

The HERALD is a Catholic Weekly of the Malaysian Church. It endeavours to communicate up-to-date news and Christian values and strives to dialogue with all sectors of society in order to build a harmonious community of believers in God. We support the formation of a participatory Church and encourage the laity and religious to make moral decisions in the marketplace.

We are not alone

Jesus is with us



VATICAN: On the morning of Easter Sunday, April 9, 2023, Pope Francis presided over Mass in St Peter's Square before delivering his *Urbi et Orbi* message and blessing from the central loggia of St Peter's Basilica.

Urbi et Orbi means "To the City [of Rome] and to the World." It is a special apostolic blessing given by the Pope every year on Easter Sunday, Christmas, and other special occasions.

Speaking to the roughly 100,000 gathered in St Peter's Square, the Pope began, first by announcing the joyous message of this day when we proclaim that Christ is risen.

In Jesus, the passage of humanity from death to life, sin to grace, fear to confidence and desolation to communion has been made, the Pope declared, wishing everyone a Happy Easter.

In particular, he greeted the sick, the poor, the elderly and all those suffering that they may experience the passage from affliction to consolation.

He called on everyone to remember and rejoice that "the Lord has built us a bridge to life" in defeating death, making it for us "the most important and beautiful day of history".

He wished that this Easter would be "a passage from affliction to consolation," especially for the sick, the poor, and the suffering.

"We are not alone: Jesus, the Living One, is with us, forever," he said. "Let the Church and the world rejoice, for today, our hopes no longer come up against the wall of death, for the Lord has built us a bridge to life."

The Holy Father noted that on the day of Jesus' resurrection, according to the Gospels, everything was done in a hurry, as the women who found the tomb empty ran to tell the other disciples, then Mary Magdalene ran to tell Peter about the resurrection.

The other disciples then ran to the empty tomb, and later that evening, the disciples who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus "set out without delay" to tell others about what they had experienced.

"At Easter, then, the journey quickens and becomes a race, since humanity now

sees the goal of its journey, the meaning of its destiny, Jesus Christ, and is called to make haste to meet Him, who is the hope of the world," the Pope said.

He prayed that the world would also "make haste to progress on a journey of reciprocal trust: trust among individuals, peoples and nations."

However, he noted that there are often many "stumbling stones" along the journey that make it more difficult, and asked Jesus to "help us to run to meet You! Help us to open our hearts!"

In his message, Pope Francis prayed for the people in countries suffering from war, conflict, or natural disaster, including Ukraine, Russia, Turkey, Syria, Jerusalem, Lebanon, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Myanmar.

He asked the Lord to help the African countries of South Sudan, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tunisia, Eritrea, Burkina Faso, Mali, Ethiopia, and Mozambique.

"Let us make haste to surmount our conflicts and divisions, and to open our hearts to those in greatest need," he urged. "Let us hasten to pursue paths of peace and frater-

nity. Let us rejoice at the concrete signs of hope that reach us from so many countries, beginning with those that offer assistance and welcome to all fleeing from war and poverty."

"Yes, brothers and sisters," Pope Francis said, "at Easter, the destiny of the world was changed, and on this day, which also coincides with the most probable date of Christ's resurrection, we can rejoice to celebrate, by pure grace, the most important and beautiful day of history."

"Christ is risen; He is truly risen!" In this traditional proclamation of the Churches of the East: *Christòs anesti!* That word 'truly' reminds us that our hope is not an illusion, but the truth!" he said. "And that, in the wake of Easter, humanity's journey, now marked by hope, advances all the more readily."

The Pope closed his message voicing hope that Christians rediscover "the enjoyment of the journey, quicken the heartbeat of hope and experience a foretaste of the beauty of heaven!" — *Agencies*

Source photo: Vatican Media

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Pet 1:3



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Masses
in
Malaysia

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HERALD

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Peace comes from Jesus — through us!

“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’”

And as if the once dead Jesus, appearing in their midst — with locked doors at that — was not enough to convince the disciples that their Master was alive, “he showed them his hands and his side.” And then they rejoiced!

But it wasn’t enough for the disciples to bask in the joy of the risen Lord, they were about to begin to understand that the unimaginable joy they just received was to be shared, to all nations.

To emphasise this, Jesus said again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

But he wasn’t sending them alone. “He breathed on them saying, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.’”

They were being charged to take the merciful peace of Jesus, into a world deeply wounded by sin, a world often captivated by sin. They faced head-on widespread sinful violence of all sorts. The violence of anger, the violence of war, the violence of abortion, the violence of greed, and the violence of indifference to suffering. Yet they faced these evils not alone, but with the strengthening, encouraging, comforting power of the Holy Spirit given to them by Jesus.

And look at all they accomplished!

And now 20 centuries later, the divine calling necessarily continues. At our baptism we received the light of the Holy Spirit, and with the complimentary sacrament of confirmation, we have been emboldened by that same Spirit to, like the first disciples, face head-on widespread violence of all sorts.

For not unlike those early heroes of the Christian faith, we too are called to challenge the prevalent violence of anger, war, poverty, abortion, capital punishment, slavery, greed and indifference to suffering.

But now add to that ancient ongoing list of violence, modern 21st century violence: nuclear weapons and the real threat of nuclear war, millions of machine and chemical abortions, conventional international wars, dozens of internal armed conflicts, societies awash in handguns with the resulting endless murders on our city



streets, violence glorified in our mass media, virtually unrestrained violent corporate greed — which treats human beings like things to be discarded, modern slavery of human trafficking, indifference to our brothers and sisters crying for help at our closed borders, human induced climate change resulting in catastrophic global warming, and starvation throughout much of the world.

And to all this violence Jesus comforts us with “Peace be with you.” As with the first disciples, he says again reassuringly, “Peace be with you.” And likewise, he sends us on mission: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

As we contemplate the Resurrection — what St Augustine referred as “God’s supreme and wholly marvellous work” — let us be comforted and empowered by the fact of faith that we serve an awesome God; who has conquered the violence of sin and death and charges us with the privilege of taking his all-powerful, life-giving message of peace into the whole world!

Take courage, “Peace be with you.”



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Jesus breathes life into our weakness

The Second Sunday of Easter is also known as ‘Divine Mercy Sunday.’ Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to St Faustina in the 1930s and promised that He would bestow His Divine Mercy to any sinner who totally repents of his/her sins, no matter how grave. Our Lord would not refuse any soul that seeks His mercy.

It is not a mere coincidence that in the private revelations that St Faustina received, Jesus asked on numerous occasions that a feast day be dedicated to the Divine Mercy and that this feast be celebrated on the Sunday after Easter.

Therefore, on April 30, 2000, when Pope John Paul II canonised his country-woman, St Faustina, he said, “It is important then that we accept the whole message that comes to us from the Word of God on this Second Sunday of Easter which, from now on, throughout the Church, will be called ‘Divine Mercy Sunday.’”

In brief, this Sunday invites us to contemplate the mercy of God. We experience this Divine Mercy very tangibly in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and also in Grace, the unmerited favour, the gratuitous gift which God gives to us out of His compassion and merciful love.

And so, during this Easter season, we walk in the most astonishing and delightful part of the story of God’s dealings with His people in Capturing, Convincing and Calling us to be Christ-centred disciples. So let us again seek to step into this story. What might Jesus have to say to us?

The disciples in our Gospel reading today are hiding. They are hiding for fear of the Jews. Are they hiding from God like Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden? Perhaps they are, in a way. What was the last thing they did before the arrest of Jesus? They fled and denied knowing Christ, even though each of them had said they would be willing to die for Jesus. In reality, they are still not willing to die for Jesus. They couldn’t allow the love of Jesus Christ, who gave Himself completely for them, to CAPTURE and CONVINCING them wholesomely, though He has been CALLING out to them repeatedly.

They are hiding and they are terrified. They know Jesus is dead. They know that His body has gone from the tomb but they have no understanding as to what this might mean. I think they believe what Mary first tells them, that the body has been taken away and they don’t know where they have put Him. Mary has since told them that she has seen the Lord but this just makes no sense to them. It is into this context that the Risen Christ appears to the disciples.

What is the first thing Jesus says to the disciples? Does He say ‘Where were you?’ or ‘All of you abandoned me, left me alone to die?’ NO. He says, astonishingly, ‘Peace be with you’. Then John gives us what I think must be one of the greatest understatements in Scripture. He writes: ‘they were filled with joy when they saw the Lord’. Of course, there is an absolute joy in seeing Jesus risen from the dead but I think the rejoicing happens partly because, in saying ‘peace

be with you’, Jesus is saying ‘I forgive you, you thought you were no longer my friends but you are still my friends and I say peace be with you.’

In a town, there lived an earnest Christian man who became a magistrate. One morning, there appeared before him in the court a friend of his youth, who had strayed from the paths of righteousness and had committed an offence against the law of the land. Those who knew the relationship between the two men expected the magistrate to deal with the man mercifully, and they were very much surprised when they heard that the sentence was a heavy fine. But they were more surprised when the magistrate went to the officer of the court, and took from his own pocket the money to pay the fine. He did his duty as a magistrate and upheld the law, but he also showed something of the mercy of God for his friend when he paid the penalty for his friend. There is little wonder that the law-breaker was broken-hearted in his repentance.

And yet, Jesus continues reaching out and He says, ‘peace be with you’ again. Then He does something else astonishing. He says, ‘I send you’. This is a group of frightened men hiding in a locked room who don’t even understand what has happened to Jesus. In that state, He tells them that He is sending them. There is no sense that they need to pass some kind of test first before they get sent out: they’re ready now. Jesus says ‘as the Father has sent me, so I send you’. It almost sounds like ‘get up, take up your mat

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Fr Martin Arlando

Divine Mercy Sunday (A)

Readings: Acts of the Apostle 2:42-47

1 Peter 1:3-9;

Gospel: John 20:19-31

and walk’.

Jesus does something really extraordinary. He breathes on them. This brings to mind the very beginning of creation. How does God bring Adam to life when he is created from clay? He breathes on him. Only the Creator God can give life to something that is dead.

In a sense, the disciples in that locked room are dead and lifeless, they are dead in their denial of Jesus, their sins, in the way they have let God down. But, Jesus breathes on them and says ‘receive the Holy Spirit.’

Jesus, the one who, until very recently was dead, breathes life, the Holy Spirit, back into the weak disciples. As St Paul writes in the *Letter to the Ephesians* ‘even though we were dead because of our sins, He gave us life when He raised Christ from the dead’ (Eph 2:5). In receiving this forgiving power of the Holy Spirit, the disciples are then to do the same, to forgive others in that power. To live as Christ-centred disciples.

Fr Martin Arlando is the parish priest of the Church of Our Lady of Good Health, Parit Buntar, Perak.



KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

April

- 16 *Feast Day Mass – Church of the Divine Mercy*
- 17-18 *Biennial General Conference – Christian Federation of Malaysia*
- 20 *Meeting – Archdiocesan Finance*
- 25-26 *Clergy Monthly Recollection*



PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Sebastian Francis

April

- 18 *Council of Priests (COP) at 10.00am*
- 18- 19 *Clergy Monthly Recollection*
- 19- 20 *Permanent Deacons' Formation*
- 21 *Meeting | Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference – Office of Social Communications via ZOOM*
- 22 *Inauguration Service of St. George's Church as Pro Cathedral of the Area Diocese of Northern Peninsula, in the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia*
- 24 *Commissioning Mass – Diocesan Catechetical Retreat – Minor Basilica of St. Anne, Bukit Mertajam*
- 25 *Penang Diocesan New Evangelization Commission Meeting – Penang Diocesan Centre*
- 25 *Penang Diocesan Finance Committee Meeting – Penang Diocesan Centre*
- 27 *Mass with Pilgrims from Romania – Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Penang*



MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

April

- 28 *Confirmation Mass – Church of the Holy Family, Ulu Tiram*
- 29-30 *Auxiliary of the Apostolate Weekend – MAJODI Centre*

A fulfilling Lenten journey for St Jude parishioners



By Mercy Almeida Stellus

RAWANG: The Church of St Jude's Lenten journey was marked by various activities and sessions organised by parish priest, Fr Vincent Thomas, the Parish Coordinating Council and the Formation Team.

One of the sessions was by Bro Philip Asirvalam, a third-year Theology Formation student, who spoke about the process of encountering Christ during Lent. He spoke in both English and Tamil. He focused on the Samaritan woman at the well, as it was Jesus' last public appearance before His Passion and Death. It signifies our final preparations in re-enacting

Seminarian Philip Asirvalam with the altar servers from the Church of St Jude and the Chapel of St Michael, Batu Arang.

and reliving Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection before Holy Week.

Bro Philip also conducted a half-day session for the altar servers from the parish and the chapel of St Michael, Batu Arang. He spoke about the importance of the Holy Eucharist and the various parts of the Mass, providing an in-depth explanation of the various actions performed by the priest and their Scriptural and outward meanings.

Bishop Peter Abir Antonisamy of Sulatanpet Diocese in Tamil Nadu gave a talk on St Paul, highlighting his participation, communion, and mission. He encouraged

parishioners to learn from St Paul's example and become missionaries by teaching about Jesus through their actions, words, and examples. The bishop emphasised the importance of persevering in the face of difficulties and sharing the Word of God with others.

The Lenten journey continued with Zones, BECs, and different ministries coming together on different days to walk the 14 Stations of the Cross and culminated with the celebration of Palm Sunday.

The parishioners' Lenten journey was a time for reflection, renewal, and preparation for Holy Week.

A journey inward and outward

KUALA LUMPUR: A half-day recollection by the Archdiocesan Prayer Ministry (APM) was held at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute (API) on April 1.

The recollection began with Mass followed by a reflection on Thomas Merton's prayer, which encouraged the attendees to reflect on their true selves and derive a daily mantra for self-fulfilment.

In the second session, APM Ecclesiastical Assistant, Fr Andrew Manickam OFM Cap discussed the theme of restoration, using examples from the Bible such as the Prodigal Son and three prophets. He emphasised that restoration requires hard work and can be a painful process, but it is ultimately worth it.

The participants also took time to reflect on how God reached out to them during their lowest points in life, and were reminded that God is always present amid the storm.



Fr Andrew Manickam OFM Cap celebrating Mass during the half day recollection.

The recollection ended with Holy Hour, where the attendees prayed for the protection, guidance, forgiveness, healing, and good health of the Pope and the clergy.

The Thomas Merton Prayer - My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I

do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following Your Will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You.

Seek Mary's intercession for those unable to conceive

RAUB, Pahang: "Nothing is impossible to God if we put our trust in Him." The Church of the Annunciation parish administrator, Fr Clement Lim, said during the feast day celebration.

He shared about prayers being answered through Mother Mary's intercession and invited the faithful to pray, as a

proxy, for someone unable to conceive, while standing at Mary's statue in front of the sanctuary. He suggested that those whose intentions were fulfilled could offer a bouquet at any grotto as a sign of appreciation to Mother Mary.

The Church of the Annunciation celebrated her feast day with a Triduum. Fr

Augustine Lee from Cameron Highlands was the preacher for March 23 and Fr Clement preached on March 24 and 25. On the feast day, more than 100 faithful were present.

As the parish has only 30 parishioners, Fr Clement invited the congregation to pray that the parish will grow and flourish. The parishioners thanked the visitors, preachers and those who sponsored the fellowship and flowers. Fr Clement thanked those involved in the preparations including the 14 members of the Catholic Students Society from TARC university who sang in the choir.

Everyone was treated to a dinner on the church grounds. As it was Fr Clement's birthday on March 28, the parishioners brought a cake for him to cut as the assembly sang 'Happy Birthday'. — *By Bernard Anthony*



Parishioners kneeling in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

This year, 852 Elect were baptised during the Easter Vigil. On pages 4 & 5, some of them share what led them to the faith.

Dreaming of Mary and Jesus

“Luke 15: 1-7, The Parable of the Lost Sheep meant so much to me. This parable was how my journey with Jesus started.

“I was at my lowest point in life and spiritually dry when Mother Mary and Jesus appeared in a dream which comforted me. Jesus just smiled.

“Then I had another dream of walking up steps into a cave, trying to listen to a sermon but I heard nothing and when I turned to my right, I saw the statue of Mother Mary.

“My turning point was when, as I walked past “Samaritan Hope Home (SHH)” on December 29, 2021, I heard God’s voice calling me, “Ellen, turn back”. I turned back to SHH and met Fatima, who runs the Home. When I went home that day, I read the daily *Divine Mercy Reflection* online I was astonished and in tears as “Hearing God Speak” was that day’s reflection (#363).

“On February 9, 2022, I had another profound dream where I was holding my dad’s hand but I could not see him. And the moment he disappeared, I opened my right hand and found a crucifix on my palm. This dream gave me so much conviction that Jesus was calling me and that He would not give up.

“And this was the same day when my sister made an appointment for me to see a priest.

“When I reflect from the beginning of Jesus’ calling, it truly shows how great God’s love and mercy for His children is. He is so faithful and never forsakes us.

“In Jesus, I find the true meaning of Love and Mercy and He fills the emptiness in my heart.



“Jesus, I Trust in You and I Love You Father.

“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).”

Ellen Kang,
Church of the Sacred Heart, KL

I no longer feel empty

“For 20 years, my life’s philosophy was that as long as I was happy and not harming anyone, it was ok. Most of my peers shared this philosophy, but it left me with questions and an empty feeling.

Then, over a period of five years, several unhappy events continuously occurred in my life. Only then was I introduced to the faith. My brother, who was a few months away from his Baptism, offered to take me to Sunday Mass. Since I didn’t have any other plans, I went. I did not expect anything, but as I left church that day, I experienced a peace I had never felt before.

I continued going to Mass, though infrequently. Months after my brother’s baptism, he handed me an RCIA form. I was not religious then but I signed up, thinking that I had nothing to lose.

I started attending RCIA classes and Sunday Masses consistently. I felt and saw changes in my life. I became happier, and more content, it was like a weight lifted. I didn’t feel empty anymore. I saw purpose in the things that happened in the past, and I firmly believed they happened so I could stand before the baptismal font this Easter and be baptised.

Has it been an easy journey? No, my resolve and my faith were tested over and over again. However, I found God through my journey, and I also found myself and a purpose. I believe my life has become better because of it.”

Danny Lee, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Penang



Gift of ordination: Profound love and mercy of God

By Liza Magnus

KOTA KINABALU: The Chrism Mass is indeed a significant occasion in the life of the local church as it celebrates the renewal of the priestly promises and the consecration of the sacred oils to be used in the sacraments.

The distribution of these oils to every parish in the archdiocese signifies the Lord’s healing presence and the life-giving gift of the Holy Spirit among the people.

More than 2,000 gathered at Sacred Heart Cathedral on March 30 to celebrate it.

Archbishop John Wong expressed his gratitude to the clergy, religious, and faithful for their attendance. “Your presence is important and manifests the body of Christ gathered together in communion with the entire People of God in this archdiocese.”

Addressing his priests, Bishop John said, “My dear brother priests, the Chrism Mass is always a wonderful opportunity for us to come together to reflect on our ordination. When I reflect on the gift of my ordination as a priest and as a bishop, it never ceases to amaze me ... it never ceases to leave me in deep gratitude for such a tremendous gift. A gift to be received



Fr Peter Chung handing the Oil of the Sick to Archbishop John Wong.

new every day.”

The prelate reminded the congregation that the gift of ordination is the profound love and mercy of God, given to us as pure grace from the Almighty and merciful God.

The Chrism Mass is traditionally celebrated on the morning of Holy Thursday to commemorate the Last Supper of our Lord, where He instituted the Holy Eucharist and the Holy Oil (the priesthood). Jesus said, “Do this in memory of me,” and the prelate urged the congregation to reflect on

what the Lord is asking each one of us to do to remember Him.

During Mass, the clergy renewed their commitment to priestly service, and the archbishop blessed and consecrated the Oils of the Sick, Catechumen, and Chrism brought to the altar by three young priests.

The Chrism Mass is a powerful reminder of the mission entrusted to the ordained ministers to remain faithful to their calling and for the congregation to offer prayers for the bishop and the priests in the archdiocese.

The Holy Spirit is indispensable in our lives



The priests renewing their priestly vows.

KENINGAU: The Diocese of Keningau celebrated its Chrism Mass at Dataran Keuskupan Keningau on April 4, 2023.

Highlighting the clergy’s mission, Bishop Cornelius Piong said, “A priest must always unite the people. He is a source of peace and serenity in the community. He is a beacon of light even when it is very dark.”

The prelate also reminded the priests that the role of the Holy Spirit is indispensable in our lives as pastors, religious, and laity. “No matter how much experience and education we have, we should never think we can walk or work on our own. We

always need God.” He also stressed three essentials in the life of a priest: “to pray, to read and preach the Word of God, and to celebrate the Eucharist daily.”

The bishop’s encouragement to pray for priests, especially in difficult missions, serves as a reminder of the sacrifices they make in service to the Church. It is a call to support and uplift them rather than add to their burdens.

Finally, the bishop’s message about renewing our commitment to Jesus during the final days of Holy Week is a call to all Christians to reflect on the

season’s significance and to recommit ourselves to living out our faith.

“We live in a modern and sophisticated era where we easily succumb to thoughts that there is no need for God. But through the teachings of the Church, we know that without God, our lives have no meaning. Always remember Christian joy comes from the certainty that Jesus is in our midst.”

After the homily, the clergy renewed their commitment to priestly service. Three seminarians brought the Oils of the Sick, Catechumen, and Chrism to the altar for consecration.

— By Liza Magnus

God is our power bank and the Holy Spirit, our GPS

By Gwen Manickam

MELAKA: The Diocese of Malacca Johore held its multilingual Chrism Mass at the Church of St Francis Xavier on April 4, 2023, with the theme *Called to Conversion*.

Bishop Bernard Paul presided over the Mass and emphasised the need for the Church to be led by the Spirit. "Today we pray for priests and the Church, to be faithful to God's Church and the Holy Sacraments entrusted to us."

During his homily, the prelate said, "Fr Richard Rohr, OFM, said that until and unless there is a person, situation, event, idea, conflict, or relationship that we cannot 'manage,' we will never find the True Manager."

He said we may keep trying until we are driven to a point where we cannot manage, "Only when we are powerless, then the presence of God is felt, and we begin to look for the source of all power, the Spirit Himself."

The first reading from Prophet Isaiah and the second reading from the *Book of Revelations* both emphasised the importance of the Holy Spirit in making us a people of priests and ministers, a race blessed by God.

In the day's Gospel reading from St Luke, Jesus was anointed in the Spirit and that was the reason for the many signs that accompanied Him. He was the Good News to the poor, He healed



Bishop Bernard Paul pouring the oil of fragrance into the chrism oil.

the broken-hearted, He proclaimed liberty to the captives, set prisoners free, comforted the mourning, and declared the year of God's favour.

Bishop Bernard said the Church today needs a True Manager, the Holy Spirit, to move. It doesn't need human beings — we just need to be His servants.

"For the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, Jesus teaches us three things — be depended on the Father, be led by the Spirit, and silently listen to the God within."

To depend on the Father is to admit we are powerless and He is our power bank. To be led by the Spirit means to consult the Spirit and let Him be the GPS in our lives and journey. To be silent is to put aside all the inside and outside noises in our life, listen to our breathing, and we

will slowly hear God speak. Our breath and the Spirit are connected, said the Shepherd of the south.

"By baptism, all of us have the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit lives in us, speaks in us, moves us, and prompts us — but are we listening? We listen to all voices and accept the voice of the Spirit which comes from our heart."

"We don't need a powerful, egoist church. We need a powerless, servant church that listens to the all-powerful Spirit moving in the baptised."

During Mass, the clergy renewed their commitment to priestly service.

Fr William Pillai, Bro Joseph Lim Swee Thiam, CDD, and Sr Jeniffer D/O Palanisamy then brought the Oils of Chrism, Sick, and Catechumen for the bishop to bless and consecrate.

All are called for mission

KUCHING: "The word 'Chrism' is derived from the Greek word *khrisma* meaning 'anointing'." Archbishop Simon Poh told the congregation at the Chrism Mass celebrated at the Cathedral of St Joseph on April 5

He also said that Chrism takes its name from Christ, meaning 'the anointed of the Lord'.

"During this Mass, we will have the Renewal of Priestly Promises, Blessing of the Oil of Catechumens and Oil for Anointing of the Sick, Consecration of the Chrism and the handing of Oils to the priests to administer to our Catholics in parishes."

The archbishop highlighted that every baptised person is anointed with Chrism for a mission to be part of the Priestly people, Kingly people, and Prophetic People of God. This is our common calling. Only a few are called

and ordained as priests to minister to the community, which is called the Ministerial Priesthood for ordained ministers who celebrate Masses and administer the Sacraments. At Ordinations, priests are anointed with Chrism on their hands, while bishops are anointed on the head.

The prelate ended his homily by asking for prayers to be a good father to his priests, who are his closest collaborators. "Help me give the archdiocese and all the parishes good pastors."

"Pray for your priests who are serving you faithfully in the parishes. We are human but with your understanding, we can be better pastors to serve you. Pray to the Lord of the Harvest to give shepherds after His own heart, who will feed us with knowledge and understanding. (Jeremiah 3:15)."

"The Chrism Oil consecrated by a

Catholic bishop at his diocese will be used to anoint every newly baptised, to trace the sign of Christ on those receiving Confirmation, and to anoint the hands of priests at ordination. Through these Oils, we are all baptised, confirmed, and sent for the mission as God's Kingly (by bringing God's Kingdom values to our home, office, and society), Priestly (to pray to the Lord and intercede for the world) and Prophetic (to witness Jesus and speak out His Gospel teaching and transforming society) people," said Archbishop Simon.

"I echo the words of Pope Francis words, 'Dear faithful People of God, be close to your priests with affection and with your prayers, that they may always be shepherds according to God's heart. And pray for those whom God is calling to be priests, that they may respond to this call with humility and joy.'"

"To my brother priests, you are my closest collaborators whom I know are committed to being available, to ensure the sacraments are available. As your bishop, I pledge my commitment and solidarity with you. Dear Fathers, your ministry is so essential to the *kampongs* and city Catholics and has made such a difference in God's plan, for our people. Know that the People of God appreciate you tremendously, and so do I. I thank you, and we thank you. May God bless you all."

At the end of the Mass, the Sacred Oils, to be used exclusively for the Sacraments, were entrusted to every priest to use in the archdiocese.



Archbishop Simon Poh praying over the Holy Oils.



"I have known Christ since 1988 but not from the Catholic faith's point of view."

"I wanted my family to be of one faith so there would be peace and harmony. I prayed God would open a door for my whole family one day and praise the LORD, that day came when my family joined the RCIA classes last year at the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe."

"At first, I was a bit sceptical, but after a few sessions, I began to understand the faith better, thanks to Fr Neville Arul Sinnappah, Simon Wee, Theresa Sia, Jonathan, and the other RCIA participants. We are like one big family."

"Every day I pray God strengthens my faith and that the Holy Spirit will dwell in me, and guide and protect my family. I feel my life transformed. Every time I get angry, I cool down quickly, as though someone is checking on me. I am always looking forward to attending weekly Mass and spending time with the Lord during Adoration. Now I spend my leisure time watching Catholic documentaries and following prayers, especially the Holy Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Gospel songs are my choice of music."

"As my Baptism neared, I found temptation and doubts becoming more frequent. I pray the Lord strengthens my faith and protects my family. Emotions were also running wild. I felt sad the RCIA classes ended but was looking forward to receiving my Sacraments so I can fully partake in the Holy Eucharist. Praise The Lord."

"Being in the RCIA class has been the most meaningful and memorable time in my life. Thanks to my newfound family."

"Once again, thank you Fr Neville, Simon, Theresa, Jonathan, Fong Leng and Shaun for sharing your knowledge and helping me grow in Christ. Thank you too, to the brothers and sisters in Christ from the parish."

Stephen Tan, Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Krubong



No knowledge of the faith

"My name is Ramesh; married with two school-going boys."

"When I began the RCIA process, I had some knowledge of God but no knowledge of the Catholic Church; and understood even less how this faith would fit into my life. The RCIA team was instrumental in my journey to become fully initiated into the Catholic faith."

"Every week I learned about Jesus, the Bible, and the Church. I was introduced to ways of communicating with God. I learned the history of our faith, the life and teachings of Jesus and started to apply the teachings of Jesus Christ in my everyday life."



Ramesh, St Theresa's Church, Masai, Johor

From the mountain top to the road to Emmaus

BUTTERWORTH: Parishioners of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Chapel of Sts Imbert and Chasten (NBVM/SCIC) who attended an enriching and spirit-filled prayer retreat with Fr Andrew Manickam OFM, Cap, felt empowered after gaining new insights into their lives and mission.

"An unexamined life is not worth living" and "To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom," Fr Andrew quoted Socrates at the opening session of the three-day retreat at Stella Maris, from March 24 to 26.

He said the retreat was an "inward journey to recollect, remember and re-examine our lives, to silence and to open our minds and hearts to God; to know ourselves, to be restored and refreshed by experiencing God's love through prayer and



The retreatants with Fr Andrew Manickam OFM Cap.

eventually, to go back to where we are, to 'bloom and grow'."

For the next two days, Fr Andrew presented two major events in the Bible for their reflection, the Transfiguration (Matt 17 1-13) and the Road to Emmaus (Lk 24.33-35, 48-49). He connected these events to the prophet Elijah (1 Kg 19:1-14),

Hagar (Gen 21:9-23), and the two disciples: Cleophas and his companion, who were joined by Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:33-35, 48-49).

By relating the above events, people, and Psalm 51, Fr Andrew crafted a 'mountain top experience' for the retreatants where they could

encounter themselves; recollect, remember, and re-examine God's loving presence in their lives.

After his sharing on Psalm 51, he urged all to pray this psalm of repentance, remembering God's saving grace and mercy for their failures against charity and to return to God; to let go of their past, their expectations, unfulfilled dreams in order to be restored, recharged and empowered by God's Holy Spirit. He then asked everyone to write a personal prayer to be kept and prayed each day, remembering God's love.

On the morning of the last day, Fr Andrew led the retreatants down from the mountain top to walk with Jesus, Cleophas, and his companion (Lk 48-49), on the road to Emmaus, to experience Jesus in a new way with a new perspective of life.

He reiterated that the sustaining power for Christian spiritual growth is the Eucharist. Cleophas and his companion, who recognised Jesus in the breaking of bread, went back to Jerusalem to tell the others that Jesus had risen. The retreatants too, need the sustaining power of the breaking of the Word and the breaking of Bread, to be where God planted them to be missionary disciples of Christ, having hope and bringing joy and hope to others.

There were many opportunities for silence, prayer, bonding, laughter, and sharing. The retreatants were grateful to God, Fr Andrew, and the organising team for a grace-filled experience.

NBVM parish priest Fr Dominic Santhiyagu joined them at the end of the retreat. — nbvmcsc.org

Clean-up Day at Pantai Seagate

PENANG: In line with the Lenten theme *Renew our hearts to Care – Care for our common home*, Caritas Diocese of Penang organised a clean-up event, in collaboration with Tzu Chi Merits Society Penang on March 25.

Sixty people from all walks of life joined the morning event at Pantai Seagate, Bayan Lepas. A Tzu Chi member briefed the par-

ticipants before they were divided into groups to embark on the clean-up at different points along Pantai Seagate.

About 34.7 kg of recyclable and 302.5 kg of non-recyclable items, mainly plastic waste, were collected. As a commitment to responsible waste management and sustainable practices, the recyclable items were sent to the Tzu Chi Environ-

ment Protection Education Centre, Penang.

This simple action of picking up trash brought people from diverse backgrounds together, united in a common goal, to keep the environment clean. It was a positive collaboration, with the spirit of unity, and most importantly, getting something done for the planet we call our common home.



The team collecting the rubbish at Pantai Seagate.

Caritas Diocese of Penang plans to organise more environmental care events to raise awareness on

proper waste management to help reduce pollution and protect the environment.



JOIN OUR TEAM

Yayasan Tan Sri Dominic Vendargon is pleased to invite applications from qualified and interested candidates for the positions offered below.

1) Chief Operating Officer (COO)

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) acts as the Executive Secretary of Yayasan Tan Sri Dominic Vendargon (YTDV) and is responsible for executing and enforcing policies of the YTDV in all schools, institutions and bodies owned and/or operated by YTDV (the 'Group').

The COO reports to the Chairman of YTDV and is responsible to the Council of Directors, for providing direction to and ensuring the effective discharge of oversight over, all educational and business operations within the Group.

The COO is expected to manage the business and the enterprise but not run education activities in schools as academics, co-curricula and extra-curricula activities will be the purview of qualified heads of schools. The COO will be assisted by a team of managers and executives.

REQUIREMENTS

The candidate we are looking for will be an active, practicing Catholic who possesses appropriate tertiary qualifications and a sound background in corporate business, legal and finance. Experience in education, digital technologies and human resources is an advantage.

The candidate is also expected to have accumulated some exposure in networking to support YTDV in the development of strategic directions that take into account market opportunities and dynamics as well as industrial support to meet performance targets.

YTDV will offer the successful candidate an attractive remuneration with annual paid leave, hospitalisation benefits, transportation and travel allowances as well as staff discounts.

2) Procurement Manager

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Procurement Manager will be based at the Yayasan Tan Sri Dominic Vendargon (YTDV) Corporate Office and will be responsible to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) for the efficient and ethical exercise and enforcement of all policies, practices, rules and procedures related to the procurement, supply, inventory and custody of assets within YTDV, including all schools, institutions and bodies under its care (the 'Group').

The Manager is expected to guide, lead and manage all procurement exercises conducted within the Group and to enforce best practices in all activities related to the procurement of goods and services and the proper care, maintenance, safety and custody of inventory and assets. Knowledge and exposure in such experiences is a prerequisite.

REQUIREMENTS

The potential candidate is expected to have a tertiary qualification in business, finance, engineering, information technology, education or marketing. Experience in digital technology is an advantage.

The manager will work in the Corporate Office in the company of other managers in an environment that demands ethical standards of business, close teamwork, competent performance and dedicated commitment.

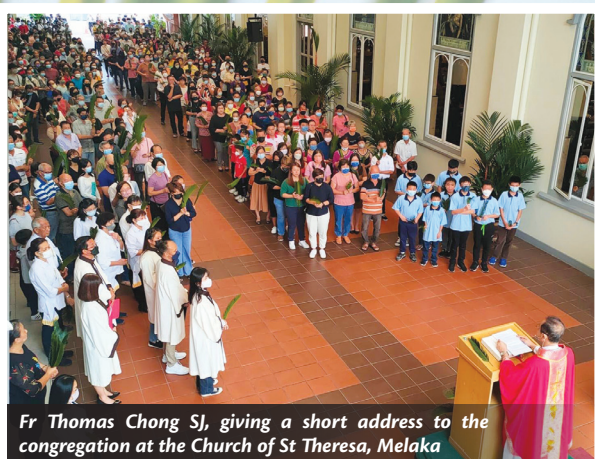
YTDV will offer the successful candidate an attractive remuneration with annual paid leave, hospitalisation benefits and transportation and meal allowances, besides staff discounts.

Applications are to be submitted in writing complete with résumés by **12 May 2023**, addressed to:

**Chairman, Council of Directors,
Yayasan Tan Sri Dominic Vendargon, c/o Stella Maris International School
No. 7, Lorong Setiabistari 2, Medan Damansara, 50490 Kuala Lumpur.**

Holy Week round-up in the parishes

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord



Fr Thomas Chong SJ, giving a short address to the congregation at the Church of St Theresa, Melaka



Fr Victor Louis praying at the beginning of the Mass in Bedong, Kedah.



The faithful raising their palms to be blessed at the Church of the Visitation, Seremban.



The congregation with their palms at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

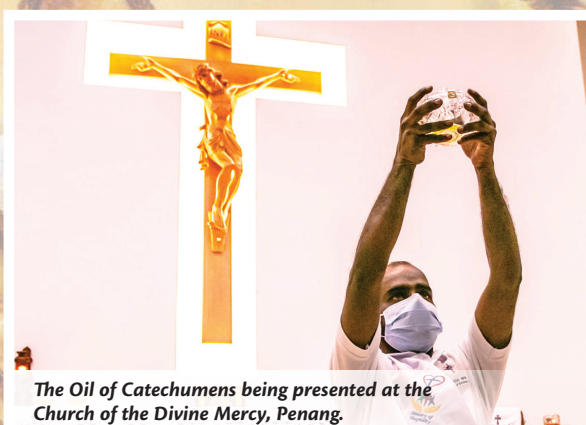


The children walking in procession with their palms raised high at the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Klang.

Thursday of the Lord's Supper



Presentation of the Holy Oils at the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Butterworth



The Oil of Catechumens being presented at the Church of the Divine Mercy, Penang.



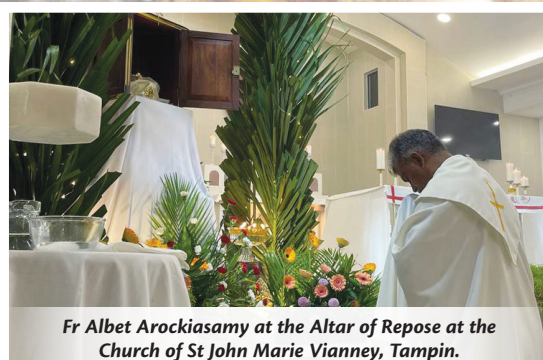
Fr Joseph Heng washing the feet of a parishioner at the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Krubong.



Deacon Lazarus Jonathan washing the feet of a wheelchair bound person at the Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam.



Fr Edwin Peter washing the feet of a child at the Church of the Risen Christ, KL.



Fr Albet Arockiasamy at the Altar of Repose at the Church of St John Marie Vianney, Tampin.



The congregation at the Altar of Repose at the Church of St Theresa, Masai.



Fr Augustine Lee at the Altar of Repose at the Church of Our Lady of Mt Carmel, Cameron Highlands.

Holy Week round-up in the parishes

Good Friday of the Passion of the Lord



Fr Michael Cheah prostrating himself at the start of the Good Friday service at the Church of St Michael, Alor Setar.



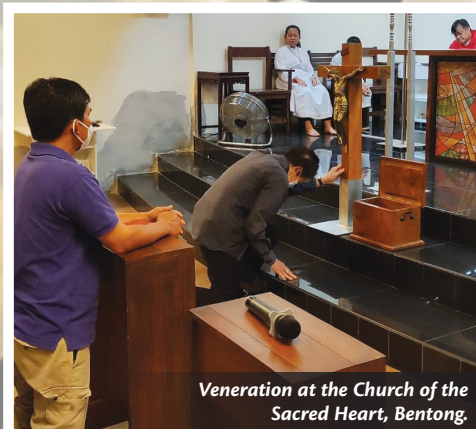
Fr Michael Dass uncovering a little of the upper part of the cross at the Church of St Joseph, Batu Gajah.



The unveiling of the right arm of the Cross at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Penang.



Fr Robin Lomangkok, CSsR uncovers the cross entirely at the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Ipoh.



Veneration at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Bentong.



The faithful venerating the cross at the Church of St Peter, Mersing.

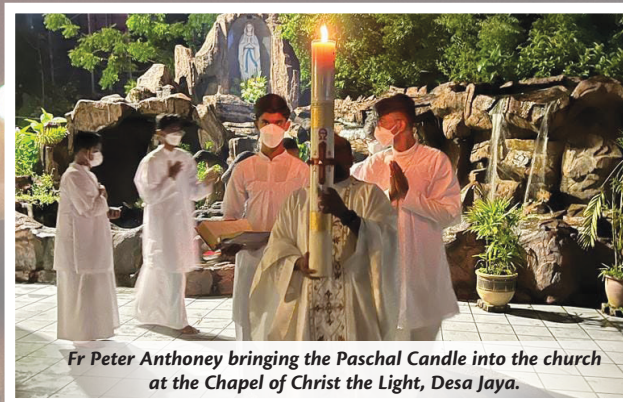
Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord



Fr Louis Loi saying the prayer before the Paschal Candle is lit at the Church of the Holy Name of Mary, Permatang Tinggi.



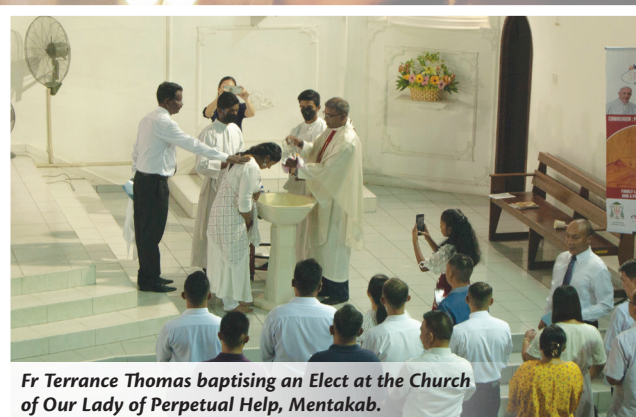
Msgr Peter Ng lighting the Paschal Candle from the newly blessed fire at the Church of St Louis, Kluang.



Fr Peter Anthony bringing the Paschal Candle into the church at the Chapel of Christ the Light, Desa Jaya.



Fr Simon Anand blessing the baptismal water at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Kampar.



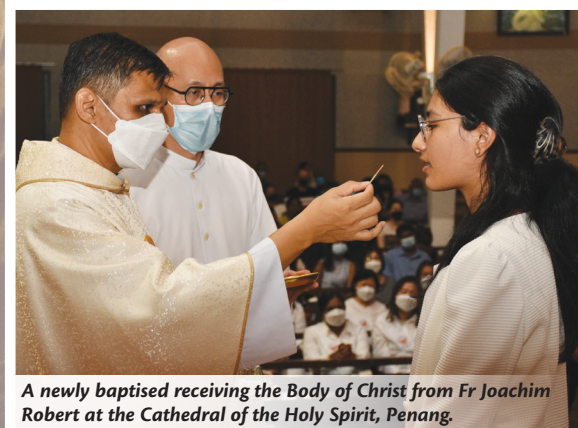
Fr Terrance Thomas baptising an Elect at the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Mentakab.



Fr Anthony Liew anointing the newly baptised with Chrism at the Church of St Michael, Ipoh.



Fr Jason Wong blessing the people with holy water at the Church of St Andrew, Muar.



A newly baptised receiving the Body of Christ from Fr Joachim Robert at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Penang.

Nicaraguan police repress Holy Week procession

MANAGUA: President Daniel Ortega's steady, ongoing silencing of dissenting voices in Nicaragua has directly targeted the Catholic Church systematically for at least five years now. Among his most recent dictates is the explicit prohibition of traditional public processions of the Way of the Cross in all parishes in the country during the recent season of Lent. Some dared to defy this prohibition recently, and were subsequently persecuted and repressed by the police.

On Holy Monday, the streets of Nindirí, in the Nicaraguan department of Masaya, are the site of the traditional procession of Los Cirineos ("the Cyrenes"). People of all ages dress in tunics and carry crosses, inspired by Simon of Cyrene, the man who, according to the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, helped Jesus carry the cross.

As reported by local media, Ortega's po-

lice repressed the procession and chased those participating in it through the streets of Nindirí.

Those who were fleeing from police threats took refuge in neighbours' houses as well as in the Santa Ana parish, the church from where the procession usually starts in that area of Masaya.

"The police arrived in Nindirí to prohibit the departure of the traditional Cirineos. Young people who were about to carry out the tradition were chased throughout the city. Whether they were detained or not remains unknown. Neighbours helped many of them to hide and flee from the police," local media said, based on information shared by the Unidad Nacional Azul y Blanco (UNAB), a non-governmental organisation that fights for freedom in Nicaragua. — **By Daniel Esparza, Aleteia**



The police repressed the procession and chased those participating in it through the streets of Nindirí. (Aleteia photo/Alcaldía de Nindirí Página Oficial)

Theology students break fast with Muslim brethren

NEW DELHI: A group of students of theology from Delhi's Jesuit-run Vidyajyoti Institute of Religious Studies recently attended an *iftar* programme, the ritual of breaking fast during the Ramadan month.

They were invited by Syed Muhammad Nizami Sahib to the *iftar* at the dargah of Sufi saint, Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya.

Muslims abstain from eating and drinking during the day and end the fast at sunset during Ramadan month. Many Muslims and their groups use the *iftar* to build and promote interfaith relations.

Reminding about the relevance of such interfaith engagements, Jesuit Fr Joseph Victor Edwin, who teaches theology and Christian-Muslim Relations at Vidyajyoti, said: "In the light of postmodernist thought which takes shape as abhorrence of uniformity, universality, and absoluteness, the Church has a new task of discerning her identity in the context of many religions."

He reminded the students of the message of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious



The Catholic students from Vidyajyoti Institute of Religious Studies breaking fast with the Muslims at the *iftar* programme. (Matters India photo)

Dialogue addressed to 'Muslim brothers and sisters,' that urged Muslims and Christians to strive to promote together a 'culture of love and friendship' in the context

of 'the culture of hate.'

The Vatican message said the culture of hate is nurtured through the numerous "negative attitudes and behaviours towards

those who are different from us," including "suspicion, fear, rivalry, discrimination, exclusion, persecution, polemics, insults, and backbiting" through social media.

Fr Edwin said the message encourages both Muslims and Christians to nurture respect, goodness, charity, friendship, and mutual care for all in the context of negativity.

Syed Muhammad Nizami Sahib said that Sufis emphasise the importance of experiencing God in one's life. He further said every human is created to love God and love his/her neighbour.

The theology students said the experience convinced them that adherents of other religions are good, loving "precisely because of their religions". The Pope's invitation is encouraging as he asks people to act with confidence that humanity belongs to God, build a future together on the foundations of Peace and Justice, and to cultivate Frankness and Courage. — **Matters India**

Controversy over Ivorian Muslim leader's Easter greetings

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast: Sheik Ousmane Diakité, president of the Superior Council of Imams of Ivory Coast (COSIM), has been harshly criticised by fellow Muslims for extending Easter greetings to the Christian community in the West African nation.

"On the eve of Easter 2023's Holy Week, characterised by intense and good moments of worship and social actions, on behalf of the Muslim community, I would like to wish you a good and fruitful Easter," the 66-year-old sheik said in a message published April 1 in the government newspaper and on social media. The message, entitled *Celebration of Easter 2023*, pointed out that Lent and the month of Ramadan have again coincided, just like last year.

"This coincidence of two highly spiritual periods invites us, Christians and Muslims, more than 80 per cent of the national community, to observe a religious discipline that is expressed by forgiveness, sharing, the fight against our passions and mercy," he said.

Muslims make up 42.5 per cent and Christians comprise 39.8 per cent of the country's estimated 29.4 million inhabit-



Sheik Ousmane Diakité

ants. The latest Vatican statistics put the Catholic population at 7.4 million.

The sheik invited members of the two faiths to address their supplications, together, "to the Master of heaven and earth, so that He may preserve Ivory Coast and relieve its brave inhabitants of all the sufferings that may hit them hard: diseases,

impoverishment, insecurity, natural disasters, climate change, etc."

Sheik Diakité, who has been president of COSIM since 2021, said Christian and Muslim religious leaders must "combine our efforts to address the scourges of society that undermine our youth, namely: the depravity of morals, drugs, organised crime, etc".

His message, which was put on COSIM's Facebook page, received thousands of comments. The vast majority of them welcomed the sheik's words. But a number of Muslims said they were outraged to see their religious leader extend Easter greetings to Christians.

"If I wish my Christian neighbour a happy Easter, I automatically believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus, while a clear verse in the Quran says that Allah does not take into account what we say, but what is in our hearts," said one of them.

"Through his message, the president of COSIM has made a fiasco of his knowledge of Islam, or I should say of his faith in Allah, because Christian holidays are forbidden for the Muslim, even wishing happy birthday to a Christian," said another.

Trained as a lawyer and a professor of Arabic and French, Ousmane Diakité leads an organisation that represents over 26,000 imams. Known as the "Imam of the Middle Way" for his ability to compromise, the sheik is a strong advocate of interfaith dialogue, as were his late predecessors at COSIM.

In his Easter message, he praised "the noble initiative of the various religious ministers in our country, who are working tirelessly for the establishment of the Alliance of Religions for Peace in Ivory Coast, in order to consolidate peace and peaceful religious coexistence within the Ivorian nation".

In October 2021, just a few months after being elected the COSIM president, he went to the headquarters of the Ivorian Catholic Bishops' Conference to formalise the co-religious alliance. "It is our responsibility to ensure that as Christian and Muslim religious leaders, we can set a good example so that our faithful can understand that religion is a matter of intimate conviction," he explained during that visit. — **By Guy Aimé Eblotié, LCI** (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)



Synod Continental Stage comes to conclusion

The broad-based consultation of the People of God around the world has officially finished its “continental stage,” consisting of a time of listening, dialogue, and discernment among the Churches of the same geographical area. This process came after the “Local Stage” of diocesan and national meetings. Both experiences represent a new style of dialogue, engagement, and involvement of the faithful presented by this synodal process.

Listening and discernment

Seven continental assemblies have taken place, marking a unique process of listening and discernment on a continental level. All looked at the key question at the centre of the synodal process, how the “walking together” that enables the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accord with its mission can be achieved today at all levels, from local to universal.

Various levels of Church involvement assisted the process, following the principle of subsidiarity. Local organising committees helped prepare and bring to fruition the continental assemblies with the onsite accompaniment and presence of heads of the Vatican’s General Secretariat of the Synod or the General Rapporteur of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. This presence has served as a sign of the closeness and desire of the Holy See to listen to the local Churches.

Open discussions

The seven continental assemblies took place over February and March 2023, bringing together members at all levels of the Church: bishops, priests, consecrated men and women,

The second stage of the synodal process, the worldwide Continental Stage, has come to a conclusion, but dialogue with the People of God continues. The General Secretariat of the Synod elaborated on the process in a statement to mark the final day of the Continental Stage, March 31, 2023.

and the laity. They discussed and responded to three key synod questions in the continental stage document. The questions regarded what topics in the document resonated most with them, and the others to identify areas of tension and priorities.

The General Secretariat of the Synod noted with satisfaction that participants in the various continental assemblies all found areas they could relate to in the document, as well as paths forward for the Church, despite the wide-ranging ecclesial and cultural differences and diversity of perspectives.

The fruit of these discussions features in the Final Document that each Assembly produced and that will contribute to the work of the first session of the Synod of Bishops, which is set for October 4-29, 2023.

Time of grace

The Synod General Secretariat in its statement noted how all the assemblies have marked a time of grace for the Church, reflecting a great desire for renewal by walking together in unity with Christ. The continental process brought out the deep joy and love of so many faithful

for their Church, the People of God, despite its shortcomings and weaknesses, as well as the importance of listening as an instrument and ongoing dynamic of ecclesial life. The assemblies also confirmed the method of “spiritual conversation” as a way to foster authentic listening and community discernment to arrive at ecclesial consensus.

Implementing synodal reforms

In conclusion, the Synod General Secretariat in its release expressed its heartfelt gratitude to all those who made this process happen and bear fruit. It also notes how this consultation will continue, focusing now on implementing the “synodal reforms” in the daily life of the local Church, with the awareness that much of what has been discussed and identified so far at the local level does not require the discernment of the universal Church or the intervention of the Magisterium of Peter. — *Vatican News*



Continental Synodal Assembly of the Churches of Africa from March 1 to 6, 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (Vatican Media)

Sr Nathalie Becquart: ‘Yes, yes, I will be voting’

NEW YORK: Sr Nathalie Becquart (*pic*), under-secretary of the Vatican’s General Secretariat of the Synod, says she will vote during the October Synod of Bishops on synodality, echoing recent comments by Pope Francis that everyone attending the synod as a member will be able to vote — both men and women.



“Yes, yes, I will be voting,” Becquart said in an interview with *Global Sisters Report* on March 28, prior to delivering a lecture in Manhattan sponsored by Fordham University’s Centre on Religion and Culture.

Becquart, a French Xavière sister, said it is too soon to say who the other members of the synod will be, but it is possible that other sisters might be voting members.

“From the beginning, we’ve had women involved in the synodal process,” she said, adding that it has “been important to have women involved at all levels” in preparing for the synod.

“You can’t listen to all of the people of God if you don’t listen to women and sisters”

Pope Francis’ February 2021 landmark appointment of Becquart as one of the undersecretaries of the General Secretariat of the Synod meant she would be automatically entitled to vote in the assembly, planned for this year and 2024.

Bishops and members of male religious orders have traditionally been the only ones to vote in synods, though women have participated. However, in a recent interview, the Pope told the Argentine newspaper *La Nación*, “Everyone who participates in the synod will vote. Those who are guests or observers will

not vote.”

Anyone who is a member “has the right to vote. Whether male or female,” he added. “Everyone, everyone. That word everyone for me is key.”

Becquart downplayed attention to her role, noting she serves the synodal process and it is “not to say what is this or that” — meaning she is not in a position to address the specifics of the synod makeup.

She said the entire synodal process has been “to listen to each other and discern the Holy Spirit,” adding that sisters have been in the forefront of embracing a new synodal-like leadership model that places importance on listening, communal discernment and promoting “servant leadership”.

Becquart said it would be difficult not to address the overall issue of “rethinking women’s participation” at the synod, including the issue of women deacons and the ordination of women as priests.

The theme is highlighted in the *Working Document for the Continental Stage*, a 45-page pre-synod synthesis document listing a number of the major themes from listening sessions held with millions of Catholics across the globe during 2022.

Earlier this year, continental synodal meetings took place to review the synthesis document in light of each continent’s needs and priorities. A final report from each continent must be submitted to the Vatican by the end of March. That final document will form the basis for the synod’s working document, known as the *instrumentum laboris*, which will guide the next stage in Rome and will be completed in June.

Becquart said the synodal consultation shows there is not one single way to respond to the call for rethinking women’s participation in

the Church. She said women’s ordination is a more pressing concern in the West and global North than in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, where Catholics say day-to-day discrimination against women is more pressing.

During the interview, Becquart quoted from the continental stage document, noting that “a critical and urgent area ... concerns the role of women and their vocation, rooted in our common baptismal dignity, to participate fully in the life of the Church. A growing awareness and sensitivity towards this issue is registered all over the world.”

The report also said: “From all continents comes an appeal for Catholic women to be valued, first and foremost, as baptised and equal members of the People of God. There is almost unanimous affirmation that women love the Church deeply, but many feel sadness because their lives are often not well understood, and their contributions and charisms not always valued.”

Becquart has been, perhaps, the most public symbol of the synodal process — something that David Gibson, director of the Centre on Religion and Culture, noted in his introduction to Becquart’s Fordham lecture, *Women and Youth: The Driving Force of Synodality*.

Gibson said that while *The New York Times* described Becquart as “the nun reshaping the role of women inside the Vatican” because of her landmark appointment, he believes an equally deserved accolade is her role as “global representative of synodality”.

In her lecture, Becquart noted that a synodal Church is a “listening Church” and that the synodal process is meant to continue the work of the Second Vatican Council, which was about “the people of God journeying in history and discerning the signs of the times”.

Yet discernment is nothing new in Church

history, she said.

“Exercising discernment is at the heart of synodal processes and events,” she said. “That is the way it has always been in the synodal life of the Church.”

The task now, she said, is becoming a synodal Church, which means “listening to and involving young people and women.”

Becquart said young people and women are “change-makers in society,” but both groups face challenges in the Church: Women continue to suffer a lack of recognition and affirmation in the Church, and young people feel they need better formation and communication with the Church.

“We can look for more inclusive and creative ways to discover and nurture their spirituality,” she said.

The 2018 Synod of Bishops on youth taught the Church that young people want to be heard, which Becquart said prompted the need for listening. Young people also want to be protagonists, which means they seek greater participation in the Church, but they also need guidance, which means they need accompaniment.

“Young people are a gift,” she said. “They can wake up the world. They can rejuvenate the Church.”

During a short question-and-answer period, Becquart fielded several questions centred on the difficulty of changing a highly hierarchical, male-dominated institution like the Catholic Church.

“We need to face the tension. That is what we’re learning,” she replied, adding that she felt the synodal process will yield fruitful results.

“It’s a long process of ups and downs,” she said. “It’s a change of mindset. It takes time.”

— *By Chris Herlinger, GSR/Christopher White, NCR*

When was the last time you spoke about Jesus to others?

When someone gets married, we can be sure the topic of conversation with others for the subsequent weeks will be on their marriage, how they met, and everything about each other. When a mother delivers her newborn baby, her pride in her baby will overwhelm all topic of conversation for the next few weeks, if not months. Anyone meeting this mother will surely coo over the baby, listen to the mother's stories and share her joy. All these are natural and expected when one is filled with joy and happiness.

How is it then that in our daily conversation, we seldom, or never, talk about Jesus to others? In church, we pray to Jesus, the Son of God, Lord of Lords, Almighty, King of Kings, Precious God, and many other nouns and adjectives. Yet, in our everyday conversation with others, when was the last time you ever spoke about Jesus or His life?

When I attended my first Alpha course in an Anglican church in Petaling Jaya, I was initially sceptical of what I thought I had already known for years. I was born into a Catholic family, educated for 11 years in a Catholic school, taught by the foreign Catholic missionary religious brothers, and received all my sacraments in church. Boy, was I in for a surprise!

Sometime in 2003, the late Fr John Gnana-piragasam put together a team of eight to ten Catholic laypersons (myself included), and invited us to participate in the Anglican church's Alpha course. We were told to be open-minded and participate wholeheartedly, rather than attend as an observer. After experiencing for ourselves the "power" of Jesus in the Alpha course, Fr John shared with us his plans to introduce Alpha into the Catholic Church in Malaysia. We became his pioneering team and set out to launch the course as a form of re-evangelisation programme for Catholics. The original Alpha course is a programme for evangelisation of non-Christians.

The following year, on the weekend of Sep-



REMINISCING CHURCH

Richard Chia

tember 4-5, 2004, the first Alpha course in the Catholic Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur was scheduled, followed with a second weekend on Sept 18-19, 2004. This course was really not the Alpha course in its entirety but rather, an accelerated version where the Alpha Introduction Dinner, the 10-week session and the Holy Spirit weekend were compressed into two 48 hours' weekend. We called it the Alpha Pilot Run.

For the two weekends, a total of 170 plus people signed up, with close to 100 plus actually completing the two weekends. In short, more than 100 plus of us experienced an encounter with Jesus in the Alpha course. Of course, each had his or her own response to this encounter. For some, it was simply a good experience. For others, it was just nice and refreshing. For yet others, it was simply "OK-lah". For a sizable few, it was joy and full of non-stop speaking about the experience.

In subsequent weeks, during follow-up sessions, I witnessed first-hand some "transformed" (for lack of a better word) people, bursting with joy, sharing their excitement and exhilaration when they went back to work or at home, how they found themselves talking non-stop about Jesus in their life. It felt like they were young again, just newly married or had just delivered their first-born child. The sheer joy and happiness from their words and faces was infectious, made you wonder what they were taking or what they experienced.

It wasn't as if those persons had suddenly experienced a bolt of lightning, or were slain by the Holy Spirit (as how many in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal or Life in the Spirit

Seminar experience). When asked to explain, many simply said they were unable to explain or describe. It was just joy, calm and peace mostly. Something I myself also experienced, but perhaps did not express outwardly as how many did at the sharing sessions later.

On Oct 16, 2004, an Alpha Team Trainers course was held where a little more than 80 plus people who had attended the two weekends showed up. These people were told specifically that they would become the initial core team that would return to their parishes (churches and chapels in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur) to facilitate and start the Alpha course.

Typical of the Catholic Church, the launch of the Alpha Course was done big-time, in many parishes almost simultaneously. During the first wave, running from November 2004 until Sept 2005, a total of 17 venues were selected to run the 10-week course. These venues covered five districts in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, including Kajang, Seremban, Klang and even Kuantan. The Chinese-language Apostolate also started their Alpha course with great success, and the Alpha Tamil team was also built. For the first wave, an estimated 2,264 attended the introductory session, and approximately 1,578 attended the weekend/day away.

By then, other dioceses in Malaysia had gotten wind of the course and wanted in. We received invitations to help launch the Alpha course in Penang Diocese and in the Archdiocese of Kuching. A similar two-weekend pilot run were conducted in Kuching on June 2005, and in Ipoh on November 2005, attended by participants from Taiping and Penang.

By 2006, the Alpha course in the Catholic Church had attracted the attention of the bishops and archbishops in the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) — thanks to the dedicated efforts of Caroline Soon, my dear friend — we were invited to go international. The KL Catholic Alpha Advisory Team

was setup and was invited by many bishops' conferences to help launch the course in their respective countries. It was at this juncture that I decided to step off, as I was unable to commit to travel and be away from my corporate job so often. Many more people have stepped up since then.

Between 2007 and 2013, Alpha in the Catholic Context was sown in almost all the archdioceses in Malaysia, was conducted in other languages for youths, campus students, workplace, and had reached as far as Myanmar, Philippines, Sydney Australia, India, Kenya, Singapore, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ghana and more. (information extracted from the Alpha in the Catholic Context 10th year anniversary book *Journey Without End, begins with a single step*, published in 2013). The KL Catholic Alpha Outreach Team networked with the Asia Pacific Alpha Catholic Teams and the Global Alpha Catholic teams, bringing Jesus in the Alpha course to a global audience. The journey continues, as aptly titled in their 10th year anniversary book.

This reminds me of the "I Found It" campaign that hit the streets of Kuala Lumpur in the 1970's, when posters, flyers and billboards were plastered on the roads, walls and street corners. People were talking and wondering what this "I Found It" message was about. When the revelation subsequently came that the "It" was in reference to Jesus Christ, and the campaign was probably initiated by some Christian groups, the authorities wasted no time in removing the posters.

But in the case of the Alpha course, the message of Jesus continues, as more Catholics fall in love with Jesus, or fall in love AGAIN with Jesus.

Richard Chia has been actively involved in Church since young. He held full-time corporate jobs while serving in ministries and groups at various church levels for the past four decades.

Protestant daughter introduces mother to Catholic Church

Kazuko Nabeshima was born 70 years ago in Nomozaki at the southern tip of the Nagasaki Peninsula, a town now part of Nagasaki City, but was "never religious" despite her peninsula housing many churches.

She left Nagasaki after graduating from school to take up a job and lived for more than 30 years without any contact with a church. The turning point came some six years ago when her only daughter Yumi, who lived nearby, decided to move with her family to Okinawa.

"I knew little about Okinawa...But even though I didn't know anything or have any connections there, I was excited about moving and I thought Okinawa was a good place."

And, Yumi welcomed Nabeshima's "desire to be part of her family."

After the move, Yumi unexpectedly became a Protestant Christian and quit her job as a medical nurse to involve herself in church activities on weekends and holidays.

"I felt isolated as I couldn't talk to my daughter. I worried if it was alright to be so obsessed with religion," Nabeshima said.

However, it prompted Nabeshima to find out about the religion Yumi was "so obsessed with" and attended a service at Yumi's church.

Yumi's church was far from home and Nabeshima wanted to try a different church. Yumi recommended the Catholic church close to their apartment in the town of Nago in Okinawa.



Kazuko Nabeshima (left) poses for a photograph with Fr Michael Nguyen Xuan Vinh (centre) and her sponsor Hatsuko Ikema (right) (UCA News Photo/Junko Ito)

For almost a year and a half, Nabeshima visited the Nago church.

She found two parishioners who particularly welcomed her. "They put me at ease with their look. They welcomed me without treating me as an outsider."

When Nabeshima attended Sunday Mass, she felt "the church is a good place."

Since then, Nabeshima has attended Sunday Mass every week.

She eventually began to attend the daily Mass celebrated by Fr Michael Nguyen Xuan Vinh, who came to the Nago church in June 2022.

"At Mass, it's like coming into direct contact with God through the priest, and I feel heaven. My body is getting older and older, and I can't believe that I pray like this. Is this what you call

a blessing from God?"

Nabeshima said she felt "blessed" to have met Hatsuko Ikema, who always sat next to her until she got used to the Mass.

Ikema's "calming warmth" prompted Nabeshima to ask her to be her baptismal sponsor.

"There are many things I don't know, but I think the Bible is wonderful. When I was taught that Jesus taught us how to pray by saying, 'Pray like this, "Our Father in heaven..." I especially envied the people who lived with Jesus at that time."

Nabeshima said she is the "type of person who gets nervous, and at work, I always wore a sort of emotional armour."

However, through warm encounters at church, "blood circulated again into my hard-

ened head and heart," and she felt she was being brought back to life, Nabeshima said.

Nabeshima said she was a sickly child and her older sister, who died of lung cancer seven years ago, took care of her from a young age. She had a difficult childhood, having an alcoholic father and did not get along well with her mother, she said.

"I always neglected my father, and even after he died, the only time I would remember him was when I made traditional grave visits, but now I pray every day that my parents will be accepted by God."

"I feel Jesus saved me from my sins and the emotional wounds from childhood which made me live separate from others and condemn others in my heart."

A parishioner suggested Nabeshima take the same baptismal name as her sponsor Hatsuko Ikema, which is Maria Goretti. The saint died after forgiving the man who stabbed her.

Nabeshima received the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil at the Nago church on April 8.

At dinner with Yumi and her grandson, the mother, and daughter recite different prayers. "My grandson, who is in high school, fidgets," she said.

Nabeshima is happy that she and her daughter are following in Jesus' footsteps while walking their separate paths. — **By Junko Ito, ucanews.com**

Ruminations

The Gaze of Mary

The most profound and transformative thing I have ever encountered is Mary's Gaze; it has eternally transformed my life for the better, and Mary has connected me to her Son, Jesus.

It is difficult for me to explain what the 'Gaze of Mary' means; for me, the Gaze of Mary represents the meeting of the divine and human realms and the connection between salvation history and personal experience.

Every day and moment, Mary's Gaze welcomes and encourages me to develop a personal relationship with Jesus and to explore and accept the wonder of God's love. For me, the Gaze of Mary is the gateway representing and serving as the connection between the transcendent and the earthly; Mary connects a miserable person like myself to the divine, her Son Jesus.

The Gaze of Mary is a living, moving, dynamic, here-and-now symbol, an experience that helps me connect with the history of redemption and make it a part of my everyday life. The Gaze of Mary has influenced every area of my life, and there is not a single aspect of my life that it has not touched, transformed for the better, and presented with God's mercy.

Mary's Gaze represents grace, which transforms and elevates my life and my relationship with God, the source of my strength and hope. As a marginalised, disabled person who has endured forced migration and persecution, I have experienced significant challenges and traumas, and giving up hope has always been the most convenient option. Mary's Gaze upon her Son is a sign of her compassionate love and care for Him, and it reminded me that she has the same Gaze on me and that her unshakable trust in God and trust in His plan, even in the face of adversity, are the sources of my hope and resilience, which she invited and encouraged and empowered me to do. My entire existence is an act of God's grace, and I am a living, breathing example of her meditation.

Mary represents the promise and ultimate triumph of God's love, and her Gaze is a source of courage and consolation for me while I am enduring hardship or attempting to achieve a goal. Mary's Gaze taught and encouraged me to learn from her complete submission to God's plan, and although I have no potential to attain her standard, she remains my inspiration, and I continue to strive to meet it.

I have learnt over the past decade that suffering is an integral part of the spiritual path and has the potential to cultivate humility, detachment, and love. I view the suffering I have endured over the past decade as a means of soul purification that has brought me closer to God.

I learned to embrace suffering as part of God's plan and to submit to His will, even when my life was in danger, and this submission led to a deeper connection with God and a greater awareness of His love, and it is always the Gaze of Mary that kept me afloat and kept me going.

In my suffering, when I went hungry, had nothing to wear in the cold, had no house, and was afraid for my life, I was able to comprehend the suffering as a rare form of a sacrament that connected me to God. I did not always view suffering as a sacrament, but the Gaze of Mary gave me the clarity and understanding to stop viewing suffering as a way for God to punish me and instead see it as a way to deepen my union with Him. This has kept me moving on the path to a deeper union with Him and has kept me moving on the path to true joy.

The Gaze of Mary has left a profound impact on my soul. I have found an indescribable connection to Jesus through her Gaze, and it has allowed me to experience the wonder of God's love in a profoundly personal way. Mary's compassionate love and steadfast faith have been a beacon of hope and strength for me in the face of adversity and hardship. I have come to understand suffering as a sacred path to a closer union with God and have learned to surrender to His will. The power of Mary's Gaze has been a constant source of comfort and resilience, lifting me up even in the darkest of moments.

This experience has left an indelible mark on my heart, reminding me of the limitless love and strength available through a relationship with Jesus and the Catholic Church. The Gaze of Mary will always hold a special place in my heart, guiding my faith journey and transforming me with each passing day. I am eternally grateful for the blessings that have come from embracing Mary's Gaze, and I pray that it may touch others in the same profound way it has touched me.



William Gomes is a former parishioner of Church of the Holy Cross in Luxmibazar, Dhaka, Bangladesh. He currently resides in the United Kingdom.

Priest & matchmaker

Fr Fernando Cuevas is a priest from the Spanish island of Ibiza who has been working in Valencia for years. It was there, 14 years ago, where he began his role as matchmaker, when a young university student told him about his difficulties in finding a girlfriend.

Fr Fernando put him in contact with a girl who shared his values and beliefs. They dated for five months, and then Fr Fernando himself officiated their wedding.

A form of service

This was the first couple that Fr Fernando brought to the altar. But today, 280 couples have already gotten married, thanks to his online matchmaking work. And the best thing is that none of them have separated or divorced!

The latest couple to set their wedding date are Miguel and Xiomara.

Beyond the surprising numbers or the anecdotal and amusing aspects of the case, Fr Fernando sees the priesthood as a service, and for him this work is one more service to the Church, which is in great need of good Christian marriages.

So, in the little free time he has left after fulfilling his pastoral duties – he belongs to Opus Dei and is the chaplain of several schools – he devotes himself to sorting and classifying the almost 50 applications he receives every day through the WhatsApp messaging app.

He admits that he enjoys it, but he also sees that there's a lot of demand and being able to help makes him satisfied. "Dedicating one minute to this can change the lives of those people who have contacted me by phone," he says.

It's through this medium that he receives the requests. If someone wants to find a possible spouse, they simply have to send him a message through WhatsApp and ask for help. After a few hours, the person will receive this text message on his cell phone:

"Hi. Welcome to the club. I'm beginning to pray for you and the man or woman that the Lord has in store for you."

Key questions

Next, they receive questions they have to answer: their name and surname, age and place of birth, height, education, current job, city of residence, willingness to meet someone in another city (and even to move there if in the end they hit it off), family, hobbies, virtues, shortcomings, and what they're looking for in a potential spouse.

All the questions are important, but for Fr Fernando, the key question is the degree of commitment that the people have with the Church and to which movement they belong. It's not enough for them to "go to Mass only on Sundays."

Finding the "needle in the haystack"

After sending Fr Fernando the completed form with all the data and a couple of photographs, the candidates wait patiently for the answer, since he has to find the most suitable match for each person within the "catalogue" of data. It's like finding a needle in a haystack.

Once the possible matches have been found, Fr Fernando sends the files



Miguel and Xiomara, now engaged, with Fr Fernando. (Fernando Cuevas Raposo photo)

to the ones that each person approves – without the last names.

On some occasions, group meetings or other activities are organised, such as get-togethers, volunteer activities, conferences, or film forums to encourage them to get to know each other.

Of course, Fr Fernando invites to these meetings only the candidates he thinks are suitable for each other so that the "spark" between them may arise.

Marriage is a vocation to holiness

After so many years as a priest and getting to know so many people, Fr Fernando has realised that in general, the biggest problem now is that we have to learn to love. He comments that "people tend to be selfish, childish and immature. Many are in love with themselves and don't think about others."

According to him, "loving a person means needing them, thinking that we cannot live without them. Couples that don't fall in love like that cannot get married." They must be united by the conviction that marriage is a vocation to holiness of the highest degree.

Those who unite in marriage should understand clearly and confidently that their union "is not a relationship of two, but of three, because the Lord is with them."

The magical cocktail

On his question sheet there's a section dedicated to "hobbies," but he knows that what unites most — more than music, sports or a love of reading — is having shared values and beliefs.

He also points out that "what really unites is having equal parts of good humour to put things in perspective and maturity to forgive and forget. That cocktail is magical. If the two of them are really discerning whom they want to share their lives with, talk a lot about the issues that matter, and feel physically attracted to each other, whether or not they agree on their love of tennis or paddle ball is very secondary."

No obstacle can stand in their way if they truly believe that what they want is to serve one another, to make the other person happy — not getting married only to make themselves happy.

Growing demand

Fr Fernando recognises that the demand for his services is growing at full speed, especially among people in

their 30s, as well as people in their 40s and older.

He receives submissions from all over the world, including Australia. Vicente Huerta, a fellow priest who also lives in Valencia, takes charge of cases from Latin America and the rest of the world.

In addition, many of his priest friends who live in other places send him information of people they know so that Fr Fernando can match them.

Even from Jerusalem

Since his formula is successful, they've even written to him from the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Diocese of Nazareth so that he could send them an example of the questionnaire and share his experiences.

In those places "they're concerned, that the young Catholics in their dioceses are very few and geographically dispersed and therefore don't know each other. They're very interested in implementing this system because pious marriages will, in principle, produce children who are firm in the faith and who are the future of the Church."

People have written to him from other very distant and different dioceses with the same objective.

Sponsoring a girl from Nicaragua

Of course, he doesn't charge anything for this service. It's free of charge. But if a couple ends up getting married, Fr Fernando proposes that they sponsor — if they want — a girl from Nicaragua for \$200 (RM880) a year. "When the Lord has changed your life, in gratitude you'll change it for that girl because she'll be able to go to school," he adds at the end of the form he sends to the candidates.

He explains why he does it: "I went many summers with doctors and catechists to do volunteer work in the jungle of this beautiful Central American country. One day in July 2006, during a Mass at the foot of the Momotombo volcano, I promised those families that I would provide the means to help them pay for school for their girls who are very underprivileged."

So since couples who have met through him want to thank him in some way, he came up with this way of giving back for all the Lord does and wants to do. — **By Merche Crespo, Aleteia**

“Render unto Caesar”

Christianity and Malaysian politics have always had an interesting relationship. While on the one hand it is used to showcase tolerance and acceptance, especially when dealing with foreign, Christocentric countries, on the other, it is used as a bogeyman of sorts, casting shadows of aspersions behind both the Church and its members — often painting Christians as having some nefarious agenda, as an enemy of Islam, and by extension, our predominantly Muslim Government and population.

Some readers from the 90s would remember how a mere Orang Asal headgear worn by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah in a public photo, that had some semblance of a cross, was used with great effect against him in an internal UMNO election. In recent years, we have seen Christianity used on-and-off by politicians to frighten the electorate against voting any party deemed ‘sympathetic’ to Christian causes, making many things that were previously deemed acceptable, like joint *iftar* sessions, crosses in Christian schools, and casual visits to each other’s places of worship, as anathema and a now ‘sensitive’ topic.

PAS, in particular, has been, in recent years, rather vocal about this. In the past year, almost a dozen statements have been issued by the party and its leaders on Christians and Christianity. Its president, Haji Abdul Hadi Awang, has, in the past, accused Christians of practising a caste system, that Christian missionaries targeted the poor communities in Borneo and baited them with cash and aid. They issued statements in May last year, and most recently in March, criticising their rival PKR’s approach to pol-



MAKING SENSE

Emmanuel Joseph

itics. In both statements, interestingly, the PAS leader called PKR’s approach to politics “Christian”, quoting the Bible to justify it — specifically Matthew 22:21, “Render unto Caesar”, alluding to the modern use of the quote, which is to separate Church and State.

Contextually, in PAS’ interpretation of Islam, religion and administration go hand-in-glove, and cannot be separated from each other.

PAS has not always been antagonistic to Christians. Indeed, there are times they’ve even been our ally. At the height of the case where this publication was involved in, PAS stood by their statement that Christians too could use the word (though they also urged the Government to appeal the case at a later stage). There are also anecdotes about how the late Tok Guru Nik Aziz offered to repair a church in Kota Bharu after some teenagers vandalised it, and so on. “PAS for all” — the slogan it went by in 2008 till 2013, showcased a more inclusive PAS, that seems to have since been replaced with a more nationalistic, conservative tone. This tone is replicated within the coalition and, to a large extent, have permeated, even dominated, Malaysian politics, especially the past General Elections.

How then should Catholics respond, when

an organisation visits them, days after appearing to support a call for caution when Muslims visit Christian places of worship? With open arms, untiring explanations, and Christian love, especially in the season of Lent and Ramadan?

As ideal as that may sound, there are also practical aspects to being nice to people who we may believe not to have our best interests at heart.

To be combative or defensive about accusations levelled against us, as they usually are — Bibles in hotels being a ‘new missionary tactic’ (when they have been around longer than hot water), First Holy communicants being mistaken as converted children and so on, would only lead to further counter-arguments and the cycle continues.

If we read the whole of Matthew 22, Jesus precedes the lesson on Caesar with the parable of the wedding feast, where a king was outraged for those who were invited to his son’s wedding banquet, but elected to not come, and he opened the doors of the feast to everyone.

The Pharisees set out the question on taxes after this lesson. Even when they could not find any actual flaw with Jesus’ answer and, finding out that the Sadducees also failed to stump Him, they set out three more times in the same passage, to test Jesus.

Sometimes, we too are tested to respond angrily, or shrug off things as hypocritical, as surely some provocative ideas have to come from a place of self-interest and a ‘trap’, just like the ones laid out in the Bible for Jesus.

But they could also come from a place of ignorance or fear.

Or they could come from a position of fear of the known, of what possibilities could happen when people refuse to fear something they now understand was something they needn’t have been bothered about in the first place.

The idea of dialogue is to improve communication, not only when it is convenient to do so. Real breakthrough happens when both parties reach new consensus, or sometimes even more meaningfully, re-establish fraught ties, even when they were severed knowingly, or at a calculated cost.

Perhaps also we could take comfort in the wisdom of our rulers who, despite our many so-called community leaders making it difficult to build bridges and engage in dialogue between faiths and communities, generously reach beyond with meaningful gestures, like wishing us openly on occasions like Easter and Christmas or visiting Thaipusam processions, undoubtedly driving home the message of the importance to maintain inter-community relations.

Following Jesus’ lead, led by our own leaders, perhaps we too could continue to answer with patience and wisdom, that someday, the fault can no longer be found, the questions stop and true dialogue can begin.

Wishing all *HERALD* readers, a Blessed Easter.

● Emmanuel Joseph oversees IT as his 9-5 job and from 5-9, he serves a few NGOs, think tanks and volunteer groups. He serves as an advisor for Projek Dialog and is a Fellow with the Institute of Research and Development of Policy.



... meanwhile

Joanne Lim

Faith can sometimes be an irony; wouldn’t you agree? To live forever, we have to die to ourselves. To get even with someone we have to offer the other cheek. Our God is all powerful but we each have pretty big crosses to bear. In a gist, embracing Christianity may sound easy for some but it can get tiresomely difficult. Worse still may be the Catholic guilt that is in our DNA.

All through Holy Week and Easter, many around me were still stuck in the shadow of death, prisoners of their own guilt, slaves to sin. Refusing to rise and walk again, we can feel alone, we drown ourselves in sorrow, we fear the unknown, and we condemn ourselves as being unworthy.

Often I fear that my sins are not forgiven — the Catholic guilt in me brings me back to when I was a child and stole a pretty-looking straw hat from a supermarket; when I was 22 and told a lie so I wouldn’t need to take the blame when a friend was caught cheating. What about the gossip club I was a part of in my 30s which led to damaged reputations? As I age now, my sins continue to weigh me down — they may be different in terms of context, perhaps even more severe in nature(!), but they often overshadow my faith and I find myself questioning why it’s sometimes so difficult to be Catholic!

Darkness over light...where’s the freedom and the light in me, in you? **Who turned the lights out? Matthew 4:16 states: The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light.** Ah, if only I

Who turned out the lights?



can catch a glimpse of that light.

There’s a song I heard that summarises this life-giving phenomenon. It goes, ‘take your candle, run to the darkness’. Indeed, the Easter promise isn’t just for ourselves. How often do we see a fellow brother or sister refusing to step out into the light, or just doesn’t know how to? How often do we put others into the darkness and shut the door on them due to greed, envy, or worse still, because we do not think they warrant the light.

Our *holier than thou* personas become the stone which we roll over someone else’s tomb — a friend who chose abortion over shame, a colleague who is contemplating divorce after years of being in an abusive marriage, a neighbour who was duped by scammers and now struggles to find a job. How quick are we to utter “serves you right”, “I would never do that”, “see, even God disapproves of him hence his suffering.” Really? ...who are we to judge? Who are we to cast the first or the last stone? Instead of embracing the freedom and salvation that comes from Easter, we bind ourselves, and in turn bind others, in this

vicious cycle of judgement and guilt.

What if our salvation depends on the salvation of others? And what if the salvation of others depends on us allowing God to enter into our lives to save us? Do we really see light in our own darkness or are we living beneath yet another mask, *thinking* our light shines for others? Is our light only shining for the ones who ‘love us’, while for the ones who ‘love us not’, they deserve or inherit our wrath of darkness?

Our holiness or outward show matter most — “others can wait for the next bus; I am getting saved; you wait in line, your turn may come; I am holy and pleasing to God, you have a lot to work on.”

And yet there it is — the light is within us...it was never snuffed out from the moment we received the Light of Christ at our baptism, and every single time we pray the Creed, participate in the Eucharistic celebration, read and reflect on the Scriptures, and receive Him at Holy Communion. Even so, how easy it is to choose death over being alive! We find it so difficult to trust that there is nothing too big for God to handle. HE is unfathomable, regardless

of how many times we have read the narrative of the Passion of Christ, we find it hard to grapple with the truth — that He died to forgive our sins and to claim us as His own.

The light we carry requires us to step out of the tomb, and as we step out, we are called to joyfully, confidently, humbly, go forth to light the lives of others around us. *‘Rejoice’, St Paul says....and again I say ‘Rejoice’!* Just like those in the Bible who were raised from the dead — mourning turned into praise, celebration, and thanksgiving — you just can’t keep Christ’s light to yourself. Its infectious. There’s no false antidote for this LIGHT.

...meanwhile, who turned out the lights? A sense of darkness seems to hover around the corridors of life in this new age. Yet, we take heart, as St Augustine says, we are an Easter People — our faith in Jesus (in His Crucifixion and Resurrection) must be lived by imitating Him in daily life through our thought, word, and deed. Let our spontaneous expressions of joy and thanksgiving come from this Faith, so that it grows through unselfish love to ignite the lives of others. The Lord of Light prods us onward, “take heart, in this life there will be trouble, but I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Sometimes the hardest decisions you can make as a Christian is choosing between darkness and light, the crown and the cross, life and death. May The Divine Mercy guide each and every one in our journey in His eternal and everlasting Light.

“Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light”. John 12:36

● Professor Joanne Lim shares the faith in Catechism and music in Church. She is Deputy Dean and lectures on media and society at the University of Nottingham Malaysia.



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Easter light

The earth was dark twice. Once, at the original creation before God first created light. But later, there was an even deeper darkness — on Good Friday, between the sixth and ninth hour, when we were crucifying God, and as Jesus, dying on the cross cried out, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me!” Utter darkness. In response to that, God created the most staggering light of all — the Resurrection.

It is interesting to look at how Scripture describes the creation of original light. The Bible opens with these words: “In the beginning God created heaven and earth. Now the earth was a formless void and God breathed over the waters. God said, ‘Let there be light’ and there was light.” A combination of God’s breath and God’s word produced the first light. The ancients identified God’s presence very much with light. For them, God was the antithesis of all darkness and, indeed, the symbol of God’s fidelity was the rainbow, namely, refracted light, light broken open to reveal its spectacular inner beauty.

But it got dark a second time! The Gospels tell us that as Jesus hung on the cross, though it was midday, darkness beset the whole land for three hours. We don’t know exactly what occurred here historically. Was the entire earth plunged into darkness? Perhaps. After all, the earth was cru-

cifying God, and God is light! Irrespective of how literally or not we take this, what happened on Good Friday triggered a different kind of darkness, a moral one — the darkness of godlessness, hatred, paranoia, fear, misguided religion, cruelty, idolatry, ideology, and violence. This is the most blinding darkness of all.

What was God’s response? God’s response to the darkness of Good Friday was to say a second time, *Let there be light!* The Resurrection of Jesus is that new light, one which, at the end of the day, eclipses all other lights.

It is interesting to compare how Scripture describes God creating the new light of the Resurrection with how God created the original light at the origins of creation. The *Gospel of John* has a wonderfully revealing passage that describes Jesus’ first appearance to the whole community after His resurrection. It tells us that on the evening of Easter Sunday, the disciples (representing here the Church) were gathered in a room with the doors locked because of fear. Jesus comes to them, passing right through their locked doors, and stands in the middle of their huddled, fearful circle and says to them, “Peace be with you!” And after saying this, He breathes on them and says: “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

Note the parallels to the original creation story. For the writer of John’s Gos-

pel, this huddling in fear behind locked doors is the darkness of Good Friday, a moral “formless void”. And Jesus brings light to that darkness in the same way light was brought to the original creation, through God’s Word and God’s Breath. Jesus’ words, “Peace be with you!” are the resurrected Jesus’ way of saying, “Let there be light!” Then, just as at the original creation, God’s breath begins to order the physical chaos, Jesus’ breath, the Holy Spirit, begins to order the moral chaos, continually turning darkness into light — hatred into love, bitterness into graciousness, fear into trust, false religion into true worship, ideology into truth, and vengeance into forgiveness.

The staggering new light that Jesus brings into our world in the Resurrection is also one of the things that our Christian creed refers to in its stunning phrase that, in the darkness of Good Friday, Jesus “*descended into hell*.” What’s meant by this? Into what hell did He descend? Simply put, the new light of the resurrection (unlike natural light that can be blocked out) can go through every locked door, every blocked entrance, every impenetrable cell, every circle of hatred, every suicidal depression, every paralyzing anger, every kind of darkness of the soul, and even through sin itself, and breathe out peace. This light can penetrate into hell itself.

Good Friday was bad long before it was good. We crucified God and plunged the world into darkness at midday. But God created light a second time, a light that cannot be extinguished even if we crucify God — and we have never really stopped doing that! Good Friday still happens every day. But, beyond wishful thinking and natural optimism, we live in hope because we now know God’s response to any moral darkness, God can generate, Resurrection, the creation of new light, life beyond death.

The renowned mystic Julian of Norwich coined the famous phrase: *In the end, all will be well, and all will be well, and every manner of being will be well.* To which Oscar Wilde added, *And if it isn’t well, then it is still not the end.* The resurrection of Jesus has brought a new light into the world, one that proclaims against all counter claims that light still triumphs over darkness, love over hatred, order over chaos, and heaven over hell.

● **Oblate Fr Ron Rolheiser**, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He writes a weekly column that is carried in over 90 newspapers around the world. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.

Biblical wisdom on how to age without becoming “old”

In the Western world, the culture of “disposability” and “profitability” leads us to believe that old age is a period of dependence and incapacity. A person’s value is determined by how well they perform in society. In contrast, biblical wisdom honours the elderly. While the world claims that old age is an enemy to be fought, the Bible reveals the opposite. Psalm 92:14 says of the righteous: “In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap.”

There are stereotypes of older people, some positive and others less so: some describe the elderly as complaining, domineering, and prone to criticism, making everyone want to avoid them. Others, on the other hand, appear as blessings to their family, their circle of friends, and their parish. What do they have that others do not? How can we grow old gracefully, according to God’s plan? The Bible includes texts and models of older people who are flourishing in their faith that show us some paths for flourishing with grace.

Believing firmly that our final destination is to be in heaven with God

What we believe about our final destination shapes our character and our daily existence. *Luke’s Gospel* highlights the 84-year-old prophetess Anna, who remained steadfast in her faith and did not leave the temple, “but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day.” (Lk 2:37). One can imagine that she prayed for herself, for others, for the coming of the Messiah, and for the salvation of Israel. She was sustained by this hope in the fulfilment of the promise (the coming of the Messiah) and by her confidence that she would be welcomed by God at the hour of her death.

Offering our weakness to God and believing His plan for our peace

The Bible presents us with several models of elderly people who are tested and suffer weakness. In the *Book of Ruth*, Naomi, whose name means “the sweet one,” has lost her husband and then her two sons, and asks to be called by a new name: “Mara,” that is to say “the bitter one, the afflicted one.” This shows how much she feels abandoned by God, and even condemned by Him. “I went away full, but the Lord brought me back empty; why call me Naomi when the Lord has dealt harshly with me, and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?” (Rt 1:21)

Naomi’s journey leads us to reflect on the meaning of old age. Youth brings us health, friends, possessions, offspring, and hope; old age, on the other hand, gradually takes away many of these things. We may feel empty, alone, and destitute, and we go through a thousand little deaths.

However, Naomi will make a choice of faith by taking the risk of a dangerous journey to her homeland. God will fill her again through Ruth, her daughter-in-law, who will marry Boaz, her “redeemer,” a prefiguring of Christ the Redeemer.

Naomi will triumph in her inner struggle. Like her, we are called during the time of old age not to give in to a narrow vision of life but to believe that God has “plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

By choosing day by day to renounce ourselves and all bitterness and regret, we surrender to God and place our trust in Him. He then makes fulfilment possible, for as the elderly and barren couple of Elizabeth and Zechariah experienced when they gave birth to the prophet John the Baptist, “nothing is impossible with God” (Lk 1:37).



The elderly meets for Bible Study Group. (Catholic Key photo/Kevin Kelly)

Providing support, consolation and wisdom to younger generations

The Old Testament repeatedly calls on the older generation to instruct the younger. Psalm 145:4 encourages each generation to tell the next how beautiful God’s works are. As Sharon W. Betters and Susan Hunt, authors of *Aging with Grace*, point out, “God never wastes a trial, a bereavement, or a journey in the wilderness. Sharing with others the lessons He teaches us personally is fulfilling.”

Old age lived with discernment and faith qualifies us to help younger generations discern the beauty and meaning of each chapter of their own story, even if it sometimes seems disjointed.

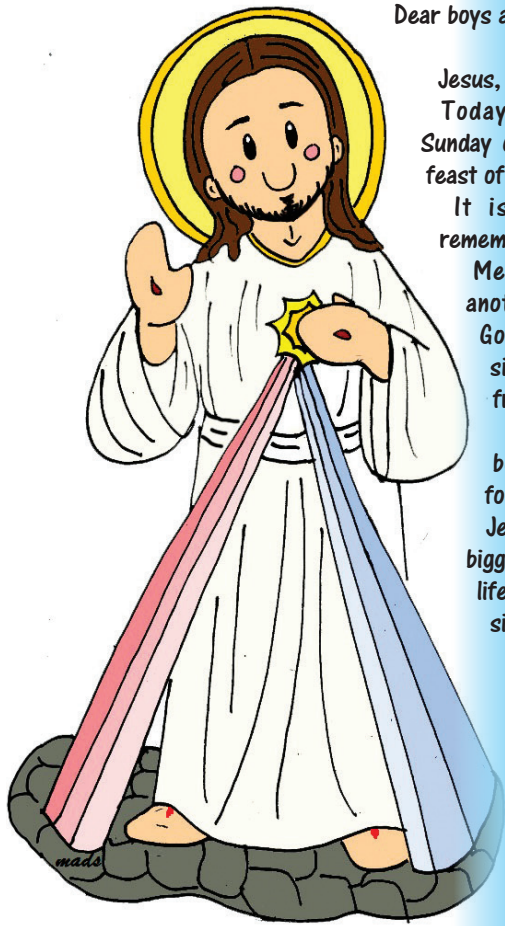
Thus, Anna the prophetess, at the time of the presentation of Jesus in the temple, had to console the Virgin Mary, who was upset by the prophecy of Simeon (Lk 2:35).

Simeon tells her that a sword will pierce her heart. One can imagine Anna’s compassion for Mary, and her words intended to strengthen the young virgin’s hope: she must certainly have reminded her that the Lord never abandoned the holy women of Israel, and that much less would He abandon the mother of His Son.

Like the prophetess Anna, like the good old man Simeon, or Zechariah and Elizabeth who hoped beyond hope, we can choose to live a fulfilling old age in grace and love of God and neighbour.

In the end, reflecting on the last stage of our existence before the great encounter of our life (finding ourselves face to face with Christ) means asking ourselves, “How do I want to live my journey to Heaven?” This also means living each moment of our brief existence more intensely. — **By Aliénor Strentz, Aleteia**

Little Catholics' Corner



Dear boys and girls,

Jesus, I Trust in you!

Today, besides being the second Sunday of Easter, we also celebrate the feast of the Divine Mercy.

It is the special day when we remember God's mercy.

Mercy is when a person treats another better than they deserve. God does not owe us anything, since everything we have comes from Him.

When we sin, we offend God, but because He is merciful, He forgives us when we are sorry.

Jesus' dying on the cross was the biggest act of mercy. He gave up His life so we could be forgiven of our sins and eventually go to Heaven!

Thank God today for all He has given you, especially giving up His life so you can be saved.

Here is an easy prayer you can say to ask God to be merciful to us: Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Have mercy on us!

Jesus, I trust in You!

Love, Auntie Gwen

Divine Mercy Sunday started when Our Lord appeared to Saint Faustina, a humble, Polish sister. During these visions, Jesus asked specifically that the Feast of Divine Mercy be established so that all people would turn to Our Lord and find refuge in him and in his endless mercy.

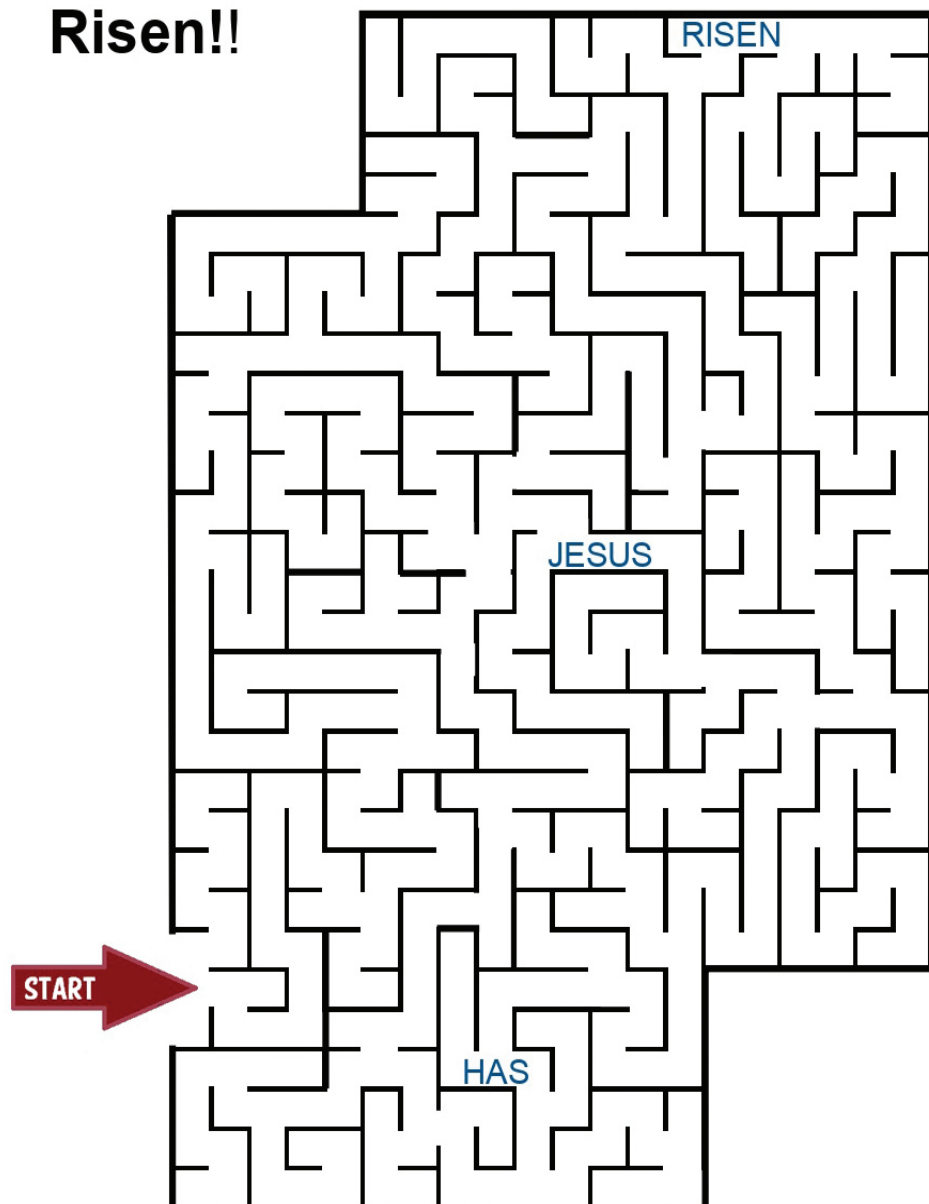


Let's Colour

Word Maze

Find your way from the start of the maze and connect the words from the answer phrase in their correct order.

Jesus Has Risen!!



Find each of the following Divine Mercy vocabulary words.

IMAGE
AWE
MERCY
GENUFLECT
SIGNATURE
CANONIZATION
VENERATE
SAINT
LAVISH
MOTHER
SUPERIOR
DIARY
POLAND
TRUST
SECRETARY
REVERENCE
NUN
DIVINE
GRACE
HUMBLE
PASSION
HOLY
VENERATION
CONVENT
CORPORAL
SACRIFICE
TABERNACLE
INSIGHTS
SHROUD
MYSTIC
PENANCE

E V E N E R A T E N A G E N U F L E C T T
U O R E M Y S A S N E T C N A T I C C E O
R D S S N O I T A R E N E V O E E S C V V
E N H S I V A L R T V D A U R U E N M S T
C A A D U O R H S I I N U E M N A H O E V
S L R C T E A A H A A O R L T N I E T C R
T O N R N R I E R L E I C N E A G P H R R
H P O U E G A Y V I I T I P E A E E E E S
G N I B N O E A T T Y A U T M R N O R T E
I E S C O A I R N C S S P I E R R O E A G
S E S M E A U E I I E I S S N A G E S R T
N I A L H S V T E C I N E I I V A E U Y P
I F P O T N S A L Y I O M A V T S C P N A
I T L O O Y C R E M V N B H I S M I E N M
R Y E C M A R N A L R A U S D G E F R A T
R A V C O R P O R A L C W T L T V I I E N
S R S U E T T E L C A N R E B A T R O Y S
S M R E I R L C E H U M B L E R C C R N I
N P H R I R E V E R E N C E I E C A R G W
V I S I G N A T U R E R E D I T B S N L U
N Y R N H D C E P E U E A A R A D U I O T

YOUTH

APRIL 16, 2023



People,
the planet
and our
ecological
conversion

MAY
7

United
World
Week
MAY 2023



Run4Unity eco-relay for peace

VATICAN: More than 200,000 teenagers, young people, families and communities from hundreds of cities around the globe are expected to join the “Run4Unity” on May 7, a worldwide relay race uniting them across ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds to build peace and a more ecological world.

The initiative — reports a press release — is co-sponsored by the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. It is led by the youth of the Focolare Movement, which launched the first “Run4Unity” in 2005 as part of their greater United World Week inspired by their founder, the late Chiara Lubich.

This year's edition will focus on the theme “People, Planet and Our Ecological Conversion”. Participants of all ages will give their contribution to promoting ecological awareness by exchanging the kilometres they run or the minutes of physical

exercise they do with the planting of trees.

“To ensure a healthy and livable future for our planet, we must all come together, across faith traditions, cultures, generations and sectors, and commit to concrete actions that safeguard the natural environment and care for the most vulnerable among us,” said John Mundell, of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and Director of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. “Young people are leading the way through events like Run4Unity, and the Dicastery hopes many people will join their important mission.”

A 24-hour event kicking off in the Fiji Islands

The Run4Unity will kick off in the Fiji Islands — the first time zone to start a new day and an ecologically symbolic country already greatly impacted by climate change. From there, the youth will pass a

virtual “baton” from one time zone to the next through a series of video conference calls running in the following 24 hours, and concluding with communities in California, USA.

Participants will include, amongst others, some of the 1000 *Laudato Si'* Schools committed to ecological education through the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, as well as groups and schools that are part of the Living Peace Project, an initiative promoted by the Italian NGO *Azione per un Mondo Unito* (Action for a United World) aimed at fostering peace worldwide through education.

Peace and climate solidarity

They will run, jog, walk, or participate in local sporting events, some held at symbolic peace sites, including borders between conflicting countries or communities, or at ecologically significant sites, to witness unity and peace.

“Our dream is that Run4Unity 2023 will create a wave of peace and climate solidarity across the globe!”, said Federico Viara and Fiorella Tassini, coordinators of the Teens4Unity's the youth branch of the Focolare Movement. “Strengthening bonds between communities in various countries can really open people to commit to peace and taking care of the planet.”

Anyone wanting to join the Run4Unity can register individually or as a group at www.teens4unity.org/run4unity. From there they will be directed to links where they can track kilometres run or minutes of exercise, register the number of trees planted by them or in collaboration with local and international sponsors and organisations, who will ensure long-term care for the trees.

All participants who register a local event will be invited to add it to a calendar on the United World Project website, where people can check it and join. — *Vatican News*

OLF YOUTH BOND OVER CAPTAIN BALL

KUALA LUMPUR: The Youth Ministry of the Church of Our Lady of Fatima organised a successful Captain Ball event that helped foster a sense of community and camaraderie among the parish youths.

The event was held at the Sentosa Sports Centre and had around 35 participants split into four teams in a round-robin format. The organisers explained the rules of the game and ensured that everyone had a chance to play and join in on the fun. The event was conducted in a friendly and inclusive manner, with all participants showing respect and sportsmanship towards each other.

After the event, the participants had the opportunity to socialise and get to know each other better over lunch. Overall, the Captain Ball event provided a fun and engaging activity for the youths to bond and connect, highlighting the importance of building a strong and supportive community within the church through shared interests and activities.



Rejoice and praise His amazing everlasting love

KOTA BELUD, Sabah: Refresh your faith and be in spirit to serve the youth. The youth of St Raphael Pompod had a *Rejoice And Praise His Amazing Everlasting Love 2* (RAPHAEL2) Programme at the Chapel St Raphael, Pompod recently.

Thirty-four youth attended the two-day programme themed *Mary arose and went with haste* (Luke 1:39).

The programme began with the Enthronement of the Bible.

The first session touched on Catechesis by



Participants during the programme.

Jamlee Ramle, Deputy Coordinator of the Parish Youth pastoral Team of St Edmund, Kota Belud.

In the next session, *Silence with Jesus*, the participants were asked to stay silent, pray and reflect for one hour. Feliciti Cressa Ross, 19, Coordinator of RAPHAEL 2 felt this session touched her as she realised she spend less time with God. "My busyness as a student caused me to spend less time with God and this has awakened me and renewed my faith".

The second day focused on friendship. They sang songs of Praise and Worship, per-

formed drama, peace sessions and foot washing as a sign of humility, peace and friendship.

Feliciti hopes the new generation of youth will stay active in church and that those who have left the church will return to serve again.

She also hopes parents will support and encourage their children to serve in the church and get involved in programmes like this.

She is grateful for the good cooperation from everyone involved in making the RAPHAEL 2 programme a success. This has encouraged me to overcome my fears," said Feliciti. — *By Euseclara Suah*



Washing of the feet as a sign of humility, peace and friendship.

Spending time with the elderly

PENANG: The Catechesis Ministry of City Parish organised a visit to the Little Sisters of the Poor (LSP), Ayer Itam March 26.

This initiative was part of the Lenten Campaign this year. A total of 50 participants joined the visit, including youth aged 13-17, catechists and volunteers.

The visit began with Mass with the residents of LSP, followed by interactive sessions with the residents.

Before leaving, the youth gifted the residents with customised prayer cards composed from their heart and some of them also prayed with the residents.



The youth and elderly at the worship session.



The youth chatting with the residents at the Little Sisters of the Poor.

LEARNING ABOUT CRIME PREVENTION

NIBONG TEBAL, Penang:

With the escalating crime rate in the county, the Church of St Anthony hosted a talk on crime prevention for 60 parents and youth on April 1.

The session was to raise awareness about the ongoing criminal activities in the vicinity. It was also to warn the younger generation how the influence of crime and violence would destroy their lives.

The police personnel present were ASP Nagantheran Sevarajah (D9 Officer), Detective Corporal Partiban Maniam, Corpo-

ral Kesavan Murugesan, and police officer, Steven.

The presenters emphasised the parents' role as the primary source of influence in their children's upbringing. Parents need to keep close tabs on their children's circle of friends, and their activities online and outside the home.

At the end of the session, parish priest, Fr Arulnathan Joseph, and the organising team thanked the police personnel for their insight and contribution.



GO TO GALILEE

Diocesan Priesthood Vocation Discernment Weekend

Inviting young men ages 18 and above who are discerning on the calling of Christ to be Diocesan Priest.

Date: Begin on Saturday, 29th April 2023 @ 12:00 noon
Ends on Monday, 1st May 2023 @ 12:00 noon

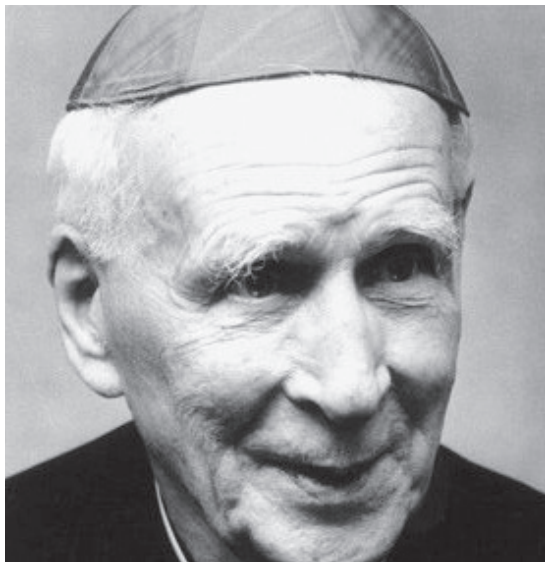
Venue: Church of St. Louis, Kluang
4, Jalan Omar, 86000 Kluang, Johor

Contact Person(s):
Msgr. Peter Ng Lai Huat
012-7725227
peterlhng@gmail.com
Fr. Adrian Francis
012-3947986

Registration via Telegram
Scan Me



French bishops vote to open sainthood cause of Henri de Lubac



ROME: French bishops have voted to open the sainthood cause of 20th-century theologian Henri de Lubac.

The French Bishops' Conference announced on March 31 that the opening of de Lubac's cause for beatification was approved during the bishops' plenary assembly in Lourdes.

De Lubac is considered by many to be one of the most important theologians of the 20th century. The French Jesuit priest was a leading thinker in the resourcement school of thought that encouraged a return to the writings of the Church Fathers in Catholic theology. He also founded the *Communio* journal together with Joseph Ratzinger and Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Some of his best-known books are *The Splendour of the Church*, *The Christian Faith*, *Catholicisme*, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, and *The Motherhood of the Church*.

Born on Feb 20, 1896, in the northern French city of Cambrai, de Lubac grew up in a traditionally Catholic family with five siblings. After his family moved to Lyon, de Lubac studied at a Jesuit school before making the decision to enter the Jesuit order in 1913.

His novitiate studies in England were interrupted by World War I the following year when he was drafted into the French army. He served in the army from 1914 to 1919, sustaining a head injury that caused him pain for the rest of his life.

De Lubac was ordained a priest in 1927 and began teaching theology at the Catholic University of Lyon.

During World War II, he resisted the ideologies of Nazism and anti-Semitism. He co-founded *Sources Chrétiennes*, a collection of patristic texts published in Greek or Latin with a French translation.

In 1950, de Lubac was banned from teaching at his Catholic university for a period of eight years. He continued to write and was named a member of the Institut de France in 1958.

Pope John XXIII appointed de Lubac as a member of the Second Vatican Council's preparatory commission in 1959. De Lubac later participated in the council as a "peritus," or theological expert, his writings are seen as having been influential in the texts that emerged from the council.

Pope John Paul II named de Lubac a cardinal in 1983 at the age of 86. He died nine years later in Paris on Sept 4, 1991. — **Courtney Mares, CNA**

MEMORIAM

40th DAY MEMORIAL PRAYER
In Loving Memory of our beloved
THANALETCHUMY @ THANAMARY
(EX-MTC EMPLOYEE)
05-03-1955 – 10-03-2023



*I have fought a good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept my faith.*
2 Timothy 4:7

We, the family of the late Thanamary would like to express our heartfelt and sincere gratitude to all relatives and friends for your kind presence, support and tributes rendered during our recent bereavement.

A Memorial Mass will be celebrated on
Saturday, 22nd April 2023 at the
Church of The Sacred Heart of Jesus,
Jalan Peel at 6.00pm.

Thereafter a prayer will be held at our residence:
No. 46B, Jalan 6/7, Pandan Indah, Kuala Lumpur
at 7.30pm, followed by dinner.

**In our hearts, you still live on
Still loved, still missed and very dear
For those we love, never go away.
You walk beside us everyday
Unseen, unheard and always near**

Deeply loved, missed and cherished by
husband, son, daughter-in-law,
Siblings, Relatives and Friends.



**1st Year
Anniversary**

ROSALIND MICHAEL
(Wife of the late Soosai Innasi)
18th November 1949 - 5th April 2022

Leaving behind beloved:

Daughters:

Valentina Anne Soosai
Adelina Anne Soosai
Celestina Anne Soosai

Sons-in-Law:

Morgan Felix Lourdes
Sakthi Kumar Ramadas

Grandchildren:

Theresa Anne Arnold, William Brooke Arnold,
Vernon Ashmund Arnold, Lukeisha Faustina Anne Lourdes,
Preeshanthini Sakthi Kumar, Zachary Eli Lourdes,
Shareeny Sakthi Kumar, Killian Matthias Lourdes,
Niel Sebastian Lourdes

Memorial Mass will be held at St. Ignatius Catholic Church, No. 2,
Jalan SS25/23, Taman Mayang, 47560 Petaling Jaya, Selangor on 15th April
2023 at 6pm.
Thereafter, dinner will be served at the residence of the family at No. 11A, Jalan
SS5C/12, Kelana Jaya, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
Please contact:
Adelina Anne - 012-350 0685 / Celestina Anne - 016-305 4465 / Valentina Anne - 012-507 8215 /
Sakthikumar - 012-892 7831 / Morgan - 012-225 2064

4th ANNIVERSARY



In Loving
Memory of
**MARTIN
NEWTON
D'CRUZ**

**April 19, 1930 -
March 16, 2019**

*Well done, good and faithful servant.
Enter into the joy of your master.*
Matthew 25:21

*Dearest Acha,
We miss your presence:
The fortitude of your faith
Your unwavering love for family
Your joy in good friendships
Your celebration of community.*

*We honour your values:
Your commitment to the unjust
Your helping hand to the poor
Your wisdom for those who seek guidance
A life of knowledge, integrity, truth.*

*We celebrate your legacy:
Family near and far who hold you in esteem
Students far and wide who continue to make you proud
Friends who speak of a man who stood
with them through thick and thin
Colleagues who respect your wisdom, insight and ingenuity
Your writings on justice for the ordinary man
The legacy of your lush gardens that now strive in our homes
Your history and traditions that give us roots
A family united in faith and love.*

*We live up to your teachings:
To learn, to teach, to share, to lead
To trust that the best is yet to come
To believe that there is always more in us
And always, always, to keep the faith.*

Loving you deeply & missing you greatly,
Your beloved wife Sarojam,
your children Rebecca & Anthony, Sue & Terence,
Joseph & Jasmine, Antony & Nikki,
and grandchildren Hannah, Isaac & Dominic.

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☎ +603-5131 5459 +603-5131 0330
📍 Trinity Funeral Services
✉ trinityfuneralservices3@gmail.com

REST IN PEACE

**18th Anniversary
In Loving Memory of**



**Ronald Ravinder
Kumar**

**Returned to the Lord:
17-04-2005**

Lovingly remembered and
cherished by:
Wife - Regina,
Son - Reuben Nevin
Kumar and loved ones.

Pope in action during Holy Week

In his audience before the start of the Paschal Triduum, Pope Francis urged the faithful to focus on the true source of hope found in Christ. Here is a pictorial of the celebrations at the Vatican.

Palm Sunday



On Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023, Pope Francis said Jesus voluntarily took on the pain and abandonment of His Passion and Crucifixion so that He could be with us in whatever sorrow or difficulty we might be experiencing. (CNA photo/Daniel Ibanez)



Holy Thursday



During the Chrism Mass in the Vatican on Holy Thursday, Pope Francis thanks priests for the good they do, which so often goes unrecognised. And he encourages them to invoke the Holy Spirit as 'the breath of each day,' which, even in times of crisis, gives them joy and points them in the right direction, toward Christ. (Vatican Media)



Pope Francis breathes on the chrism oil, a gesture symbolising the infusion of the Holy Spirit, as he celebrates the Chrism Mass in St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Holy Thursday, April 6, 2023. (Vatican Media)

Holy Thursday



At the Mass of the Lord's Supper (April 6, 2023) at Rome's Casal del Marmo juvenile penitentiary, Pope Francis reminds us of how the Lord, in washing the feet of His disciples, teaches us the importance of humility and service that are born of a noble heart. (Vatican Media)

Good Friday



Pope Francis misses the traditional Good Friday Way of the Cross procession at the Colosseum as he is recovering from bronchitis. He adores the Holy Cross by kissing it during the Friday of the Passion of the Lord. (Vatican Media)



Our Lady of Fatima
Feast Day Celebration

Journeying with Our Blessed Mother to Her Son

நமது தரய அன்னையோடு அவரது மகனில் பயணம்

5th May (Fri)

Mary's call to follow Jesus

இயேசுவைப் பின்பிசுவ
மரியாவின் அழைப்பு

7:00pm Rosary & Novena
8:00pm Mass (E/T)

6th May (Sat)

To Jesus through Mary

மரியாவின் வழி இயேசுவிடம்

5:00pm Rosary & Novena
6:00pm Mass (E/T)

7th May (Sun)

I am the way the truth
and the life

நானே வழியும்
உண்மையும் வாழ்வும்

7:30am Rosary
8:00am Mass (T)

10:00am Rosary
10:30am Mass (E)

8th May (Mon)

Mary prepared a home for the Lord

மரியா ஆண்டவருக்கு ஓர் இல்லத்தை
ஆயத்தப்படுத்தினார்

7:00pm Rosary & Novena
8:00pm Mass (E/T)

9th May (Tue)

Mary, Queen of Peace

மரியா அமைதியின் அரசி

7:00pm Rosary & Novena
8:00pm Mass (E/T)

10th May (Wed)

Mary abides in the Lord

மரியா ஆண்டவரில் நிலைத்திருக்கிறார்

7:00pm Rosary & Novena
8:00pm Mass (E/T)

11th May (Thurs)

Mary abides by the Father's love

தந்தையின் அன்பிற்கு மரியா
கட்டுப்படுகிறார்

7:00pm Rosary & Novena
8:00pm Mass (E/T)

12th May (Fri)

Mother of infinite Love

எல்லையற்ற அன்பின் தாய்

Healing Mass
9:30am Rosary
10:00am Mass (E/T)

7:00pm Rosary & Novena
8:00pm Mass (E/T)

13th May (Sat)

Mary kept the Lord's
commandments

மரியா இறைவனின் கட்டளைகளைக்
கடைப்பிடித்தார்

5:00pm Rosary & Novena
6:00pm Mass (E/T)

followed by procession and benediction

14th May (Sun)

I am the handmaid of the Lord

நான் ஆண்டவரின் அடிமை

10:00am Rosary
10:30am Mass (E/T)

NOTE: Confessions will be heard 30mins before mass