

World Youth Day



will be a sign of

HOPE

LISBON, Portugal: “The country is getting ready as a whole, including families and youths,” according to Domingos Fezas Vital, Portugal’s Ambassador to the Holy See, as he expressed the nation’s feelings in the days preceding the 37th World Youth Day.

The event will take place in Lisbon, August 1-6, and will see the presence of over 400,000 young people who registered for the event. It was initially scheduled to take place in 2022, but was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Given the importance of this event, which is unique, we feel a deep sense of responsibility,” Ambassador Fezas Vital said, “but also of immense joy.”

The ambassador’s hope is for the upcoming World Youth Day “to be seen as a sign of hope for a better world, more just and more sustainable.”

The motto chosen by Pope Francis for this year’s World Youth Day is: *Mary arose and went with haste*, recalling Luke’s Gospel account of the Visitation.

Among the various moments characterising the Pope’s participation in World Youth Day, there is a moment of prayer for peace that Pope Francis will lead at the Marian Shine of Fatima.

Regarding the theme of peace in a time of war and conflicts, the ambassador highlighted how “Portugal believes that the best guarantee of peace for the world is the respect for the UN rules and commitments to each other that all countries have endorsed.”

“If we all respect them, we will have peace,” Fezas Vital affirmed.

The ambassador noted Portugal’s “open attitude,” in terms of issues related to the flow of migrants, which are strictly interconnected with conflicts present worldwide.

“We also strongly believe,” he added, “that more support has to be provided to the coun-



Archbishop Julian Leow and some of the clergy with the fifty-odd young people at the sending off Mass at the Church of St Anthony, Kuala Lumpur, July 19, 2023. (photo/SAC Media Team)

tries of origin.”

Meanwhile, over 3,000 Australian pilgrims have set out for Portugal to take part in the highly anticipated World Youth Day. This vibrant contingent represents one of the country’s largest groups ever to attend the international event, with strong representation from the Archdioceses of Sydney and Melbourne, each bringing over 500 pilgrims.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse, chair of the Bishops’ Commission for Evangelisation, Laity, and Ministry, expressed his joy at witnessing the enthusiastic response of young people to Pope Francis’ invitation.

“It’s almost four decades since St Pope John Paul II instituted these great events and they continue to inspire the young Catholics of the world,” he said. “With Lisbon hosting the first World Youth Day since 2019, and obviously the first since the pandemic, it’s encouraging to see the enthusiasm remains among our young adults.”

Eighteen Australian bishops are also part of the journey, actively involved in leading catechesis sessions to guide and nurture the

spiritual formation of the pilgrims.

A highlight of the event will be on Aug 1, when Australian pilgrims gather for a special national component amid the vast international celebration. Studies have shown that World Youth Day has a profound and lasting impact on young adults, leaving an indelible mark on their faith journey for years to come.

The pilgrimage promises to be a transformative and life-changing experience for the participants, reaffirming their commitment to living as faithful disciples of Christ.

Likewise, according to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, over 5,000 Canadian youth are eagerly preparing to gather in Lisbon, to take part in World Youth Day alongside Pope Francis.

The first international WYD was held in 1986, and Canada had the honour of hosting the event in 2002, with Pope Saint John Paul II making the pilgrimage to Toronto.

The Canadian delegation, representing provinces like Ontario and Quebec, is set to participate in various activities, including talks led by prominent Catholic speakers,

prayer sessions, divine worship, and a vibrant cultural festival showcasing the talent of youth worldwide.

The pilgrimage holds special significance for Canadian Indigenous young people following Pope Francis’ historic 2022 Apostolic Visit to Canada, during which he sought to foster healing and reconciliation.

Among the thousands of youth from the various countries and continents will be our **148 Malaysian pilgrims** comprising of priests, Religious and young people. Due to time constraints and distance, not all dioceses had a send-off for their delegates. However, the Archdioceses of Kuala Lumpur and Kuching had one on July 19. The Diocese of Keningau organised one at the Diocese Retreat Centre, Keningau on July 17. In the Diocese of Penang, Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis sent off his delegates on July 22 at the Chapel of St Peter, Malim Nawar.

World Youth Day 2023 promises to be a momentous and inspiring event that will leave a lasting impact on the faith journeys of the young pilgrims who attend. — *Vatican News*

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Rom 8:28-30



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OPINION

World Youth Day and current issues in the Church

A million young people are expected to attend the August 1-6 World Youth Day (WYD) gathering with Pope Francis in the Portuguese capital of Lisbon. There will be a total of 148 delegates from Malaysia. It's only natural that such an event should be a great time of pilgrim celebration, of sharing languages, cultures, experiences, joys, hopes and woes with others from all over the world.

It should be a place of festive communion, of collective fusion and even of individual love at first sight, as has happened before. There must also be times of silence and adoration. Hopefully, WYD will also be a place of spiritual experience and encounter with the "All Other", of discovery (and rediscovery) of Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

I don't know whether the young pilgrims will join Francis in visiting the Marian Shrine at Fatima. If so, it would be a good idea to experience the gift of tears for suffering humanity rather than wasting time on the politically manipulated and now irrelevant messages and "secrets" Our Lady allegedly shared with the young visionaries so many years ago.

In retranslating what the Lisbon WYD experience could be, I give the impression that it will be all about feelings and the heart, which may well correspond to the expectations of our "very devout" young people, to quote a survey *La Croix* conducted on "the orientations of young (French) Catholics who go to World Youth Days".

But should we only strive to respond as well as possible to this dominant demand of those young people who have remained practising Catholics? Wouldn't it be better, or more demanding, to give reason and the historical relevance of the Church their due? Couldn't the catecheses offered by the bishops in Lisbon be an opportunity to include this more reflective aspect (at least on days when they are not replaced by the inevitable "great witnesses" ...)?

Perhaps the bishops should first persuade themselves of the importance of this exercise, and prepare for it seriously. Then, it would be important to resist the most obvious temptation at the moment: that of cheap piety and spirituality, of pious and edifying commentary on a biblical or Gospel passage. Perhaps, the bishops

could, instead, propose a teaching that gives food for thought on issues that are currently critical for the Church and of which many young Catholics (and not only them) are unaware.

In these times of "retraditionalisation", liturgically and otherwise, it would be important, for example, to reiterate that there was a Second Vatican Council, and to explain the theological renewal it meant for the Church and its insertion "in the world of this time", without concealing the difficulties of its implementation and the contestations to which it was subjected.

It also seems to me that an honest reflection should be proposed — however painful the subject — on the sexual and spiritual abuses that are shaking the Church and creating an unprecedented crisis of confidence. This should include speaking about the "systemic" causes of abuse that are due, among other things, to an internal "clericalism" that has become unbearable.

Finally, what's most topical for the Catholic Church right now is the Synod on synodality, which will take place in Rome two months after World Youth Day. Surveys show that very few young people were involved in the local synodal consultations. Would talking to them — and getting them to discuss — what's at stake in this meeting for the Church, and therefore for them and their future in it, be out of place in the context of WYD?

The point is not to turn young people on their head or impose issues on them that they don't care about, but to remind them that the "joys and hopes" they experience in liturgical gatherings and festive encounters only make sense when they also accompany the "grief and anguish" of the Church and the world of today. — **By Jean-Louis Schlegel, LCI** ([https:// international.la-croix.com/](https://international.la-croix.com/))

● **Jean-Louis Schlegel is a French sociologist and theologian, author of several books, and respected commentator on matters of faith and religion.**



Seek first the Kingdom of God

The world is rapidly modernised by technological advancement and overwhelmed by capitalism. People, forced to engage in this fast, ever-changing world, are struggling to find and express their identities while providing for their families. Christians are exposed to digital media and consumerism which threaten their core values and faith. Today, we are invited to pray and to discern more on our aims in life. As Christians, what are we seeking for in life?

In today's *Gospel of Matthew*, we are reminded that the Kingdom of God is like a treasure or a great pearl. It is very precious and its value is immeasurable. Once it is found, the lives of those who found it will be changed, and they will experience eternal joy.

For the Catholics, the Kingdom of God is a kingdom of love, peace and justice, where God is ruling in our hearts. Have we found the Kingdom of God? Have we ever experienced God living in us and within us? Once we have encountered God and experienced His love in our lives, we would be willing to give up everything and to invest all that we have in order for us to re-live that experience and to be part of it.

To find the Kingdom of God is not an easy undertaking. It requires sacrifice, self-emptying, and a total commitment. In sacrifice, a Christian unites one's own life and sufferings to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Meanwhile, self-emp-



tying entails one to empty oneself of ego, resentment, judgment, anxiety, and desire as Jesus emptied Himself. And total commitment refers to having Jesus Christ as Lord in all aspects of our lives. In order for us to find the Kingdom of God, we have to imitate Jesus Christ and put Him at the centre of our lives.

How do we fix our eyes on the Lord? Nowadays, we are surrounded by many things which cloud our minds and hearts and hinder us from focusing on the Lord, our God. The existence and advancement of the information and communication technology contribute to the distraction of the minds. We are exposed and over flooded with information on the economy, politics, and society which can trigger anxiety, doubt, anger, etc. Technology is

meant to improve our lives and the benefit people. We are not supposed to be enslaved by it. In dealing with digital information, there is a need to sort out and make use of this technology wisely.

In order for us to make a wise judgment, we are invited to follow the example of Solomon, as written in the *First Book of Kings*. In order to do so, in humility, we need to acknowledge ourselves and our circumstances in front of God. Solomon, who was a young man, acknowledged his dispositions: being young, unskilled in leadership, and being in the middle of God's multitude of chosen people (and not his own people). Then, like Solomon also, we are called to pray and ask for a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil. This is not for our own personal

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Dcn Elvost Luchi MHM

17th Sunday of Ordinary Time (A)

Readings: 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

Romans 8:28-30;

Gospel: Matthew 13:44-52

gains but it is in order for us to be able to do God's will in serving others. Discerning judgment is very crucial in order for us to live an authentic Christian life!

Today's Gospel also reminds us that judgment is real at the end of time. The wicked will be thrown into the blazing furnace. This tells us that God's call is demanding, but it is not impossible. To find the Kingdom of God is not an impossible mission. We are never left alone after the Ascension of Christ. God has sent the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is ever present to help us. The Holy Spirit enables us to do God's will and to abide in His love.

In his *Letter to the Romans*, St Paul affirms that God cooperates with all those who love Him and with all those He has called according to His purpose. We are called to be assimilated in Christ and it is God who is calling, justifying and sharing His glory to us all. Therefore, we need to respond generously and wholeheartedly to this call. We need to seek first the Kingdom of God!

Malaysian bishops pledge to make all dioceses ecological

PLENTONG, Johor: The nine Malaysian bishops signed pledges to make their dioceses ecological, during the Catholic Bishops' Conference at MAJODI Centre, July 13.

The pledge is worded as follows:

"The Roman Catholic arch/diocese of (name), Malaysia, hereby declares its pledge to be an Ecological Diocese in perpetuity, living out a deep ecological spirituality and advancing ecological justice and resilience for all creation, by pursuing decarbonised pathways and the building of community and earth resilience, according to the Ecological Diocese Protocols appended to this pledge, to the best of its ability and creativity within local circumstances."

Addressing his fellow bishops, the President of the Episcopal Commission for Creation Justice of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei (ECCJ-MSB), Rt Rev Joseph Hii, said this event was particularly meaningful in line with the ECCJ-MSB's *Protect Our Earth, Protect Our Children* (PROTEC) campaign launched nation-wide in 2020 and which carried a new theme each year.

The current year's theme for PROTEC is *Stop Plastic Pollution* and the new theme for Year Four (Sept 1, 2023, to Aug 31, 2024) would be *Cut Fuel Consumption* which is in line with the ECCJ-MSB's current *Decarbonising Malaysia Project*, launched this year, given the worsening of the climate crisis.



The bishops showing their pledges after signing the *Laudato Si'* commitment for the Malaysian Church at MAJODI Centre, Johor, July 12, 2023.

MJD Creation Justice Commission head, Dr Maria Lee, who was present at the ceremony, shared that everyone in the ECCJ-MSB is proud of our Church leaders i.e. the bishops, for signing this pledge. It shows that the Catholic Church is taking the call of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* (LS) to "save mankind from self-destruction" (LS#79) seriously. She also stressed that the climate crisis is a health crisis and hoped Catholic doctors would be leaders in taking up this public health issue. She further called upon the Church to dedicate one Prayer of the Faithful at every Mass to the climate emergency, and for every commission/ministry

to incorporate climate action in its work.

The pledge was signed in the form of a certificate with several appendices listing out the ecological diocese protocols in detail with accompanying Ecological Parish Protocols, self-monitoring forms and other supporting documents to help each diocese and parish make the transition towards becoming fully ecological. Each bishop was also given a pen drive filled with resources produced by the ECCJ-MSB members over the years to support ecological conversion and transformation (flyers, bookmarks, videos, etc.) at the diocesan and parish levels. These resources were also shared with Cardinal William Goh

of Singapore and Fr Robert Leong of Brunei.

The pledges made by all the bishops of Malaysia truly represent a milestone for the Roman Catholic Church in Malaysia, showing it is united in taking leadership and accountability, and is a clarion call for all the Catholic faithful to respond to the global emergency with urgency. It is timely as well, given that we are in our seventh year since *Laudato Si'* was released and Pope Francis repeatedly reminds us to "hear the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor (LS#49)".

Since the ECCJ-MSB restructured itself with its new name in 2017, the Commission has grown from strength to strength, with all arch/dioceses coming on board with active Creation Justice Commissions. With the bishops' pledges successfully signed, there is a hopeful expectation that every parish within each diocese in Malaysia will set up a dedicated Creation Justice Ministry with the primary objective of promoting the advancement of creation justice and resilience for all aspects of creation, encompassing both humanity and the natural world. Since the UN declared a (Climate) Code Red situation in 2022, with all indications that at current emission rates, we will hit 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming in the next decade, there is no time to lose for the sake of current and future generations and our beloved Common Home. — **By Clare Westwood, Regional Director, ECCJ-MSB**



KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

August

- 6 **Mass — AOHD Commissioning**
- 12 **Confirmation — Church of St Anthony, KL**
- 13 **Confirmation — Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Mentakab**



MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

July / August

- 31/7 **Memorial Mass for Bishop Emeritus James Chan — MAJODI Centre at 6.00pm**
- 1 / 8 **3rd Caritas Malaysia Board Management Meeting via Zoom**
- 4/8 **MAJODI Centre Reporting Meet**
- 6 / 8 **Confirmation — Church of St Theresa, Melaka**
- 7/8 **Fr Nelson Joseph's 25th Sacerdotal Anniversary — Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam**



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #140

F12
MJD NEWS
UPDATES

Greetings to you from MAJODI Centre.

The Laws of Malaysia Act 846 abolishes the mandatory death penalty. Grocery bills burn a hole in wallets, says EPF. The PM says: Eradicating poverty is not focused on one race only. Prevent hate speeches, protect open dialogue, social commentators say. Now, a chase for the Indian votes. Lisbon gets ready for WYD. A thousand participated in the Eucharistic Adoration held on July 15 at MAJODI. The Divine Encounter Retreat that ended on the 16th was a 4E experience.

Crossroads Times: A writer commented that Malaysia is at a crossroads. "Problems are mounting. The country's resources are inadequate to overcome them. In this millennium, the premier resource is people. Malaysia needs all her people on her side, not just half of them".

The world has changed dramatically since 1957 but Malaysia is tied to her past without a willingness to reimagine herself. A ship that cannot be steadied when it is at war with itself, always revisiting whether citizens are equals.

The 2000-year-old Church is "not talking down" but is hearing the voices of the small, distant and the peripheral communities. We call it the "synodal Church". Listening means respect, which invites all into the extended tent. Respect generates respect. As leaders, do we hear what people say and what they are not saying?

A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

A Glass of Milk

One day, a poor boy who was selling goods from door to door to pay his way through school, found he had only one thin dime left,

and he was hungry. He decided he would ask for a meal at the next house. A lovely young woman opened the door. Instead of a meal, he asked for a drink of water. She thought he looked hungry so brought him a large glass of milk.

He drank it slowly, and then asked, "How much do I owe you?" "You don't owe me anything," she replied. "Mother has taught us never to accept payment for kindness." He said, "Then I thank you from my heart."

Years later that young woman became critically ill, with a rare disease.

Dr Howard Kelly was called in for the consultation. He recognised her at once. He was determined to do his best to save her life. After a long struggle, the battle was won.

The bill came. She feared opening it. She knew it would take a lifetime to pay. But as she looked at the bill, she saw a little handwritten note: "Paid in full with one glass of milk". Signed, Dr Howard Kelly.

A lesson from the glass of milk: Three things are important in life: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind. No act of kindness is EVER wasted. Just be a little kinder to one another.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

1. The **Memorial Mass for the late Bishop Emeritus James Chan** will take place on Monday, July 31, at Majodi Hall at 6.00pm, followed by dinner and an exhibition.
2. The Bible Apostolate of MJD is organising **Discipleship In The Gospel of St Matthew** with Fr Ryan Innas Muthu, August 7-9 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception (CIC), JB nightly from 8.00pm to 10.00pm. Contact CIC JB.
3. The **MJD Vocation Promotion Team**,

headed by Fr Adrian Francis, is organising a talk on the Diocesan Priesthood entitled "I Am Mission" on August 31 at St Peter's Church Malacca, from 10.00am to 1.00pm.

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION AND QUERY.

The Q asks: What is the spirit of the world?

1. **What is this worldliness**, which is capable of hating and destroying Jesus and His disciples, which is bent on corrupting them and corrupting the Church?

2. **Worldliness is a culture:** it is a passing culture, a culture of appearances, of make-up, a culture of "today yes, tomorrow no, tomorrow yes and today no". It has superficial values.

3. **A culture that knows no loyalty**, because it changes according to circumstances; it negotiates everything. This is the worldly culture. And Jesus insists on defending us from this and prays for the Father to defend us from this culture of worldliness.

4. It is a **throwaway culture**, according to what is convenient. It is a culture without fidelity, it has no roots. But it is a way of life, a way of life also of many who call themselves Christians. They are Christians but they are worldly. (Pope Francis)

Even though you want to run, even though it is heavy, difficult and uncomfortable, even though you're not quite sure of your way through, healing happens by acknowledging and feeling. Just sit with it.

Have a great weekend. God bless you all. Be safe.

Bishop Bernard Paul



New leadership helms the Regional Bishops' Conference

By Charles Bertille

PLENTONG, Johor: It was a significant week for the 112th Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei (CBCMSB) at MAJODI Majodi from July 9-14 — working on a variety of subjects and making decisions that will bear an impact on all our local churches in the coming years.

The highlight of the week was the election of the new office bearers for the Conference as well as for all the Commissions. In this next phase, the bishops discerned and decided to elect Archbishop Julian Leow of Kuala Lumpur as the President of the CBCMSB and Archbishop Simon Poh of Kuching as President of the Malaysian Bishops to helm the Conference. Cardinal William Goh remains as Vice President of the Conference. The list of office bearers can be viewed below. The term for office bearers and commissions is two years' renewable.

Official Delegates to the Synod

The preceding week saw the announcement of the official delegates from our Conference to the Synod in Rome this October. Cardinal William Goh of Singapore is the elected official delegate of the Bishops Conference, and together with him there would be Anna Amandus from Sandakan, Fr Dr Clarence Devadass from Kuala Lumpur and Prof Christina Kheng from Singapore as an expert/resource person. Four from a small Conference, including from Sabah — it's indeed a blessing.

Elevation of Bishop Sebastian Francis

On Sunday night as the bishops arrived, we heard the proclamation that Bishop Sebastian Francis of Penang, the outgoing president of the Conference, will be elevated to Cardinal in the coming consistory of September. The Holy Father must have had in mind the ka-



Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski with the members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. Also in the picture is the Executive Secretary, Charles Bertille. (photo/MJD)

leidoscope of faiths and cultures represented by the region and the opportunity it holds for dialogue, evangelisation and inculturation of faith.

Communication Workshop for Bishops

Monday was dedicated to working on communication skills for the bishops, with their spokespersons and social communication teams. The significant takeaway was, to be prepared for any crises, courage to encounter the media, and the good preparation that is needed. Augustine Anthuvan, the media professional and trainer from Singapore, closed with a powerful quote, "A good bishop or leader will not surround himself with yes-men but those who are willing to tell the hard truths to Church leadership — and in that process help you to develop your own leadership."

Address by the Nuncio

On Tuesday morning, Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski, the Apostolic Nuncio to Malaysia

and Timor Leste, and Apostolic Delegate to Brunei Darussalam, met and addressed the bishops on a wide range of topics. He gave importance to the synod process and safeguarding — protection of minors from abuse, and all the efforts being put into these areas.

Reports

The bishops continued on their own from Tuesday to Thursday, listening to various commission reports and discussing matters around the Liturgy and the translation of materials, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) survey on Synodal Formation efforts at Diocese and Conference level, the Malaysian Religious Assembly that was held successfully in June, the feedback to the Universal Guidelines Framework sent out by the Commission on Safeguarding of Minors from Rome. Next was the Seminary Charter and efforts to develop a vision as Malaysian seminary, the formation among seminary formators, Finance matters, Caritas

Malaysia, Migrants, Catechetics, Catholic education, Inter-faith, Ecumenism, Laity & Family, Health, Creation Justice, Young People, and a follow-up of all the correspondences by the Executive Secretary.

The journey as one Malaysian Church will culminate in the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026. It will bring together all the local synodal processes from 2022 to 2024, the parish and diocese assemblies of 2023, the regional assemblies in 2024, the journey of the "Salib Malaysia" in 2025 by the Young People, to the national encounter from September 9 – 13, 2026.

It was a week rich with all the events and renewed encounters, dense with the workload and decisions taken. The Conference of Bishops is also a community of faith, with a generosity of spirit and responsibilities to bear. So much is placed on the shoulders of each one — that only the living Spirit of God enables and assists us to carry forward. We are all "earthenware vessels carrying treasures of God." (cf. 2 Cor 4:7).

Election of office bearers

The Executive Secretary of the Conference explained the rationale for the elections as per the Constitution. The term of office comes to an end for all office bearers and Episcopal commissions. The election of the main office bearers was held by secret ballot administered by the Executive Secretary, with Cardinal William Goh assisting to check and read out the ballot responses.

Please note the following:

- CHARIS is now integrated into Family, Laity & Life Commission. There will be only one bishop president for the entire commission.

- The Commission on Caritas Malaysia is re-named as the Commission for Integral Human Development. Caritas Malaysia will continue to be the vehicle for promoting the social mission of the Church.

- The Commission on Ecumenism & Inter-Faith is renamed as Ecumenism & Interreligious.

- The transition from the previous to the new office bearers will take place from Merdeka Day August 31 and the cut-off date is on Malaysia Day Sept 16, 2023.

The newly elected office bearers and heads of episcopal commissions are as follows:

President, CBCMSB

– Archbishop Julian Leow

Vice President

– Cardinal William Goh

Episcopal Secretary

– Bishop Richard Ng

Treasurer

– Bishop Bernard Paul

President of Malaysian Bishops (CBCM)

– Archbishop Simon Poh

Episcopal Commission Heads:

Biblical Commission

– Bishop Richard Ng

Consecrated Life

– Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis

Diocesan Priests and Seminaries

– Bishop Richard Ng

Ecumenism and Interreligious

– Archbishop Julian Leow.

– assisted by Archbishop Simon Poh

Family, Laity and Life

– Archbishop John Wong



Youth-Campus Ministry

– Archbishop Simon Poh

Liturgy

– Cardinal William Goh

New Evangelisation

(including Pontifical Mission Societies)

– Bishop Julius Gitom

Pastoral Healthcare

– Bishop Cornelius Piong

Migrants, Itinerants & Victims of Trafficking

– Bishop Bernard Paul

Integral Human Development

– Bishop Bernard Paul

Creation Justice

– Bishop Joseph Hii

Social Communications

– Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis

Malaysian Catechetical Commission

– Bishop Joseph Hii

Malaysian Catholic Education Council

– Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis



Entrusted to carry our Malaysian conversations at the Synod

KUALA LUMPUR: Theologian Fr Dr Clarence Devadass from the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, and Anna Teresa Peter Amandus from the Diocese of Sandakan, are the two delegates from Malaysia who have been personally selected by Pope Francis as Voting Members at the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

HERALD spoke to the duo, who are undoubtedly honoured and humbled at being chosen to attend the First Synod on Synodality, October 4-29, 2023 in Rome.

Fr Clarence was a member of the Asian Discernment and Writing Team that worked on the Final Document of the Asian Continental Assembly on Synodality, while Anna was a delegate at the Asian Continental Assembly on Synodality held in Bangkok in February this year.

Being able to see the fruition of their synodal journey in Bangkok unfold in Rome as voting members from the continental assemblies will certainly be a grace-filled experience for the both of them.

Describing the synod as 'one-of-its-kind', where non-bishops and laypeople will be in attendance and have voting rights for the first time, Fr Clarence views this experience as an opportunity to obtain a global perspective of the universal Church.

"Many times our 'universe' is confined to our own parish or diocese. Most of the time we understand our own context in our own country, but when we have the opportunity to read or hear the reports from different countries, it will be an eye opener to see new realities. It will give a certain vision of Church. That is the great joy of having this wider vision of who the Church



Fr Dr Clarence Devadass

is and I certainly look forward to sharing about Malaysia and the Asian Church with delegates from other parts of the world," said Fr Clarence.

"I will carry the Asian and Malaysian conversations we have had, but I also want to hear what the others have to say," said the Chancellor of the Archdiocese, while expressing hope that the attendees will respect the synod as a sacred space so that everyone can speak freely and listen openly to one another while keeping the growth of the Church at the core.

While going with an open mind and heart, Fr Clarence is keeping expectations at bay and is realistically aware that, with approximately 400 representatives at the synod, there are possibilities that not all the agenda or views of each country will be voiced or addressed.

Nevertheless, he has placed his trust in the synodal process and is convinced that



Anna Teresa Peter Amandus

the Holy Spirit will lead the Church collectively in moving forward in the right direction.

"The challenge is for us to understand that this is a process that we need to trust. We need to trust the Holy Spirit and we need to trust God, otherwise we will be disappointed if our views and concerns are not brought up or addressed. Those of us going from this part of the world have to pray that we are faithful to the voice of Asia," he added.

According to statistics released by the Holy Press Office on July 7, a total of 363 people will be able to vote in the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. Among them, 54 of the voting delegates are women. For Anna Amandus, being among this small yet significant number, greatly reflects 'the space in the tent being enlarged.'

"The decision made by the Holy Father

to include women, emphasises his vision for the lay faithful taking on a greater role in Church affairs that have long been left to clerics, bishops and cardinals. I am certain that this Synod of Bishops will be "enriched" by representatives of the whole Church.

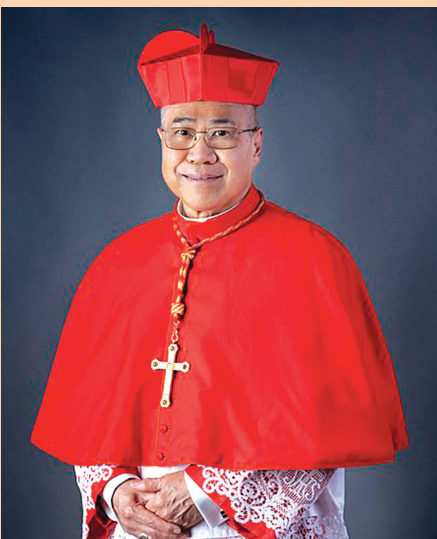
While admitting that she does not know what to expect at the synodal assembly, Anna is preparing herself by reading more on the synod and related Vatican documents. She and the other Asian delegates to the synod will be participating in an on-line meeting with the 'Asia Group' to help them be acquainted with the *Instrumentum Laboris*.

"This is an important meeting and therefore I will give and contribute the best of my ability to bring and share the voices of Asia (including Malaysia) in the Synod. I hope, by the grace of God, that this Synod will be fruitful, spiritually guided and come out with a direction (way forward) especially in giving a 'fresh breath' to the Church and her people.

Anna, who is attached to the Pastoral Office and Migrant Desk in her Diocese of Sandakan wishes to share with the delegates her synodal experience and learning, especially in the ongoing journey towards the Malaysia Pastoral Convention (MPC) 2026.

"I aspire to see our Malaysian Catholic Church go beyond barriers and differences, be united in God's love and journeying together towards becoming a more synodal Church," said the married lay woman, who also thanked her bishop, Rt Rev Julius Dusingit and her husband, George Ryan Petrus Tokan, for their encouragement and support.

Elected voting member



Cardinal William Goh

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei elected Cardinal William Goh of Singapore to represent the conference at the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, October 4-29 in Rome.

He will be joined by Fr Dr Clarence Devadass and Anna Teresa Peter Amandus from Malaysia, who were personally chosen by the Pope as voting members.

The Synodal process has only just begun

On July 7, 57 non-voting "experts and facilitators" comprising of priests and religious and lay men and women were named to be part of the Synod of Bishops.

More names are going to be added to the list of non-voting members, such as experts and representatives of non-Catholic Christian communities, said Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops.

Professor Christina Kheng, a Singaporean layperson who teaches Pastoral Leadership at the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila, will be at the synod as an Expert and Facilitator. Previously, she was named by Pope Francis to be part of the Commission on Methodology supporting the Synod's General Secretariat.

She shares her experience of both the Consultation Stage of the Synod, and the meeting held in Frascati (near Rome) to draft the Working Document for the Continental Stage.

"What has become very important to me is that as a Church, we are used to being ready with the answers or telling people what's right and what's wrong. But in this process of learning and doing synodality, everyone is learning as we go along. And sometimes it's trial-and-error. What's key about the *sensus fidei fidelium* is that, theologically, we know what it is. We can actually talk about it and describe it. But this is the first time we are actually trying to harness it even on a worldwide basis. We have the example of the Council of Jerusalem. That was the early Church with a



Dr Christina Kheng

relatively small number of people compared to what we have today.

"So, in a way, we are learning as we go along trying to find out what exactly are the methods and the processes to harness the *sensus fidei fidelium*. I admit that it has not always been a smooth process. We've had to adjust so many times. But the wonderful thing is that the adjustment does occur. At the very beginning when people asked for more time, the deadline was extended. And now we have even the surprise move to have two sessions of the meeting. And what's also going to

be a surprise move is that people saw the document for the continental stage. They had a chance to give feedback, raise questions, and that's never been done before. So really, we are learning synodality by doing synodality."

"One thing that impressed me very much is just the plethora of efforts and the creativity that we saw from people all over the world. If people admire the array of direct quotes and voices from the ground all over the world in all continents. I would really like to emphasise that the real heroes of this synodal process are the synodal teams. They are people who travelled far and wide, who worked for a long time to get to remote areas to bring the voices from the peripheries to the centre. There were people who did not travel physically, but had to travel a lot emotionally and socially to reach out to their friends or relatives who have left the Church, who feel disenfranchised by the Church, to persuade them to lend their voice to be consulted in this process.

To me, these are the real heroes of this synodal process. And it's because of them that we have this rich and valuable array of voices from the field. Of course, much, much, much more has to be done and to be improved upon. Many people were not consulted, but I think it's a very good start and I hope it's a momentum that will keep going. The synodal journey has only just begun, let's keep going.

Source: Vatican News

The essence of our talents lies in our service to God

KLANG: The Church of Our Lady of Lourdes recently organised a series of talks on Leadership, an area of concern identified from the parish synodal process. It was conducted over four sessions by external speakers and the parish Formation Team. The participants were from various ministries and BECs, with encouraging participation from the youth.

Richard Ganesh led the first two sessions on *The Desire for God* and *Our Vocare* on June 17 and June 24 respectively. Richard began the sessions with the heartening message that *God can make me bloom where He plants me*, encapsulating 1 Cor 3:6 and prompting the participants to ponder the essential question of where God has planted them now concerning the Church. Richard's inspiring presentation left the participants



Rededication of OLL leaders in service to Christ and community.

filled with the profound belief and conviction that when assuming leadership roles in response to the calling, one must always make God their focus and work for the Lord their goal.

The third session on July 8, conducted by Mary Reggie entitled

Leading with Confidence through Communication and Teamwork was a discourse on the many facets of communication such as listening, speaking, observing, and empathising. There were also activities involving group discussions, presentations, and roleplay-

ing where various leadership crisis scenarios were presented and the participants asked how they would handle those situations. The participants demonstrated great teamwork and community spirit. The essential qualities of being a good communicator were emphasised, as well as the pitfalls and traits that leaders need to avoid. Mary's vibrant presentation led to the participants showing lively enthusiasm throughout the session.

The fourth session on July 15, *Day of Prayer: Jesus the True Vine* was facilitated by the Formation Team in collaboration with the parish priest, Fr Gregory Chan. Justina Pakiam in connecting with the message *God can make me bloom where He plants me* expounded the teaching from John 15: 1-8 that to bear good fruit, as leaders, we must be grounded in Christ who

is the True Vine. Josephine Navis elucidated on the various stages of fruit-bearing and the importance of repentance and renunciation to enable one to yield shoots heavily laden with good fruit. Damian Prakash explained the *Parable of the Talents* and how it is not our talents that matter but rather, how we use them in the service of God as leaders. Fr. Gregory stressed that God invites us to abide more deeply in Him to yield good fruits, and be worthy of the grape harvest. The session concluded with each participant lighting a candle symbolising their light of faith and the rededication of their lives in service by placing the candles at the foot of the Cross.

By God's grace, the sessions on Leadership proved to be both inspiring and fulfilling. — **OLL Organising Team**

A call for a new self

SANDAKAN: The Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service (CHARIS) of St Mary's Cathedral selected the theme *To be made new self in true righteousness and holiness* (Ephesians 4:23-24) for the Life in the Spirit Seminar (LSS) from July 7 to 9.

Conducted in English, the LSS was organised by the Star of Yahweh Covenant Community (SYCC), with the support of the parish priest, Fr Simon Kontou, in collaboration with the team from the Light of Jesus Christ Covenant Community (LJCCC) of Kota Kinabalu.

During his welcoming address, Philip Mosinoh, an elder of SYCC, re-affirmed to the 46 participants that their presence at the seminar was not a mere coincidence. Instead, he reaffirmed that it was the prompting of the Holy Spirit, empowering them to reestablish a

deeper, and more personal relationship with Christ.

The first session commenced with Fr Simon presenting a talk titled *The Lordship of Jesus*. His opening remark, "Is Jesus God? Where in the Bible did Jesus say, 'I am God, worship me?'" captivated the participants, who were fully aware of the phrase commonly used by adversaries of the Christian faith. Fr Simon's session set the tone for the subsequent talks by the team from LJCCC on the second day.

These talks covered various topics, including *God's Love* by Aline Lim, *Salvation* by Daniel Kong, *New Life* by Hector Jintoni and *Receiving God's Gift* by Peter Thien. On the evening of the second day the session culminated in a praying over session and Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This allowed the participants to experience the trans-



The participants of the LSS at the Cathedral of St Mary, Sandakan.

formative power of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the seminar, attendees engaged in prayer, songs of praise, small group discussions and personal sharing. On the final day of the seminar, the retreatants were treated to a talk on *Growth and Transformation* by team leader Daniel. He reminded them that growth and transformation do not happen instantaneously, but are a gradual process that may involve trials and difficulties. He reassured the audience that while the journey of

growth can be painful, Jesus offers comfort to those who are burdened, saying, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Remember, the Holy Spirit is working to change us and make us holier. Daniel stressed the importance of nurturing the transformation process, and suggested that participants engage in various ministries and groups within the church to support their faith journey. He

specifically mentioned SYCC, which holds gatherings every Friday evening at the same venue, as one of the options for participants to consider joining.

The LSS concluded with expressions of gratitude and a gesture of appreciation. The Presiding Elder warmly expressed thanks to the LJCCC team, acknowledging their valuable contributions. In a gesture of appreciation from the participants, a gift was presented to the team. — **By DaliusLL, Dospo**

Melaka parishioners' initiation to Christian meditation

MELAKA: The Church of St Theresa organised a parish formation focused on the John Main Tradition of Christian Meditation on July 16.

The session was conducted in Mandarin and English, reflecting the parish's commitment to enhancing the spiritual and prayerful experiences of its members.

About 100 Mandarin-speaking individuals gathered on the ground floor, while 60 English-speaking faithful gathered on the second floor of the parish building. A team of seven members from the World Community of Christian Meditation (WCCM), Malaysia, led the formation.

The origin of Christian meditation can be traced back to St John Cassian in the fourth century and its rediscovery in the 20th century by Fr John Main, OSB. Fr Lawrence Freeman, OSB, who took over after Fr John's passing in 1982, formed WCCM in 1991 and now has medi-

tation groups (monastery without borders) in parishes worldwide.

Christian Meditation is about spending time with the Lord, being in touch with the Spirit of Christ — the God inside us. It is the art of waiting, being close to Jesus and feeling His love. In the Scriptures, we see Jesus spending time with the Father, Jesus is silent and He talks to the Father. Jesus is the master/teacher of Christian meditation/contemplation. Matthew 6:6 speaks of the inner room (interiority), and Mt16:24 says "Follow me, leave self behind".

During meditation, we used a single word/phrase. In the John Main tradition, the word (mantra) recommended is *Maranatha*, an Aramaic word found in 1 Cor 16:22 and Rev 22:20. The prayer word (mantra) acts as an aid to bring our busy minds filled with thoughts to stillness. It is a way of detachment and a way of training the mind. We



The participants at the Christian meditation formation.

become aware of God's loving presence in our hearts — it is the prayer of the heart. We experience conversion and gather a close relationship with Jesus.

In the video on the wheels of prayer, Fr Lawrence says that prayer is a spiritual journey. There are dif-

ferent forms of prayer — Eucharistic, Sacramental, Charismatic, and Petition prayers. At the centre of the wheel is the hub — Jesus' prayer to the Father in compassion for the world. Jesus' prayer manifests and completes all forms of prayer. Jesus prays in us, within us, and for

us. I no longer pray but Jesus prays in me.

The way to the heart of the wheel is by using a single word /phrase, said silently and repeatedly in our hearts, that will guide our thoughts, so we may enter into stillness and that stillness generates the movement of the wheel. Other forms of prayer become enhanced with the practice of meditation.

In the John Main tradition of Christian Meditation, we are told to meditate twice a day; once in the morning and once in the evening for 20 to 30 minutes. In meditation (silence, stillness, simplicity), we are sanctified by a healing process. God transforms us and makes us whole and to be whole is to be holy. Transformation is gradual as the fruits of the Spirit — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control — grow in us in our meditation. — **By Christine Ong**

Young Tibetans gather for first youth empowerment forum

DHARAMSALA, India: For Tenzin Tsedup Lodoe, the first-ever the International Tibet Youth Forum is a way for young Tibetans to take the initiative to preserve their religious beliefs and culture, which are under attack by the Chinese government.

"At the end of the day, action is what matters," he told *Radio Free Asia*. "Tibetan youth should play a bigger part because we are the future, and we should be the ones taking the initiatives and responsibilities."

The youth activist from Washington, DC, and co-founder of the Bodja podcast, was one of more than 100 young Tibetans from 16 countries attending the forum in Dharamsala, at the invitation of the Central Tibetan Administration, the Tibetan government-in-exile. His podcast aims to raise awareness among Tibetan youth about news and

events concerning Tibet.

Fellow participant, Chime Lhamo, a human rights activist and campaign director of Students for a Free Tibet in New York, said Tibetan youths have a huge role to play when it comes to advocacy.

"Our older generations were busy trying to survive, put food on our table and protect our Tibetan identity, but the younger generation has the opportunity not just to survive, but now we are thriving in our own neighbourhoods," she said.

"We have a wonderful, precious opportunity to not only give back to the Tibetan community in exile, but also play a role in making sure that we are amplifying the voices of Tibetans inside Tibet."

The theme of the event, held July 18-20, is *Empowering voices and inspiring actions for Tibet's future*.

The Dalai Lama, the spiritu-

al leader of Tibetan Buddhism who is currently in Ladakh for a month-long sojourn, addressed the participants in a short video, urging them to preserve Tibetan culture and tradition.

"The new generation of Tibetans living in different parts of the world should never forget our own tradition of moral behaviour," said the Dalai Lama. "Those living in India may not find this difficult, but those living in the West are also doing well to cherish and preserve our culture and traditions. Those with young minds should be made aware of Tibetan's tradition of consideration for others."

Instead of feeling anger towards China, whose military troops crushed a revolt in Tibet in March 1959 that forced the Dalai Lama to flee to India, young people and other Tibetans should "generate compassion for them," he said.

Events like the youth forum are



Young Tibetans listen to a speaker at the first International Tibet Youth Forum, which ran from July 18-20 in Dharamsala, India. (photo/RFA)

important because they inculcate leadership in young Tibetans and ensure they keep Tibetan culture alive, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the head of the Central Tibetan Administration, told *Radio Free Asia*. "The younger generation is the

future of Tibet," he said. "Our investment in the younger generation is very important. Otherwise, if we are not able to bring up the younger generations as future leaders then we would be failing in our duty." — *LiCAS*

Filipino Catholics warned against 'illicit' religious group

MANILA: Catholics in a Philippine diocese have been asked to stay away from an unrecognised religious society, which reportedly includes married priests among members.

Bishop Joel Baylon of Legaspi issued a statement on July 17 after reports emerged that the Missionary Society of Sts Peter and Paul was conducting "acceptance rites" among Catholics of Albay province that covers the diocese.

"The Catholic Church does not recognise this group as a legitimate body, as its members are no longer in the active ministry of the Catholic Church and have no permission from the legitimate authority to act in the name and on behalf of the Catholic Church," Baylon said.

Baylon warned Catholic clergy joining the group will incur dismissal from priestly faculties.

"Any priest who joins this group



Bishop Celestino Gianan (centre), the Superior of the Missionary Society of Sts Peter and Paul, a religious group not recognised by the Catholic Church, is seen with some members in this undated image. (photo/Julius Cepeda)

automatically incurs suspension from his duties as priest, and is, therefore, prohibited from performing any religious act relative to his priestly duties, such as celebrating Mass and administering the Sacra-

ments," the prelate added.

The diocese has information that the group has been recruiting Catholics in the region, specifically lay ministers who received seminary formation, Baylon said.

Henrick Geralde, who claims to be a priest and the group's seminary formator, said the congregation is part of the "Holy Catholic Church International" — an ecumenical church group composed of Roman, Orthodox, Traditional and Old Catholic churches.

"We are Catholic because Catholic means universal believers of Christ. We believe in Christ, so we are Catholic. We are a religious missionary society in the Philippines under the Holy Catholic Church International," said Geralde.

"We are one Catholic Church, but we come from different backgrounds. We trace our roots and succession from Peter, the first Pope," Geralde added.

The group was founded in 2014 by Celestino A. Gianan as part of the Holy Catholic Church International. He is projected as their church's Metropolitan Archbishop

of Southeast Asia and the first Superior of the society he started.

The group has reportedly established local branches in several dioceses, including the Archdiocese of Manila and the dioceses of Imus and Legaspi.

Fr Marlon Gipta of Cebu Archdiocese alleged the group lures members to join their "initiation rites", masked as social gatherings.

"The recruits would receive an invitation for dinner, for example, or a talk on poverty alleviation. Of course, the topics are interesting and there's food. But after the programme, they will bless them and participants would swear their oath of allegiance to the group," said Gipta.

The national bishops' conference has said that local bishops should see how to prevent Catholics from joining the illicit religious order, he said. — *ucanews.com*

US archbishops to lead 'pilgrimage of peace' to Japan

NEW YORK: Two US archbishops are leading a "Pilgrimage of Peace" to Japan, hoping to promote global nuclear disarmament.

Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Archbishop Paul D. Etienne of Seattle, are travelling July 31 - Aug 12 to Japan's cities of Tokyo, Akita, Kyoto, Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Joining the archbishops are representatives from archdiocesan offices and various organisations focusing on nuclear disarmament and social justice. Funding for the trip is underwritten by "grants and personal contributions", rather than archdiocesan funds, according to a July 18 news release from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.

"During this Pilgrimage of Peace to Japan, I hope to encourage conversation about universal, verifiable nuclear disarmament and walk together towards a new future of peace, a new promised land of peace, a new culture of peace and nonviolence where we all might learn to live in peace as sisters and brothers on this beautiful planet, our common home," Wester said in a statement.

Etienne, in a statement, added that to build a community where humanity can flourish, it's important to "keep educating ourselves, praying for peace, and appealing for verifiable nuclear disarmament, which reflects Catholic teaching and is the path for the common good."

The trip follows a May open letter from Wester, Etienne, Archbishop Peter Michiaki Nakamura of Nagasaki and Bishop Alexis Mitsuru Shirahama of Nagasaki, where they implored leaders of the Group of Seven countries to take concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament.

The letter came as G7 leaders met in Japan May 19-21. Out of that meeting, leaders from the G7 countries committed to working towards a world absent of nuclear weapons, and called on Russia, Iran, China and North Korea to cease nuclear escalation. Beyond the joint statement in support of nuclear disarmament, G7 leaders took no concrete steps towards that goal.

Both the Santa Fe and Seattle

archdioceses, led by Wester and Etienne, have ties to nuclear weapons. The Archdiocese of Santa Fe is the US diocese with the most spending on nuclear weapons per capita, and contains two weapons laboratories and the nation's largest nuclear weapons depository. The Archdiocese of Seattle is the US diocese that has deployed the most strategic weapons.

Meanwhile, two of the dioceses the delegation will visit on the pilgrimage, the Dioceses of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, are the only two dioceses in the world that have suffered from atomic attacks when the United States bombed both cities during World War II.

As part of the pilgrimage to Japan,

the delegation will pray a novena for peace from Aug 1 to Aug 9, the anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Nagasaki in 1945.

Wester has been especially outspoken about the need for nuclear disarmament in recent years, prompted both by a 2017 trip he took to Japan, and the reality of his diocese's involvement in the nation's nuclear weapons arsenal. In his statement on the upcoming pilgrimage, he said he holds out hope that one day nuclear threats can be a thing of the past.

"I hope one day, we will stop building these weapons, disarm our state and our world, and embark on a new future without the fear and terror of the nuclear threat," Wester said. — *CruX/OSV*

'Priests in Concert' raise funds for World Youth Day

WASHINGTON: A group of nine priests from the Archdiocese of Washington, who met in the seminary, formed a band to raise money for young people in their archdiocese to attend World Youth Day (WYD), August 1–6 in Lisbon, Portugal.

The priests attended the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Hyattsville, Maryland, and are members of the Neocatechumenal Way, a Catholic movement that sends out families on missions around the world and the priests from its seminaries to evangelise.

The 'Priests in Concert' band is composed of Frs Pawel Sass, Yan Pietryga, Grzegorz Okulewicz, Mattia Cortigiani, Philip Ilg, John Benson, Salulo Vicente, Emanuel Lucero, and Daniele Rebeggiani. All of them share a profound connection with WYD, having discovered their vocations during previous gatherings of this nature.



Members of "Priests in Concert" perform to raise money for youth to attend World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon, Portugal. / Photo courtesy of Priests in Concert

Recognising music's profound impact on reaching young hearts, these talented priests engage with youth in a fun and meaningful way, blending the joy of music with the richness of the Catholic faith. Their performances at various events, from concerts to retreats, embody the essence of priesthood: preach-

ing, sacraments, and connecting with people on a deep level.

Singing popular songs such as *Eye of the Tiger* and *Knocking on Heaven's Door*, the priests also include songs from other countries such as Spain, Italy, Poland, Mexico, and, of course, Portugal, as many of the attendees are from the Hispanic com-

munity. The concerts are a delightful mix of entertainment and spiritual reflection as some performances include vocation stories from the priests themselves or testimonials from young individuals who have previously attended a WYD.

The priests raised \$20,000 (RM91,110) between tickets and

donations during their first concert and approximately \$10,000 (RM45,555) at the second concert held at St Mary of the Mills in Laurel, Maryland recently. These funds will help 400 young people from the local area to embark on their life-changing pilgrimage to the WYD this year.

Through their music and fundraising, the 'Priests in Concert' makes life-changing pilgrimages possible for young people, reflecting their deep love for the Catholic faith and their mission to share it with the world. Their efforts embody the spirit of community and faith, uniting to empower the youth of their archdiocese and sending them forth on a profound spiritual adventure at the WYD. With music and faith intertwining, this band of priests is making a meaningful impact on the lives of young Catholics and nurturing their spiritual journeys. — **Agencies**

Historic event at UK's oldest living convent



Dr Hannah Thomas with the vestments. (photo/ICN)

YORK: This August, the three priestly vestments designed and worn for the secret opening Mass in the UK's oldest living convent will go on display together in the chapel for the first time since 1769, as part of the York Georgian Festival.

The Bar Convent, York, was first established in 1686 when the Catholic faith was illegal. The chapel was built in complete secrecy and took 20 years to complete. The first Mass was held on April 29, 1769, and the vestments were only worn together in the chapel on that occasion.

Since then, one vestment has been on display in the Bar Convent's exhibition, but the remaining two have been in the possession of different churches – until now.

Special Collections Manager, Dr Hannah Thomas said: "Historically, these three vestments have been lent to different churches in the city, and it has taken some

time to arrange for their return to their original home. These incredibly significant vestments were designed and made as a set specifically for the opening of this very special chapel and we are both thrilled and moved to be able to share this historic reunion with the public.

"The vestments will be displayed behind the altar in the chapel where they were first worn together more than 250 years ago, at great risk to the priests and all those who attended.

"Not only have these Georgian vestments survived a time in which Catholic material was regularly seized and destroyed, but the fact that the chapel and the convent have also survived against all the odds is an incredible story that we will be highlighting as part of the inaugural York Georgian Festival 2023."

The display will take place from August 3-5. — **By Lauren Masterman, ICN**

Brazil congresswoman launches Rosary campaign amid 'serious threat' of legalised abortion

BRASILIA: Brazilian federal legislator Christine Nogueira dos Reis Tonietto, (pic), a member of the Liberal Party (PL), launched a campaign July 17 to pray the Rosary live on Instagram "for Brazil and for life."

Bishop Fernando Rifan of Cedamusa and Bishop Adair Jose Guimarães of Formosa are scheduled to participate in the live event as are priests, artists, intellectuals, and Catholic politicians.

Known simply as Chris Tonietto, the congresswoman will transmit a total of 14 live broadcasts through August 3 on her Instagram account, always concluding with a prayer for unborn children.

Tonietto describes herself on her Instagram channel as a Catholic

lawyer, wife, and mother who is pro-life, pro-family, and against judicial activism and corruption. She concludes her profile with "Ora et labora" and the prayer emoji.

In a statement to *ACI Digital*, *CNA's* Portuguese-language news partner, Tonietto explained: "As we live at a hectic pace and often our prayer time takes a back seat, I took the initiative to call on the Brazilian people to unite in prayer."

The lawmaker also said that the prayer campaign is taking place in the context of "the very serious threat of legalising abortion, which can occur through the ADPF [Argument for Non-compliance with a Fundamental Precept] ruling 442".

The ADPF 442 is a lawsuit filed by the leftist Socialism and Free-



dom Party (PSOL) with the Federal Supreme Court seeking the decriminalisation of abortion up to 12 weeks of pregnancy.

"Along with this problem," Tonietto continued, "the situation in our country has worsened significantly, which is why we are experiencing unprecedented legal uncertainty."

Faced with this situation, the Brazilian congresswoman said that "it is of the utmost importance that we get down on our knees on the ground and cry out." — **CNA**

Cardinal to leave Baghdad after presidential decree

BAGHDAD: Cardinal Louis Raphaël Sako, Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans, (pic), has publicly announced his intention to "retire from the Patriarchal See in Baghdad and move to a church, a mission, in one of the monasteries of Iraqi Kurdistan."

His announcement, published in Arabic on the official website of the Chaldean Patriarchate on July 15, follows a decision made by the President of Iraq, Abdul Latif Rashid, to revoke a decree established in 2013 by the previous head of state, Jalal Talabani, recognising Cardinal Sako as Patriarch of the Chaldean Church.

In a statement sent to Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), Cardinal Sako described the revoking of the decree as part of a "deliberate and humiliating campaign" against him. He also characterised President Rashid's move as an act "against the Christian community that suffered a lot".

The revocation "is unprecedented in Iraq's history," the cardinal stressed, highlighting "the government's silence" about the incident and the suffering of the Christian community.

In his open letter to the president, the cardinal referred to the ruling as an unprecedented "danger" to the



Christian community in Iraq. He also warned that if the president did not withdraw his decision, he would file a legal case against it.

Chaldean Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil, in Kurdish northern Iraq, told ACN: "Personally, I believe the approach to revoking the decree was flawed. The President of the Republic could have convened a meeting with all the Church leaders to explain the history of these decrees and his decision to retract them. Instead, the matter was played out in the media, leading the Patriarch to interpret this action as punitive." — **Vatican News/ICN**

A bishop gives his life for his flock

VATICAN: Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, presided over the morning Mass on July 15 in St Peter's Basilica for the episcopal ordination of Msgr Gian Luca Perici, appointed apostolic nuncio to Zambia and Malawi by Pope Francis on June 5.

In his homily, Cardinal Parolin addressed a key question regarding the role of a bishop, recalling in particular the duties to "bring the Good News to the poor" and "bind up the wounds of the broken-hearted."

The bishop is a "sign of Christ", Cardinal Parolin explained, recalling words of Pope Francis during his apostolic journey to Canada: "Precisely because we are a sign of Christ, the Apostle Peter urges us to tend the flock, to guide it, not to let it go astray while busy about our own affairs. Care for it with devotion and tender love." The bishop, the Cardinal emphasised, is like "a good watchman" who scans the horizon and "warns the community of any approaching danger." A watchman who gives guidance "in listening to the Word of God, in prayer, in frequenting the sacraments, in humility and in charity, the powerful ways to overcome every obstacle and maintain fraternal cohesion and living hope."

The bishop is called to direct his gaze towards "the heart of Jesus that shines with infinite love," to the Good Shepherd, "willing to give his life for the sheep" and "not to flee before the wolves." Cardinal Parolin added that the bishop is called to focus always to "this heart that shines and emanates charity," to this "source of mercy" that rejects no one and offers to everyone "a joyful proclamation of true liberation." The invitation that a bishop must accept is that of "integrally transforming every care of the heart and transferring it to God." The bishop is called "to show the sweetness of the yoke of Christ so as to lift the sad yoke of sin from the shoulders of the people entrusted to him."

Cardinal Pietro Parolin finally recalled the specific task entrusted to Archbishop Perici: "that of sharing the word of the Pope with Churches and governments" of the countries where he is being sent. At the same time, the bishop must be "a tireless peacemaker in this world troubled by wars and cruel conflicts" and to promote the defence of the "fundamental rights of the human person, often threatened by ideologies that instrumentalise and manipulate them in the name of a humanism that, in truth,



Episcopal ordination of Msgr Gian Luca Perici. (photo/Vatican Media)

no longer has anything human about it."

Finally, he encouraged him to be "an authentic bridge capable of presenting the needs, problems, hopes and fears of the individual local Churches to the universal Church, helping them be aware of the paternal care of the successor of the

Apostle Peter."

Archbishop Perici entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See on July 1, 2001 and has served in apostolic nunciatures in Mexico, Haiti, Malta, Angola, Brazil, Sweden, Spain and Portugal. — By Amedeo Lomonaco, *Vatican News*

US Catholic bishops report fewer complaints of abuse in 2022

WASHINGTON: The US Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) just released 2022 annual report on the protection of children and young people shows that there were fewer number of sexual abuse cases reported in the past two consecutive years.

The 2022 report for July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 states that 1,998 victim survivors came forward with 2,704 allegations and that this number is 399 less than that reported in 2021 and 1,548 less than that reported in 2020. The report also emphasised assistance given by dioceses and eparchies to the families of the 254 victim survivors who reported during the audit period as well as the 1,589 victim survivors who reported during earlier audit periods.

"I wish to acknowledge gratefully the victim survivors who have allowed us to work with and journey alongside them. We have learned much and continue to value the relationships created out of courage, trust and care, compassion and need, and healing and reconciliation. I continue to pray for our victim survivors and their offenders. Pray for the needed change in our culture and understanding of the sin and crime of sexual abuse. Pray for the conversion, transformation, and understanding that, as the spiritual leaders of the Church, my brother bishops and I take responsibility for this crisis," USCCB President, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of Military Services, said in the document's preface.

"We have made enormous progress, thanks to the courage and fortitude of our sisters and brothers who were harmed, abused, or molested by a trusted clergy member, and who made reports and shared their stories," the archbishop said.

The bishops' report is the 20th since its first release in 2002, when the US bishops introduced the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, "a comprehensive framework of procedures to address allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy and establish protocols to protect children and young people".

"This decrease is due in large part to the resolution of allegations received as a result of lawsuits, compensation programmes, and



bankruptcies. Of the allegations received, 2,217 (83 per cent) were first brought to the attention of the diocesan/eparchial representative by an attorney. Allegations involving current minors account for 16 reports. All other allegations were made by adults alleging events that occurred when they were minors," according to a USCCB press release.

The Church checked the backgrounds of 2,144,161 clergy, employees, and volunteers in 2022. Additionally, in 2022, more than 2.1 million people and over 2.9 million

kids and teenagers received training on how to recognise the warning signs of abuse and how to report those indicators. "These numbers had decreased significantly during the previous two years but are now increasing as society returns to activities enjoyed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic," the press release said.

The audit for the 2022 report is based on findings from New York-based StoneBridge Business Partners, a specialty consulting firm that offers forensic, internal, and compliance audit services to top businesses

nationally. The study also contains a survey of claims of child abuse done by the Centre for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University.

The report also includes the following prayer for healing:

*God of endless love,
ever caring, ever strong,
always present, always just:
You gave your only Son
to save us by the blood of his cross.*

*Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,
join to your own suffering
the pain of all who have been hurt
in body, mind, and spirit
by those who betrayed the trust
placed in them.*

*Hear the cries of our brothers
and sisters
who have been gravely harmed,
and the cries of those who love them.
Soothe their restless hearts with hope,
steady their shaken spirits with faith.
Grant them justice for their cause,
enlightened by your truth.*

*Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,
heal your people's wounds
and transform brokenness into
wholeness.
Grant us the courage and wisdom,
humility and grace, to act with justice.
Breathe wisdom into our prayers
and labours.
Grant that all harmed by abuse may
find peace in justice.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.*

Let's give saints a voice in the synod dialogue

Pope Francis' synod on synodality envisions an inclusive dialogue that encompasses as many participants as possible. First, it is a dialogue of believers among themselves, with all their varied, and sometimes even inconsistent connection with the Church. Synodality also invites others who are not a part of the Catholic family of faith. Ideally, the dialogue partners should include as many as possible and so represent the many rich dimensions of human experience.

Still, the synod dialogue is missing essential voices and remains incomplete. A fuller sense of who we are as God's Church can widen the tent of dialogue.

The Church is not only the Church on earth. It is the communion of saints and the historical people of faith. In the process of synodality, we can, and should be, sharing our experiences and aspirations. At the same time, we must also be in dialogue with our historical tradition.

That tradition is no mere abstraction. It is embodied in the saints and all the women and men of faith who have gone before us and still walk with us. If these partners are missing, we will have flattened out our experience of Church and reduced it to our current state of soul on the planet Earth.

If that happens, our dialogue will be incomplete. Even more significantly, we will have hampered the Spirit's creative movement among us.

My experience of teaching and reflecting on spirituality has led me to a strong conviction that we must be in dialogue with the saints and with our history to have a full and complete sense of ourselves and where God is drawing us forward.

For many years, I taught a course



Clockwise from upper left: Bartolomé de las Casas (Wikimedia Commons/Architect of the Capitol); Thérèse of Lisieux (Wikimedia Commons); Hildegard of Bingen (CNS/Paul Haring); Damien de Veuster (CNS/Courtesy of Damien Museum); Francis de Sales (Wikimedia Commons); Louise de Marillac (Wikimedia Commons/GFreihalter); John Chrysostom (Wikimedia Commons); Vincent de Paul (CNS/Chaz Muth); Marianne Cope (CNS/Courtesy of Sisters of St Francis of the Neumann Communities). Background: Detail of synod on synodality logo (OSV News/Courtesy of Synod of Bishops).

titled *Spirituality by Way of Autobiography*. My students and I read five classic autobiographies of the tradition (Thomas Merton, Thérèse of Lisieux, Teresa of Jesus, Julian of Norwich and Augustine) to grasp across cultures, historical periods and gender experiences, how the Gospel and discipleship of Jesus had its constants but also its variations.

Later, I wrote a book titled *The Archaeology of Faith: A Personal Exploration of How We Come to Believe*. Our faith, I affirmed in that book, is not just an individual and contemporary enterprise. It builds

from a rich matrix of those who have gone before us and who continue to shape our beliefs and our spiritual life journeys.

As we draw from our history, we must always remember that it is not just the story of triumphant grace. Our collective and personal history includes sin, and that means a summons to repentance accompanied by a firm purpose of amendment. That amendment means that we do not forget where we have been, so that we can go forward in a transformed and healed direction.

In the measure that the synodal dialogue does not incorporate our

history with its lights and shadows and the living communion of saints, that dialogue — however wide-ranging the number of its earth-bound and time-bound participants — will remain one-dimensional, narrow and incomplete.

This lack could also contribute to ideological divisions in a Church process that, ironically, is meant to build unity.

Consider some of the examples of the pilgrim people of God grappling with sin and grace that both mark our past and have an imprint on our present. The sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable persons

comes immediately to our minds today. Also think about the wars of religion and collusion with worldly powers to colonise, exploit and subjugate peoples.

There is, however, not only sin. There is also much grace embedded in our history. Consider across the years the remarkable care for the poor and the infirm.

Think, too, about how we finally got some things right after years, even centuries, of tragic missteps — for example, with the Second Vatican Council's declaration *Nosstra Aetate* and our relationship with the Jewish people.

These examples, of course, do not represent abstract events. They are populated by people, and the most influential of them both then and now are holy women and men, saints both canonised and not canonised.

Think of John Chrysostom not letting the people of Constantinople forget the poor and the marginalised. The same could be said of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, as well as Damien De Veuster and Marianne Cope.

Bartolomé de las Casas stood against the tide of the exploitation of native peoples and worked for justice. Then there is the towering medieval figure of Hildegard of Bingen, who brought together science and art.

Both Francis de Sales and Thérèse of Lisieux, with their advocacy for "the devout life" and the "little way", democratised holiness, making it accessible for everyone and corrected an often-entrenched spiritual elitism.

These are just a very few examples of voices that need to be in the synod dialogues. Their concerns and their vision are entirely relevant for today's Church on pilgrimage.

Voices from the communion of saints and sinners

The question is this: How do we bring these voices from the communion of saints and sinners into the synod's tent of dialogue?

One possibility is to draw on an already existing office in the synod process. When synodal gatherings take place, there are always *relatores*, reporters who gather the results of dialogue and report back to the assembly. *Relatores* on behalf of at least some of the repentant

sinner and the saints of our tradition could carry their voice into today's assemblies. They would help us to understand that we are not just the sum of our current experience but that we belong to a much larger people of faith in history who share a longed for future in the reign of God.

There is an echo of this approach in the earliest synodal assembly in the Church's history, the Council of Jerusalem as we find it in the *Acts of the Apostles*. The council was prompted by an urgent question: Do Gentiles need to be circumcised to be saved?

On their way to Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas describe a new experience: "They reported the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the believers" (Acts 15:3). And they again spoke of their experience and how "God ... testified to them by giving them [the Gentiles] the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us" (15:8).

In this dialogue, someone serves as a relator and represents the past but also very much present prophetic tradition. The prophet Amos is cited to bring light to their situation: "After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David ... so that all peoples may seek the Lord — even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called" (15:16-17).

Today, we would do well to expand our tent of dialogue to include those who have gone before us and walk with us still. Our synodal Church needs to make its pilgrim way by embracing all who belong now and from the past, on earth and in heaven above. — **By Fr Louis Cameli, NCR**

Fr Louis Cameli is Cardinal Blase Cupich's delegate for formation and mission. He is a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago and has authored a number of books on theology and spirituality.



Mosaic of Sts. Barnabas and Paul above the front door of the Church of St. Panteleimon in Nicosia, Cyprus (Wikimedia Commons/Молли)



REMINISCING CHURCH

Richard Chia

I count myself fortunate to be part of a Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC) that celebrated its 43rd anniversary this year, since its formation in August 1980. As far as I know, there are only a handful of BECs that were formed in the early years when the Church initiated Basic Christian Communities (BCC). This was later renamed Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC). It was a novel idea then, and parishes that started BCCs were only guided by one document titled *Five Loaves and Two Fishes*, produced by the Five Loaves and Two Fishes team in Easter 1980, as a follow through from the historic *Aggiornamento* 1976.

The *Aggiornamento* 1976 was the renewal process that the Church in Peninsular Malaysia started and had identified the core need to “build Christ-centred communities”.

In that 134 page-booklet, 12 pages were allocated to Basic Christian community: #15. *The Environment: Why is there a need for local Christian Communities*, #16. *Some Basic Attitudes: How we should care, share and be concerned with people living in our community*, and #17. *How to Create a Christian Atmosphere in the Home: Some basic guide on sharing, praying and listening to Scriptures in the community*. The rest of the booklet were about the changing role of the Church, Church as a Christian community, Church as servant of the poor, focus on the child, shared prayers, liturgy as a celebration of life, etc.

Guided by Fr Eduard Limat, a French missionary and then parish priest of the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, BCC Medan Damansara (before it was renamed BEC St Joseph), along with several others in the Am-

Journey of an ageing BEC

pang areas (Kuala Ampang, Ampang Jaya and Lembah Jaya) was formed in the early 1980s. The pioneers of these BCCs had the daunting task of reaching out to Catholics living in their neighbourhood.

Being mindful that Jesus sent His disciples on their missionary work in pairs (Luke 10: 1), the BCC outreach teams also worked in pairs. They walked around the neighbourhood in the evenings after work, or on weekends, looking for tell-tale signs of homes belonging to Catholic families — a crucifix, a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, or a picture of the Divine Mercy at the entrance of the homes. That was how my family was first approached in 1981, and we became part of the local Christian community until we moved out 32 years later.

In the first few years of the BCC, meetings (as it was known then) were held twice a month, with some key positions assigned (secretary, treasurer, assistant) and prayers and minutes of meetings prepared. The BCC functioned somewhat like a club or society, with agenda, reporting and food fellowship at the end. Recruiting members was one of the priorities then. At parish level, reports were submitted by each BCC on activities and the number of Catholic families reached.

We had occasional guest speakers (usually priests) that came to enlighten us on specific topics. On those days, attendance was good, almost full house (literally the house would be crowded, with plastic chairs brought out). BCC Mass too was another crowd puller. Food was also plentiful and varied at such meetings. This gave rise to the acronym BCC being “best curry chicken”.

As our membership grew (at least on paper), it was found the BCC now had 80 fami-

lies. Thus, in 1984, a new offspring BCC was born (BCC Bukit Damansara), with 45 families, after a pastoral visit by the late Archbishop Emeritus Tan Sri Dominic Vendargon.

In order to keep the members interested in BCC, meetings were limited to one hour, with a guitarist to lead the singing. Songs of praise and worship were mostly used, followed by sharing sessions and intercessory prayers.

In the words of a founding member of my BCC, Lucy Tan, as published in the Golden Jubilee magazine of the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, Kuala Lumpur in 2005, “As the months passed, more residents joined the BCC meetings and attendance expanded. One encouraging sign was the presence of youth and children from the resident families. Members of the community became more involved in the life of the BCC. When a death occurred, members of the BCC were there to offer prayer and moral support to the bereaved family, organising the seven nights of prayers and leading the prayers before the funeral.

“With the passage of time, the children became teenagers. Having grown closer together through friendships forged in the community, these teenagers came together to form a youth section of the BCC. The youth were then given charge of organising the programme for some BCC meetings, the annual Christmas children’s party and Christmas carolling within the neighbourhood.

“A ladies’ auxiliary group organised visits to the aged and home bound as the community’s temporal work of charity. In some years, days of recollection were organised by the BCC coordinator. Visits to churches and pilgrimage sites during the Jubilee Year were also done.”

Today, 43 years on, the entire neighbourhood has changed. Lots of modern apartments, condominiums and commercial cum residential buildings have taken over. Gated and guarded communities are common. Walking the streets to spot Catholic homes may invoke complaints and suspicions among the neighbours. Singing carols from house to house requires police permits. The homes of our BEC members are now devoid of young voices, except for the occasional visits by children and grandchildren. Almost everyone in the BEC had at one time or another served in the BEC core team. Most of the children who grew up there now live in newer neighbourhoods and have their own families. New owners or tenants seldom come out, or are never seen as they are mostly working or locked inside their homes. Safety and security have become a concern.

During this year’s BEC anniversary Mass on the feast day of St Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the St Joseph BEC Medan Damansara remembered a long list of their members who have departed forever. Like any family, the community has aged. Unless new family members step forward, it will further decline as illness and old age set in. On a positive note, the then youth members who left their coop, have sprouted their wings and hopefully have their own local Christian communities elsewhere. The family has enlarged itself, while the older family members fade away.

● **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.

A few words and a handshake with Pope Francis transformed my life

I was in Rome in 2000 on the occasion of International Youth Day, where I saw Pope John Paul II up close. I participated in Mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI in Washington, DC in 2008. I attended the International Day of Families in 2015 in Philadelphia, where Pope Francis was present. I can now say, 23 years later, that I have had the joy of being close to the last three popes.

This year, when Francis celebrated the 10th anniversary of his pontificate, I was able to congratulate him personally. That would not have been possible without being part of Catholic Extension’s Latin American sisters’ initiative and St Mary’s University of Minnesota. We are all pursuing bachelor’s or master’s degrees, while working in ministries in diocesan missionary settings in the United States.

The trip to Rome was originally planned for 2022 but, because of the pandemic, was cancelled. Thanks to that cancellation, I was able to participate in the rescheduled trip, since last year I was not yet part of the group. So, I can say that, thanks to the pandemic, I had the grace to firmly shake hands with Francis.

My joy began on the evening of April 18 when I read a WhatsApp message from the Catholic Extension team that said, “We ask that you please be very attentive to your emails tonight, because we will be sending a very important email with all the information about the trip to Rome.”

At four o’clock in the morning, like a little girl who enthusiastically wakes up to see what the Three Kings had brought her, I opened the email containing the details for

our stay in Rome. What excited me the most was the news that on Wednesday, April 26, at 8.00am Rome time, we would have a private audience with Francis.

Overwhelmed with emotion, I later prepared a sign, just in case I was allowed to display it in his presence. It said: “Thank you, Pope Francis, for your ten years of service to the Church. We love you and pray for you!”

We left for the Vatican on April 26 at 6.30am, since our appointment with the Pope was at 8.00am. The excitement, nervousness and joy we experienced while waiting for the Holy Father was remarkable. We already knew the protocols: The Pope does not like people to kneel before him or kiss his ring. Aware of that, I was also ready to seize whatever spontaneous moment presented itself.

Precisely at 8.00am, the Holy Father walked through the door with a firm and light step, joyful, smiling, and greeting the audience. He was dressed in white, and his face was radiant.

I could not believe that this man, who has difficulty sitting and standing, carries the weight of the Church on his shoulders. Without a doubt, he preaches with his life a God who is close, tender, and compassionate — “God’s style,” which is the way he invited us to express ourselves in the pastoral work that we do in the face of a “throwaway culture.”

The Pope insisted that “caring for the needs of the poor” helps society. This phrase seems contrary to what society thinks but, on further reflection, it makes sense, because society, the Church, the person and the community are transformed when a person is



(GSR photo/Maria Elena Méndez Ochoa via Vatican)

helped to grow and to overcome poverty, and when their dignity is valued.

Another phrase that touched me very much was that “the Church is a rich tapestry made of many individual threads ... woven into unity by the Holy Spirit”.

A small group of 45 sisters from different congregations and charisms, various countries, and diverse pastoral and leadership experiences had woven this tapestry together, with the Spirit, in 10 days. Our presence, dressed in many colours, was a sign of diversity, synodality and interpersonal relationships. We discovered that significant encounters are possible when they are interwoven with the love of God and our vocational call to serve the poorest in society in our ministries.

I believe that all the sisters and the Catholic Extension committee were ecstatic with the presence of the Pope; it was enough to

see their faces, expressions and their gestures of joy. We all saw, heard and touched Francis, standing only inches away from us. The peace and joy in my heart were so great that I wanted to pitch “three tents” and stay there longer; however, it was not possible because the Holy Father had his general audience immediately following our visit. We had to go back to St Peter’s Square to listen to him with all the people who had gathered from various parts of the world.

Being in Rome, greeting the Pope personally and encountering the faith of Peter, Paul and the Christian martyrs of the first centuries of the Church, was a human, spiritual and historical experience that transformed my life forever.

Thank you, Pope Francis, for your faith, your love, and your witness of closeness. — **By Sr Maria Elena Méndez Ochoa, Global Sisters Report (NCR)**

A walk to remember ...

By Tianne Ramona Pereira

C.S Lewis once wrote that “the real substance of the faith dwells in the world of action. Christian faith becomes real when it is lived out.” Here’s a story of a young man who literally walked the talk.

But first, did you know pilgrimages were around since ancient times? This tradition has existed throughout history, from the ancient Greeks and Romans, Hindus and Buddhists, Christians, and even Muslims. A pilgrimage is known to be a journey; more often than not it is a long journey made to a sacred place as an act of spiritual devotion.

In an exclusive interview with *HERALD*, Jownathan Roy Michael, a 28-year-old business owner who hails from Seremban, tells us of his journey after completing a nine-day walking pilgrimage from the Church of the Visitation, Seremban to the old Church of St Anne’s at Bukit Mertajam. This 400km walk, that began on July 5 was actually his father’s dream. His father, Buithyanathan Michael, took this same journey of faith in 2004, when he walked on this solo journey for charity. He too took nine days to complete the walk and always dreamt of doing it again. However, tragedy struck and in 2021, Buithyanathan passed away.

Goal to fulfil late father’s dream

It became Jownathan’s goal to fulfil his father’s dream – but it was not always a smooth and dandy journey. In fact, a majority

of those who knew of his plans, tried to dissuade him, stating it was too dangerous, there were too many cars, he was not physically prepared and the list goes on — but that did not stop him. Instead, he put his trust in God and did it anyway. However, just a week before the pilgrimage, fear crept in and Jownathan began to second guess his decision to walk. He questioned if he was capable or if he had what it took. In the end, he submitted his plans to God and told himself he had to try, for even if he was not able to complete it, he would go as far as he could. And if this journey was to take his life, he was now all pumped up and all for it.

There was nothing fancy that took place during the week leading up to the pilgrimage – in fact other than packing his bag two days in advance, Jownathan was at work the day before his awaited adventure, in order to ensure he left no job undone before setting out. The morning of his pilgrimage began like any other day. He attended Mass before leaving the church grounds at 9.00am. The goal was to cover 45kms a day, which he successfully did.

When he reached the Sg Perak rest stop, Jownathan was offered a lift by an elderly old man who said the area was not safe. In fact, it is notoriously known for mugging and even murder cases. The kind old man didn’t want anything to happen to him, so he took him on his lorry to the next rest area, Bukit Kantang. God sent? We think so.

While on the pilgrimage itself, Jownathan stated that there were multiple times he wanted to give up – it was raining, it



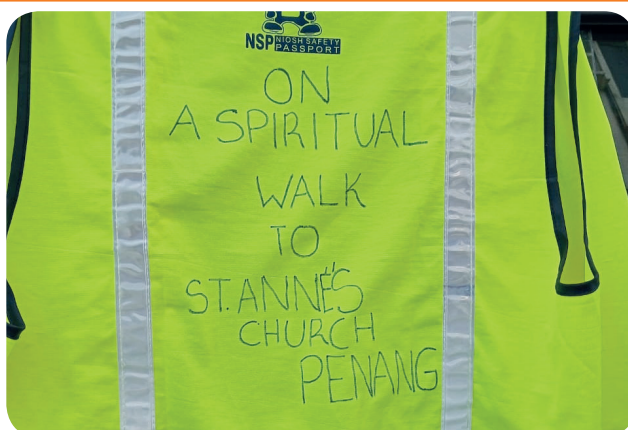
Jownathan Roy Michael showing the clippings of his late father’s journey in 2004.

was hot, it was far. As a matter of fact, every morning felt like there was such a long way to go. This was pretty understandable, seeing that Jownathan had not prepared himself physically with any special regimes, diets or training. He did, however, spiritually prepare himself through prayer and mentally psyched himself with the notion that “if my dad could do it, so can I”.

Whole journey absorbed in prayer

When sharing about the many encounters he had to overcome, Jownathan noted that one of the biggest challenges faced was when he was trying to avoid a fast lorry, missed his step and fell into a drain, leaving him with a sprained foot. An injured foot and a long way to go was just the beginning of his troubles, because now he came to one of the narrowest and steepest legs of his journey, walking just one foot away from the bustling traffic. To him this was one of the most terrifying and trying times. All the way he kept focusing on his prayer for healing and protection.

And this is exactly what he holds closest to his heart as the most memorable thing discovered on his pilgrimage — prayer! He shared that never in his life has he prayed so much, but his whole journey was absorbed in prayer. When he was thinking about making this pilgrimage, he felt a calling to leave everything and pray, and not just pray for himself or his needs but to pray for people. He couldn’t help emphasising that the greatest take back from this pilgrimage was his encounter with prayer. Prayers can move mountains. In this nine-day journey, he learnt to pray not just for himself, but for everyone — cancer patients, prisoners, orphans, sinners, everyone! While sharing, he stated that he is not a saint, or the holiest person around nor is he a great person, but what he learnt is that we can and should pray for everybody. “We must pray for everyone and



we must never forget to pray to God in thanksgiving for all our blessings, and only then we pray for ourselves.”

Looked on as a beggar

Jownathan went on to share that at almost every stop he made, people would look at him like he was a beggar or a homeless man. Many assumed he had run away from home, and only a handful came up to speak and ask him his story. Some even gave him food thinking he needed it. He shared that people



Prayer was the mainstay for Jownathan.

judged him without knowing his story and that is another valuable lesson learnt — “in life, never judge a person, look at a human like a human. We need humanity. Jesus could be sitting somewhere as a beggar, but we could be judging Jesus through our lack of understanding and compassion. I have walked through many phases in life, but I have never lived like this – a beggar, a homeless. I slept and took my shower whenever and wherever there was an opportunity. There were days I had to skip my shower.”

Overwhelmed with joy

meet St Anne before all the other pilgrims who would be making their way for the feast later in the month.

He shared that you don’t have to be rich to change the world, stressing that he is not a rich man, he cannot give much to people but praying for everyone in the nine days was so rewarding. He prayed uncountable decades of the Rosary for incalculable hours and learnt that prayer is the most powerful thing in the whole world.

When asked if he would take this journey again, he said he would jump at the opportunity to do so if he has the calling, because he has learnt invaluable lessons and discovered so much about himself through it all.

Believe in God, believe in yourself

Jownathan wants his message to be “believe in God, believe in yourself”. He adds, “Before you can believe in anything, you need to believe in yourself. People can say so many negative things about you – but if you lose belief in yourself, you lose everything. When you believe in God, He will point you to the path of success and walk with you on your journey, whether up or down. We only live once, there are no repeats, so give as much as you can give, help as much as you can help, and pray as much as you can pray. This is our time – do your best for humanity. You may not be able to do a lot but remember — helping just one person is a blessing.” No matter the odds of success or the scale of the challenge, your actions can make a difference. It’s better to light a candle than curse the dark.



Jownathan kissing the foot of the stairs just as his father did in 2004.

A sense of pure relief gushed through him when he first saw the old Church of St Anne’s from afar and when he finally reached the church, he was overwhelmed with joy and pride. He had done it! He had finally made it! He had conquered what he had set out to do. He kissed the foot of the stairs in the exact same way his father had 19 years ago, before making his way up to the old church. Entering the church left him speechless, feeling blessed, happy and at peace that he was able to



In front of the old Church of St Anne.

The abolition of torture

The Pope's prayer intention for the month of June, 2023 was the *abolition of torture*. We may think that since the intention for that month is over, we do not need to dwell on it anymore. This is far from the truth. If we reflect deeply on the monthly intentions of the Holy Father over the years, we will realise that it is a continuous call to action on our part.

It is not difficult to understand the reason why the Pope chose 'the abolition of torture' as his intention. Pope Francis is Argentinian, and lived in Argentina during the military dictatorship that ruled from 1976 to 1983. Many were tortured by the state during this period including Catholic priests and religious. To put this in context for all those who enthusiastically followed the proceedings of the FIFA World Cup in 2022, the year 1978 was the year that Argentina hosted and won their first world title, while the country was under the military dictatorship of the National Reorganisation Process.

The definition of the word 'Torture' includes the action or practice of inflicting severe pain or suffering on someone as a punishment or in order to force them to do or say something (*Oxford Languages*). Torture is often meted out by the state, but in areas of conflict, it can also be carried out by an opposing force in the conflict, for example by the members of ISIS when they were in power in parts of Iraq and Syria.

At a United Nations Voluntary Fund of Torture (UNVFT) programme in Geneva several years ago, I heard it announced that about 75 per cent of countries in the world have practised, or are practising, torture. This list of countries includes Malaysia. A dark period in the history of the country was when *Operation Lalang* was enforced from October 27 to No-



INFORMED OPINION

Prof Xavier V. Pereira

vember 20, 1987. It involved the arrest by the Royal Malaysian Police of about 106 to 119 people, mainly political activists, opposition politicians, intellectuals, students, and scientists, under the infamous Internal Security Act (ISA). A few Catholic activists were also detained. Some of the detainees were tortured.

Torture can be the worst form of abuse that a human being suffers. It is often physical but has a huge impact on the psychological and social dimensions of the human being. The immense psychological stress suffered by a victim of torture can result in PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), depression, anxiety, and even self-harm. The physical, psychological, and social consequences of torture often persist for a long time, and may be lifelong or permanent especially if there is a lack of access to medical, psychological, or psychiatric interventions.

The largest number of torture victims living in Malaysia over the past decade or so are amongst refugees. They were tortured in their home country before being forced to migrate to Malaysia. Asylum seekers and refugees flee their home countries often because of the threat to their lives and wellbeing.

The UNVFT had the following theme for the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on June 26, 2023 – *Transitioning from Horror to Healing: Preventing Torture and Helping Survivors Rebuild Their Lives*. Understanding this theme will assist us in acting

on the Pope's intention for the month of June, 2023. Other than prayer, we can *advocate for the abolition of torture*, and, if possible, *participate in the healing and rebuilding of the lives of the victims of torture*.

Advocacy for the abolition of torture

This is the intention that Pope Francis has put forward to us. The Abolition of Torture. It may require us to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5: 16 – 17) and pray much more than we have done during the month of June.

Advocacy to abolish torture is currently largely the efforts of NGOs like Health Equity Initiatives in Malaysia, and international networks like the IRCT (International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims), the EU consortium #United Against Torture, and the UNVFT.

Awareness is important in understanding torture, and to advocate for the abolition of torture. This would be best done by programmes that focus on the understanding of torture and the impact of torture on victims of torture. Presentations by people who have worked with victims of torture and victims of torture who have experienced healing, would also add value to these programmes. These days programmes like these can reach many people in different parts of the country utilising an online platform.

Advocacy is effective. The Abolition of the Death Penalty is proof of this though the process is painstaking and often takes much effort and time to ensure effectiveness.

Interventions for the victims of torture

When I treat victims of torture, I often wonder if we can bring satisfactory healing to them. Victims of torture suffer immensely

and their woundedness often present challenges to healing.

Other than physical and psychological trauma, the victims of torture experience great difficulty in trusting people because torture is an interpersonal act. Forgiving the perpetrators is also difficult. Interpersonal healing though can take place in a good therapeutic relationship by a skilled, experienced, and compassionate psychotherapist.

There are challenges in bringing this healing to victims of torture. Traumatization is a risk that one needs to be aware of when assisting these victims. Traumatization can occur to the victims and to unprepared people who assist them.

The two main approaches to healing trauma are trauma informed care and trauma focused care. These strategies of healing are much developed in countries like Australia which receive a good number of refugees who are victims of torture.

I recently watched an online presentation on Healing of Intergenerational Trauma organised by the IRCT. One of the speakers spoke about the consequences of trauma observed in grandchildren of Jews who were victims of torture during World War II. This created an awareness that the consequences of torture can be intergenerational.

May we continue to pray and advocate for the abolition of torture.

● **Xavier V. Pereira** is a medical doctor, psychiatrist and psychotherapist, and an adjunct professor at Taylor's University School of Medicine. He is also co-founder, director and pro bono psychiatrist of Health Equity Initiatives, an NGO that serves refugees with mental health challenges.



Hmm...

Ivy Philip

In today's society, creating an inclusive workforce is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic advantage for businesses. Among the diverse group of individuals who are often overlooked in employment opportunities are those with intellectual disabilities. There are many reasons for inclusively hiring Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (PwID), highlighting the benefits they bring to the workforce and the positive impact it has on organisations and society as a whole.

Diversity and inclusion for all

While the corporate industry has been doing a brilliant job in embracing diversity in the workplace, the minorities in this group who are yet unable to speak out loudly enough for themselves are not being included. By inclusively hiring PwID, companies send a powerful message to the broader community that diversity is valued. It fosters an environment of acceptance, respect and understanding of the world of a PwID. Hiring PwID brings a unique perspective to the workplace, promoting diversity of thought and challenging existing norms. Persons with Intellectual Disabilities have different experiences and approaches that can contribute creativity, innovation, and fresh problem-solving techniques.

Nurturing strengths

PwID possess a range of unique skills and talents. While their level of abilities, speed and rate of performance may vary, they excel in areas of work that may seem tedious and repetitive to you and me. They have great attention to detail, repeated task, adherence to schedules, and perseverance. There is numerous research that have shown that employees with intellectual disabilities have enjoyed high levels of job satisfaction

Embracing inclusive employment

and commitment. When proper training and support is provided, they can be productive and reliable contributors to the workplace. Their enthusiasm and determination to work often result in a punctual and reliable task force with low turnover rates. Additionally, the presence of PwID in the company would promote teamwork and collaboration. Their presence anyway very naturally encourages empathy, patience, and communication among everyone around them. Additionally, the positive impact they have on team spirit can lead to improved overall productivity and employee satisfaction.

Gainful Employment

Person with intellectual disabilities are persons first before their disabilities. Just like you and me, they have many needs and desires. Have you spoken to someone with disabilities recently? When you do, you often find that they would like to enjoy experiences just like you and me. They would like to hold a job of their own, earn an income of their own and spend their own money to make purchase of their desires. When hiring PwID, you will provide them with gainful and purposeful employment. By being involved in meaningful work and having work is a way for them to be engaged, especially within their community and society at large. Hiring them gives them a sense of purpose and something that they can be proud of.

Positive organisational impact

The current consumer trend is increasingly prioritising businesses that demonstrates commitment and social responsibility to add value to the community at large. By embracing inclusive hiring, your company's reputation would be greatly enhanced. Furthermore, some PwID are so full of life and enjoy meeting new people. Hiring them in front end customer service will not only bring joy to customers as they are able to create a positive experience for them but also leave a lasting impact, one you can be guaranteed will be talked about frequently.



EmployAble trainees completing a packing job in November 2022.

Cost incentives

Did you know that there are many government initiated incentives in Malaysia for companies hiring persons with disabilities? Companies hiring employees with disabilities will enjoy tax deductions as stated in Section 33 (1) of the Income Tax Act. Sometimes, there are accessibility factors to be considered when hiring PwID. The Malaysian government also provides remuneration on costs incurred when hiring persons with disabilities (e.g. any renovation or equipment purchased to accommodate an employee with disability) is also available. Finally, in Budget 2023, it is stated that employers will also be incentivised for hiring PwID.

Win-Win

Inclusively practicing hiring persons with intellectual disabilities is a win-win proposition for businesses and society as a whole. By embracing diversity and creating inclusive workplaces, organisations can tap into a pool of untapped talent that will benefit the economy. When we all begin prioritising inclusivity, we will create a Malaysia where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to their fullest potential.

● **Ivy** loves that she gets to live out her vocation through her profession. Along with her partners, she has developed a pre-employment training and job placement programme for individuals with learning and intellectual disabilities. Learn more about their efforts through myemployable.com



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Praying for both — the weak and the strong

When Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper, He held up bread and wine as two elements within which to make Himself especially present to us. Since that time, now more than 2000 years ago, Christians celebrating the Eucharist have used the same two things, bread and wine, to ask Christ to bless this world and to bring God's special presence to our world. Why two elements? Why both bread and wine? What reality does each represent?

I have always found this insight from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin particularly meaningful. Commenting on why both bread and wine are offered at each Eucharist, he says this: *"In a sense, the true substance to be consecrated each day is the world's development during that day — the bread symbolising, appropriately, what creation succeeds in producing, the wine (blood) what creation causes to be lost in exhaustion and suffering in the course of that effort."*

There's an important lesson here for how we are invited to enter into and pray the Eucharist. When Jesus said, *my flesh is food for the life of the world*, He meant just that. He meant that our prayer, particularly the Eucharist, needs to embrace nothing less than the world, the whole world and

everything and everybody in it. And that is asking a lot because, as we know, our world is a pathologically complex place, mixed, bi-polar, differentiated; a place full of both good and bad, young and old, healthy and sick, rich and poor, powerful and powerless, triumph and defeat, life and death. Making Christ's flesh food for the life of the world means holding a lot of things up for God's blessing, and that doesn't always come naturally to us.

As instituted by Jesus, the Eucharist needs to be a prayer that embraces the whole world and everything and everyone in it. It needs to be a prayer for the poor, the aged, the sick, the suffering, the powerless, and for everyone (including mother earth) who is being victimised — even as it needs to be a prayer for the rich, the young, the healthy, and the powerful. At the Eucharist, we need to pray for those in our hospitals and for those who are bursting with health. We need to pray for the woman or man who is dying, even as we pray for the young athlete who is preparing to compete in the Olympic games. And we need to pray for the refugees on our borders as well as for those who make laws regarding our borders. As Teilhard de Chardin says, we must hold up in prayer *what creation succeeds in producing and what creation*

causes to be lost in exhaustion and suffering in the course of that effort.

As a Roman Catholic priest, I have the privilege of presiding at the Eucharist, and whenever I do, I try always to remain conscious of the separate realities which the bread and wine symbolise. When I lift up the bread, I try to be conscious of the fact that I am holding up for God's blessing all that is healthy, growing in life, and is being celebrated in our world today. When I lift up the wine, I try to be conscious that I am holding up for God's blessing all that is being crushed, is suffering, and is dying today, as life on this earth moves forwards.

Our world is a big place, and at every moment somewhere on this planet, new life is being born, young life is taking root, some people are celebrating life, some are finding love, some are making love, and some are celebrating success and triumph. And, while all of this is happening, others are losing their health, others are dying, others are being raped and violated, and others are being crushed by hunger, defeat, hopelessness, and a broken spirit. At the Eucharist, the bread speaks for the former, the wine for the latter.

Several days ago, I presided over the Eucharist at the funeral of a man who had died at the age of 90. We celebrated this

faith, mourned with his family, highlighted the gift that was his life, tried to drink from the spirit he left behind, said a faith-filled ritual goodbye to him, and buried him in the earth. The wine we consecrated at the Eucharist that day symbolised all this, his death, our loss, and the deaths and losses of people everywhere — God's being with us in our suffering.

Shortly afterwards, I was in a house filled with the vibrancy and young energy of three small children — aged five, two, and eight months. Little on this planet so refreshes the soul as does young life. There isn't any anti-depressant drug anywhere on this planet that can do for us what the energy of a young child can do. When I next held up the bread at the Eucharist, I was more conscious of what that bread symbolised — energy, health, beauty, young life, vibrancy — God's joy and radiance on this planet.

● **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

SOCIAL JUSTICE



Making a Difference
Tony Magliano

Pope Francis declares "No to war." Is anyone listening?

"We are living at a crucial moment for humanity, in which peace seems to give way to war. Conflicts are growing, and stability is increasingly put at risk. We are experiencing a third world war, fought piecemeal, which, as time passes, seems to become ever more widespread," warned Pope Francis to members of the United Nations Security Council during their meeting at UN headquarters in New York on June 14.

Due to the Holy Father's post-surgical recovery at the time of the Security Council's meeting, Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher, Vatican foreign minister, read the Holy Father's dynamic message, which went on to say, "As a man of faith I believe that peace is God's dream for humanity. Yet sadly, I note that because of war, this wonderful dream is becoming changed into a nightmare."

In highly critical language to weapon producing corporations, and thus to the individuals who comprise them, and those who hold stock in them, Pope Francis says, "From the economic point of view, war is often more enticing than peace, inasmuch as it promotes profit, but always for a few and at the expense of the wellbeing of entire populations. The money earned from arms sales is thus money soiled with innocent blood" (see Pope Francis' powerful video illustrating this hellish reality <https://bit.ly/3CaoOgp>).

With inspiringly prophetic language the Holy Father attempts to move us to a



Pilgrims in St Peter's Square hold up a sign that says "pace," which means "peace" in Italian. (Vatican Media)

morally higher way of thinking and acting. He says, "It takes more courage to renounce easy profits for the sake of keeping peace than to sell ever more sophisticated and powerful weapons. It takes more courage to seek peace than to wage war. It takes more courage to promote encounter than confrontation, to sit at the negotiating table than to continue hostilities."

And his powerful language continues, "In order to make peace a reality, we must move away from the logic of the legitimacy of war: If this were valid in earlier times, when wars were more limited in scope, in our own day, with nuclear weapons and

those of mass destruction, the battlefield has become practically unlimited, and the effects potentially catastrophic."

And thus, Pope Francis declares in his ordinary magisterium as the leader of the Catholic Church: "The time has come to say an emphatic 'no' to war, to state that wars are not just, but only peace is just — a stable and lasting peace, built not on the precarious balance of deterrence, but on the fraternity that unites us."

With these words of the Supreme Pontiff, it can be credibly argued that the Catholic Church is being directed to understand that the "just-war theory" — if it ever

had any moral legitimacy, and that's a big "if" — cannot in anyway claim today that it morally reflects Gospel-based truth. If we take this teaching by Pope Francis seriously — and indeed we should — this is monumental! It deserves serious study, discussion and prayer in our churches, schools, universities, corporations and halls of government.

Pope Francis adds, "Where will we end up if everyone thinks of themselves? So those who strive to build peace must promote fraternity."

Building peace is a craft that requires passion and patience, experience and farsightedness, tenacity and dedication, dialogue and diplomacy. And listening as well: listening to the cries of those who are suffering because of wars, especially the children. Their tear-stained eyes judge us: the future we prepare for them will be the court of our present choices."

Please reflectively read the Holy Father's full address to the UN Security Council, and prayerfully discern what the Holy Spirit is calling you to do (see: <https://bit.ly/3pEoCEi>).

Pope Francis places both the hope, and the challenge, before us: "Peace is possible if it is truly desired!"

Do we truly desire it?

Tony Magliano is an internationally syndicated Catholic social justice and peace columnist. He can be reached at tmag6@comcast.net.

Little Catholics' Corner

Hello children of God,

In this week's Gospel, Jesus continues to tell His disciples about the kingdom of heaven through parables.

He said the kingdom is like a hidden treasure in a field. Imagine finding something so special that makes you very happy! You would be so excited that you give up everything you have to get that treasure and keep it safe.

Jesus also said the kingdom is like a merchant who searches for valuable pearls. One day, the merchant finds a pearl worth a lot

of money. It's so precious that he sells everything he owns to have it.

These stories teach us important lessons about the kingdom of heaven. They show us it's like a treasure or a valuable pearl. It's something so wonderful and important that we should be willing to let go of everything else to be a part of it. Jesus wants us to know that the kingdom of heaven is more valuable than anything we own.

These stories remind us to treasure the kingdom of heaven above everything else and to keep learning more about it.

Love, Aunty Gwen

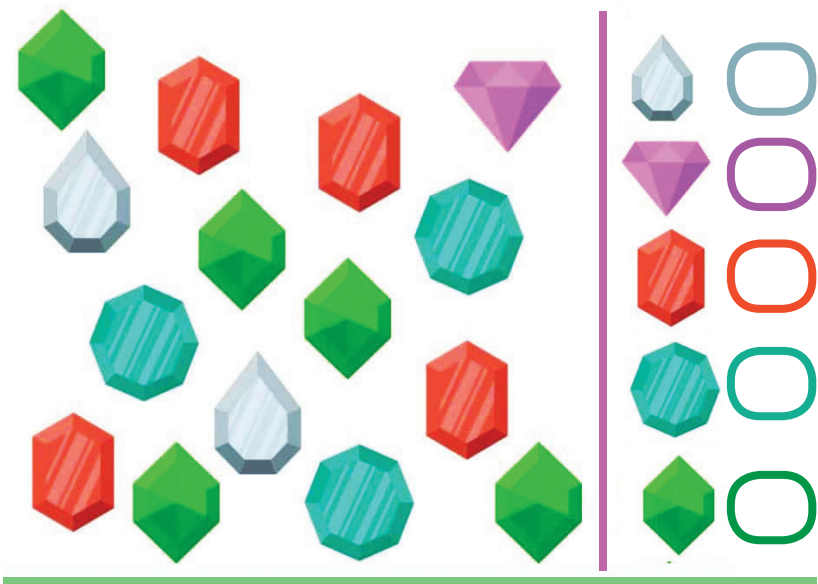
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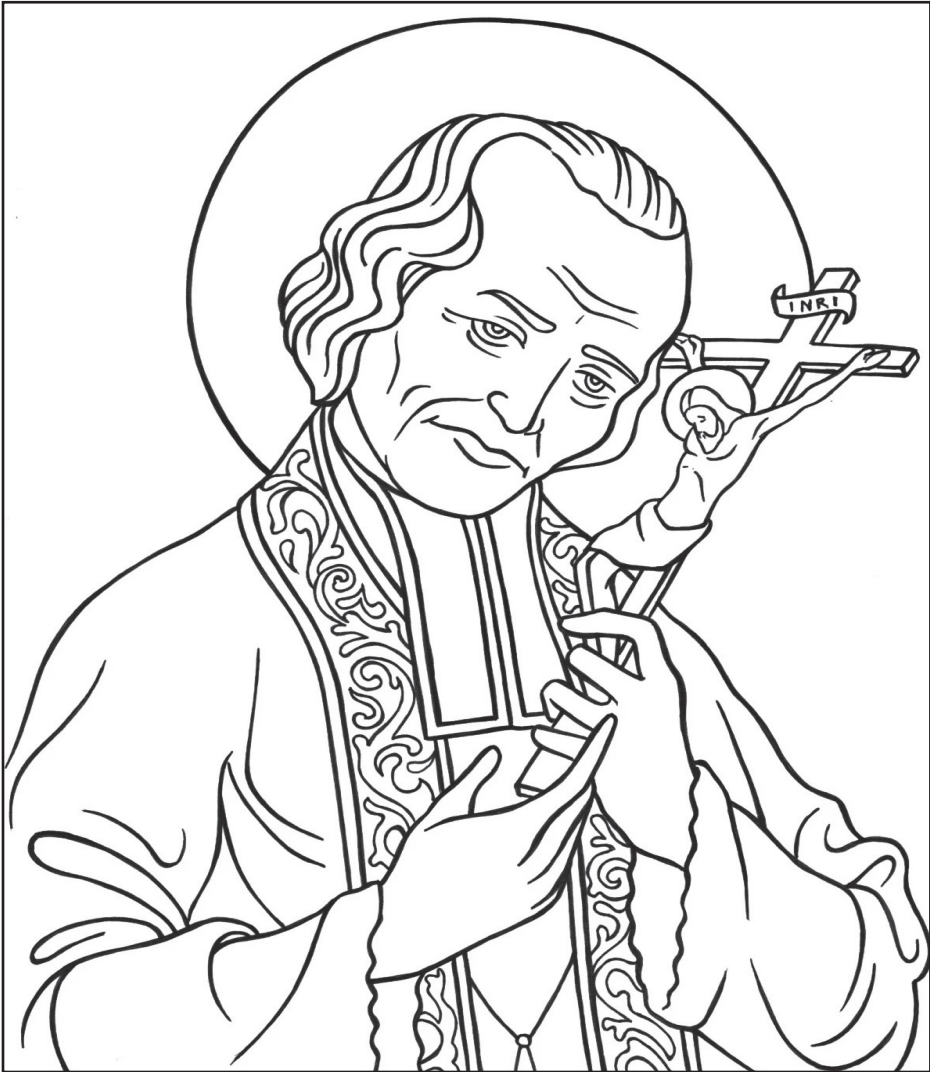
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The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Count the treasure on the left and write down in the empty box.



JOHN VIANNEY WAS A FRENCH CATHOLIC PRIEST WHO IS VENERATED IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AS THE PATRON SAINT OF PARISH PRIESTS. HIS FEAST IS CELEBRATED ON AUGUST 4. COLOUR THIS PICTURE AND REMEMBER TO SAY A PRAYER FOR OUR PRIESTS AND FOR MORE VOCATIONS.



King Solomon asked God for wisdom

Draw a picture of what you will ask from God



YOUTH

JULY 30, 2023

Come, Discover, Live

POH: The Penang diocese vocation team organised a *Come, Discover, Live* programme at the Church of St Michael, July 8 to 9. A total of 87 young individuals between the ages of 13 to 25, responded to the call and participated in the event.

The initiative for this programme came from the Church of St Michael's parish priest, Fr Anthony Liew. Under his guidance, the vocation director of the Penang diocese, Fr Louis Loi, led the vocation team in organising the event. A group of dedicated parishioners also contributed their efforts by working tirelessly from morning until late at night to ensure the success of the camp.

The diocesan team, comprising an exceptional group of four priests, nine religious members, one lay calling, and eight laity, embarked on a journey of ministering to the youth. They dedicated their efforts to connecting with the young participants through a range of activities including talks, sharing, buzz groups, personal reflections, group discussions, prayer sessions, and Holy Mass.

Music and song hold immense significance in the lives of today's youth. Whenever there is a Praise and Worship session, it has a profound impact, shaking the very gates of hell and causing unrest and annoyance to the evil one. Recognising that Praise and Worship are a form of "spiritual kung fu," several dedicated young individuals from St Michael's Youth Group joined forces. They united in prayer, combining their unique gifts and talents, and sought empowerment from the Holy Spirit to minister to and uplift the participants through their captivating Praise and Worship. Their youthful enthusiasm was so infectious that not only were the participants touched and motivated, but the facilitators were also on their feet, dancing.

On the first day of the programme, the focus was on providing the participants with a unique encounter with Jesus. A series of talks centred around the incredible love of God for each person, the importance of turning back to Him, and the promise of transformative lives through experiencing the touch of the Lord. After the discussions, the attendees spent time in silent Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, interiorising the talks, sharing and discussions.

The second day was about vocation. It started with Mass, followed by Fr Louis sharing on voca-



"Come, Discover, Live!" General Vocation Camp at the Church of St Michael, Ipoh July 8-9, 2023

tion, the four different states of life - priesthood, religious life, married life, and singlehood offered to us, and the different orders in our diocese.

The next session was The Vocation Lab, where a hall was arranged with eleven booths. Participants were organised into groups and took turns visiting each booth. In each visit, which lasted approximately 10 minutes, participants engaged with the facilitators, asked questions and gained insights into the various Orders. The facilitators shared valuable information about the charisms of their Orders, the service they undertake, and their vocation stories.

The Orders who participated were from the Diocesan Priesthood, Order of Friars Minor Capuchin (OFM Cap), Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM), Good Shepherd Sisters (RGS), Little Sisters of the Poor (LSP), Sisters of Puteri Karmel, Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary (CSCM), Order of Friars Minor (OFM) and the Auxiliary of the Apostolate. They were joined by the laity who represented married life and singlehood.

Following the Vocation Lab, a Vocation Forum was conducted, with representatives from the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (CSSR) and the Brothers of the Christian Schools (De La Salle Brothers) joining in. These representatives generously shared their personal experiences and vocation stories, giving the participants a deeper insight into the different religious orders. The participants were also encouraged to ask additional questions and seek further clarity about the various Orders and their unique paths.

As the programme came to an end, the participants were reminded of the fundamental truth that every individual is called to glorify God in all aspects of life, and the choice of one's vocation plays a crucial role in this endeavour. The attendees were coaxed to choose wisely, considering which vocation would allow them to best glorify God. — *By PDVT*



The OFM Friars during the Vocation Lab.

What the participants say:

"It was interesting to hear what the facilitators had to share about their experiences of how God moves in their lives." — *Tracia Nicolle Gallyot (15), Church of St Michael, Ipoh*

"The talks helped me realise the importance of having a relationship with God and the power of prayer." — *Kishona A/P Sandanasamy (16), Church of the Sacred Heart, Kampar*

"This camp has given me so many benefits, especially about my faith. It helped grow my faith and mend my relationship with God. I also met a lot of good-hearted people who made me feel welcome and helped us a lot during the two-day camp." — *Jessydra Eadith Edward (23), Church of the Risen Christ, Penang*

"During Adoration, I recognised the importance of speaking to God, and the vibrant Praise and Worship session allowed me to sing praises to the Most High, with an open heart. This camp reminded me of the importance of spending time with God and asking for His guidance to answer the call of my vocation." — *Aaron Benedict (25), Church of the Nativity Blessed Virgin Mary, Butterworth*

"This was the first camp I joined. I thank God for the opportunity. I received spiritual healing and had a change in the way I think about spirituality and mentality. I thought that calling was about becoming either a nun or a priest, but I was wrong. I got more knowledge about our religion and also my purpose and mission in life. I'm so grateful for this opportunity." — *Claire Vyonne Jimmy Joe (22), Church of the Risen Christ, Penang*

"I joined the vocation camp because I was eager to know what God's plans are for me. Each session allowed me to reflect on my faith, and it opened my eyes to see the signs He has been giving in my daily life. It made me realise how special and blessed I am to be His child. I needed to feel His presence.

"To my surprise, I experienced peace, strength, healing and love throughout the camp. Joining this camp was the best decision I have made thus far.

"However, to be very honest, I'm still unsure about my vocation, but I know a seed has been planted in my heart and it takes time for it to grow. I just can't wait to see what 'plant' God wants me to grow into!" — *Audrey Kok Ee Lin (23), Church of St Francis of Assisi, Cheras*



During one of the group sharings.

EMPOWERING YOUNG ORANG ASLI TO BE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

BIDOR: A special outreach programme, with a prayer and reflection session was held at the Gereja Ibunda Maria in Kg Chang, located approximately five km away from Bidor town recently.

The gathering was attended by nearly 60 Orang Asli Catholics, including 35 children aged between seven and 17 years old. The event also welcomed the presence of a group of Catholics from Kuala Lumpur, who collaborated with parishioners of the Chapel of St Joseph, Bidor. Among the attendees were the chapel's chairman, Augustine Savarimuthu, Alice Jabaimalar and the Orang Asli Catholic lay leader, Junaida.

The event started with a prayer session, followed by hymns in Bahasa Malaysia, in which everyone participated. Junaida led the prayers followed by a reflection on John 8:12 and Matthew 5:14-16. The Orang Asli attendees, especially the young ones, were motivated to follow the example of Jesus



During one of the games.

Christ and become beacons of light in the world. They were inspired to share Jesus' message through their words and actions within their community and beyond, with an aspiration that people see the light of Jesus shining through them. The 90 odd peo-

ple mixed and mingled over a catered lunch before moving on to play indoor games like the balloon competition. Participants of all ages took part enthusiastically and walked away with many prizes.

The 35 students beamed with joy when

they were each given a school bag, bath towel, Rosary, pillow, biscuits, snacks, a litre of drink, 2B pencils, holy water, and a toothbrush.

The outreach programme aimed at bringing God's love to the young and to encourage them to deepen their faith life, by reciting the Rosary daily, with family members.

Before leaving, the KL group also visited five dilapidated non-Catholic homes to give pillows and biscuits to the residents. They then proceeded to the Church of St Mary, Tapah for a prayer session with parish priest, Fr James Pitchay.

Fr James, also the chapel administrator for Bidor and Kg Chang, encouraged Catholics to help the poor, especially those living on the fringes of society. He also commended the city Catholics for working with his parish in caring care for the poor and encouraged them to continue their mission.

— **By Bernard Anthony**

Strengthening bonds and empowering youth leaders

PORT DICKSON: The youth ministry from the Church of the Holy Family (HFK), Kajang, organised a dynamic and engaging formation at the IJ Retreat Centre last month.

The purpose of the formation was to cultivate stronger bonds among the young church leaders and generate creative ideas for the upcoming year's activities. Under



Fr Michael Chua during his session.

the guidance of parish priest, Fr Michael Chua and supervision of dedicated mentors Kevin, Sheila, and Alma, the event achieved resounding success. The formation, themed *Finding God and ourselves in Nature*, encouraged open dialogue, personal reflections, and team-building exercises. The atmosphere was vibrant and filled with positive energy as the participants, nine of the core team members, engaged in heartfelt discussions and shared their aspirations for the youth ministry. Through his sessions, Fr Michael guided the youth in a personal reflection on how they see themselves and others, followed by a spiritual reflection on seeing themselves through the eyes of God.

The evening and following morning were filled with various interactive sessions which allowed the youth to forge lasting friendships and brainstorm innovative and



Holy Family Church youth ministry leaders.

impactful activities over the next 12 months. The HFK youth, armed with fresh ideas, are poised to embark on an inspiring journey of faith, service, and fellowship over the coming year.

As the participants bid farewell, they thanked Fr Michael for his unwavering commitment to the spiritual growth of the

youth ministry. His guidance, supported by the mentors, helped equip the committee with the tools and inspiration to deepen their faith and make a positive impact within their community. This event not only strengthened the bond between the youth but also ignited their collective passion for serving God and spreading His love to others.

STEP INTO THE TIME MACHINE: OLLYM RETRO DINNER & DANCE

KLANG: The youth ministry of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, OLLYM, embarked on a journey through time with the much-anticipated Retro Dinner & Dance. This captivating evening transported about 380 attendees back to the golden era of the 60s - 90s, where memories were made, and laughter filled the air.

Party-goers of all ages were seen diving into the grunge fashion and alternative music of the 90s, embracing the neon hues and pop culture of the 80s, immersing themselves in the groovy beat and disco glam of the 70s, and witnessing the flower power and peace of the 60s. It brought together individuals from all walks of life, fostering connections and reminiscing about simpler times. The event served as a reminder that, despite the passing years, the values of love, joy and togetherness remain timeless and vital.

Not only did attendees revel in the nostalgia of past eras, but they also played an active role in shaping the future of the youth in the community. By supporting the fund-raiser event, guests contributed close to RM4,500 towards



Performance by the OLL youth.

the construction of a new youth centre — a space designed to nurture and empower the young members of the church. This centre will serve as a hub for mentorship, educational programmes, and recreational activities, providing a supportive environment where the youth can grow and thrive.

As the evening unfolded, guests were treated to a sumptuous Western and Asian fusion buffet dinner. The lucky draw added an extra

layer of anticipation and excitement to the event. In addition to the lucky draws, the Retro Dinner & Dance also featured a highly anticipated Best Dressed contest. Attendees put their fashion prowess to the test, donning their most fabulous retro outfits. At the end of the night, lucky draw winners and the Best Dressed contest winners were announced, sparking applause and cheers from the crowd, and these special moments added an extra layer of joy

and excitement to an already unforgettable evening.

The highlight of the night was when the dance floor came alive with The Nightbirds, featuring a playlist of hits from the 60s - 90s, and DJ Roy ensuring everyone was busting a move and reliving their favourite dance crazes. The night also showcased some special presentations for the youths and former youths as well as some performances by the youths.

OLLYM extends its heartfelt appreciation to all who attended, sponsored, and contributed to the success of the Retro Dinner & Dance. It is through the unity and generosity of the parishioners that such meaningful events can take place and the youth be empowered to embrace their full potential.

While the echoes of laughter and music have faded, the memories created at the Retro Dinner & Dance will forever remain in the hearts of those who attended. It was an evening where time stood still, and the spirit of love and camaraderie prevailed. — **By Shaienne Delaney**

MEMORIAM

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Pope remembers Bishop Bettazzi's 'intrepid witness' to Vatican II

VATICAN: Pope Francis has expressed spiritual closeness to the family and all those who are mourning the passing of Bishop Luigi Bettazzi, *pic*, who died on Saturday, July 16, just months ahead of what would have been his 100th birthday.

In a telegram signed by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, on behalf of the pontiff and addressed to Bishop Edoardo Aldo Cerrato of Ivrea, the Pope recalled the prelate whom he said was "so loved and appreciated by those he met during his long and fruitful ministry."

In particular, Pope Francis said he remembers him as "a great lover of the Gospel who distinguished himself for his closeness to the poor, becoming a prophetic sign of justice and peace in particular times in the history of the Church, as well as a man of dialogue and a point of reference for numerous representatives of Italian public and political life."

Bishop Bettazzi of Ivrea, in Italy's northern Piedmont region, was a long-time friend of Pax Christi International and served as President of the peace movement from 1978 to 1985.

His focus on active nonviolence, disarmament and human rights fuelled by biblical spirituality was evident in the many books he wrote and, in his pledge, to renounce wealth and privilege and to embrace a lifestyle of evangelical poverty.

He played a role in promoting dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Italian political scene and even offered himself — together with two other bishops — as hostage to the Red Brigades terrorists in exchange for kidnapped former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro.

Intrepid witness to the Council

The Pope's message continues with words of gratitude to the Lord "for this intrepid witness to the [Second Vatican] Council," and the invocation of the eternal reward promised to faithful servants.

Finally, he imparts his apostolic blessing upon Bishop Bettazzi's Diocesan community and upon "that of Bologna, which saw him esteemed as presbyter and then as auxiliary bishop." — **By Linda Bordon, Vatican News**



In Loving Memory of
Pathiadass a/l Ganaratnam (Robert)
05.11.1949 – 03.07.2023

40th Day Memorial
Mass will be celebrated on **Saturday, 12 August 2023** at the **Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 152 Jalan Peel** at 6:00pm followed by dinner fellowship at the Church Hall.

*I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.
I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles
when life is done.*

*I'd like to leave an echo
whispering softly down the ways,
Of happy times and laughing times
and bright and sunny days.
I'd like the tears of those who grieve,
to dry before the sun;
Of happy memories that I leave when life is done.*

Deeply missed and forever loved by
Daughter, Son, Daughter-in-Law, siblings
and a host of relatives and friends.



4th Year Anniversary
In Ever Loving Memory of

FRANCIS XAVIER
S/O ANTHONY
(SUB-INSPECTOR PDRM, PENANG)

Returned to the Lord:
31st July 2019

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, even if he dies, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in Me, shall never die."

Forever loved, cherished and dearly missed by wife, daughter, son-in-law, grandchildren, family members, relatives and friends.

In Loving Memory Of
AGNES EMMANUEL
30 July 1932 – 18 April 2023

"To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die." ~ Thomas Campbell



*Death is nothing at all.
I have only slipped away into the next room.
I am I, and you are you.*

*Whatever we were to each other that we still are.
Call me by my old familiar name, speak to me in
the easy way which you always used.*

*Put no difference in your tone, wear no forced
air of solemnity or sorrow.
Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes
we enjoyed together.*

*...Why should I be out of mind because
I am out of sight?
I am waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere
very near, just around the corner.
All is well*

~ Canon Henry Scott Holland of St. Paul's Cathedral

You've gone 100 days but you lived for 90 years. You are now with your loving husband. Your life was full and all of us left behind remember you with love and affection. Watch over us and guide us as you have always done. Love from your children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and great great-grandchild.

12TH ANNIVERSARY
Remembering With Love



SEBASTIAN VINCENT

17th November 1928 - 4th August 2011

*"When we are able to die with grateful hearts,
grateful to God and our friends and family,
our death becomes a source of life for others."*

~ Henri J.M. Nouwen

Deeply missed and cherished
Celine Vincent and family,
and our relatives and friends around the world.

IN EVER LOVING MEMORY

JULICE VISUVASAM PEREIRA

BELOVED WIFE OF LATE A. ABRAHAM

(1929 – 5TH AUGUST 2022)

The First Year Memorial Mass
for the repose of the soul of our dearest
Mummy, Grandma and Great Grandma
will be offered at the

Church of the Risen Christ, Jalan Sungkai
off Jalan Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur
On Saturday, 5th August 2023

Time: 6.30pm

Please do join us for the Mass

*'A mother's love lives on forever
in the memories she created
and the hearts she touched'*



1st Year Anniversary
In Everloving Memory of



Mr Mariasusai Innasi Udayar

Date of Birth: 11-07-1944

Departed: 05-08-2022

*God saw that he was getting tired,
A cure was not to be. So, He put His arms around
him and whispered, "Come with Me".
With tearful eyes, we watched him suffer,
and saw him fade away. Although we loved him
dearly, we could not make him stay.
A golden heart stopped beating, hard working
hands to rest. God broke our hearts to prove
to us He only takes "the best".*

Memorial Mass will be offered at the
Church of St Francis of Assisi, 7th Mile Cheras
on Saturday, 5th August 2023 at 6.00pm
(Sunset Mass) followed by dinner at 7.30pm
at the Church carpark.

Deeply missed by wife, Jayanyanam Sinnappan
sons, daughter, son-in-law, daughters-in-law,
grandchildren, relatives and friends.

Vincent Raj: 0192646830,
Stephen Mariasusai: 0196281949

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In Memoriam
First Anniversary



Kunjamma (Kitty) George

14.11.1936 – 01.08.2022

Not a day passes without we remembering your
beautiful smile, your joyous laughter and above
all, your love for us. We cherish those moments.

Sadly missed by
Your loving husband, sons, daughter,
daughters-in-law, son-in-law and grandchildren.

In loving memory of the late



MR AROCKIASAMY
RAPHAEL

DOB : 02-10-1927
DOP : 21-08-1974

49TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY

*All that the Father gives to me shall come to me.
And whoever comes to me, I will not cast out. – John 6:37*
*Dearest Appa & Amma thank you for leading us
in the path of life of joy in faith.*

Always deeply missed by all your beloved children, in-laws,
grandchildren, great-grandchildren, relatives & friends.



MDM ANNAMAH
AROKIAM

DOB : 31-12-1933
DOP : 01-08-2022

1ST YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Conference presidents working on collaboration with everyone

KUALA LUMPUR: New office bearers were elected during the 112th Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei (CBCMSB), July 9-14.

Archbishop Julian Leow Beng Kim of Kuala Lumpur was elected as the President of the CBCMSB via secret ballot. He succeeds cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis of Penang who held the position since 2016.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Simon Poh of Kuching was elected as President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, a position which was previously held by Archbishop Julian.

Episcopal Commission Presidents were also chosen during the plenary assembly.

The term of office for office bearers and commissions is two years' renewable.

On the right are the comments of Archbishops Julian and Simon on their new positions which take effect from Sept 16, 2023.

● Turn to Pages 3 & 4 for more



Archbishop Julian Leow, CBCMSB President

“As President of the Conference of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei I hope that the deliberations and decisions we as bishops make, can be followed through by all the commissions concerned. We should collaborate with other commissions and leverage on the strength of each other.

“Structures are important to give a framework of how decisions are made and carried out. There should be competent persons to carry out and follow through systematically these decisions until fruition.

“I hope to see the CBCMSB play her role at the Asian, as well as the Universal, levels. This conference of three tiny countries has had a cardinal from each plus another for Malaysia just recently, totalling four Cardinals, two having left us all too soon. I envisage CBCMSB will contribute to the Church in Asia in particular with active bishop participation in various commissions.

“Being a small conference, we



must also look out for the little ones in our midst. Safeguarding minors and the vulnerable are high on our list of concern. The care for the poor and those at the margins must also be brought to the centre of our attention and focus.

“I pray CBCMSB will continue to play our role on the universal stage of the world as well as paying detailed attention to the needs of the vulnerable among us. We journey together with a heart open to ecological conversion to protect and respect Mother Earth.”



Archbishop Simon Poh, CBCM President

“We realise that the Church in Malaysia is living in a time of great challenges. The three years of pandemic have brought much suffering and hardship to poor families. The changing climate, with longer dry period and stronger storms, are affecting the crops. In addition, the uncertain future and political situation have experienced a rise in fundamentalism where politics of race and religion are threatening to destabilise the government and economy. “My desire is that the Catholic Church in Malaysia — in collaboration with Christians and people of goodwill from all faiths — will contribute towards nation-building. May we build a Malaysia where the rights and liberty of every citizen — irrespective of race, culture, faith and beliefs — are upheld and respected, as enshrined in the *Rukun Negara*, with the following ambitions :
● Achieving and fostering better



unity amongst the society;

- Preserving a democratic way of life;
- Creating a just society where the prosperity of the country can be enjoyed together in a fair and equitable manner;
- Ensuring a liberal approach towards the rich and varied cultural traditions;

- Building a progressive society that will make use of science and modern technology.

With the Catholic bishops of Sabah, Sarawak and *Semenanjung*, our Catholic Church is committed to work for peace and harmony and to respond to this current climate crisis today. We will exercise our spiritual and moral leadership to contribute to the common good of all peoples and our *Tanah Air Malaysia*.

Source on *Rukun Negara* from Malaysian Information Portal:
<https://www.malaysia.gov.my/portal/content/30110>

Holy Father offers ‘grandfatherly’ wisdom to youngsters

ROME: The young people attending this year’s Vatican summer camp, which brings together children of Vatican employees, asked Pope Francis all sorts of questions during their meeting with him on the morning of July 18 in the Paul VI Audience Hall.

Among the many questions, young Edoardo asked, “What message can we bring to our heroes: our parents?” Pope Francis replied by encouraging everyone to say “thank you” often to their mothers and fathers for their commitment in raising them.

Elena asked, “Who are the Pope’s superheroes?” and the Pope replied his “grandparents”, recalling their “wisdom” and why it is also “important to talk to them.”



Pope Francis poses for a photo with children in the Vatican's Paul VI audience hall July 18, 2023. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Raphael, the eldest of the three, asked the Pope, “How can we be heroes in the digital world?” Pope Francis responded by suggesting that we engage positively in this area but avoid becoming manipulated by it.

The three children asking the questions were taking part in the summer kids camp at the Vatican.

The Pope visited with them like a

grandfather in the midst of his grandchildren and, coincidentally, just a few days before Sunday’s celebration of the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly to which he has given great support.

Camp animators Giuditta and Giacomo told Pope Francis about the rich experience the summer camp has offered them.

They described the camp as “a precious experience for all the animators and assistant animators, because it offered the opportunity to grow together with these youngsters who give us so many smiles.”

They noted how they draw inspiration from the encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti*, saying it “acts as a compass in our journey that aims to help the young people understand how important it is to create a fraternity among people, so that everyone feels recognised and respected simply as a brother or sister, rediscovering the power, value and beauty of fraternal relationships.”

The journey is one that emphasises the importance of relationships and sharing “through the discovery of

emotions and kind attitudes based on trust rather than fear of the other, on dialogue rather than confrontation, on free and good gestures rather than arrogance and selfishness.”

Some of the young people attending the Vatican summer camp will travel to Lisbon for the upcoming World Youth Day, Aug 1-6.

After reciting the *Our Father* with the young people, Pope Francis imparted his apostolic blessing and asked them to take it with them to their parents, grandparents and friends, while remembering always to pray for one another.

Finally, the Pope posed for a group photograph together with the participants. — By Rosario Capomasi, *Vatican News*

Argentine priest is Pope’s new personal secretary

VATICAN: Archbishop Jorge García Cuerva of Buenos Aires, Argentina, on July 17 announced that Pope Francis has appointed a priest from the Buenos Aires Archdiocese, Fr Daniel Pellizzon, 40, (*pic*), to act as his personal secretary. Pellizzon will replace Fr Gonzalo Aemilius in the position.

García said Pellizzon will travel to Rome at the beginning of August to begin his new role.

The archbishop offered his prayer for the priest as he begins “this new mission entrusted to the service of the Church.”

Pellizzon was born Jan 24, 1983, in Buenos Aires.

In 2011 and 2012, he collaborated with Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio — the archbishop at that time — in organising his personal archives.

Pellizzon was ordained a priest on Nov 3, 2018.

He began his ministry first as a deacon and then as parochial vic-

ar, serving pilgrims at St Cajetan Shrine in the Liniers neighbourhood of Buenos Aires for five years.

In March, he was assigned as vicar to Our Lady of Mercy Parish, where he continues to work to date. — By Julieta Villar, *CNA*



photo/Archdiocese of Buenos Aires