

HERALD

The Catholic Weekly

Mission Statement

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

TERHAD

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The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Cor. 10:16-17



A reality check for all

■ P5



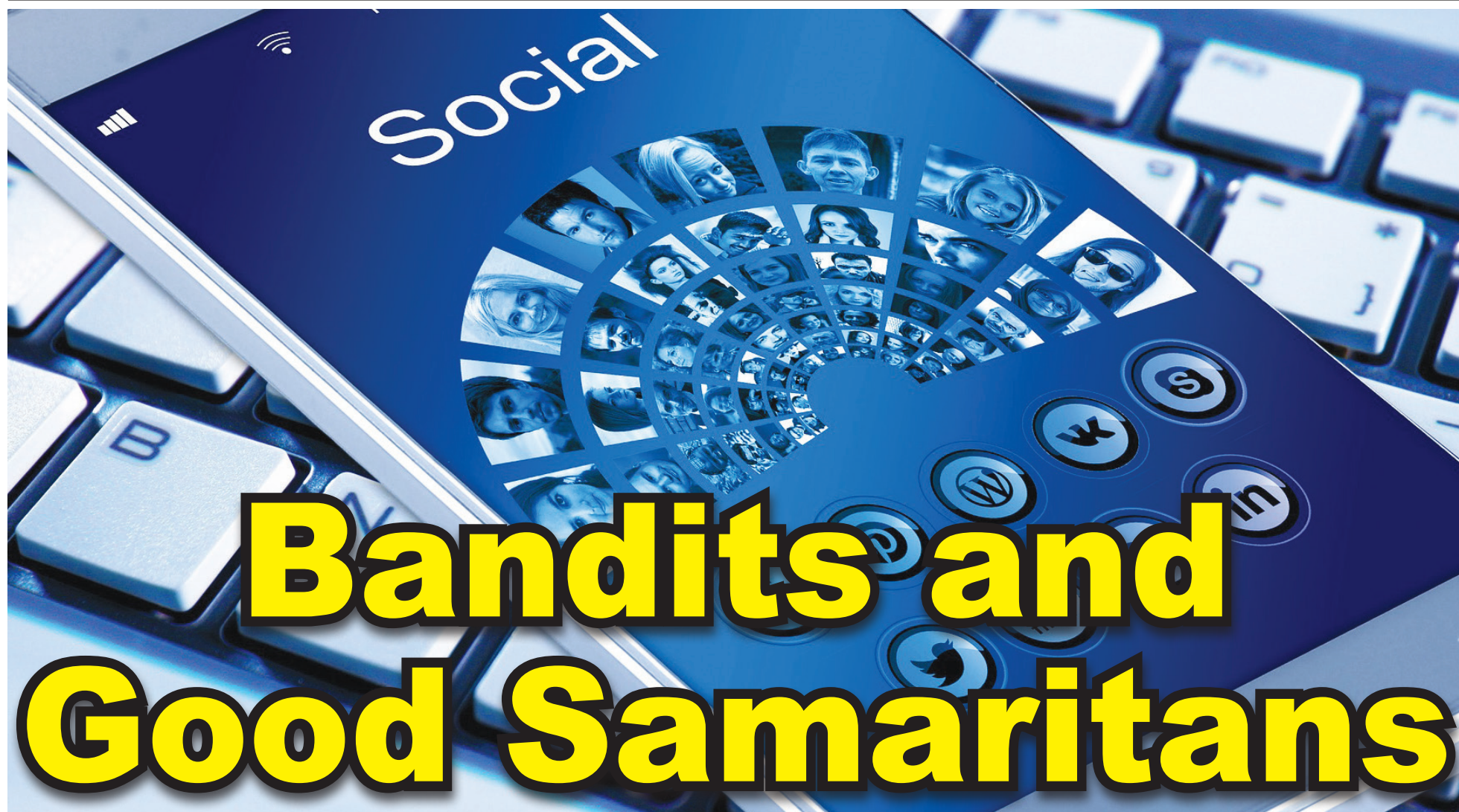
Making the papacy visible

■ P10



Above all, keep loving one another earnestly

■ P16



ON SOCIAL MEDIA

VATICAN: Online hatred and fake news are the scourges of our time. Social media is the place where people can express themselves without restraint, more or less anonymously. The various networks are even accused of encouraging circulation of the most divisive content.

“Even in Catholic media, limits can be overstepped, defamation and slander can become commonplace, and all ethical standards and respect for the good name of others can be abandoned,” laments Pope Francis in *Gaudete et Exultate*, his 2018 exhortation “on the call to holiness in today’s world”.

It’s a decades-old question that’s never been resolved — Are there certain criteria that should guide how Catholics use the Internet? The Vatican’s Dicastery for Communication sought to shed greater light on the issue recently by issuing a pastoral reflection on engagement with social media.

The text, *Towards Full Presence* is aimed

at promoting a common reflection on the involvement of Christians in social media and invites us to listen to the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

It may seem surprising that this text was chosen to reflect on today’s cyber culture. But it actually opens our eyes to what’s happening on social networks.

There are those who behave like brigands, when they harass, express their hatred or steal the attention of others. And there are those who are victims of such bad actions. Then there are those who pass by with indifference along the digital highways. Finally, there are those who act like the Samaritan, healing not only the physical wounds, but also the divisions and animosity that exist between social groups, enabling connections to be transformed into genuine encounters.

It’s true that Christians use various social networks to put up messages, images and videos. But how many are really, truly, and totally present? Not to occupy digital space, but to make social media a place of authentic exchange, in which people genuinely give of themselves and receive from others.

The document looks in particular at what the Christian notion of “neighbour” means in the digital universe.

“Who is my ‘neighbour’ on social media?” asks the document, which brings together a wide range of themes. The text seems to take note of the changes brought about by the interference of digital technology in all dimensions of human life, while the Vatican has for a long time reduced the Internet to a mere “continent” to be evangelised. But this time, Rome seems to be going beyond this simplistic reading.

“Social media ‘neighbours’ are most clearly those with whom we maintain connections. Neighbours are also often those we cannot see, either because platforms prevent us from seeing them or because they are simply not there,” says the new Vatican document. “Recognising our digital neighbour is about recognising that every person’s life concerns us, even when his or her presence (or absence) is mediated by digital means,” it further asserts.

It is in the name of digitally adapting the definition of “neighbour” that the text appeals to the responsibility of Catholics present on social networks.

“When groups that present themselves as ‘Catholic’ use their social media presence to foster division, they are not behaving like a Christian community should,” says *Towards Full Presence*. “It is possible to find many profiles or accounts on social media that proclaim religious content but do not engage in relational dynamics in a faithful way,” it laments. “Hostile interactions and violent, degrading words, especially in the context of sharing Christian content, cry out from the screen and are a contradiction to the Gospel itself,” the document points out.

“The problem of polemical and superficial, and thus divisive, communication is particularly worrying when it comes from Church leadership: bishops, pastors, and prominent lay leaders,” the text asserts. “These not only cause division in the community but also give permission and legitimacy for others likewise to promote similar types of communication,” it says. — LCI (<https://international.la-croix.com/VaticanNews>) (Source photo: Pixabay/Gerd Altmann)

● See more on Page 9

HERALD

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Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre

5, Jalan Robertson, 50150, KL

Tel / Whatsapp: 03-20268291

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Facebook : www.facebook.com/
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Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur,

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EDITOR

Patricia Pereira

editor1@herald.com.my

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Social Media Coordinator

Sandra Ann Inbaraj

sandra@herald.com.my

WRITER

Children's Section

Gwen Manickam

gwen@herald.com.my

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Youth Section

Amanda Mah

amanda@herald.com.my

BAHASA MALAYSIA

Melania Liza Magnus

liza@herald.com.my

MANDARIN

Adelina Wong

yin4482@gmail.com

TAMIL

RK Samy

rksamy3@hotmail.com

ADMINISTRATOR

Advertisements / Memoriam / Subscription

advertisement@herald.com.my

LETTERS

letterseditor@herald.com.my



EDITOR'S NOTE

A survey conducted by The Pew Research Centre (*What Americans Know about Religion — Pew Research Study, July 2019*) concluded that many Catholics do not fully understand the fundamental teaching of the Church concerning the real presence of our Lord in the Eucharist.

According to this research, “Just one-third of US Catholics (31 per cent) say they believe that ‘during Mass, the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus.’ While, 69 per cent of self-described Catholics believe “the bread and wine used in Communion ‘are merely symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.’”

The study's findings sparked much debate in the Church, including among the bishops of the United States, resulting in the launching of a three-year Eucharistic Revival aimed at seeking to reawaken Catholics' understanding of the Eucharistic and offer a path toward healing. The revival will culminate in a National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis in 2024.

I wonder what the percentage would be like if we conducted a similar research here amongst our Malaysian Catholics. Do we know and understand enough about the Eucharist to be able to explain it to non-Christians? (see pg 13, *Corpus Christi — Musings on the Holy Eucharist*).

From the very beginning of Christian history, holy men and women have reflected on Christ's presence in the Eucharist and have taught that the sacred transformation that occurs in the Eucharistic liturgy is a sign and a cause of the transformation that should occur in the lives of all those who receive this great sacrament of Christ's love.

Pope Francis, in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), has continued this tradition and forcefully reminded us that the Eucharist “is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.” The words of the Holy Father resonate well with the Eucharistic revival in the US, which coincided with a sharp rise in anxiety, depression and other mental health issues among large segments of the nation's population. This then urged Catholics to ask, “how we, as a Church, can better support one another and live out this call of caring for one another as one body?” (see back page, *Eucharistic revival – a call to accompany those with mental illness*).

We live in a time of confusion and controversy over what it means to be a Catholic. Many diverse and dissonant voices tell us that our faith is old-fashioned and out of touch. Church teaching is often portrayed as repressive or intolerant. The younger



generation these days tend to regard religious teaching and practice as optional. At worst, those who take their faith seriously are regarded as a threat to ideologies that define the status quo.

In spite of years of controversies and changing practices, the foundational teachings of our Church have not changed. We may come to understand things differently (in a new light), or we can mature in our ability to express what we believe, but the teaching we have received from the Apostles remains constant and unchanging even as new questions and controversies arise to challenge our most cherished beliefs and traditions.

Let's cut through all the confusion and controversy to the heart of the matter. The Eucharist is a mystery that we may never fully comprehend, but we Catholics are invited (and challenged) to accept that Christ is really present in this great sacrament.

As we prepare to celebrate the solemn feast of Christ's body and blood this weekend, let's reflect prayerfully on its meaning for us and for our world. Christ is present to us in the most intimate way possible. He becomes one with us so that we can become one with our sisters and brothers everywhere.

Patricia Pereira

Real presence of Christ is in the Eucharist

The Solemnity of Corpus Christi, or the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, originated in France in the mid 13th century and was extended to the whole Church by Pope Urban IV in 1264. This feast reminds us of the mystical and physical manifestations of the Body of Christ, namely the Holy Eucharist and the Church. However, the primary focus of this feast is still the Eucharist. This is echoed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1324-1327) which states that, “The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit’ of the Christian life.” The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely, Christ Himself, our Pasch. At every Mass, our attention is called to the Eucharist and the Real Presence of Christ in it.

We know that in order for us to go about our daily life, we need physical food to nourish us and give us strength. However, we are not merely physical beings. We are all made of both body and soul. Therefore, we also need another kind of food that can nourish our spirits and souls. The food par excellence for our spirit is, of course, the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, the food and drink that Jesus Himself gave to us under the form of bread and wine. In the Gospel, Jesus says: “I Myself am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who feeds on this



bread will live forever. The bread I will give is My flesh for the life of the world.”

When we reflect on the word ‘hunger’, it teaches us something about the Eucharist. We are hungry not just for physical food but we must also hunger for food that will last, food that will give life to our souls. We know that without adequate food for our body, we become weak and cannot work. When we do not have enough nourishment in our bodies, our immune system will be lowered and we will fall prey easily to bodily sickness. In other words, without food, it would be difficult to live a meaningful life. We cannot enjoy health, work, learning and freedom without first attending to our hunger.

What applies to the body also applies to the soul. If our body craves for food that can give us the strength that we need to live, then our soul too would crave for food that can help us to live out our spiritual life. With-

out the nourishment that comes from the Eucharist, we risk the danger of becoming weak spiritually and incapable of reaching out to help others. We become easy victims to temptations and depression. But we also need to realise that the Eucharist does not rid us of our temptations. Rather, it gives us the strength and grace to resist these temptations when they come. Without the bread of life, we run the risk of losing our freedom in the spirit and become enslaved by the ways of the world. As the old adage goes, “not all that glitters is gold.” If we want to be truly alive and active in spirit, we need to receive the Eucharist as frequently as we can.

The secondary focus is that of the physical manifestation of the Body of Christ, seen in the Church. The Church is called the Body of Christ because of the intimate communion which Jesus shares with His disciples. He expresses this in the Gospels by using the metaphor of a body in which

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Fr Philip Tay, OCD

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (A)

Readings: Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16;

1 Corinthians 10:16-17;

Gospel: John 6:51-58

He is the head. This image helps keep in focus both the unity and the diversity of the Church. Receiving the Body of Christ i.e. the Eucharist, we receive the grace to live out our roles as different parts of the physical Body of Christ.

The question to ponder upon is this — when people see the Eucharist, they see or at least know that it represents the mystical Body of Christ. However, when people see the physical Body of Christ, which is represented by us, collectively as a Church, do people still see the Body of Christ or do they see something else? When we consume the Eucharist, we receive the presence of Jesus in our lives. If we have Jesus in our lives, then should not our lives reflect that presence as well?

Today's feast reminds us of the need to be an effective witness — by being a united Body of Christ in the eyes of the world. Nourished by the mystical Body of Christ, we pray that we will all be transformed into the true physical Body of Christ, manifesting His presence in the world today.



KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

June

- 12 2023 Workshop – Malaysian Catholic Education Council
- 15 AGM – Assunta Hospital
- 16 Feast & Sanctification of Priests – Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, KL
- 17 Confirmation – Church of St Thomas More, Subang Jaya
- 17 Confirmation – Cathedral of St John, KL
- 18 Confirmation – Church of St Francis Xavier, PJ
- 18 Mass – Feast, Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, KL



PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Sebastian Francis

June

- 12 FABC - Radio Veritas Asia (RVA) – Zoom
- 13 Meeting – Council of Priests at 10.00am, Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam
- 13-14 Clergy Monthly Recollection
- 16 Meeting – Archdiocesan Office of Human Development (AOHD) & Caritas Penang at 10.30am, Pusat Keuskupan Katolik, Penang
- 17 Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference – Office of Social Communication (FABC-OSC) Inauguration of Online Webinar at 7.00pm
- 18 Confirmation – Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Silibin, Ipoh at 9.00am
- 18 Diocesan Celebration of Kaamatan - Gawai Festival – Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam (Live-streamed) at 3.00pm



MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

June

- 13-14 Clergy Monthly Recollection – MAJODI Centre
- 15 MJD Young Peoples Network
- 17 MJ Mission School Committee Gathering – Good Shepherd Seminary, Melaka

Charismatic leaders commissioned



The Service Team of Charis Kuala Lumpur Service of Communion (CKLSC) after their commissioning at the Church of St Ignatius, PJ.

PETALING JAYA: The Service Team of Charis Kuala Lumpur Service of Communion (CKLSC) and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) Prayer Group Leaders of the KL Archdiocese were commissioned on May 19.

Archbishop Julian Leow was the main celebrant at the Eucharistic Celebration at the Church of St Ignatius. Concelebrating were CKLSC Ecclesiastical Assistant Fr Clement Lim, Fr Lawrence Ng, CDD, Fr Martin Then, CDD, Fr Paul

Cheong, OFM Cap, and Fr Simon Lau.

Also present were the coordinators of all the language groups, CCR leaders and members from the parishes of the KL Archdiocese.

In his homily, Archbishop Julian reminded the leaders of their mission to always follow the right Spirit, to Serve and not to be Served. The Rite of Commissioning took place, where all the leaders pledged their commitment to service, to journey together, stay united at all times,

and become part of the CKLSC family.

Archbishop Julian also gave a special blessing to the CKLSC flag presented by the Service Team during the procession.

Before concluding Mass, the Archbishop expressed his gratitude to the organising committee and SIC for hosting the event.

The celebration ended with everyone singing praises to God, followed by fellowship. — *By John Chooi, CKLSC Secretary*



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #134

F12
MJD NEWS
UPDATES

Greetings again dear people of God.

Pentecost is over. This celebration that is next to Easter in importance, passed by many parishes without a bang, no preparation, no fire, no Holy Spirit hymns, no birthday of the Church. Mediocrity is also a form of corruption. Does the Church live to maintain or for mission? The 'Allah' issue, race and religion continue to divide. Bribes, commissions and pay-outs have become an acceptable culture everywhere. The Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) is hard at work. Greed has no fear. It is all about making quick and easy money, effortless gains and serving without sacrifice.

Hopeful Times: Some recovery in economy and investors' confidence, in sports, especially badminton, and stability in politics and governance.

When I see parishes introducing parish management and accounting systems, implementing parish ministries' SOPs and guidelines, and ensuring communion, participation and mission as their parish pastoral agenda, I see hope. When I see the young initiating flash mobs, street feeding or "healing the earth" movements, there's hope of a better world. It is to see as God sees, and to be patient as God is, for the seeds of goodness, love, beauty, and truth to spring forth.

Pope Francis said: Although the life of a person is in a land full of thorns and weeds, there is always a space in which the good seed can grow. *Hope opens new horizons, making us capa-*

ble of dreaming what is not even imaginable. Hope never disappoints, hope goes not alone, but together. Do not let anyone rob you of hope.

St Augustine said: Hope has two beautiful daughters — anger and courage. **Anger** at the way things are, **courage** to see that they do not remain as they are. *Hope is not wishful thinking; it does not wait for things to happen; it steps out with God to effect change.*

A Thought For The Week: One

One tree can give life to a forest, One smile can start a friendship, One hand can uplift a soul, One idea can shape the future, One candle can wipe out darkness, One laugh can conquer gloom, One ray of hope can lift your spirits, One touch can show you care, One life can make a difference, Be that 'ONE' today!!

Lesson from the One: One can make a difference. There is power in one. We can feel inadequate, useless, and meaningless to the people and the world around us. But doing small things matter. Be that one who makes a difference to the family, community, church and nation.

Announcements for this Week

1. The *Malacca Johore Diocese's Mission Schools Gathering* will take place at the Good Shepherd Seminary on June 17 from 10.30am-12.30pm. It is the meeting of all Mission Authorities, BOGs and Head Teachers.
2. The *Fourth Divine Encounter*

Retreat (DER 4) is back! Organised by the DER team from the Diocesan Commission for New Evangelisation, it will be held from July 12 to 16 at Domus Shalom Hall, MAJODI Centre. Sign up for this life changing retreat by contacting your respective parish office.

This Week's Question and Query. The Q asks: How can one be a light in the world?

1. **Carl G Jung** said: Your inner light is the revelation of *the divine in you*.
2. Is it important to daily living? Discovering our inner light not only *gives us purpose and meaning*, but it also helps us realise that life is a gift to be cherished, and not a burden to bear.
3. This is what we can do, as suggested by Carl Jung: Take time to *connect* with your inner light, *embrace* your darkness, and let your light *shine* forth.
4. Remember, we are all connected by this divine spark within us, and when we share our light with others, we help to brighten the world around us.
5. We are *reflections of the one Light of the World*.

Let us continue building and rebuilding His Church knowing that *"God always makes a way"*. Let us create and recreate with the Lord. May the Lord bless you all. Take care.

Bishop Bernard Paul



**DIOCESE OF
PENANG**

PKK/BDN/2023/06/162

Notifications and Updates

1. *Motu Proprio Vos Estis Lux Mundi* (Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Adults)

The Holy Father, Pope Francis has promulgated on March 25, 2023 His Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio Vos estis lux mundi*, which entered into force on April 30, 2023. For every good purpose and for your direct knowledge of this document, as well its application, I convey the English version of the above-mentioned Document. Scan or go to <https://shorturl.at/hpKZ7>



2. Appointment of Rev Fr Patrick Massang CSsR as Assistant Priest

Rev Fr Patrick Massang CSsR has been appointed assistant priest of Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Ipoh with effect from June 1, 2023. My heartfelt thanks to Fr Patrick Massang, CSsR for his continued contributions in his priestly ministry in the parish.

3. Appointment as Head of Permanent Deacons for the Diocese of Penang

Deacon Lazarus Jonathan has been appointed as Head of Permanent Deacons for Diocese of Penang, replacing Deacon Clement Samuel with effect from June 1, 2023. We thank Deacon Clement for his dedicated and committed contributions and services, and welcome Deacon Lazarus Jonathan with gratitude for his generous availability in accepting this new role and mission.

4. Penang Diocese Catholic Heritage Conservation Committee

The Committee previously known as Penang Catholic Heritage Preservation will now be known as Penang Diocese Catholic Heritage Conservation Committee, following their meeting on May 26, 2023.

5. Penang Island Deanery *Corpus Christi* Celebration

The parishes of Penang Island Deanery will be organising the celebration of *Corpus Christi* at the Church of the Assumption with Vespers and Mass followed by procession from the Church of Assumption to the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows. All are welcome. Scan or go to <https://shorturl.at/imKQZ>



Sebastian Francis

Bishop Sebastian Francis
Bishop of Penang

By Neil Mah

KUCHING: The 25th meeting of the Episcopal Regional Liturgy Commission (ERLC) took place at St Peter's College Seminary from May 22 to 24.

The meeting saw 27 delegates from the 11 arch/diocese in the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei (CBCMSB) attending to discuss matters related to the liturgy in the region, as well as to facilitate coordination, networking, and resource sharing among the arch/diocese.

Bishop Sebastian Francis, who serves as the president of the ERLC and the CBCMSB, welcomed the delegates to the meeting. He expressed his joy in seeing that all the arch/diocese were fully represented at this silver jubilee edition of the meeting. The prelate also took the opportunity to extend a special welcome to the new delegates attending for the first time.

During his opening remarks, Bishop Sebastian briefed the delegates on the synodal journey of the Conference and the ongoing preparations for the Malaysian Pastoral Convention (MPC) 2026. The MPC is a significant event planned for the future, which will bring together the Catholic community in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei to discuss pastoral matters and set a direction for the Church's mission in the region.

In unity with the Universal Church in its



The delegates at the 25th Episcopal Regional Liturgy Commission (ERLC) meeting in Kuching.

preparation for the XVI general Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023, the prelate announced that all churches, Marian shrines and parishes in the Conference organise a solemn moment of Marian prayer on May 31. Liturgical guidelines and suggestions were sent out to all arch/diocese.

At this meeting, Fr Ignatius Yeo of Singapore Archdiocese gave an input of sacraments and sacramentals, sharing the importance of using the official liturgical texts when administering the sacraments and blessings of sacramentals.

The delegates had the opportunity to fellowship with one another through a night outing to Kuching city, attending the welcome dinner hosted by Archbishop Simon

Poh of Kuching Archdiocese, and visiting the construction of the up-coming impressive new St Peter's Gothic Church at Padungan, and the adjacent columbarium complex.

Delegates of ERLC, both new and long serving, were given the opportunity to share their experiences attending this meeting where all shared a fruitful and enriching experience in coming together to discuss matters of the liturgy, to network and collaborate together, and hoped for more urgency and expediency to decisions and implementation of matters discussed.

The gathering ended by announcing the 26th ERLC meeting to be held on June 3-6, 2024 in Miri, Sarawak.

Matters discussed during the ERLC

Alkitab Versi Borneo

Other topics discussed included updates on the Bahasa Malaysia (BM) Mass text and lectionary. Bishop Francis reminded all present that CBCMSB has endorsed the *Alkitab Versi Borneo* (AVB) as the official BM text for the region. He informed that a committee had been formed under Archbishop Simon Poh from Kuching Archdiocese to prepare and send out weekly Sunday Mass texts based on the AVB translation for churches to use.

Although this AVB version is still open for improvement and refinement, it is the valid provisional BM liturgical texts to be used for Masses. After completing the three-year cycle and making improvements, the ERLC will consider printing the official BM Mass texts for the Conference.

The prelate also provided an update on the translation efforts for the AVB in the Catholic context. He shared that a translation committee, overseen by Bishop Richard Ng from Miri Diocese, had successfully completed the translation of the Deuterocanonical books to make them suitable for Catholic use within the AVB.

The committee is in the process of collecting quantity orders for the Deuterocanonical books from the nine diocese in Malaysia. As the AVB itself was already available, the committee planned to print only the supplementary Deuterocanonical books for now. Bishop Francis mentioned that the CBCMSB would consider printing the complete AVB Catholic Edition (AVB-CE) at a later stage.

The ERLC advised all diocese not to print any Bahasa liturgical booklets for now until all AVB liturgical texts are finalised and approved by CBCMSB.

Sing Your Praise to God

The ERLC Liturgical Music Committee (ERLC-LMC) updated the conference delegates that the new *Sing Your Praise to God* (SYPG) hymnal Accompaniment Edition meant for musicians and choir has been compiled and is being printed.

Fr Vincent Chin, the secretary of ERLC, said that the SYPG hymnal project commissioned by the CBCMSB had been ongoing for more than 20 years and was finally completed. He described the process of compiling the hymns as tedious and painstaking, with careful attention given to ensuring that all the hymns included were liturgically appropriate and had cleared copyright for use.

Fr Vincent emphasised that the license obtained for the SYPG hymnal only covered its printing and did not include permission for projection. Therefore, it was important for churches to understand that the hymnal should not be projected on screens during liturgical services.

He also said that CBCMSB no longer held any responsibility for the old SYPG book as it had been officially phased out. As a result, Fr Vincent strongly encouraged all churches that conducted English Masses to make full use of the new SYPG hymnal.

As the SYPG hymnal project has been completed, ERLC-LMC proposed embarking on the next phase of liturgical music development in the Conference, which is to collect and compile locally composed hymns

(Propers and Ordinaries). The ERLC agreed that such a compilation will be made available in the public domain, to be shared for free, and the composers, whose work are chosen for this compilation, must agree to this policy.

Hymnal in Chinese

With regards to the Chinese hymnal review process, it was reported that the working committee is in the midst of collecting all the Chinese hymn books currently used in the region. All Chinese Mass choirs have been given a period of one year, till June 2024, to submit both hard and soft copies of the current hymns to be reviewed by the working committee and to be considered for the compilation.

Pozoo No Kinoingan Hymnal

The three Sabah diocese will collaborate and review the *Pozoo No Kinoingan* hymnal (combination of Bahasa and Kadazan-Dusun hymns). Other diocese will also send compilations of Bahasa hymns for review.

Printing of Prayers, Lectionary

ERLC was informed that the new translation for English Eucharistic Prayers for Mass with Children is available and will be printed for the Conference.

The ERLC meeting was also informed that the Paulines and CTS publications are no longer printing the New Jerusalem Bible based English Lectionary, and have now opted to use the English Standard Version Catholic Edition (ESV-CE). ERLC will bring this matter to the July CBCMSB meeting to discuss and decide which lectionary version the Conference will adopt.

Christmas Celebration

The meeting also discussed liturgical fixture for December 24, 2023 which falls on Sunday. It was decided during the day, Masses will be celebrating the Fourth Sunday of Advent Year B while the evening liturgy will celebrate the Christmas Midnight Mass.



22 - 27 Oct 2023

- Myeongdong Cathedral (birthplace of the Korean community)
- Cheonjinam Holy Site (birthplace of Korean Catholicism)
- Mirinae Shrine (burial place of Saint Andrew Kim)
- The Haemi Martyrdom Holy Ground (major execution site)
- Shrine of Solmoe (the birthplace of 1st Korean saint)... and more

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Pentecost reality check for Penang cathedral parishioners

By Lucille Dass

PENANG: Parishioners of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit prepared for their parish feast day with a triduum and vigil. These were animated by the five ministry cluster groups of the parish and culminated with the Eucharistic celebration on Pentecost.

The main theme for the celebration was *Fan into flame the gift of God* (2 Timothy 1:6). Preachers for the triduum included Franciscan Friars Fr Esmond Chua and Crispus Mosinoh; Fr Desmond Jansen and parish priest Fr Joachim Robert, while Frs Simon Lau and John Anandan, OFM, Cap ministered to the Mandarin- and Tamil-speaking communities respectively.

On the Solemnity of Pentecost, Bishop Sebastian Francis presided at the Sunday mid-morning multi-lingual Mass with Fr Joachim and Fr Francis Anthony concelebrating.

"The waiting is over!" Bishop Sebastian began his homily. "The nine-day wait in the Upper Room led by Peter, is all planned with precision as it is for us today." From the cathedra, the prelate taught through "reality check" questions. **Reality check one** — "What happened on that day (Acts 2:1-14) to change the course and history of humankind, not just the Church? The historical, physical Jesus was not there! Peter took over the leadership." The gathered group (Acts 1: 12-



Bishop Sebastian Francis during the Eucharistic Celebration at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit.

14) was "ordered to go proclaim the Resurrection" to the whole world.

He marvelled that Pentecost — the Jewish Harvest Festival — *Shavuot*, coincided with *Kaamatan* — Sabah harvest festival; *Gawai* — Sarawak harvest festival; and *Panen* — the Indonesian harvest fest, acknowledging the migrant Indonesian population in Malaysia. "More importantly, it's the harvest festival of the Holy Spirit!" We too must come out of our 'upper room,' get-up-and-go like Mary, hailed by the Holy Spirit, arose and went with haste (Lk 1:39); like the Prodigal Son who was interiorly prompted to get up and go to his father (Lk15:18).

"The sound and wind effects (Acts 2:1-11) accompanying Pentecost are similar to your vibrant and Spirit-filled rendition of Gloria." The gushing wind from the upper atmosphere "forced out" the disciples; the "tongues of fire" empowered them to mission. "Our faith is based on Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium, not just on sentiments, emotions, or illusory artistic impressions of Pentecost, no matter how romantic." Sixteen different nationals heard and understood the one language Peter spoke! "So, **reality check two** — Is there one dominant language or culture in the Catholic Church?" In answer, he quoted a sixth century unknown African

author, "The Church in its unity speaks in the language of every nation."

Reality check three — "Where is Jesus today since the Holy Spirit is in charge of the continuation of the mission?" He is seated at the right hand of the Father and intercedes for us (Rom. 8:34) ... according to our *Profession of Faith* and the *Gloria*. The Most Holy Trinity enfolds and unfolds "the completion of the revelation of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." **Reality check four** — "Who is Peter today? Pope Francis. Who are the Apostles? The bishops. Who are you? Disciples of Jesus ... gifted, blessed, forgotten."

Reality check five — "What is the mission now of the Holy Spirit?" To purify us for mission in communion with the Trinitarian God, and with the whole of creation. Final reality check and exhortation — "So what do we do now? Remember your chosen theme (2 Tim. 1:6), and get out of your upper room to celebrate who and what you are gifted with by the Holy Spirit." With enthusiasm, the prelate compelled us to savour the need to be bold witnesses of our indwelling Holy Spirit.

In closing, Fr Joachim expressed his appreciation to those involved in the 50-day joyful journey culminating in Pentecost. After the feast day cake cutting, all adjourned for fellowship lunch.

Pentecost — a new beginning



Vincent Nathan presenting to the parishioners of the Church of St Thomas, Kuantan.

KUANTAN: Spiritual formations in preparation for Pentecost were held at the Church of St Thomas. The formations took place in the four major languages throughout the month of May, with each group sharing the common theme *Pentecost — A New Beginning*.

The Mandarin-speaking group had their formation on May 7, followed by the Bahasa group on May 14, and the Tamil-speaking group on May 21. The Pentecost retreat in English spanned two days from May 26 to May 27. The retreat was led by a guest speaker, Vincent Nathan from Kepong, Kuala Lumpur.

His sharing and input revolved around various themes of *An Easter People*, *Pentecost*, *Permitting the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us*, and *Becoming filled with the Holy Spirit*. Each talk began with a Praise and Worship

session, and participants were provided with scriptural texts and materials to read and reflect on for their personal study and growth.

Approximately 75 parishioners attended the retreat, many of whom were youths. The sessions were well-attended, and the participants greatly benefited from them. The parish priest, Fr George Packiasamy, motivated and encouraged the attendees to continue reading, praying, and meditating on the provided texts and materials as it would help them gain a deeper understanding of God's insights and renew their personal faith.

On May 27, during the Pentecost Vigil after the Sunset Mass, all the language groups and parishioners came together to spend time in praise, worship, and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. The Vigil concluded at midnight with Benediction. — **By Dr Francis Leong**

Be a clear light for the young

KUALA LUMPUR: Golden Eagles of the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist recently learnt the finer points of being the light for the younger generation.

Friar George Ho, OCD, said youngsters would occasionally approach the elderly for advice. "When we guide others to the light, we sometimes find ourselves still living in the shadows."

He advocates a revisit to the past to seek one's vulnerable self through the eyes of Christ as a source for healing.

"This will help us to grow and also create hope for others to grow too," he said during a talk titled *New Wine Is Like A New Friend* at the fortnightly gathering of about 40 senior parishioners.

Friar George quoted Pope John Paul II: "This retrospective gaze makes possible a more serene and objective evaluation of persons and situations we have met along the way.

The passage of time helps us see our experiences in a clear light and softens their painful side."

On overcoming shadows, Friar George advised reframing a negative thought or situation, looking at it in a more positive light and repeating the positive affirmation.

He also read out a passage from Henri J.M. Nouwen's *Bread of Journey*: "The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with the trust that we have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go."

On making new friends, Friar George asked the Golden Eagles to reflect on Sirach 9: 10: Do not abandon old friends; new ones cannot equal them. A new friend is like new wine — when it has aged you drink it with pleasure.

He also talked about "Sister Death," as



The seniors learning to be a light to the youth.

St Francis of Assisi would call it. Scripture teaches that death is not the ultimate end. Friar George said: "If you welcome death as a friend, the rest of other things will fall in place."

As Nouwen puts it in *A Letter of Consolation*: "... if we could really befriend death, we would be a free people. So many of our doubts and hesitations, ambivalences, and insecurities are bound up with our deep-seated fear of death that our lives would be significantly different if we could relate to death as a familiar

guest instead of a threatening stranger."

Nancy Ban, 80, found the talk beyond expectation. "The explanation, accompanied by slides, has changed my attitude to life and not be scared of Sister Death. Looking forward to more of such sessions," she quipped.

The Golden Eagles are indeed blessed to have Friar George driving from Seremban for the talk held in a cafe near the cathedral. The session ended with fellowship, lunch and a final blessing by Friar George. — **By Bob Ho**

Understanding the difference between deliverance and exorcism

By Anthony Joseph

MUAR: A two-day talk entitled *Deliverance* was held at the Church of St Andrew, May 27 and 28.

Parish priest, Fr Jason Wong, a member of the Diocesan Deliverance, Exorcism Office (DEO), initiated the event. The DEO Ministry was established by Bishop Bernard Paul in 2018, with retired Fr Benedict Yee (Fr Ben) as the chief exorcist. Besides Fr Jason, Fr Paul Sia, and Fr Cyril Mannayagam, are also appointed to the ministry. Additionally, a few parishioners from Johor Bharu are involved in the ministry.

This talk was the first of its kind in the long history of the parish, which dates back to 1908. Deliverance is a concept unfamiliar to Catholics, and many people have fears and doubts surrounding it. The talk was to clarify these concerns and educate attendees about putting their faith in Jesus. Approximately 50 people were in attendance, with some coming from Kuala Lumpur, Batu Pahat, and Melaka.

According to Fr Ben, the bishop recognised the need for such a ministry in the diocese as many “ignorant” Catholics have been known to stray from their religion by engaging in practices related to Folk Religions, *Feng Shui*, or consulting



Fr Benedict Yee with the participants at the Church of St Andrew, Muar.

mediums, *bomohs*, and gurus when they fail to find healing within the Church.

During his talks, Fr Ben pointed to Jesus’ Temptation as an example of rejecting the various suggestions and proposals presented by Satan. He emphasised the need to reject alternative faith healers and temptations, relying solely on God for all needs. Fr Ben warned that fallen angels are subtle in their efforts to tempt Catholics with empty promises and that Satan becomes more active the closer one gets to God.

Fr Ben also provided several warnings to avoid opening the door to Satan. These warnings included avoiding involvement in practices such as Yoga, Crystals, and Reiki. He advised against keeping images and folk religious items in the house and recommended disposing

of them. He also cautioned against seeking cures from healers of other faiths or engaging in occult practices and folk rituals.

In the case of “mixed marriages,” where one spouse follows a different religion, Fr Ben advised against participating in the rituals of the other religion. Additionally, he suggested checking the history of a second-hand house to ensure that no evil spirits remain from previous occupants.

In response to a question from the audience, Fr Ben explained that not all participants are called to practise deliverance. Only those who feel the calling should speak to a priest for support and guidance.

It’s important to note that deliverance and exorcism are two different forms of spiritual intervention. Deliverance is a broad term that

refers to being freed from any spiritual problem or affliction. On the other hand, exorcism specifically addresses the expulsion of demons.

One misconception that arises from this tradition is the belief that any command given to a demon by a baptised Christian in the name of Jesus will be immediately obeyed. The Catholic Church recognises that the authority to command demons was given to the Twelve Apostles and their successors, and therefore, a priest requires apostolic authority from a bishop before engaging in battle with a demon.

It is indeed essential to recognise that the root cause of demonic problems lies in a person’s relationship with sin, often involving the violation of the First Commandment. Demons deceive individuals by hiding within their wounded feelings

and exacerbating harm. Therefore, individuals affected by demons must begin their healing journey by repenting of their sins and seeking forgiveness. One of the challenges in deliverance and exorcism ministry is discerning whether a case is possession or severe oppression. Exorcism is effective in addressing cases of demonic infestation and can serve as a diagnostic test.

However, it’s important to note that not every manifestation in response to an exorcism is sufficient evidence of possession. The faithful should not use exorcism prayers as a means to test for possession, as these prayers should only be performed by a priest with permission from his bishop. The Church provides deliverance from oppression cases through reception of the sacraments and spiritual direction.

Affected individuals play a significant role in their liberation by fully embracing spiritual guidance including confession, forgiveness, prayer, and penance. When a person starts to exhibit demonic manifestations, the case should be referred to the bishop’s office. Although the case may not rise to the level of full possession, the bishop’s office or appointed personnel can oversee the spiritual direction and monitor the situation.

Monfort lauded for nation building efforts

SHAH ALAM: One hundred and forty-five Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students from Montfort Boys Town (MBT) graduated in a ceremony witnessed by Ministry of Youth and Sports Secretary General, Ts (Technologist) YB Dr Nagulendran Kangayatarasu, family members and friends.

MBT director, Bro Robin Devasagayam expressed his pride in the graduating students and commended them for their commitment and hard work. “Vocational training is the foundation of creating a practical and skilled workforce for various careers. It is observed that individuals with vocational training are better at problem solving and at effectively using the resources available to them. There is much emphasis on the value of TVET in Malaysia and abroad. Our graduates are blessed to pass out with skills that are much in demand for today’s workforce,” he said.

Recognising MBT as a proponent of nation building, Dr Nagulendran lauded the centre for its contribution to equipping youths with both technical and life skills. “For Malaysia to grow economically, we need education. For our economy to prosper, we need an economy led by innovation. I would like to convey the Minister of Youth and Sports, YB Hannah Yeoh’s, warm wishes of congratulations to the graduating students.

“Congratulations MBT for your amazing work through the soft skills (technical and life skills) you impart to students. It is nice to see stake-



From left: Montfort Boys Town Chairman of the Board of Governors, Ir Dr Philip Tan, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Secretary General Ts (Technologist) Dr Nagulendran Kangayatarasu, and Montfort Boys Town Director, Bro Robin Devasagayam, walking into the Graduation Ceremony.

holders come together towards nation building. Education never stops and I hope the students make the best of their education at MBT.”

The graduates comprised 115 boys and 30 girls. This year, 41 graduates were from the Automotive Training Programme, 24 from Bakery and Pastry, 24 from Electrical, 21 from Graphic Design and Multimedia, 21 from Hospitality, and 14 graduates from the Facilities Management Training Programme.

The ceremony culminated in the *Scholar of the Year Award* presentation to three outstanding MBT graduates Ashvin Kumar A/L Muraley, You Wai Heng and Niang Sian Lun Cing @ Lucy, from the Montfort Girls Centre. They were selected for their outstanding performance in all aspects of life and training at the institution.

MBT is a holistic and nurturing learning institution dedicated to helping underprivileged youths grow in a positive and stimulating

environment. The institution offers six signature training programmes. Students from the Bakery and Pastry, Hospitality, Electrical and Automotive Training Programmes are recognised under the Malaysian Skills Certificate or *Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia* (SKM) accredited by the Department of Skills Development. Meanwhile, students from the Graphic Design and Multimedia, Mechanical Engineering, and Facilities Management Training Programmes graduate under the MBT endorsed in-house certificate.

Representatives from the Selangor Social Welfare Department (JKM), Montfort Boys Town Chairman of the Board of Governors, Ir Dr Philip Tan, Members of the Board of Governors, teachers, and families of the graduating students were also present.

For more information on the centre, contact S. Arul at 03-55191735/6, 016 – 6209244 or email admin@montfort.org.my.

Three win ‘top scholar’ award

SHAH ALAM: Niang Sian Lun Cing @ Lucy was surprised by the announcement. “I’m very excited! I never expected to receive these awards. I thank my guardians, and my teachers, especially Bro Robin for instilling in me the values of a Montfort student. I’m not sure what I’m going to do next, but I’m sure I will continue my studies and keep learning,” shared the jubilant Hospitality Training Programme graduate who also picked up the *Eva Gomes Award* and additional awards in recognition of her exemplary discipline.

Fellow *Scholar of the Year Award* recipient, Ashvin Kumar said, “I’m so happy. This is after two years of hard work. I faced a lot of challenges, but I worked hard to build

my confidence and told myself not to give up. My friends, teachers and the staff at MBT, especially our Student Affairs Officer, Anand, helped me a lot. I wish to encourage my juniors to keep going and remember that nothing is impossible,” said the Electrical Training Programme graduate.

You Wai Heng, a Graphic Design and Multimedia Training Programme graduate attributed his success to team work. “My friends and teachers guided me along the way. Especially Arokiam, my mentor, who gave me tasks to help develop my problem-solving skills and instilled good values in me,” shared You who also received the *Bro Roberge Award* for exemplary leadership.



From left: Ashvin Kumar A/L Muraley, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Secretary General Ts (Technologist) Dr Nagulendran Kangayatarasu, Bro Robin Devasagayam, Niang Sian Lun Cing @ Lucy, You Wai Heng and Montfort Boys Town Chairman of the Board of Governors, Ir Dr Philip Tan.

Creating awareness on renewable energy

By Marilyn Menezes Simon

"There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy. Worldwide there is minimal access to clean and renewable energy." - Laudato Si' encyclical (26)

KUALA LUMPUR: Continuing its focus on decarbonisation and creating an awareness of Renewable Energy, the Creation Justice Ministry of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur organised a ses-

sion on the use of solar energy at the Church of Our Lady of Fatima on May 27. Jonathan Dean Gomez, a parishioner from the Church of the Holy Family, Kajang and from PathGreen, was the speaker for the session.

Fr Andrew Manickam OFM Cap, the Ecclesiastical Assistant for the Archdiocesan Creation Justice Ministry, welcomed the 27 environmental enthusiasts from different faiths and started the day with a prayer.

Jonathan highlighted the two forms of energy – the renewable energy obtained from the sun, wind, water and the non-renewable energy obtained from fossil fuels: coal, petroleum, natural gas etc. In doing our bit for the en-

vironment, he stated how households and companies were transitioning to solar energy that is in abundance in Malaysia.

During the session, a two square metre solar panel, weighing 25kgs and that generates 505watts, was showcased. These panels come with a 25-year extendable warranty. The presenter explained how the Net Energy Metering (NEM) system works and how the excess energy can be carried forward. He also shared information about the required connections, meters, inverters, and other components.

Jonathan said solar panels can only be installed on sturdy roof tops without asbestos roofing sheets, ensuring they have access to direct sunlight. If a house, condominium, or church is surrounded by tall buildings, the efficiency and output of the solar panels may be compromised.

If churches have many small, slanting, arched or rhombic roofs, the panels may not fit well. However, aerial drone surveys are conducted to assess the suitability of locations for solar panel installation.

The inexhaustible supply of solar energy and its non-polluting character make it one of the highly attractive sources of renewable energy.

In conjunction with World Environment Day, and its theme *Beat Plastic Pollution*, the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur's Creation Justice Ministry encourages parishioners to bring their recyclable plastic for collection throughout the month of June.



Jonathan Dean Gomez from PathGreen talks on Solar Energy-efficient panel.

Celebrating *Laudato Si'* week



Susan Poon demonstrating the techniques of growing potted plants in confined spaces.

CHERAS: The Creation Justice Ministry of the Church of St Francis of Assisi organised a *Laudato Si'* Week formation session recently.

Sixty parishioners who are passionate about gardening attended the session.

Laudato Si' Week is a global celebration that aims to promote environmental stewardship and raise awareness about the urgent need to care for our common home. The theme for this year's celebration is *Hope for the Earth, Hope for Humanity*. We invite all parishioners to join us in reflecting on how our faith inspires us to care for the earth and all its inhabitants.

The session began with an introduction of the week by Vivien Hua, the Creation Justice Ministry leader.

Then, Dr Christina Chan delivered an engaging and lively talk

about the benefits of trees and shared her personal experience in maintaining her tree plantation.

During Susan Poon's Urban Gardening demo session, she shared techniques for growing potted plants in confined spaces. She demonstrated how to grow different types of plants in a single pot, likening it to a flower arrangement. Many participants were fascinated and gathered around Susan to learn more from her after the session concluded.

Over 100 plants were distributed to the participants to promote home gardening.

After the Sunday formation session, parish priest Fr Paul Cheong OFM Cap presented Certificates of Appreciation to the Youth Ambassadors of Creation Justice Ministry, recognising their effort in initiating and organising the World Earth Day Carnival held on April 23.



Parishioners choosing some plants to take home.

Five Loaves and Two Fish — A call to lay ministry

PENANG: One hundred and forty-two participants from Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and India zoomed in each week over four consecutive Tuesdays during the months of April and May to discover their calling to lay ministry.

Organised by the Penang Diocesan New Evangelisation Commission (PDNEC), this eight-session programme themed *Five Loaves and Two Fish* was headed by Simon Wong and moderated by Iruthaya Das. The sessions were conducted by both clergy and laity.

Summarily speaking, all eight sessions depicted the 5Ws & 1H (What, Why, When, Where, Who and How) of each ministry to serve the PDNEC objective of giving participants an opportunity to discover how best to invest their time, talent, and treasure/resources in the Lord's vineyard to build and expand His kingdom on earth.

Mike Yong, Penang Diocesan Coordinator for Christian Medi-

FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH Discover Your Calling into Lay Ministry



How can you offer or invest your gifts/skills/talents etc. in the Lord's vineyard to expand God's Kingdom?



Mike Yong

tation, set the ball rolling. He introduced Christian Meditation as a form of "pure prayer from the heart" and its holistic benefits: spiritual, physical, and character-wise. He explained how the Wheel of Prayer symbolised both



Fr Joachim Robert

the movement and journey of prayer towards God while it remained grounded and integrated in our daily living and growing, its many spokes representing the diverse forms of Catholic prayer. Mike stressed on the 3S requisites

of Christian meditation: silence-stillness-simplicity and went on to give pointers on the when, where, why, and how of meditation.

Next, Fr Joachim Robert, chairperson of Caritas Penang and Cathedral of the Holy Spirit parish priest, homed in on LOVE in action as the essence of CARITAS. As an institution of the Church (people of God), Caritas makes Christ visible and present in the marketplace when our faith and love of God is translated into actual deeds of charity for the needy of society. It's a social mission, unlike an NGO because it is underscored and motivated by faith and prayer.

Fr Joachim used the analogy of the Paschal Candle whose sacred fire visibly lights up the entire Church, to illustrate Caritas' outreach to serve the 4L groups mentioned in the composite four verses in Matthew: the last (Mt. 20:16); the least (Mt. 25:40); the lost (Mt. 18:11; also, in Lk 19:10) and the little (Mt. 18:14). Through the grace of God, the

acts of charity that begin with a small offering of five loaves and two fish, multiply to serve the physical, emotional, social, mental, spiritual, and developmental needs of the marginalised, the depressed and the oppressed amongst us!

Caritas administrator, Juanita Chin, screened a video to show the numerous works of charity carried out by different church communities in different parts of the diocese and beyond. She also showed the challenges that need to be overcome to enable God's kingdom to flourish far and wide. This was a clarion call for all who are willing to hear the silent cries of the needy and administer to them. Fr Joachim solemnly reminded everyone that it is in fact the needy who are ministering to us when they allow the kingdom of God to flourish through our corporal and spiritual works of mercy amongst them. — **By Lucille Dass**

● More in our following issues

LiCAS.news editor-at-large named as Philippine Information Agency chief

MANILA: President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has appointed LiCAS.news editor-at-large Jose “Joe” A. Torres Jr. (pic) as the head of the Philippine Information Agency



(PIA), authorities announced on May 23.

“The appointment of Torres, known for his exceptional investigative reporting and work in new media, is expected to strengthen PIA’s mission of disseminating information about government programmes, projects, and services to the Filipino public,” PIA said in a statement.

Torres is one of the founding editors of LiCAS.news, a Church news agency based in Bangkok, established in 2019. He was managing editor and Manila bureau chief of the *Union of Catholic Asian News* from 2010 to 2019. He served as member of the editorial board of *Radio Veritas Asia* in 2018.

“I am grateful to President Marcos for the opportunity and the privilege to serve the country in these trying times of misinformation and disinformation,” said Torres.

In a phone interview, Torres told LiCAS.news that his focus is how to “bring the government and its policies and programmes closer to the basic masses to allow them fully participate in the democratic process.”

The PIA serves as the country’s primary information arm, with a network spanning 16 regional offices and 78 provincial information centres.

Torres started his journalism career as a writer for the alternative news service *Philippine News and Features* in the late 1980s. Throughout his career, Torres has worked for various media outlets, both in the Philippines and abroad.

He is a member of SIGNIS, a Catholic lay ecclesial movement in 100 countries for professionals in the communication media, including press, radio, television, cinema, video, media education, internet, and new technology.

He was a recipient of the US Embassy’s Fellowships for Professional Development through the International Visitors Programme in 2005 and was a fellow at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 — **By Mark Saludes, LiCAS News**

Catholic research to improve families and marriages

VATICAN: Pope Francis has expressed his support for the Family Global Compact that is being launched as a way to support the welfare of the family, “decisive for the future of the world and that of the Church.”

In a message released on May 30, the Pope lauded the goals of the Compact, an initiative of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life and the Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences.

The Family Global Compact aims to bring the pastoral care of families into dialogue with centres of study and research on the family located in Catholic universities around the world, especially in view of the new challenges families face today. The goal is also mutually beneficial, the Pope writes in his message, “to enable the pastoral care of families in the particular Churches to benefit from the research and the educational and training programmes in Catholic universities.”

The Pope notes how, by uniting together, universities and programmes of pastoral ministry, both can better promote a culture of family and life in these times of uncertainty and worry. The hope is to assure people today so new generations can greatly appreciate the beauty, value, and essential importance of marriage and family life, and generating and nurturing human life.

Citing his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, the Pope sums up the goal: to make “a more responsible and generous effort to present the... motivations for choosing marriage and the family and in this way, to help men and women better respond to the grace that God offers them.”

Today we witness more and more “a crisis in family relationships” caused by many and sometimes unforeseen challenges, as



(iStock/Boonyachot)

well as at the level of society and policies, putting pressures on family life, the Pope observes. And research shows that “the family continues to be the primary source of social life, and point to the existence of good practices that deserve to be shared and promoted globally,” he underscores. He calls on families themselves to be witnesses and leaders in these efforts.

The Pope outlines four goals adopted by the Family Global Compact as part of a long-term process. The first looks at initiating a dialogue and greater collaboration among university research centres dealing with family issues, with greater networking among them. The second goal looks at creating greater synergy in content and goals among Christian communities and Catholic universities. Third, is the promotion of the culture of family and life in society, also so that helpful public policy emerges. And

fourthly, the goal is to advance proposals together so that the family can be better served in spiritual, pastoral, cultural, legal, political, economic and social spheres.

In his message, the Pope calls on everyone to help the family and stop its decline due to uncertainty, individualism, and consumerism, or a future where individuals only look out for themselves.

“We cannot be indifferent to the future of the family as a community of life and love, a unique and indissoluble covenant between a man and a woman, a place where generations meet, a source of hope for society.”

In conclusion, the Pope thanks all those who have joined the Family Global Compact and invites them to dedicate their creativity and confidence to efforts that help put the family once more at the heart of our pastoral and social commitment. — **By Thaddeus Jones, Vatican News**

‘Sin City’ becomes Catholic Archdiocese

NEW YORK: Las Vegas, a gambling town, became the first new Roman Catholic Archdiocese in America in 19 years.

On May 30, the Vatican announced the creation of the Ecclesiastical Province of Las Vegas, which includes the newly elevated Archdiocese of Las Vegas, as well as the suffragan Dioceses of Reno and Salt Lake City.

Archbishop George Leo Thomas, named by Pope Francis as the first Metropolitan Archbishop of Las Vegas, said the move speaks to the “growth and vibrancy” of the archdiocese’s faith community.

“This speaks to the tremendous growth and vibrancy of the local faith and the commitment of the women and men that serve in leadership, including our priests,” Thomas said in a statement. “This is really a remarkable legacy moment in Las Vegas, and for the Catholic Church as a whole.”

The Holy See created the Diocese of Las Vegas in 1995, when it divided the Diocese of Reno-Las Vegas in two, supporting the northern and southern parts of the state respectively. At its inception, the Diocese of Las Vegas had a Catholic population of 250,000, which has more than doubled since.

Today, the Archdiocese of Las Vegas comprises 39,088 square miles in Nevada, and has a total population of 2,322,280, of which approximately 620,000 are Catholic, according to the archdiocese. The new archdiocese has a total of 67 priests and 30 parishes across the five counties it covers.

In a May 30 news conference, Thomas said there are more like 650,000 registered Catholics in the archdiocese, and likely another 200,000 unregistered Catholics as well, giving the archdiocese a total number of Catholics somewhere in the 850,000 range.

Expanding on those statistics, Thomas said there are 58 language groups in the archdiocese, which includes large Filipino and Caucasian communities. He said the archdiocese is also getting an influx of about 50,000 Californians each year, which has contributed to the growth.

Ultimately though, he credited the dedi-

cated Catholics of the archdiocese for its growth and vitality.

“I feel very grateful to the Holy See and to Pope Francis, who I love very deeply, but I [told the Vatican] the honour and the glory belong to the priests and the lay faithful,” Thomas said. “It is the people labouring out on the fields and in the community who are really responsible for the dynamism here.”

“We are having exponential growth, but our people are receiving excellent pastoral care,” he continued.

Auxiliary Bishop Gregory Gordon of Las Vegas highlighted not just population growth, but the spiritual growth of the region as the reason why the Vatican made this decision.

“Las Vegas has grown in many ways since we first became a diocese in 1995,” Gordon said in a statement. “But there has also been spiritual growth, in the number of baptised, an increase in vocations for our archdiocese and religious life, and we continue to build new parishes and continue to welcome to the priesthood. Our new archdiocesan status reflects that growth.”

The Vatican elevates a diocese to an archdiocese/ecclesiastical province based on certain criteria, such as size and population. An ecclesiastical province is a territory consisting of at least one archdiocese (known as the “metropolitan see”), and includes several dioceses (known as “suffragan sees”). In this case, the Dioceses of Reno and Salt Lake City are those suffragan sees. — **By John Lavenburg, Crux**

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'Don't feed the trolls'

ROME: Using a bit of cyber-jargon to get a point across, a senior Vatican communications official had a piece of advice for how to respond to the rise of online "trolls," meaning users looking to stir up trouble.

"Don't feed them, and don't nurture them on Twitter," said Italian layman Paolo Ruffini, head of the Vatican's Dicastery for Communications. This attitude, he said, ought to be assumed both by "those who are part of the Church and those who aren't."

Ruffini ducked, however, on the question of what happens when those trolls are actually Catholic prelates who use social media to criticise Pope Francis, saying that's a problem

for the Vatican's Dicastery for Bishops.

The question was sparked in part by a recent controversy centring on Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas, who used his Twitter account May 12 to announce that while he regards Francis as the legitimate Pope, he believes the pontiff is "undermining the Deposit of Faith."

Ruffini was introducing a lengthy new Vatican document on the risks and benefits of social media and the attitude of Christians who use them, which insists the platforms must be used to promote truth and community.

Discussing everything from cyberbullying to AI, misinformation to in-

formation overload and the growth of tribalism online, the document, published May 29, is titled, *Towards a Full Presence - A Pastoral Reflection on Engagement with Social Media*.

Topics covered in the pastoral reflection include information overload, constant scrolling, not giving others one's full attention, being an "influencer," witnessing to Christ, "digital detox," the need for silence, intentional listening, and building community in a fragmented world.

The text is "not meant to be precise 'guidelines' for pastoral ministry," the dicastery clarified, but seeks to promote a common reflection on how to foster meaningful and caring relationships on social media.



According to an executive summary of the document, its aim consists of an in-depth reflection on Christian interaction with and on social media, given the increasingly important role it plays in many people's lives.

Formation in the digital world

Sr Nathalie Bequart, secretary General of the Synod of Bishops and a member of the Vatican Dicastery for Communication, stressed the need for better formation in the digital world.

Given the rapid growth and expansion of social networks and the digital universe, Bequart said "formation in a just presence in the digital world is needed today, not only in education in schools, but all pastoral centres, for pastors, sisters

in communities."

Formation in proper online conduct must be integrated into communities so they learn "a correct way of being on social media" and of interacting with and in the digital world, learning "when we should speak and when we shouldn't speak."

The only way for the Church to move forward in this sphere, she said, "is to reflect on the path taken and what changes are needed for a better way."

According to the executive summary of the document, the idea behind publishing it is to "foster a culture of being loving neighbours also in the digital sphere," the summary said, noting that in the digital sphere, individuals "are often both consumers and commodities."

In this context, a "faith-filled" response is needed, the Vatican said, saying this response "begins with being discerning regarding the stimuli we receive and being

intentional listeners."

"Attentiveness, together with a sense of belonging, reciprocity, and solidarity are the pillars for building a sense of community that should ultimately strengthen local communities, capable of becoming drivers of change," the Vatican said.

The Vatican urged believers to be "weavers of communion" online, building new models of digital interaction based on trust, transparency and inclusion.

Listening disposition is needed

Among other things, the document warns Christians to watch out for various "pitfalls" along the "digital highways," noting that while the internet and social media platforms provide many opportunities for interconnectedness, they also present various challenges that must be addressed.

Users are frequently reduced to "consumers and commodities," while tribalist instincts are not only fostered, but often encouraged, the Vatican said, noting in the executive summary of the document that "many have been marginalised and wounded" through the online environment.

In the past, the Vatican has repeatedly spoken out against cyberbullying, launching an international observatory on the issue in 2018.

Pope Francis weighed in on the issue himself in 2019 during a meeting with young people belonging to Scholas Occurrentes, an educational project he began while still archbishop of Argentina, telling youth that when someone chooses to bully online, "the emptiness of the aggressor's own identity is apparent. There is a need for them to attack in order to feel like a person."

For Christians, then, the question that must be asked is, how they can help the online environment become "a place of sharing, collaborating, and belonging, based on mutual trust?"

In order for this to happen, social media users must have "a listening disposition" and must interact "in the realisation that the others we

are encountering online are real people."

"Even in an environment replete with 'information overload,' this attitude of intentional listening and openness of the heart makes it possible for us to move from mere awareness of the other to a genuine encounter," the executive summary said, saying the aim should be to invest in those met online and allow those digital connections to become "real relationships" that strengthen communities.

Oftentimes, people meet and interact with each other online in a spirit of indifference, the attitude of an ambivalent bystander, or in a spirit of "support and companionship," the summary said.

When the latter attitude of care

and support is chosen, the Vatican said, Christians, whether they are doing the support or are in need of it, can help heal "the wounds created by a toxic digital environment."

"We need to rebuild digital spaces so that they become more human and healthier environments," the summary said, saying Christians must also help shape the digital sphere so that it is capable of fostering "real communities based on that embodied encounter which is indispensable for those who believe in the Word become flesh."

Christians, the Vatican said, must bring a "distinctive style" to social media that is based on the words and love of Jesus Christ, who taught believers that "truth is revealed in communion, and that

communication also comes from communion – that is, from love."

The digital footprint of a Christian must reflect an attitude that shares truthful information creatively and that builds friendship and community, using whatever online influence they have "responsibly."

"It will be reflective, not reactive; it will be active in promoting activities and projects that promote human dignity; and it will be synodal, helping us to open our hearts and embrace our brothers and sisters," the summary said.

Christian influence on social media must also "bear the mark of witness," the summary continued, saying Christians are not on social platforms to sell anything or to proselytise, but to share the message of Christ.

This means they are online "to vouch, with their words and with their lives, for what someone else – God – has done, forging a communion that unites us in Christ," the summary said.

Drawing on the parable of the Good Samaritan, the summary said Christians will, at times, be the wounded one, and at other times, the one who helps, or they might be both together.

Either way, their presence online and the digital interactions they have must "become an encounter with a neighbour whose life concerns them, and ultimately, with the Lord. In this way, communication grants a taste of the communion that has its roots in the Holy Trinity, and that is our true 'promised land,'" the summary said.

Benefits and dangers of social media



In addition to his past remarks on cyberbullying, Pope Francis has repeatedly spoken about the benefits of social media, as well as the dangers they present.

When Francis published his encyclical on social friendship, *Fratelli Tutti*, in October 2020, he condemned today's hyper-polarised and trigger-happy social media culture, saying social aggression "has found unparalleled room for expansion through computers and mobile devices."

The pontiff lamented that unthinkable things could be said "in the crudest of terms, even by some political figures," and said the "feverish" exchanges on social platforms are often based on misinformation.

He blamed social media for normalising aggression and making polarisation and ideological and political disputes more acute, saying a spirit of charity, friendship, respect, and community-building is the remedy.

During the presentation of the document, Ruffini also fielded questions regarding Artificial Intelligence and AI technologies that create fake images, videos and audios, calling for the development of a global control system to monitor content circulating online and distinguish what is real from what is fake.

Misinformation, the manipulation of content and "deep fakes", such as AI generated images of Pope Francis wearing a giant white puffer jacket or playing basketball that have recently circulated, must be targeted "together," Ruffini said.

The challenge for Christians, he said, is to "be sources of truth, be capable of building an ecosystem of the truth" online. — **Cruix/CNA**



Making the modern papacy visible

What trips were to John Paul II, interviews may be to Francis



For a pope, one good way to be remembered is to do more of something than anyone else in history. To this day, Vatican-watchers love to cite the factoid that John Paul II travelled more than all previous popes combined, covering three and a half times the distance between the earth and the moon.

The previous record for papal trips outside Italy was held by Paul VI, who took nine. John Paul II made 104 such journeys, visiting 129 countries in all — meaning it's literally easier to list the nations he didn't visit, since the UN recognises a total of 193 sovereign states.

By the measure of sheer quantity, one thing for which Pope Francis is certain to be remembered is his interviews.

Oddly enough, unlike papal trips, no one in the Vatican appears to have kept an accurate count of the full number of media interviews Francis has given since his election in March 2013. One commonly cited tally is "more than 200," but that's just a way of saying, "It's a lot, but we don't really know."

The thought comes to mind in light of the fact that Pope Francis drove across town to the headquarters of the Italian national broadcaster *RAI* recently to record an interview for a June 4 segment of the TV programme *A Sua Immagine* (In His Image), which goes on air every Sunday morning just before his noontime *Angelus* address.

It was the first time a pontiff has visited *RAI*'s mother ship in the Roman neighbourhood of Saxa Rubra, and another reminder of just how ubiquitous papal interviews

have become in the Francis era. The experience of most reporters is that they barely have time to unpack the most recent papal Q&A before the next one drops.

One common term linking John Paul II's trips and Francis' interviews is that both are ways of making the modern papacy visible and relevant, using the tools modernity itself provides.

Famously, John Paul II once said that he considered himself the successor not only of Peter but, in a certain sense, Paul too, exploiting the highways and byways of his era in order to bring the Gospel to the world. Social mobility and the ease of travel in the late 20th century made that possible in a new way.

Every time the pope travelled, the world's media moved with him, and for a few days, he had the capacity to shine a spotlight on some particular corner of the world that he believed needed attention. The massive crowds John Paul drew also reinforced the social capital of the papacy, providing an indirect response to the famous derisive question posed by Stalin — how many legions does the pope have?

Watching John Paul II galvanise millions of devotees in Poland, for example, or Mexico, or the Philippines, the answer seemed clear: "Plenty."

In a similar fashion, Pope Francis is exploiting the ubiquity of media in the 21st century to make the pope a regular point of reference in the digital sphere. Knowing that a vast swath of the population today draws its impressions of reality almost exclusively from television and online media,

the pontiff has injected himself thoroughly into that milieu.

Once again, these interviews attest to the magnetic force of the papacy.

When Francis sat down just before Christmas for an interview with journalist Fabio Marchesi Ragona of Italy's *Canale 5*, the broadcast drew more than three million spectators and a 14 per cent audience share in its time slot ... and this is Italy, by the way, where any pope is always over-exposed, so the fact Francis can still generate such numbers says something.

Another point linking John Paul's travels with Francis' interviews is that both drew withering criticism from the Pope's in-house opposition.

In the John Paul era, critics charged that his trips amounted to expensive exercises in agitprop, putting the pope in front of adoring multitudes to insulate him from challenges to his leadership. One liberal European cardinal told me in the mid-1990s that the pope's trips reminded him of the Nuremberg rallies, in that both were intended to exalt the Great Leader and make resistance look puny and irrelevant.

Similarly, today, critics of Pope Francis often complain that not only is his language in many of his interviews doctrinally imprecise and misleading, but that he hand-picks friendly reporters and media outlets that won't ask any challenging questions. The idea, according to these detractors, is to make the Pope look beloved and admired without exposing him to any real danger of being embarrassed.

Of course, such criticism can be read as

a back-handed tribute. It's unlikely people would invest so much energy objecting to something if they perceived it to be a failure.

One wonders, therefore, if there will be another commonality between John Paul's physical travels and Francis' virtual journeys in the media, i.e., that both may become institutional features of the papacy.

It's striking that when Benedict XVI and Francis were elected, both initially said they did not plan to travel as much as John Paul, suggesting that his outings represented a personal charism they didn't necessarily share. Yet in the end, both averaged more or less the same number of foreign trips a year as John Paul, having found that the demand for the pope's physical presence simply required it.

It's possible future popes may have the same experience vis-à-vis interviews. They may come into office vowing not to follow Francis' lead, only to discover that in a media-saturated age, the demand for a pope to make himself available, and the advantages of doing so, mean it's no longer a matter of personal preference but part of the job description.

Come to think of it, maybe that's a question Francis himself could be asked in a future interview ... because, God knows, there probably will be more. — **By John L. Allen Jr., *Cruce***

Francis the teacher and evangelist

It is amazing to hear people who describe themselves as "faithful" or "staunch" Catholics accuse Pope Francis of being "too political" and not speaking enough about Jesus Christ. They certainly have not been paying close attention these past ten years that he's been Bishop of Rome.

The motivation for everything the 86-year-old Pope does and every initiative he takes, indeed for the very way he looks at the world, is based on the Good News; that is, the Gospel. When the Pope makes appeals for a more just distribution of the wealth, or throws his support behind environmental activists, or speaks out forcefully against abortion, or badgers nations about the dignity and rights of migrants and refugees, or actively seeks dialogue even with those whom some might see as despicable human beings, he does so out of love for Christ.

In fact, he is merely trying to live and be a witness to the demands of the Gospel. Period. And that is what it means to preach Jesus, even without specifically invoking the Lord's name. Francis is probably one of the most radically evangelical popes of all time. And he strives to follow in the footsteps of his papal namesake, the 13th century saint from Assisi whom the medievals called The Second Christ.

Papa Bergoglio is not perfect, obviously.

No one is; not even a Jesuit! Indeed, Christianity does not demand perfection but rather, fidelity to, and deep trust in the God that Jesus has revealed and modelled for humanity. And Jesus made it clear that the only way to love and serve God is by loving and serving our brothers and sisters — the God-present-in-others. But Francis also speaks very specifically about God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He does so quite a lot, in fact, and not just in the homilies he delivers during his frequent celebrations of the Eucharist. He does it all the time. But there are two fixed weekly appointments in particular during which the Latin American Pope "teaches" and "preaches" — and in a very focused way — the Gospel of Jesus Christ: each Sunday at the noontime *Angelus* (or *Regina Caeli*) address and blessing, and each Wednesday at the 9.00am general audience.

See for yourself!

If you want to get a sense of the Pope's zeal for evangelisation, for sharing the Good News that has obviously been the anchor and inspiration of his own life, you should watch him speak at these two events because merely reading his reflections or catechesis, as good as they may be on paper, does not give you the sense of his fervour. Most of the time he strays from the prepared

text and speaks passionately from the heart.

The Vatican provides live and easy-to-access online coverage of the Sunday reflection/blessing and Wednesday audience. It's surprising to learn at times that many people are not aware of this or how to get access to the Pope's speeches and the videos of his events.

So, here's the "how to" — you can find the official Holy See website in several languages

right here <https://shorturl.at/gpxNW>

This is virtually a one-stop shop for accessing just about everything Pope Francis says or does. The site also includes links to the various departments of the Roman Curia and other agencies and offices related to the Vatican. And if you want to locate a speech or document from a previous pope, there are links that open up sites for Francis' predecessors, or at least provide texts from their pontificates.

Keeping an eye on the Vatican

On the main page of the Holy See website there is also a calendar with select papal events each day, which provides links to the Pope's addresses, the daily bulletin of the H.S. Press Office, newly issued papal documents, and — in the case of papal liturgies — a pdf of the service booklet. If you click "General Audience" you can access the text

of the Pope's catechesis in the original Italian, plus full translations in numerous other languages.

There is also a photo gallery and a video recording with an English voice-over (with the option of including sign language). If you want to watch and listen to Francis speak without the voice-over, simply go back to the homepage of the website and, in the upper right-hand corner, select "ITALIANO". Then go back to the calendar and click on "Udienza Generale". There's another easy way to access videos of papal events, even as they are happening — it's through the various YouTube channels operated by Vatican News.

The first window is Vatican Media Live, which provides a running video feed that can be scrolled back up to 12 hours. The live camera is actually fixed on St Peter's Square when it is not broadcasting papal events — such as the general audience and *Angelus* — in real time. There are also recorded videos of past events. The English version of the Vatican News YouTube channel is here <https://shorturl.at/eBEQY>

Enjoy the view... especially the words and gestures of Francis, the teaching and evangelising Pope! — **By Robert Mickens, *LCI* ([https:// international.la-croix.com/](https://international.la-croix.com/))**



From mission work to priesthood

At 5.45pm on June 14, 2022, I received a message that read “Rich... Fr Chris passed away!”. My first reaction was “Which Fr Chris?” The reply came almost instantly “Our friend Fr Chris Lee from Seremban”. That was when I read and re-read the message in disbelief. My friend Anne then forwarded me another message from Fr Chris’ aunt, Julie, that read “It’s true. Got the news about 5.20pm”. After that, I wasted no time informing all the people who knew him well, from the days before he joined the priesthood.

Fr Christopher James Lee (Fr Chris as he was popularly known), was well loved by many in Malaysia, thanks to his active mission work before he joined the ranks of clergy. When I listened to the many eulogies given during his wake, I realised most of them knew him only after he was ordained into the priesthood in 2009. During his short 13 years as priest, he had touched the lives of many, serving as assistant priest, parish priest and chancellor in the Diocese of Malacca Johore. What many may not know is that Fr Chris had been actively living his priestly life, doing mission work long before that.

I first met Chris (as we knew him then) in the year 2000, when he was invited by the late Fr John Gnanapiragasam to join the team in conducting a Bible study programme named simply *Biblical Journey in 44 weeks*, based on the four volumes of the *Journey*, a study guide to the Old and New Testaments prepared by Bishop Marcel Gervais of Canada. Fr John had put together a team of 12, comprising two priests, two religious and the rest were laity, of whom Chris and I were involved.

Due to the success of the first batch of almost 300 attendees who completed the programme at four separate venues, Fr



REMINISCING CHURCH

Richard Chia

John continued with this course for the next four years at three different locations each year. It was made possible because Chris had stepped forward and had taken on many of the sessions held on weekday nights, and was able to travel to these locations. In total, the five years Bible study course had reached more than 2,000 plus participants.

Subsequently, Fr John, who was then the Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute (API) Director, also initiated several other programmes where Chris played a key role, either as one of the facilitators, a speaker or simply some resource personnel. Among them were an archdiocesan catechist formation and some formations organised by API.

During the period from 2000 till 2005, when he submitted his application to join the priesthood to Bishop Paul Tan, SJ (the then bishop of Malacca Johore), he was literally “working everyday” in God’s vineyard, giving talks, conducting camps, retreats and formation to many groups who were constantly inviting him. The catechist groups were regularly calling upon him to conduct First Holy Communion and Confirmation camps. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal groups would invite him as speaker for many of their CCR gatherings. The youth groups would invite him to conduct youth camps or formations. And, the Catholics in the Workplace group, a group of Catholics working in the KL City Centre



The late Fr Christopher Lee

that meets during lunch time every week, considered him their resident speaker.

Whenever he had late night sessions in Kuala Lumpur or Petaling Jaya, he would call to ask to stay in my house. So much so I just gave him a set of keys, and he would come by anytime, whenever he needed a place to stay the night. He would then share with me his session for that day or week, and then would be off again the next day.

At numerous occasions I asked him how he was able to sustain himself, to be able to do all that he did. After all, he had a car to maintain, petrol, toll and parking to pay, and had to take care of his daily meals whenever he was not home in Seremban (which was often). He smiled and simply replied “The Lord provides”, and did not elaborate further.

Chris’ mission work was not confined to the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur only, as he had, on occasion, been invited to give talks or camps in the other dioceses in Malaysia. On one occasion, the late Cardinal Soter Fernandez (then archbishop) had suggested to Charles Bertille, who was

then with Fondacio, to “take Christopher under your wings in any of your activities”. Charles had, at that time, received an invitation from the Bishops Conference in Myanmar to conduct an evaluation of their diocese and its project in the northern Shan state.

Upon completing his 10 days’ mission work in Myanmar, I recall Chris telling me how poor the people there were, and how he lived among them, sleeping and eating whatever was offered him. It was truly an eye opener for him, and he shared how simple and full of joy the people there were.

It wasn’t totally a surprise to the many who knew him when he announced that his application to join the priesthood had been accepted. For me, it was with mixed feelings, somewhat. I was happy that he was finally being accepted into a vocation that he had been living all the while. Sad at the same time, because I had “lost” a partner whom I had worked well with, whenever we gave sessions, talks and camps together. Of course, my loss was personal, while the people in the Diocese of Malacca Johore gained a priest who went on to greater works.

Re-reading the obituary notice by Bishop Bernard Paul on June 15, 2022, Chris had indeed moved on to greater works between the time of his ordination to priesthood on Aug 31, 2009 till his sudden demise 13 years later. The many offices he held, the ministries and positions he was responsible for, truly shows how much Fr Chris Lee was valued as a late vocation priest.

● **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.**

Recounting the horrors of Cameroon’s war

The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) recently launched a book entitled, *In the Eye of the Storm between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea; The Unheard Voices of the Anglophone War in Cameroon*.

The book is aimed at providing an apprehension of the context in which the Anglophone crisis has evolved into an Anglophone War. Understanding the realities, controversies, role of stakeholders and the unheard voices of the victims of this cruel war, which has claimed many lives.

The book, the unheard voices of the Anglophone crisis, is meant for everyone with a heart, with a voice and with a story to be told. It draws whosoever’s attention to the implication of the war, and identify the disgusting horror it has, on children, women and men.

The publishers of the first-ever book that captures the voices of those most affected by the war say the tone was meant to shock the national and international psyche. So long as there is war and armed conflicts in the world, stories like the one below of Sandra and Fr Abraham will always emerge.

Sandra began her conversation with Fr Abraham by describing how she and five friends set out one day for a walk in the violence-plagued south-western region of Cameroon, where a civil insurrection has waked and waned since 2016.

At one stage, the group reached a police checkpoint and were asked to present their national ID cards. While the others presented the cards and were allowed to continue, Sandra and a boy in the group were minors and theoretically didn’t need the card to

move about.

The boy paid a bribe and was allowed to leave, but not Sandra.

“At this point, I still thought I was in safe hands because of their uniforms,” Sandra told Fr Abraham via WhatsApp, as recounted in the book.

Sandra and Fr Abraham are pseudonyms, according to the book, because both still live in precarious situations.

“These men asked me to get on their truck, which I did Their truck took a turn into a community I couldn’t recognise, and continued into the forest. I thought it was a path into another community but the vehicle slowed down and then stopped. I was asked to get down the truck which I did...”

“Father, after these men finished talking to themselves, one walked towards me, and asked that I take off my clothes... before I could even say a word, I was pushed to the ground and told to stay quiet. They threatened me, saying if I tried to resist, I would be shot. Three of the officers joined their colleague and they forcefully tore my clothes... All four of them severely raped me.”

Afterwards, Sandra said, she was left in a pool of her own blood. In the wake of the experience, Sandra told the priest, she now hates men, so much so that she actually considered poisoning her own brother.

Fr Abraham told Sandra he shared in her “pain and grief,” and said that in his priestly mission, “I have witnessed these barbaric and inhuman acts.”

“Right in front of me,” he wrote, “one of my Christians was killed. Right in front of



“They turned my body into a playing ground. Despite my crying, they were more concerned with taking turns.” This is just one of the poignant points contained in a book released by the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa, CHRDA. (photo/panafricanvisions.com)

me, another’s hand was amputated.”

The harrowing exchange is reproduced in the 174-page book, intended to give voice to the victims of Cameroon’s conflict.

Sexual and gender-based violence has been the biggest tool in the conflict, and “rape has always been used as a tool for war,” said Agbor Balla, lead author and executive director of CHRDA, said in an interview with *Crux*.

“We felt that it was these unheard voices — these women, children, men who are faceless and nameless, but who are suffering from this war more than anyone else.

We wanted to put the story in their own voices in a way that would be attractive and appealing to each and every one. The narrative style would not be very academic, but a style that would appeal to the grassroots person, because the purpose is for the common man to appropriate it, so that they can hold accountable their leaders to try to find a solution.”

“It’s a document people will read and feel the pain our brothers and sisters are going through in the Southwest and Northwest regions,” Agbor Balla said. — **By Ngala Killian Chintom, *Crux***



A surfing saint?

Pope Francis recognises the heroic virtue of Guido Schäffer

The Catholic Church is one step closer to canonising a surfing saint. Pope Francis recognised the heroic virtue of Brazil's "Surfer Angel" Guido Schäffer in a decree issued by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints on May 24.

Schäffer was a seminarian, a doctor, and a surfer who drowned while surfing in 2009 off the coast of Rio de Janeiro at the age of 34, before he could fulfil his desire of being ordained to the priesthood.

The Brazilian seminarian, known locally as the "Anjo Surfista" or "Surfer Angel," used to begin each of his surfing lessons with a prayer and was known for his work with the poor, providing medical care to Rio's *favelas* (poor, working-class neighbourhoods) alongside the Missionaries of Charity.

With the decree, Pope Francis declared Schäffer "venerable." The Church will now need to approve a miracle attributed to his intercession before he can be beatified.

Born in Brazil on May 22, 1974, Schäffer grew up near the sandy beaches of Rio's Copacabana neighbourhood. His father was a physician and his mother was very active in a charismatic renewal movement in their Catholic parish, Nossa Senhora de Copacabana, and instilled in him a love of Scripture and prayer.

As a student, Schäffer was an active member of a charismatic prayer group called *Canção Nova* (New Song), founded by Fr Jonas Abib. Schäffer later co-founded, together with his girlfriend and a priest known as Fr Jorjão, the prayer group "Fire of the Holy Spirit" at a parish in Ipanema the year he graduated from medical school.

During his medical residency from 1999 to 2001, Schäffer worked as a general practitioner at the Hospital Santa Casa de Misericórdia. He also began volunteering with a Catholic group that provided pastoral ministry to the sick at the hospital.

While on a retreat, Schäffer was moved by a line in the Bible: "Do not turn your face away from any of the poor, so that God's face will not be turned away from you" (Tobit 4:7). He asked for God's forgiveness and prayed: "Jesus, help me to care for the poor."

One week later, he met Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity and soon began working with them to offer medical care in some of Rio's poorest neighbourhoods. He invited

other doctors from his hospital to join him and also brought young people from his prayer group and hospital ministry to volunteer.

Sr Caritas, with the Missionaries of Charity, recalled how Schäffer talked to each of the people he served about Christ, taking care of "both their body and their soul."

"He used to pray with and for each of them, always inviting them to receive the sacraments as a source of grace and communion with God," she said.

"His only concern was to save souls to God — guiding as many people as he could to a personal experience with Christ."

While he was volunteering with the Missionaries of Charity, Schäffer read "Brother Francis of Assisi" by Ignacio Larrañaga, which became a great inspiration for him.

St John Paul II's visit to Rio de Janeiro in 1997 and Schäffer's pilgrimage to Europe for the beatification of Brazil's protomartyrs in 2000 also played a decisive role in his life-changing decision to leave his profession as a doctor and leave his girlfriend to respond to a call to enter the priesthood.

Schäffer began studying philosophy at the São Bento Monastery in 2002. In between seminary classes, he volunteered at a local



hospital. He moved to the Archdiocesan Seminary of São José in Rio de Janeiro in 2008, where he devoted himself to evangelisation while continuing his medical volunteering and surfing.

Big wave surfer Rodrigo Resende was impressed by Schäffer's love for the poor and inner peace. He told the Brazilian publication *Veja Rio*: "I have never seen someone treat the marginalised with such respect. The inner peace that he radiated was impressive."

While surfing with friends off of Rio's Recreio dos Bandeirantes beach on May 1, 2009, Schäffer hit his head on his surfboard and drowned. — **By Courtney Mares, CNA**

"He used to pray with and for each of them, always inviting them to receive the sacraments as a source of grace and communion with God,"

Sister Caritas

"I came back happy," says Barbara Rettig, Aid to the Church in Need's (ACN) head of projects for parts of India, as she returned from a trip to West Bengal. "I saw a joyful and hopeful Church, with people singing during Mass, and beating drums. Over there, I felt that faith is joy. People go to Mass. Churches are full."

India is a multicultural country, which according to tradition first received the Christian faith from St Thomas, the Apostle, in the mid-first century, after he came ashore on the Malabar coast, near the old port of Muzaris (Cranganore).

Today, Christians make up about 2.3 per cent of the population, spread throughout the country. Nonetheless, in some parts of India, there are obstacles to religious freedom, with some states having approved laws to regulate conversions. "There is no anti-conversion law in West Bengal yet," said Rettig, adding, "There is greater religious freedom there, compared to other parts of the country."

India's Constitution guarantees religious freedom, based on treating all religious traditions equally. However, according to ACN's 2021 Religious Freedom Report, anti-conversion laws are being approved at the request of nationalist Hindu groups who fear that India's Hindu character is being threatened by the growth of competing religions. Therefore, the laws are disproportionately targeting their respective states' religious minorities. Muslims and Christians are particularly affected and harassed because both religions have missionary activity, the report adds.

Free from anti-conversion laws, in the state of West Bengal the Church continues to thrive, thanks to the attention of its shepherds.



A priest celebrates Mass in a Catholic community in a village in West Bengal, India. (LiCas News Photo/Zvonimir Athletic via shutterstock.com)

"During my trip, I got a real grasp of Jesus' request that 'the shepherd should know his flock and the sheep should know the shepherd's voice.' I saw it especially when I was in the car with a bishop. The people would wave to him as they passed, and the bishop would wave back because he knew who they were. It was a lovely experience."

This closeness of the clergy is also visible among the priests, the women religious, and some of the laypeople who accompany the BECs, which are small groups of faithful rooted in the Word of God and the Eucharist, and they extend their service for the pastoral and social development of the situation

in their local neighbourhood. "They meet to share their faith and reflect on the Word of God, following the seven-step Gospel Sharing Method. There is an atmosphere of intense communion, and they treat the Word of God with great respect. At the beginning of a meeting, the Bible is brought in procession and enthroned. They treat it with such reverence that I was really impressed. The Bible is really venerated," Rettig explains.

The formation of people who accompany the faithful is a priority for ACN in this region, according to the head of projects for India. "We are supporting programmes to strengthen animators for the BECs and the

formation of leaders who can continue to help to keep the faith alive, not only the ones who accompany the BECs but also people who participate in other pastoral activities. We will not leave them alone. We must appreciate the fact that there is no anti-conversion law in this area."

Other projects supported by ACN in West Bengal include the construction and renovation of small churches in rural areas. ACN also helps with the training of catechists, the formation of seminarians, priests, and sisters, and provides subsistence aid for priests through Mass stipends. — **Carlos Rosas-Jiménez, LiCAS**

The lessons of imperfection

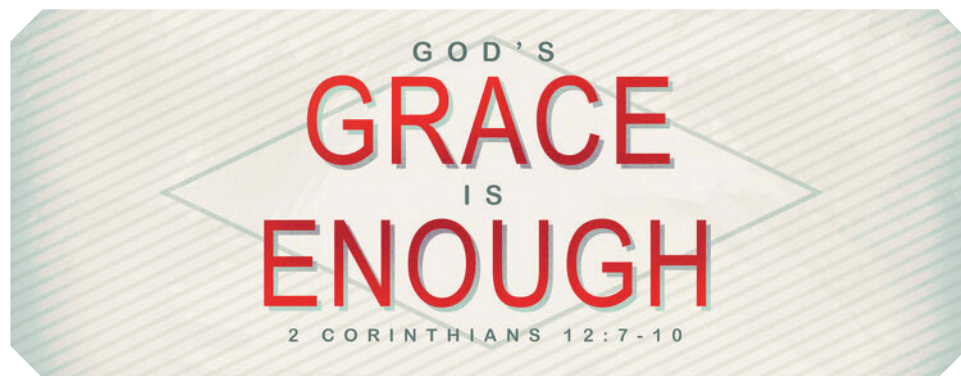


WORD IN PROGRESS

Karen Michaela Tan

I have just had to text my teen's catechist to explain the reason my 15-year-old would not be attending the class camp. As I hit send, a wave of despair washed over me. My message explained that my child was clinically diagnosed with anxiety, thus making social interactions difficult, and that forcing attendance to the sleep away event would impede their daily coping ability. I was not making any of it up, but as I waited for the two-tick read message from my former fellow catechist, I wondered how things had come to this.

Having received entry into the Catholic Church as an adult, I was adamant that any child I had would be born Catholic and raised Catholic, by a parent who was not only a Sunday Catholic, but one who spoke of the faith, tried to live it in all ways possible, and who testified to it when appropriate. Even without the help of a Catholic co-parent, my progeny was baptised as an infant, enrolled into catechism, and received perfect attendance awards for every year of their primary school catechism classes. I planned vacations and school holidays around the catechism calendar, and moved family gatherings and social outings to give the classes precedence because I wanted to make it a point that my child would grow up understanding the faith, and adhering to all



its practices is not about how convenient it is, but how committed a person or a family was to keeping to the teaching and responsibilities of Catholic familyhood.

While fortunately the teen actually finds pleasure in going early to help set up the classroom with the catechist, she falls into anxious, subdued silence in the presence of chattering classmates, most of whom remain strangers, despite nine years of being in a class together.

In despair, I wrote to my teen's catechist, "I sometimes ask what kind of demon exists in the kids of today that they are plagued with such crippling low esteem, such self-hate." The adolescent psychiatrist attending to my offspring's case tried to put things into perspective when I burst out one day, "Why is this happening? There is no abuse, neglect, abandonment in the family. The parents are civil to each other, there is every effort taken to ensure extended family ties are strong, that there is a routine, and the opportunity of age-appropriate responsibility and decision-making given. So why this illness, why my child?" I felt as bereft as the widow in the

Bible whose only son had died.

In her clinical, neutral way, the psychiatrist — one of the pre-eminent names in her field, and one of the best in the country — told me that I should be grateful that the teen trusted me enough to confide in me, and felt safe enough to say there was a need for help from a trained mental health professional. Many times, she said, she saw teens only after they had failed to hide evidence of self-harm.

Yet, for me, that was little comfort. I was the one who was primed to raise a young Catholic who would lead by service, be rooted in the Word of God, and walk in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd. I was a fire-brand myself — as zealous a proponent of my faith as Paul was after his conversion. So why this? Why was my child 'faulty'?

After months of searching, and speaking to trusted friends in ministry, teacher friends, and Catholic parent friends whose values mirrored mine, I have come to a conclusion, and not a particularly nice one.

Because children are an extension of ourselves, many parents, whether they know it or not, desire their child to appear societally

'correct'. Passable, if not excellent, academic results, acceptable cocurricular performance, and please God, as a Catholic parent, a love for Jesus and His Church. We forget that conversion is a personal thing. Faith lessons can be drummed into a person relentlessly, but until a heart softens enough to accept God in an intrinsically organic way, Scripture and prayer are just words on a page. We can lead our children to the faith, but we cannot make them believe.

We would like to believe a good tree produces good fruit. As such, we sometimes force-shape our children to be what we want them to be, unheeding of their limitations, momentarily deaf to that line from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 that "for everything there is a season, and a time for every [a]purpose under heaven."

As a parent, I should not be treating my child as a means to collect honour. My prime responsibility is to care for the gift that God entrusted me with, in spite of what I wish they would be. While I may fancy myself some kind of female version of John Chrysostom, perhaps it is the will of God that my attention be turned to the study of gentleness and patience needed to raise a child with societal difficulties.

This is something I struggle with every day. When things get hard, I grit my teeth and read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, and pray for the grace of God to continue to parent in the way God would have me.

● **Karen-Michaela Tan** is a poet, writer and editor who seeks out God's presence in the human condition and looks for ways to put the Word of God into real action.

Corpus Christi — Musings on the Holy Eucharist

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ is also known as 'Corpus Christi'. It is a day to remember the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, the source and summit of the Catholic faith.

Here are some musings on *Corpus Christi* and the Holy Eucharist.

Eucharistic Procession

Every year during *Corpus Christi*, I look forward to the Eucharistic procession where the Blessed Sacrament is carried in procession either within the church compound or on the streets for worshippers to adore.

Certain districts organise their Eucharistic procession by selecting a particular parish in the district to host the celebration. All parishes in the district then work together for the liturgy, procession, logistics, refreshments, etc. It is a positive way to build communion and encourage participation between parishes. The celebration also brings the district together in the spirit of being one in the Body and Blood of Christ.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist in Kuala Lumpur used to organise a five-kilometre-long procession through the financial district of Kuala Lumpur. The roads where the procession passed — Jalan Raja Chulan, Jalan Sultan Ismail and Jalan Ampang are tourist belts with many curious on-lookers, some of whom also joined in the procession without knowing its meaning.

There was one year when a couple from Syria who joined the procession asked me what was going on. It was difficult for me to explain because their command of the English language was not strong and my command of Arabic was nil. But thanks to Google Translate in my mobile phone, I



FAITHFULLY SPEAKING

Julie Lim Seet Yin

managed to translate the word, 'Eucharist' into Arabic. I also told the couple to look for information about *Corpus Christi*.

If there is another Eucharistic procession again through the streets of Kuala Lumpur, I may list down related words and translate them into different languages as preparation because Eucharistic processions are a great way to share the faith and to evangelise.

Treating the Eucharist

Many of us assume that all Catholics know about the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. However, there are Catholics who may not believe it. This lack of understanding is the reason we hear of cases where the Eucharist was treated in a disrespectful manner.

One of the most shocking incidents I have heard was when a mother carrying a toddler went up to receive Holy Communion. Instead of consuming the Eucharist, she proceeded to let the toddler play with the precious Body of Christ. I suppose she must have received a harsh reprimand for doing so.

Whenever we attend Mass, we may have seen the Eucharist accidentally dropping on the floor. I am not sure what is the correct procedure to pick up a host that has fallen on the floor, but the Eucharist must be handled in the most precious way because it is the real presence of Jesus Christ. This is why we consume the Eucharist — so that



Christ becomes part of our body, and we become part of Him.

Catholics and the Eucharist

When my aunt passed away in August 2021 due to cardiac arrest caused by COVID-19, I attended an online memorial service organised by her cell group from Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB).

At the beginning of the service, each SIB member had a small glass of liquid and a piece of food that looked like a wafer. The person leading the service then invited everyone to consume the liquid and wafer. There was no prayer or ceremony to bless the items. I was disappointed that they didn't inform the non-SIB members beforehand or else I would have prepared Malbec and Haw flakes.

That was my first time attending a service conducted by another Christian denomination, and that experience opened my eyes (once again) that the Holy Eucharist is one of the main elements that differentiate Catholics from other Christian denominations. For Roman Catholics, the Holy Eucharist is simply the source and summit of our Catholic faith.

Deprived of the Eucharist

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Masses were suspended throughout the various dioceses in Malaysia and in many other dioceses globally. During this time, the people were told to receive spiritual communion by following online Masses on YouTube. To me, this was an interim solution because Catholics need to receive Holy Eucharist in its physical form.

As Masses continued to be suspended, the longing to receive Holy Eucharist in its physical form became so strong that many Catholics cried tears of joy after physical Masses resumed and they could receive the Eucharist again.

Certain Catholics who were angry with the Church for the prolonged Mass suspension wanted to join other Christian churches but decided not to. When I asked what stopped them from doing so, they said it was because of the Holy Eucharist, and no other reason. These enriching conversations reminded me of a quote from Catholic Link: "Once you understand the Eucharist, you can never leave the Church. Not because the Church won't let you, but because your heart won't let you."

On this Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, I hope that all Catholics will reinforce their belief in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. And that we need to receive the Eucharist as often as possible in order to become one with Him.

● **Julie Lim Seet Yin** believes that a satisfied life measured by one's heart, mind and soul is better than a successful life measured by worldly yardsticks. She can be reached at: limseetyin@gmail.com



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Wonder has left the building

In a poem entitled, *Is/Not*, Margaret Atwood suggests that when a love grows numb, this is where we find ourselves:

*We're stuck here
on this side of the border
in this country of thumb streets and
stale buildings*

*where there is nothing spectacular
to see
and the weather is ordinary*

*where love occurs in its pure form only
on the cheaper of the souvenirs*

Love can grow numb between two people, just as it can within a whole culture. And that has happened in our culture, at least to a large part. The excitement that once guided our eyes has given way to a certain numbness and resignation. We no longer stand before life with much freshness. We have seen what it has to offer and have succumbed to a certain resignation: That's all there is, and it's not that great! All we can try for now is more of the same, with the misguided hope that if we keep increasing the dosage, the payoff will be better.

They talk of old souls, but old souls are actually young at heart. We're the opposite, young souls no longer young at heart. Wonder has left the building.

What's at the root of this? What has deprived us of wonder? Familiarity and its children: sophistication, intellectual pride, disappointment, boredom, and contempt. Familiarity does breed contempt, and contempt is the antithesis of the two things needed to stand before the world in wonder: reverence and respect.



G.K. Chesterton once suggested that familiarity is the greatest of all illusions. Elizabeth Barrett Browning gives poetic expression to this: Earth's crammed with heaven. And every common bush afire with God. But only he who sees, takes off his shoes. The rest sit round and pluck blackberries and daub their natural faces unaware. That aptly describes the illusion of familiarity, plucking berries while carelessly stroking our faces, unaware that we are in the presence of the holy. Familiarity renders all things common.

What's the answer? How do we recover our sense of wonder? How do we begin again to see divine fire inside ordinary life? Chesterton suggests that the secret to recovering wonder and seeing divine fire in the ordinary is to learn to look at things familiar until they look unfamiliar again. Biblically, that's what God asks of Moses when Moses sees a burning bush in the desert and approaches its fire out of curiosity. God says to him, take off your shoes, the ground you are standing on

is holy ground.

That single line, that singular invitation, is the deep secret to recovering our sense of wonder whenever we find ourselves, as Atwood describes, stuck on this side of the border, in thumb streets and stale buildings, with nothing spectacular to see, ordinary weather, and love seemingly cheapened everywhere.

One of my professors in graduate school occasionally offered us this little counsel: If you ask a naïve child, do you believe in Santa and the Easter Bunny, he will say yes. If you ask a bright child the same question, he will say no. But if you ask yet still a brighter child that question, he will smile and say yes.

Our sense of wonder is predicated initially on the naivete of being a child, of not yet being unhealthily familiar with the world. Our eyes then are still open to marvel at the newness of things. That changes, of course, as we grow, experience things, and learn. Soon enough we learn the truth about Santa and

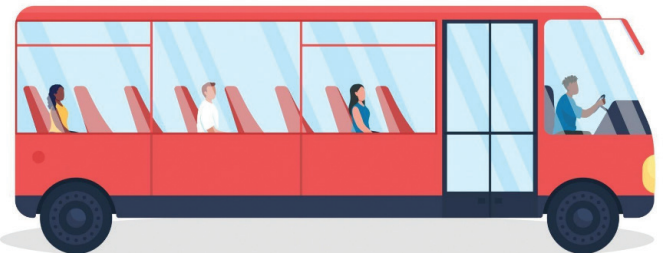
the Easter Bunny and with that, all too easily, comes the death of wonder and the familiarity that breeds contempt. This is a disillusionment which, while a normal transitional phase in life, is not meant to be a place in which we stay. The task of adulthood is to regain our sense of wonder and begin again, for very different reasons, to believe in the reality of Santa and the Easter Bunny. We need to bring wonder back into the building.

I once heard a wise man share this vignette: Imagine a two-year-old child who asks you, "where does the sun go at night?" For a child that young, don't pull out a globe or a book and try to explain how the solar system works. Just tell the child the sun is tired and is taking a sleep behind the barn. However, when the child is six or seven years old, don't try that anymore. Then, it's time to pull out books and explain the solar system. After that, when the child is in high school or college, it's time to pull out Steven Hawking, Brian Swimme, and astrophysicists, and talk about the origins and make-up of the universe. Finally, when the person is 80 years old, it's enough again to say, "the sun is tired and is taking a sleep behind the barn."

We have grown too familiar with sunsets! Wonder can make the familiar unfamiliar again.

● **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**

My Sunday celebration of Eucharist begins on a Chicago bus



The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is in the midst of a three-year, multi-million-dollar campaign to reinforce belief in the real presence of the Eucharist. While the cost is a mere widow's mite compared to the mid-term political campaigns this country has recently weathered, it nonetheless sounds like a great pile of cash to many Catholics — myself included.

I've been going to Mass longer than most of the bishops leading this effort have been alive. Age alone does not make me an expert, but my length of days spanning the pre-Vatican II practice of attending Mass to the post-Vatican II practice of celebrating the Eucharist does give me perspective.

Distinct though distant memories of attending Mass in the pre-Vatican II Church abound in my mind. I recall making my first Holy Communion decked out in a white Palm Beach suit as was the custom at St Philip Neri Church in the South Shore neighbourhood of Chicago. My classmates and I said the Communion host tasted like cardboard, much to the chagrin of our grammar school nuns. Reading *My Sunday Missal*, "explained by Fr Stedman," and eventually graduating to a much thicker tome, the *St Anthony Daily Missal*, helped me follow the ritual of the Latin Mass.

A few years later, I memorised the Latin Mass responses from a red cover booklet,

How to Serve Low Mass, qualifying me as an altar boy. In those days of yore, Mass was a hermetically sealed experience focused on the transubstantiation of wine — which only the priest could receive — and of bread, which congregants could receive but not touch!

That all changed with the Second Vatican Council.

We no longer passively attend Mass; now we actively celebrate the Eucharist. Thanks to the Second Vatican Council, celebrating the Eucharist and identifying the real presence has expanded well beyond attending Mass and receiving the cardboard-tasting Communion wafer.

Nowadays, my celebration of the Eucharist begins with my bus ride to the faith community I have chosen to attend, rather than my assigned geographical parish. I am one of about half of urban churchgoing Catholics in this country who have eschewed my territorial parish in favour of a destination faith community.

The bus I ride early on Sundays travels along Lake Michigan. From my seat, I once saw a man reverently approach the lake, dip his fingers into the water and make the sign of the cross. His recognition of the real presence embodied in the natural world has always stayed with me. Our common home is God's home too. I think of that stranger's

little ritual with mighty significance when I dip my fingers into the holy water font as I enter the sacred space of my faith community. The soul can see the grace and beauty that lies beneath appearances.

The healthcare workers riding the bus to various nursing facilities along the route are on their way to yet another real presence, as they care for people whose bodies can no longer care for themselves. Their Sunday morning rituals with the real presence of people confined to beds, wheelchairs, and walkers are also revelatory. I find myself remembering these blessed, broken bodies and the health care workers ministering to them during the prayers of the faithful.

Often an elderly Black couple will hobble onto the bus, each with a cane in one hand and a well-worn Bible in the other. They are decked out in their Sunday finery — she in a fancy dress with a rhinestone brooch, he in a double-breasted suit with a handkerchief that matches the colour of her dress in his lapel pocket. They, too, are on their way to church, to a different faith community than my own that celebrates the real presence of the biblical words clutched in their hands. I think of them and their celebratory faith during our Liturgy of the Word.

Pondering all of these encounters, I know I have already gone to the altar of God before stepping inside the church building.

The real presence on my Sunday mornings does not end with our faith community's celebration of the Eucharist. Afterward, a small group of us go to brunch. I, along with others in this group, consider this meal a principal part of our liturgy. Our wide-ranging conversations often turn to the day's readings and homily. Our discussions about them over coffee, omelettes and bagels — sometimes complimentary, other times critical — never fail to provide myself and other brunchers with additional glimpses into the real presence in our lives.

On my bus ride home, I will sometimes see a person searching through a dumpster, looking for food. How can I not think of the insight into the Eucharist from the late Jesuit Superior General, Pedro Arrupe? "If there is hunger anywhere in the world, then our celebration of the Eucharist is somehow incomplete everywhere in the world."

I wonder, have I just witnessed a missing dimension to the real presence?

Will the bishops organising this Eucharistic revival lead the faithful into a wider appreciation and understanding of the real presence that is more expansive than a doctrine of faith and the obligation to attend Sunday Mass? I am not optimistic about that. Nonetheless, I will continue my lifelong search for the real presence in my life. — **Peter Gilmour, NCR**

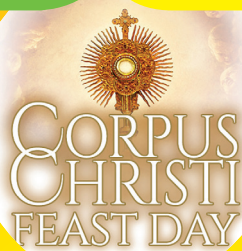
Little Catholics' Corner

Hello children of God,
Today we celebrate the feast of the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It is also known as the Feast of Corpus Christi which is Latin for the Body of Christ.

At the Last Supper, Jesus knew He was going to leave His friends. So, He turned the bread into His Body and the wine into His Blood — even though they still looked like bread and wine — and He told the Apostles to do the same.

Jesus gave the Apostles, who were the first priests, the power to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood during Mass. Now at every Mass, Jesus comes to us on the altar, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity!

We can't see any change happen when the priest consecrates the bread and wine, but we know that God can do things without us understanding them. He loves us so much that He wants to come to us hidden in Holy Communion. Now it is up to



us to love Him back with all our hearts!

History

The proclamation of the feast, back in the 13th century, involved a nun, a priest, a bishop and a Eucharistic miracle.

St Juliana of Liège (in Belgium) was a nun who had a deep devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. After Jesus gave her a mission through visions, she set out to make the church recognise a special feast for the Body and Blood of Christ.

But how? She was a nun in the Middle Ages without any power or influence. Enter Fr Peter of Prague. He was wrestling with the debate at the time about just how real the Real Presence was. His doubts were quelled when he was celebrating Mass and blood began seeping from the consecrated host. Fr Peter brought this miracle to the bishop, who was also aware of St. Juliana's visions. That same bishop soon became Pope Urban IV, who proclaimed the Feast of Corpus Christi to the whole Church.

Love, Aunty Gwen

Ask your parents or an older sibling about this popular saint and fill in the details.

All about St Anthony of Padua



BORN

DIED

COUNTRY OF BIRTH

FEAST DAY

PATRON SAINT OF

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE SAINT

PRAYER TO ST ANTHONY OF PADUA

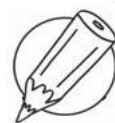
"Blessed be God in His Angels and in His Saints"

O Holy St Anthony, gentlest of Saints,
your love for God and Charity for His creatures,
made you worthy, when on earth, to possess miraculous powers.
Encouraged by this thought, I implore you to obtain for me (request).

O gentle and loving St Anthony,
whose heart was ever full of human sympathy,
whisper my petition into the ears of the sweet Infant Jesus,
who loved to be folded in your arms;
and the gratitude of my heart will ever be yours. Amen.



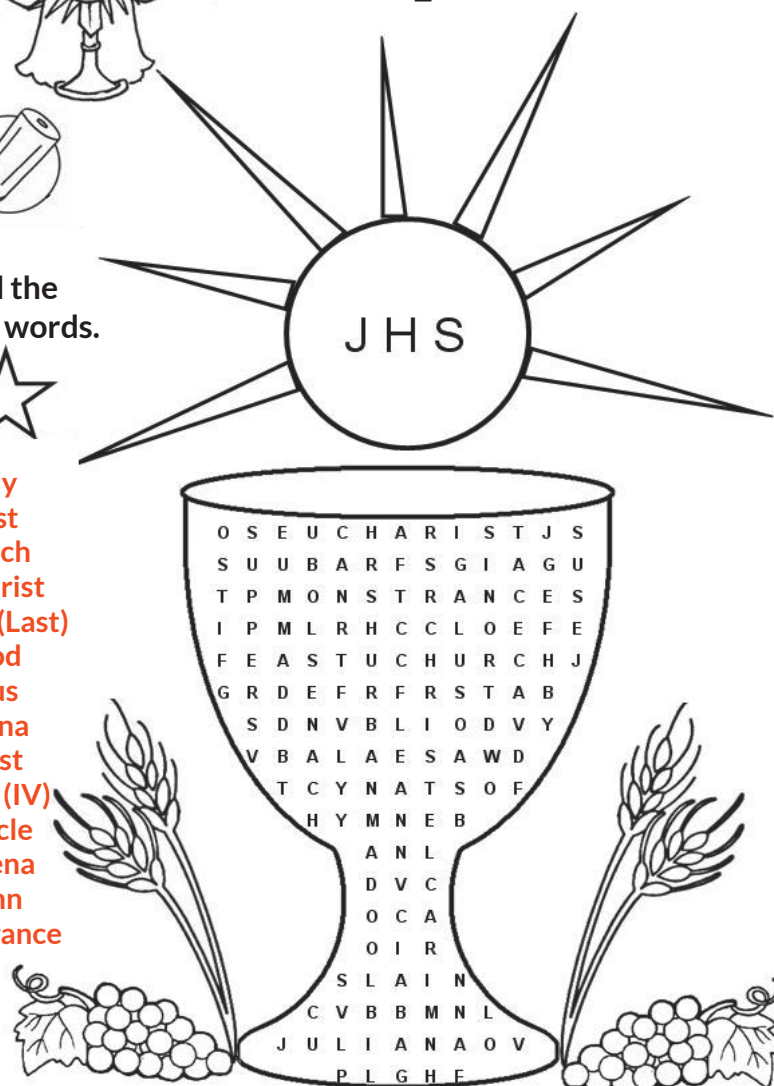
The Feast of Corpus Christi



Find the hidden words.



Body
Feast
Church
Eucharist
Supper (Last)
Blood
Jesus
Juliana
Christ
Urban (IV)
Miracle
Bolsena
Hymn
Monstrance



The Sacred Heart of Jesus

Use the cross, heart, and circle to trace or color, and create Jesus's heart:



YOUTH

JUNE 11, 2023

KUCHING: The UiTM Young Catholic Undergraduates (YCU) organised the Singai Youth Camp at the Catholic Memorial and Pilgrimage Centre, Mount Singai (CMPC), Bau, Sarawak from May 19 to 21. The camp was attended by two alumni and 45 students, namely from UiTM Campus Samarahan 1, UiTM Campus Samarahan 2, UNIMAS and Pusat Pembangunan Kemahiran Sarawak (PPKS).

The camp aimed to sow a spirit of unity among students, including alumni, by bringing them together in an environment outside the campus. Instilling a craft attitude among the attendees, the camp's objective was also to enhance the bonds between the participants and deepen their relationship with God.

By participating in various activities and workshops, the students had the opportunity to develop leadership skills, explore their interests, and cultivate a mindset of craftsmanship in their secular and spiritual lives.

The YCU vice-president Aaron Laing Jeffrey, kicked off the camp with a prayer and at the venue, YCU president, Stella Lungan, introduced the camp's objectives to the attendees. The talks, based on the theme *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins*. 1 Peter 4:8 was led by the representative of the exco YCU committee including Urmilla Nangko



Tinggom, Sylvia Haren Usat, and Stella Lungan Ayub. The participants also enjoyed the various Praise and Worship sessions as they learnt to connect with God through singing.

On the last day, Fr Ramon Borja celebrated the closing Mass, animated by the liturgical ministry, before the attendees took group pictures and helped clean up the venue.

Testimonies

“Singai Camp was full of joy and laughter, and I could also feel Christ's love for us. I am blessed to be surrounded by new friends who help strengthen my faith through service, prayer, community, and the journey of growing in one heart and one mind.

“Hands down, this is the best camp I have ever attended. It

was all fun and games until you needed to go back and climb down the stairs and feel the muscle cramps the next day. Nevertheless, if I were given a chance to join any church or YCU camps again, I would, without any doubt, do so.

“Lastly, God is good all the time, and all the time, God is good.” — **Brenda Wilod Niun**

“The foot-washing session was something I have never experienced, as I belong to a different denomination — Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM). It's definitely a novelty, and I had the chance to wash my close friends' feet. I understand that this act is to seek and celebrate reconciliation with others.” — **Aaron Jasper Anak Abang**

“The theme of the Singai Youth Camp is suitable for us to practise in our daily lives, as it teaches us to love one another and forgive those who have sinned against us, like God's eternal and unrestricted forgiveness to us. Although we have done things that we did not mean to do, He still loves us unconditionally and has compassion for all of us.” — **Marcela Satik Anak Thomas Abun**

“As I bid you adieu, envision a future where I shall traverse these hallowed grounds once more, ready to serve our Lord Jesus with unwavering devotion. The Singai Youth Camp left an indelible mark on my heart, igniting a flame of passion that shall guide my path for all eternity.” — **Dylan Daniel Anak Harry Daniel**

YOUNG PEACE-MAKERS MEET WITH POPE IN VATICAN

VATICAN: “You have decided not to live as enemies, but as brothers. May your example inspire peace in those who have political responsibilities.”

These were the words of Pope Francis at his weekly General Audience, as he addressed a group of around 60 young people from the Rondine Citadel of Peace project.

The initiative brings together young people from warring countries the world over — Russia and Ukraine, for example, or Israel and Lebanon — and offers them the opportunity to live together in a tiny village in the Italian region of Tuscany.

That village — Rondine — gives its name to the project which began in 1990 and has, over the years, welcomed thousands of young people from five different continents, offering them formation, community,

and a chance to practise the art of dialogue.

One current participant, who was present at the General Audience, is Ruzica, a 27-year-old psychologist from Bosnia and Herzegovina. She spoke about her meeting with the Pope, and the “Rondine Method” of conflict resolution.

MEETING WITH THE POPE

Around 60 people affiliated with the Rondine project, Ruzica says, were present at the General Audience and had a private meeting with the Pope afterwards.

The participants presented him with a Rondine t-shirt, and had a chance to greet him individually, an experience Ruzica describes as “really moving”.

“It was very significant,” Ruzica says, “not just for the religious aspect — which

is really important to me — but also because of the Pope's message of peace and dialogue.”

THE “RONDINE METHOD”

Moving on to the Citadel of Peace initiative itself, Ruzica describes how the goal is the “creative transformation” of conflict.

“For Rondine,” she says, “conflict is not a negative thing. The meaning of conflict is to meet another person, to listen to the different point of view of the person with whom I'm in conflict.”

“I have my part of the story,” she continues, “but also the other person has their part of the story. In conflict, we need to understand that I am not more valuable than that person. My opinion is as important as that of this other person.”

AMBASSADORS OF PEACE

The ultimate aim of the project, Ruzica explains, is for participants to return to their home countries and work for peace there.

Some of them, like Ruzica, stay in Rondine for a year, before returning to their countries of origin, to implement a particular project. Other students stay in Rondine for two years, working “really intensely on the theme of conflict”.

During their time in Italy, all participants study for a master's degree in Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action.

“For me”, Ruzica says, “the most beautiful part is that we do all of this in Rondine, and we all live together, even those who disagree, and we work to see how we can deal with our emotions, and make conflict into something good.” — **By Joseph Tulloch, Vatican News**

Confirmands embrace Alpha Youth Series

PETALING JAYA: The Church of the Assumption organised a Confirmation Camp 2023 for 65 confirmands on May 13 and 14. The Alpha Youth Series was included in the formation.

Confirmand Rufina Lazarus said, “The Alpha Youth Series was a new thing for me. I’ve heard of Alpha, but a specific Youth Series was new. Alpha as the main topic for confirmands was an eye-opener for me and many students at the camp. All the videos had different values and teaching, for example — how to pray, how to read the Bible, and so on.

“As teenagers of this generation, we are not used to reading the Bible daily, but through the camp, I learnt that the Bible and the Word of God will help me. There was a question posted — “Do you get whatever you pray for?” and it made me realise, yes, I do get the things I pray for. Maybe not at the very next moment, but a few months down the road, or maybe even

a few years, I see my prayers answered.

“The Alpha Youth Series is definitely a wonderful programme for youths to get to know their faith in a more meaningful way, as an individual, and as part of the Church community. I’m thankful to our catechists for arranging Alpha Youth as the topic for the confirmands.”

Note: The main building of the Church of the Assumption is currently closed for renovations. All Masses, events, and activities are held in the Assumption Family



David went to the 2005 WYD to party ... Today he's a PRIEST!

David Cueto is a priest and currently a canon at the Shrine of the Our Lady of Covadonga, located in the Asturias region. As the World Youth Day (WYD) in Lisbon approaches, he spoke about the connection between his vocation and the WYD in Cologne, which took place from August 16 to 21, 2005, with Pope Benedict XVI.

It was while going to confession there that he really felt God existed. That experience changed his life.

Although Fr David was raised in a Catholic family, in his youth he quickly abandoned his faith and even said he was Confirmed without really wanting to be. The WYD? He had never heard of it, but his brother, who had registered, “sold” the idea to him as an opportunity to have fun with young people from all over the world.

“At the time, I wasn’t aware of it, but I was looking for answers to many questions I had. However, it wasn’t because of a motivation of faith (that I went), but for fun, because my brother invited me and showed me the festive and playful part of it. He told me that young people from the entire world would go. That attracted me because I really like to travel and I thought it would be a unique opportunity,” he explains in an interview published on the website of the Diocese of Oviedo.

Bishops treated like rock stars

“I knew absolutely nothing about these World Youth Days. Right from when we left Asturias it was great. I met very fun and centred people, good and generous people. Everyone was looking after everyone else. I didn’t feel judged at any time, and that’s something that helped me a lot,” he recalls.

Once in Germany, the atmosphere was very festive, with millions of young people gathered together, but

it was very calm. We had a meeting with all the Spaniards gathered around their bishops, and I’ll always remember it because something happened that caught my attention. We went in through a place where before we could see the bishops we saw all the people who were there. There was a great commotion, shouts, flags, and I imagined that we were going to attend a concert, and when I looked at the stage and saw the bishops, I thought, “This makes no sense to me at all.” He goes on to tell the interviewer what happened next:

We sat down, and in the back we could see a group of priests. My brother explained that they were there to hear confessions, and I felt moved to go over to them to do it. And there, I experienced a change, a conversion. I experienced the certainty that God exists.

Fr David says that all the wounds that he carried within him were not healed immediately, but after experiencing the certainty of God’s existence he couldn’t get rid of that conviction. “I’ve seen it, it was shown to me.”

After the WYD

Back in Spain, David talked to his friends and admitted, “I don’t know what to tell you. I just know that God exists and I can’t deny it. Now I have to build my life and my way of thinking around that, because he has arrived, he’s here and it seems that he’s not going to go away.”

He then joined a parish in Oviedo, thinking that he would “get over it soon,” that it was all just the “euphoria” of the moment. But it wasn’t just euphoria; it was the beginning of a new life.

“When there is a truth behind it, it lasts,” he says. He met with priests in order to better educate himself, because he knew very little about religion. He enjoyed his many



discussions with them, as well as the parish life he also discovered. He realized that a Christian needs to live in community. The life of the Church fascinated him, and he wanted to go deeper because “the more you know, the more you love,” as the saints say.”

Going to WYD without faith is possible!

Thanks to his beautiful experience, Fr. David, who was ordained on June 4, 2017, at the Cathedral of Oviedo, is eager today to encourage young people to register for WYD. “A WYD involves a lot of effort, a lot of fatigue, but people from all walks of life go, and the Lord is always there waiting to meet each one of them. Those are moments of conversion, of strengthening faith, of discovering a universal Church. Therefore they are important ecclesial experiences, which anyone can enjoy,” whether they are a believer or not.

Regarding young people who are far from the faith, Fr. David continues, “they lose nothing and can gain a lot. Even if they aren’t believers, they can understand a little about the life of the Church, see that it is full of good people, and also discover a young Church. No one will judge you there or ask you questions about your level of faith. It’s also a very fun experience.”

And for young Catholics who already have an established Christian life, Fr David has a message as well. For them it’s a good opportunity to “strengthen your belonging to the Church, your communion with the Pope, and get to know many movements. It’s a very powerful ecclesial moment that can help strengthen our experience of faith and of the Church. I really see no reason not to go.” — By **Bérengrère de Portzamparc, Aleteia**

MEMORIAM

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1st Anniversary Memorial for Mariam J. Nathan

**Came from the Lord on 5th December 1956
Returned to the Lord on 12th June 2022**

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. John 11:25-26.

You left us so soon, leaving emptiness in your absence. Our heart misses you everyday and every moment. We miss you so much, your presence at home and the community that you served tirelessly.

Your service to the community is always remembered and cherished. In sadness we rejoice for we know you are at the Lord's house. Our love and memories of you will last our lifetime, our beloved sister in Christ.

Dearly missed by
husband, children, brothers and sister,
grandchildren, in-laws, relatives and friends.

21st Anniversary



**Mr C Anthony
PPN, BM
Rest in peace:
15-06-2002**

*May the Lord bless thee and keep thee,
May the Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee.*

May the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee everlasting peace.

**We have
never stopped
loving and
missing you.
Your family**

31st Anniversary In Loving Memory of



**Paul Raj Rayappen
Born: 18 November 1942
Departed : 14 June 1992**

*"I have called you by name;
You are Mine" Isaiah 43:1*

Fondly loved and
forever remembered by
wife Adaikela Mary, children
and all loved ones.

27th Anniversary In Loving Memory of



**Thanaletchumy
Lourdesmary Sewestian
Born: 25 June 1942
Departed: 15 June 1996**

Remembering a much Beloved wife, mother & grandmother; a generous heart and a gentle soul.

"I give thanks to my God each time I remember you, and when I pray for you, I pray with joy." - Phil.1:3-4

Remembered by Husband,
children and grandchildren.

In Loving Memory of



**Vincent
Mathavarayan
Departed:
9 June 2014**

**Mary
Elizabeth
Departed:
14 June 2020**

Dearly missed by
children, grandchildren, daughter-in-law,
sons-in-law, relatives and friends.

5th Anniversary In Loving Memory of



**CHRISTOPHER TAN
CHENG SAN**

From the Lord: 9-7-1932
To the Lord: 15-6-2018

*Ah Kong and Dad
we miss you dearly.
Everyday life goes by
thinking of you.
Till we meet again.*

Forever remembered and
deeply missed by children,
spouses, grandchildren and
great grandchildren.



**38th Anniversary
A. J. Morris
15 May 1985**

**1st Anniversary
Jane Morris
12 May 2022**

*"Surely God is my salvation;
I will trust and not be afraid.
The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song;
He has become my salvation."*

Isaiah 12:2

*From Kerala's verdant shores to KL's urban sway,
A young man embarked, dreams paving his way.
His heart ablaze, his faith entrenched,
A thirst for newness which only God quenched.*

*At 37, a union blossomed
with God's gentle Grace,
From KL's bustling streets
to Telok Anson's embrace.*

*A gentle woman, with great simplicity,
Strong and prayerful,
perfect partner for domesticity.*

*A man and a woman, in the twinkling of an eye,
Built a home on earth with riches stored on High.
Their reward bestowed, their souls reunited,
After 37 years apart, in eternity reignited.*

Our Papa and Mama forever held near, with
thanksgiving in our hearts:
Charles (predeceased), Mary, Conrad, Michele;
Philomina, Patrick, Deborah, David,
Regina, Justin, Ruth.

*Blessed be the God
and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of
mercies and God of
all comfort, who
comforts us in all
our affliction, so
that we may be able
to comfort those
who are in any
affliction, with the
comfort with which
we ourselves are
comforted by God.*

2 Corinthians 1:3-4



1st Anniversary In Loving Memory of Utiramary P. Thomas @ Jothi

**Returned to the Lord on
10th June 2022**

*Your Love
is always in our hearts
Your Kindness
is fondly remembered
Your Faith
has shown us grace and mercy
Even though you are now
in God's Kingdom
The memory of you is
always beautifully near*

Dearly missed and fondly
remembered by
Husband, Daughters, Sons-In-Law,
Grandchildren, Relatives
and Friends.

1st Anniversary In Loving Memory of Samathanam Lourthumary Regina (Lady in White)



**Returned to the Lord:
13-06-2022**

*It's been a year
since you left us...
The way we miss you,
words can't describe.
We hope you know
how much you
meant to us.
We still think about
you every single day.
We just love and miss
you very much in our
special ways.*

Always loved,
remembered and
cherished by
family and friends.

34th Anniversary In Loving Memory of



**S. Michael
Born: 1903
Died: 16-06-1989**

*The LOVE we shared will always
remain in our hearts.
"Eternal rest grant unto him,
O Lord, and let your perpetual
light shine upon him.
May his soul rest in peace."*

Always remembered and
cherished by
Children, grandchildren,
great-grandchildren,
in-laws & all loved ones.

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Eucharistic revival

a call to accompany those with mental illness

INDIANA: With US Catholics in the midst of a National Eucharistic Revival, the call to accompany those with mental illness is stronger than ever.

To live out Eucharistic communion means not only the reception of the sacrament," said Beth Hlabse, programme director for the Fiat Programme on Faith and Mental Health at the University of Notre Dame's McGrath Institute for Church Life.

"We are called to then live out that communion in our daily lives — a communion that knits us to Christ Himself and to one another," said Hlabse who is a Catholic mental health counsellor and researcher.

Launched in 2022 by the US bishops to increase devotion to Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, the revival coincides with a sharp rise in anxiety, depression and other mental health issues among large segments of the nation's population.

Surgeon General Vivek Murthy has issued advisories regarding "alarming increases" in sadness and hopelessness among young people, and on what he called a broad "epidemic of loneliness and isolation."

Those trends urge Catholics to ask "how we, as a Church, can better support one another and live out this call of caring for one another as one body," said Hlabse.

She cited St Paul's *First Letter to the*



(Aleteia/wideonet)

Corinthians (1 Cor 12:12-31), in which the Church is depicted as one body, with Christ as the head and the faithful as its members.

"St Paul reminds us ... that when one member of the body suffers, all suffer with it, and if one part is honoured, all share its joy," said Hlabse. "That means, if a member of my parish community is experiencing mental illness or disability, my flourishing is bound up in theirs."

Mental illness and disabilities can be inherently isolating for both those directly affected and their families, she said.

"They're both often too great a burden for one person or family, and yet so often the burden rests on that person or family to seek additional support and outreach," Hlabse said.

She pointed to the "great need to shift that burden so that falls more upon all of us, as people of the body of Christ, so that we can better support those families with children or loved ones who have mental illnesses or disabilities."

"How can we better involve them in the fabric of parish life?" she asked. "What are the barriers for them in finding fellowship, information and catechesis, and in participating in the sacramental life of the Church?"

Hlabse noted that "some beautiful fruits" have emerged through a number of mental health and disabilities ministries at national, diocesan and parish levels.

She stressed that such initiatives "must not be relegated to ministers or priests" but, instead, be shared by "the people of God."

Hlabse said an array of resources for accompanying those with mental illness and disabilities are available through Notre Dame's Fiat programme, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability and the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers, as well as the Catholic Psychotherapy

Association.

She also highlighted the model established by the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv, Ukraine, where persons with mental illness — recently described by UCU president Archbishop Borys Gudziak of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia as "arguably the most marginalised" in society — are integrated into UCU campus life.

Catholics can extend that same sense of belonging and connection to those they encounter, both in the pew and in the wider community — and fear of those with mental illness and disabilities can be overcome by faith, said Hlabse.

"Practise the presence of God," she said. "When you feel anxious (about someone with mental illness), breathe and ask the Lord's help. So many people need to be known and acknowledged ... (in this) pandemic of loneliness."

Hlabse also underscored the need to remember the gifts those with mental illness and disabilities can offer.

"Let's open ourselves to the gift of friendship, and learn from the unique voices of those with mental illness," she said. "Let's learn to walk with them, because we don't express our vocations in isolation. We need to be able to share them with each other."

By Gina Christian, OSV

Thousands gather in Times Square for Eucharistic procession in the US



Thousands of people gather in Times Square for a eucharistic procession in New York City, May 27, 2023. (CNA photo/Jeffrey Bruno)

NEW YORK: In what many are calling the largest Eucharistic procession ever held in New York City, thousands of people took to the streets reciting prayers and singing songs of praise on the vigil of Pentecost, May 27.

The NYPD estimated more than 4,000 people took to the streets and processed through Times Square, led by Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Espallat of the Archdiocese of New York.

The theme of the procession was *¡Esta ciudad pertenece a Jesucristo! — (This city belongs to Jesus Christ!)*

Photojournalist Jeffrey Bruno, who happened to be in the city for another assignment and stumbled upon the procession thanks to an Instagram post, said: "I have never seen anything like that before, espe-

cially in New York."

One particularly moving moment Bruno captured was the crowded street, lined by the skyscrapers of Times Square, filled with the faithful kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament as it was being lifted high into the air.

Fr Shane Johnson, administrator of St Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, said: "To me, the number of people was secondary to the amount of real authentic faith that was so evident in those who were present. It was astonishing."

"These moments of kneeling on the asphalt in the middle of a city street with our arms raised to God remind us of who we are as His children and how this city really does belong entirely to Him," he added. — By Francesca Pollio Fenton, CNA

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