

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.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned — for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.

Rom. 5:12-13



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Human fraternity key to beating 'groundswell' of hatred



Young people from around the world held hands in St Peter's Square during the #NotAlone human fraternity event June 10, 2023. (Vatican Media)

NEW YORK: A groundswell of xenophobia, racism and intolerance, hatred, and religious persecution is leading to the escalation of conflict and atrocious crimes around the world, said the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, while addressing the Security Council on June 14.

The UN chief pointed to hatred as the common denominator in the "onset and escalation of the conflict" and "fuels humanity's worst impulses". He then highlighted the role of social media in spreading hate speech and misinformation which, he said, has "equipped hatemongers with a global bullhorn for bile."

Guterres expressed concern that hate-fuelled ideas are moving to the mainstream and are triggering real-life violence. Hate speech, he said, has been used to "vilify minorities", citing cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Myanmar, and Iraq.

The UN chief then called for concrete measures to create a more inclusive and safe digital space, as well as increased investment in education, peace-building, and global solidarity. He emphasised that the values of compassion, respect,

and human fraternity, are the "best antidote to the poison of discord and division".

Guterres also highlighted the importance of faith leaders in fighting hatred among their followers. Other speakers also emphasised that human fraternity can "help build a better world and advance peace".

The UN chief acknowledged the declaration of *Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* — co-authored by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb — as a model for compassion and human solidarity, as it urges religious and political leaders alike to "bring an end to wars, conflicts, and environmental destruction."

The Holy See's representative to the Security Council, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, also lamented the rise in hatred globally. He noted that the world is experiencing a "famine of fraternity" which results in armed conflict and war.

To make peace a reality, the world "must move away from the logic of the legitimacy of war," Archbishop Gallagher said, who spoke on behalf of the Pope. He also said that there is still time to "write a new chapter of peace in history", and in such a way that "war would belong to the past, not the future."

The meeting, held in New York, also saw discussions on a

draft resolution submitted by the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom that addresses hate speech, racism, and extremism in conflict situations. The resolution aims to combat the threats posed by these divisive ideologies.

Despite the challenges posed by armed conflicts, extremism, and hate speech, the speakers remained hopeful and underlined the potential for dialogue, prevention measures, and inter-religious and intercultural dialogue to promote peace and understanding among communities.

Pope Francis has already emphasised the importance of human fraternity in the past. In 2019, he co-authored the document *Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* that "invites all persons who have faith in God and faith in human fraternity to unite and work together" for "mutual respect in the awareness of the great divine grace that makes all human beings brothers and sisters."

In 2020, the Pope released his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, to spread the message of fraternal love and social friendship to build a better, more just, and peaceful world.

Recently, on June 10, some 30 Nobel Peace Prize winners gathered in the Vatican to draft and present the landmark *Declaration on Human Fraternity*, which called on people of goodwill to "embrace our appeal to fraternity" that recognises equal dignity for all. — By Zeus Legaspi, Vatican News

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Pope Francis laments spiritual poverty that leads to teen suicides

Pope Francis has said that the rise in teen suicides points to a deeper spiritual poverty in our culture today that leads young people to believe they are failures.

In his message for the 2023 World Day of the Poor, the Pope wrote that he could not fail to mention "an increasingly evident form of poverty that affects young people."

"How much frustration and how many suicides are being caused by the illusions created by a culture that leads young people to think that they are 'losers,' 'good for nothing,'" he said.

"Let us help them react to these malign influences and find ways to help them grow into self-assured and generous men and women."

The Pope warned that a culture of "haste" can prevent us from stopping to care for others. He added that Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan "continues to challenge each of us in the here and now of our daily lives."

"It is easy to delegate charity to others, yet the calling of every Christian is to become personally involved," Pope Francis said.

The Pope noted that youth are particularly vulnerable to cultural changes that have led people to "disregard anything that is unpleasant or causes suffering and exalt physical qualities as if they were the primary goal in life."

"We are living in times that are not particularly sensitive to the needs of the poor. The pressure to adopt an affluent lifestyle in-



Pope Francis poses for a photo with a group of young people after his general audience Aug. 17, 2022. (CNA photo/Pablo Esparza)

creases, while the voices of those dwelling in poverty tend to go unheard," he said.

Pope Francis established the World Day of the Poor in 2016 at the end of the Catholic Church's Jubilee Year of Mercy. The day is celebrated each year on the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, a week before the feast of Christ the King.

The seventh World Day of the Poor will be celebrated on November 19 with the theme "Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor," taken from the Book of Tobit 4:7. — **By Courtney Mares, CNA**



NCRonline.org/cartoons

Remain steadfast in the face of adversity

The readings for the 12th Sunday of Ordinary Time Year A are a powerful reminder of God's love and mercy for His people.

The first reading from Jeremiah 20:10-13 speaks of the struggles and trials that Jeremiah faced as a prophet of God. Jeremiah was called by God to be a prophet to the people of Judah during a time of great political and social turmoil. He was a contemporary of several other prophets, including Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Ezekiel. His prophetic mission began in the 13th year of King Josiah's reign and continued through the Babylonian exile.

Jeremiah encountered various challenges, with rejection and persecution being among the most prominent. Despite being commissioned by God to convey a message of judgment and repentance to the people of Judah, they scorned, insulted, and even plotted against him. Consequently, Jeremiah felt lonely and isolated since he lacked friends or allies to support him. Moreover, he endured physical suffering, being beaten, imprisoned in stocks, and thrown into a cistern. Moreover, he watched as his close associates and family members also suffered because of his prophetic message. Nonetheless, the emotional anguish that Jeremiah experienced was the most significant struggle. He was profoundly saddened by the people's disobedience and refusal to heed God's message.

Despite all of these trials, Jeremiah remained steadfast to God and continued to deliver his message of warning and hope.



He serves as an example of steadfastness and perseverance in the face of adversity. His prophetic message was not always easy to hear, but it was necessary for the people of Judah to hear it in order to repent and turn back to God. Jeremiah's message still speaks to us today, reminding us of the importance of steadfastness to God, even in the midst of our trials and suffering.

We may also identify with the experiences of the Prophet Jeremiah in our life too. We too experience many trials, challenges, and rejections. But let us draw our attention to the Gospel reading from Matthew 10:26-33 where Jesus reassures His disciples, and us too, that we should not fear those who oppose us but instead trust in God's protection and providence. Jesus encourages His disci-

ples to boldly proclaim the Gospel without fear of the consequences. He draws attention to God's sovereignty and provision, reminding his disciples that God cares even for the smallest creatures and that they should have faith that God will care for them as well.

How are we able to do this? The second reading from Romans 5:12-15 explores the concept of sin and salvation through Jesus Christ. St. Paul emphasises the abundance of God's grace and the gift of righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. This passage reminds us of the universal nature of sin and the incredible gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Sunday readings of today provide meaningful lessons for Christians in the present world. These teachings urge us to persevere in our dedication to God, despite the obstacles or temptations we may encounter. They serve as a reminder of the remarkable blessing of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and inspire us to spread this wonderful message to others. Amidst the difficulties we face every day, let us find courage in these readings and rely on God's unwavering faithfulness and strength to support us. Let us always remember that we should never surrender in doing what is right, because ultimately, goodness prevails.

● In what ways do you face opposition or persecution for your faith? How do you respond to these challenges?

● How do you prioritise your relationship with God above material possessions or social status? Are there areas in your life

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Fr David Gasikol

12th Sunday of Ordinary Time (A)

Readings: Jeremiah 20:10-13;

Romans 5:12-15;

Gospel: Matthew 10:26-33

where you need to refocus your priorities?

● Have you experienced the abundance of God's grace and the gift of righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ? How has this impacted your life?

● How can you remain committed to sharing God's message with the world, even in the face of opposition or indifference?

● In what ways can you trust in God's provision and protection, rather than relying on your own strength or resources?

● Are there areas in your life where you struggle with sin or addiction? How can faith in Jesus Christ help you overcome these struggles?

F.E.A.R. has two meanings; *Forget Everything And Run*, or *Face Everything And Rise*. Therefore, the choice is yours!

Fr David Gasikol, from the Diocese of Keningau, is currently doing his Licentiate in Canon Law at the Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines.

Supporting the mission of lay evangelisation

By Fr Raymond Pereira

SANDAKAN: The Directors of the Pontifical Mission Society (PMS) of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei met at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre from June 12 to 14.

The Episcopal President and Archbishop of Kuching, Most Rev Simon Poh, co-chaired the meeting with the PMS National Director, Fr Victor Louis.

In his opening remarks, the prelate shared about the Synodal approach to witnessing our faith in this world. The people of God tend to rely too much on the Church hierarchy to tell them how to evangelise to the world.

We need to train the laity to take on some responsibility for coming up with ideas and solutions regarding mission challenges.

PMS was founded by a bishop, a priest and two laywomen, and we need to en-

courage more lay people to follow in their steps.

He shared how one hospital chapel was initiated by nurses and health workers to find a way to care for patients awaiting treatment.

Fr Victor shared the Pope's address with the PMS members.

The Pope reminded us of the missionary nature of every baptised person.

Every Christian receives the gift of the Holy Spirit and is sent forth to continue the work of Jesus, announcing the joy of the Gospel to all, and to bring mercy and compassion from the heart of Jesus to the wounded world.

PMS is not primarily an agency for the distribution of funds for those in need of help. It is to support the mission of evangelisation and to foster a missionary style among the People of God.

Fr Victor also shared the report from the

meeting of the PMS national directors of Asia and Oceania held in Thailand last February.

The Christian faith is very much alive, despite the many problems and challenges of being a minority in Asia and Oceania.

Then, the members looked at this year's message for World Mission Day by Pope Francis. The 96th World Mission Sunday falls on Oct 22, 2023. This year's theme is *Hearts on fire, feet on the move!* (cf. Lk 24: 13-35.)

Everyone shared a point that touched them from the message. We deliberated on how to animate and inspire others towards missionary work.

Then, each diocesan PMS director shared their respective missionary activities and collections challenges.

We also reviewed the purpose of the four societies of PMS since we have several new members.

PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES (PMS), MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE-BRUNEI



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DIOCESAN DIRECTOR
(DIOCESE OF SANDAKAN)



Archbishop Simon Poh with the PMS directors at the regional meeting in Sandakan.

KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

June & July

- 29/6 Church of Sts Peter and Paul
Feast Day Mass
- 1/7 Confirmation Mass – Church of
St Jude, Rawang
- 2/7 Confirmation Mass – Church of
the Risen Christ, KL

PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Sebastian Francis

June

- 20-30 Parish and National Shrine of
St Padre Pio, Lipa, Philippines
- 29-30 Federation of Asian Bishops'
Conference – Radio Veritas Asia
(RVA), Manila, Philippines

MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

June & July

- 27/6 Mass of St Josemaria – Church
of the Holy Family, Ulu Tiram
- 29/6 KATOLIKOS 2023 – Church of St
Louis, Kluang
- 2-9/7 Retreat for Singapore
Seminarists – MAJODI Centre



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #136



Greetings again dear people of God.

The Malaysia Religious Assembly (MRA) 2023 ended on June 10, with 191 participants from 28 religious orders. The feast of *Corpus Christi* is over and the parish "Pesta Kesyukuran Menuai" is in progress. Kedah MB claims Penang. Comedian Jocelyn Chia's distasteful jokes caused a furore. The Deputy Education Minister reported that the dropout rate is higher at the secondary school level compared to primary level.

"Step Out" Times: At the end of the MRA2023, I was asked: WHAT NEXT? I said: Courage! First, the courage to take ownership for one's wrongdoings, weaknesses and in-decisions. Second, courage to step out, and even change direction, if we have to. And finally, the courage to believe that God is in control, that we are only pastoral workers in His vineyard. The Church, the nation and people cannot leave others to transform situations. It calls for participation in the process of community or nation building. We participate when we speak the truth in love, give feedbacks; use our votes wisely after discernment; engage in neighbourhood groups, NGOs and social action. Courage helps us make a difference.

A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: A Flashlight.

When a flashlight grows dim or does not work, do you just throw it away?

Of course not! You change the batteries.

When a person messes up or finds themselves in a dark place, do you cast them aside? Of course not!

You help them **CHANGE THEIR BATTERIES.**

Some need **AA**...Attention and Affection

Some Need **AAA**...Attention, Affection, Acceptance

Some need **C**...Compassion

Some need **D**...Direction

And if they still don't seem to shine...Simply sit with them and share YOUR LIGHT!

A Lesson from the Flashlight: Fatigue! Burnt out! Do you condemn yourself? Do you just stop trying? Rest! Regain your energy! Recharge! Let the Life-giver recharge you.

Announcements for this Week

1. The Deliverance and Exorcism Office (DEO) of Malacca Johore Diocese is conducting **Deliverance & Healing 3 & 4**, a follow-up programme in Chinese and English for clergy, case officers, charismatics and parish-sent candidates, on June 29 & 30 at MAJODI Centre.

This Week's Question and Query. The Q asks: How do my thoughts affect me?

1. According to research by Dr Fred Luskin of Stanford University, a human being can have around **60,000-70,000 thoughts per day** — and 90 per cent of these are repetitive! These thoughts

can contain a mixture of **negative, positive and inquisitive thoughts.**

2. It's important what thoughts you are feeding into your mind because your **thoughts create your belief and experiences.** You have positive thoughts and you have negative ones too. **Nurture your mind with positive thoughts:** kindness, empathy, compassion, peace, love, joy, humility, generosity, etc. The more you feed your mind with positive thoughts, the more you can attract great things into your life. (Roy T. Bennett)

3. **Philippians 4: 8** Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.

4. **Fr John Powell SJ**, said: What we think is what we feel; what we feel is how we act. (cf logotherapy, Viktor Frankl)

Michael Jackson said: *Change begins with the 'man in the mirror'.* Take responsibility for what you want to see happen. Be the agent of change where you are planted. You can remain conservative, compromise or be constructive.

God bless. Be safe always.

Bishop Bernard Paul

Take, break and partake in the Eucharistic Lord

By Aaron Lim

GEORGE TOWN: The Feast of Corpus Christi, also known as the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, was celebrated meaningfully at the Penang Island Deanery.

In the spirit of synodality and unity, five parishes in the deanery came together for a 10-day programme, from June 2 to 11, themed *Take, Break and Partake*.

As a spiritual preparation for the celebration, Holy Hour and sessions conducted in several languages were held in the various parishes including the College General Major Seminary, which saw parishioners adoring the Lord and reflecting on the Scriptures.

During the weekend of June 10 and 11, exhibitions on the Eucharist and relics were held at the Church of the Immaculate Conception and the Church of the Divine Mercy respectively.

The main celebration was held on the evening of June 11, with more than 1,200 parishioners participating in a multi-lingual Eucharistic celebration at the historic Church of the Assumption.

Dean of Penang Island Deanery cum parish priest of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Msgr Jude Miranda, was the main celebrant.

Joining him in the celebration were the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit parish priest, Fr Joachim Robert, the City Parish pastor,



The faithful participating in the procession.

Fr Edmund Woon, the City Parish assistant priest, Fr Desmond Jansen, the College General Dean of Studies, Fr Ryan Innas Muthu, and the Little Sisters of the Poor chaplain, Fr Oliver Tham OFM.

Msgr Jude, at the beginning of his homily, expressed concern over Catholics losing interest in the faith and not appreciating the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

He explained that throughout history, men had written many books about the search for God, but one by a Jewish philosopher, Abraham Joshua Heschel, wrote about God searching for men so that they can experience love, mercy and healing.

"This is why we celebrate *Corpus Christi*

today, that Jesus, in being with us, his disciples, is present as He takes bread, breaks it and invites us to partake of it in remembrance of Him," he said.

Msgr Jude then reflected on the theme of the celebration — that Jesus invites us to take His body through the Eucharist as His gift of Himself to mankind, and to embrace Him as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

"We must also appreciate Jesus breaking bread in our lives, for it is an actualisation of His whole life of great love and sacrifice through His death and resurrection, and it is also our triumph over death," he said.

Msgr Jude then shared that the partaking is an invitation from Jesus to celebrate our communion and faith, as our participation

in the Eucharist makes us privileged people and enables the embracing of our identity as sons and daughters of God.

He also shared the story told by Venerable Fulton Sheen of Little Li from China who was martyred for her entry into the church to consume the Blessed Sacrament as it was desecrated by the communist authorities.

In concluding his homily, he hoped that the faithful will believe with all their hearts that what they receive is truly the Body of Christ that is substantially present.

After Mass, the faithful fervently took part in the Eucharistic procession which was held for the first time in four years after the COVID-19 pandemic.

A beautifully decorated float carried the Blessed Sacrament, with the procession led by more than 60 seminarians, altar servers and flower girls coming from the various parishes.

Parishioners walked in faith as one body in Christ in a two-kilometre route from the Church of the Assumption to the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows.

It was a great act of witnessing for the faith and belief in the body of Christ as parishioners sang hymns and knelt when the monstrance was lifted for the solemn blessing at three stops: namely the Church of St Francis Xavier, Penang police headquarters and Kinta Lane.

The celebration ended with Benediction at the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows and a fellowship dinner.

Exhibition held to emphasise Jesus' real presence

PLENTONG, Johor Bahru: The state's first Eucharist Miracles Exhibition was held at the Church of St Joseph in conjunction with the feast of *Corpus Christi*, June 10.

This exhibition, sponsored by the Real Presence Eucharistic Education and Adoration Association, showcased materials from the Vatican International Exhibition on the Eucharistic Miracles of the World. The late Dr Aloysius Raj from Penang brought these materials in and they were subsequently passed to the parish.

All the miracles presented in the exhibition have received recognition and approval from the Church. The exhibition featured 50 colourful panels adorned with attractive pictures, each accompanied by historical descriptions of miraculous events that have taken place around the world throughout the centuries. The exhibition was to em-

phasise the doctrine of the Real Presence to both the catechism students and the parishioners. By doing so, the Church aimed to remind everyone that our God is a Living God. The Eucharist, being the source and summit of the Christian life, holds immense importance.

The exhibition served as a powerful reminder of the tremendous privilege we have to experience Christ's actual presence every moment of the day and night in the Blessed Sacrament and in tabernacles worldwide. Therefore, we should receive Him with the utmost reverence during Mass.

The same exhibition will be held at the Majodi Centre on July 15, from 2.00pm to 4.00pm, in conjunction with the Eucharistic Adoration for the catechism students and families. All are welcome to join. — **By Christine H Lee**



The students learning about the Eucharistic Miracles of the World.

Faithful called to recognise their role as bearers of Christ



Fr Simon Labrooy carrying the monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament for the procession. (Church of St Anne Port Klang facebook)

PORT KLANG: The clergy from the Klang district decided to resume the district celebration of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, an event that had not been held for several years. The Church of St Anne had the honour of hosting the celebration.

The Mass was presided over and preached by Fr Simon Labrooy, the Rector of College General, Penang. In his sermon, he took the congregation back to the pre-Vatican II era when Mass was often seen as merely fulfilling the Sunday obligation, lacking deeper understanding and participation.

With the reforms of Vatican II, a deeper and better understanding of the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, emerged.

In the present time, the faithful are called to be one in the celebration, one in the Body of Christ, and to recognise their role as bearers of Christ. As such, we must be united in the Body of Christ and become the presence of Jesus to one another in word,

deed and our relationships with each other. Fr Andrew Kooi and Fr David Arulanatham translated the homily.

After Mass, the procession took place, with the Blessed Sacrament displayed in a elegantly decorated and brightly lit float. The altar servers carried torches (*pelita*) while flower girls accompanied the procession. Hymns were sung, and the Rosary recited as the procession moved forward.

The celebration encompassed Mass, procession with singing and praying, and Benediction. The congregation also took the opportunity to commemorate, in advance, the silver jubilee of Fr Simon's sacerdotal anniversary, which falls on July 18. The festivities concluded with a dinner fellowship.

On the whole, the celebration emphasised unity, highlighting the mystical Body of Christ and the presence of God in our everyday lives. Emmanuel!

Uniting the faithful in a profound procession

By Rachael Philip

PETALING JAYA: The Petaling district witnessed a joint *Corpus Christi* celebration at the Church of St Ignatius. The faithful from six churches, namely St Ignatius, St Thomas More, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Assumption, St Francis Xavier and Divine Mercy, came together to honour Jesus — the Living Bread.

The event, marked by devotion, unity and faith, demonstrated the strength of the Catholic community in the district.

Despite the warm weather, the faithful, gathered outside the church after Mass at 6.00pm, glistening in sweat but undeterred in their commitment to join the procession. The route was roughly 2.7km, meandering past shops, restaurants and homes, providing an opportunity for the community to demonstrate their faith in action.

The procession was led by altar servers, flower girls and representatives from the six churches carrying their respective flags and banners. They walked before a beautifully decorated vehicle transporting the Blessed Sacrament. For the duration of the proces-

sion, four priests took turns kneeling before the monstrance on the truck.

Carrying candles, the faithful followed, fervently singing popular hymns in multiple languages, including *Christ our Lord and our King, Holy God we praise Thy name and We have decided to follow Jesus*.

The carriage made four stops along the route, where servers incensed and flower girls strewed petals. At the four stops, the celebrant proclaimed a Gospel reading and prayed for the Church, its faithful, the departed, and vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

At each pause, the monstrance was lifted, bestowing blessings upon the streets, homes and lives of the community. Many of the faithful knelt on the road, holding their candles, their heads bowed in reverence.

Ten priests participated in this joyous event, further emphasising the significance of the *Corpus Christi* celebration for the Petaling district. Their presence and active involvement enriched the spiritual experience of the faithful and highlighted the unity and support among the clergy.

The procession returned to the Church of



Fr Biju Mathew blesses the people with the monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament. (Petaling District Media Team)

St Ignatius for Benediction, which was led by Fr Alan Pereira, the Petaling district senator and parish priest of the Church of Divine Mercy. As a final hymn, the voices of the faithful joined together in singing *Mine eyes have seen the glory of the Lord*.

The success of the event was the result of a collaborative effort from all the churches in the district. Each parish took the lead in various tasks, including liturgy, traffic management, food, catering, media and com-

munications, medical support and clean-up. This collective commitment and cooperation exemplified the strong sense of community and the shared responsibility of all involved.

The procession and the presence of the faithful demonstrated their faith in the Eucharist, the source and summit of their lives. The joint *Corpus Christi* celebration reinforced the Catholic community's unwavering love for the Eucharist and their desire to proclaim their faith to the world.

Parish and district celebrations held at Jesus Caritas

KEPONG: The Church of Jesus Caritas (JCC) celebrated her annual feast day centred on the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. On the third day of the triduum, June 10, five churches and three chapels from the KL North District joined the parish to commemorate the 700-year-old feast of *Corpus Christi* at a district level.

JCC parish priest, Fr Simon Lau, chose the theme *Holy and Living Sacrifice*, with each day of the Triduum focusing on the sub-theme *Taken, Blessed, Broken, and Given*. These themes aimed to inspire us to apply these concepts in our lives and become holy and living sacrifice to our community.

On the first day of the Triduum, June 8, guest preacher Fr Joseph Heng, from the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Krubong, Melaka, preached about reconciliation, focusing on the sub-theme *Taken*. He also spoke about our being the body of Christ and the significance of our participation in the common priesthood. The following day, Fr Joseph highlighted the blessing we, as Catholics, receive through the Eucharist and emphasised the importance of being a blessing to others. Concelebrating with



The clergy and lay faithful during the procession.

Fr Joseph were Fr Simon and JCC's former assistant priest, Fr Dominic Tan.

On the day of the grand combined celebration, excitement filled the parish from morning to evening. From floral arrangements to the polishing of candelabra to final sound and livestream tests, the parish was ready to receive the faithful from various churches in the North District of the archdiocese.

Busloads of people filled the main church,

prompting the opening of the mezzanine floor and foyer by 4.30pm. At 5.30pm, Mass commenced with the presence of eight priests from the North District parishes, including Fr Joseph.

During the homily, Fr Joseph reiterated the significance of the common priesthood and stressed the importance of communion among believers in English and Mandarin.

He said the Church is alive and living. We

are not a 'museum' but the Body of Christ. When receiving the Body of Christ, we answer 'Amen'.

Fr Joseph shared about the qualities of the believer's sacrifice.

'It is living' — represents the new life that the believer possesses in Christ.

'It is holy' — a Christian is set apart for and belongs to God.

'It is pleasing' — sacrifices offered to God are not enough in themselves. The offerings must be acceptable to Him. The greatest motivation for offering ourselves as living sacrifices stems from God's mercy on us.

Fr Joseph also shared about priests, who are *in persona Christi* and are sent to bear fruit for Christ. This holy sacrifice we hold on; it is holy. Put God first. He quoted Pope Francis at the World Day of Sick, who blessed and consoled the sick, saying 'My name is Mercy. It is the name of God'.

The Krubong priest said vocation is about making God's dream come true — ask 'what you have done to fulfil God's dream in your life'. — **By Malcolm Francis Solomon and Bernard Anthony**

A public profession of faith



Public procession around the Church of St Theresa, Masai.



...at the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Ipoh.

Project to foster economic resilience among Bunan Gega farmers

BUNAN GEGA, Sarawak: A pilot project, aimed to strengthen the economic resilience of farmers in the region was inaugurated at the St Clare Auditorium of Gethsemane Pilgrimage Centre on May 20.

The initiative, known as the Bunan Resilience Project, falls under the Church of St Jude, with the support of the Kuching Archdiocese Creation Justice Committee (CJC) led by Friar David Au, OFM.

Inspired by the counsel of Kuching Archbishop Simon Poh back in 2018, the project seeks to uplift the

livelihoods of rural communities by equipping farmers with the necessary tools, knowledge and resources to face challenges posed by climate change and environmental threats.

It also hopes to build a deeper connection between consumers and the sources of their sustenance, fostering a stronger appreciation for locally obtained produce.

The launch began at 9.00am with a series of talks organised by the Kuching Archdiocese CJC. Some 58 farmers from across Bunan and its nearby villages attended the

event, together with visiting parishioners, St Jude Parish Pastoral Council members and over 100 Form Four students from surrounding schools.

The event was also witnessed by the Provincial Superior of Chennai Province, India, Fr Jesu Doss CMF, Archbishop Simon and rector of the Church of St Jude, Fr Berkman Rayar CMF.

In a video message, Friar David connected the project to the values espoused by St Francis of Assisi. He emphasised the profound connec-



Archbishop Simon Poh demonstrates an avocado seed planting. Watching on from left: Fr Berkman Rayar CMF, Paul Diye (PPC Vice Chairman of the Church of St Jude), Fr Galvin Ngumbang, Simon Joseph (PPC Chairman) and Dr Margaret Chan. (photo/Today's Catholic)

tion St Francis felt with the world around him, recognising the divine presence in every person, creature, and even inanimate object.

Fr Galvin Ngumbang also delivered a talk highlighting the elements of resilience outlined in *Laudato Si'*, an encyclical by Pope Francis on environmental conservation. This was followed by a presentation by CJC's main coordinator and UiTM associate professor, Dr Margaret Chan, who discussed carbon farming and

how it can help the community.

The talks culminated with the official project launch at noon, when the archbishop, in a show of solidarity, gifted three avocado seeds to the parish.

The day concluded with an interactive Q&A session with panellists Dr Margaret and CJC secretary Stephen Chin, and closing remarks from Fr Berkman Rayar and the archbishop. — **By Shannon Wei, Today's Catholic**



The Form Four and Five students listening to the sessions by the Kuching Archdiocese Creation Justice Committee. (photo/Today's Catholic)

Focus Team prepares Sandakan parishes for MPC2026

SANDAKAN: In preparation for the Malaysian Pastoral Convention (MPC) 2026, the Focus Team from the Diocese of Sandakan is actively engaging with the parishes and providing information about the journey towards MPC 2026.

In June, the Focus Team visited the three parishes in Paitan, Sandakan and Telupid. During these visits, Fr David Garaman, Fr. Stanley Matakim, Sr Martina James FSIC, and Anna Teresa Peter Amandus explained the objectives, process, and what to expect in MPC 2026.

In March and April, the Focus Team visited the parishes in Lahad Datu, Beluran, and Tawau.

During the visit to Beluran, 31 church leaders were in attendance including members of the Parish Pastoral Council, Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC) leaders, del-

egates from church committees, and laity.

The Tawau session was attended by 100 participants, including lay leaders and local Catholics. The event consisted of various activities including *Expectation Check* during which Anna invited the participants to remove their shoes symbolically, representing the act of shedding their ego and being open to the sessions. She reminded them of Jesus' continuous presence and to call upon the Holy Spirit for guidance throughout the sessions.

During the *Reality Check* session, Sr Martina gave an overview of the history of the Catholic Church and connected it to the role of service that each leader present held.

Anna discussed the positives and challenges of the contempo-

rary world during the *Weather Check* session. She acknowledged that modernisation has its benefits, but cautioned that it can pose a risk to one's faith if not careful.

Spiritual Conversation was a new session added aimed at fostering a more synodal approach among the participants. It was to encourage a spirit of solidarity and unity to strengthen the sense of community and encourage mutual support among the attendees.

Using Vatican II documents, Sr Martina also conducted the session *I am a Mission on this Earth* and explained the role and function of the lay in being a local Church.

The process implemented during the event provided participants with a safe and non-judgmental environment to openly share their thoughts and experiences and to be more aware of the



Anna Teresa explaining the process and expectations of MPC 2026 to the participants.

Holy Spirit's promptings.

The attendees were informed that the next programme in their journey toward MPC 2026, would be the parish pastoral assemblies.

Throughout their visits to each parish, the Focus Team consistently emphasised that the primary ob-

jective of the MPC was not merely to generate additional documents, but rather to engage in prayer, silence, discernment, and collaborative discussions. The ultimate aim was to align their actions and decisions with God's will, focusing on what is pleasing to Him. — **Dospo**

My Soul finds rest in God alone,
my salvation comes from him (Psalm 62:1)



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You are a precious child of God (John 1:10)
You are loved forever (Jeremiah 31:3)

I AM ALWAYS WITH YOU

When I am gone, please me, let me go.
I have so many things to see and do,
You mustn't tie yourself to me with too many tears,
But be thankful we had so many good years.
I gave you my love, and you can only guess
How much you've given me in happiness.
I thank you for the love that you have shown,
But now it is time I travelled on alone.
So grieve for me a while, if grieve you must
Then let your grief be comforted by trust
That it is only for a while that we must part,
So treasure the memories within your heart.
I won't be far away for life goes on.
And if you need me, call and I will come.
Though you can't see or touch me, I will be near
And if you listen with your heart, you'll hear
All my love around you soft and clear
And then, when you come back this way alone,
I'll greet you with a smile and a "Welcome Home".

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Asian Church voices concern over shrinking democratic spaces

VANG TAU, Vietnam: A weeklong conference of Asian Church leaders has expressed concern over shrinking democratic spaces in several countries in the region.

The June 5-10 conference at Marian Pilgrim Centre Bai Dau in the Vang Tau City of Vietnam regretted that the rulers in those countries have become totalitarian, violating their citizens' basic rights and instilling fear among civil society groups that take up people's cause.

"Wider surveillance and threatening national security laws are employed to silence the voice of the voiceless and the media who are standing for the cause of the poor and the marginalised," the meeting noted.

The conference addressed the FABC 50, a document issued by the Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) on its golden



The conference focused on the FABC 50, a document issued by the Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) on its golden jubilee, and its implications for the region. (Matters India photo)

jubilee, and its implication for the region.

Another common concern in the region is migration that forces people to leave their countries out of economic compulsions for better opportunities in life. "The local Church fails to protect and safeguard the people on the move. The left behind families and abandoned children of

the migrants become burning issues to be addressed with utmost urgency," the conference said.

The participants also observed a widening rich-poor gap in most Asian countries. The number of poor has increased in the post COVID-19 period because of the government's pro-rich policies. The conference attributed low minimum wages and

informalisation of the workforce as the reasons for unequal distribution of the wealth among people.

Another burning issue is the rise of religious fanaticism as many countries now witness intolerance among different religious groups, attack against the minorities especially the Christians who are minorities in many Asian countries.

The 'My religion is better attitude' limits the space for dialogue, encounter and learning between the religions and the cultures, the conference regretted.

The meeting also addressed ecological concerns and made a call to 'Save Mother Earth.' "Modern life and its luxuries are built upon the cry of nature. Globalisation and urbanisation induced heartless development at the expense of the environment. The digital technology also has caused enough havoc in the lives of families, especially among the youth and the children," lamented the participants.

The conference ended with a resolution to build bridges between different Asian countries by imparting the consciousness and awareness that 'we belong to the Asian Church.' —

By Jaison Vadassery, *Matters India*

Korea, Bangladesh Church collaboration nurtures future priests

SOUTH KOREA: A collaboration between churches in South Korea and Bangladesh to offer priestly formation and education to seminarians from the South Asian nation is credited for promoting priestly vocation over the years.

Denish Rongdi and Urban Chiran, both ethnic Garo Catholics from Bangladesh's tribal-majority Mymensingh Diocese, are currently studying philosophy and theology at the Catholic University of Suwon.

Rongdi and Chiran arrived in Suwon Diocese in 2021 after the diocese expressed willingness to train seminarians from the tiny church in

Muslim-majority Bangladesh, the Catholic Peace Broadcasting Corporation of Korea (CPBC) reported on June 12.

They said the Catholic faith of their parents inspired them to join the priestly formation and their experience in Korea is "life-changing" despite the challenges.

Rongdi said studying philosophy and theology in Korean was not an easy task.

"It is difficult. Sometimes in class, it is a little difficult to understand words you do not know or things you do not know," he told CPBC.

Chiran, on the other hand, puts in immense effort to gain the knowl-

edge he needs.

"I work hard and study hard," he said.

Both the seminary students from Bangladesh are supported and funded through the Ahn Jung-Geun Scholarship Association.

Since 2002, several Catholic seminarians from Bangladesh have studied in Korean seminaries, became priests, and now serve in the country and abroad, Church sources say.

The collaboration gained momentum when Korean Archbishop Paul Tschang In-Nam served as the apostolic nuncio to Bangladesh (2002-2007).

Rongdi and Chiran, the latest seeds, have credited their families for their call to the priestly vocation.

"My family are believers, starting with my grandparents. So, I also went to church with my parents," said Rongdi.

Chiran pointed out that he had been practising his faith "very steadily" since he was a child and many of the priests whom he saw inspired him to join the seminary.

"When I saw the priests, I thought that I should become this kind of person," he said.

Chiran hopes that he can be as fruitful in his ministry as his predecessors.

Both hope that they can support the Catholics in Bangladesh in their own ways.

"When I was working at the parish, I heard a lot of stories from believers and their problems, so I wanted to become a priest or pastor," Rongdi said.

Chiran, on the other hand, wants to "teach seminarians."

Both seminarians are expected to receive their diaconate in 2026 which will enable them to assist priests and bishops in their ministry.

They are scheduled to be ordained priests in Bangladesh in 2027. — *ucanews.com*

CHARIS' objectives and being good stewards of God's creation

This week's instalment on the Five Loaves and Two Fish series gives an insight on CHARIS and Care for Creation.

Adeline Teh, Head of the CHARIS Penang introduced the structural setup of CHARIS ministry from the diocesan level to the national, Asia-Oceania Continental, and to CHARIS International Service of Commission.

Personally speaking, while studying Greek mythological literary works as a student some eons ago, I was enamoured by the name *charis* — derived from the Greek mythological charities (graces) and their popular personifications of the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Biblically speaking, *charis* is said to occur more than 150 times in the Bible, mostly in the letters of St Paul. This beautiful word means "heavenly grace from God," "the unmerited favour of God" etc., while charisma/charism refers to all manner of spiritual gifts.

Adeline explained the need for this united body under its Episcopal President, Rt Rev Sebastian Francis, to house all affiliates representing the different realities of the Charismatic Renewal movement. This happened soon after *Vatican News* announced



Adeline Teh

that "On December 8, 2018, the Diocese for the Laity, Family and Life erected a new service for the current grace that is the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. This service is called CHARIS, an acronym for Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service."

Adeline clarified the meaning of the oft-misunderstood term 'charismatic' — "It refers to anyone who is prayerful



Magdalene Chiang

and has the Holy Spirit within his/her being by virtue of baptism and confirmation (Romans 5:5). Jesus is the focus because He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (Jn 14:6); the Holy Spirit is the Advocate promised by Jesus Himself to the disciples" (Jn 15:26).

She listed the four objectives of CHARIS:

1. Promoting Baptism and Life in the Spirit

2. Communion within the Church
3. Ecumenism
4. Service to the poor and marginalised.

Many of its activities are carried out in collaboration with Caritas. Adeline encouraged participation in Life in the Spirit Seminars for those who haven't yet experienced any, especially the newly baptised.

Next was a session on *Care for Creation* by Magdalene Chiang, coordinator of the Penang State Creation Justice Commission (formed in 2021) and Head of Friends of Creation, a ministry in the Church of the Divine Mercy, Sg Ara. Magdalene is a passionate advocate for justice and care for God's creation. Her content focused on: 1. Care for creation from a Catholic perspective 2. The group's charter and 3. Diocesan contacts. She highlighted the seriousness with which the Catholic Church wants to promote ecological conversion.

Over the last 50 years, numerous popes have been concerned about the critical state of our God-given environment and how best to mitigate the damage and harm wrought upon creation. Magdalene shared Pope Francis' heart wrenching pronouncement in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato*

Si', to show its inseparability, and the vulnerability of the poor. On Sept 1, 2016, Pope Francis declared Care for Creation as the eighth work of mercy. At a Vatican Christmas Eve Mass in 2022, the Pope denounced the "irresponsible behaviour" of human beings for causing the present environmental crisis. He also condemned the rising "culture of waste and the human hunger for wealth and power" at the expense of the vulnerable.

Magdalene quoted relevant Scripture verses to raise awareness of the need to be good stewards of God's "garden" gifted to us. She decried the take-make-dispose linear economic motive, and the pack-consume-dispose consumer behaviour that contributes to colossal garbage pile-ups and consequential foul fallout.

Film clips portrayed a very concerned Pope Francis highlighting the damage and devastation of Mother Earth everywhere. "Nature is screaming!" exclaimed Pope Francis.

Hopefully, we are listening and responding as God's faithful. Let's do this: look into *Laudato Si'* for a Catholic approach to ecological conversion and care for our common home!

— *By Lucille Dass*

More in our next issue.

Anglican bishop to convert to Catholicism and serve as priest

WALES: A former Anglican bishop from Wales will be received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church next month and serve as a priest with the Anglican Ordinate, which was set up by former Pope Benedict XVI in 2011.

The Rt Rev Richard Pain, who served as the Anglican bishop of Monmouth, will join the Catholic Church on July 2, at St Basil and St Gwladys in Rogerstone, Wales. He is the first Welsh Anglican bishop to convert to Catholicism through the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

"We are delighted that after much prayer Richard has asked to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church," Msgr Keith Newton, who serves as the ordinary of the ordinariate, said in a statement.

"He will be the first bishop from the Anglican Church in Wales to be received into the ordinariate since its creation in 2011," Newton said. "Richard has a long and distin-



Rev. Richard Pain

guished ministry in the Church in Wales. He has many gifts which he will continue to use to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the

people of Wales."

The ordinariate is structured similarly to a diocese and allows former Anglican priests and bishops to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church while maintaining certain Anglican traditions. It has its own eucharistic liturgy, which is distinct from the standard Roman Rite liturgy, and incorporates elements of the *Book of Common Prayer* that do not conflict with Catholic doctrine.

In the US and Canada, the ordinariate is known as The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St Peter and welcomes Anglican and Methodist converts. Through the ordinariate, an Anglican priest or bishop can enter into full communion with the Catholic Church and serve as a priest even if he is married. Pain married, Juliet, more than 40 years ago, and they have two sons.

In a statement, Pain said the Benedictine understanding of obedience and hearing the Lord was significant in his personal forma-

tion and ultimate conversion to the Catholic faith.

"The call to conversion which follows has led me to becoming a convert to the Catholic Church through the ordinariate," Pain said. "I have much to be grateful for the experience gained over a lifetime as an Anglican. Yet the call to Catholicism seems natural and spiritual at the same time. To start afresh will be a welcome challenge and I come — as we all do — as a learner and a disciple. The ordinariate, through the vision of Pope Benedict, provides a generous pathway to walk a pilgrim way and I ask for your prayers."

Pain was born in London in 1956 and ordained a priest in the Anglican Church in Wales at Newport Cathedral in 1986. He was ordained the bishop of Monmouth in 2013 and retired in 2019. During his time in the Anglican Church, he assisted with the discernment and training of clergy. — **By Tyler Arnold, CNA**

Korean, Japanese churches strengthen pastoral cooperation

SEOUL: Two groups of Japanese priests visited South Korean dioceses with the aim to strengthen friendship and cooperation between churches on various issues including undocumented migrants, catechesis for the elderly and children, and a decline in religious vocation.

The priests from the Diocese of Fukuoka in Japan along with Spanish bishop, Josep Maria Abella Batlle, paid visits to Incheon from June 5-9.

The Japanese priests joined a training programme at the Social Pastoral Centre of the Incheon Diocese.

On June 6, they held meetings with the clergy of the diocese to share pastoral activities on issues such as migration, catechesis, and religious vocation.

During the meeting, the priests of both dioceses pledged to promote cooperation despite challenges like the language barrier.

Prior to the meeting, the Japanese delegation attended the Eucharistic Exaltation Mass and the Eucharistic Procession presided over by Bishop John Baptist Jung Shin-chul of Incheon at the Eucharistic Pilgrimage Shrine in the Gimpo Catholic Church.

They also paid visits to the Dapdong Catholic Church and the Incheon Diocese History Museum.

Bishop Jung presented a statue of the Korean Virgin Mary and an unknown martyr to Bishop Abella.

"I hope that the two countries, having their first meeting as a group of priests who speak different languages, may become one in God and achieve a greater unity that helps each other," the prelate said.

Bishop Abella said that the Diocese of Fukuoka is grateful for the support of the Incheon Diocese which dispatched Korean priests to serve in his diocese.

Earlier, on May 24-27, another Japanese delegation of 10 people led by Bishop Paul Yoshinao Otsuka of Kyoto Diocese paid visits to the Diocese of Jeju.

They visited Jeju diocesan offices and attended a prayer gathering dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

The group held a meeting with Bishop Pius Moon Chang-woo of Jeju and discussed the history of the diocese and its cooperation with the Kyoto Diocese dating back to 2005.

Since then, Kyoto Diocese has been sending pilgrims to the Blessed Virgin Mary shrine in Jeju. On the other hand, youths from Jeju Diocese have been participating in Hiroshima Peace Camp hosted by Kyoto Diocese.

Church leaders say promoting friendship and cooperation between churches in the two countries is important as many Koreans still hold a negative attitude towards Japan for its colonisation of Korea (1905-45) and various forms of oppression and abuses. — **ucanews.com**



Bishop John Baptist Jung Shin-chul of Incheon Diocese in South Korea speaks to a group of Japanese priests during their visit on June 6. (UCA News Photo/Catholic Times)

Indian archdiocese to help Manipur students

BANGALORE: A Catholic archdiocese in southern India has shown a willingness to rebuild the shattered lives of college and school-going students from the strife-torn hilly state of Manipur, where a fresh outbreak of violence has reportedly resulted in the killing of 11 more people.

Archbishop Peter Machado of Bangalore in southern Karnataka welcomed nearly 70 students from the north-eastern state at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre on June 12.

"We will provide all-round help," the prelate said, trying to console and assure them of all support.

Archbishop Machado assured them that they could continue their studies in "diocesan and religious order-run institutions free of cost."

The prelate expressed "solidarity with the displaced people of Manipur" and conveyed his readiness to help them, according to a press release.

"The prelate listened to their ordeals and promised to do whatever possible in his capacity to rebuild their shattered lives," said archdiocesan spokesperson, J A Kantharaj.

"The archbishop has promised to assist them until their situation improves," he said.

The students were accompanied by Jesuit



Archbishop Peter Machado of Bangalore

priest Fr James Beipei, currently based in Bengaluru, the capital of southern Karnataka.

Since May 3, unprecedented violence has taken place in the hilly state bordering civil war-hit Myanmar, between the ethnic Kuki and Meitei communities over a court proposal to grant special tribal status to Meitei people so they get priority in government jobs, education and other affirmative programmes meant for the indigenous people.

Most Kuki people are Christians, while most Meiteis are Hindus, though a few of them are Christians, too. — **ucanews.com**

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UN Chief: Take risk of AI disinformation seriously

NEW YORK: UN chief António Guterres called on countries to seriously heed the warnings over the risks posed by artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, which he said are “loudest from the developers who designed it”.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) is a type of artificial intelligence system that can generate text, images, and other media.

Guterres, however, said that the rapid development of AI must not distract people from the “grave” damage that digital technology is currently inflicting upon the world.

“The proliferation of hate and lies in the digital space is causing grave global harm – now. It is fueling conflict, death, and destruction – now,” he cautioned.

Guterres further warned that hate speech and disinformation on digital platforms are already threatening democracy and human rights and are undermining public health and climate action.

While social media platforms have supported communities through crises and amplified the voices of the marginalised, the same technology has become a source of fear and not hope, the UN Secretary-General said.

“Digital platforms are being misused to subvert science and spread disinformation and hate to billions of people,” he said.

He then appealed for clear and coordinated global action against what he called a “clear and present global threat”.



Secretary-General António Guterres briefs reporters on his *Information Integrity on Digital Platforms* policy brief. (UN Photo/Mark Garten)

Part of this global effort is the UN’s recent policy brief on information integrity on digital platforms. This brief bids to “put forward a framework for a [concerted] international response.”

Information integrity is the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of information. This is now threatened by disinformation, misinformation, and hate speech, which then threatens human progress, the UN policy brief said.

“While traditional media remain an important source of news for most people in conflict areas, hatred spread on digital

platforms has also sparked and fuelled violence,” the brief said.

The policy brief’s proposals are “aimed at creating guardrails to help governments come together around guidelines that promote facts while exposing conspiracies and lies, and safeguarding freedom of expression and information,” Guterres said.

Further, the UN chief said that recommendations in the brief seek to make the digital world safer and more inclusive while also protecting human rights.

The proposals in the policy brief include a commitment by governments, tech companies, and other stakeholders to refrain from propagating disinformation, a pledge by governments to guarantee a free, independent, and plural media landscape with strong protection for journalists, and a commitment from digital platforms to make sure all products take into account safety, privacy, and transparency, and more.

“Disinformation and hate should not generate maximum exposure and massive profits,” Guterres said. When asked how confident he is that tech companies and governments will take steps to make the digital ecosystem safer, he said that it is a “constant battle” as they are dealing with “businesses that generate massive profits”.

“The problem is that the present business model prioritises engagement in relation to privacy, truth, and the human rights of people,” the UN chief explained.

The policy brief addressed this issue, say-

ing “disinformation is also big business,” as some public relations firms, contracted by some states, political figures, and private sectors, are “key sources of false and misleading content”.

The policy brief is the latest in a series of 11 reports intended to inform discussions ahead of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in September.

Pope Francis has already addressed the problem of misinformation in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, stating that the digital realm has the capability to employ subtle and invasive mechanisms for the “manipulation of consciences and the democratic process,” consequently facilitating the “spread of fake news and false information.”

The Declaration of Human Fraternity drafted and presented by Nobel laureates on June 10, also stated, “Let us cease the manipulation of technology and AI. Let us prioritise fraternity over technological development so that it can permeate through it.”

In his message for the first World Meeting on Human Fraternity, the Pope also stressed that “brothers and sisters are the anchors of truth in the stormy sea of conflicts that spread falsehood.”

Amid misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech proliferating in the digital space, the UN said that strengthening information integrity is an “urgent priority for the international community.” — **By Zeus Legaspi, Vatican News**

Church and corporate leaders reflect on principles of business ethics

VATICAN: Business and Church leaders, academics, and institutional stakeholders gathered at the Vatican’s Academy of Sciences on June 9, for a *Business Ethics Summit* discussion on how ethical and moral principles can be applied to the corporate environment.

The *Summit* was dedicated to how ethics can inform business decisions concerning the environment, emerging technologies, and current social issues. The conversation revolved around four main pillars: the human economy, the tech economy, the climate economy, and the impact economy.

Through an innovative use of artificial intelligence, the Academy provided a framework for participants to share their own expertise and experience for a conversation that highlighted the centrality of the human person and the necessity of bringing ethical principles into the world of business.



Fr Philip Larrey speaks during the summit.

“We tried to involve people from all different sectors of society – politicians, economists, professors, entrepreneurs,” said Fr Philip Larrey, Dean of the Philosophy Department at the Pontifical Lateran University, who helped organise the event.

Fr Larrey explained, “Business ethics is the understanding of what we do in the business world according to principles about right and wrong. Almost everybody agrees that you need to avoid doing wrong and do good, but we don’t always agree on what is good and what is wrong. So, we’ve tried to come up with different frameworks basically from a philosophical point of view.”

The *Summit* was focused on the ideas of philosophers John Stuart Mill, Immanuel Kant, Aristotle, and Confucius, with discussion revolving around how to apply those principles to the business world.

Among those taking part in the *Summit* was Scott O’Neil, CEO of Merlin Entertainment, who spoke at the first session of the event, which considered “key milestones business should adopt to transform and compete in the era of human economy. “I think that what’s happening in the world now is pushing CEOs, business leaders, executives – and in partnership with local governments, absolutely – to try to figure out how we’re going to operate together. There are real problems that we have to solve together. And it’s of my view that businesses can do the lion’s share of that work.”

O’Neill insisted on the importance of putting people at the centre of the economy, saying, “That’s good for business.” He noted that business leaders today are being held accountable for their beliefs and values, adding that the questions they face will



The *Business Ethics Summit*, held at the headquarters of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in the Vatican. (Vatican Media)

push them “to create cultures and environments that are good. They’re good for the employee, they’re good for our customers – and they’re wonderful for the world. And I think that that trifecta is what’s going to push us forward.”

Christiana Falcone, a board member of the think tank “Core” that organised the *Summit*, highlighted the contribution of Cardinal Peter Turkson, the president of the Pontifical Academy. “I think the fact he reminded us that this idea of good – which he defined as good wealth, good planet, good people... I think that was a simple but profound way of reminding us to ask ourselves the question, was this good? Was this right? And these are basic ethical questions that we have forgotten in the C-suite or in the boardrooms.”

Asked about her hopes for the *Summit*, she said the interaction among the participants was one of the chief outcomes of the event. “We wanted to contaminate the brain of everybody in the room with the thought of someone else, someone different... The outcome, I hope, is that people get out of this room having learned a little bit or they’ve learned what they don’t know and then try and learn more about it.”

Ms Falcone noted, too, that the four case studies discussed at the event will also be presented to students at the LUMSA University. That’s good, she said, “because it means the generation of today in leadership, the decision makers, are passing the baton of their failure or of their success to the next generation.” — **By Christopher Wells, Vatican News**

What the Vatican tells the public when the Pope is sick

When Pope Francis was spotted entering Rome's Gemelli Hospital for some medical tests on June 7, the Vatican did not confirm that he had been there until more than two hours had passed. The following day, after two Italian news outlets had broken the news that Pope Francis was to have an operation, the Vatican sent out a press release mistakenly announcing that the Pope had already gone to the hospital for a planned surgery even before he had finished his Wednesday general audience at the Vatican.

That evening, after the surgery, the Vatican took a more proactive approach, arranging a press conference with Pope Francis' surgeon, Sergio Alfieri.

What accounts for the Vatican's change in tactics, and how does the Vatican's communication strategy around this current papal hospitalisation stack up against past medical events?

An effort to avoid speculation

John Thavis, a longtime *Catholic News Service* Rome bureau chief and author of *The Vatican Diaries: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Power, Personalities, and Politics at the Heart of the Catholic Church*, said different strategies reflect different levels of certainty regarding the Pope's health. "In general, over the last three pontificates, the Vatican has been pretty open about medical issues when it comes to the clinical details — by that I mean doctors' diagnoses, test results, surgeries, even prognoses," Thavis said. "They're comfortable dealing with information when they feel they have answers. They have not been as transparent when it comes to how any of these physical ailments cumulatively can impact the ability of a pope to do his job."

"When the Vatican and the doctors don't have answers yet, they're very cautious about how much they say," he added. "If the Vatican simply says, 'It looks like the Pope is going to need surgery; we'll let you know more in a few days,' can you imagine the media speculation? They want to avoid that, so they downplay it until they have results,



During his last full day of hospitalisation on June 15, 2023, Pope Francis visits the paediatric oncology ward of Gemelli Hospital, which is next to his own hospital suite. (CNA photo/Vatican Media)

answers, prognoses."

This strategy was apparent in the press conferences that the Vatican hosted during Pope Francis' hospitalisation this month. The Pope's surgeon, Dr Alfieri, directly confronted two rumours that have circulated around the Pope's health in recent years: one, that he had cancer and another, that he had suffered a heart attack. Dr Alfieri said that having examined the Pope closely, he could confirm that these stories were fake.

Still, the Vatican's hesitancy to share details until the Pope's doctors have definite answers has proven frustrating for some covering the Vatican. One crisis communications expert, who works often with various Vatican bodies and spoke on the condition of anonymity, expressed relief that Dr Alfieri had taken questions from reporters at a press

conference on Wednesday night after the Pope's surgery. "That's a huge step forward. I'm just — like a lot of us — amazed it took them so long," the source said.

A lack of clarity, a lack of transparency?

The crisis communications expert also expressed frustration at the medical jargon used in the brief updates that the Vatican has issued once or twice per day outside of Dr Alfieri's press conferences. The Vatican's first update, for example, issued before the surgery, said that the Pope would undergo a "laparotomy and plastic surgery on the abdominal wall with prosthesis under general anaesthesia" and that the surgery "was necessary because of an incarcerated laparocele that is causing recurrent, painful and worsening sub-occlusive syndromes."

"We all had to Google all of it. What's a lacerated incision, and what's subocclusive, and how is subocclusive different from occlusive? I've never heard of that. I didn't know it was a syndrome. And how painful is recurrently painful, and worsening as related to what? It's gobbledygook," the source said. "And so, what does that come to? It means a lack of transparency."

Thavis recalled a similar lack of transparency on the Vatican's part during Pope John Paul II's struggle with Parkinson's disease. "Where reporters sometimes felt the Vatican fell short was, for example, when John Paul II was visibly weakened by Parkinson's disease later in life and the Vatican had never uttered the word Parkinson's disease. They used this term 'extra-pyramidal disease,'" Thavis recalled, acknowledging that the difficulty of specifically diagnosing Parkinson's disease may have accounted for this choice of terminology.

The lack of transparency was not limited to terminology, he said. On papal trips, "there were times when the pope would just disappear, and we would wonder what was going on and never be told. So, the day-to-day impact of how [an illness] affects the ability of a pope to be pope, that's where they don't want to get into the details," Thavis said.

The Pope's medical privacy

At the heart of the question of how to communicate about the Pope's medical concerns is the balance between the public's expectation of accurate information regarding public figures and the Pope's expectation of a reasonable amount of privacy.

The crisis communications expert believes that the Vatican has not sufficiently met the public's need for accurate information regarding the Pope's health. "I've been getting messages from friends of mine across the world: How's the Holy Father? We're praying for him. Is he going to be OK? Is this the end? That's not fair. It's not fair on those people who love him and care for him," the source said. "Yes, of course, he has a right to privacy. I don't need to know what colour pyjamas he was wearing [in the hospital], but I do need to know exactly why he's there, what was wrong, and if he is going to be OK."

According to Dr Alfieri's updates, Pope Francis is going to be OK. But historical examples of the Vatican withholding medical information about the pope has led some to be sceptical about the honesty of the Vatican's communications. Thavis recalled that he was in the Vatican when Paul VI died in 1978. "I remember the day before his death, the Vatican said, 'Well, he's taking a few days' rest for arthritis. No cause for alarm.'"

A few weeks later, John Paul I died of a heart attack after only 33 days as Pope. "Only after he died did the Vatican release medical information that showed he had serious blood circulation problems, and he was actually awaiting medication to arrive from Venice [when he died]," Thavis said. "It was a classic case where he did not get the proper attention in time. And not only that, the cardinals who had elected him a month earlier had no clue about this. So I think, at the highest levels, there was a recognition that, not only do we have to be more transparent with the public, we have to be more transparent with each other. I think that really did change a lot of people's minds."

Thavis also believes that the institution turned a decisive corner in 1992.

That year, Pope John Paul II had a tumour the size of an

orange removed from his intestine. "That's when we saw the Vatican begin issuing very detailed medical bulletins and bringing out doctors for press conferences. They got into biopsies, they got into whether any cells were malignant or not, the details that reporters wanted. And that transparency was largely credited to the papal spokesman at the time, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, who is himself a medical doctor and believed that unless the Vatican provided medical details, the press would simply speculate about things they didn't know," Thavis said.

Both Thavis and the crisis communications expert spoke admiringly of Navarro-Valls, saying that although there was often some measure of positive spin added to his comments on the Pope's condition, he was easily reached by reporters, communicated clearly and was credible because he spoke directly with the Pope often.

"Navarro had to fight some internal battles with the old guard at the Vatican who thought it was unseemly and an invasion of people's privacy to broadcast medical specifics like biopsy reports," Thavis said. "I really do think John Paul II [and] Navarro-Valls set up the model for communicating on health issues."

The crisis communication expert added that he does not see a similar dynamic at play between Pope Francis and the current Vatican spokesman, Matteo Bruni, or the Vatican's communications dicastery as a whole. "Joaquin Navarro-Valls was in the room with John Paul II all the time. It was one-on-one: What do you want me to say? How much do we need to know? [Vatican spokesman] Frederico Lombardi had very much the same with Benedict; they spoke German together. Again, it was one-on-one: What do you need me to say? What do we want to do? There is nothing like that right now."

The expert cited as an example how forthcoming Pope Francis has been in interviews about his health, in contrast with the brief statements from the Vatican.

The crisis communication expert, who has worked extensively with the Vatican, said he believes this can be attributed to the internal dynamics in the Vatican's communica-



(CNA photo/Vatican Media)

tion structure. The current papal spokesman, Matteo Bruni, "can't say anything until his superiors give him the green light. And they won't give him the green light until they've heard from the Secretary of State. And so on and so forth. It's simply dysfunctional."

Thavis did not go so far as to call the internal dynamics of the Vatican dysfunctional but he said: "Very often the way things happen at the Vatican depend very much on who's in charge that day, who won the argument over, 'How transparent shall we be?' It's not like they have a policy set in stone; it's not part of canon law. It depends very much on the personalities involved and the personality of the Pope." — **By Colleen Dulle, America**

'Lay ministry not for inflated egos'

This was the “screaming” headline featured in a recent issue of *HERALD* (May 7, 2023) where Pope Francis spoke to the participants at the Second Plenary Assembly of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life.

Strong words from a pontiff who has since “rocked many a boat” in the Catholic Church since taking office as head of the universal Church. In his speech, translated in English, he said “these ministries, services, offices, must never become self-referential. I get angry when I see lay ministers who – pardon the expression – are ‘puffed up’ by this ministry. This is ministerial, but it is not Christian”. (source: *Holy See Press Office Bulletin, Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, 22 April 2023*).

How relevant are these words to the Church in Malaysia? How relevant is this in describing the situation of lay ministries in Malaysia?

To the best of my knowledge, the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur organised its very first lay ministry formation course in the early 1980s. That was the period after *Aggiornamento* 1976, when the Church in Peninsular Malaysia started her renewal process. The course was conducted weekly for two years at Cardijn House, Kuala Lumpur, and all parishes were asked to send participants. As usual, it started off well with several hundred attendees, but as the weeks and months passed, only about two hundred people completed the course.

This was the first time ever that I know, when the Church formally conducted a comprehensive training covering all aspects of liturgy, biblical, pastoral and sacramental of our faith to laity. The occasional “homework” and the reading materials handed out, made the course daunting for many who had to rush from office. The course was conducted on weekday nights for about two hours each session, by priests, religious brothers and sisters. For those who endured this two-year course, a rite of commissioning and a certificate was issued to recognise their completion.

From the success of this Lay Ministry programme, subsequent two-year courses



REMINISCING CHURCH

Richard Chia

were planned, but focused on Bible study only. At least two more batches of laity completed these programmes between 1985-1989. I was one of those in the last batch of the Bible study programme in 1989.

Fully empowered with their new knowledge and charged by the Holy Spirit, this first batch of commissioned lay ministers returned to their respective parishes, and thus began the period of laity involvement in the Church.

Today, we have laity spread out geographically across Malaysia, serving in various aspects of Church life. I seldom hear us being called lay ministers, but according to Pope Francis “the ministeriality of the faithful, and of laypeople in particular, stems from the charism that the Holy Spirit distributes within the People of God for its edification”. Meaning, we are all

lay ministers in our own right so long as we are using the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve the People of God. We need not necessarily be commissioned or appointed as such.

Returning to Pope Francis’ “angry words” above, I sincerely hope it is not happening anywhere in any of the parishes in Malaysia. On the contrary, I see many dedicated and much committed individuals serving in the churches, in the many parish ministries, groups and organisations. It is not like there are many people clamouring for power in the Church. After all, most of these positions and duties are voluntary and unpaid. In fact, there are many who are happy just serving in one small area in Church without holding any positions.

The most I feel that we may be “guilty of”, if we can really call it so, is that many of the lay faithful serving in Church remain in the same lay ministry for long. Not that they have inflated egos or enjoy monetary rewards, but because they are comfortable serving in that ministry, and find satisfaction doing their little bit for God.

However, the Church does have some guidelines on that. Some parishes require its leaders to serve no more than two terms

of three years each only. This will allow others the chance to come forward, as well as groom new leaders into the field. Of course for smaller parishes where resources are scarce and volunteers are few, we sometimes find the same person wearing more than one hat.

I agree with Pope Francis’ statement that lay ministry is not for people with inflated egos. In fact, Pope Francis, on many occasions, has referred to the Church as a field hospital — she needs many more lay faithful to step up in service.

Just like in the early years, the Church in Malaysia is in constant need to form and train its lay faithful to serve with love, care and compassion. She needs to constantly form the laity in the area of the pastoral, liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. All these cannot be done via Zoom, online or any form of electronic media. It needs to be done one-on-one, through human relationship and mutual support of each other.

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.



The laity at a seminar. We are all lay ministers in our own right so long as we are using the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve the People of God. We need not necessarily be commissioned or appointed as such. (HERALD file pic)

New Archbishop of Madrid discusses his vision for the future

After his appointment as archbishop of Madrid became official, José Cobo said he sees a need to “reposition the Church” in a changing society.

Cobo’s appointment as the new archbishop to replace retired Cardinal Carlos Osoro was made official June 12. He has been serving as an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Madrid since 2018.

Asked at a press conference what he can contribute going forward as one of the youngest prelates of the Spanish episcopate, Cobo said: “We can bring the capacity or the desire to reposition the Church within our world. Perhaps in different ways, with other languages.”

The newly appointed archbishop said that it is not a question of “abandoning the parameters of what has already been done, nor of what it means to be a bishop, because this will never change” but rather, of “providing a vision of new challenges that are appearing in our society, which is changing at a dizzying rate.”

“It’s not so much about innovating as it is about embodying the Gospel message in the

reality that we have,” he stressed.

After his installation on July 8, Cobo said that his “first [step] will be to listen” through meetings with “all those who have a responsibility in the diocese” and the presbytery.

He noted that there will be three words “that will accompany us throughout the Church: participation, communion, and mission,” which he considers “a good focal point, a good template to start a new stage.”

The new archbishop commented that “Madrid is an exciting diocese, because it has an overflowing lay life” in which there are “plenty of lively and strong communities.”

For this reason, he said he feels “like a bride or groom before the wedding: You become dizzy due to the immensity of what marriage means, but when you’re in love, these things become easier. I find myself in love with the Lord and with the mission He is entrusting to me.”

From now on, he said, he is ready to “guide, preach, celebrate, but, above all, accompany, so that the diocese gets to where

God wants it to go.”

Although born in Andalusia in the country’s far south, Cobo has been in Madrid in central Spain since the 1980s, when he went to the capital to study law at the Complutense University, from which he graduated in 1988.

That same year he entered the seminary, where he completed his theology studies. From 1994-1996, he studied morality at the Pontifical University of Comillas.

Ordained in 1994, he has been assistant chaplain for the Brotherhood of Labour in Madrid, a Catholic lay association; a parochial vicar; and archpriest. From 2000-2015, he served as a parish priest, and from 2000-2012 he was a member of the Presbyteral Council.

He has also taught at the School for Pastoral Workers in Madrid and at the Centre for Social Studies of Diocesan Caritas.

From 2015-2017 he served as episcopal vicar until his appointment as an auxiliary bishop in late 2017.

He was ordained a bishop in 2018 and directed the prison ministry department of



the Spanish Bishops’ Conference (CEE) for three years. Cobo is part of the Social Ministry of the CEE and has served as head of the Migration Department since 2019.

His pastoral activity has been characterised by a special closeness to the poorest and most needy, already demonstrated when, as a layman, he collaborated with Project Man in caring for people with AIDS. — **By Nicolás de Cárdenas, CNA**

St Anne's intercession brought couple together

and inspired them to write a guide on novenas

A new book from Ascension is inspiring Catholics to experience the power of novenas with a pocket guide to dive deeper into this traditional form of prayer.

Pocket Guide to Novenas by Annie and John-Paul Deddens offers readers a look into where these nine-day prayers came from, how to pray them, and what to expect when praying them.

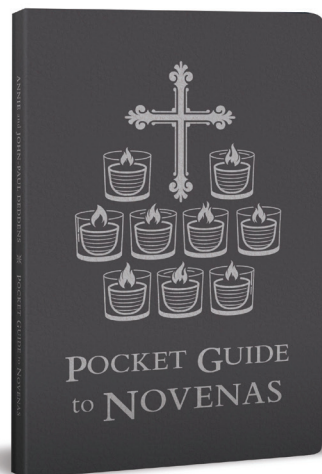
The new pocket guide includes 20 novenas, 14 of which are newly written, an introduction to each novena, sacred art, inspirational stories from Catholics who have had their prayers answered through a novena, and a schedule for when to pray these particular novenas throughout the year.

First-time authors and married couple Annie and John-Paul Deddens spoke with *CNA* about their personal experiences seeing the power of novenas at work in their marriage and daily lives. A novena even played a part in bringing the two together.

Annie explained that the novena to St Anne — the name given to the Virgin Mary's mother in the Catholic tradition — was the first novena she ever prayed. She heard several women say they met their fiances after praying for St Anne's intercession for a spouse. This moved Annie to find a novena to the saint. She began to pray it every morning at a local chapel.

"As I left that chapel every morning, I remember noticing a guy praying in one of the last pews in the back, and I thought to myself, 'I'd like to meet someone like him, who is also starting his day in prayer,'" she recalled.

"Very shortly after finishing the St Anne novena, I met John-Paul, and it turned out that he was the guy I had been seeing all along in the very back of the chapel while



praying the novena," she added. "So, we attribute St Anne's intercession to us meeting one another."

In addition to being authors, the Deddens are also the creators of the popular website and social media platform *PrayMoreNovenas*, an online ministry that helps people rediscover the beauty of praying novenas and sends daily emails to participants so that they can stay up-to-date on their chosen novena.

John-Paul shared how the site came to fruition saying, "While we were dating, Annie asked me to pray a novena with her. I turned her down. You see, my experience with novenas wasn't great. I started several but I had never finished one!"

"I realised that I was constantly checking my email throughout the day and that if I had the prayers right there in front of me, that I would probably finally finish a novena," he said. "I created the website *PrayMoreNovenas.com* to help others who had the same difficulty and we've since received thousands of messages from people



John-Paul and Annie Deddens

who finally finished their first novena using *Pray More Novenas*!"

Now, they hope to continue to encourage Catholics around the world to spend more time in prayer through their *Pocket Guide to Novenas*.

"Helping people pray novenas has been the heart of our ministry...for many years," Annie said. "We wrote [the book] to further help people pray novenas and hopefully grow closer to the Lord through each prayer. We love novenas and we hope they will become a beloved devotion for others in their prayer lives."

She continued, "While novenas aren't a required devotion in the faith, they're a simple and beautiful way to spend just a lit-

tle more time in prayer each day. The daily novena prayer might take just a couple of minutes a day, and it can help us to reflect on the lives of the saints or the life of Christ or our Blessed Mother, and to ask for their intercession in our lives."

Some of the new novenas included in the book are the *Novena to St John Paul II*, *Novena to St Louis and Zelig Martin*, *Novena to Christ the King*, as well as several traditional novenas including the *Divine Mercy Novena* and the *Surrender Novena*.

John-Paul added that he hopes their book "will bring people closer to Christ, leading them in conversation and relationship with the Lord." — **By Francesca Pollio Fenton, CNA**

Legacy of Irish teenager who inspired a nation lives on

Donal Walsh was tired of seeing young people end their lives while he was fighting each day for his.

Born and raised in County Kerry, Ireland, Walsh was diagnosed with bone cancer in his tibia at the age of 12. He endured nine months of chemotherapy and an operation to give him a prosthetic knee. After two years the cancer returned, this time to his lung. The young boy underwent surgery again to have half his lung removed and endured more chemotherapy.

In October 2012, Walsh was diagnosed for a third — and final — time with tumours in five different locations in his body.

During his final months, Walsh took to writing about his battle with cancer and how his faith allowed him to persevere in what he called "climbing God's mountains." He also wrote about his frustration at seeing a rise in teenage suicide.

It was then that he decided to go on national television to encourage young people to value life.

With only a few weeks left to live, Walsh went on the Irish talk show *The Saturday Night Show* with Brendan O'Connor hoping to emphasise the value of life by sharing his own story.

"If I'm meant to be a symbol for people

to appreciate life — it might not be just suicide — but just to appreciate life more in general, then I'd be happy to die if that's what I'm dying for," Walsh said during his television appearance.

Walsh passed away four weeks later on May 12, 2013, at the age of 16.

He spoke for 19 minutes, and those 19 minutes inspired a country. Months later, the coroner of County Kerry reported a decrease in suicides after Walsh spoke out.

Ten years later, his legacy lives on.

On May 11 of this year, more than 2,000 Irish students gathered at the Knock Basilica and Shrine in County Mayo, Ireland, to honour Walsh's memory. The students listened to several speakers who spoke about different issues that affect the world today, especially mental health.

Walsh's parents, Elma and Fionnbar, were also in attendance.

"When we were told he was terminal, we turned around and started to say, 'Why us?' And he [Donal] changed his question to, 'Why not me?'" Fionnbar Walsh recalled in an interview at the event with *EWTN News In Depth*, which aired June 2.

"Donal was very upset for the first few days, but it only lasted a few days," Elma Walsh added. "And he decided he wasn't going to let cancer dictate. Whatever was

left of his life, he wanted to do something."

His mother shared that he had a "remarkable" faith. He loved to pray the rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Walsh asked his mother to ensure he received holy Communion every day and that he die with a "clean spirit."

"It [his faith] was kind of innate to him. It was just in him ... It's hard to explain. It was just in him. It was just part of Donal," she explained.

After Walsh's death, his parents started the Donal Walsh Live Life Foundation, which has raised more than half a million euros to date for various charities, all of which promote life. And once a year, students meet at the Basilica of Knock to celebrate Mass, to be inspired and encouraged by guest speakers, and to be reminded of the value of life.

"I think a lot of people would be very afraid of the idea of terminal illness, but his bravery — he was able to endure through so much hardship and still have faith, and that's inspiring to people," said Adam Walsh (no relation), a student in attendance.

Another student, Anastasia Mullen, added: "I think that it is very inspirational. He really creates this beacon of hope for the youth — just keeps hope alive."



Only a few weeks before he died, 16-year-old Donal Walsh went on national television in Ireland to remind people of the value of life. Today the Donal Walsh Live Life Foundation continues to promote life. (CNA/EWTN News)

Elma Walsh shared that she hopes the students in attendance will leave knowing "that they're loved. To know that their lives are precious and delicate and nobody knows what tomorrow will bring but just to appreciate things they have in life." — **By Francesca Pollio Fenton, CNA**

As state elections loom, move forward without fear

The political rhetoric is rising ahead of the upcoming elections in six states.

Negri Sembilan, Selangor, Penang, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu will soon hold state elections.

The Pakatan Harapan-led multi-coalition controls three states, while Perikatan Nasional leads the other three.

As polling day draws closer, divisive issues of race and religion are rearing their ugly head.

It is disturbing that certain politicians feel compelled to raise such divisive issues. Sometimes, what is written and said is so alarming, if not depressing — as if all hope for a brighter future is lost.

This is in stark contrast to the message of the great spiritual traditions — that humanity is one, and the diversity of humankind, indeed all of Creation, is meant to enrich our lives. This diversity provides occasions for us to rise above our differences to uplift our neighbours and the entire human family.

Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan shows us that ultimately, what is important is not our ethnic or religious differences. Rather, it is our willingness to rise above these differences to show compassion and love for "the other", to promote a culture of inclusion — not exclusion — of the marginalised and outcasts.

When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, she questioned Him about whether God should be worshipped in Mount Gerizim, as the Samaritans did, or in Jerusalem, as the Jews did.

Jesus response to her in John 4:4 echoes down the ages for all generations: "23 the hour is coming — indeed is already here — when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father seeks."



SUNDAY OBSERVER

Anil Netto

"24 God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth."

Worship in Spirit and Truth. This means that the Spirit will guide us to the Truth, above all human differences. This is the essence of spirituality.

It is easy to worry about the future, which is filled with uncertainty and often seems gloomy.

But if we believe in the truth, if we worship in spirit and truth, the attempts to divide humanity using primordial sentiments like race and religion will surely fail.

No one should underestimate the inexorable movement towards the worship of God in spirit and truth.

If we believe in a God of love, a God of mercy and compassion, then we should recognise that He wants us all to love one another and to forgive each, "not seven times, but seventy-seven times".

This is a God who hates corruption and oppression and injustice. As Christians, we believe the Spirit of God in Jesus showed us what God was really like. We know this is a God who cares deeply about the plight of the poor and the outcast, the marginalised and the sick.

So, we should not lose hope or worry that we will be engulfed by any kind of 'wave', no matter what colour it is.

The Lord's destiny for the human family is for us to draw closer to Him, to one another and to all Creation. If any of us is hurt or suffers injustice, if Creation is



harmled in any way, it is a blow to the entire human family.

The challenge for us is to work towards the divine destiny, towards the kingdom, by reaching out to one another in love, compassion, justice, mercy and forgiveness.

If we can plant the seeds of this kingdom on solid ground, no storm or evil will be able to destroy the movement that is spreading across the world. The kingdom grows wildly beyond all expectation, quiet and unseen, like a mustard seed turning unexpectedly into a tree.

This gives us hope in our world today, not just within Malaysia but beyond. It is up to us to reach out to people of all faiths, or none, to share our love for another, and to build the kingdom of compassion and

justice, where we all worship in spirit and truth.

So as the state elections approach, let us not be alarmed by the politicians' rhetoric, their relentless drive for power, often motivated by greed, or even the election results.

What matters is our faith and trust in a God of spirit and truth, who only has our best interests at heart. This is a God who wants us to rise above our differences to love one another, to protect creation and to worship in Spirit and Truth.

"Be not afraid."

● **Anil Netto** is a freelance writer and activist based in Penang. He believes we are all called to build the kingdom of God in this world.



WORD MADE FRESH

Nicholas Lye

There can be no true obedience without true ownership of one's choices and decisions.

Five years ago, in the midst of my sabbatical and feeling all confused as to whether God wanted me to return to the path of the priesthood or explore other paths, God one day finally said to me: "You choose."

I was a little shocked by that response, for I had not seen it coming. Yet I felt God saying to me that I was now ready to make my own choices and own them. That was when I had realised how, during my eight years of seminary formation, I had often felt a little resentful that God had called me to the priesthood, and that I had 'no choice' but to obey His Word and follow it. It was almost as if I had picked the 'shortest straw' of the lot and was 'condemned' to the life of a priest.

Yet, when God called me to take a sabbatical, it was for me to begin discovering more about myself, and where my true and deep passions lay. It was for me to allow Him to reveal who I truly am, and what was the unique purpose He had created me for, so that I may not merely

'obey' His command and be 'enslaved' by His will, but more so, obey my true and original design and freely choose to live the life I was already designed to live.

Today, I realise that while my passion and joy to serve people never changed, God has created me in a unique way where I can best do so on the ground as a lay person, using my gifts and passion in creativity, and even reach out to people in the fringes or beyond church settings. At the same time, all those years being formed in the seminary also prepared me to live out this unique life and mission that I have been called to and designed for.

In our culture today, many of us grow up having many decisions being made for us. Or we are often told what decisions are 'best' for us. Yet very seldom are we given the freedom and space to discover more about our unique design, and uncover our deeper passions and purpose.

When God called Moses to free the Israelites from Egypt, God was offering Moses a space and time to discover His unique gifts and abilities, and respond to His original design as a man of faith, love and leadership. When God appeared before Mary and invited her to be the mother of Christ Jesus, it was to offer Mary the opportunity to freely discover and accept the life that she was created and conceived for. When Jesus obeyed the Father's will,

even to the point of death, He did so freely, and by owning His true identity and purpose as the Son of Man, despite His own fears and struggles.

The truth is, God has already made His choice by creating us in a certain design, with a particular and unique purpose. What He desires for us is that we learn to obey the unique design of our being, and own the choices we make that are in line with our original design and purpose. Discernment is more than simply listening to God's voice and doing whatever He says, which can sometimes take place begrudgingly; rather, discernment is also about listening to ourselves and the unique design God created us in, so that we may eventually make choices that are true to our unique design, and where our free will also matches God's will and desire for us. True obedience to God's plan and will for us, therefore, means that we take ownership of our lives and make decisions that allow us to become who God created us to be, and not simply 'leave it to God', where we may easily start 'blaming' Him if anything goes 'wrong'.

In a recent Bible Arts Camp organised for children aged 9-12 years, where I facilitated a workshop using arts and craft to help children discover more about God and themselves, I noticed how the children took a lot of pride in the colours that

they chose, the designs that they drew, and even the truths of who God says they are which they picked and added to their crafts. I also noticed how some children are good at testifying in front of an audience, others are good at silently helping their friends, while others put a lot of heart in their work in ways that can inspire just by looking at it. It was inspiring to see the unique beauty of each child coming alive, and through the choices that they made which reflected who they uniquely were.

If we can give permission not only to children but to ourselves to discover more about our unique and beautiful design, to practise making choices that reflect that particular design, and also being willing to let God guide us and invite us to explore certain paths that may reveal more about who we uniquely are, then I believe obeying God's will for us and taking ownership of our choices can be very freeing and life-giving.

● **Nicholas** is a lay missionary whose personal mission is to bring hope, healing and a taste of heaven on earth to others, particularly through the gift of creativity and authenticity. He also hopes to encourage, enable and empower others to become who they are uniquely created to be.

Obedience comes with ownership



Fr Ron Rolheiser

The taste of banter and wine

Elizabeth Poreba ends a poem, *No Good Company*, with these words:

I've got no banter,
I'm all judgement and edges, an edgy
white lady
Wondering what to do, what to do next
As in *Jesus is coming, look busy*.

At the wedding feast in Cana, Mary tells Jesus, *they have no wine*, asking Him to create some. What do wine and banter have in common? Both bring a needed extra into our lives.

Let's start with wine. Wine is not a protein, something the body needs to be nourished and kept alive, part of an essential diet. It's an extra that provides something special for one's health. Taken with the right spirit and in moderation, wine can help lift the mood, lighten the heart, and warm the conversation, even as it helps (at least for the moment) lessen some of the tensions among us. It's a grease that can help make a conversation, a family dinner, or a social gathering, flow more pleasantly.

Banter? Well, like wine, if taken with the right spirit and in moderation, it can also lift the mood, lighten the heart, warm a conversation, and lessen tensions at a gathering. Classical Greek thought suggested that love has *six* components: *Eros* – emotional and sexual attraction; *mania* – emotional obsession; *asteismos* – playfulness and banter; *storge* – care

and solicitousness; *pragma* – practical arrangement and accommodation; *philia* – friendship; and *agape* – altruism.

Normally, when we think of love, we think of each of these components, except the aspect of banter and playfulness. Our romantic selves identify love very much with emotional obsession and sexual attraction. Our religious and moral selves identify love with care, friendship, and altruism, and our pragmatic selves identify it with practical arrangement. Few speak of the place and importance of banter, or playfulness, of healthy teasing, of humour, but these are often the grease that keeps the others flowing more smoothly.

Here's an example: For all of my adult life, I've lived in various religious houses, in community with other vowed religious (in my case, men). We don't get to pick with whom we live, but are assigned to a community, along with everyone else who lives there. And we come together with our different backgrounds, different personalities, and different eccentricities. This can be a formula for tension and yet, for the most part, it works, is pleasant, and provides life-giving support and fellowship. What makes it work? Why don't we end up killing each other? How do we live (for the most part) pleasantly together beyond our differences, immaturities, and egos?

Well, there's a common mission that keeps us working together and, most

importantly, there's regular common prayer that helps us see each other in a better light. But, very importantly, there is banter, playfulness, healthy teasing, and humour which, like wine at a table, helps take the edge off things and ease the tension inherent in our differences. A community that doesn't stay light-hearted through banter, playfulness, and healthy teasing will eventually become everything that light-hearted is not, namely, heavy, drab, full of tension, and pompous. In every healthy community I've lived in, one of the things that made it healthy (and pleasant to come home to) was banter, playfulness, loving teasing, and humour. These are rich wines that can enliven the table of any family and any community.

This, of course, like drinking wine, can be overdone and be a way of avoiding harder conversations that need to be had. As well, banter can keep us relating to each other in ways that actually hinder genuine community. Humour, banter, the jokester, and the prankster need to know when enough is enough and when serious conversation needs to happen. The risk of overdoing banter is real, though perhaps the greater risk lies in trying to live together in its absence.

Banter, playfulness, loving teasing, and humour don't just help us relate to each other beyond our differences, they also help deflate the pomposity that is invariably the child of over-seriousness. They

help keep our families and communities grounded and pleasant.

I grew up in a large family, with each of us having strong personalities and plenty of faults; yet, save for very few occasions, our house, which was physically too small for so large a family, was pleasant to be in because it was perennially filled with banter, playfulness, humour, and healthy teasing. We seldom had wine, but we had banter! When I look back on what my family gave me, I am deeply grateful for many gifts: faith, love, safety, trust, support, education, moderation, and moral sensitivity. But it also taught me banter, playfulness, healthy teasing, and humour. No small gift.

At the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus' mother noticed that, even though a wedding celebration was happening, something wasn't right. Was it a heaviness? An over-seriousness? Was it an unhealthy pomposity? Was there a noticeable tension in the room? Whatever. Something was missing, so she goes to Jesus and says: "Son, they have no banter!"

● **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.ron-rolheiser.com.

Prayer is hard, and it's something we have to learn

As Christian believers, we are called to a life of prayer. Such an internal beckoning is a summons to a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. The Church offers to guide us in our desire to enter into this relationship with God. As such, she opens and offers to all the vast riches of her spiritual treasury.

But relationships aren't easy. Prayer isn't easy. It involves our whole being. Prayer is a response to the initiative of God and relies on our faith. It is our faith, grounded on the thirst God has for us, that leads us to pray and to seek fellowship with Him. As a consequence, we have to understand what prayer truly is and further clarify what we're ultimately doing when we pray.

Prayer, therefore, is a battle, and it can be fierce. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: "In the battle of prayer, we must face, in ourselves and around us erroneous notions of prayer. Some people view prayer as a simple psychological activity, others as an effort of concentration to reach mental void. Still others reduce prayer to ritual words and postures."

As a result of such misguided notions of prayer, the *Catechism* tells us: "Many Christians unconsciously regard prayer as an occupation that is incompatible with all the other things they have to do: they 'don't have the time.' Those who seek God by prayer are quickly discouraged because they do not know that prayer comes also from the Holy Spirit and not from themselves alone."

In this passage, the Church is stressing the basic truth — that prayer is a gift from God. If anyone approaches prayer as solely their own activity, they are doomed to either a dismissal of prayer or to a pseudo prayer in which God is absent.

Prayer is about God. It is about relationship. Prayer is a "mysterious encounter" with the all-powerful, ever-living, ancient of days, Wonder Counsellor, Mighty Warrior, Personal God, who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning

and end of all things. Prayer is the profoundly intimate meeting with God, who is infinitely perfect and blessed in himself.

We can only pray because of God's benevolence and love for us. We can only truly understand prayer, therefore, if we fan our faith into flame and allow it to teach us and draw us into the arms of the God who loves us.

Once the authentic power and reality of prayer is realised, the false expectations and the juvenile demands for things begin to wane. In their place, a deep longing for God's presence emerges and grows within us.

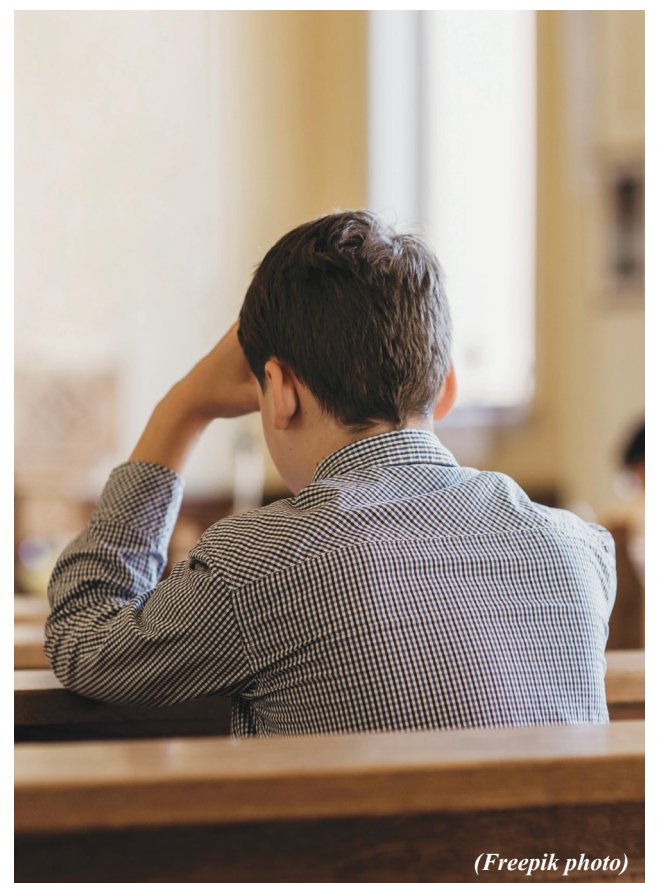
The desire to be with God is met by the Church's rich spiritual tradition.

In the Church's spiritual treasury, there are various prayer methods. Such a term should not confuse anyone. Prayer methods is the term for simple methods, or ways and forms of praying. No one should get stuck on the term. The prayer methods are active ways to help believers enter into a life of prayer.

We have prayer methods because we need to learn how to be in God's presence. We have to be taught how to pray. The *Catechism* says it bluntly: "Prayer cannot be reduced to the spontaneous outpouring of interior impulse: in order to pray, one must have the will to pray. Nor is it enough to know what the Scriptures reveal about prayer: one must also learn how to pray."

The prayer methods, therefore, instruct our interior lives. They structure our prayer and help us to engage in conversation with the living God, to talk with him and listen to him.

There are as many prayer methods, and variations of prayer methods, as there are personalities, temperaments, and situations in life. The prayer methods have been formed over centuries upon centuries of God's people seeking and labouring to be with Him, to avoid false views and promises of prayer, and to rejoice in holy



(Freepik photo)

fellowship with Him.

The *Catechism* helps us to understand this diversity of prayer methods when it explains: "The Lord leads all persons by paths and in ways pleasing to Him, and each believer responds according to His heart's resolve and the personal expressions of His prayer."

Humility is the key to a strong interior life. As such, we need to be docile and seek to be taught the ways of prayer. We need to explore the various prayer methods of the Church and so actively encounter and converse with the God who loves us and calls us into a relationship with Him. — **By Fr Jeffrey F. Kirby, *Cruz***

Little Catholics' Corner

Hello children of God,

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus tells us we don't need to be afraid of people who might hurt us. Jesus tells us God pays attention to little birds like sparrows, so we can imagine how much more He loves and cares for us, His special people!

Jesus wants us to remember that God loves us so much and we don't have to be scared because God always wants what is best for us.

Sometimes, things might happen that make us sad or hurt, we may lose things or get sick. But even during those times, God is still taking care of us. It's a way for us to remember how much we need God in our lives.

Whenever you see a picture of Jesus, remember God is thinking about you right now. Let's thank Him for His love and try to show that same love and care to others around us.

Love, Aunty Gwen



GOD CARES FOR US

Jesus said, "Look at the birds in the air.
God provides everything they need."

Count the birds in the picture and circle the correct number.

7 9 12



Answer: 12

Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



O MOST HOLY HEART OF

FOUNTAIN OF EVERY BLESSING,

I YOU, I LOVE YOU, AND WITH
LIVELY FOR MY SINS I OFFER

YOU THIS POOR OF MINE.

MAKE ME , PATIENT, PURE

AND WHOLLY TO YOUR

WILL. , GOOD JESUS, THAT I

MAY LIVE IN YOU AND FOR YOU.

ME IN THE MIDST OF DANGER.



Cut and paste these words into the prayer.

JESUS

OBEDIENT

HUMBLE

GRANT

HEART

SORROW

PROTECT

ADORE

Colour this picture of
a child caring for her
injured friend.



YOUTH

JUNE 25, 2023

Bible Knowledge journey in SJPSS

KUCHING: Bible Knowledge (BK) as an SPM subject? This question has been asked by many students, and the graduates of St Joseph's Private Secondary School (SJPSS) shared their enlightening testimonies about their BK journey.

In the graduating class of 2022 at SJPSS, 63 candidates took Bible Knowledge as a subject for their SPM examination. Among these students, 52.4 per cent achieved the highest grades (A+ and A-), while 76.2 per cent secured A's

and B's, showcasing the effectiveness of the school's BK programme. The commitment of the teachers, coupled with the dedication of the students, has undoubtedly contributed to this outstanding achievement.

So, should you take Bible Knowledge as an SPM subject? The resounding answer from the graduates of SJPSS is a definite yes. Beyond the academic rewards, BK provides a unique opportunity to explore spirituality, deepen faith, and gain valuable life lessons. The testimonies of these graduates exemplify the profound impact studying BK can have on one's personal and intellectual development.

Testimony from the BK students

“Taking BK in SPM has been life-changing. It not only provided countless opportunities but also transformed my worldview. Studying BK has become a joy, as I deepen my connection with God. I yearn to share my Christian knowledge far and wide. The annual BK Quiz has been a highlight since Form 1. My dream was to reach the finals in Form 5. By God's grace, it became a reality. My teammate and I emerged victorious in the *BK22 Quiz*, securing a scholarship from MCKL. This experience taught me about perseverance and obedience, as God rewards unwavering faith.”

BK taught me about hope and redemption, offering solace and strength in the face of adversity and existential questions. Now in college, I see the vastness of the world and the diversity of people. Thankfully, studying BK and embracing Christian values have provided a moral compass during times of confusion.

I am forever grateful to incredible teachers like Mr. Ben, Ms. Nancy and Mr. Jerome. Their guidance kept us on track, imparting invaluable knowledge. I hope more students choose BK, benefiting both their general knowledge and spiritual well-being. Let me end with Luke 1:37 – “For with God, nothing will be impossible.” — *Christabelle Johneva Lee Yin Inxuen (A+)*

“For me, Bible Knowledge (BK) is a story which makes it a much more enjoyable subject to learn. If you are a person that loves reading, BK is definitely a subject for you. To score well in this subject, you will need to consistently push yourselves to read the book. As you are reading, take note of the people, places and events that took place.

“Last but not least, do a lot of past year questions as the questions are quite repetitive, only structured in a different way. All the best in your SPM examination.” — *Leonard Wong Yu Rui (A+)*

“It was since I took up BK as a subject in school that I started to learn more about the Bible than I ever did in the past few years. It immediately became my favourite subject and I looked forward to it each week. BK has taught me so much about the Lord and what He has done for us. I used to answer questions about the significance of the Lord in our lives using answers from the textbook but now, I could answer them through my own understanding and experience. Learning this subject has also helped me to hone skills such as information, literary and critical thinking and also analytical reasoning which is definitely beneficial for my future.

“Here, I would like to extend my appreciation to all my BK teachers in SJPSS for their efforts towards helping us master BK. They are the ones who helped us to realise how fun BK can be through different activities while also showing us techniques on how we can understand and remember biblical facts better. If not for them, I would not have gotten this far in my faith journey and achieved what I had achieved today.” — *Joey Pui Jia Yi (A)*

“Deciding to take BK as one of my SPM subjects was not a surprising decision, as I was rather good at remembering things. Some people claimed that BK was like a second History paper, but don't get intimidated by it. I felt that BK was a lot easier to remember as it is story-based. Repetition is the key! Also, a big thank you to Mr Ben for making every BK class engaging and interesting. There was not a single time when I felt like falling asleep in his class!

“Personally, it was through remembering the text that I reflected more on the Word of God. It was amazing how I got inspired differently each time I read the book. Taking this paper is like going through a spiritual journey with God, where you get to learn more about Him and be closer to Him. It requires a lot of commitment, and sometimes you might feel like pulling out. I don't regret my five years of studying BK. It has turned me into a better person, and it's definitely worth a try.” — *Jocelyn Wong Kee Lei (A+)*

“Although I didn't get the result I wanted, I am glad that I took BK because it helped me to understand more about the Word of God. I seldom read the Bible, but thanks to BK, I was forced to read it, and it helped me to know more about God. I learnt a lot from this subject and I'm glad that I took it. Actually, the B is all because I didn't see the last essay question which cost me 20 marks... big reminder to the juniors: Read the questions carefully, don't look down on the questions.” — *Michelle Wong Qing Ying (B)*

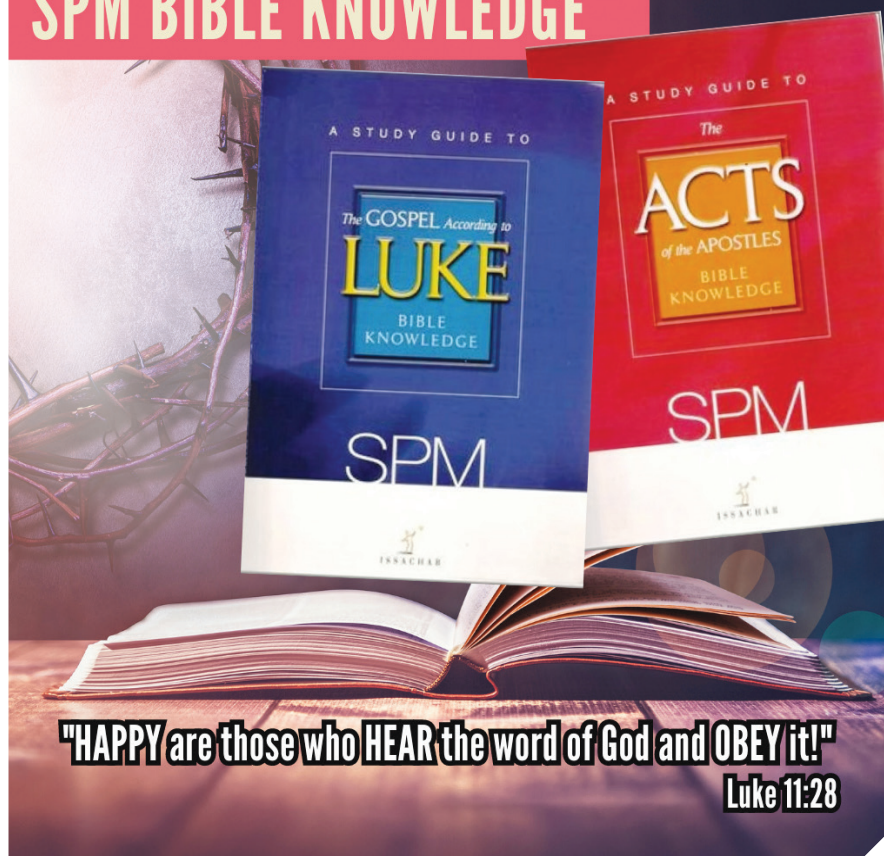
“Taking BK as a subject is a choice I will never regret as it drew me closer to Jesus. By taking BK, I got to know more about Jesus and his journey to fulfil God's plan.

“Furthermore, there are also important lessons in the Bible for us to learn and practise. For instance, when Jesus was busy healing the sick and casting devils out, He managed to make time to pray to God. In the midst of our problems, we should always turn to our Abba Father and cast all our worries onto Him because He cares for us. (1 Peter 5:7) When I was reading the Bible, it gave me a sense of peace and comfort knowing that Jesus is always there for us, He is our refuge and fortress.

“Hence, I encourage all my juniors to take BK! Don't need to worry whether this journey is going to be hard or not because we can always pray and ask for wisdom from our Almighty God.” — *Voon Mei Hui (C+)*

“A lot of people around me say that BK is similar to History, something you must memorise in order to get marks. Although I agree that there are many details to remember, I can say that I have learned much more than the contents of the two books, Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles. Not only did the whole process of learning benefit me in deepening my relationship with Christ, I gained countless life lessons through discovering the meaning behind the Parables of Jesus. My favourite part about BK is that I was able to express my feelings and write to my heart's content through the reflections.” — *Angelia Faye Anak Adrian Orlando (A-)*

SPM BIBLE KNOWLEDGE



SIC youth ministry hosts Pentecost-themed gathering

By Ricky Fieldad Jr.

PETALING JAYA: The Church of St Ignatius Youth Ministry (SICYM) set the stage for a spirited youth gathering, centred around the theme of the *Holy Spirit* in celebration of Pentecost Sunday on June 13.

The event witnessed an impressive turnout, with almost 70 participants, surpassing the organisers' expectations. The gathering attracted a mix of newcomers and familiar faces, all eager to embrace the joyful atmosphere.

"It felt good and refreshing to be back after years of inactivity due to COVID-19," said Adrian, who last attended the event

before the pandemic.

The day unfolded with a medley of engaging activities, including icebreaker games, Praise and Worship sessions, and an enlightening discussion on the Holy Spirit. To keep spirits high, rapper-themed emcees entertained the crowd, ensuring an uninterrupted flow of excitement and anticipation.

The Praise and Worship session was the highlight of the day, as it gave participants a space to connect with Christ, amid the eventful day. First-time attendee Leo said, "The most memorable part about the event was the Praise and Worship."

The worship session helped the attendees prepare spiritually for a presentation on the

Holy Spirit. Ivy Phillip, a seasoned youth ministry alumna, delivered the insightful talk. As the session drew to a close, the participants attained a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit, gaining knowledge about His identity and works, aligning with the significance of Pentecost Sunday.

During the event, a warm and inclusive atmosphere enveloped the numerous activities. Icebreaker games and group discussions facilitated a sense of



fellowship, particularly for those who may have felt reserved or shy. As a result, numerous friendships blossomed, both among new acquaintances and long-standing connections, building an enjoyable and memorable time together.

"The most important part about the day was that young people were able to come together freely, while learning more about God," said Mark Nishantta a key organiser of the event.

It was a long day for the SICYM members, as many had helped out in an eventful coffee morning. Although tired, the members were glad to end the day with a successful event.

SICYM aims to host youth gatherings like this on the fourth Sunday of every month to connect with more Catholic youths, fostering a sense of community and engagement among them.

To be connected and informed about SICYM's vibrant activities, follow them on Instagram @sicym or reach out to Mark (017-440-7706) or Ryan Abel (019-358-7872) for further information.



BK students share their BK journey

• Continued from page 16

"I have no regrets taking Bible Knowledge as a subject for SPM. Honestly it's one of my most enjoyable subjects and I would like to thank Mr Ben for making it so much easier and fun to study this subject. I started participating in a lot of online BK quizzes since Form 3, so I didn't need to study so hard when I reached Form 5 as I was already familiar with most of the things I learned. Therefore it's really beneficial for you all to participate in those quizzes and join competitions so you don't have to cram everything when you come to Form 5. All the best!" — **Olivia Lau Synn (A+)**

"Taking Bible Knowledge is one of the decisions I made as a 16-year-old that I will never regret. Be it reading our two thick books full of words or getting reprimanded because we had forgotten our reading for the class, taking BK taught me that painful processes can teach us a lot and are definitely rewarding if we try our best.

"I am so grateful that I took Bible Knowledge. The subject itself is a very rewarding one, but the knowledge in the subject can be very meaningful to us over the next few years of our life, or perhaps even the rest of our lives. We can easily learn from all the lessons in the Bible itself and studying Bible Knowledge is a very rewarding and enjoyable way of helping us improve. I believe more students should take BK as a subject because there is really a lot to gain, and pretty much nothing to lose." — **Jordon Lai Qi Hao (A-)**

"Many say that Bible Knowledge (BK) is the English version of History. Yes, but no. Despite having to memorise details of long passages and wise words from our ancestors, BK fills my empty heart with joy and sweetness. There were times when I felt empty and insecure, but it was the verses I learnt in class that cheered me up and calmed me down.

"Additionally, I wasn't alone during my SPM BK season. I had an amazing BK partner since Form 3 who was willing to guide and care for me throughout my entire BK journey. BK helped me grow closer to my friends, which turned out to be a motivation for me to study the subject.

"Moving on, Bible stories are easier to understand and imagine because most are similar and repetitive. To me, BK class is like Moral or Physical Education classes where we can feel more relaxed and chill. We listened and watched wonderful videos about miracles and parables during the BK lessons. We acted, we sang, we talked and most importantly, we had fun.

"In short, I strongly recommend my juniors to embrace BK as an additional subject for SPM, for it offers not only spiritual growth but also an expedition of self-discovery. The more you enjoy BK classes, the closer the A+ is to you. Don't doubt but trust the process! After all, you are not alone! You have your friends and teachers by your side. Nothing is easy unless you work hard." — **Jolin Chong (A+)**

"Taking up BK since Form 4, I found the subject difficult in the beginning as there were many things to remember like miracles and events. However, it became easier after going through the *Gospel of Luke* and the *Acts of the Apostles* a couple of times.

"There really isn't a short cut to achieve great results in SPM BK as it is something that requires hard work and dedication. One must also enjoy the process to truly understand what the books have in store for us. To future SPM BK students, it is important to refresh your memory on the two books from time to time and not study at the last minute. There are many ways that can help you remember better and teachers are always willing to help. I would definitely encourage students to take up BK as it is an experience that will be with you for a lifetime." — **Jayden Lim Wen Ming (A+)**

"Taking Bible Knowledge as an extra subject in SPM is a privilege. Why? We might not have the same opinion about this matter but I agree with most people that taking an extra subject in an exam is always a burden because you have more to study and, without doubt, there is a lot of effort to be put in, to pass with flying colours. However, as I look back to those days in high school, taking SPM BK remains one of the best decisions I made and which I will never regret.

"To me, BK is not just a subject but rather a compilation of many short stories and parables which, in my opinion, are crucial life lessons we have to learn. BK helps enhance our mental and spiritual health. It allows us to gain better insight of how God works and, most importantly, it reminds us of the growth of Christianity from Judea to every corner of the world. BK is unique and it is certainly a blessing for me to be given the chance to explore deeper on the syllabus." — **Claire Teo En Yi (A+)**



World Youth Day (WYD) is the gathering of young people from all over the world with the Pope. It is also a pilgrimage, a celebration of youth, an expression of the universal Church and an intense moment of evangelisation for the youth world. Although its Catholic identity is clearly evident, WYD opens its doors to everyone, no matter how close to or distant from the Church they are.

Over the course of a week, young people from all over the world are welcomed. In addition to the moments of prayer, sharing and leisure, the young people enrolled in this celebration participate in various initiatives organised by the WYD team, in different locations across the host city. The highlights are the celebrations (central features) for which the Pope is present, such as the welcoming and opening ceremony, the Way of the Cross, the vigil and, on the last day, the closing Mass.

Contingent Preparations

July 26 - 31

Days in dioceses for the Malaysian contingent will be held in the Diocese of Porto, known for its food and drink, as well its numerous historical churches and sites.

August 1 - 6

The WYD2023 proper will be held primarily in Lisbon, with pilgrims staying with host families in the surrounding dioceses of Setubal and Santarem.

Past Preparation

October 15 - 22, 2022

WYD2023 International Preparatory Meeting coordinators journeyed to Lisbon for the briefing/preparatory meeting in Fatima, Portugal. They were briefed on the methodology and spirituality of the programme and how to support/prepare pilgrims from respective countries to participate in WYD2023 in Lisbon.

Ongoing virtual meetings/correspondence with organisers in Lisbon and in Porto Coordinators are communicating directly with the organisers in Lisbon/Porto via Whatsapp and/or email. Process is much easier today, compared to past WYDs. Organisers from Portugal are also very supportive and do their best to support our preparatory efforts.

June 23, 2023

Final briefing for all pilgrims participating in WYD2023 under the Malaysian contingent, via Zoom. To brief all pilgrims on what to prepare, how to prepare, on the programme etc.

The pilgrims received a special blessing from Archbishop Simon Poh, as the Bishop in-Charge of the Episcopal Commission for Young People and the Malaysian Catholic Youth Ministers Committee (MCYMC) via Zoom.

To Come

Preparations for send-off of pilgrims
Each diocesan youth office will be preparing a send off in the form of a Mass/blessing in their respective dioceses.

The total number of pilgrims under the Malaysian contingent is 148*.

The breakdown is as follows:

Diocese of Keningau: 7
Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu: 6
Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur: 45
Archdiocese of Kuching: 16
Diocese of Malacca Johore: 20
Diocese of Miri: 9
Diocese of Penang: 37
Diocese of Sandakan: 6
Diocese of Sibiu: 0

* This does not include other groups participating under the guidance/coordination of their respective parish priests/lay leaders. There are groups from Malacca Johore and KL.

MEMORIAM

For enquiries, please contact:
Email: advertisement@herald.com.my
Tel: 03-2026 8291

6th Year Memorial

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (2 Timothy 4:7)



Augustine Peter

Was called home to be with the Lord
on **19 June 2017**

*Absolve, we beseech thee O Lord, the soul of thy faithful servant,
Augustine Peter, from every bond of sin that in the glory of thy resurrection, he may rise to a new and better
life with thy Saints.
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.*

Dearly missed and fondly cherished by beloved

Wife: Rosa Peter

Sons:

Dato' Frances Peter Jaditsin Peter
William Peter

Daughters:

Matilda Peter Mary Rose Peter
Thessa Peter Flori Peter

Sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives & friends.

*We know you can hear us
way up in heaven
because we talk
through our hearts.*

*Dear Papa in heaven
we miss you everyday
and we know you miss us too.*

*No matter how old we get
or how long you're gone,
We hear you, Papa,
up in heaven
through the love
in our heart.*

6th Year Anniversary
In Ever Loving Memory of



**Xavier Franklin
Gomez**

**From the Lord:
20.11.1941**

**To the Lord:
24.6.2017**

*"The Lord is my
shepherd, there is
nothing I shall want.
He makes me lie down
in green pastures; He
leads me beside still
waters. He restores my
soul." – Ps 23*

*Eternal rest grant unto
him O Lord and let
perpetual light shine
upon him. May his soul
rest in peace.*

Deeply missed
and remembered by:
Brothers, sisters and
their families.

40th Day Memorial Prayer



Joseph Anandan

26.01.1944 - 21.5.2023

Please join us on the 1st of July 2023 for the 40th Day
Memorial Prayer.

Blessing of the burial plot at 6.30 pm.
Prayers in the St Anthony Church (Teluk Intan) Hall at
7.00 pm followed by fellowship.

The family wishes to thank all relatives and friends for your
attendance, prayers and assistance during our recent
bereavement.

Kindly treat this as a personal invitation.

10th Anniversary

In Loving Memory of
**RANJI THERESA
PONNIAH**

**Born: 31st July 1928
Departed: 12th June 2013**



*In our home she is fondly remembered
Sweet memories cling to her name
Those who loved her in life sincerely
Still love her in death just the same.*

*But memories are precious
Those we love don't go away
They walk beside us everyday
Unseen, unheard but always near;
Still much loved, missed and always remembered by
Loving children, Sister-in-law, Grandchildren, Nephews,
Nieces, Relatives and Friends.*

**AMMA we miss you and love you.
Rest in Peace.**

Stephen James
Murugasu



16TH ANNIVERSARY
26th June 2007

*"I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith."
– 2 Tim. 4:7*

Forever Missed, Forever Loved.

*Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.
Let your perpetual light shine upon
him. May his soul rest in peace.*



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

**1st Anniversary
Jane Morris
12 June 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."*

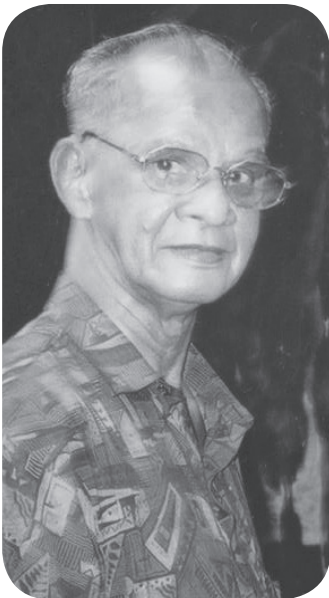
Isaiah 12:2

*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, Annie;
Regina, Justin, Ruth.**



Corpus Christi procession in Valencia, continues to catechise



Valencia, Spain, claims to have the largest processional monstrance in the world and uses it in Corpus Christi processions. (CNA photo/Rachel Thomas)

VALENCIA, Spain: Year after year, the feast of *Corpus Christi* brings whole neighbourhoods to the streets in Spain, with some enterprising families chaining lawn chairs to prominent viewing spots days in advance. This year was no different, with the procession lasting for hours and civic and religious leaders, as well as representatives of various religious groups, taking part.

Each city's procession has something special. For example, the city of Toledo is known for lining its streets with thousands of flowers. Valencia, a city on the south-eastern coast, has many memorable traditions.

Valencia's first *Corpus Christi* procession was recorded in a historical document in 1355, and by 1372, it was an annual affair. Its particular characteristics stand out.

The Valencia cathedral has a chalice that some historians believe could be the Holy Grail. This gives the city a decidedly eucharistic feel, even when it's not *Corpus Christi*. Naturally, the chalice is always featured in the Valencia procession.

While not centuries old like those used in other places, the monstrance has a special significance. It was constructed between 1945 and 1954 as an offering from the faithful in reparation for the sacrileges and tragedies of the Spanish Civil War, which had occurred some 10 years before. Already more

than 2,000 people, including a number of locals, have been beatified from that three-year bloodbath known as Spain's Red Terror.

During the Valencia procession, an *umbraculum* precedes the monstrance and a bell alerts those who are lining the streets that Jesus is about to pass by. Those filling the balconies prepare their flowers, and the Eucharistic Lord is showered with red and white petals from two, three, five floors up.

This year the Valencia procession once again offered an afternoon to soak in the Word of the Lord. People dressed up as characters of the Old Testament — from Adam and Eve through the minor prophets, including Noah, Moses, David, and many others, known and less known — were part of the procession.

St Michael the Archangel kicked things off, accompanied by a soul in glory and a soul in suffering, representing the age-old conflict between good and evil, and the archangel as the great defender of the Church.

The New Testament characters — from Simeon and Anna to the 12 Apostles and four Evangelists — continued with the themes of Scripture. And favourite legendary saints are also part of the scene, especially notable for their link to the battle against evil, or the Eucharist.

St George was there with his dragon, and

also depicted was the lesser-known story of Martha (Lazarus and Mary's sister) and the dragon-turtle she supposedly vanquished. St Christopher carried little Jesus, and St Mary of Egypt processed by, doing penance in the desert with only her three loaves of bread (symbols of the Eucharist).

The elders who stand before the throne of God in the *Book of Revelation* were particularly admirable in the procession. Bearded and robed in white tunics, they carried 35-pound candles that are about six feet tall. They served as a perfect illustration of how all the participants in the procession were both jubilant and penitential, enduring the heat (or this year, the sudden torrential rain) with a spirit of "offering up" the inconveniences of accompanying Jesus along the way.

These figures give the procession a decidedly catechetical flavour. Programmes were distributed in the local Valencian dialect, with a brief explanation of each biblical character or saint in the order they would process through the city.

While some things have changed from century to century, the highlight of the procession is still the same: Jesus in the Eucharist processes through the streets of His city, cheered on by loving faithful. — **By Rachel Thomas, CNA**

Eucharistic procession in the Vatican Gardens

VATICAN: On the Solemnity of *Corpus Christi*, a German bishop led a Eucharistic procession through the Vatican Gardens.

Corpus Christi, also known as the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood, of Christ is a 700-year-old feast in the Catholic Church that commemorates the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Pope Urban IV officially established the feast in 1264 following a Eucharistic miracle in the Italian town of Bolsena. Today the feast of *Corpus Christi* is commonly used as an opportunity for public Eucharistic processions, which serve as a sign of common faith and adoration.

The Vatican procession on June 11 began immediately following a Mass in the Church of Our Lady of Mercy by German Teutonic Cemetery presided over by Bishop Josef Clemens.

The procession ended at the Vatican's Lourdes Grotto, a replica of the grotto in Lourdes, France where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St Bernadette Soubirous in 1854. Pope Leo XIII commissioned the replica of the Lourdes Grotto in 1902 when the Pope was a prisoner of the Vatican.

Pope Francis, who in past years has led a Eucharistic procession in Rome for the feast, was recovering in the hospital on *Corpus Christi* after a three-hour surgery for an incisional hernia on June 7.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said on June 11 that Pope Francis' "post-operative progress is normal." He added that the Pope watched Sunday Mass on television and received the Eucharist in his hospital room before praying the *Angelus* in the papal medical suite chapel and eating lunch with some hospital staff. — **By Courtney Mares, CNA**



A Eucharistic procession in the Vatican Gardens on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ on June 11, 2023. (CNA photo/Daniel Ibáñez)

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