

Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.
Phil. 2:6-8



Catholics, Muslims come together in fraternal love and peace

■ P4



Catholics unite for Jubilee Walk

■ P7



Harmony in hunger: Sharing in times of NEED

■ P16

Perjalanan Salib

launched at MCYD

Liza Magnus

KOTA KINABALU: The Catholic Church in Malaysia launched the *Perjalanan Salib* (Journey of the Cross) on April 3, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. This marks the beginning of an 18-month pilgrimage that will unite the nine arch/dioceses across Malaysia in a shared experience of prayer, reflection, and community.

The *Perjalanan Salib* is a significant initiative leading up to the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC 2026), which will be the first-ever gathering of all nine arch/dioceses in Malaysia. This journey of faith is part of the larger effort to strengthen the unity of the Church in Malaysia, a vision that has been in progress since 2018 under the theme “Celebrate, Listen, Walk as One Church”.

The launch coincided with the Malaysian Catholic Youth Day (MCYD), which took place from March 31 to April 6, in the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu. On the fourth day of the event, a solemn ceremony began at 3.00pm with the Blessing and Veneration of the Cross. Nine crosses, representing the arch/dioceses of Malaysia, were brought in procession by three representatives from each diocese and placed before the altar. Each cross, adorned with the national flower of Malaysia, the Hibiscus (*Bunga Raya*), symbolises Christ’s victory over the world, His reconciliation with the Father, and unity among all people through the Holy Spirit.



(Holy Redeemer Church Klang Youth Ministry facebook)



The Hibiscus also carries a deeper significance as a national symbol of love, independence, and unity. Cardinal Sebastian Francis, who presided over the Mass, explained that the crosses represent the strength of the Malaysian Church’s faith and its journey towards unity. He emphasised that the *Perjalanan Salib* is a spiritual journey, not just a physical one, aimed at fostering communion and solidarity among the faithful.

During his homily, Cardinal Sebastian urged the youth of MCYD — who were joined by delegates from Brunei, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Macau — to embrace their role as disciples and witnesses of Christ. He reminded them that, as followers of Jesus, they were entrusted with a universal mission: to spread love, faith, hope, and life to others.

He further encouraged the youth to take practical steps in living out their faith. “Do

the most fundamental thing first — introduce Jesus to others. When you know Him, you will love. When you love, you will care. When you care, you will long for Him, and when you long for Him, you will be open to His grace and blessings,” he said.

Cardinal Sebastian also highlighted four key areas of focus for the youth in their faith journey: building small communities within the Church; strengthening families; enriching community values, and increasing ecological awareness. These, he said, are essential gifts from God, which they must share as part of their mission to bring the joy of the Gospel to others, especially young people.

The *Perjalanan Salib*, which will last until September 2026, aims to bring the cross to every corner of Malaysia, including remote areas, as it travels from one parish to the next. The cross serves as a focal point for prayer and reflection, inviting the faithful to reflect on the message of the Gospel and to support one another in the spirit of unity.

At the conclusion of the Mass, the nine crosses were handed to the diocesan

coordinators, who will carry them back to their dioceses. Each coordinator received a token of the mission — a prayer card of Saint Helena of the Cross, patroness of new discoveries. Before departing, Cardinal Sebastian led all the participants in a prayer to St Helena, entrusting them with the task of promoting the journey and its mission in their communities.

As the cross travels through Malaysia, it will unite the faithful in prayer and reflection, leading up to the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026, where all the dioceses will come together for a shared experience of discernment and communion.

The bishops of Malaysia are hopeful that the *Perjalanan Salib* will deepen the faith of all those involved and foster a strong, united Church in the country. Cardinal Sebastian expressed his desire for the journey to culminate in a profound synodal experience, guided by the Holy Spirit, where all the faithful, including those from neighbouring countries, will be united in faith and mission.

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Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur,
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EDITOR
Patricia Pereira
editor1@herald.com.my



ASSISTANT EDITOR
Sandra Ann Inbaraj
sandra@herald.com.my



GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Amanda Mah
amanda@herald.com.my



SOCIAL MEDIA
Kevin Francis
kevin@herald.com.my



BAHASA MALAYSIA
Melania Liza Magnus
liza@herald.com.my



MANDARIN
Adelina Wong
yin4482@gmail.com



ADMIN ASSISTANT
Rachael Sharma
admin@herald.com.my

ADVERTISEMENT/SUBSCRIPTION
advertisement@herald.com.my

MEMORIAM
memoriam@herald.com.my

LETTERS
letterseditor@herald.com.my

Social Media



www.heraldmalaysia.com



@heraldmalaysia



heraldmalaysia
Herald Snapshot



@heraldsnapshot

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Holy Week: A journey of suffering and hope

As Catholics across the world prepare for Holy Week, the most sacred time in the Church's liturgical calendar, we are called to reflect deeply on the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This sacred time invites us to participate in the central mysteries of our faith and to renew our commitment to follow Christ more closely. Holy Week is not merely a series of liturgical observances; it is an opportunity for personal transformation, spiritual renewal, and, ultimately, reconciliation with God and one another.

The Call to Reconciliation

In the liturgies of this week, we are reminded of the importance of forgiveness — both God's forgiveness of our sins and our call to forgive those who have wronged us. On Good Friday, as we venerate the cross, we are reminded that through Christ's suffering, we have been given the gift of reconciliation with God. However, this gift is not simply for our benefit; it is a call to be instruments of reconciliation in a broken world.

Pope Francis, in his message for Lent, reminded us that reconciliation is a vital part of the Christian vocation. He wrote, "God reconciles us to Himself, and He entrusts us with the ministry of reconciliation."

The rituals of this week — the washing of feet, the veneration of the cross, the Eucharistic

celebration — invite us to ask ourselves: How am I living out the call to love and forgive as Christ has loved and forgiven me? How can I bring reconciliation into my relationships and my community?

A Call for Renewal

The Resurrection is not just an event to be commemorated; it is an ongoing reality in the life of the Church and in the lives of each believer. As we reflect on the Paschal mystery, we are called to allow the power of Christ's resurrection to transform our hearts, our attitudes, and our actions. The joy of Easter morning is a reminder that we, too, are called to rise from the depths of sin, despair, and brokenness to new life. As we enter into the celebration of Christ's victory over death, we are invited to embrace the new life that He offers, to renew our commitment to live as His disciples, and to share His love and mercy with the world.

Holy Week in the Digital Age

In today's fast-paced, often noisy world, the deep spiritual observances of Holy Week may seem at odds with the constant distractions of modern life. Social media, news cycles, and digital noise can sometimes draw our attention away from the quiet, prayerful reflection that this week calls for. However, the Church's call

to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving can offer us a welcome respite from the chaos of everyday life.

A Hopeful Future in Christ's Resurrection

We are reminded that the journey of the Christian faith is both one of suffering and hope. The Passion of Christ challenges us to confront the darkness of the world — our own sins, the suffering of others, the injustices of society — and to embrace Christ's suffering as a means of participating in His redemptive work. Yet, we do not remain in the darkness. The Resurrection shines brightly as the promise of new life, transformation, and ultimate victory.

During this week, may we experience a renewal of faith and a deepening of our relationship with God. May we find hope in the Resurrection and be inspired to live as a people of reconciliation, forgiveness, and mercy. As we celebrate the mysteries of Christ's death and resurrection, let us remember that we are not alone. Christ walks with us through the darkness and leads us into the light of Easter morning.

In a world in need of healing and unity, the invitation to walk with Christ through His Passion and to share in His Resurrection is one that calls us to be agents of transformation, peace, and hope. Let us be reminded of the powerful truths at the heart of our faith — the love, forgiveness, and hope that come through Jesus Christ, who died and rose for our salvation.

Loving us to distraction!

Palm Sunday begins the most sacred and profound week in the Christian calendar — Holy Week — ushering us into a period of deep reflection, prayer, and transformation. As we celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, we are reminded of the depth of God's love for us, a love that defies our understanding. St Catherine of Siena beautifully captures the essence of God's love, saying, "He fell in love with the beauty of His creature." This love culminates in the Passion of Christ, which speaks not only of what Jesus has done for us but also what we, through our sin, have done to Him.

The Passion narrative is a powerful invitation for us to reflect on our own roles in the story of Christ's suffering. The liturgy of Palm Sunday invites us to engage with the emotions of the moment and to ask ourselves how we would have stood in relation to Christ's trial, suffering, and crucifixion.

Identifying with the characters of the Passion

As we listen to the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, we might feel the initial excitement of the crowd, shouting "Hosanna!" and welcoming Jesus with joy. It's easy to think we would have been among the jubilant crowd, hailing Him as the Saviour. However, as we journey deeper into the Passion story, the joy quickly turns to sorrow, and we are faced with the stark reality of Jesus' suffering and death. When we hear the account of His crucifixion, and Jesus' final words, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit," we are invited to pause in silence and reflect.

Would we have remained faithful, or would we have abandoned Him like the disciples did, fleeing in fear? Would we have denied Him like Peter, or betrayed Him like Judas? Or, like Pilate, would we have washed our hands, avoiding difficult decisions between good and evil? Perhaps, in moments of our own lives, we have even stood among the Pharisees or religious leaders who opposed Jesus, holding tightly to traditions and beliefs that were not aligned with His truth.

In reflecting on these possibilities, we must consider whether, in our own hearts, we too may sometimes oppose the message of Christ in our attachment to human traditions, opinions, and comforts. If Jesus were to appear today, would we recognise His call for renewal, or would we resist His challenge to transform our lives?

Throughout Holy Week, we are reminded that Jesus did not have to suffer and die. At any moment, He could have exercised His divine power and rejected the Cross. But He didn't. Jesus willingly embraced the suffering and rejection, knowing that it was through His Passion and death that He would bring redemption to the world. The key question is: why would He choose to suffer? The answer lies in God's perfect plan for our salvation.

In the wisdom of the Father, this act of suffering became the greatest good — the ultimate act of love. Through the Cross, God confounded the wisdom of the world and transformed the greatest evil into the greatest good. This truth is evident in the centrality of the crucifixion in our churches and homes today — a constant reminder that no evil, no suffering, no death can overcome the love and power of God.

As we reflect on the Passion of Christ this Holy Week, let it be a time of deep spiritual renewal. We may face trials, hardships, and crosses in our own lives, but nothing can conquer us unless we allow it. No burden is too heavy, and no sorrow too great if we remain steadfast in Christ. The Lord calls us to embrace the Cross, just as He embraced it, with faith that He can bring good out of every situation.

Consider the contrast of emotions from Palm Sunday to Good Friday. The same people who hailed Jesus as King on Sunday were calling for His crucifixion by Friday. This dramatic shift challenges us to consider how easily our own hearts can shift from joy to despair. Yet, even in the depths of despair, the Resurrection on Easter morning brings hope. Christ's victory over death gives us the assurance that no darkness, no suffering, no evil can ultimately triumph over God's love.

Holy Week is a call to reconciliation —

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings

with Fr William Pillai

Palm Sunday (C)

Readings: Isaiah 50:4-7;

Philippians 2:6-11;

Gospel: Luke 22:14-23:56

reconciliation with God, with others, and with ourselves. We are reminded of the importance of forgiveness, both receiving it from God and offering it to others. Just as Jesus forgave those who crucified Him, we too are called to forgive those who have wronged us. As St. Paul writes in Romans 12:2, we are invited to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. This transformation begins with repentance and forgiveness, washing away guilt and sin. It is in this process of reconciliation that we experience the fullness of God's grace.

Holy Week is a time to reflect on our own actions, to examine our relationships, and to ask ourselves how we might better embody the love, forgiveness, and reconciliation that Christ demonstrated for us. We are called to not just reflect on Christ's Passion, but to allow it to transform our lives.

This is the ultimate grace of Holy Week: the opportunity to be transformed by the love and sacrifice of Christ. We are invited to take up our own crosses and walk with Christ through His Passion, knowing that, in doing so, we participate in His redemptive work. The suffering we face in our lives can be united with Christ's suffering, and through this union, we can experience the joy of His Resurrection.

This Holy Week, let us make time for deep reflection and prayer. Let us examine our hearts, seek reconciliation through confession, and offer forgiveness where it is needed. May we be renewed by the power of Christ's love and the promise of His Resurrection.

As we journey through Holy Week, let us preach and witness "Christ and Him crucified."

Blessed Holy Week!

IMPORTANT DATES

April 13: Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

April 17: Holy Thursday

April 18: Good Friday of the Passion of the Lord

April 19: Holy Saturday

April 20: Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord



KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

April

- 17 Holy Thursday – Church of Annunciation, Raub
- 18 Good Friday – Church of Annunciation, Raub
- 24 Meeting – FCMSM Exco
- 26 Mass – Jubilee of People with Disabilities
- 29 Meeting – Archdiocesan Finance
- 30/4- Peninsular Malaysia Deacons & Wives Annual Gathering – MAJODI Centre



PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Cardinal Sebastian Francis

April

- 10-20 Holy Week and Easter – Kota Bahru, Kelantan
- 23 Easter – Jawi Prison at 2.00pm
- 24 Meeting – Federation of Christian Mission Schools Malaysia, Google Meet 2.00pm
- 26 25th Anniversary of St Anne's Recycling Centre – Minor Basilica of St Anne, BM at 10.30am
- 30/4- Peninsular Malaysia Deacons & Wives Annual Gathering – MAJODI Centre



MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

April

- 15 CHRISM Mass – Church of St Theresa, Masai
- 15-16 Clergy Monthly Recollection – MAJODI Centre
- 19 Easter Vigil – Church of St Joseph, Plentong at 8.30pm in BM
- 26-27 Feast of Divine Mercy – Church of the Divine Mercy, Sungai Ara, Bayan Lepas, Penang
- 29 Meeting – 2nd Caritas Malaysia Diocesan Directors & Ecclesiastical Assistants (CM DEA) via Zoom
- 30/4- Peninsular Malaysia Deacons & Wives Annual Gathering – MAJODI Centre

Archbishop Julian thanks MAPIM for praying for the Pope

KUALA LUMPUR: Archbishop Julian Leow met with representatives from the Malaysian Consultative Council of Islamic Organisations (MAPIM) to express his gratitude for their prayers for Pope Francis' recovery following his recent hospitalisation, March 26.

Mapim had previously sent a letter offering their prayers for the pope's health and thanking him for his support of the Palestinian people.

During the meeting at Archbishop Julian's residence, he emphasised the importance of praying for peace, noting that violence is never the answer, and encouraged people to focus on shared values that unite them.

The meeting also addressed broader issues, with Archbishop Julian and Mapim representatives agreeing that the ongoing conflict in the Middle East is not driven by religious differences but by political factors.

Ahmad Awang, chairman of the Malaysian Ulama Association, highlighted the importance of interfaith collaboration in promoting peace and



Archbishop Julian Leow with Persatuan Ulama Malaysia chairman Ahmad Awang and other representatives from MAPIM at his residence. (ArchKL facebook)

harmony, both locally and globally.

Archbishop Julian presented copies of *The Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* — the Abu Dhabi Declaration — signed in 2019 by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, which promotes interfaith cooperation.

Archbishop Julian and the Mapim representatives reaffirmed their commitment to unity, mutual respect, and cooperation

in addressing global and local challenges.

The archbishop also expressed his appreciation for the letter of support from Mapim, reinforcing the shared responsibility of religious communities in building a more peaceful and understanding world. Pope Francis, 88, was discharged from Rome's Gemelli Hospital after a five-week stay to treat a severe respiratory infection, marking his first public appearance since his hospitalisation.



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #218



Dear friends of MJD, we remember our Muslim friends as they celebrate the month-long Ramadan. Thanks to Dr Jaysuman and Sheikh Imran of Erthul Mustafa Organisation (EMO) for the *Aidil Fitri Raya* lunch fellowship.

The temple relocation tensions, heavy rains, the floods, the Myanmar-Thailand earthquake and the Trump administration's tariffs impact us and the region. International aid groups eg ICMC are deprived of essential funds to alleviate the world's suffering.

The billionaire advisers to Trump or big powers are not in touch with the reality of poverty, deprivation and loss of human dignity.

Commendable Times: EPF Malaysia's approach exemplifies how middle-income nations can balance flexibility, inclusion and sustainability in retirement savings in an aging population. (WEF reports). Freedom Of Information (FOI) based international best practices, local sensitivities and political structure is on the drawing board.

Caritas Malaysia and the Malaysian Church are on standby to mobilise aid and support to Myanmar-Thailand's earthquake victims.

The Foreign Ministry said that no new visa restrictions have been imposed on Malaysian citizens travelling abroad as alleged by a social media platform.

The MCYD Festival 2025, the first of its kind, with a tone of synodality, with estimated 1500 youths, leaders, religious, priests and the 9 Bishops, begins the countdown for the MPC2026, with the start of the Perjalanan Salib in the 9 dioceses.

Can our leaders be trusted to deliver what they promise and go beyond the 4Rs. (race, religion, royalty and riches)?

A Thought for the Week: Brutally beaten.

A Brazilian newspaper carried a story of a little girl brutally beaten by her parents. As a result, she lost all physical movements, as well as the ability to speak. At the hospital where she was admitted, a nurse who cared for her, said to her each day: 'I love you'. The doctors told the nurse that her efforts were in vain, that the child could not hear. The nurse continued, saying: 'Do not forget, I love you.' Three weeks later, the child recovered the power of movement, and in four weeks, she could talk and smile.

The lesson from the nurse: Love cures. Henry Drummond said, "Time does not transform man. Willpower does not transform man. Love transforms." Wherever the energy of love appears, it always achieves its end.

Disarm the Words, Disarm Minds, Disarm the Earth

Pope Francis reminds us that words can heal, words can kill. These were his words to social communicators:

"I would like to encourage you and all those that dedicate their work and intelligence to report - through communication tools that now unite our world in real time, the importance of words. They are never just words: they are facts in human environments. They can connect or divide, serve truth or make use of it. We disarm workers in order to disarm minds and disarm the Earth.

There is a great need for reflection, calm and a sense of complexity. Whereas war only devastates communities and the environment without offering solutions to conflicts, diplomacy and international organisations need new blood and credibility. Moreover, religions can be inspired in the spirituality of peoples to

revive the desire for brotherhood and justice, the hope for peace."

The recent KL Temple mess reflects careless, unsubstantiated and hurtful words hurled by netizens and so-called respected heads of communities. Words to remain popular...words to incite... words to divide ...and words to denigrate or words to bridge peoples, to calm and assure.

QnQ! Q asks? Fear makes us do things that we will regret later?

"I must say a word about fear. It is life's only true opponent. Only fear can defeat life. It is a clever, treacherous adversary, how well I know. It has no decency, respects no law or convention, shows no mercy. It goes for your weakest spot, which it finds with unnerving ease. It begins in your mind, always ... so you must fight hard to express it.

You must fight hard to shine the light of words upon it. Because if you don't, if your fear becomes a wordless darkness that you avoid, perhaps even manage to forget, you open yourself to further attacks of fear because you never truly fought the opponent who defeated you." *Yann Martel, Life of Pi*. Fear leaves you blind, it limits and keeps you bound.

The Holy Spirit @work: "The Holy Spirit is the one who reproves, convicts, strives, instructs, invites, quickens, regenerates, renews, strengthens, and uses." *Unknown*

Something To Tickle You: "Hope is praying for rain, but faith is bringing an umbrella." *Unknown*

Bishop Bernard Paul

Catholics, Muslims come together in fraternal love and peace

Deacon Dr Leslie Petrus

JOHOR BAHRU: A recent *Aidil Fitri* gathering between Catholics and Muslims highlighted a moment of unity and goodwill. Led by Rt Rev Bernard Paul, Bishop of the Malacca Johore Diocese, the occasion saw a delegation from MAJODI Centre, including both clergy and laity, come together with members of the Erth Al-Mustafa organisation.

Throughout the event, attendees exchanged warm hugs and heartfelt wishes, mingling in a display of mutual respect and harmony. The gathering served as a powerful reminder of the shared values of peace and fraternity between the two communities.

The two founders of the organisation, Shyakh Imran Angullia al-Hafiz (founder) and Dr Jaysuman Bin Puspanathan (co-founder), warmly welcomed Bishop Bernard and his delegation, treating them to a delicious lunch featuring *ketupat*, *serunding*, and *biryani*. Many of the women in attendance engaged with the



Bishop Bernard Paul, clergy and laity with members of the Erth Al-Mustafa organisation.

Muslim ladies and children, exchanging conversations and building friendships.

During the gathering, Shyakh Imran and Dr Jaysuman shared insights into the work being done at their centre in Bandar Baru UDA, Johor Bahru. The centre serves as both a place of learning and a support hub

for students, particularly foreign students, offering counselling and assistance.

Erth Al Mustafa is a two-pronged organisation, comprising both humanitarian and academic branches, dedicated to spreading traditional Islamic knowledge. The academy was established

to meet the growing demand for high-quality, traditional Islamic education in modern societies. It offers courses in English, Malay, and Arabic, focusing on Islamic sciences.

The humanitarian branch of the organisation was founded to provide support to underserved communities and offer emergency relief during humanitarian crises.

One of the core visions of this organisation is to promote peace and mercy across borders, races, cultures, and religions. As part of this mission, they reach out not only to the Catholic Church but also to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, and Taoist organisations. Through dialogue and the sharing of faith, they aim to foster trust and build fraternal affection among diverse communities.

Shyakh Imran and Dr Jaysuman expressed their gratitude to Bishop Bernard Paul for his efforts in building bridges and strengthening relationships. The gathering was a truly wonderful and blessed moment for both the Catholic Church and the Erth Al-Mustafa organisation.



Cardinal Sebastian Francis with Senator Datuk Seri Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa.

Iftar Muhibbah at historic Lebuh Aceh mosque

GEORGETOWN: The historic Lebuh Aceh Mosque in the Georgetown UNESCO Heritage zone hosted the annual *Iftar, Buka Puasa Muhibbah* gathering on March 21, bringing together faith leaders, heritage enthusiasts, civil society members, tourists, and university students in a spirit of unity. The Catholic community was represented by Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang.

In his address to the attendees, Cardinal Sebastian spoke of *Fratelli Tutti*, which means "We are all brothers and sisters" in Italian. He extolled the virtues of the gathering, expressing a heartfelt and profound desire for understanding, fraternity, and blessing in our society. He emphasised the importance of the gathering with the phrase, *mahu kenal, mahu cinta, mahu rindu, mahu peduli, mahu berkat*, which reflects a

deep yearning for connection, love, longing, care, and blessings.

Senator Datuk Seri Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa addressed those gathered at the mosque, emphasising that the purpose of the event was to spread peace, understanding, and harmony, especially during the holy month of *Ramadan*. He urged everyone to carry the spirit of friendship and togetherness from the iftar gathering, helping to silence the intolerance reflected in recent incidents. Prof Dato' Seri (Dr) Anwar Fazal, a prominent international civil society advocate, delivered an insightful talk on the diversity of Penang, highlighting the rich variety in races, cultures, religions, and even the trees. Prof Dr Anwar also distributed pamphlets promoting the Taiping Peace Initiative, titled *The Culture of Peace – 99 Ways to Make It Happen*, which focuses on fostering inner peace, peace with

others, and peace with the environment.

YB Lim Siew Khim, State EXCO for Social Development, Welfare, and Non-Islamic Religious Affairs, remarked that events like this align perfectly with Penang's vision of promoting harmony and inclusivity. Also in attendance were Paul Au, general manager of Harmonico, and members of the Penang chapter of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Taoism (MCCBCHST).

The Lebuh Aceh Mosque (Acheen Street Malay Mosque), built in 1808, is located at the end of Georgetown's Street of Harmony. This historic street is home to St George's Anglican church, the Taoist Goddess of Mercy temple, Sri Maha Mariamman Hindu temple, and the Kapitan Keling mosque. **Christopher Kushi**

Lenten Iftar for parolees fosters fellowship and hope

KAJANG: The Catholic Prison Fellowship Association (CPFA), in collaboration with the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD), organised a meaningful *Majlis Buka Puasa bersama Parol* on March 16 at Bandar Teknologi Kajang. The event, which began at 6.00pm, brought together 36 parolees for an evening

of fellowship, encouragement, and shared humanity.

The evening kicked off with an address by CPFA vice-president, Audrey Freeman, who warmly welcomed the guests and shared insights into CPFA's outreach initiatives in partnership with AOHD. She highlighted the association's ongoing efforts to

support ex-inmates, providing guidance and opportunities for reintegration into society.

A special session followed by Nicholas Jacob, CPFA treasurer, who offered heartfelt words of inspiration and practical advice to the parolees. His motivational speech encouraged them to stay on the right path and embrace the second chance life has given them.

The event was graced by several distinguished guests, including Fr George Pakiasamy, ecclesiastical assistant; Fr Michael Chua, parish priest of the Church of the Holy Family Kajang; Dr Gary Liew, AOHD director; Dr Flora, CPFA member; and John Kor, Prison Ministry leader from the Church of the Holy Family Kajang, along with AOHD photographer, Mohammad Azlan.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of hygiene kits to each parolee. Sponsored by the Parish Integral Human Development Ministry (PIHDM) of the Church of the Holy Family Kajang, the kits contained essentials such as a face towel, shaver, toothbrush, toothpaste, and a bar of

soap. John Kor distributed the kits, a gesture greatly appreciated by the attendees.

CPFA president, Gnadas, also shared words of encouragement, reminding the parolees of their inner strength and the community's support. His uplifting messages resonated deeply with all present. He also expressed his gratitude to Parole Office head KIP, Mahadhir Bin Mohamad, and the staff of Pejabat Parol Daerah Hulu Langat, for their collaboration in making this event possible.

Representatives from Pejabat Penjara Negeri, led by Tuan PP Faisal Bin Ahmad, were also present and expressed their gratitude to CPFA for organising the programme during the holy fasting month. They acknowledged the positive impact such initiatives have on the rehabilitation and morale of the parolees.

As the sun set, the gathering came together to break their fast, symbolising harmony, respect, and shared humanity across faiths. The event concluded at 8.00pm, leaving behind a lasting memory of compassion, support, and hope for all who attended.



The guests at the Majlis Buka Puasa at Bandar Teknologi Kajang.

Pauline Sisters mark 60 years of missionary service in Peninsular Malaysia

Sr Anna Yap, fsp

PETALING JAYA: The Daughters of St Paul (also known as the Pauline Sisters) celebrated 60 years of missionary service in Peninsular Malaysia on March 19, the Solemnity of St Joseph, husband of Mary, at their convent. Approximately 220 friends, collaborators, clergy, and religious attended the celebration, which also marked the 50th anniversary of the Pauline Cooperators.

The Mass, presided over by Archbishop Julian Leow, was concelebrated by Archbishop Wojciech Zalwski, the Apostolic Nuncio to Malaysia, along with 22 priests. Representatives from various religious institutes within the Kuala Lumpur Archdiocese also attended the event. The modest celebration was organised with the support of the Assumption Parish Team. A parish-level celebration will take place on April 27 during the 11.30am Mass, followed by a simple reception at the parish hall.

The community's history dates back to 1961 when they first established a house in North Borneo. From there, the Sisters occasionally travelled to Singapore for book missions, with the hope of opening a house there. However, it was not the right time. Instead, they accepted the invitation of then Msgr Dominic Vendargon of Kuala Lumpur to open a house in his diocese in 1965. This was formally confirmed in his letter of approval for the establishment of the Daughters of St Paul in the Diocese of Kuala Lumpur in 1969. Initially, the Sisters resided in a rented apartment in Brickfields, but in 1968, they moved to their permanent residence at 161 Jalan Gasing, Petaling Jaya.

Over the past 60 years, the Pauline Sisters have actively engaged many lay people in their evangelisation mission through the media. These individuals were first inducted into the Association of Pauline Cooperators (APCs) in 1975.

Over the last 50 years, the APCs have played a vital role in the Pauline Mission,



The Pauline sisters cutting the anniversary cake.

participating in activities such as Bible Enthronement in homes, book distribution in local and outstation parishes, forming media clubs in schools and parishes, conducting film and video analysis, and participating in World Communications Day events.

They have also served at the Pauline Media Centre, assisted in publishing the bimonthly newsletter for parishes, printed Christmas and prayer cards for distribution, and co-organised fundraisers (such as coffee mornings and bazaars) in support of the media apostolate.

The Daughters of St Paul and the Pauline Cooperators are part of the Pauline Family, founded by Blessed James Alberione in Italy between 1914 and 1960. The Pauline Family includes five religious institutes: the Society of St Paul; the Daughters of St Paul; Pious Disciples of the Divine Master; Sisters of

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and the Apostoline Sisters. It also consists of four secular institutes: the Institute of St Gabriel for men; the Institute of Our Lady of the Annunciation for women; the Institute of Jesus the Priest for diocesan clergy, and the Holy Family Institute for married couples. Additionally, the family encompasses one lay organisation, the Association of Pauline Cooperators.

The Pauline Sisters would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to all those who have supported their mission over the past 60 years. As time passes, both people and buildings age. The Sisters are currently in need of funds to repair their convent and apostolic building. To help raise funds, T-shirts are available for sale at RM20 (round neck) and RM30 (with collar). Additionally, a fundraising dinner will be held on July 12.



Archbishop Julian Leow celebrating the Mass.

Caritas Canossa home officially opens

SEGAMAT: The Caritas Canossa Home, a boarding school for needy schoolgirls, officially opened its doors on March 25, 2025, marking a significant milestone for the project that began in 2016.

The vision for the home was inspired by the late Fr Michael Mannayagam, who envisioned transforming the former Canossian Sisters' property into a space dedicated to supporting vulnerable students.

After nearly a decade of reflection and planning, the renovation of the premises began in July 2024, with a budget of RM250,000, and was completed in December 2024.

The facility can accommodate 20 students, with four rooms, each housing five beds. Two full-time nuns and a Student Affairs officer, who also serves as a cook, manage the daily operations of the home. The first intake of students arrived in mid-February 2025, breathing life into the space and marking the beginning of the Caritas Canossa Home's mission to support underprivileged schoolgirls.

The official opening ceremony was held on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 2025, with Bishop Bernard Paul and Sr Josemary, Vicar General of the Canossian Congregation, presiding over the ribbon-cutting and plaque unveiling. The event was followed by a lively dance performance by the four boarders, symbolising the vibrant spirit of the home.

In his address, Bishop Bernard Paul highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of the marginalised and quoted Aristotle, urging attendees to recognise the intersection of their talents and the world's needs. He emphasised the importance of being fruitful and productive, using the fig tree as a metaphor for the mission's potential.

Sr Josemary spoke of the home as a testament to love in action and reminded the boarders that they were the heart of the mission and the light of the world.

Fr Paul Wong also shared his thoughts on the power of collaboration and the hope that the home's efforts would bear significant fruit.

The event concluded with a fellowship lunch, where guests enjoyed a simple yet delicious meal, celebrating the success of the Caritas Canossa Home's opening and its promising future. **Philip Packium**



Legionaries renew pledge to Mary at Acies ceremony

KUALA LUMPUR: More than 800 legionaries from the Kuala Lumpur Regia – Mother Mary's army – gathered at the Church of Jesus Caritas to renew their pledge of loyalty to Our Lady in the annual Acies ceremony.

At the Acies ceremony, Regia Spiritual Director, Fr. Paul Cheong, OFM Cap, urged Legionaries to emulate Mary as instruments of hope, emphasising that hope is central to Marian devotion, especially in today's challenging world. He highlighted that the ceremony is not only a renewal of commitment to the Legion but also a reaffirmation of trust in Mary's maternal care and guidance. Fr. Paul reminded members that hope involves active trust in God's providence, not passive waiting, and that Mary supports and intercedes for them in their mission to bring Christ's light to the world, particularly to those in need of God's mercy.

In his welcoming remarks, Fr Simon Lau, parish priest of Jesus Caritas Church, highlighted the significance of hosting the Acies

during the parish's golden jubilee celebration and its designation as a pilgrimage church. Drawing parallels with the Jewish Jubilee Year, he emphasised the theme of forgiveness, noting the church's relic of St Maria Goretti, patron saint of forgiveness. Fr Simon encouraged legionaries to embrace mercy during Lent, forgive others as taught in the Lord's Prayer, and act as agents of forgiveness while fulfilling God's mission to care for all creation.

Regia president, Ignatius Wang, called on legionaries to excel through prayer and service as "pilgrims of hope."

The event also honoured 56 dedicated legionaries for their long years of service, ranging from 30 to 46 years. Spiritual bouquets were presented to them by Fr Paul Cheong, Fr Martin Then CDD, and Fr Philip Chua.

The Acies ceremony concluded with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a time of fellowship. **Joseph John Sossai**



The Caritas Canossa Home located at SMK Canossian Convent.

St Mary's Cathedral focuses on *Amoris Laetitia* and Family Life

Evelyn Jock

SANDAKAN: The Cathedral of St Mary's Parish Pastoral Council, dedicated to fostering pastoral activities and advancing the caring mission of Christ through the Gospel, organised its 5th Parish Pastoral Assembly on March 22. The assembly brought together parish priest Fr Simon J. Kontou, assistant parish priest Fr Mitchelly Kiun, Deacon Ricki Boy Hasim, religious sisters, ministry leaders, group representatives, couples, and singles, all united in reflection and prayer.

The assembly focused on *Amoris Laetitia* – *The Joy of Love*, an apostolic document by Pope Francis. This important document, which addresses key issues related to marriage and family life, was presented by the clergy and members of the Parish Pastoral Council. The gathering included Conversations in the Spirit, that allowed the community to delve deeper into these topics through active listening, sharing personal experiences, and discerning God's Will together.

Fr Simon officially opened the assembly, recalling that the first Parish Pastoral Assembly

took place in 2018, with 80 attendees from various parishes. He also highlighted that in 2014 and 2015, the Catholic Church held two Synods focusing on the vocation and role of the family in both the Church and the world. These Synods culminated in the 2016 publication of *Amoris Laetitia* – *The Joy of Love*.

Fr Simon explained that the assembly embraced the themes of *Amoris Laetitia*, which addresses the complex realities families face today, including challenges such as separation, divorce, cohabitation, and the decision not to have children. He emphasised that due to the depth and complexity of *Amoris Laetitia*, it should be read and studied slowly. He encouraged all participants to recognise the significance of the assembly, to fully engage in the experience, and to allow it to enrich their spiritual lives, both now and in the future.

Amoris Laetitia calls on the Church to meet people where they are, acknowledging the complexities and brokenness in their lives. Today, many families are burdened by the difficult issues of the world, and some may feel alienated or excommunicated. The Church,



The participants reflecting on *Amoris Laetitia* during the parish pastoral assembly.

however, must address these challenges and work to integrate all individuals into the community. *Amoris Laetitia* takes us on a journey through the joys and struggles of marriage and family life, emphasising that the vocation of marriage is a gift from God and is indissoluble. While not everyone will enter into the vocation of marriage — such as clergy and religious brothers and sisters — it remains a central calling for many. The document also

highlights the pastoral care of families and the education of children. At the same time, *Amoris Laetitia* stresses the importance of prayer, faith, and the pursuit of holiness.

How wonderful it would be if the teachings of *Amoris Laetitia* not only resonate with the participants of this assembly but also reach a broader audience within the Church, inspiring more to understand and embrace the Catholic Church's call for love, compassion, and unity.

BEC recollection reflects on growth, unity and the Jubilee of Hope

JOHOR BAHRU: A half-day BEC recollection was held at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on March 22, bringing together BEC coordinators and members from across the South Johore Vicariate. Participants from the Tamil, Mandarin, Bahasa Malaysia, and English-speaking communities gathered to reflect on the progress of the BECs and discuss the support needed for their growth. The event was organised by the BEC Animation and Formation Team of the Malacca Johore Diocese (BECAFT).

The gathering provided an opportunity for fellowship, discussion, and shared learning.

Present at the event were the parish priests of the Church of St Joseph and the Church of Christ the King, as well as a religious sister from the Church of the Immaculate Conception. The assistant parish priest of the Cathedral also supported the event.

The first presentation focused on the "4Ws" — Worship, Word, Works, and Witness. Participants were guided in reflecting on various expressions of worship, such as the Rosary, meditations, examinations of conscience, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and prayers at the personal, family, BEC, and parish levels. A community rooted in the Word of God listens and reflects through Scripture readings, spir-

itual talks, and formation. This leads naturally to works in the ministries of the Church and outreach through social missions like Caritas. Living as witnesses means responding to the needs of the community through acts of service, social awareness, and support, including encouragement for students and youth.

Following the presentation, participants engaged in group discussions, sharing insights about BEC unity. Topics raised included the central role of prayer, the value of outreach activities such as meal provision at homes like Graceville, and the importance of involving children and youth in BECs. The need to invite those who have distanced themselves

from BEC life to return was also emphasised. The reflection reminded all present that God's Word shapes us to live meaningful and active Christian lives.

The second presentation introduced the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025, proclaimed by the Universal Church. The theme, *Pilgrims of Hope*, is based on the Scripture "Hope Does Not Disappoint." Within the Diocese, three churches have been designated as pilgrimage centres: the Church of St Louis in Kluang, the Church of St Mary in Ayer Salak, and the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Johor Bahru.

The presentation also reflected on Pope Francis' Lenten message, which calls all to

"journey together in hope." This journey involves walking alongside migrants and those on the margins, recognizing that we are all pilgrims. To journey together is to move in communion, showing respect and compassion. It is to place our trust in God and His promise of eternal life.

In subsequent group discussions, participants reflected on how the Jubilee Year of Hope relates to Church, Ecology, Family, and Society. Group leaders shared various insights. Rachel from Group 1 emphasised that strong families, with parents serving as good role models, contribute to building a strong Church and society. Cecilia from Group 3 encouraged closer collaboration between BECs and parish ministries, fostering connections between the Church and society. She also spoke about living simply, reducing waste, and being better stewards of creation. Paul from Group 5 reminded the group that hope is essential to discovering purpose in all aspects of life.

As the session came to a close, participants were invited to express their gifts and interests, such as skills in poster design, food preparation, and event facilitation. Evaluation forms were distributed and collected, providing valuable feedback for BECAFT to guide future BEC initiatives. BECAFT MJD



A group leader sharing some answers from his group.



DIOCESE OF PENANG
PKK/BDN/2025/04/202

"Is not this the fast that I choose: to lose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free? Then shall Your light break forth like the dawn and Your healing shall spring up speedily." Isaiah 58:6-9

1. Pastoral Directive on the Accompaniment Process of the implementation phase of the synod

I am pleased to share with you the Pastoral Directive issued on March 19, the Solemnity of St Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin, Tamil and English. <https://shorturl.at/1xiSN>

2. 2025 Feast of St Anne and St Joachim,

Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bkt Mertajam

The Novena and Feast of St Anne this year will begin from July 18 and culminate on July 27. Let us pray for all pilgrims, volunteers, celebrants and confessors as we experience a meaningful and grace-filled celebration through the intercession of St Anne and St Joachim. <https://rb.gy/swesfc>

3. Perjalanan Salib for all nine dioceses of Malaysia

The Perjalanan Salib was launched with the nine Bishops of Malaysia gathered at the Malaysian Catholic Youth Day (MCYD) on April 3 at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Kota Kinabalu.

Representing the nine dioceses of Malaysia

Notifications and Updates

— Sabah (three), Sarawak (three), and Semenanjung (three) — each cross will journey through its respective diocese from April 2025 to September 2026.

Please be ready to welcome the Salib in your various communities within the diocese.

These nine crosses, one from each diocese, will then be assembled into ONE cross at the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026). <https://shorturl.at/WCqCB>

In the Diocese of Penang, we will be launching it on May 1 at 10.00 am at the Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bkt Mertajam. All are welcome!

4. Message for Ramadan and Aidil Fitri

I am pleased to share with you the message

from the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue titled, *Christians and Muslims: What we hope to become together* for Ramadan and Aidil Fitri.

5. Lenten Journey and Holy Week

As we intensify our Lenten observance of Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving, I wish to assure you of my prayers and solidarity in journeying with you very specially in this Jubilee Year of Hope 2025.

Let us interiorise the Joyful, Sorrowful, Luminous and Glorious mysteries to truly rejoice with Mary at the celebration of Easter

Sebastian Francis
Cardinal Sebastian Francis

Catholics unite for Jubilee Walk

Elvina Fernandez

KUALA LUMPUR: Close to 1,000 Catholics from various churches in the Kuala Lumpur central district and beyond came together to participate in the Jubilee Walk, a spiritual journey of faith, reflection, and unity.

Held on March 22, the walk organised as part of the Jubilee Year celebrations, brought together believers united as one community reflecting on the Stations of the Cross. Four churches were visited by participants of the Jubilee Walk: Our Lady of Fatima, Holy Rosary, St Anthony, and St John.

The Jubilee Year, a special period of grace and renewal in the Catholic Church, marks a significant milestone for spiritual growth, forgiveness, and the strengthening of community bonds. It is a time for Catholics to reflect on God's mercy and celebrate their faith through various acts of devotion, pilgrimage, and service.

The Walk commenced with a Mass at the Church of Our Lady of Fatima at 6.45am. It was celebrated by Archbishop Julian Leow, with Fr Gerard Theraviam, Fr Clarence Devadass, Fr Andrew Manickam OFM Cap, Fr Dominic Tan, and Fr Michel Dass concelebrating.

Fr Clarence, in his homily said, "For us as Catholics, going on pilgrimage is a journey symbolising a quest for God and to deepen our faith, which translates to us reflecting his image to others."

"Today, we are gathered from parishes in the KL Central District, making this journey so the quest to journey closer to God is fulfilled. In the Gospel, we are called to go back home, to open our hearts to reconciliation, spreading peace, joy, and love to those we encounter. As we make this pilgrimage, walking through the busy streets, let this pilgrimage inspire a deeper devotion and desire to God so that we can inspire others," he said.

He added that we must be mindful that



Participants walking uphill to the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist.

it is God who is calling us to fulfil the will of Our Father here. "We make this journey to reflect on the Way of the Cross as a sign of the love of Christ for us. With Christ and one another, we come together as one Church and one community, as pilgrims of hope."

After Mass, participants embarked on

the first three Stations of the Cross. As they journeyed from one church to another, many also meditated on the Rosary, deepening their spiritual connection and devotion as a community.

The pilgrimage continued as the group made their way to the Church of the Holy Rosary by foot. Here, they gathered to pray through several more Stations, reflecting on the Passion of Christ. The participants pressed on to the Church of St Anthony, where they paused once again to reflect on the remaining Stations.

The final leg of the journey saw the faithful walking to the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist. At the cathedral, the group completed the last Stations of the Cross, marking the culmination of their spiritual pilgrimage.

Following the completion of the Stations of the Cross, participants were treated to lunch, providing a chance to rest, nourish themselves, and foster fellowship. Many took the opportunity to bond with fellow attendees, sharing stories and experiences that enriched the sense of community.



Participants in front of the Church of the Holy Rosary.

Pilgrims embark on a sacred journey of hope to St Mary's Cathedral



Pilgrims pausing at the statue of Mother Mary.



Pilgrims praying the Rosary along the Marian Rosary Corridor.

SANDAKAN: In the heart of the Diocese of Sandakan, 121 pilgrims embarked on a sacred journey on March 14 and 15, gathering at the tranquil Cathedral of St Mary. Hailing from the diverse regions of Inanam, Penampang, Tuaran, Terawi, Manggatal, and Telipok, they came together in unity, bound by faith and the promise of hope. This pilgrimage was more than a mere physical journey; it was a profound spiritual odyssey that connected them to the sacred history and deep peace of this revered pilgrimage centre.

The pilgrims arrived at the cathedral at 3.30pm, their hearts already filled with reverence and anticipation. As the sun began its descent, they participated in the Stations of the Cross at 5.30pm, feeling the weight of each step echo through the cathedral's hal-

lowed halls. This moment marked the beginning of their pilgrimage, a time for reflection, prayer, and unity.

The following morning, the pilgrims were warmly welcomed at the Parish Centre. The Parish Pilgrimage Ministry, in collaboration with the Marian Mount Volunteers, greeted them with open arms, fostering a deep sense of community and devotion. With hearts open to the Divine, the pilgrims began their spiritual journey with a prayerful procession, starting at the front of the cathedral. One by one, they moved through the Stations of the Cross, reflecting on Christ's sacrifice, until they reached the 14th and final station near the historical Japanese bunker, a solemn reminder of the trials of the past.

The journey continued with the recita-

tion of the Rosary, a sacred devotion that led them along the Marian Rosary Corridor. This path, winding through the untouched beauty of a pristine jungle, climbed up a steep incline, leading them to the summit. As they made their way through the sacred journey, between stations 3 and 4, the pilgrims found themselves at a quiet spring, where a statue of Mother Mary stood in serene grace. Here, they paused their Rosary prayer to offer a moment of adoration.

The peaceful setting, surrounded by nature's quiet beauty, created an intimate space for personal reflection and devotion. With hearts lifted in reverence, they took time to honour Mary, the mother of Christ, seeking her intercession and guidance as they continued their pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage continued with the Rosary through the untouched beauty of a pristine jungle, climbed up a steep incline, leading them to the summit where the fifth Rosary station awaited. The pilgrims, undeterred by the challenging ascent, found solace in the rhythm of their prayers, each Hail Mary weaving them closer to the divine.

At the summit, the pilgrims reached the open chapel, perched at the very edge of a cliff, offering a breathtaking panoramic view of Sandakan Bay. The sight was nothing short of awe-inspiring, a testament to the grandeur of God's creation. Here, amidst the natural beauty and the stillness of the sacred space, the pilgrims completed their Rosary devotion, feeling a deep sense of peace and connection.

On their way back down, the pilgrims took a moment to honour the lives and legacies of those who had laid the spiritual foundation for the diocese. They paused to pay homage at the tombs of the pioneering priest, Fr De Witt, and the Franciscan Nuns, nestled quietly behind the Fr Mulder Centre. In this sacred space, they were reminded of the enduring faith that had brought them all together.

By noon, the pilgrimage ended, but its significance lingered. The 121 pilgrims departed, their hearts full of grace and their spirits uplifted, carrying with them the light of hope that had guided them through this sacred journey. The Pilgrims of Hope had found a renewed sense of faith, and the pilgrimage to the Cathedral of St Mary had become a beacon of spiritual renewal, a testament to the enduring power of hope and devotion. **Pilis Malim**

Lenten beach clean-up brings together 12 parishes



Students collecting rubbish from the beach.

BANTING, Selangor: One hundred and four participants from 12 parishes of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur joined a beach cleaning activity at Pantai Kelanang on March 29.

Organised by the Archdiocesan Creation Justice Ministry, the beach cleaning is part of the Archdiocese Office of Human Development (AOHD)'s Lenten Campaign for this year as we collaborate with Klang District parishioners to be stewards of creation by keeping our beaches pristine and clear of rubbish.

More than half of the participants comprised of catechism students from various parishes including Church of St Francis Xavier, Petaling Jaya, Chapel of our Lady of Good Health, Assam Jawa, Kuala Selangor and Church of Sts Peter and Paul, Banting. They were joined by several catechists, youth leaders, AOHD representatives, Creation Justice Ministry coordinators from various parishes and other beach enthusiasts.

Dr Gary Liew, AOHD director, started with an opening prayer and followed with a safety briefing before participants were divided into groups for the beach cleaning. Participants were advised not to feed the monkeys and dogs and to stay with their group for safety purpose.

The group picked up rubber shoes and sandals, rags, empty glass bottles, plastic PET bottles, plastic containers and bags, and broken plastic pails among others. 161.1 kg of plastics, 15 kg of glass and 250 cigarette butts were collected in addition to general trash.

Dato Seri Ann Marianthony, Creation Justice Ministry coordinator of the Church of our Lady of Lourdes in Klang, thanked everyone for helping to clean the beaches in the Klang district and welcomes more of such initiatives in the future.

Angeline Das, catechist at Sts Peter and Paul parish said her confirmation students were happy to do their part for the environment and also log in a few hours of CSR work.

The group had lunch at the Church of Sts Peter and Paul. It was a perfect setting before they departed as they were able to appreciate the picturesque church, set amidst nature, with a flowing river in the backyard. **Melina Yeoh**

Jalanan Kasih outreach supports prisoners and their families

KAJANG: On March 16, the Archdiocesan Catholic Prison Ministry (ACPM) of Kuala Lumpur organised a meaningful Lenten outreach with two events aimed at supporting the families of prisoners and those on parole. These initiatives reflect Christ's call to care for the needy, reminding us of His words: "I was in prison, and you came to visit me" (Matthew 25:36). It was a powerful reminder of the importance of kindness and support.

The first event, the Jalanan-Kasih Programme (Bonds of Love Programme), was held at Kajang Hall from 12.00 noon to 5.00pm. The programme focused on supporting the families of prisoners, recognising the emotional and financial challenges they often face. ACPM volunteers organised a heartfelt gathering filled with love, support, and encouragement, bringing together wives, parents, children, siblings, and close friends of incarcerated individuals.

The event provided a space for families to connect, share their stories, and find comfort in a supportive community that truly understood their experiences. The gathering included a delicious meal, inspiring speeches, and lively musical performances. While some families came independently, transportation was provided for others to ensure everyone could participate.

Each family received essential provisions, including grocery hampers, clothing,



Children of inmates participating in the games.

and daily necessities. About 80 individuals attended, with 20 volunteers and leaders working tirelessly to make the event a success. Through this initiative, ACPM emphasised that no one should feel abandoned, and that the love of Christ unites us, even in challenging times.

This Lenten outreach marked a significant milestone for ACPM, bringing joy, healing, and renewed relationships. It highlighted

that mercy and love are boundless, and that simple acts of kindness reflect the heart of Christ. Encouraged by this success, ACPM intends to expand its outreach programmes in the years to come, ensuring dignity and care for those often overlooked.

Let us remember in our thoughts and prayers both the imprisoned and their families, that they may find strength, hope, and reconciliation in their journey through life.

CSJE community spreads love and hope through Lenten outreach

KUALA LUMPUR: This Lent, the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist (CSJE) focused on spreading God's love, particularly to families of prison inmates and the Orang Asli communities.

From the very first day of Lent, the cathedral entrance was filled with donations of food, essential supplies, stationery, and toys for children.

On March 11, the Parish Integral Human

Development Ministry (PIHDM) delivered "Baskets of Hope" to the families of prison inmates through the *Jalanan Kasih* project. These packed baskets, containing essential items such as diapers, sanitary pads, and milk powder, were a tangible message of solidarity for families who face emotional and financial hardships due to the absence of a loved one.

Beyond the city limits, the CSJE com-

munity reached out to the Orang Asli communities, who continue to face significant challenges such as land encroachment, limited access to clean water, and economic difficulties.

On March 30, PIHDM members travelled to the Church of the Visitation in Seremban for the "To Stand in Solidarity with the Orang Asli" event. This gathering, held after Mass, offered an opportunity for the parishioners to learn about the struggles of the Orang Asli, who are deeply connected to nature and self-sufficiency. However, modern development continues to threaten their land and way of life.

The event provided an inspiring moment of connection, culminating in a shared meal that symbolised the bonds of friendship and solidarity. In a gesture of support, the PIHDM team presented a cheque, food items, as well as stationery, books, and toys for the Orang Asli's learning centres. This heartfelt contribution is aimed at enhancing the educational opportunities for the Orang Asli children, ensuring they have the resources they need to thrive.

The overwhelming response from the parishioners of CSJE has been truly inspiring. The community's spirit of generosity is a reminder to carry this mission of love, peace, and hope beyond Lent. Let us continue to be instruments of God's love, extending kindness and support to those in need. **Hilda Alposilva**



Fr Gerard Theraviam helping PIHDM members load items for the Orang Asli.

10 million Christians in US at risk of deportation

WASHINGTON: A report from Christian organisations has found a significant number of people impacted by the Trump administration's pursuit of what it has called "the largest deportation in United States history" are Christian.

The report, a joint project of the National Association of Evangelicals, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Migration and Refugee Services, the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and World Relief, found many of those vulnerable to deportation themselves – or those who have a family member vulnerable to deportation – are Christians.

"One cannot help but ponder what our country and our lives would be like, if the same sort of restrictions and enforcement actions being contemplated today were imposed on those coming from places like Ireland, Germany, Poland, Italy and elsewhere by the boatfull," Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas, said.

"You know, it's amazing how US history repeats itself, and I don't think many of us would suggest that the way that our immigrant ancestors were treated in many cases would be a model to be followed today," he said.

Catholic social teaching on immigration balances three inter-related principles – the right of



Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents conduct a raid in Denver, Colorado, in February. (OSV News/Kevin Mohatt, Reuters)

persons to migrate in order to sustain their lives and those of their families, the right of a country to regulate its borders and control immigration, and a nation's duty to regulate its borders with justice and mercy.

While the individual Christian organisations behind the report may support or oppose particular policies according to their beliefs, participants explained, they share a common goal of seeking to understand not only how mass deportations would impact the US, but

also their faith communities and Christians as a whole.

According to demographic data as of the end of 2024, the report found, more than 10 million Christians living in the US would be vulnerable to deportation under Trump administration policies implemented in 2025.

Christians account for approximately 80 per cent of all of those at risk of deportation. The Christians most at risk of deportation are Catholics, 61 per cent of the total. OSV



(Asianews photo)

China adds new restrictions on foreigners' religious activities

MILAN: A new set of regulations released by China's National Religious Affairs Administration (NRAA) will further restrict religious activities by foreigners in the country, effective from May 1. The "Detailed Rules" outline 38 articles dictating how foreigners of any religious denomination must seek permission from Chinese authorities to practise their faith and comply with the Party's rules, reinforcing the principle of "independence and self-government" of religions in China.

The new guidelines take President Xi Jinping's "sinicisation" policy to a new level, requiring all religious expression, even by foreigners, to align with Chinese culture and government control. These regulations mandate that religious activities must occur only in "official" places of worship or with permission from the authorities. Foreign religious leaders must be approved by Chinese religious officials, and foreign clergy cannot engage in activities without Party approval.

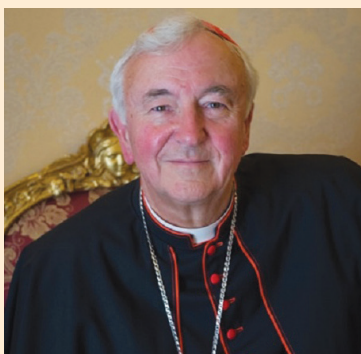
Article 5 stipulates that religious

activities must not harm national interests or public order, and foreign clergy are prohibited from interacting with "underground" religious communities, particularly those not part of the state-run Patriotic Association. The regulations also control the dissemination of religious materials, restricting foreigners to bringing no more than 10 copies of religious books or audiovisual materials without prior permission. Additionally, foreign individuals or organisations cannot recruit students in China for religious training without authorisation.

The new rules assert that all religious activities must be conducted under strict Party oversight, limiting foreign influence in religious spaces. The guidelines underline that no religious expression, including within the Catholic Church, can occur outside the control of the Chinese government, signalling increasing submission to state directives and raising concerns about the autonomy of religious communities in the country.

AsiaNews

Cardinal Vincent Nichols urges Catholics to oppose assisted suicide bill



WESTMINSTER: Cardinal Vincent Nichols *pic*, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, has written a pastoral letter urging Catholics to contact their MPs to oppose the Bill seeking to legalise assisted suicide.

The letter, read in Westminster archdiocese parishes on April 5-6, reiterates the bishops' objections to the Bill, emphasising concerns

about the "deeply flawed" parliamentary process.

Cardinal Nichols criticises the rushed nature of the Bill's review, noting that MPs were given insufficient time to study the complex legislation before voting. He also questions why no Royal Commission or independent inquiry was held before considering such significant changes to the law. The parliamentary committee

examining the Bill held only three days of evidence hearings, with many crucial voices not represented, and an overrepresentation of Bill supporters.

Ahead of the Bill's Third Reading and vote on or around April 25, Cardinal Nichols raises several unanswered questions, including concerns about the scope of the Bill, judicial involvement, protection for vulnerable individuals, and

potential strains on the NHS. He stresses the need for better-funded, compassionate palliative care for the elderly and vulnerable rather than legalising assisted suicide.

Cardinal Nichols urges Catholics to act now, calling on them to contact their MPs and ask them to vote against the Bill due to both its moral implications and the lack of adequate scrutiny in Parliament. ICN

Rising tensions push one in three Christians in Israel to consider emigration

MILAN: A recent report by the Rossing Centre paints a grim picture for Christians in Israel, revealing that one in three are contemplating emigration, with nearly half of those under 30 expressing the same concern.

The study attributes this growing trend to escalating violence from Jewish extremist groups and a widespread perception of discrimination by Israeli state actors. The ongoing Gaza conflict and fears of political and religious extremism only deepen these concerns, particularly as Christians face increasing marginalisation in the Holy Land.

The research highlights the deteriorating conditions for Palestinian Christians, many of whom feel that the erosion of their



Monsignor Éric de Moulins-Beaufort, president of the French Bishops' Conference, presides over the Mass at Maison Abraham (Abraham House) in Jerusalem during the celebrations for the 60th anniversary of its foundation as a pilgrim guest house run by Secours Catholique-Caritas France in 2024. (CNA photo/Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem)

cultural and religious heritage — especially in the land where Jesus was born — threatens their future. Security concerns (44 per cent)

and socio-political instability (33 per cent) are the primary factors driving the desire to leave, while a low birth rate among Christians

further contributes to the shrinking community in Israel.

Attacks against Christians have risen sharply in recent years, with 111 confirmed incidents in 2024, up from 89 in 2023. These attacks, often attributed to ultra-orthodox and national-religious groups, include physical assaults, vandalism of church property, and verbal harassment. Most of the victims are clergy or individuals wearing visible Christian symbols. These acts of violence, coupled with political and religious extremism, have left many feeling vulnerable and unsure of their place in Israeli society.

The Rossing Centre's report emphasises the urgent need for international intervention to protect the Christian community and urges global churches, humanitarian or-

ganisations, and diplomats to take a more active role in addressing the situation. Despite some improvements, such as increased cooperation with municipal officials and police, the report calls for more consistent action to hold perpetrators accountable and to ensure that Christian communities feel safe and supported.

With Easter and Passover approaching, fears of further violence and discrimination are rising. The report underscores the necessity of vigilance and immediate action to prevent further incidents. The future of the Christian community in Israel remains uncertain, and the need for a broader, more substantial international response is now more critical than ever. AsiaNews

Ecological Conversion: A call to action from the Church in Asia

In a time of unprecedented ecological challenges, the Catholic Church in Asia has raised its voice in unity with the global community, urging a renewed commitment to the care of creation. The recent pastoral letter issued by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) calls on all local churches across Asia to engage in the urgent task of ecological conversion. The letter dated March 15, coincides with both the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' groundbreaking encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025, offering a timely and prophetic call for action.

The pastoral letter, signed by Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao, Cardinal Pablo David, and Cardinal Isao Kikuchi, brings to light the ecological crisis that is ravaging the region. Drawing on the wisdom of Scripture, the bishops remind the faithful of the profound words of St Paul in Romans "...afflictions produce endurance, and endurance proven character, and proven character hope. And hope does not disappoint." This message is particularly powerful in the context of the unfolding environmental disasters that Asia faces — from rising sea levels to devastating air pollution, loss of biodiversity, and extreme weather events.

Despite these afflictions, the bishops call for a hopeful response — one rooted in Christian faith. They urge the Church to see these ecological sufferings not as reasons for despair but as opportunities for action, endurance, and hope. The call is clear: The Church's mission is to be actively involved in the restoration of creation and the healing of the earth's wounds, embracing ecological conversion as part of its spiritual and ethical duty.

Ecological Woes Across Asia

The letter vividly outlines the dire environmental issues affecting Asia:

Deforestation and Biodiversity Loss — Vast swaths of the region's rainforests, such as those in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Papua New Guinea, are being destroyed by illegal logging, mining, and agricultural expansion. This loss threatens not only wildlife but the livelihoods of indigenous communities who depend on these forests.

Rising Sea Levels and Coastal Displacement — The warming of the Pacific Ocean has led to rising sea levels, resulting in the displacement of entire communities in countries like the Philippines and Bangladesh. The letter emphasises the plight of coastal populations who are facing increasingly frequent climate-induced migrations.

Water Security — The bishops highlight the melting of glaciers in the Himalayas and the depletion of rivers across South and Central Asia, which is jeopardising the water supply for millions of people. The situation is exacerbating tensions and conflicts over water resources, especially in areas where river basins cross national borders.

Air Pollution and Health Crisis — Major

cities such as Beijing, Delhi, and Jakarta suffer from dangerously high levels of air pollution. The health impacts are severe, especially for children and the elderly, contributing to respiratory diseases and a reduced quality of life.

Extreme Weather Events

— Intensified typhoons, flooding, and extreme heatwaves have wreaked havoc across Southeast, South, and East Asia. The letter stresses that the suffering caused by these increasingly frequent and severe weather events is a clear reminder of the urgent need for climate action.

Agricultural Crises and Food Insecurity

— Unpredictable weather patterns, including droughts and floods, are severely affecting crop yields, threatening food security in many rural communities. Climate change poses an existential threat to those whose livelihoods are tied to agriculture.

Hope Amidst Despair

While the challenges are immense, the letter also offers a hopeful message. The bishops point to inspiring grassroots movements, such as reforestation projects and mangrove rehabilitation, which showcase the resilience of local communities and their commitment to protecting biodiversity. Indigenous peoples, in particular, are seen as key players in these climate action efforts, offering invaluable knowledge in sustainable land management.

Furthermore, the Church is fostering ecological consciousness through ministries that integrate environmental care into parish life and Catholic education. From green audits to renewable energy projects, dioceses across Asia are taking tangible steps to reduce their ecological footprint.

Another sign of hope is the growing engagement of youth, who are increasingly stepping up as champions of ecological



justice. Pope Francis' call for urgent action in his recent encyclical *Laudate Deum* has found a passionate response among the younger generation, inspiring them to lead the way in creating a more sustainable future.

The bishops also emphasise the importance of interfaith and civil society collaboration. Ecological concerns transcend religious boundaries, and Christians must work alongside people of other faiths and global communities to advocate for the care of creation.

The Call to Action

With hope as a driving force, the Church calls on the faithful to engage in four critical areas of action:

Mitigation — The Church advocates for stronger climate commitments, particularly in line with the Paris Agreement. Protecting vital ecosystems, such as Asia's rainforests and coral reefs, is a priority.

Adaptation and Loss & Damage — The poor and marginalised are the most

vulnerable to climate change. The Church calls for greater funding and support for adaptation measures and compensation for the damage already inflicted by climate change.

Legislation — The letter stresses the importance of creating and enforcing environmental laws to protect natural resources, including waste management, mining regulations, and watershed protection. Governments and corporations must be held accountable for environmental harm.

Finance — A just approach to climate financing is crucial. Wealthier nations and industries must fulfil their financial commitments to climate action, while debt relief for vulnerable nations is urgently needed to allow them to tackle the climate crisis effectively.

A Global Stage for Action: COP 30

Looking forward, the bishops encourage the Church to actively engage in global climate forums, such as COP 30, set to take place in Belem, Brazil in 2025. This conference provides a crucial platform for nations and communities to come together and advocate for bold, equitable climate solutions. The Church's voice is vital in amplifying the needs of the vulnerable and pushing for actions that align with the moral responsibility of stewardship.

The Season of Creation

The bishops also call for sustained celebration and reflection during the Season of Creation (September 1 to October 4), a time for spiritual and ecological renewal. They encourage the faithful to embrace simpler, more sustainable lifestyles and to deepen their relationship with God and creation.

Conclusion: Walking the Pilgrimage of Hope

In closing, the bishops invite the people of Asia to embark on a "Pilgrimage of Hope," responding with courage and faith to the challenges facing the earth. As part of this journey, they urge Christians to examine their consciences, repent for past environmental wrongs, and renew their commitment to ecological conversion. By entrusting the care of creation to Mary, the Mother of all, the Church seeks the wisdom and strength to act with compassion, justice, and integrity for the sake of God's common home.

The pastoral letter is not only a call to action but also a profound invitation to engage in the transformative work of ecological healing and restoration — an endeavour that holds the potential to shape a more just, sustainable, and hopeful future for all of creation.

**Source: FABC Pastoral Letter
To the Local Churches in Asia on the
Care of Creation: A Call to Ecological
Conversion**



Participants with their grafted avocado seedlings.

Advice to new priests hoping to change a parish: Go slow and listen

Synodality is what I would call a “far-away word.” The strange sound of the word makes it feel distant from our lives. It is simultaneously too old (a Greek word from the early Church) and too new (a neologism from the contemporary Church). And yet I think this “far-away” word has a lot of nearness to it.

In the context of a parish, we can think about this nearness with a particular focus on new pastors and how they ought to approach their role. Parishes are places where people live synodally without knowing it. We live it, because, in the parish we work together as a neighbourhood in the pilgrim city of God. In the parish, we help each other with Christmas pageants, walk the Stations of the Cross together, organise turkey drives for Thanksgiving, invite neighbours to the Christmas concert and teach our children. These simple things are essential for us to live out our baptismal roles of serving, worshipping and teaching.

As a result, new pastors bring both excitement and trepidation. For a priest, whether older or younger, being a new pastor is no easy matter. I am particularly mindful of priests my age and younger.

Part of a community

Like many young priests, I think our parishes need a renewal in the traditions of the Church, a reverent celebration of the liturgy and a commitment to the full teaching of the Church. Many parishes need the dynamic colour of the faith that helps them witness to the world. But these parishes are still full of people with a deep commitment to the faith. To enrich the colour, a priest needs to work within the life of the community, not above it.

When a priest is new in a parish, he would do well to keep in mind the Latin adage *festina lente*: Make haste slowly. If you are eager for liturgical renewal, for teaching the easy and the hard parts of the



Priests put their hands on the heads of newly ordained priests during an ordination Mass celebrated by Pope Francis in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Yara Nardi, Reuters)

faith, for preaching in season and out, for evangelising in the neighbourhood and serving the poorest, good. But don't rush. Jesus could have quickly corrected the crowd eager to stone the woman caught in adultery. Instead, He drew in the sand and offered gentle words that turned them towards mercy. He could have told the Samaritan at the well that He was Christ and she a serial adulteress as His first words, but He didn't rush her. You should not rush either.

This does not mean doing nothing. It means reading the signs of the parish and the neighbourhood, hearing their rhythms and rhymes and learning where there might be discord (there is always discord). Get to know the hundreds or even thousands of people that God and your bishop have called you to serve. As canon law prescribes, a pastor needs “to strive to know the faithful entrusted to his

care.” Being synodal means starting this at the beginning and living it throughout. Your new parish probably has a choir, prayer groups or sisters. Your task is to get to know them, be known by them, and sometimes take their lead. It is a small thing, but as Thérèse of Lisieux taught us, small things are the way of love.

As you listen, take what you hear to prayer. If the choir is singing hymns that you find insufficiently orthodox or liturgically inappropriate, take it to prayer. The hymns may need to change, but pray on how to bring about the change, pray about how you will explain the change and pray for those who might find the change painful.

Take what you hear to study as well. At seminary, you should have learned how to listen with the ears of the Church. Listening does not require doing what the speaker tells you to do. When someone

tells you that you should publicly bless a same-sex couple, listen with the ears of the Church. When a wealthy parishioner tells you that the parish prefers not to hear about the preferential option for the poor, read John Paul II to help them prefer the poor. Return to Scripture, tradition, the saints and the magisterium to figure out what to do and how to do it.

Take what you hear to the people. Ask us how you think you should approach changes you are planning or hard preaching you are preparing to give. You might hear that the homily on pornography is better as a letter to the parish so that young ears do not hear it. Or you will learn that changing the Mass times will inconvenience people, even if you think it would help.

Co-responsibility

If you are worried that you are not doing much while you meet people and get to know the place, do not be. Getting to know the place is about falling in love with it. You won't preach the Gospel well to people you don't love, and you won't love them if you don't know them. As you listen, people get to know you as someone who listens and cares. Beyond this ministry of presence, you will be shaping the place because of the authority you have and the way you live it.

When the time comes for changes, make sure they are grounded in the Church's preference, not yours. As St Augustine wrote, “my desire is less to be first in the church than to put her first.” Offer the changes you think are needed based on what the Church thinks and in a way that works with the charisms, strengths and weaknesses of the place you serve. What is the best time to add more confession? What are the works of mercy most needed in the neighbourhood? What kinds of devotions fit the people in the pews? Figure these things out from the people and then put them in place with the people.

Passing on spiritual knowledge to the next generation

Such a synodal approach means thinking of your parishioners as more than just your “flock.” A pastor is gifted with responsibilities, true: By the grace of your ordination and the decision of the bishop, you are a leader. But remember that the people you lead are your fellow workers in the vineyard, “co-responsible citizens in the City of God” as Cardinal Gerhard Müller calls us. In your flock there are people with all kinds of talents and insights; draw on those. There will be people with richer prayer lives, better educations and better management skills than yours. Leading them will at times mean letting them lead. Your mission is not primarily to us, but with us. You will look more like a leader when you get your hands dirty with us — and sometimes when you do what we tell you to do.

Pastoral pilgrims

As time passes, you will help your parishioners grow toward Christ and so attract others to Christ. You will do this best if you smell like your flock — because

you work with them and if you always centre yourself on Christ. You will change and your parish will change, but Christ, the centre, “is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8). Remembering this will also remind you of something else that will outlast you: the parish. You are just passing through, but the parish will last. The 90-year-old you bury was here before you and the baby you baptise will be here after you.

In canon law, a parish is a “community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church.” It is certainly the case that its “pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor,” but the parish exists because the baptised are there, not because you are. Lose track of that and you'll lose track of us. Keep track of it and you might find a parish eager to follow your lead, eager to work with you and eager to continue the only journey that matters: The pilgrimage into the heavenly city.

Synodality may be a far-off word, but it envisions the nearness so central to Christianity, for in “Christ Jesus you who



once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:13). Parishes are one of those places of synodal nearness to Christ. What we need in pastors, new and old, is the commitment to live that mission to and with us as we seek to draw all

people nearer to Christ. **Terence Sweeney, America**

Terence Sweeney is a professor in the Honours Programme at Villanova University.

Kristen Priya Krishnan

The Archdiocesan Office of Human Development (AOHD) of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur hosted the *AOHD Summit 2025 – A Lenten Journey of Hope* from March 21 to 24. This four-day summit, which aligned with the Jubilee Year theme "Pilgrims of Hope," reflected the message from Jeremiah 29:11, "I know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." A total of 313 participants from various walks of life attended the different sessions and workshops.

The summit began with Mass at the Church of St Anthony. Archbishop Julian Leow was the main celebrant with Apostolic Nuncio to Malaysia, Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski, Bishop Enrique Figaredo Alvargonzalez SJ, also known as Bishop Kike, among the concelebrants.

In his homily, Archbishop Julian reminded attendees to embrace hope as a divine gift of life, never to give up or despair. He emphasised that God is present, even in pain, guiding people toward a future of hope. The celebration also included a cultural dance by Cambodian dancers, a gesture of unity and joy. Archbishop Julian also commissioned 15 new AOHD members.

Following the Mass, Fr Albet Arokiasamy, the ecclesiastical assistant for AOHD, officially opened the summit, with Dr Gary Liew, director of AOHD, delivering the welcoming address.

The summit's keynote speaker, Bishop Kike, shared his inspiring work in Cambodia, where he is renowned as the "Bishop of the Wheelchairs." His initiative involves providing wheelchairs to the disabled and empowering them through employment, particularly focusing on the marginalised and landmine victims. His talk underscored the importance of transformation, social justice, and uplifting the least and the lost, promoting solidarity and communion.

Throughout the next four days, the summit featured nine main talks, 15 workshops, a Lent Concert, Holy Hour, and exposure immersion outreaches.

Among the notable sessions was a talk by Church of the Divine Mercy parish priest, Fr George Harrison, on *My Mission on this Earth Today – A Hope-Filled Lenten Joy*. Fr George who currently serves in the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral

AOHD Summit 2025: A transformative encounter of faith and unity



Dr Bugs Tan (AOHD Human Library) and participants engaged in a sharing session.

Human Development at the Vatican shared the story of Sr Rani Maria, a Franciscan nun who worked tirelessly for the empowerment of women and the marginalised before being tragically assassinated. His message highlighted the importance of living a mission of compassion, sharing the Good News, and showing mercy to those in need.

On March 22, there were three exposure immersion projects offered from 11.00am to 2.00pm: Feeding the homeless at Samaritan Hope, Visiting the Myanmar Learning Community or joining the tree planting activity at SMJK (T) Thamboosamy Pillai Sentul.

In the evening, the AOHD Human Library featured individuals who shared their personal experiences, encouraging deep dialogue and fostering a positive community. Borhan Pelanduk, the headman of an Orang Asli village, shared his struggle to protect his community's ancestral land against developers. Jelatah, an Orang Asli member, discussed the challenges of obtaining clean water in their village, while Fr Paulino Miranda emphasised the ongoing fight for the rights of the Orang Asli people.



All ears at Sr Salverina's session on the Art of Listening.

Other inspiring talks included "Stories on the Undocumented Chow Kit Youths" by Awaludin Jalalus Shuti, founder of Chow Kit Youths NGO, which helps young people break free from negative stereotypes and find purpose through community engagement. Dr Bugs Tan and Nicholas Lourdes also shared their stories of supporting underprivileged children's education and overcoming personal disabilities, respectively.

A standout moment of the summit was the participation of Fara Diba Rosle, a 22-year-old Orang Asli student, who shared her remarkable journey from her village in Pahang to studying law at the University of Malaya. As the first in her family to pursue tertiary education, she hopes to change the future of her community.

Workshops led by Fr Gerard Theraviam and the World Community for Christian Meditation team offered participants a chance to experience Christian meditation and Taizé prayer, fostering deep moments of renewal and stillness.

Sr Salverina, a member of the Daughters of Carmel Religious Order, gave an inspirational session on "The Art of Listening," emphasizing God's constant presence and reassuring attendees not to fear, for God is always with them.

A session on *Psychospirituality of the Pilgrim of Hope*, led by Fr Philip Chua explored the connection between faith and mental health, followed by a mental health screening. These sessions helped attendees reflect on their emotional and spiritual well-being during the Lenten season.

The summit concluded with a Meet and Greet session where participants could engage with the speakers and leaders, sharing moments of reflection and encouragement.

The evening culminated with a Lenten Concert, featuring performances from Friar Derrick Yap, Cambodian dancers, and the Bave Chamber Choir. As the night came to a close, Archbishop Julian shared his final words, wrapping up this journey of reflection, music and faith, wishing the audience that the spirit of this Lenten season stay in our hearts as we continue our path of hope and renewal.

The highlight of the summit came at the conclusion of the Mass presided over by Archbishop Julian Leow and concelebrated by Friar Derrick Yap, and priests present.

What an amazing and meaningful four days it had been, bringing together faith leaders, experts, and communities to inspire change as well as to encounter God. Archbishop Julian's final words reminded everyone to carry the spirit of hope and renewal beyond the summit.



Feeding the homeless at the Samaritan Hope Home.



Navigating multiculturalism in Malaysia

As Lent draws to a close, and we celebrate Palm Sunday today, Catholics finally enter the last phase of our Easter preparation, one week from the “joyous” mood our Muslim friends got into two weeks ago when they celebrated *Hari Raya*, while many of us were still unable to partake in the *rendang* dishes, unless they are vegan meat, which as the name suggests, is ...a mockery?

Coinciding with most of Lent was the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. This usually presents an opportunity for Muslims and Christians who observe to come together, but thanks to a rise in politically driven conservatism, such occasions are now somewhat frowned upon. Even multi-religious breaking of fast, a commonplace event for years, has been waning, in part due to increasing restrictions on Muslims from participating in such events, and in part from fear of misunderstanding by non-Muslims organizing them. These days, apart from such feel-good features in English dailies and sporadic initiatives from relevant government agencies, celebrations of multiculturalism through religious lenses are becoming less common.

But it is precisely because of the rise in misunderstandings that these events need to not only carry on but be expanded, to both stem the increasing tensions over race and religious relations, and to improve it.

The unusually heated argument that happened in the past few weeks over the erection of a new Madani mosque in Kuala Lumpur is evidence of it. This incident, interspersed with videos of random people being slapped by security guards

to motorists dominated our Internet browsing for weeks. Unfortunately, this negative news trend doesn't seem to be dying down.

Both sides had valid points in their arguments – the temple, at the end of the day, was sitting on private land, but the government, via DBKL, perhaps should have considered the temple's position before selling off the said land.

This is, unfortunately, a common problem we see with Hindu temples here, where urban migration, a shift in historically Tamil occupations, increasing price of land and shifting religious demographics are pushing worshippers away from their historical sites into rather distant and sometimes unrealistic places of worship, that while on paper makes sense in terms of geography or land size, presents the new issues of accessibility and lack of historical context.

Catholics too, face this problem as a significant portion of our flock originate from Tamil estates and we have seen closures and mergers of many chapels, especially in Selangor and Negeri Sembilan. Unlike Catholics who have overarching authorities like diocesan committees to guide the faithful, many of our Hindu friends worship in temples that are local and largely autonomous. Overseeing bodies tend to be coordinative and advisory in nature, like the Malaysian Hindu Sangam.

This problem is compounded by complex land ownership issues and trusts, most of



Making Sense

EMMANUEL JOSEPH

which depend on goodwill from either state or municipal authorities, private land owners like housing developers and real estate investment trust funds, plantation owners, government or semi government agencies who own land banks and reserves that sometimes need to be activated at the cost of farms, structures, and sometimes, even houses of worship.

To their credit, most of these people respect places of worship, especially those that served as historical places of worship of previous workers, despite its dwindling population – our national utility company for example, has a few temples on their headquarters grounds. Some of our military camps maintain chapels on or near premises, as do a few universities. Our police force has a gurdwara near its old headquarters.

For the rest, the places of worship are relatively well-funded and contributions stream in from the business communities whose worshippers use it as a form of community service responsibility (CSR).

Can the Church, or its members, do anything? Perhaps not directly, but as members of a shared community, we could be agents of peaceful dialogue and communication.

Often politicians respond to their respective community sentiments, and it unfortunately makes sense for them to pick a side and hold on to a communal position,

it would be difficult to expect politicians to navigate out of this situation due to the risk involved with it. While empathizing with these sorts of situations, we could offer rationale, expertise and compassion instead of adding fuel to the fire.

As humans, we have, unfortunately, a tendency to view things as binary in nature-winning and losing, oppressor and victor, right and wrong, black and white.

In a complicated, multicultural society such as ours, this is rarely the case as there are a hundred and one things to be weighed and measured to maintain all sides of sensitivities, in the face of communalism, increasingly partisan politics, rapidly shifting global trends, changing local demographics and so on. This has been the case for the past 100 years, just that we did not have half a dozen social media outlets for opportunistic parties to capitalise on issues.

These conversations need to happen at long tables in meetings rooms along the corridors of power, but those important discussions are culminations of thousands of Malaysian small talks that happens over water machines in offices, tables in coffee shops, outside fitting rooms in shopping malls, at strategic points in sermons about empty tombs during the Easter Octave, and even over plates of *rendang*, at a *Raya* or Easter gathering.

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

Synodality as a pastoral conversion for effective collaboration

The word “synod”, or *synodos* in Greek, is an ancient word in the tradition of the Church. It is composed of the preposition *syn*, meaning “with”, and the noun *odos*, or “path”. Thus, ‘synodality’ means walking and journeying together. The concept is based on the common dignity and co-responsibility of all the baptised for the life and mission of the Church. There is an immense richness in the diversity of charisms in the Church, and each part has its own proper role. At the heart of the synodal path is mutual listening, collaboration, and a renewed sense of a shared responsibility and wisdom on the part of all for the mission of the Church.

The objective of the synodal process is to involve the lay faithful in the life and mission of the Church. Synodality reminds us of the work of the Holy Spirit through each of us and through all of us working together for our common mission. It expresses the Church's mission in the ordinary life and work. Synodality bridges the expectation of change, develops and supports the understanding of clergy, religious and laity to the direction of an inclusive and attentive Church. This reflects the Synodal Church where the people that journey together in faith, work in communion.

Synodality in the pastoral field as in collaborative ministry reveals the Synodal Church at its best. This is so because it bears witness to authentic Christian life and is rooted in the spirituality of its Catholicism. Collaboration is the way of sharing responsibility and working together. Collaboration is not simply



PERCEPTIVITY

Sr Margaret Sta Maria FdCC

about delegating duties or about obtaining effective management. It is about being a Synodal Church, about a deep awareness and conviction that the Church is a communion of people with a vision and passion for mission.

God desires unity in diversity, not the unity of sameness

The root meaning of the word collaboration is to ‘co-labour’. In I Corinthians 3:9, the term for co-labour is *synergoi*, from

which we get the modern word ‘synergy’. In short, collaboration means to coordinate, organize, and co-labour in such a way that the sum of our combined efforts produces more than our individual contributions.

Collaboration built on listening, participation, inclusivity, unity, and diversity, is so much more than a strategy for ministry success. It is the expression of God's heart and nature. Co-labouring in loving diversity, unity with God and each other is how we rise to the scale of the challenges that God has given us; it is how the world comes to recognise that a loving God, powerful enough to change people's hearts and minds, is seeking them.

Collaborative ministry, was among the many gifts that the Church re-discovered, especially after the Vatican II Council. Generous participation, listening and open collaboration is the very essence of the Gospel.

The recent Synod also spoke explicitly about collaboration: ‘Since Vatican II, a new type of collaboration between laypeople and clergy has happily come about in the Church... In this there is a new experience of the fact that we are all the Church.’ (Final

Report of the Extraordinary Synod. C.6)

Pope Benedict XVI summarised it beautifully stating, “St Paul is an eloquent example of a man open to collaboration: he did not want to do everything in the Church on his own but availed himself of many and very different colleagues.” (Cf. *Catechesis of Benedict XVI*, January 31, 2007)

Thus, collaborative ministry begins from a fundamental desire to work together because we are called by the Lord to be a company of missionary disciples, not isolated individuals. It grows through a mutual process of conversion, formation and discernment. It also requires a willingness to face and work through conflict because of the attraction and value of a common good, supported by an awareness of participating in the work of the Spirit in the Church.

Collaborative ministry is a ministry committed to mission. It is not simply concerned with the internal life of the Church. Rather, it shows to the world the possibility of transformation, of community and of unity within diversity.

Collaborative ministry for mission can be challenging. However, it creates a sense of direction and focus for any organisation. For this to take effect, leaders need to communicate a clear and compelling mission, inspire their teams to work towards a common goal, and facilitate collaboration by encouraging individuals to work together towards mission. A shared mission can provide a sense of purpose and meaning in the ministry that is being carried out. Ultimately it promotes sense of belonging, participation, communion and lived synodality.

There are obstacles to the Synodality process of journeying together towards a Synodal Church. Daniel Dow in his

book on *Understanding God's heart for collaboration*, January 26, 2024 narrates the following obstacles:

1. Parish and people's vision not of the Church of Vatican II.
2. Time and commitment for ministry by the lay faithful is limited due to family and work commitments.
3. Attitude of superiority towards one another which results in arrogance. Arrogance blinds people to the gifts of others as it attempts to protect their images and self-esteem.
4. Spirituality as a private matter. There is resistance to change and renewal.
5. Clericalism as the attitude that over-emphasises the power and authority of those who are ordained at the expense of the rest of the baptised people of God. Pope Francis describes the affliction of clericalism as one of the attitudes that must be overcome to enable listening in the Church.
6. Gender inequality effects the fidelity on the demands of the reign of God that the Church is always called to heal all divisions that could wound the mystical body of Christ.

To sum up, in this Jubilee Year of Hope we are also reminded to make the internal pilgrimage. Thus, moving towards a Synodal Church as a pastoral conversion does express this journey of Hope. Someone said, “Until you truly hope for something, God will remain impersonal to you.” As such, we are being invited to dig deeply into our baptismal identity and listen to the Spirit calling us to a future filled with hope towards a Synodal Church.

Sr Margaret Sta Maria FdCC is the Director of the *Kuala Lumpur Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute*



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Searching for Jesus in the afternoon of Christianity

Where might we experience Jesus today in a world that is seemingly too crowded with its own concerns to allow a space for Him?

The renowned spirituality writer Tomas Halik, in a recent book entitled *The Afternoon of Christianity*, makes this suggestion. As the world makes less and less explicit space for Jesus, we need to search for Him more and more in those places where He is “anonymously present”. Halik’s counsel: “Let us search for Him ‘by His voice’ like Mary Magdalene; let us search for Him in strangers on the road like the disciples on the road to Emmaus; let us search for Him in the wounds of the world like the apostle Thomas; let us search for Him whenever He passes through the closed doors of fear; let us search for Him where He brings the gift of forgiveness and new beginnings.”

The invitation here is to better respond to the signs of the times, given that we are living now in what he calls “the afternoon of Christianity”.

What is the afternoon of Christianity?

He distinguishes three periods in the history of Christianity. He sees the morning of Christianity as the time before 1500 AD, the pre-modern period, the time before secularisation. The noonday of Christianity, for him, is the time of secularisation and mo-

dernity, basically from the 19th century until our own generation. The afternoon of Christianity, for him, is our time today, the post-modern world, where we are witnessing a breakdown of much of the world as we once knew it, with the effects of this on faith and religion. And for Halik, the effect of all of this is that the Christian faith has now outgrown previous forms of religion.

Wow! That’s quite a statement! However, what Halik is proposing is not that the faith is dying, that Christianity is dying, or that the churches are dying. Rather, for him, Christianity today finds itself in a certain cultural homelessness, in a time where so many social structures that once supported it are collapsing, so that the Christian faith is now needing to seek a new shape, a new home, new means of expression, new social and cultural roles, and new allies.

And how will that turn out? We don’t know. But here’s Halik’s hunch: Christianity will not, as many fear, lose its identity and become a non-religious faith. It will not disintegrate into some vague, doctrineless, boundaryless, privatised spirituality. Rather, the hope is that (paradoxically) the very dynamism and diversity that frightens many Christians is the incubation phase of the Christianity of the future.

For him, the challenges that Christianity

faces today invite us to bring faith into a new space, like Paul did when he brought Christianity out of the confines of the Judaism of his day. Here is how Halik puts it: “I believe that the Christianity of tomorrow will be, above all, a community of a new hermeneutic, a new reading, a new and deeper interpretation of the two sources of divine revelation, Scripture and tradition, and especially of God’s utterance in the signs of the times.”

How is this all to happen? That’s the thesis of the book. Chapter after chapter lays out possibilities of how we might more courageously read the signs of the times and, rather than water down any of the substance of the Christian faith, let the signs of the times lead us to a deeper understanding of both Scripture and tradition, especially so that we might bring together, in better harmony, the Christ of cosmic evolution with the Resurrected Jesus; and then recognise that they are both not just present in what is explicit in our Christian faith and worship, they are also anonymously present in the evolution of our culture and society.

Consequently, we need to search for Jesus Christ not just in our Scriptures, our churches, our worship services, our catechetical classes, and our explicit Christian fellowship, though of course we need to search

there. But, like Mary Magdalene, we need to recognise His voice in the caretaker at the cemetery; like the discouraged disciples on the road to Emmaus, when we no longer have the answers, we need to recognise His presence in strangers whose words make our hearts burn inside us; like the doubting Thomas, we need to overcome our doubts about His resurrection by touching His wounds as they are now manifest in the poor and the suffering; like Jesus’ first community who barricaded themselves behind a locked door out of fear, we need to recognise Him whenever, inside our huddled fear, something expectedly breathes peace into us; and we need to recognise His presence inside us every time we receive forgiveness and are empowered to begin again. This isn’t a time of dying, it’s a time of *kairos*, a time when we are being invited to open our eyes in a new way so as to recognise the Christ who is walking with us in some unfamiliar forms.

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

Recently, talking with some priest friends, we were worried about the phenomenon of children who come for catechism but not for Mass on Sunday. Sadly, it’s hard to put the blame on the children as they are dependent on their parents for transport. The reality is that some of these parents themselves are not there for Mass so where have we as Church gone wrong?

Once upon a time people came for Mass under the pain of mortal sin and so they complied, willingly or otherwise. However the pendulum has swung to the other side and some now chose to come when it suits them, sometimes just at Christmas and perhaps on Good Friday, rather than Easter. Ash Wednesday, interestingly, is not a day of obligation (but of fast and abstinence) but chalks up high attendance. Some newly confirmed youngsters seem to think that they have now ‘graduated’ from church attendance and would rather sleep in on a Sunday. (By the way, there is a possibility of an evening Mass!) Parents may despair that their offspring seem to have abandoned the practice of the faith and wonder where they went wrong and feel guilt-ridden. So what has happened?

Perhaps it could be argued that not coming out of fear but rather that they want to is actually better. Maybe. But the reality is that when people let their attendance slide, they can end up stopping altogether after a while and are then labelled ‘non-practicing’ or ‘lapsed’ Catholics. They might come for weddings and funerals and even walk up for Holy Communion, despite announcements that say otherwise. Perhaps for many, there is still a sense of still being Catholic although they may no longer actively participate in the life of the parish. Some will point to a



As I was Contemplating

FR GERARD THERAVIAM

Reclaiming Sunday as the Lord’s day

lessening in the ‘sense of sin’ and an ‘anything goes’ mentality that pervades society. Some will refer to ‘cafeteria Catholics’ who pick and choose for themselves from among the beliefs and practices of the Church.

It could be that some people never really moved from mere attendance on Sundays to radical discipleship that was an ongoing daily endeavour. Maybe some are like the seeds that fell onto

unfertile ground that failed to sprout or died quickly, as in the Parable of the Sower.

One of the realities is that people have lost a sense of what the Eucharist and even Sunday is. Hence I reread St John Paul II’s Apostolic Letter entitled *Dies Domini, [Keeping the Lord’s Day]* released in 1998.

One significant point I picked up is that genuine spiritual maturity is needed to distinguish between “the weekend” (time to rest and relax) and Sunday (time to worship). For many, the weekend is about ‘me’ time and we might have a lot of different things that we haven’t the time for on weekdays, but we forget that Sunday is actually the Lord’s Day and we should not short-change ourselves or even God on that. St Jerome declared: “Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, it is the day of Christians, it is our day.”

So how can we spend worthily spend Sunday?

In the words of Pope John Paul II, Sunday is the “very heart of Christian life. The celebration of the Eucharist is the very heart of Sunday. The Eucharist is the celebration of the living presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of his own people. The Eucharist is the “fountainhead” of the Church; it feeds and forms the Church.

As in every Eucharistic celebration, the

Risen Lord is encountered in the Sunday assembly at the twofold table of the Word and of the Bread of Life

John Paul II stated that Sunday is the “day par excellence” for our relationship with God. It is a day of explicit prayer, “in which the relationship becomes an intense dialogue” with God. Sunday is the day for remembering all the good that God has done. In addition, the “weekly Easter” becomes the “weekly Pentecost” – we relive the joyful encounter with the Risen Lord and receive the life-giving breath of his Spirit.”

We journey from Mass to mission. Our Eucharistic celebration does NOT stop at the church door... there is a responsibility entrusted to us to share with others the joy of meeting the Lord in the liturgy but also in our daily life and shared experiences.

Of course, Sunday is a day of rest, a break from the mundane tasks of the week. The account in Genesis of the creation of the world describes God resting on the seventh day – the Sabbath rest. Rest is something sacred, because we all need a break from excessively demanding cycle of earthly tasks in order to renew our awareness that everything is the work of God. All our work is actually cooperating with God who is at work in our world.

With the advent of Saturdays off, it now is possible to do our shopping and other necessary tasks then and allow ourselves a more restful Sunday – a day for re-creation of our tired selves.

Sunday allows us more family time, of being together, not just at church but also at meals and shared relaxing time together. With our respective busy weekly schedules, Sunday allows us the opportunity to bond together and make time for each other.

Sunday is a day of solidarity and brotherhood with others who share faith with us. As we come for Mass, we realise

that we are not alone as we encounter our sisters and brothers who share the same faith in the Risen Christ and who share in our burdens of life. Sunday also allows us the opportunity for mission, for reaching out – for instance, visiting the elderly and sick in their homes as well as hospitals. We can take the opportunity for acts of mercy, charity and apostolate.

When we travel, let us not take a holiday from church on Sundays. Allow ourselves the joy of discovery of the church in new places, cultures and languages. The basic structure of the mass is the same everywhere but it can be a refreshing experience of the Church beyond the ordinary.

My hope is that in this Jubilee Year of Hope, we will re-discover the beauty of the Lord’s Day, crowned by the Eucharist which strengthens us for the mission of the week ahead. May our “weekly Easter” becomes the “weekly Pentecost” – we relive the joyful encounter with the Risen Lord and receive the life-giving breath of his Spirit who empowers and sends us on mission.

“Leave everything on the Lord’s Day and run diligently to your assembly, because it is your praise of God. Otherwise, what excuse will they make to God, those who do not come together on the Lord’s Day to hear the word of life and feed on the divine nourishment which lasts forever?” The Didascalia, 3rd Century

For a fuller understanding of the Lord’s Day, please do read St. John Paul II’s *Dies Domini, Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy* - an Apostolic Letter published in 1998. <https://rb.gy/hfg336>

Fr Gerard Theraviam is the parish priest of the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist in Kuala Lumpur, as well as the Spiritual Director to the World Community for Christian Meditation, Malaysia.

Little Catholics' corner

Dear children,

Today is the beginning of Holy Week, when we specially remember the last days of Jesus' earthly life and His death on the cross.

The Sunday before Jesus died, He came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. All the people cheered for Him.

They laid down their cloaks and palm branches on the road to honour Him.

That was Palm Sunday. On the first Holy Thursday, Jesus offered the first Mass ever. He took bread and wine and changed them into His Body and Blood and gave them to His Apostles to eat and drink.

The same thing happens at every Mass when the priest says Jesus' words at the Consecration. We don't see the bread or wine change, but they are really Jesus, offering Himself to God for us.

Good Friday is the day that Jesus died on the cross. The leaders of the Jews got the people to turn against Him.

After an unfair trial, Jesus was stripped harshly and made to carry a cross up a hill. Then He was nailed to the cross and hung there until He died. Only His mother and a few of His friends were with Him.

Jesus was God and could have stopped the people from killing

Him, but He chose to die for you and me. Because we sin, we don't deserve to go to Heaven, but Jesus' death saved us.

Jesus died to take the punishment for our sins so that we could go to Heaven. That's why it's called "Good" Friday! What is something special you can do on Good Friday to make up for your sins and say "thank you" to Jesus?

Aunty Eliz

Can you find 10 differences between the photos below?



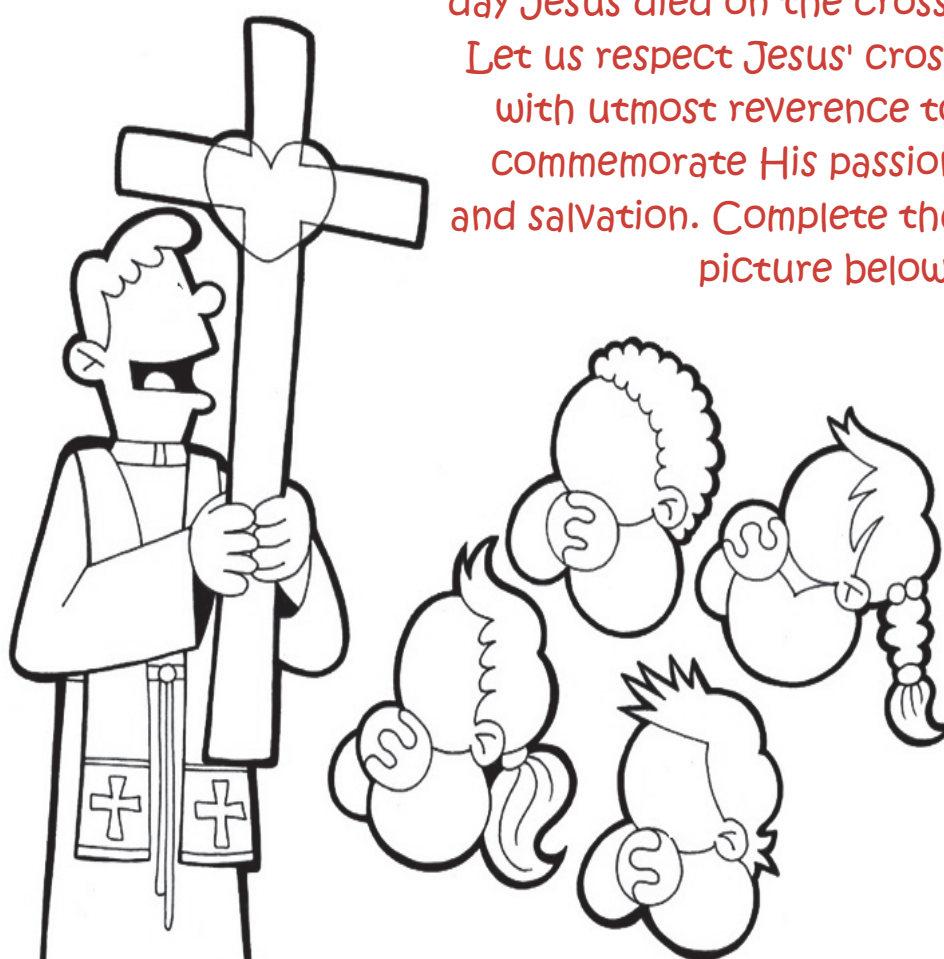
"Hosanna to the Son of David!" (Mat 21:9)



On the first Holy Thursday, Jesus established the first Mass. Can you sketch bread and wine on the table? Don't forget to colour the picture.



Good Friday observes the day Jesus died on the cross. Let us respect Jesus' cross with utmost reverence to commemorate His passion and salvation. Complete the picture below.



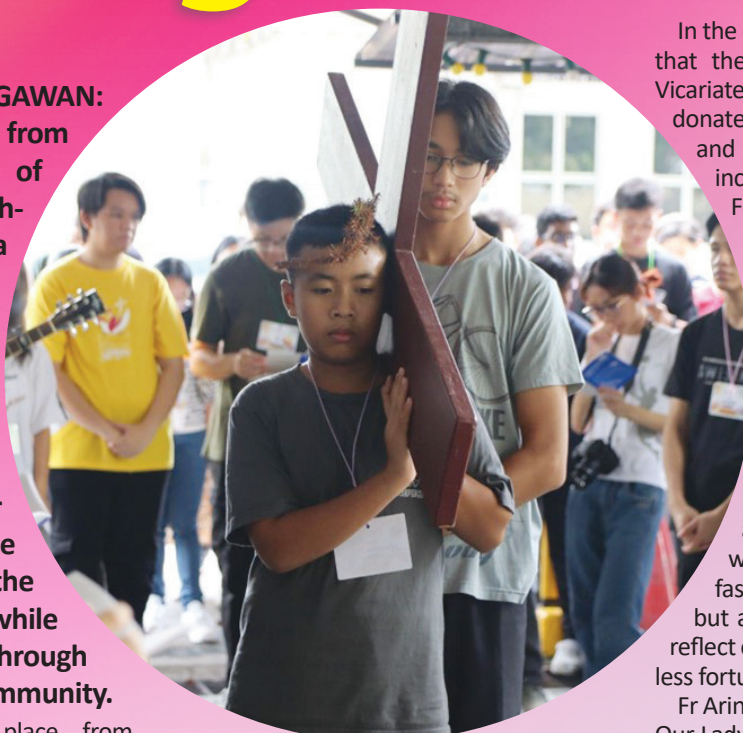


Harmony in hunger: Sharing in times of NEED

By Francis Mae

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN: High-spirited youth from various districts of Brunei Darussalam gathered in the capital in a spirit of solidarity and sacrifice during the Lenten season. The 30-Hour Vicariate Youth Famine is an annual event that allows participants to fast from all meals for thirty full hours, with the purpose of experiencing the challenges of hunger while deepening their faith through prayer, reflection, and community.

This year's event took place from March 16 to 18 at the Church of Our Lady of Assumption (COLA) under the theme *Harmony in Hunger: Sharing in Times of Need*. The theme was accompanied by a Bible verse from Romans 12:16: "Unity and humility in times of scarcity – live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited." This verse served as a reminder to embrace humility, practise sacrifice, and strengthen



Youth participants partaking in the Stations of the Cross. (Photo/COLA)

the commitment to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving during this holy season of Lent.

The event saw an overwhelming response, with 170 youth participating ranging from 11 to 24 years old, who were divided into 11 groups. Each group took part in creating their own unique chants, engaging in prayer stations, and participating in various team-building games and activities.

In the opening remarks, it was announced that the funds raised from the 30-Hour Vicariate Youth Famine 2025 would be donated to charitable causes both locally and internationally. The beneficiaries include YASKA - Children's Cancer Foundation in Brunei Darussalam, and Hospicio de San Jose and Asin At Ilaw in the Philippines. This charitable contribution highlighted the event's deeper purpose of serving those in need, even as the youth journeyed through their own sacrifice.

The fasting officially began on the second day after breakfast, marking the start of thirty hours of abstinence from food. Participants were reminded of the significance of fasting not just as a physical challenge, but as a spiritual exercise to help them reflect on the suffering and struggles of the less fortunate.

Fr Arin Sugit, parish priest of the Church of Our Lady of Assumption, warmly welcomed the youth and offered words of encouragement. His remarks set the tone for the weekend, reminding the participants of the importance of journeying together through this season of Lent and supporting one another in their shared sacrifices.

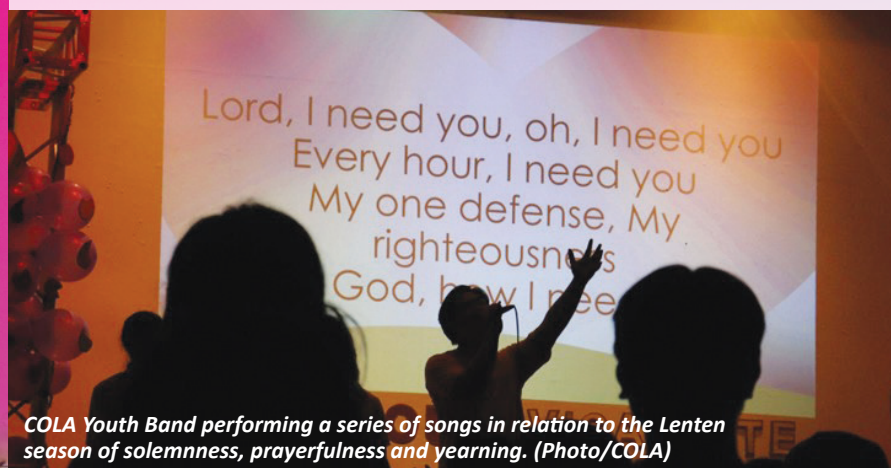
The event featured two inspiring talks. The first, titled *The Hope of Lent*, delivered by Winnie from COOL Seria in English, offering reflections on the spiritual significance of Lent and the hope that arises from embracing

its disciplines. The second talk, *Prayer: Unity Through Humility*, was presented by Alfie and Phoebe Ang from St John's Church (SJC) in both English and Malay, emphasizing the power of prayer and the importance of unity in humility.

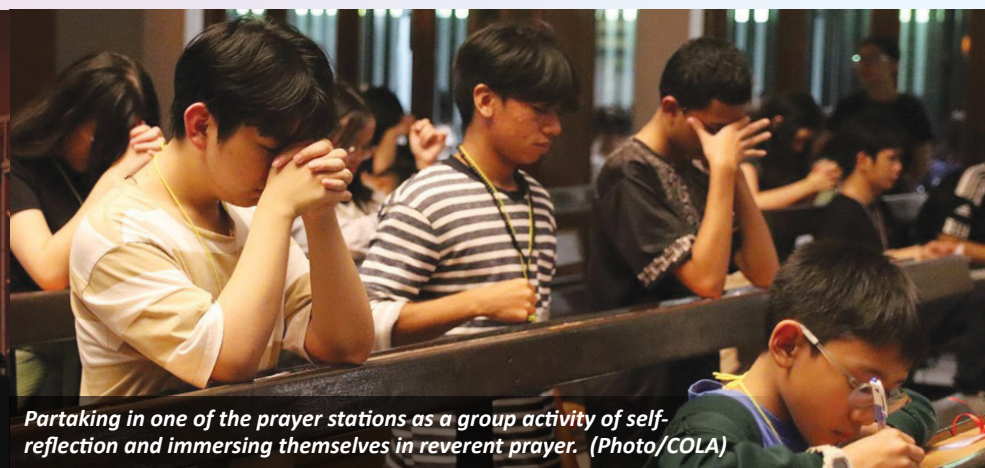
Throughout the event, participants engaged in various enriching activities, including the Divine Mercy Chaplet, prayer stations, Mass, testimonies, and solemn praise led by the COLA Youth Band. One particularly reflective activity was *We do not live by bread alone*, which deepened the participants' understanding of the role of fasting and prayer in their spiritual lives. The "Amazing Games" and Stations of the Cross (Tableau) provided further opportunities for fellowship and reflection.

As the event neared its conclusion, Fr Paul Shie, parish priest of the Church of St John Kuala Belait and head of the Youth Ministry, celebrated the closing Mass. In his homily, he urged the youth to embody faithfulness, selflessness, humility, and compassion in their daily lives. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong prayer life, urging the participants to cultivate their spiritual habits as they continue their journey of faith.

Fr Paul concluded the event with heartfelt gratitude, thanking the youth for their active participation in the 30-Hour Vicariate Youth Famine 2025. With a final blessing, he officially announced the breaking of the fast, marking the end of the three-day event and the beginning of a renewed spirit of commitment to faith, humility, and service.



COLA Youth Band performing a series of songs in relation to the Lenten season of solemnity, prayerfulness and yearning. (Photo/COLA)



Partaking in one of the prayer stations as a group activity of self-reflection and immersing themselves in reverent prayer. (Photo/COLA)



Navigating faith in the digital age

BUKIT MERTAJAM: The St Anne's Youth Ministry hosted an inspiring digital talk at the Minor Basilica of St Anne recently. Led by Erwind Jozef and Jason Tioh, coordinators of St Anne's Social Communication team, the session offered an insightful discussion on the intersection of faith, technology, and responsible digital engagement.

The event began with Jason sharing the inspiring story of Blessed Carlo Acutis, a modern role model for young Catholics. Renowned for his deep devotion to the Eucharist and his groundbreaking work in cataloguing Eucharistic miracles online, Blessed Carlo showed how technology can be harnessed to spread faith. Jason also highlighted that Blessed Carlo will be canonised on April 27, 2025 — a momentous occasion for the Church and a powerful inspiration for young people striving to live holy lives in today's world. Encouraging attendees to reflect on their own digital habits, Jason introduced practical tools like digital well-being settings and the Pomodoro technique. These simple yet effective changes, he suggested, can

help us better manage our time, fostering more meaningful moments with God and our loved ones.

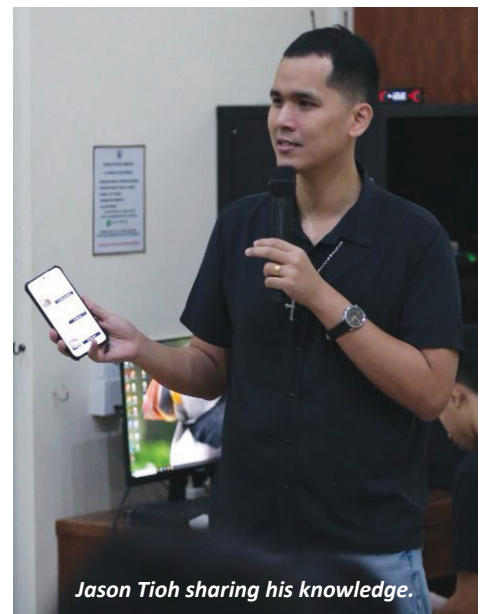
In addition to time management, Jason emphasised various ways to explore and deepen our faith through media. Rather than getting lost in endless scrolling, he encouraged young Catholics to engage with digital content that nourishes the soul — such as faith-based podcasts, videos, or online communities. He also referenced Pope Francis' message on social communication and Artificial Intelligence, reminding the audience that the Church is actively addressing the challenges of the digital age.

Erwind's segment focused on digital safety and privacy, an increasingly important topic in today's online world. Drawing from practical examples and personal experiences, he outlined essential steps for protecting oneself from scams and data breaches. Beyond caution, he encouraged attendees to reflect on their digital footprint and how they present themselves online. "Let's strive to be Christ-like in the digital space as well," he urged, emphasising the impor-

tance of being responsible digital citizens.

The session concluded with a prayer and blessing by Fr Anthony Pillai. His presence affirmed and uplifted many attendees, bringing a profound sense of unity and encouragement to all present.

As we navigate this digital age, may we strive to use technology wisely — building connections, deepening our faith, and bringing Christ's light into the virtual world.



Jason Tioh sharing his knowledge.



A journey of faith and fellowship: Lent Camp 2025

PARIT BUNTAR, PERAK: The youth of the Church of Our Lady of Good Health organised a camp at the Little Sisters of the Poor (LSP) in Penang. The young participants had the opportunity to experience faith, service, and community in a profound way. Upon their arrival, the excitement and anticipation were palpable as they settled in, eager for the days ahead. The programme officially commenced the next morning with a pilgrimage to one of Penang's significant pilgrimage centres, the Church of Holy Name of Mary.

The pilgrimage was a spiritually enriching experience for the youth, the Sisters, and the residents of LSP. Together, they journeyed to the Church of the Holy Name of Mary, learning about its rich history and engaging in moments of prayer and reflection. This journey was not just about travelling to a holy site but about deepening their understanding of faith and spirituality.

Upon their return, they spent the afternoon in meaningful conversations with the Sisters. The Sisters shared their vocation stories and their call to religious life,

inspiring the young participants. A fruitful dialogue took place, where the youth expressed their thoughts, questions, and perspectives on religious life. This exchange fostered a deeper bond between the Sisters and the young participants, bridging the gap between generations and vocations.

Later in the evening, the Sisters guided the youth on a tour of LSP, sharing its history and the inspiring story behind its establishment. Following this, they gathered for dinner. The night concluded with an hour of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, accompanied by praise and worship. This session led the youth into deep reflection on their Lenten journey, encouraging them to contemplate their personal pilgrimage as pilgrims of hope.

They lit candles before the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Sr Jessica further deepened their reflections by sharing from the Book of Joel, prompting them to embrace hope and transformation.

To end the night, the youth engaged in games and songs, celebrating the joy of Lent as a season of renewal and hope.



The youths with the nuns.

The final day began with morning praise and worship, led by the OLGH youth, alongside the Sisters and seniors. This was followed by sharing sessions and an ice-breaking activity conducted by the brothers from the Seminary, further strengthening the bonds among participants.

At 10.00am, the Mass, animated by the brothers and youth of OLGH, brought the community together in prayer. The spiritual momentum continued with another ice-

breaking session, this time in Tamil, conducted by the OLGH Youth and Brothers, ensuring inclusivity for all participants.

The afternoon was dedicated to community service, where the youth actively participated in feeding, washing, cleaning, and sweeping within the LSP premises. This hands-on experience deepened their understanding of humility and service, reinforcing the importance of giving back to the community.

Before parting ways, the youths gathered for a review session, reflecting on their experiences and key takeaways from the camp. Finally, the camp concluded with a farewell lunch, where laughter, gratitude, and newfound friendships filled the atmosphere.

The Lent Camp 2025 was more than just a retreat; it was a pilgrimage of faith, hope, and love. The youths not only deepened their spiritual connection but also gained valuable insights into religious life, service, and community building. As they departed, their hearts were full, their spirits renewed, and their commitment to being pilgrims of hope strengthened.

This camp served as a beautiful reminder that faith is not just about individual belief but about journeying together, supporting one another, and being a light for the world.



The youth spending time and assisting the elderly.



Desperate conditions in earthquake aftermath

YANGON, Myanmar: International development agency, Christian Aid has spoken to one of its local workers operating in Myanmar after the March 28 devastating earthquake. Because of security reasons, her words are anonymous:

“The current situation on the ground is highly complicated because of the difficulties that rescue teams are facing at a community level. The roads are damaged and there’s been massive devastation of buildings.

“At the moment, the most critical needs are access to safe and clean drinking water and latrines. Because so many people died due to the earthquake, we now have a lot of dead bodies, and body bags are essential as they start decomposing. Managing that is critical at this stage.

“We also need to hygiene kits and shelter assistance. We are thinking about using tarpaulin sheets and ground sheets so that they can be laid out on the roads. Because these days many people are sleeping on the roads because they don’t have any houses.

“Christian Aid and our local partners are focusing on the direct assessment at community level. The hardest hit areas are the northwest, the central dry zone of Myanmar, where water scarcity is already an issue, especially during the summer from March to May.

“The earthquake has exacerbated the water scarcity, and we now have only four hours of power in Yangon and outside Yangon, no power at all. In Myanmar power supply is directly connected to the water supply.” ICN



Rescue teams are seen at a construction site where a building collapsed in Bangkok on March 28 after an earthquake. (ucanews photo)

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10th Anniversary
In Loving Memory

Ten years has flown by since you left us,
But your love has been our compass,
guiding us through life's ups and downs.
You may not be here in person,
but your spirit is
our constant companion
Our family chain is broken and nothing
seems the same, but as God calls us one
by one, the chain will link again.
.....
“When doubts filled my mind,
your comfort brought me joy”
Psalms 94:19
.....
Lovingly remembered and deeply missed by
husband, children, grandchildren, siblings, relatives and loved ones.



In Loving Memory of
our Dearest Father
Thomas Pee Tian Cho

19 March 1944 –
12 April 2022

“To you, O LORD,
I lift up my soul.”
~Psalm 25:1
We Shen Ray Leanne
always remember.



4th Anniversary
In Loving Memory of

Marianthony Peter s/o
Marianthony

21/11/1925-09/04/2021

Achaan, there is no
goodbye for us. Where
ever you are, You will
always be in our hearts.
Rest in peace, Achaan.
Deeply missed and
cherished by loved ones.



2nd Anniversary
Mr Paul Thanaraju Devasahayan

Born: October 6, 1952
Reunited with the Lord: April 9, 2023

Dearest Appa, on the second anniversary of your
passing, we hold you close in our hearts.
The memories we shared are treasures we cherish:
your laughter, your wisdom, and your boundless
love. The pain of losing you is only deepened by
the recent loss of Amma as well. We miss your
guidance, your warmth, and your unwavering
support. You both taught us the true meaning of
love and family. Though our hearts ache with your
absence, we find solace in the thought of your
reunion. May you both rest in eternal peace,
together forever. We miss you both dearly!
Memorial Mass for the repose of his soul will be
celebrated at the Church of the Divine Mercy,
Shah Alam, on April 12 at 6 pm.
He is fondly remembered and missed by
his children, sons-in-law, daughter-in-law and
his lovely eight grandchildren.



In Loving Memory of
18th Anniversary

Mr. A
Savarinathan

25/10/1921 to
14/04/2007

Today we are not only remembering our
beloved parents, but we are also celebrating
the myriad of ways they enriched our lives. As
we share our memories, let us find comfort in
knowing that their spirit will live on through
the love they shared and the lives they touched.
May we carry forward their legacy by
embodying the same compassion and
generosity they so effortlessly displayed.



8th Anniversary

Mrs. Anamah
Savarinathan

29/09/1938 to
12/04/2017

The 18th and 8th Anniversary
Memorial Service for our beloved parents will
be celebrated at Cathedral of St. John the
Evangelist, Jalan Bukit Nanas, Kuala Lumpur,
on 12th April at 6.30 pm, and
14th April at 6.30am.
Prayers will also be held at our residence
No.22, Jalan 9 Ampang Jaya, Selangor,
on both days at 8.00pm.
Your prayers and presence
will be much appreciated.
From: Loving Children, Daughters-in-law,
Grandchildren, Relatives and Friends.

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The righteous man
perishes, and no
one lays it to heart;
devout men are
taken away,
while no one
understands.
For the righteous
man is taken away
from calamity;
he enters into
peace; they rest in
their beds who
walk in their
uprightness.
Isaiah 57:1-2

1st Anniversary
In Everloving Memory of
Benaverter Basilias



To the Lord on
10th April 2024

No tears can
bring you back.
Forever in our hearts.
Sadly missed by
Basilias Family

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TOGETHER, WE MAKE EACH DAY DIFFERENT

Download the Click To Pray updates now.



THE FEAST OF DIVINE MERCY 2025



JESUS, I TRUST IN YOU



THE FEAST OF DIVINE MERCY

21ST APRIL 2025 - 27TH APRIL 2025

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?

JOHN 11:26

FEAST DAY HIGHLIGHTS



MASS FOR THE SICK & ELDERLY

There will be a **special blessing and anointing** for the sick and elderly at the 11:00 AM Mass on the 25th of April



MASS FOR CHILDREN

Divine Mercy Novena and Praise & Worship led by children. There will also be an **exciting performance for the kids** after the 10:00 AM Mass on the 26th of April



CONFESSION

Available daily **before** Mass



BLESSING OF SACRED IMAGES

Bring along Sacred Images for a blessing during the 3:30 PM Mass on the 27th of April



MASS OFFERINGS

Mass offerings can be made opposite the Parish Office from the 21st - 27th of April



MERCHANDISE

Divine Mercy merchandise (T-shirts, Water Tumblers, Umbrellas, Mini Rosary and Hand fans) will be available for sale in front of the Parish Office



BOOTHS

Come visit the Divine Mercy, Mental Health, Family Life & Ecology booths at the Church Foyer
Divine Mercy Booth: 21st - 27th April
Other Booths: 25th - 27th April



FAUSTINA'S BAKERY CORNER by CDM Altar Servers

Selling Polish Pastries - Kolaczki Pastries, Cupcakes, Blueberries Latice, Cranberries with Walnuts bread and more on the 26th & 27th of April



CASA MARIA by PIHDM

Selling hand made items such as Divine Mercy Rosary, Pot Holders, Cup Holders, Jute Bags, Hand Towels, etc. on the 26th & 27th of April



HOLY RELICS

Holy Relics will be on display for veneration at St. Joseph Room, 1st Floor on the 26th & 27th of April



PROCESSION CANDLES

Candles will be sold before the 6:00 PM Mass on the 26th of April



REFRESHMENTS

Refreshments provided daily after mass

DEVOTIONS AND MASS TIMES

21 APRIL
MONDAY

"I am the Resurrection and the Life"

John 11:25-26

7:00 PM Flag raising,
Holy Hour, Divine
Mercy Novena,
Praise & Worship
8:30 PM Mass

22 APRIL
TUESDAY

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe"

John 20:29

7:00 PM Holy Hour, Divine
Mercy Novena,
Praise & Worship
8:30 PM Mass

23 APRIL
WEDNESDAY

"Lord, help my unbelief!"

Mark 9:24

7:00 PM Holy Hour, Divine
Mercy Novena,
Praise & Worship
8:30 PM Mass

24 APRIL
THURSDAY

"Faith that moves mountains"

Matthew 17:20

7:00 PM Holy Hour, Divine
Mercy Novena,
Praise & Worship
8:30 PM Mass

25 APRIL
FRIDAY

"Hope that does not disappoint"

Romans 5:5

10:00 AM Holy Hour, Divine Mercy
Novena, Praise & Worship
11:00 AM Mass for the Sick & Elderly,
with blessing & anointing

7:00 PM Holy Hour, Divine Mercy
Novena, Praise & Worship
8:30 PM Mass

26 APRIL
SATURDAY

"Teaching our children to hope in God"

Psalms 78:5

10:00 AM Holy Hour, Divine Mercy
Novena, Praise & Worship
followed by
Mass for Children

Divine Mercy as the Anchor of Hope
5:00 PM Divine Mercy Novena,
Praise & Worship
6:00 PM Mass, Candlelight
Procession, Benediction

27 APRIL
SUNDAY

Divine Mercy as the Anchor of Hope

7:30 AM Divine Mercy Novena
8:00 AM Mass (Tamil)
9:30 AM Divine Mercy Novena
10:00 AM Mass (Mandarin)
11:30 AM Divine Mercy Novena
12:00 PM Mass (Bahasa Malaysia)
3:00 PM Divine Mercy Novena
3:30 PM Mass (English)



Church of the
DIVINE MERCY
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As CDM is a Zero Waste Church,
we invite everyone to
**bring their own water bottles and
food containers.**

Water dispensers are available at the
Grotto & Cafeteria