

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

Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them.

Rom. 11:13-14



Pastoral assemblies in preparation for MPC2026

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Archbishop Julian Leow reflects on his new role

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Thousands die at Sea

VATICAN: Pope Francis called attention to the thousands of people who have lost their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea to immigrate to Europe in 2023.

“It is an open wound of our humanity,” he said after reciting the Angelus prayer at the Vatican on August 13. He added that the deaths bring “pain and shame.”

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimates that 2,175 men, women, and children are either missing or dead in the Mediterranean Sea as of Aug 13. In 2022, in the same period, the estimated dead and missing was 1,361.

Speaking to a crowd of about 15,000 people gathered in St Peter’s Square, Pope Francis said he had prayed for the 41 migrants who died in the latest Mediterranean shipwreck tragedy.

Survivors rescued off the coast of the small Italian island of Lampedusa reported the migrant shipwreck on Aug 9, according to CNN.

An estimated 90,763 migrants have arrived in Italy by sea in 2023 as of August 6, a large uptick from the previous year, authorities say.

“I encourage political and diplomatic efforts that seek to heal [the wound of migrant deaths] in a spirit of solidarity and brotherhood,” Pope Francis said Aug 13, “as well as the efforts of all those working to prevent shipwrecks and rescue migrants.” —
By Hannah Brockhaus, CNA



(Vatican News photo)

Be champions of fraternity

VATICAN: As the United Nations International Youth Day was marked on August 12, Pope Francis posted an encouragement to young people on his X social media platform (formerly known as Twitter).

He invited youth to dream big, promote a culture of care, and be champions of fraternity.

The Pope also offered young people a key for living a fuller life: allowing themselves to be guided by God and accepting the advice of good counsellors.

“Dear young people, never lose your courage to dream big and to live life completely! Adopt the culture of care and spread it. Become champions of fraternity. Face life’s challenges by letting yourselves be guided by God and by good counsellors. #YouthDay”

The Pope’s tweet recalled his speech to young people at the Sacred Heart School in Awali, during his Apostolic Journey to Bah-

rain (Nov 3-6, 2022).

Just two weeks ago, Pope Francis led some 1.5 million people in the Church’s celebration of the 37th World Youth Day, held in Lisbon, Portugal, Aug 1-6.

The 2023 edition of UN International Youth Day boasts the theme *Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World*.

According to the UN website, the theme highlights the need for economies to embrace a “green transition” and to shift towards “an environmentally-sustainable and climate-friendly world”.

That transition can best take place, says the UN, when everyone seeks to make life and work decisions that do not negatively impact the environment.

“While green skills are relevant for people of all ages,” reads a statement on the UN website, “they have heightened importance for younger people, who can contribute to the

green transition for a longer period of time.”

The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, released a message ahead of International Youth Day.

He encouraged young people to continue their call for “bold and accelerated action” on the challenges facing the world today.

Guterres noted that young people often seek to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable, as they work toward solutions that ensure “social, economic, and climate justice, and peace and prosperity for all.”

The UN Secretary-General also encouraged older generations to ensure young people’s access to the skills they will need to make a positive impact on their economies and the world around them.

As Pope Francis urged young people in his X post: “Never lose your courage to dream big and to live life completely!” — **By Devin Watkins, Vatican News**



HERALD

ESTABLISHED 1994

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Tel / Whatsapp: 03-20268291

Website : www.heraldmalaysia.com

Facebook : www.facebook.com/

heraldmalaysia

Jointly published by the
Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur,
Diocese of Malacca Johore, Diocese of
Penang and Diocese of Keningau

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Youth not asking 'Is there space?' but 'Why bother?'

For an entire generation of young people — some of them misfits and some cool kids, some convinced Catholics but also plenty of folks on the fence and free-spirited seekers — Pope Francis at the recent World Youth Day (WYD) in Lisbon, Portugal, had a clear answer: “Yes, there is room for all of you in the Catholic Church.”

“There is space in the Church for everyone... Everyone, everyone, everyone!”

What does it mean to reiterate that there is room for everyone in the Church?

In a time when everyone gives their opinion and no one listens, when so many try to appear as something they are not, there is no message more attractive and revolutionary than what the Pope is reminding us of: God loves us just as we are, always forgives us, awaits us with open arms, and extends His mercy.

The invitation which the “rejuvenated” Pope Francis reiterated “among the young,” influenced by their enthusiasm, is the key to evangelisation today.

What else do we need if not someone to embrace us as we are, making us feel special, wanted, loved, and forgiven? What else do we need if not to be assured? There is room for you too, regardless of your circumstances.

It's reasonable to wonder, however, if that was really the question today's youth are asking about the Catholic Church.

There's a great deal of evidence — much of it gathered by Vatican outfits — to suggest that the true question young people today have isn't so much, “Is there space for me in the Church?” as it is, “Why bother?”

The great insight of Pope St John Paul II in instituting and boosting World Youth Day was twofold.

In an age that insisted with increasing volume and consistency on the idea that Christianity's time had come and gone, that the power of Christianity as a cultural force was on the wane and that the civilisation Christianity had helped build and sustain for well over a thousand years finally was ready to shed the baggage of ancient faith, John Paul II called young people to bet it all on Christ in the Church.

“Enthusiasm is brief,” John Paul II told the roughly one million young people gathered in Buenos Aires on Palm Sunday of 1987, the first really big World Youth Day. “Let yourselves be embraced

by the mystery of the Son of Man, by the mystery of Christ who died and rose from the dead. Let yourselves be embraced by the Paschal Mystery!”

In an age for which the clash of great systems was the order of the day, and disorder in the soul was everywhere palpable, John Paul II called on young people to seek the victory beyond history, won before the foundation of the world: “In Him,” said Pope St John Paul II, “is the victory that triumphs in the world, the definitive victory of man.”

That was powerful, heady stuff.

Since then, WYD has taken on a life of its own. It has developed a culture of its own, tending sometimes and in some ways toward attempts to baptise the cult of youth that is a hallmark of civilisational malaise, but at the same time, and in other ways, standing in stalwart opposition to the cultural dismissal of Christianity as a force for good.

Francis may have been answering the wrong question — or fighting the last war — with his insistence on there being space for everyone in the Church, but he certainly keyed into a subtle cultural undertone in his closing August 6 homily for WYD, which happened to be the Solemnity of the Transfiguration.

“Listen to Jesus,” he said. “Otherwise, even if we set out with good intentions along paths that seem to be of love, in the end those paths will be seen as selfishness disguised as love.”

That's what taking people seriously sounds like. Paradoxically, it is of a piece with Francis' core message to young people at his first World Youth Day in Rio, when he called on them to “make a mess” or “stir up a ruckus” — *Hagan lio!* — in Rio and beyond.

The spectacle, the sound and the stir of a million-odd young people, will speak for itself to a world that understands little besides numbers, but the sound of those young people listening to the divine teacher could break through the technological din of daily humdrum.

“Be careful of selfishness disguised as love!” Francis warned. “Listen to Jesus, for He will show you which paths are those of love.”

“Listen to Him,” Francis said.

There's an answer to the question, “Why bother?” — *Cruz/Vatican News*

● See also pages 9, 12, 16 & 17

Persistence, faith and humility

In the Gospel today, we read of the encounter between Jesus and a Canaanite woman whose daughter is ill. The portrayal of the scene is rather vivid and those with a good imagination can picture how a frantic woman is chasing after Jesus, asking Him to come and cure her daughter. This is a normal action that any parent will do for their child. The reaction, or non-responsiveness of Jesus, leads us to look deeper into the entire episode.

On a superficial level, one might think that Jesus is callous and without compassion since He is ignoring the Canaanite woman completely. We read throughout the various Gospels that Jesus went everywhere curing the sick but why did He ignore this particular woman? His response to her request may be seen by some to be rather rude and not in character with what we know about Jesus. However, we need to take a closer look at the context of the incident.

The Canaanites were a people who worshipped pagan gods. Unlike the Israelites, who practised a monotheistic religion, the Canaanites practised polytheistic religion and thus were considered pagans by the Israelites. Like many other ancient Near East civilisations of their day, they prayed to a myriad of gods such as the god of fertility, of crops etc. For the Israelites, the commandment they received from God through Moses is very clear — there is to be the worship of only one God and no other. For the Canaanites, worshipping multiple gods meant that they do not fall into the category of those favoured by God.

When Jesus made the statement to the Canaanite woman, telling her that food for the children should not be given to house dogs, He did not mean to insult the woman. In this day and age, we see that as degrading the woman and not respecting the human aspect of the person. This is definitely

not the case. The reference is to make the distinction between the God of the Israelites and the gods of the Canaanites. It is an assertion of the superiority of the God of the Israelites over all the other gods, pointing back to the Ten Commandments — worship no other god but God. By making this statement, Jesus wanted to see what kind of reaction or response the woman would make.

The response of the Canaanite woman is one that would surprise anyone. Instead of getting angry or indignant, her retort shows her faith in the healing power of Jesus. Whether or not she knows or acknowledges that Jesus is the Messiah is not clear but that is not the subject matter. The important thing here is that her love for her daughter prompts her to put her faith in the healing hands of Jesus. It is her persistence and act of faith that moves Jesus to help her. Jesus does not help the woman because she is shouting and badgering Him. In essence, by making such a remark to her, He is able to draw out her faith that is motivated by love.

This is an important lesson for all of us to learn. Modern society often leads us to believe that if we shout loud enough or assert ourselves hard enough, we will get what we want. Sometimes people use their wealth or status in order to procure what they want. We see this happening all the time, in and out of the Church. But, like the encounter between the Canaanite woman and Jesus, we need to learn to ask with faith and not the volume of our voice. Increasing the volume of our voice and throwing our weight

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Fr Philip Tay, OCD

20th Sunday of Ordinary Time (A)

Readings: Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Romans 11:13-15, 29-32;

Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28

around will get us nowhere. Ultimately, it is our faith and, most important of all, humility. This is the trait that the Canaanite woman displays when she gives her response to Jesus.

Whether we are making a petition to God or making a request to someone, humility will help our request to go further than when we make them in pride. In fact, a genuine prayer is often made out of humility because it is only when we are humble that we are able to acknowledge our need for help. If we are so capable and powerful, why do we need help in the first place? In expressing her humility and her need for help, the Canaanite woman unconsciously expresses her confidence in the divine power of Christ. This, St Paul tells us in the Second Reading from the *Letter to the Romans*, is the admission that will lead to the resurrection of the dead instead of the rejection of God. As St Vincent de Paul teaches us, God always gives a greater blessing to humble beginnings than to those that start with a chiming of bells.



(Pieter Lastman)



KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

August

- 20 Confirmation – Church of St Paul the Hermit, Bestari Jaya
- 26 Confirmation – Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Puchong
- 26 Confirmation – Church of St Ignatius, PJ
- 28 Meeting – AOHD Board of Management
- 29-30 Monthly Clergy Recollection
- 31 Opening Mass – Catholic Charismatic Renewal Peninsular Malaysia



PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Sebastian Francis

August

- 20 Confirmation — Church of the Immaculate Conception, Penang @ 11.30am
- 22 Meeting — Council of Priests (COP), Stella Maris, Penang @ 10.30am
- 22 & 23 Clergy Monthly Recollection (CMR) | Stella Maris, Penang
- 23 & 24 Formation — Permanent Deacons' at Stella Maris, Penang
- 24 Mass — Singapore-Peninsular Malaysia Chinese Apostolate Gathering at the Church of St Louis, Taiping at 5.00pm
- 27 Confirmation — Church of Our Lady of Good Health, Parit Buntar at 8.30am
- 29 Meeting — Malaysian students of Australian Catholic University (ACU) at Stella Maris, Penang at 3.30pm
- Aug 31 - Golden Jubilee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Peninsular Malaysia at the Church of the Holy Family, Kajang



MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

August

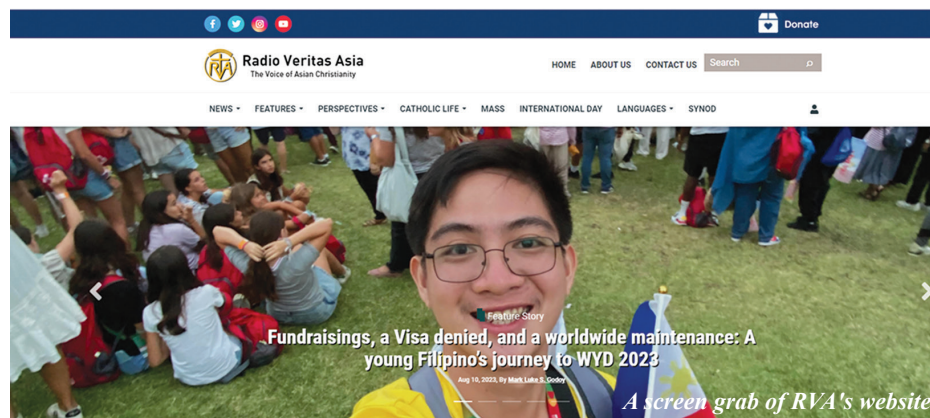
- 25 Mass for Malaysia Focolare Communities @ Mariapolis – MAJODI Centre
- 26 Confirmation – Church of the Immaculate Conception, Johor Bahru
- 31/8 - Deliverance & Healing Programme (Modules 7 & 8) – MAJODI Centre

Radio Veritas Asia suspension revoked

KUALA LUMPUR: In a statement dated August 10, the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) president, Cardinal Charles Bo, officially announced the revocation of the suspension on the operations of Radio Veritas Asia (RVA) in Manila.

This decision follows a compelled suspension brought about by a sequence of events. As these circumstances are being meticulously reviewed by the appropriate authorities and the potential for addressing unresolved matters is becoming more evident, the cardinal emphasised the paramount significance of advancing RVA's crucial mission to transmit the Good News across Asia through the medium of communication.

The Committee of Bishops, appointed by the FABC, undertook a comprehensive review of the lingering concerns surrounding RVA. In this process, the voices of various stakeholders, including FABC OSC (Office of Social Communication), under the chairmanship of Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis, PREIC, donors, RVA leadership, and language services, have been thoughtfully heard.



The committee is expected to present its report and recommendations to the FABC Central Committee for further decisions concerning RVA. In the meantime, the cardinal appeals to all those who are associated with the work of RVA to continue their services with whole-hearted commitment.

He prayed God's blessings on the Church in Asia, the pastors and faithful, that all may be able to faithfully, and without fear, proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all Peoples of Asia.

On January 1, Cardinal-elect Sebastian

Francis was appointed as the chairman of the FABC Office of Social Communication (OSC) for a period of three years.

He has been entrusted with the task of making the FABC OSC a vibrant and effective instrument for strengthening the episcopal ministry of the Church in Asia in the service of the Gospel through social communications.

One of the important responsibilities which the FABC has entrusted to the FABC-OSC is the management and governance of the Radio Veritas Asia (RVA).



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #143

F12
MJD NEWS
UPDATES

Greetings to you from MAJODI Centre

The Lisbon World Youth Day (WYD) 2023 has ended. The next WYD will be hosted in Seoul in 2027. The Pope invites the young to the Jubilee for Young People in Rome in 2025 and declared that the Church is open to everyone. On August 12, six states in the country went to the polls. Following soon after, was the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. The *Jalur Gemilang* is flying high again.

"Befriending Times: "The Church is open to everyone" including LGBTQ people and all marginalised groups" said the Pope, reminding us that the Lord welcomed the sick, the elderly, the young, old, ugly, beautiful, good and bad.

The Hari Kebangsaan theme is: *Malaysia MADANI: Tekad Perpaduan Penuhi Harapan* (Malaysia MADANI: Determination of Unity Fulfills Hope) and the logo feature the determination and commitment shown by Malaysians upholding a high spirit of unity, to continue living in peace and harmony and enjoying the nation's prosperity together.

The unique logo design, symbolised by the hand being raised, to pronounce the *Rukun Negara* contains the basic colours of the *Jalur Gemilang* in line with the identity and patriotic spirit of multiracial Malaysia in which the people live in harmony, having one soul.

"Whether in the church or beyond, the call of Fratelli Tutti to fraternity and social friendship is the way to build a better, more just, inclusive and peaceful world, with the contribution of all — people and institutions. We have to find our soul, the one soul, that "all are brothers and sisters".

A Thought for the Week:
Nuts In A Box

The monkey-hunters of India use a box with an opening at the top, big enough for the monkey to slide its hand in to grab the nuts. But it is unable to withdraw with its fistful of nuts as the opening is now too small for its full fist to come out. Despite this, it hangs on to the nuts and gets caught.

A lesson from the nuts: We are no different from the monkeys. We all hang on to some "nuts" that keep us from going forward in life. We rationalise. But successful people don't rationalise. They let go of their fears and think 'outside of the box'.

Announcements for this Week:

1. Beginning August 1, the Malacca Johore Diocese (MJD) prepares for the **next phase of our pastoral journey, the Diocesan Pastoral Assembly 2023 - Malaysia Pastoral Concention 2026.** Please take note the banners, the buntings and prayer cards in your parish. Pray the given prayer in the Masses, gatherings, meetings, BECs and ministries' meetings.

2. The **MJD Vocation Promotion Team**, headed by Fr Adrian Francis, is organising a talk on the diocesan priesthood entitled "I Am Mission" on August 31 at St Peter's Church Malacca, from 10.00am to 1.00pm. A Facebook account on vocations is now available for your viewing. Young people, the Lord has not stopped calling.

3. With effect from August 31, **Fr James Rajendran** is posted to the Church of the Divine Mercy Skudai as assistant parish priest.

Fr John Pereira leaves for the Church of St Philip Segamat as assistant parish priest;

Fr Andrew Arockiasamy, a visiting priest, will reside at St Philip Segamat.

Fr Paul Wong has been assigned as the parish priest of the parish of St Philip Segamat, and administrator of St Simon Labis and St Anthony Chaah.

This Week's Question and Query.

The Question asks: Why do we call services and work in the Church, ministry? Chuck Swindoll says:

- The **foundation** of ministry is CHARACTER, not a professional skill.
- The **nature** of ministry is SERVICE, not being served.
- The **motive** for ministry is LOVE, not money or power.
- The **measure** of ministry is SACRIFICE, not success.
- The **authority** of ministry is SUBMISSION, not pulling rank.
- The **purpose** of ministry is TO GLORIFY GOD, not to glorify ourselves.
- The **tools** of ministry are PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE, not marketing handbook.
- The **privilege** of ministry is GROWTH, which may be in depth rather than in numbers.
- The **power** of ministry is THE HOLY SPIRIT, not programmes.
- The **model** for ministry is JESUS CHRIST, not a corporation or a man.

The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few. "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

God bless you all.

Bishop Bernard Paul

Honouring a life devoted to Christ

By Datin Dr Ho Eu Len

PLENTONG, Johor Bahru: Fr Francis Lim Lian Swee, OCSO, celebrated his 25th sacerdotal anniversary with Mass at the Chapel of St James, MAJODI Centre, August 5. Bishop Bernard Paul was the main celebrant, with Fr Francis, Fr John Chia CDD, and Fr Benedict Yee concelebrating.

Sr Maria Goretti Heng from the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary (CSCM), and Sr Josephine Thong, of the Franciscan Sisters of The Holy Infant Jesus (OSF), along with Fr Francis' relatives and friends formed a congregation of about 70 which filled the chapel to its brim. It was a beautiful celebration, filled with God's presence and grace, as the devout community gathered to commemorate and honour the unwavering dedication of Fr Francis' faithfulness to God.

Led by the prelate, the community offered heartfelt prayers for the 84-year-old's continued good health, protection, and blessings as he continues to serve in the Lord's vineyard. Apart from the joy of witnessing the event, the

congregation was touched by the way Bishop Bernard physically held and assisted the frail Fr Francis during the whole celebration.

Before Mass started, Bishop Bernard assisted Fr Francis in vesting his new MJD 50th Anniversary vestment, depicting the icon of St Francis Xavier, the patron saint of the Diocese of Malacca Johore and Fr Francis' patron saint.

Fr Francis' religious journey began in 1966, at age 26 when he was ordained as a Gabrielite Brother. He worked in the Gabrielite's Missionary schools, teaching and guiding young minds to the Catholic faith, as well as empowering them with the knowledge to be good citizens of Malaysia.

Answering God's further calling, Fr Francis joined St Peter's College and was ordained as the first deacon of the diocese in 1983 by the now-late Bishop James Chan Soon Cheong. For nearly a decade, he passionately carried out his pastoral duties in a few parishes in Johor and Melaka, sharing the message of love and compassion with the faithful.

In 1992, guided by a profound



Fr Francis Lim OCSO with clergy, religious, family members and friends on August 5, 2023.

calling, Fr Francis joined the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (also known as "Trappists") at the Our Lady of Joy Monastery, Lantau Island, Hong Kong where he embraced a life of contemplation and asceticism. The culmination of his dedication, patience, and perseverance came on June 28 and 29, 1997 when he was ordained as a monk and a priest, respectively. These sacred ordinations marked a momentous milestone in his journey of faith, signifying his complete devotion to God and the Cistercian tradition.

In 1999, Fr Francis received a profound mission to serve as the Superior in The Holy Mother of God Monastery at Shuili, Taiwan. Leading with compassion, wisdom, and humility, Fr Francis nurtured the spiritual growth of his

fellow monks and the local Catholic community in Shuili, creating a haven of prayer and tranquillity.

Throughout the years, Fr Francis' life has been characterised by simplicity, selflessness, and dedication to prayer and contemplation. His daily routine of spiritual practice served as an inspiration to those around him, fostering an atmosphere of peace and serenity within the monastery walls and beyond. Besides his immediate community, Fr Francis' impact has reached far and wide, touching the hearts of people across different walks of life. His teachings, grounded in the Cistercian tradition, have offered guidance and solace to individuals seeking spiritual enlightenment.

As the community gathered to celebrate his sacerdotal silver

jubilee, they were filled with immense gratitude for the life and ministry of Fr Francis. His unwavering commitment to his calling has been a source of inspiration for the faithful and a testament to the transformative power of faith.

At the Mass, Fr Francis shared how, through his prayers, silence and solitude, he experienced God's grace, particularly in moments of physical weakness and spiritual dryness. He touched on how he is drawn closer to God, discovering His presence, love, and divine mercy. He encouraged the congregation to treasure the Gift of Life and to embrace their Catholic faith wholeheartedly.

May the example of Fr Francis' devotion illuminate the path for those who seek to deepen their relationship with God.

Five in one celebration in Limbahau parish

LIMBAHAU, Papar: Eight hundred parishioners from Holy Rosary, Limbahau, along with the faithful from other parishes within the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu, came together to commemorate the anniversaries of four priests. Friar Gerard Terence Saimel OFM, Fr Terans Thadeus and Fr Lasius Gantis marked the first anniversary of their ordination. Friar Arul S Mariadass OFM, from Penang, who is now serving in Papar and Limbahau parishes, celebrated the 26th anniversary of his ordination.

The occasion was also a thanksgiving celebration for Fr Elvost Lunchi MHM who was ordained on July 22 at the same church.

The five-in-one celebration was presided over by Friar Gerard. Also present were Holy Rosary's parish priest, Msgr Nicholas Stephen, Fr Sylvester Wong, Fr Joshua Liew and Fr Aloysius Fidelis.

Fr Elvost, in his homily, focused on God's love. He said God's love is perfect, He loves us unconditionally and His love is self-sacrificing. He gave His Son, His one and only Son

so no one needs be destroyed; by believing in Him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. (John 3:16)

In his thanksgiving address, Fr Terans conveyed his appreciation to all who had taken the trouble to organise the event and thanked the Lord for the gift of priesthood bestowed upon the five of them.

"When I reflect on my first year as a priest, I did not realise one year had passed so quickly. It felt just like yesterday that I was ordained a priest. Your continuous prayers, support and friendship strengthens me in my service."

At the end of the Mass, Msgr Nicholas conveyed his gratitude to all the parishioners who pray, support, encourage and honour their priests. He noted that the presence of the parishioners for that fellowship as a big and united family is a reflection of a Christian community without barriers of language, race or custom.

A fellowship was held at the Fr Amandus Augustine Hall where Fr Joshua's birthday was also celebrated.

Fr Nelson Joseph Jacob marks sacerdotal silver jubilee

BUKIT MERTAJAM: A Mass was celebrated at Minor Basilica of St Anne, August 7, to commemorate Fr Nelson Joseph Jacob's 25 years of dedicated service in the priesthood.

Bishop Emeritus Anthony Selvanayagam, who ordained Fr Nelson was among the concelebrants together with Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis, Archbishop Julian Leow, and Bishop Bernard Paul.

Fr Nelson wore a chasuble with his ordination theme, *Holy Spirit, Giver of Life*. He used the same liturgical reading used during his ordination.

In the homily, Fr Nelson drew focus towards God's work, making clear that the celebration was not about his achievements but about God's enduring faithfulness. His humility, highlighted by his confession of God's sustenance during his worst times, resonated with the congregation.

He also reflected on his ministry from his ordination to the present. Hailing from the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Bishop Bernard was the parish priest during Fr Nelson's ordination.

Fr Nelson was first posted to the Church of St Michael, Alor Setar, where Fr Peter Shyu was the parish priest. Here, Fr Nelson was able to finetune his command of the Tamil language with a parishioner's help.



Next, he was assigned to the Taiping Catholic Church to serve with parish priest, Fr Anthony Chong, where he fondly remembers the parishioners' support and Fr David Lourdes' mother catering for him. He then was sent to the Church of the Immaculate Conception, where he served with Fr Alexander Edwin, who played a pivotal role in inspiring Fr Nelson to become a priest. He shared that the late Fr Alex's homilies often felt like it was a personal address to him to dive deeper into his faith, and he eventually answered the call to join the seminary.

Fr Nelson later assisted Fr Regis at the Church of St Francis de Sales, Sitiawan before he was as-

signed as parish priest, for the first time, to the Church of Our Lady of Fatima of the Holy Rosary, Kota Bharu.

Other parishes he served include the Church of the Sacred Heart, Kampar where he was the first Indian parish priest. He returned to the Church of St Francis De Sales, before moving to the Church of Christ the King, Sungai Petani, and then to the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Once again, Fr Nelson was assigned to serve at the Church of St Michael, Alor Setar, before being posted to his current parish, the Minor Basilica of St Anne.

Here, the jubilarian starts his day by spending time at the Shrine, where he listens to pilgrims' confessions and prays for them. At first, he used to only spend a few hours a day there, but as time passed, he felt the urge to stay longer. He noticed more people, Catholics and non-Catholics, were coming for prayers and blessings, and as they left, they appeared happier and at peace, believing that God was touching them through him. Before Mass ended, Cardinal-elect Sebastian thanked Fr Nelson and praised him for being a beacon of light and hope who has lived all the Mysteries of the Rosary.

After Mass, the congregation adjourned to the hall for fellowship. — **By Erwind Jozef**



From left Fr Elvost Lunchi MHM, Fr Terans Thadeus, Friar Gerard Saimel, Fr Lasius Gantis and Fr Arul S Mariadass.

Towards the Diocese of Keningau's Pastoral Assembly

By Stella Eming Dydimus

KUALA PENYU: In preparation for the Diocese of Keningau's Pastoral Assembly in November, two parishes, St Peter, Bundu and St Patrick, Membakut held their joint 12th pre-Pastoral Assembly Diocese of Keningau (Pre-PUKAT) at the Diocesan Retreat House, Purun, recently. A total of 182 participants attended this Pre-PUKAT which started with Bible enthronement, led by Fr David Gasikol.

In his exhortation, Bishop Cornelius Piong welcomed the congregation and highlighted three main points upon which the Church is built: family, to protect God's creation, our home together, and building a harmonious society.

During the first session, Fr David shared the history of the journey of the Synodal Church, guided parishioners on the direc-

tion of the Diocese of Keningau, gave a brief history of the diocese and highlighted the themes from the first Keningau diocese Pastoral Assembly (PUKAT) to the 11th assembly.

Next, Patrick Marius elaborated on the *Synodality of the Diocese of Keningau* and the meaning of "synodal," its main purpose and how PUKAT will be implemented.

He spoke about the four main priorities of the Malaysian Pastoral Convention 2026: Family, Church, Social and Ecology. Drawing from that, Patrick emphasised that we must take up the mission of the Church in the Diocese of Keningau to be the Salt of the Earth and Light of the World.

The two encyclicals and two apostolic exhortations by Pope Francis; *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Amoris Laetitia*, *Fratelli Tutti*

and *Laudato Si'*, were summarised by Rita Titing, as humanity confronts its crisis in the family, Church, society and creation.

Rita also explained that the four documents serve as guidelines for the coming diocesan pastoral assembly and all pastoral plans in the Diocese of Keningau.

In the concluding session, Patrick guided the participants to focus on Jesus' mission by constantly Reviewing (SEE), Reflecting (JUDGE) and Renewing (ACT).

As the assembly concluded, Fr Clement Abel commended the active participation of all in the pre-PUKAT assembly. He said they are to be congratulated for being chosen to be witnesses of the Risen Christ, who promised to be with His Church throughout the ages. Fr Clement encouraged the participants to bring their experience and knowledge back to their respective parishes and BECs.



One hundred and eighty-two participants from the Church of St Peter Bundu and the Church of St Patrick Membakut at the 12th Pre-PUKAT Assembly in Keningau Diocese Retreat House, Purun.

Youths let their voices be heard at PPA

RAWANG: The Church of St Jude held its Parish Pastoral Assembly (PPA) on August 5. A small number gathered at the church at 2.00pm.

In her opening speech, Parish Pastoral Council chairperson, Christine Vincent, said that the PPA served as a reminder of the strong foundation upon which this parish was built — a foundation of prayer, fellowship and service. The participants came to reflect on their journey so far and also to envision the path that lies ahead.

The assembly commenced with representatives from the Youth, Family Life and Formation cluster groups sharing activities they have had, as well as the challenges faced organising the programmes such as parishioners' participation. On the same note, the three groups agreed they had parish priest Fr Vincent Thomas' full cooperation.

The youth said some parents were the

obstacle as they were reluctant to send their children to church activities. Many parents were primarily focused on sending their children to pursue their studies, leaving little time for them to take part in parish youth activities.

The following item on the agenda involved group sharing, during which participants were organised into groups based on their respective zones. Each group was tasked with addressing four questions related to potential activities that could be undertaken and strategies to help strengthen the faith of the parishioners. Among the various suggestions raised from the group sharing, starting a ministry for the elderly or senior citizens was top on the list, as they felt the golden agers still had a lot to contribute to the community.

The Family Life Ministry proposed conducting talks on mixed-marriages as this is a difficult issue parents are facing to-

day, and they must learn to deal with the present generation of children. There was also a suggestion to host talks catering to the needs of single parents, young parents, and divorcees.

The youth requested counselling sessions for children and teenagers. They also asked to be allowed to animate Mass once or twice a month. Adrian Joseph, the youngest PPC member, said a lot can be achieved if there was cooperation from every parishioner.

Senior parishioner Mas Muthu said, "We are called to be Christ-like". He said we have to be good role models and reach out to the parishioners to dialogue with them, while being humble and more attuned to their feelings.

Fr Vincent brought the assembly to a close with a quote from St Teresa of Calcutta.

He said, "Keep in mind that our community is not composed of those who are already saints, but of those who are trying to become saints. Therefore, let us be extremely patient with each other's faults and failures."

Fr Vincent added that it might not be feasible to put into action every suggestion but he will sit with his council members to discuss the best approach for implementing these recommendations to foster the growth of the parish. He thanked Bro Ashvin Andrew Xavier and Theresa Ayyakkannu for moderating the assembly.

— By Mercy Almeida Stellus



Each group was tasked with addressing four questions for activities to be undertaken.

New CEO for Mt Miriam Hospital



PENANG: Paul Kang Hian Beng has been appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Mount Miriam Cancer Hospital effective September 1, 2023. Dato' Dr Patrick Tan Seow Koon, the current chairman of Mount Miriam Cancer Hospital, announced this in a statement released Aug 3.

This appointment marks an important step forward for the hospital as it continues its mission to provide exceptional care and support to patients battling cancer.

Paul's selection follows an extensive and meticulous search process led by the CEO Search Panel. This panel included esteemed members from the Hospital Board, as well as representatives from Catholic Health Care Asia (CHCA) and the Franciscan Missionaries of Divine Motherhood (FMDM) sisters. The appointment was endorsed and approved by FMDM and CHCA, reinforcing the collective confidence in Paul's capabilities.

With a strong commitment to mission and service, Paul brings a wealth of experience from the corporate sector. He has held various key positions in prominent companies, including IBM, Andersen Consulting, and SOCSO. He played pivotal roles in successfully steering turnaround strategies, showcasing his insight into strategic planning and adeptness in leading diverse teams.

A devoted family man, Paul's leadership proficiency extends beyond the corporate realm, as seen in his active participation in community service initiatives within the Catholic Diocese of Penang. Furthermore, his compassionate nature has positioned him as a well-rounded individual dedicated to society's betterment.

Demonstrating his commitment to holistic care, Paul has undertaken specialised training in Clinical Pastoral Care, culminating in hands-on experiences at Mount Miriam Cancer Hospital and Penang Adventist Hospital. This training equips him with vital insights into the needs of patients and caregivers, enriching his ability to drive patient-centric approaches.

With a proven track record in strategic leadership and his genuine passion for serving others, Paul is poised to lead Mount Miriam Cancer Hospital into a new chapter of excellence. The Hospital Board and stakeholders are confident his tenure as CEO will uphold the institution's core values and propel it toward continued success.

The entire community extends warm congratulations to Paul on his well-deserved appointment.

As he assumes his role, we anticipate a collaborative journey aimed at furthering the hospital's mission of providing compassionate, respectful, and integrity-driven care.

Dato' Dr Patrick ends the statement by urging everyone to welcome Paul as the new CEO.

Tampin parish feast day sees return of the flock

By Priscilla Wilson

TAMPIN: The Church of St John Marie Vianney, celebrated her parish feast day from August 3 to 6 with the theme *Come Back to Me*. This year's celebration was a wonderful and meaningful experience to witness the faithful returning to attending the Masses. Each day of the Triduum began with the recitation of the Rosary, the litany, and a prayer to the parish patron, followed by Mass.

The subtheme for the first-day was *Come to my dwelling as family*. Fr Peter Anthoney was the main celebrant, with Fr Philip Tay OCD, and parish priest Fr Albet Arockiasamy concelebrating. Fr Peter brought home the message on the importance of families coming together to church for Mass.

Archbishop Julian Leow was the main celebrant on the second day, the actual feast of St John Vianney. Themed *Be the Gift of your Vocation*, nine priests con-celebrated: Fr Moses Rayapan, Fr Gregory Chan, Fr Christopher Soosaipillai, Fr Paulino Miranda, Fr Xavier Andrew, Fr Jestus Pereira, Fr Anthony Heng, Fr Philip and Fr Albet. During the homily, Fr



About 700 faithful participate in the candlelight procession at the Church of St John Vianney, Tampin August 5, 2023.

Gregory emphasised being faithful to the call of our vocation and being true to ourselves. After Mass, Fr Paulino presided over the prayer of blessings at the St John Vianney shrine, before the prelate led the opening ceremony.

This year, besides parishioners who came in thanksgiving to worship and fulfil vows, pilgrims from other churches in various districts

and states were also present.

On Aug 5, at 9.30am, Fr Albet, with Fr Christopher Loh concelebrating Mass, carried out the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick for the elderly and the infirm. At 2.00pm that afternoon, three busloads of catechism students and their catechists from the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Klang, and two buses

of pilgrims from Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya spent an hour in Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, followed by Mass presided over by Fr Albet, with Fr Christopher concelebrating.

Fr Xavier Andrew was the main celebrant on the third day of the Triduum, with Frs Albet and Christopher Loh concelebrating. Fr Xavier preached on the subtheme *Transform to be Transfigured*. He said, "Aspiration is the key to transformation and when your aspiration is noble, you cannot remain where you belonged before, but you can inspire others". After the Eucharistic celebration, the celebrants led the faithful in a procession with the Blessed Sacrament. The statue of St John Vianney was beautifully adorned with flowers.

Approximately 700 parishioners and pilgrims walked prayerfully during the candlelight procession. The celebration ended with Benediction at the church, followed by a dinner fellowship for all present.

On Aug 6, the celebration ended with a Thanksgiving Mass, attended by the parishioners, pilgrims and Matriculation students who helped and participated in the festivities.

Legionaries focus on new evangelisation

CHERAS: The Kuala Lumpur Regia annual retreat was held at the Church of St. Francis of Assisi on August 5. Regia President, Ignatius Wang, welcomed 127 members from 20 praesidia, including four members from Kuantan. Opening with prayers and Rosary, retreat director, Fr Paul Cheong OFM Cap, the Ecclesiastical

assistant for the Legion of Mary, led the legionaries with the theme *The Legion and the New Evangelisation*.

All legionaries should know that the Legion exists to evangelise and we need to be in tune with the Holy Spirit at all times. Through the Holy Spirit whom we invoke at the beginning of our daily Legion prayer,

we are called to live and share the Gospel fully, to "rekindle the fire" of the legionary spirit so our lives may be authentically apostolic. As legionaries we use the spiritual flame to help and serve others in our homes, workplaces and communities.

As sharers in Jesus' anointing, we are consecrated for a purpose and mission. We are kept safe from the dangers around us and from falling into sin by the fire of the Holy Spirit in us. Just as Jesus was tempted by Satan, we too will struggle with Satan. The Holy Spirit will help us in our spiritual battles. When we unite our temptations with the sufferings of Christ, we are assured that one day, we will share in the victory Christ won for us.

Daily reading the Word of God with an open heart feeds our soul and keeps us in

tune with the Holy Spirit. Frank Duff, the founder of the Legion of Mary, said that the Legion is a school of making saints and that God has implanted in the heart of every Catholic the desire to become a saint.

We, the Church, exist to evangelise — a command of the Lord which flows from our love for God, and we share with others the treasure of our Christian faith for the glory of God. All Christians must be effective evangelists with an active, personal relationship with Jesus.

Fr Paul concluded by offering four ways of fulfilling our evangelising mission: by the witness of our life, humble sharing of our faith, dialogue with people of other faiths and cultures, and working for liberation, cultural, social and political transformation. — **By Cynthia Fernandez**



The power of love for the Magnificat

KUALA LUMPUR: Love resonates in flawless unity to magnify the glory of God, propelling the devoted congregation of the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist towards greater efforts to realise their cherished aspiration: the Magnificat, a beacon of their visionary community centre.

The bountiful results of the Parish Integral Human Development Ministry (PIHDM) was evident during the benefit musical, *In Perfect Harmony Too*. The event showcased musical talents and stood as a testament to the labour of love poured into the endeavour to support the Magnificat project.

The musical tribute to the popular songs that "tug at our heartstrings since Merdeka" by Dama Asia electrified the audience in the 662-seat hall of the PJPAC on August 5. It played to a full house. PIHDM also hosted the Montfort Boys Town residents and staff, as well as migrants and refugees.

For Cheryl Rita Lock, it was a "truly energetic and thrilling musical performance that captivated the audience". The brilliant band musicians added more rhythm and jive to the evening, she quipped.

Magnificat building committee chairman, Selvanathan Sargunam, felt the energy too. "It

is giving us a fresh impetus to go all out, again and again, to work for God's vineyard."

Indeed, it was a night that gave life to William Shakespeare's quote from the *Twelfth Night*, "If music be the food of love, play on." The energetic performance captivated the audience, including Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski, Archbishop Julian Leow and the clergy. Mesmerised, they could not resist singing along and clapping.

Many Sabahans, cajoled by the performers, took to the stage, dancing to the medley of Sabahan hits, *Jambatan Tamparuli* and *Anak Kampung*. When it came to the upbeat *Bekikis Bulu Betis*, the Sarawakians from the floor ruled the stage. The Church of St Francis Xavier's assistant priest, Fr Alvin Ng, was a natural at leading them in the *poco-poco* dance.

PIHDM volunteer Irene Ramachandran rated the musical a "resounding success", attributing it to the songs, dancing, quality production, smiles, cheering and spontaneous audience participation. Irene, too, was on stage for a role play with two actor-musicians squabbling and serenading Ed Sheeran's *Perfect* to win her heart.

Parish priest, Fr Gerard Theraviam, thanked the donors and the PIHDM members for their



An assorted family of cast and PIHDM team with Archbishop Julian Leow and Fr Gerard Theraviam in perfect harmony.

tireless efforts in fundraising, particularly Gloria Bon for her stewardship. PIHDM coordinator, Mary Teoh, praised everyone for an enthusiastic united front for the glory of God.

The RM16 million Magnificat will house a chapel, a conference hall seating 600, meeting rooms, parish offices, a funeral parlour, children's catechism classrooms, a grotto, a cafeteria, PIHDM programmes and dormitories. The Magnificat is designed to fulfill the parish's pastoral needs for the next 40 years.

The cathedral recently raised RM1 million for the Magnificat. It needs another RM4 mil-

lion. The musical was one of several fundraising activities, including donations, T-shirt and umbrella sales, Fam Day Fiesta on June 18, and buy a brick at RM10 each.

And more activities are underway, including a hint from Fr Gerard telling donors to keep Oct 21 free because "I want to have dinner with you".

The final gig before the encore was the 1985 Mandarin charity hit, *Tomorrow Will Be Better*. Indeed, it will when we strive to "above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony". — **By Bob Ho**

Bishop James Chan served without counting the cost

JOHOR BAHRU: “Bishop James Chan tirelessly sowed and planted for the good of this diocese. He left us a legacy through his life and example. His motto as a bishop, *To serve is my joy*, reminds us to always have and bring the element of joy to our service,” said Bishop Bernard Paul at the 100th-day memorial Mass of Bishop James that was also tied-in with the golden jubilee celebration of the Diocese of Malacca Johore.

The memorial Mass was celebrated during the feast of St Ignatius of Loyola. Bishop Bernard said during the homily that the life of the late bishop coincided with the teaching of St Ignatius as one who gave without counting the cost. This can be an inspiration to all of us. St Ignatius reminds us to pray: “O Lord, teach us to give, not count the cost.”

Bishop Bernard asked all present to do their part in serving as the late

Bishop James did and pray for those who planted the seeds of faith, vocation, and mission in this diocese and nation. They are like the late bishop who dared to dream dreams and paid the price for them to come true.

About 300 people attended the memorial Mass, celebrated on July 31. The Mass was celebrated at MAJODI Centre, Johor Bahru. The centre is a legacy of the late bishop. Msgr Peter Ng, who had lived with the bishop for some time in the early years of his priesthood said, “Bishop James was very concerned about giving the Catholics of the diocese space to come together for formation and sharing, and this was the drive behind MAJODI. He also wanted to ensure that aged priests would be cared for, which was why he built Graceville. He always had a heart for the people.”

An exhibition of the life of the prelate was put up at the bishop’s



The exhibition on the life of the late Bishop James Chan is on display at the bishop’s house in MAJODI.

house in MAJODI. The exhibition displayed memorabilia and items used by the late bishop from his early years, such as his old typewriter and vestments during his episcopacy. Centre for History and Heritage staff, John Ng, said that the exhibition “was initially planned for the 97th birthday and the golden jubilee

of Bishop James’ episcopal ordination but unfortunately, he passed away. We were only able to display a small part of the items he used over the past 50 years. We were saddened to find that many important items, such as his first episcopal ring, cross, and even the chalices he used, were missing. These things

must be in our diocese museum. They belong to the diocese and are a part of our history as a diocese.” The exhibition will be open until the Diocese Pastoral Assembly on Oct 14, 2023.

Monica Chan, 81, and her daughter Christina were among those who attended the Mass and visited the exhibition. The late bishop was very special to her and was the prelate who confirmed her children. She said, “Bishop James never failed to ask about my family whenever he saw me. I came to celebrate his life. Coming to this memorial felt like the passing of an era. I was happy to see the exhibition of his life, from the start of his episcopacy to his retirement.”

Bishop James Chan, who was the first bishop of the Diocese of Malacca Johore, passed away on Apr 22, 2023 at the age of 97. — **By Y.K.Ng**

AOHD members called to mission



The fourteen commissioned AOHD members with Archbishop Julian Leow and the clergy at the Church of St Anthony, August 6, 2023.

By Cheryl Kristine Danasamy

KUALA LUMPUR: Fourteen members of the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD) were commissioned August 6, at the Church of St Anthony. The Mass was presided over by Archbishop Julian Leow, with Fr Dr Clarence Devadass, Fr Paulino Miranda and Fr Andrew Manickam, OFM Cap, concelebrating.

In his sermon, the archbishop posed a question to the congregation: “What is the significance of the Feast of the Transfiguration?” He explained that Jesus had foresight that His disciples would face challenges, including persecutions and moments of doubt regarding His divinity. Jesus also recognised that some may have believed out of fear rather than true understanding. Therefore, Jesus chose to reveal His magnificent glory to His closest friends on the mountaintop.

This was to prepare them when they faced life’s trials of persecution, doubt and fear, they would have a vivid memory of the way Jesus revealed Himself. That image would serve as an anchor during times of persecution. Today, we have the Scriptures, the Creed,

various documents, and doctrines, tailored to help on our faith journey, but in the early days they were still trying to understand and discover who Jesus truly was.

During every Mass, right before our eyes, the bread and wine transform into the body and blood of Jesus. Despite the numerous times our Mother appeared throughout history, we still find ourselves asking for more signs. What do we do when we encounter Christ? Do we choose to remain on the mountain (stay within the church/chapel)?

Our mission lies out there in the world. We must come down from the mountain. Although we come to church to get nourished by the Word of God and the Eucharist, and to draw strength from the community, our presence should not remain in the church. We need to return to the marketplace, our workplaces, the community, and actively serve the people.”

Before the final blessing, Archbishop Julian lit 14 candles and gave one to each AOHD member. It was a symbolic gesture that we carry the light of Christ with us and we go into the world bringing Christ’s love and the Gospel of peace to everyone we meet.

The 14 members commissioned

that day included full-time and part-time staff as well as volunteers heading the various ministries under AOHD.

During the simple brunch after Mass at Dewan Dominic, AOHD director Dr Gary Liew advised the team, “While you fill the cups of others, look around you this morning and know that you are not alone, that you are loved. It can be very challenging when we keep giving and not receive in return. So, this message is a reminder to all of us to not only give love but to also receive love from family and friends.”

Archbishop Julian advised the team to not only address current challenges but to also anticipate upcoming ones. This would enable them to be prepared and innovative. The theme for the PMPC IV in 2016 emphasised that the Church should be creative, bridge-building, and inclusive. As a Church, we cannot be navel-gazing or stuck within its four walls. While the Church needs lectors and communion ministers, our impact should extend beyond its boundaries and be witnesses in the world. While no single person can accomplish everything, the collective efforts of many can yield significant achievements.

Klang parish completes second run of Landings

KLANG: The Church of Our Lady of Lourdes (OLL) completed its second run of the Paulist programme Landings recently.

Landings is a programme that originated in the United States approximately 40 years ago, to offer support and guidance to individuals who have drifted away from the Church or are facing challenges in their relationship with God and the Church. As the programme operates in a welcoming and non-judgmental manner, creating a safe space for participants to share their spiritual journeys and explore their Catholic faith, it’s beneficial for anyone to participate, including practising Catholics. The partnership between the Landings Malaysia core team and OLL was a successful endeavour, resulting in 33 participants completing the programme. They met every Sunday at the parish for 10 weeks to worship, pray, rekindle their knowledge and love for the Catholic faith, and share their faith story in a safe environment. The first Landings programme at OLL in June 2022, was attended by 18 ministry leaders, many of whom came back to help facilitate the second run.

The programme culminated during the weekend away retreat at the Port Dickson Methodist Centre where attendees listened to relatable take-home experiences facilitated by Tony See, Landings Malaysia coordinator, Jerry Thasan and OLL parish priest, Fr Gregory Chan. Tony, a Singaporean currently based in Bangkok, played a crucial role in introduc-

ing Landings to Singapore some 15 years ago and to Malaysia in 2019.

Throughout the weekend, numerous special moments deeply resonated with the participants. These experiences touched the core of their hearts and left a lasting impact. The organising team was particularly delighted to witness a significant outcome: many attendees who had not been to confession in years decided to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. They sought this sacrament either from Fr. Gregory or the two guest friars from the Church of the Visitation in Seremban.

The following day, retreatants attended morning Mass celebrated by Fr Gregory at the venue’s balcony, amidst chirping birds, overlooking the Straits of Melaka. The retreat ended on an emotionally high note as the participants shared their testimonies about how the programme and the weekend away impacted their lives.

During the last Sunday of the programme, the OLL team showcased a slideshow summarising the 10-week journey. Many participants invited their families and friends to give them a glimpse of the programme, getting them excited about joining the upcoming session.

The next Landings session commences Aug 27 at the Church of Jesus Caritas, Kepong. If you’re curious to learn more, feel free to reach out via WhatsApp at 012-3775169. — **By Gwen Manickam**



Pope modifies Church law on personal prelatures

VATICAN: Pope Francis changed canon law regarding the governance of Opus Dei and any future personal prelatures.

In a *motu proprio* issued August 8, the Pope assimilated the personal prelature to “public clerical associations of pontifical right with the faculty of incardinating clerics.” It also further defined the role of the prelate as a “moderator endowed with the faculties of an ordinary.”

A personal prelature is made up of a particular group of faithful and is structured in a hierarchical manner, with a prelate who is its head and source of unity and with priests and deacons who assist him.

The *motu proprio* modifies canons 295 and 296 of the Code of Canon Law on personal prelatures and immediately entered



St Josemaria Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei (CNS/Puus Dei)

into force on the day of its publication.

The updated canons now state that the statutes that govern a personal prelature can be “approved or issued by the Apostolic See.”

To date, the international Catholic organi-

sation Opus Dei is the only personal prelature in the Catholic Church. The group’s statutes have yet to be approved by the Holy See following its extraordinary congress in April.

Opus Dei is a personal prelature made up of laymen and laywomen and priests founded by St Josemaría Escrivá in 1928. Escrivá called the organisation Opus Dei to emphasise his belief that its foundation was a “work of God” — or, in Latin, “opus Dei.”

Canon 296 on the lay involvement in the personal prelature now also includes a reference to canon 107 and stresses that “the manner of this organic cooperation and the main duties and rights connected with it shall be determined appropriately in the statutes.”

The changes build upon the Pope’s previ-

ous decree on the oversight of Opus Dei last year in the *motu proprio* “To guard the charism,” which declared that its leader, the prelate, could no longer be a bishop.

In the text of the decree, Pope Francis also recalled that the apostolic constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* transferred the competence over personal prelatures to the Vatican’s Dicastery for the Clergy.

Opus Dei has about 90,000 members — 98 per cent of whom are laypeople, the majority of which are married. In addition to its lay members, some 1,900 priests incardinated in different dioceses throughout the world belong to the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, an association of clergy intrinsically united to the prelature of Opus Dei. — **By Courtney Mares, CNA**

Beloved saints’ relics bring thousands to a Lisbon church

PORTUGAL: If one was to line up some rockstar saints loved by the youth, certainly the founder of World Youth Day, St John Paul II, and vivid Italian hiker Pier Giorgio Frassati would be first in the line.

Their relics were available for veneration across four days of events, liturgies and speakers hosted by the JPPI Project at Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima in Lisbon during World Youth Day, August 1 to 4.

A vial of blood from the cassock that St John Paul II was wearing when he was shot in 1981, the pickaxe and rosary of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati used on his deathbed, and a part of the coffin of the Sts Jacinta and Francisco Marto, the young Fatima visionaries, brought thousands of pilgrims to pray in front of them.

Motivated to share the inspiring stories of the Polish pontiff and Blessed Frassati, who is also one of WYD Lisbon’s patron saints, JPPI Project founders Corinne and Joe MacDonald coordinated one of the most popular, and lengthy, series of events for pilgrims at World Youth Day.

Even though there were dozens of churches open to visit, and other events scheduled around the Portuguese capital city, no other location featured such a unique opportunity to personally encounter, and touch, artefacts from the two saints.

Even though just 2,000 pilgrims had

pre-registered for the event, organisers estimated at least 20,000 pilgrims came through the church doors, or at least tried to; at times the parish reached capacity and forced pilgrims to wait in lines outside.

At one point, as lines grew outside, the organisers made a decision to bring out the relics to the crowds, so that they could pray even as sessions continued within the church.

Volunteers with the programme, stood outside with each relic, offering pilgrims the chance for a quiet moment to pray, reflect and simply be with each relic during what can be a chaotic WYD experience. Pilgrims paused in meditation, others kissed the relics, while some chose to touch their holy articles, like prayer cards, rosaries and the like, to the relics.

With each visit, one by one, volunteers quietly explained the story behind each relic: Blessed Frassati’s pickaxe pointed to the Italian’s passion for adventure and mountain climbing; his rosary was a clear sign of his devotion to the Blessed Mother.

Another relic on display was also an image of Our Lady of Czestochowa that had belonged to the Polish pope. Several rosaries were led and prayed in the presence of the relics.

Across three days, a trio of bishops presided over Holy Hours, including Bishop Philip A. Egan of Portsmouth, United



An exhibition at the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima in Lisbon, Portugal, displays relics of St John Paul II, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, and Sts. Jacinta and Francisco Marto for veneration by pilgrims August 1-4, 2023, at World Youth Day. (OSV News photo/JPPI Project)

Kingdom, Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila of Denver and Auxiliary Bishop Robert J. Lombardo, CFR, of Chicago.

During his Holy Hour, Archbishop Aquila encouraged the attendees of the overflowing church to quietly meditate on a crucifix in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

“Jesus has given His body and blood; he has laid down his life for you,” he said. “Gaze on that crucifix and receive the truth that Jesus has died for you personally. He has died for every human being, and we must receive that gift every time we gaze

upon the Eucharist.”

He told the young people to ask for that gift from the Lord, so that they could come to know His love.

“Jesus knows you with all your sins with all your wounds, with all that has happened to you in your lifetime,” he said. “Bring that to Him, and know that He desires to heal you, He desires to restore you, He desires to make you saints.”

A series of exhibits accompanied the events and brought to life the backgrounds and history of the beloved saints for youth. — **OSV News**

Indian Christians in US stage prayer vigil for peace in Manipur

NEW YORK: Indian Christians in the United States rallied in front of the United Nations headquarters in New York City last week to pray for peace and justice amid rising violence in Manipur.

The demonstrators urged authorities to take effective measures to curb the ongoing attacks on the Kuki-Zo tribal people, a

predominantly Christian group, in the north-eastern Indian state.

More than 700 individuals attended the prayer vigil, according to a report by *Matters India*.

“Prayers by the clergy reflected the deep pain felt across the Indian Christian Community in the United States for the great

calamity that befell Manipur with tremendous loss of human lives and destruction of homes and churches,” said the Federation of Indian American Christians of North America (FIACONA) in a statement.

FIACONA president Koshy George said the gathering “is not a protest rally,” adding, “We aim not to examine why the riots happened, who is responsible, or politics.”

Anna George, the event’s leader, lamented the dire circumstances, where lives are lost, women face heinous crimes, and thousands are displaced without basic necessities.

George said there was a historical harmony between religious groups in India but expressed dismay over the current situation.

“But what has happened now? A genocide or massacre is taking place right before our eyes,” she said, adding that over 145 individuals have died, with 60,000 rendered homeless, hundreds of churches destroyed, and numerous villages burned.

American activist and journalist Peter Friedrich drew parallels between the situation in Manipur and the events in Odisha’s Kandhamal. He criticised both local and central governments for insufficient action and the silent response from American churches.

New York State Senator Kevin Thomas, the sole legislator present, stressed the importance of justice and equality for all humans, regardless of religion. He called for global unity in fostering a world where people coexist harmoniously.

Bishop Johny Itty of the Episcopal Church encouraged attendees to stand resolute in their pursuit of justice and to pray for those facing persecution.

Fr Robinson Frank, an American Catholic priest, highlighted the need for improved legal systems in Manipur and expressed sadness over the persecution of Christians in India. — **LiCAS News**



The Indian Christian community in US organised a vigil in front of the United Nations to pray for peace and justice in Manipur where ethnic clashes have raged since May 3. (Matters India)



Five chosen to sit closer to the Pope

Five youth from the Malaysian contingent were chosen to sit closer to Pope Francis during the Vigil and Closing Mass.

They are: Brendan Sanjay, Faustina Francis, Ivy Cheah, Kenneth Chin and Maria Florina.

Here are their remarks of their experiences.



I have everything when I have the Eucharist

“It was an unexplainable feeling when my name was drawn for the special seating during the vigil. It was a long tiring walk to the place where the vigil would take place but at the end of the day it was all worth it. To be part of the vigil so close to the Vicar of Christ was a whole new experience.

“We were quite close to Pope Francis compared to others. I took a moment of silence before the adoration began to calm myself down and pre-

pare my heart to feel the presence of Jesus in the midst of us.

“When the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, I could not control the tears of thanksgiving to the Lord for the precious moment given to me when I felt I was unworthy of. But He said a word and my soul was healed. I took this precious moment to ask pardon for the moments I failed to follow Him and to pray for all those who asked me to pray for. I prayed especially for the unborn children and all

those who are longing for a baby.

“I spent my time silently in front of Jesus, I could not stop crying as a sign of thanksgiving till the end. It was one of the most blessed moments in my life. I spent the rest of the night in silence in the presence of Jesus till the end of the adoration. I felt as if all my burdens were eased after the moment.

“I have everything when I have the Eucharist.” — **Maria Florina, Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Silibin**

A small taste of heaven

“The World Youth Day (WYD) in Lisbon was my first WYD and I hope it isn’t the last. I believe that the WYD is one of the greatest gifts of the Catholic Church. If I could summarise WYD, I would say it was like a small taste of heaven for me. It felt unreal seeing youth from all over the world at one place. It was really a heart-touching experience to see young adults making their journey to Lisbon. It opened my eyes and showed me that faith is still alive and there are still a lot of people that long for JESUS.

“I had the privilege to experience Jesus on two different occasions. The first time was when I went to the Church of St Dominic, Lisbon for Taizé. I experienced the unique meditative music and chants. My body was at peace and I felt as if all my troubles and burdens were lifted up.

“The second was during the vigil night. The event was said to have 1.5 million pilgrims attending. Seated at the front of the stage, the Eucharistic adoration was probably one of the

most beautiful moments I have ever experienced. The host was glowing. I was just praying and all of a sudden, tears started pouring down my cheeks without me having any control over it.

“It felt like it was a dream because I was lucky enough to not only see the Blessed Sacrament in person but also to see the Holy Father. The feeling was overwhelming. I never thought that I would be able to see the Pope up close.

“I admit that the World Youth Day was tiring because there was lots of walking, enormous crowds of people everywhere. But it was worth it because I got to meet youths from all over the world. I got the opportunity to learn about different cultures. It was exciting to know that we were all serving, singing, praying to one God. I will forever be grateful for this opportunity because this has ignited the fire in me to do more for my Church, the diocese of Penang and hopefully, the youth in Malaysia.” — **Brendan Sanjay, Church of St Mary, Tupah**

Inspired me to radiate Christ

“It was to my surprise and excitement to be given the privilege to be seated closer to the central altar for the evening vigil of adoration with Pope Francis. It was a surreal feeling to see the Pope in person although we were in fact still quite far away. It was humbling and inspirational.

“Seeing and meeting the Catholic youth from all over the world, with their devotion and passion in our faith has shown me how much love they have for Christ and how

true our faith is. There were songs and laughter everywhere we went!

“Despite that, during the exposition there was silence and reverence. In a crowd of 1.5 million youth with all their energy, there was silence in the air except for the sound of waves and crickets.

This pilgrimage has inspired me to radiate Christ — His joy and love, to deepen my faith and to serve Him as best as I can.” — **Ivy Cheah, Church of the Immaculate Conception, Penang**

Jesus loves us in spite of our sins

“My experience during the evening vigil conducted by Pope Francis during World Youth Day was truly a breathtaking one. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to be near the Holy Father for the adoration. During the adoration, despite having over a million youth present, it was total silence. Everyone was adoring the Lord at the same time as we all felt the Lord’s presence. When the Lord was present during the adoration, we were able to experience the Lord’s love for us as it felt like the Lord was healing us from our past traumas and wounds. Jesus loves us despite our sins and imperfection. Our God is truly an amazing God.” — **Kenneth Chin, Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Butterworth**

I am truly blessed

“My experience during the vigil is something that words can’t express. How extremely grateful and blessed I am to have been able to see the Holy Father from such a close distance. And that exact moment, I felt his message ‘If God calls you by name, it means that for Him you are not a number, but a face’. These experiences are the moments in time that become treasures forever.” — **Faustina Francis, Church of St Anthony, Teluk Intan**

Malaysian part of forum with Jesuit Superior General



Yvonne Lim, (with mic), from the Church of St Francis Xavier, Petaling Jaya, represented Asia in a Forum with Jesuit Superior General, Fr Arturo Sosa, SJ. Below is the question she posed to him.

Being Catholic in Asia usually means being part of the minority. In fact, in some Asian countries, just being Catholic itself warrants persecution. While I had an amazing experience at MAGIS and later at the World Youth Day which filled our hearts with excitement, joy and hope, we still face the reality of returning to our home countries, to be faced with systemic and structural challenges, especially with regards to evangelisation.

When our environment limits our abilities to express and share our faith, how do we be beacons of hope to others, especially those at home who urgently need this? What encouragement or words of consolation could you offer us, the youth of Asia?

Fr Arturo Sosa, SJ: Persecution has been a constant in the history of

Christianity. Even before, in ancient testament, you remember how the prophets died. Jesus, in the Gospel, never hides the difficulties of Christian life. He talks about it every time. He said, I offer you persecution and life. If you are really my followers, you would want to be my disciples, you will be persecuted but still give your life. It is a real consolation.

Pope Francis has so many times said, in the history of the Church, now is the biggest moment of persecution of Christians. Comes to my mind in this moment the situation in one place — in Manipur, India in the last five months. There are hundreds of churches burnt and more than 150 hundred victims have died there. If we go to other continents, we can find similar situations. Persecution is a reality for us, the violence of persecution that will be remembered for years. But there are other persecutions; denying men and women of faith, all the ideologies around, part of alienation. That is part of our world today.



"I am on the journey with you"

Pope to priests of Rome

"I am close to you in your joys and sufferings, thank you for your often unrecognised service," Pope Francis writes in a letter to the priests of his diocese, while warning them against spiritual worldliness that "hides behind appearances of religiosity and love for the Church, but, in reality, consists in seeking, instead of the glory of God, human glory and personal well-being."

Gratitude, first of all, for a precious and often hidden or little recognised service; then the reassurance of never being alone in the midst of "joys" and "sufferings"; finally, a warning against those temptations — denounced since the beginning of the pontificate — towards "spiritual worldliness" and "clericalism" (from which the laity are not exempt), that risk diverting the ministry into forms of closure, elitism, possessiveness, arrogance. Hence, the Holy Father invites the clergy to work side by side with lay "brothers" and "sisters" to initiate "synodal forms and paths" and to be "servants" and not "masters," to "wash the feet of our brothers and not crush them under our feet."

There is a pastor's attention and a fa-

Spiritual worldliness and clericalism

"I feel that I am on a journey with you and I would like you to feel that I am close to you in your joys and sufferings, in your projects and labours, in your bitterness and pastoral consolations," says Pope Francis, reassuring them that he shares "the desire for communion, affective and effective."

He then stigmatises what he says are the worst evils for priestly ministry: spiritual worldliness and clericalism — temptations that he has been denouncing for a decade. Indeed, the Pope apologises in some passages of the letter for repeating things that have already been said; but, he stresses, they are necessary admonitions. They are things, he writes, that are "priorities."

"God asks us to go to the depths in the fight against spiritual worldliness", he says, recalling Henri de Lubac, who warned of the dangers of this "way of life that reduces spirituality to appearance."

"Spiritual worldliness leads us to be 'merchants of the spirit', men clothed in sacred forms who in reality continue to think and act according to the fashions of the world".



Pope Francis speaking with priests and seminarians of the Diocese of Rome. (Vatican Media)

Showing themselves to be superior

When it enters the hearts of pastors, this worldliness "takes on a specific form, that of clericalism," the Pope points out. "Excuse me for reiterating this," he adds, "but as priests, I think you understand me, because you too share what you believe in in a heartfelt way, according to that beautiful, typically Roman (Romanesco!) trait whereby sincerity of the lips comes from the heart, and smacks of the heart!"

"As an old man and from the heart," he continues, "I feel I can tell you that it worries me when we fall back into the forms of clericalism; when, perhaps without realising it, we let people see that we are superior, privileged, placed 'above' and therefore separated from the rest of God's holy people."

Concerned with image and success

Clericalism is "a sickness", Pope Francis repeats, that leads to "living authority in the various forms of power, without being aware of duplicity, without humility but with detached and haughty attitudes."

The Pope cites the metaphor of "milk" and "wool" (that which nourishes and warms), found in Ezekiel and St Augustine, to warn against the risk of "feeding ourselves and our interests by covering ourselves with a comfortable life."

"When we are only concerned with milk, we think of our personal gain; when we obsessively seek wool, we think of looking after our own image and increasing our success. And so, we lose the priestly spirit," he writes.

Looking to Jesus

According to Pope Francis, "praise," "a sense of grace," "amazement at the gratuitousness" of God's love, help to stem these tendencies. But above all there is a "daily antidote", which is "to look upon

Jesus crucified, to fix one's eyes every day on Him who emptied Himself and humbled Himself for us, even unto death."

"This is the priestly spirit," the Pope says: "making us servants of the People of God and not masters, washing the feet of our brothers and sisters and not crushing them under our feet."

Watchful

"Let us, therefore, remain vigilant towards clericalism," is Pope Francis' exhortation. Clericalism "can affect everyone, even lay people and pastoral workers: one can, in fact, assume 'a clerical spirit' in carrying out ministries and charisms, living out one's calling in an elitist manner, closing oneself within one's own group and erecting walls towards the outside, developing possessive bonds towards roles in the community, cultivating arrogant and boastful attitudes towards others."

The "symptoms" are then evident: "complaining", "negativity", "chronic dissatisfaction with what is wrong", "irony that becomes cynicism."

"Thus," the Pope writes, "one becomes absorbed in the climate of criticism and anger that one breathes around, instead of

being the kind of people who, with evangelical simplicity and meekness, with kindness and respect, help their brothers and sisters to come out of the quicksand of intolerance."

This is the priestly spirit: making us servants of the people of God and not masters, washing the feet of our brothers and sisters and not crushing them under our feet.

"Do not be discouraged!"

So many "frailties", so many "inadequacies" ... But "let us not be discouraged!" is the Pope's word of encouragement.

"Let us roll up our sleeves and let us bend our knees (you who can!): let us pray to the Spirit for one another, let us ask Him to help us not to fall, in personal life or in pastoral action, into that religious appearance full of so many things but devoid of God, so as not to be functionaries of the sacred, but passionate heralds of the Gospel, not 'clerics of State', but pastors of the people." — **By Salvatore Cernuzio, Vatican News**

I have asked her to guard and protect you, to dry your secret tears, to revive in you the joy of the ministry and to make you every day shepherds in love with Jesus.

ther's concern in the letter that Pope Francis sent on August 7, to all the priests of the Diocese of Rome — the Pope's diocese, 'reorganised' last January with the new apostolic constitution *In Ecclesiarum communione*, which brought about several changes within the Vicariate.

The missive, which Pope Francis drafted in a familiar style in the midst of the numerous appointments of the WYD, bears the date of August 5, 2023, the memorial of the Dedication of the Basilica of Saint Mary Major, and is about seven pages long. The text, the Pope writes, is also the fruit of prayer before the *Salus Populi Romani* to whom — he assures them — he has entrusted all the priests of the Urbe: "I have asked her to guard and protect you, to dry your secret tears, to revive in you the joy of the ministry and to make you every day shepherds in love with Jesus."

A 'hidden' ministry

For Jorge Mario Bergoglio, who has always presented himself as the Bishop of Rome, it is precisely the latter that seems to be the greatest concern: namely, a disenchantment of priests with their vocation and ministry. It is, the Pope acknowledges, a ministry that carries a "burden of joys and labours, of hopes and disappointments," and that often takes place amid "many labours" and "misunderstandings."

He says "thank you" for this, and in fact repeats it several times in his letter.

"Thank you for so much hidden good that you do"; "thank you" for a work that sometimes receives "no recognition". "On the other hand," he says, "our priestly ministry is not measured by pastoral successes (the Lord Himself had fewer and fewer as time went on)".

Appearances of religiosity

"This happens when we allow ourselves to be fascinated by the seductions of the ephemeral, by mediocrity and habit, by the temptations of power and social influence," Pope Francis writes. "And, again, by vainglory and narcissism, by doctrinal intransigence and liturgical aestheticism, forms and ways in which worldliness hides behind appearances of religiosity and even love for the Church but, in reality, consists in seeking, instead of the glory of the Lord, human glory and personal well-being."

Gentle temptations

Spiritual worldliness is a "gentle" temptation and for this reason "even more insidious," he insists. "In fact, it creeps in, knowing how to hide well behind good appearances, even within 'religious' motivations". It is, in short, one of those "elegant demons" he spoke of in his Address to the Roman Curia in 2022, that come and go and that "knock in a polite way."

Spiritual worldliness leads us to be 'merchants of the spirit', men clothed in sacred forms who in reality continue to think and act according to the fashions of the world.



Conference president reflects on his new role, responsibility

By Patricia Pereira

In July, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei (CBCMSB) met for their bi-annual plenary assembly during which they elected a new president — Archbishop Julian Leow Beng Kim of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, succeeding the outgoing president, Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang.

As he prepares to commence his tenure as president of the Conference in September, Archbishop Julian sees one of his key tasks as ensuring there is collaboration between the bishops and the respective commissions.

In an interview with *HERALD*, the archbishop made some refreshingly straightforward, and helpfully clarifying, statements about his role as president and the role of the conference.

The archbishop emphasised that it's important for people to understand that though it's true that the Conference president can shape (though not dictate) the work and priorities of the Conference, all decisions will be made collectively by the Conference members.

"I can give suggestions and propose ideas, but at the end of the day, it still requires the 'buy-in' and approval of my brother bishops," said Archbishop Julian, who previously headed the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia.

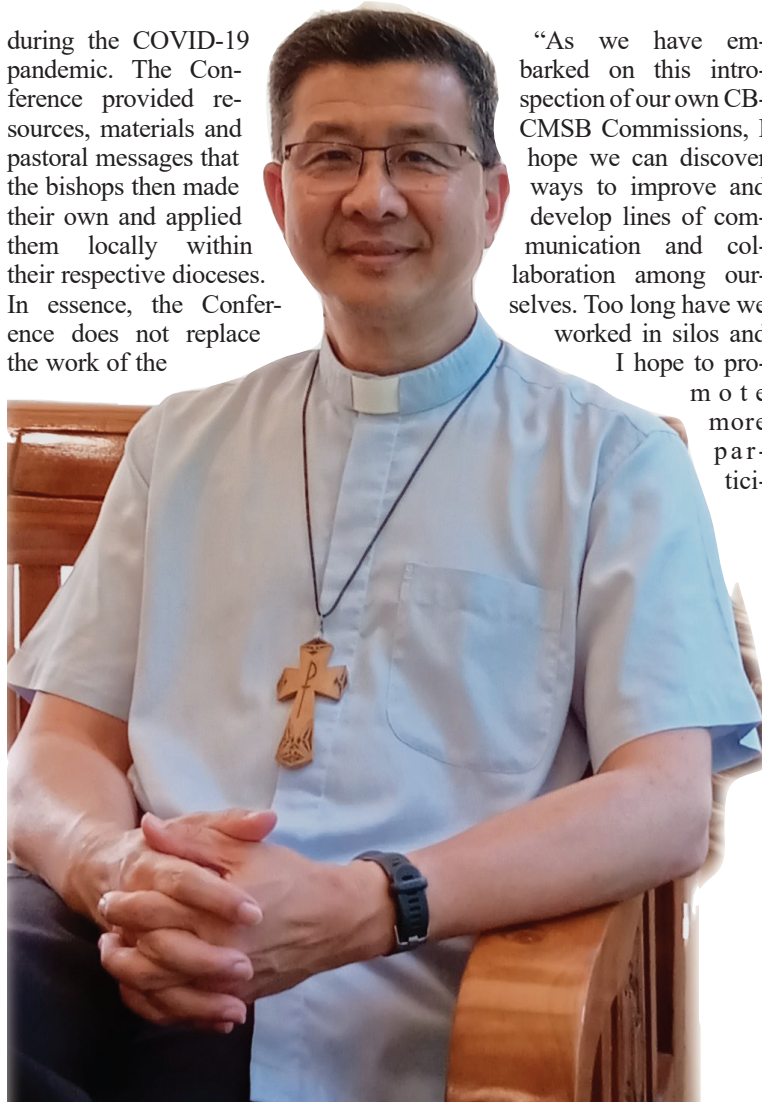
The prelate explained that from the very beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis has, in various ways, emphasised and elevated the role of national and regional episcopal conferences (the CBCMSB is a regional episcopal conference).

First, and most importantly, the Second Vatican Council, particularly in *Lumen Gentium* and *Christus Dominus*, focuses on the ministry of bishops and the principle of collegiality. Bishops are not branch managers within Catholicism's corporate structure, nor are they mere deputies of papal authority. Bishops possess legitimate authority of their own.

"Part of the misconception might be to think that we have ultimate authority over everything about the Church. A bishops' conference is a convening, it's an assembly of the bishops who come together in unity to work as a college, a collegial authority, under the Pope and in union with the Pope, to address the signs of the times. That's really the key message.

"I think sometimes when people write in or contact us, they might wish we had more immediate, local authority, that we could make this or that particular thing happen in a diocese or a parish — that's really not the function of the Conference. A case in point would be the guidelines and dispensation

during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Conference provided resources, materials and pastoral messages that the bishops then made their own and applied them locally within their respective dioceses. In essence, the Conference does not replace the work of the



local bishop; rather it enhances and assists."

Reiterating his emphasis on collaboration, the archbishop said that through the years, they have enjoyed peace and stability as a Conference because of their common goals and vision.

"This does not mean that we do not have our individual differences. As a body, we recognise diversities of opinions but we respect and abide by collective decisions. The Catholic Church is present and active in this small conference of three countries and each diocese has its own characteristics and history, and its own unique challenges and opportunities, all underpinned by our common faith. There is really unity in diversity among the bishops. One of the most important aspects of the Conference is our readiness to listen to and learn from each other's experience. Every part of the Church in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei has something to offer the wider Church," said the archbishop.

On whether the Conference will follow in the footsteps of Pope Francis' *Praedicate Evangelium* (PE), which was on the restructuring of the Roman Curia, Archbishop Julian said that this is a great opportunity for the Conference to also move forward in the restructuring momentum of PE as they too have been discussing about restructuring for quite some time now.

"As we have embarked on this introspection of our own CBCMSB Commissions, I hope we can discover ways to improve and develop lines of communication and collaboration among ourselves. Too long have we worked in silos and

I hope to promote more participation

the FABC central committee. Currently, there are three bishops from the Conference who hold positions of office in the FABC — Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis (Office of Social Communications), Archbishop Julian (Office of Education and Faith Formation) and Archbishop Simon Poh (Office of Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs).

The archbishop went on to explain that the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur had embarked on a restructuring exercise two years ago, and has now completed its proposed streamlining of the various ministries into 10 commissions, after several discussions with "back and forth" counter proposals by the clergy.

"The first attempt at restructuring will be implemented in *experimentum* for the next two years, and evaluated. Structures are important to give a framework of how decisions are made and carried out and I hope to share the process and outcome of the archdiocese's restructuring exercise with the CBCMSB in the coming year," he added.

The prelate expressed hope that the CBCMSB will continue to play its role on the universal stage as well as pay detailed attention to the needs of the vulnerable among us. "Being a small conference, we must also look out for the little ones in our midst. Safeguarding minors and the vulnerable are high on our list of concerns. I have seen the deep desire in so many people for the Church to be authentic and faithful. The horrors of the sexual abuse crisis, and the extent of the suffering inflicted on the young and the vulnerable, will be a permanent scar on the Church. All of us, clergy and laity, must ensure we, the Church, is what it is called to be — a living and effective sign of the Lord's presence and action in our world.

"The Holy Father has stressed, and we the CBCMSB agree, that there can be no compromise on ensuring a safe environment for our children. Safeguarding is a priority for us as Church. We are trying to improve on

our protocols, updating with local legislation as well as Vatican best practices," said the archbishop.

When asked to share his personal thoughts on one of the concerns raised at the local synod discussions, i.e. ministering to the LG-BTQ+ community, Archbishop Julian who will mark the ninth anniversary of his episcopal ordination in October, believes that there are times when we need to keep going back to the basics when dealing with such pastoral matters.

"The letters of St Paul, for example, with their very practical advice about how to treat each other in our communities of faith with respect, with kindness, with gentleness and with compassion, need to be taken seriously. The way in which Jesus interacts with various people in His encounters with them needs to be seen as the model of our own interactions with people. In other words, we need to be people grounded in the Scriptures.

"I live by the axiom, 'Hate the sin but love the sinner'. We all struggle with the lure of sin. We fall so very often but we do not remain in sin. Jesus reminds us as He reminded the woman caught in adultery, 'Go but sin no more'. We must know the right from wrong. We must journey with the sinner and bring back the lost — to leave the 99 in search of the one.

"In the end, we are disciples of Jesus and everything in our life, in the Church, needs to reflect this. We, as bishops, are also guardians of the deposit of Faith. We are successors of the Apostles," said the archbishop, who concluded the interview by quoting Eph 4: 3-5 "The Church is one: She acknowledges

one Lord, confesses one Faith, is born of one Baptism, forms only one Body, is given life by the one Spirit, for the sake of the one Hope."



Archbishop Julian Leow greeting a child at a parish event. The safeguarding of minors and the vulnerable are high on the list of concerns for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei. (HERALD filepic)

Four ways the Catholic Church can actually listen more to young people

Pope Francis travelled to Lisbon, Portugal, for his fourth World Youth Day, to listen to the hopes, challenges and questions of over one million young Catholics from every corner of the global Church. He met with sexual abuse survivors, Ukrainian pilgrims, university students, young people suffering from illness; and he challenged them all to work for a “hope-filled future.”

A much smaller contingent of young people will have the Pope’s ear this October in Rome at the first of two month-long meet-

ings of the Synod on Synodality, on the themes of Communion, Participation and Mission in 2023 and 2024. For the first time in history, lay people will have the right to vote in a synod, and among the voting members are college students and men and women in their 20s and 30s.

The Pope has said, “Synod means walking on the same road, walking together.” As we embark on this new path in the life of the Church, what are some guidelines to consider when thinking about listening to, and walking with, young people?



1. Youth do not share a common perspective

Young people are not a monolith. It can be unhelpful and reductive to speak about any group in the Church as a unified bloc. In a similar way, we should avoid speaking of “young people” as if they all share a common perspective on, or experience of, Church.

There are young Catholics who are drawn to more traditional liturgies and those who feel at home in a Catholic Worker House, and some find deep meaning in both. There are young Catholics who feel hurt and alienated by the Church’s teaching on sexuality and others who see the Church’s



2. Offer something different

The Church must admit its failures and offer something different. The working document for the synod says that a synodal Church is one that “seeks to widen the scope of communion, but which must come to terms with the contradictions, limits and wounds of history.” Most young Catholics today have known only a Church marred by the sexual abuse scandal — but that does not mean they see it as ancient history. While the Church has made great strides in the protection of children and vulnerable adults, the revelations remain shocking for each new generation of Catholics as they mature. Church leaders must be forthright with young Catholics about past failures and transparent in their ongoing efforts to hold accountable those who covered up abuse. For young people to show up at the table, they have to trust they are speaking with adults who have their best interests at heart.



But the Church has failed young people in other, more subtle ways. It can be easy to blame secular culture, or even young people themselves, for the exodus of millennials and Gen Zers from the pews. And there is plenty to critique about modern society. But we should ask ourselves: Have we failed to offer something different? Studies show that Gen Z is the loneliest generation. If these young people are not finding community in parishes, have we been bold enough in searching for new models of relationship?

countercultural witness as a bulwark in a destabilising, relativistic world. There are hundreds of thousands more who have not set foot in a church since their baptism or confirmation. Outside the US Church, there are young people fighting in and fleeing from the war in Ukraine; young migrants risking their lives in the Mediterranean and on the Rio Grande; and others struggling in refugee camps across the Middle East and Africa.

When framed in this way, “listening to young people” can start to seem an impossible task. But this way of speaking may also shed some light on the sometimes opaque concept of synodality. If we are to truly listen to all these young voices, it will take more than a Vatican meeting or survey. It will require a new way of being Church, a Church that accompanies its people and is attuned to their hopes, doubts and lived experiences.

4. Be willing to accept

Ask for more, not less, from young people. Among the delegates from the United States who will have the right to vote in October’s synod is Julia Oseka, a junior at St Joseph’s University in Philadelphia. When asked what emerged from her synodal conversations over the past two years, she said, “[T]he feeling that young people are not merely the future of the Church, but also the now of the Church.” While much discussion around the synod has rightly focused on Catholics with one foot in and one foot out of the Church, we should not neglect the millions of young people already active in the Church who are eager for their gifts to be more often accepted.

There are small steps we can take today, like making sure young people are invited to serve on parish councils — and that parish meetings accommodate the schedules of working adults and young parents — that could foster greater involvement among young people. But as the synod looks at more fundamental structural reforms to Church governance, participants should not overlook or underestimate the skills, energy and dedication young people are already prepared to offer the Church.

Young people will always be among us, and as Pope Francis said at his first World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro in 2013, they are sometimes called to “make a mess.” The Church’s job is not to clean up after them but to harness their restless, creative energy in service of the kingdom. — **The Editors, America**



3. The Church cannot act like everybody else

Listening to young people does not mean idolising youth. In his book *God Is Young*, Pope Francis writes: “Adolescents seek confrontation, they ask questions, they challenge everything, they look for answers. I can’t stress enough how important it is to question everything.” But he has also said that the Church cannot think “she is young because she accepts

everything the world offers her, thinking that she is renewed because she sets her message aside and acts like everybody else.”

There are many young people in the Church — and many more who have left — who want to see Church teaching, especially where it relates to women, LGBTQ people and divorced Catholics,

better aligned with more modern values. Those voices will be represented at the synod and should be listened to, not for show but with an ear for where the Holy Spirit may be working through them. Serious discernment will be needed to find our way forward, and that will require the wisdom from within the Church that has spanned the ages, too.

We need to change our perception

By now, the results of the six state elections would have come in and depending on the results, we would now have an indication of the political temperature for the remainder of the present government's term.

A status quo would enable the present government to continue, but even with the new anti-party-hopping laws, we can expect a strong, purposefully exerted pressure on the administration should the result be interpreted as a referendum against it, or successfully spun into such a narrative.

That likely means prolonged political unease.

The fast and steady rise of conservative politics in Malaysia seems to have edged out moderate politics from the mainstream, which makes post-election reconciliation harder than it used to be. The strong 'Us vs Them' stance — where does that leave minorities like the Catholics?

First is to be encouraged in the fact that sometimes being used as a bogeyman, alongside Communists or Jews, while hurtful, isn't likely personal nor fuelled by actual hatred, but to a political end of perception-based politics.

While it may not stem from actual fear, the damage it does from the fear it does raise, in the long run, is quite real.

If left unchecked, it could further tear apart our social fabric — a concern that may not be shared by most current politicians whose event horizons have shortened significantly to the next five years as they chase short term gains, ignoring the long-term cost and consequence.



MAKING SENSE

Emmanuel Joseph

In five years' time, these politicians may not even be there for the aftermath, but organisations like the Church will need to live with it.

Continued engagement and dialogue with other communities, therefore, is important to counter-balance lies with the truth.

It will not be easy, as our new political and social realities have set many things taboo, and difficult to broach, while curious Catholics can sometimes be a little direct.

Regardless, it needs to be done via current or even new, more 'benign' mechanisms.

Dialogue need not be centred around faith alone.

Poverty alleviation, common social issues like security, cleanliness, health awareness: these are already being done on some level or other by most parishes, and some already invite the local community to join in their talks and forums, blood donations and other initiatives. Virtually all parish priests already have their own networks of local religious and community leaders, as well as political representatives that they communicate regularly with — which can be extended at a committee and even community level.

Conversely, participating in reciprocal events, or events organised by other communities, too, will help allay misgivings

and ill misconceptions that may stem from fear mongering, but are exacerbated by our own silence, perpetuating myths, and deepening the mistrust. It is amazing how much of people's world view we can alter by just being a presence in their interactions, as we help form their image and idea of what a group, in this case 'Christian' is like in general.

Having some non-Catholics, say a nearby Muslim resident, over for celebrations in our own halls or compounds for fellowship and chats on common issues for even a couple of hours would help them put a face and context to a 'Christian' — a fellow Malaysian who may disagree with some things, but wants many more things for the common good just as he/she does.

These interactions are contagious, and they draw communities together, making both our worlds a little smaller.

Imagine if that person's interaction would be, instead, with an aggressive missionary with a Bible in one hand and brimstone in the other, selling Jesus like a multi-level marketer, haranguing the listener day and night and with constant bursts of passive-aggressive overtures — and that was the only Christian that person ever had a chance to interact with. And that person hears a political *ceramah* that Christians are out to convert all Muslims, and that is why we have Bibles in hotel rooms!

The connection, to us, who know that may seem farfetched, but not so to that person who is now convinced there is a 'secret Christian agenda'.

Similarly, many of the misconceptions

seem ludicrous to us, especially when we see it from our lens and with our assumptions of the other party's level of exposure and knowledge.

On the flip side, we could find our own assumptions of people mistaken.

A former PAS leader who is a friend speaks perfect English and several other languages, a John Hopkins honours graduate, and an internationally known speaker on finance and banking, donning his usual tie and suit. Most people don't know that side of him from seeing him in a mosque where he also preaches weekly in Arabic, Bahasa, and Tamil, which he is also conversant in, who changed my own world view of what a Muslim preacher is supposed to be like.

This labelling of people and generalisations are to be expected in large, multiracial and religiously diverse countries like ours, as we tend to pigeon-hole people into categories, for our own ease of navigating through our daily lives without getting into trouble or offending others, which is probably the way we, as minorities are typically trained - to keep our heads low and not get into businesses that don't concern us.

If we do not show others who we are, other people will describe us in ways that we may not be.

● 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.

Come sing with me



... meanwhile

Joanne Lim

It only takes a spark, to get a fire going, and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing. You've heard this one for sure. Something tells me you were as touched as I was the first time you heard the song. I listened to a testimony of a priest who once told us that the song *Pass It On* not only brought him to his knees at the pew, but led him later to the pulpit.

As a six-year-old, I was deeply moved to literally pass it on, to spread His love and to shout it from the mountain top. Through the years, this would be the song that played as the 'backing track' of my life as I went on to become a lector at Mass during my schooling years, saying 'yes' to joining the music ministry when I was at university, and now as a catechist.

Praise and worship songs brought me closest to the faith...especially during the times I was lost and lonely. As a teenager, there was a tendency to drift away, but during our weekly Catholic students meeting, when we sang with all our hearts, "There is None Like You, no one else can touch my heart like you do, I can search for all eternity long, and find, there is none like..." tears would flow freely as we trusted in His unfailing love and acclaimed that, "Your mercy flows like the river wide, and healing comes from your hands; suffering children are safe in your arms, there is none like you!" Later, someone would explain to me that this song wasn't composed by a Catholic, and I was (mis)led to believe that it was even sacrilegious to sing it.

I remember every time when I was tired

of searching, tired from all the guilt and problems with friendships that were dear to me, "when I lost all hope with life and my heart was hardened by sin..." I would cry to Him, "Renew Me, O Lord, please renew me, with Your power and Your Spirit, move in my life. Break all the chains that keep me from You, take me O Lord, and make me O Lord, the instrument of Your love." It was iconic songs like this that brought us to our knees to *Give Thanks*.

In my 20s, I had followed some church friends to a drug rehab centre; a resident was on the drums and with each beat, his eyes teared as he sang along, "there is no problem too big, God cannot solve it; there is no mountain too tall, He cannot move it; there is no storm too dark God cannot calm it; there is no sorrow too deep, He cannot soothe it." Witnessing that from someone whom I knew went through hell and back, I could not but believe that he meant every word. I went home that day fervently trusting that "if He carried the weight of the world upon His shoulders, I know my brother that He will carry you." With the many storms I subsequently encountered in my life, I would learn to place them in His care.

My first heartbreak was painful...I was made to face my frailties and to deal with rejection on my own. I asked the Lord for His grace and mercy, and I realised the wonderful power of His love as I pleaded "...Lord I come to You, let my heart be changed, renewed, flowing from the grace that I've found in You. Lord I've come to know the weaknesses I see in me will be stripped away by the power of Your love..." I know so many young people today who are going through mental anguish, heartbreak, depression...and I wish they could draw strength from this hymn, as I did during the lowest points in my life.

An old gentle lady I knew was very fond of the hymn *In His Time*... Being widowed at 36 with nine children, the youngest being just a year old, I understood what this song meant to her. She must have looped the lyrics in her heart to have endured the many struggles that came her way, and lived until she was 94. With a smile on her face, she was always ready to give, steadfast in her faith, and hugely generous with her love, because she believed that "He makes all things beautiful, in His time."

A joyous migrant community in our BEC always started prayer meetings with *Hari Ini*, accompanied by hand gestures of the song. We would subsequently learn how to also sing praises to our Lord through *Kau Yang Terindah* and *Bagaikan Bejana*. Today in some parishes, there is no hint of a Malay hymn in Malaysia — although Latin is evidently present in some.

We incessantly call for young people today to join the crusade, to be a follower of Christ...yet we stopped singing "Here I am Lord, is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go Lord, if you lead me, I will hold your people in my heart." In an age when superficiality and self-centredness roar at our faces, the opportunity for change is embedded in the verses of *I Offer My Life* — "all that I am, all that I have, I lay them down before you, O Lord. All my regrets, all my acclaim, the joy and the pain, I'm making them Yours..."

My teenage children today grow up with church songs that are limited to a 452-page book...songs with words they struggle to relate to, and that they can vaguely understand. Why aren't we overflowing like we used to? One school of thought says quality is more important than quantity. The young generation find increasing relevance in pop songs and rock music because Billie Eilish,

Taylor Swift, Bruno Mars, Shawn Mendes and Ariana Grande ...and maybe Kingdom City 'speak their language'.

As people of God, will we wake from our slumber and arise from our sleep, to realise the need to bring back at least 'some' meaningful old melodies into our Church and to pass these gems along to our children who are clearly searching yet are not finding? Isn't it hard enough out there?

Above all, I know that regardless of whether it was a song from Maranatha or Don Moen, these songs inspired millions of Catholics worldwide, including me. My thoughts circle back to my six-year-old self who learnt hymns from my dear mother who soothed me into slumber with songs like *As I kneel before You and Gentle Woman*. I, in turn, did the same when I became a mother. "Don't sing to Majesty in the third person!" seems to be the cry of the hour, and I often wonder, who in earnest eternity is counting? Notwithstanding, St Augustine says singing is praying twice harder and as the psalmist says, "Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; break forth and sing for joy and sing praises." (Psalm 98:4).

...meanwhile, the same Lord of the *Old Rugged Cross* beckons us to *Be Not Afraid*. By now, I can now hear the hum of long-lost tunes echoing in your heart, and as you acknowledge God's soft prompting, we sing *I Thank You Lord for the trials that come my way...and when you call out His name, know that He will Come and Save You*.

God is Good? Together now, and...All the time!

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



Fr Ron Rolheiser

The illusion of self-sufficiency

A number of years ago, I attended the funeral of a man who died at the age of 90. From every indication, he had been a good man, solidly religious, the father of a large family, a man respected in the community, and a man with a generous heart. However, he had also been a strong man, a gifted man, a natural leader, someone to whom a group would naturally look to take the reins and lead. Hence, he held a number of prominent positions in the community. He was a man very much in charge.

One of his sons, a Catholic priest, gave the homily at his funeral. He began with these words: Scripture tells us that the sum of a man's life is 70 years, 80 for those who are strong. Now our dad lived for 90 years. Why the extra 20 years? Well, it's no mystery. He was too strong and too much in charge of things to die at 70 or 80. It took God an extra 20 years to mellow him out. And it worked. The last 10 years his life were years of massive diminishment. His wife died, and he never got over that. He had a stroke which put him into assisted living and that was a massive blow to him. Then he spent the last years of his life with others having to help him take care of his basic bodily needs. For a man like him, that

was humbling.

But this was the effect of all that. It mellowed him. In those last years, whenever you visited him, he would take your hand and say, "help me". He hadn't been able to say those words since he was five years old and able to tie his own shoelaces. By the time he died, he was ready. When he met Jesus and St Peter on the other side, I'm sure he simply reached for a hand and said, "help me". Ten and 20 years ago, he would, I'm sure, have given Jesus and Peter some advice as to how they might run the pearly gates more efficiently.

That's a parable that speaks deeply and directly about a place we must all eventually come to, either through proactive choice or by submission to circumstance; we all must eventually come to a place where we accept that we are not self-sufficient, that we need help, that we need others, that we need community, that we need grace, that we need God.

Why is that so important? Because we are not God and we become wise and more loving when we realise and accept that. Classical Christian theologians defined God as self-sufficient being, and highlight that only God is self-sufficient. God alone has no need of anything beyond Himself. Everything else, every-

thing that is not God, is defined as contingent, as not self-sufficient, as needing something beyond itself to bring it into existence and to keep it in existence every second of its being.

That can sound like abstract theology, but ironically, it's little children who get it, who have an awareness of this. They know that they cannot provide for themselves and that all come to us as gift. They know they need help. However, not long after they learn to tie their own shoelaces, this awareness begins to fade and as they grow into adolescence and then adulthood, particularly if they are healthy, strong, and successful, they begin to live with the illusion of self-sufficiency. I provide for myself!

And, that in fact serves them well in terms of making their way in this world. But it doesn't serve truth, community, love, or the soul. It's an illusion, the greatest of all illusions. None of us will enter deeply into community as long as we nurse the illusion of self-sufficiency, when we are still saying, I don't need others! I choose who and what I let into my life!

G.K. Chesterton once wrote that *familiarity is the greatest of all illusions*. He's right, and what we are most familiar with

is taking care of ourselves and believing that we are sufficient unto ourselves. As we know, this serves us well in terms of getting ahead in this life. However, fortunately for us, though painful, God and nature are always conspiring together to teach us that we are not self-sufficient. The process of maturing, aging, and eventually dying is calibrated to teach us, whether we welcome the lesson or not, that we are not in charge, that self-sufficiency is an illusion. Eventually for all of us there will come a day when, as it was with us before we could tie our own shoelaces, we will have to reach out for a hand and say, "help me".

The philosopher Eric Mascall has an axiom that says we are neither wise nor mature as long as we take life for granted. We become wise and mature precisely when we take it as granted — by God, by others, by love.

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In the 'saint method', we talk to an older brother or sister in eternity



The Christian call to prayer is a call to communion with God and other believers. While our time of prayer is personal, it's not individualistic. The Christian — even if physically alone — always prays as a member of the Body of Christ, united with those on earth and those in eternity. Our prayers are offered together before the throne of God.

The Church has many prayer methods, such as *lectio divina*, composition of place, and *poustinia*. The prayer method, however, that most emphasises prayer as a communion with other believers is called the saint method.

The saint method resembles the composition of place but is distinct from it since the composition of place normally involves an event or scene from the written Word of God. By contrast, the saint method draws from an event or scene in the life of a saint.

Like composition of place, the saint method employs the use of our spiritual imagination. We select a scene from the life of a saint and re-create the event within our spiritual souls. Using some poetic license, we ask ourselves what we see, hear, taste, touch, and smell.

Unlike the composition of place, the saint method has us walking with the saint in the event and talking with the saint about what's happening. We talk and we listen to this older brother or sister in eternity.

After conversing with the saint, we then do our colloquy — the conversation — with the living God. We do the colloquy with the saint by our side. We can even have the saint do a colloquy with God before we do our own.

The point of the saint method is to engage a holy one and see their experience of God from the narrative of their lives.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us of the importance of the saints: "The witnesses who have preceded us into the kingdom, especially those whom the Church recognises as saints, share in the living tradition of prayer by the example of their lives, the transmission of their writings, and their prayer today. They contemplate God, praise Him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. When they entered into the joy of their Master, they were 'put in charge of many things.' Their intercession is their most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world."

The saints are still with us. They commune with us behind the thin veil that separates life here and life in eternity.

By using the saint method, we allow ourselves to feel and know more deeply of the presence, friendship, and intercession of the holy ones. As we might struggle with issues, heartbreaks, finances, health, relationships, sin and temptation in this

world, we can turn to the ones who also walked this walk and ask them for their words of encouragement and consolation. We can seek their help and intercession.

As an example, I have a deep devotion to St Katherine Drexel. I once lived in a house where she herself visited. I have always felt a deep affinity for her and her witness of turning sorrow into service. I have known of Mother Drexel's presence in my life and have regularly turned to her for wisdom and

spiritual strength. I am regularly inspired by Mother's tenacity, relentless, and keen sense of mission. I have studied her life and consider her a true sister, mother, and friend.

In my use of the saint method, I have often put myself with Katherine Drexel at the feet of Pope Leo XIII. The young heiress, with millions to spend, offered to pray for missionaries to go and minister to the African American and Native American peoples in the United States. In response, the elderly pope told Katherine: "What about you? You go and be that missionary!"

In my spiritual scene, I imagine the grey hair and whispered voice of the pope. I hear his voice being pushed to strength as he summoned her to do the work of the Gospel herself. I feel the breeze of the wind, the pain in our knees as she and I kneel before the pope. I can hear the rumbling of the people behind us who are waiting for their turn to meet the pope.

Through the saint method, I allow my spiritual soul to take me there with this saint. It is not only Katherine Drexel who is being challenged by the pope, but also me.

This is one example of the saint method. The method has its esteemed place among the major prayer methods of the Church and it's a helpful method for us to feel and know of the presence and friendship of the holy ones in our lives today. — **By Fr Jeffrey F. Kirby, *Crux***



Little Catholics' Corner

Hello children of God,

Today's Gospel story on the faith of the Canaanite Woman may seem odd, as it appears that Jesus ignores her request at first. In the end, we understand how she recognises Jesus' power, and was willing to take risks and persist in her efforts because she believed in His ability. The miracle Jesus performed in this lesson, and how it came about, reminds us that sometimes God might seem to be far away and asks us to be patient. But He is always listening and ready to give us what we truly need.

Children, it's important to remember that faith is

not about us, but about who we are trusting. This woman was persistent in asking Jesus for help. But it was not her persistence or her merit that caused the healing of her daughter. That came about through Christ's help. We are all sinful, but Jesus died for all of us, and wants us to come to Him with our needs.

God wants all kinds of people to believe in Him, even those the world sees as outsiders. Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman is a powerful lesson on how God accepts all people based on faith.

Love, Aunty Gwen

Word Search

JESUS AND THE CANAANITE WOMAN

HEALED
GREAT
DEMON
EAT
DAUGHTER
CRYING
HELP
FAITH
SHEEP
DOGS
TABLE
CRUMBS
FALL
LOST
ISRAEL
SUFFERING
MERCY
JESUS
WOMAN
KNELT

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

CRUMBS FROM THE TABLE

Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." Matthew 15:28 (NIV)

Choose the word that best matches the definition.

1. An adult female human being
A. girl B. demon C. woman D. daughter
2. A female child in relation to her parents
A. dog B. daughter C. demon D. woman
3. To experience physical or mental pain
A. lost B. worry C. faith D. suffer
4. An evil spirit
A. woman B. lost C. demon D. daughter
5. The Son of God
A. Matthew B. Jesus C. Joseph D. James
6. Unable to be found
A. sick B. suffer C. demon D. lost
7. Animals with four legs, commonly kept as pets, and sometimes used to guard things
A. dogs B. cats C. frogs D. camels
8. Small pieces of bread or cake
A. food B. crumbs C. crackers D. leftovers
9. An very large amount of something
A. small B. great C. medium D. tiny
10. To have trust or confidence in something or someone
A. help B. great C. cry D. faith



Hang your faith on Jesus craft

You will need:

- Yarn or string
- Scissors
- Caption or verse
- Hole punch
- Construction paper
- Extra decorations (stickers, etc.)
- Markers or crayons



Procedure:

1. Choose how many words or phrases you'd like on your decoration.
2. Cut construction paper into shapes such as hearts, crosses, or other shapes.
3. Add verses, captions, or specific words to each paper.
4. Hole punch the papers, adding more decoration if desired.
5. Loop the yarn or string, through the punched holes. This can be used as a long wall decoration or a simple necklace or "belt" to enjoy.

Dear God,
Thank you for providing what
we need every day
Help us to be patient
Even when you seem far away
Help us to trust in you always
Thank you for your love
We love you, Father God!
In Jesus name, Amen!



YOUTH

AUGUST 20, 2023



WORLD YOUTH DAY 2023: TRUSTING YOUNG PEOPLE

By Isabelle de Gaulmyn

The World Youth Day came to an end on August 6, with the closing Mass presided over by Pope Francis.

The youth participating in the Lisbon World Youth Day are neither aliens nor nostalgic for an idealised past. They belong to their generation, which is quite logical, given the very high number of participants, over a million in fact. They carry the same anxieties and uncertainties. It is striking to see how much the COVID-19 pandemic has affected this age group, whether they come from Asia, Europe, or America. They have come out of it weakened, as confirmed by all healthcare professionals. Added to this are the climate changes that make them feel powerless.

The absence of firm references, the rapid dissemination of statements through social media, without anything solid to hold on to... For European pilgrims, especially from the East, there is also the traumatic experience

of a war within the borders of Ukraine, with threats to neighbouring countries. Finally, these young people who were in Lisbon, hold on to a faith that seems to be shared less and less, even mocked, by those around them.

Are we paying enough attention to what these young people are experiencing and giving them their rightful place in this complex world? Pope Francis has clearly perceived their anxiety: "At this moment in time, we are facing enormous challenges; we hear the painful plea of so many people (...) Yet, let us find the courage to see our world not as in its death throes, but in a process of giving birth, not at the end, but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history," he affirmed at the University of Lisbon. "So, work to bring about a new "choreography", one that respects the "dance" of life by putting the human person at the centre". It's a way of perceiving the strength of the joy that emanated from this lively, young, and diverse crowd during these five days and to trust them. — LCI (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)



The Holy Father's encounter with

God is calling you by name

Pope Francis leads the welcoming ceremony of the 37th World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal on August 3 and reminds young people from across the globe that God calls each of us by name because He loves every person.

The highlight of the Welcome Ceremony was the Liturgy of the Word, focusing on St Luke's account of Jesus' sending forth the 72 disciples.

In his reflection on the Gospel reading, Pope Francis warmly welcomed the young people taking part in World Youth Day, reminding them that God has called them by name precisely because He loves each one of them. "At this World Youth Day," the Pope said, "let us help one another to recognise this fundamental reality: May these days be vibrant echoes of God's call of love."

— By Christopher Wells, Vatican News



Letters from young people.

(Source photo/JMJ Lisboa 2023 flickr)



Pope Francis hears young people's confessions in Lisbon

Pope Francis heard the confessions of three young people in the Jardim Vasco da Gama, renamed Reconciliation Park or "Forgiveness Park" for World Youth Day, August 4.

The Pope took about 10 minutes in total to hear the private confessions of the young people while seated in one of the dozens of custom-built white confessionals dotted around the park, the largest square in the Iberian Peninsula. He was assisted into the confessional while seated in his wheelchair. — Vatican News

'Don't lose the joy of life'

Pope enjoys lunch with 10 young WYD pilgrims

Sebastião, Clara Ysabel, Joana, Luis Carlos, Beatriz, Pedro, Audrey, Hannah, Karam, and Maria Magdalena are the names of the 10 young people — six girls and four boys — who had lunch with Pope Francis on Friday in the Apostolic Nunciature in Lisbon, August 4.

Their ages ranged from 24 to 34, and they hailed from different countries: three from Portugal, and then one each from Peru, the Philippines, Equatorial Guinea; United States, Palestine, Colombia, and Brazil.

The Pope encouraged them to always be "happy", like the saints who are never sad. They discussed a number of topics: peace, abortion and euthanasia, the challenges facing young people, and their hopes for the future. — Vatican News





LISTEN - DREAM - RISE UP

RISE UP ENCOUNTERS

Rise Up Encounters was a new catechesis model of World Youth Day, which challenged the youth to reflect on the teachings of Pope Francis.

Pope Francis' pontificate has presented various topics that are close to the hearts of young people.

The three topics for Rise Up Encounters were: integral ecology (*Laudato Si'*), social friendship and universal fellowship (*Fratelli Tutti*), and mercy (*Misericordia et misera*).

The Rise Up Encounters were planned to provide young people with an experience aligned with the ongoing synodal journey to build a missionary and outgoing Church.

They were organised in close collaboration with the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, August 2-4 during the week of WYD 2023.

The events took place in churches and venues in Lisbon, close to areas where pilgrims were welcomed, across 270 locations, in more than 30 languages and provided time for reflection, listening, and sharing.



First Encounter — Integral Ecology

Biblical theme: *Mary arose and went with haste towards the hills.* (Luke 1:39)

The main objective of this meeting was to explore the general theme of WYD and to introduce young people to the experience of being loved and called by the Lord, like Mary. This experience propels us to go higher and to go out towards others, and to be reconciled with God, with our brothers and sisters and with creation.

Some food for thought can be found in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* 111-113 (the great proclamation for all young people) and from the message for WYD 2022-2023, in connection with the theme of caring for the common home (cf. *Laudato Si'* 1, 65, 66, 71, 80, 96, 97, 98, 100, 241).

Second Encounter — Social friendship

Biblical theme: *Do whatever He tells you.* (John 2:5)

The meeting aimed to show young people specific ways to follow Jesus and imitate Mary and so give substance to their "yes" (cf. WYD 2021 Message). Young people should feel invited to participate in God's dream for humanity and to actively contribute to transforming reality. The young people and the bishop gave testimonies of concrete actions already implemented, to show other young people that practical commitment is indeed possible and feasible. It was explained to young people that praying is also a way of taking action, and they were reminded of the power of prayer to God: through prayer, they are called to intercede for our wounded humanity, as Mary did at Cana.

Some food for thought can be found in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* 111-113 (the great proclamation for all young people) and from the message for WYD 2022-2023 in connection with the theme of social friendship and universal fellowship, as presented in *Fratelli Tutti* (1, 2, 276, 278).



Third Encounter — Mercy

Biblical theme: *His mercy is from age to age.* (cf. Luke 1:50)

On the third morning, young people were introduced to the importance of silence and contemplation. They were encouraged to come closer and become friends of Jesus, "the Man of the third day", the One who was crucified and rose again. In this encounter with the Father of mercies, young people were invited to re-examine the journey of their lives while they spent time in adoration, personal dialogue and reconciliation with God.

Some food for thought can be taken from the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* 111-113 (the great proclamation for all young people) and from the message for WYD 2022-2023, in connection with the theme of mercy, which can be found for example in *Evangeli Gaudium* 3 and 144.

The Construction of a House

On the three mornings that the Rise Up encounters were held, young people built a house to-

gether right after the dialogue with the bishop, which synthesised several of the encounters.

Mary's readiness to arise and to go in haste to meet Elizabeth (cf. Luke 1:39) was an invitation for young people to imitate her as active protagonists of a "Church in her missionary outreach." The dynamism of Mary's journey highlights the symbology of the house Mary leaves in Nazareth and the home where she arrives — that of Elizabeth and Zechariah.

The idea of a house suggests a connection to our Common Home, given by God to everyone as a place to live (Integral Ecology); the relational dimension, where fraternity and the joy of living in communion are learned (Social Friendship); the Father's house, a place of mercy, where we came from and where we will return to, many times like prodigal children so that life and joy can be rediscovered and recreated (Mercy).

This activity which took place on the three mornings, aimed to show young people that together, they can build a "common home" with their dreams. — Lisboa2023.org



THE RELATIONSHIP OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH GOD INVOLVES RECOGNISING AND VALUING CREATION. Young people are invited to be contemplative of the world with a renewed look, recognizing how much they have been given by God. **THE EARTH AS THEIR COMMON HOME AND TO CARE FOR IT AS SUCH. Creation.** The Eucharist and the time given to prayer strengthen the relationship with God.

the young people



Jesus continues to journey at our side

"Today you are going to walk with Jesus," Pope Francis said at the beginning of the *Via Crucis*, or Way of the Cross, the culminating event during the celebration of World Youth Day, August 4.

Speaking from the heart, Pope Francis reminded young people that "when He was among us, Jesus walked, healing the sick, caring for the poor, doing justice... He walked, preaching, teaching us."

But, the Pope said, "the way that is most engraved in our hearts is the way of Calvary, the Way of the Cross. And today you are going with prayer — we [are going in prayer], me too — with prayer, you are going to renew the Way of the Cross." — *By Christopher Wells, Vatican News*

Vigil with Young People

Pope Francis portrayed the Blessed Virgin Mary as a "missionary of joy" in his address to young people gathered in Lisbon for the World Youth Day Vigil celebration, and invited Christians to train our hearts to love God and our neighbour.

He went on to consider the roots of our joy, recalling that we too received a joyful Christian example from those who came before us.

"If we look back," the Pope said, "we recall people who were a ray of light for our lives: parents, grandparents, friends, priests, religious men and women, catechists, animators, and teachers. They are the roots of our joy."

The Holy Father then invited the 1.5 million pilgrims in Tejo Park to close their eyes and recall the faces of those who have impacted our lives.



After a moment of silence, he urged everyone to do the same for others, so that they too might grow "roots of joy". — *By Edoardo Giribaldi & Devin Watkins, Vatican News*



Keep riding the waves of love and charity

Pope Francis thanked the 25,000 World Youth Day volunteers from 150 countries for their wonderful generosity, service and faith.

The participants offered their own testimonies, telling the Pope about their experience of World Youth Day and how it transformed them and their faith.

Chiara from Germany, working in youth ministry, said the WYD events gave her a tangible experience of God's boundless love and acceptance. She added that it marked a powerful experience of being part of a Church that represents so many people from around the world, a real family, and a beautiful mosaic of cultures and believers in the one God searching for His love.

Francisco from Portugal just graduated from college, but spent the past year assisting in the preparations for WYD as a volunteer. He said it's been a real journey and hard work, but a wonderful experience of inner growth and seeing Jesus in others, especially their smiles. — *By Thaddeus Jones, Vatican News*

Priest killed in a car crash remembered for his passion for truth

BATON ROUGE: A Louisiana priest who was killed in a car accident on August 2 is being remembered in his home diocese for his commitment to the truth as taught by the Catholic faith as well as his unwavering devotion to the Blessed Mother.

Fr Mark Beard, 62, was pastor of St Helena Catholic Church in Amite City, Louisiana, about an hour north-east of Baton Rouge.

During what was to be his final Sunday Mass on July 30, Beard preached about not being "on the fence" when it comes to faith in Christ, telling the congregation that "the only thing that matters is your soul."

"Please, for the love of God remember this. The nanosecond after you and I die ... you have already been judged, and you are in heaven, hell, or purgatory, that's it ... I'm telling you, you can't pick and choose. Either He's the great I Am, or He's not; you can't go running both ways."

"You need to know the truth," Beard continued.

"I am not going to stand before Him and say, 'Well, Lord, I would have pitched it but you know there's going to be pushback' ... my brothers in Christ, my job is to pitch it. Whether you want to catch it or not is on you. My job is to make sure you know the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God."

Beard was born in Baton Rouge and worked for many years at his family's business, Beard Engineering and United Industries, before hearing a call to the priesthood after a 2000 visit to Medjugorje, a small town in Bosnia and Herzegovina and site of alleged Marian apparitions. A serial dater before entering the seminary, Beard said his closeness to Mary led to his view that "you can't have two women in your life."

Beard entered Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans in 2004 and was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Baton Rouge on May 30, 2009, at St Joseph's Cathedral. He was pastor of St Helena for the past 12 years, and his devotion to Mary continued throughout his life. A few years ago, Beard and a local business-



man bought a former girls' school in Osyka, Mississippi, and turned it into Our Lady of Hope Catholic Retreat Centre, a sprawling complex that includes many gardens devoted to Mary.

Beard previously earned a master's degree in business administration from Louisiana State University and went on to earn a master's in divinity degree (M.Div) while at seminary. He also received a certification in spirituality (spiritual direction) and divinity, according to his obituary.

Louisiana Gov John Bel Edwards, a Catholic and a Democrat who largely holds pro-life views, said he and his wife had been close personal friends with Beard since 2011. Edwards and his wife, Donna, are from Amite and attend St Helena.

"We watched him revitalise our church. And not just with the attendance, not just with the people who were coming to church who didn't come before, although that was a big part of it, but it was so much more than that," Edwards said, as reported by the diocese.

"I think the fact that he became a priest relatively late in life and he had a lot of other experiences in the business world and so forth, and travelling around, that he was able to relate to people perhaps better than, or at least differently, than priests who hadn't had that experience."

Beard is survived by his mother, Florence, as well as several siblings, nieces and nephews, and a great-niece. — **By Jonah McKeown, CNA**

MEMORIAM

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22nd Anniversary In Loving Memory of

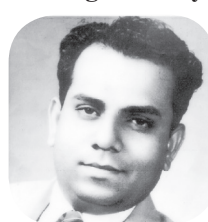


Joackim Jeyapragasam Manikam
Departed: 23-08-2001

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell forever and ever.
— Ps. 23.

Deeply missed and always remembered by wife, daughter, son, brothers, sisters and friends.

44th Year Anniversary In Loving Memory of



J. D. Gilbert
Returned to the Lord on 23rd August 1979

"I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord. "Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."
— John 11:25-26

Sadly missed by children, Jerome and Kenneth, Patrick and Lulu.

1st YEAR ANNIVERSARY



Thirasa Sinnappan (Mrs Raymond)

Came from the Lord: 21.11.1960
Returned to the Lord: 20.08.2022

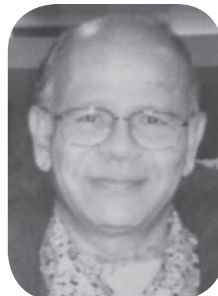
*A star that shines so bright
Has left behind a ray of light
It has been a year that you have gone
But the wound has not healed
We miss you every single second.*

The 1st anniversary memorial prayer will be held on 19th August 2023 at 7.30pm at our residence, No 37 Seri Beringin A/19, Seri Beringin, Bandar Seri Botani, 31350 Ipoh.

Your prayers and presence will be much appreciated.

A tribute of love from your loving
Husband: Raymond
Son: Capt. Yogamainthan @ Joshua
Daughter-in-law: Marissa
Daughter: Diane Pravina
Siblings, Relatives & Friends.

10th Anniversary In Loving Memory of



Rev Fr Clement Bala
13th Feb 1942 ~ 18th Aug 2013

'Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.'
(Psalm 23:6)

Fondly remembered and missed by loved ones.

15th Year Anniversary



PATRICK IGNATIUS ANUGRAHAM

Born: 21-01-1946
Returned to the Lord: 20-08-2008

*Psalm 23:1-3
The Lord is my shepherd.
I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures:
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

Deeply missed by

Loving Wife:
Adeline Madeliene De Souza
Children: Ignatius (Danny), Jennifer, Joshua & Michelle
Daughters-in-law & Sons -in-law: Sharon, Carlos, Pauline & Late Steven
Grandchildren: Adelina, Anthony, John, Catherine, Mark, Ignatius, Gerard & Sarah

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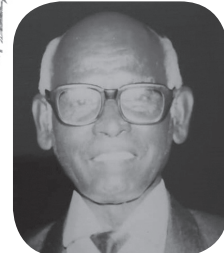
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*My soul
clings
to you;
your right
hand
upholds
me.*

Psalm 63:8

In Ever Loving Memory

25th Anniversary



Mr Immanuel Rajoo
Born: 24.8.1928
Departed: 24.8.1998

26th Anniversary



Mrs Lourdemary Varatharaju
Born: 23.3.1935
Departed: 16.8.1997

"Perhaps they are not the stars, but rather openings in Heaven where the love of our lost ones pours through and shines down upon us to let us know they are happy."

Forever loved, cherished, and dearly missed by
Mr. Abraham Ligan & family.
Children, In-Laws, Grandchildren, Relatives and Family.

FSP missionary called to eternal life

PASAY CITY, Philippines: Daughter of St Paul Sr Tomasina Vasquez who had served in Selangor in the 1980s-1990s was called to eternal life on August 6, a few weeks short of her 86th birthday.

Born in Quezon Philippines, she entered the Daughters of St Paul in 1959 after graduating from secondary school and completing a training course as a business secretary. She made her first profession in 1963 and took her final vows in 1968. She was an open and friendly person, attentive and sensi-



tive, always smiling despite the difficulties she encountered in life and battling poor health.

In 1985, she was sent to Selangor where she served as bursar, bookkeeper and superior. In 1994, she was sent to Nigeria where she served for 12 years and then to Zambia where she served for three years.

In 2012 she returned to the Philippines for good. In February 2023 she was

diagnosed with brain cancer which quickly spread to her vital organs. And on the feast of the Transfiguration, she passed on to eternal life. — **Sr Anna Yap**

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Artificial intelligence will be theme of next World Day of Peace

ROME: The Vatican announced that Pope Francis' annual peace message for 2024 will focus on artificial intelligence (AI).

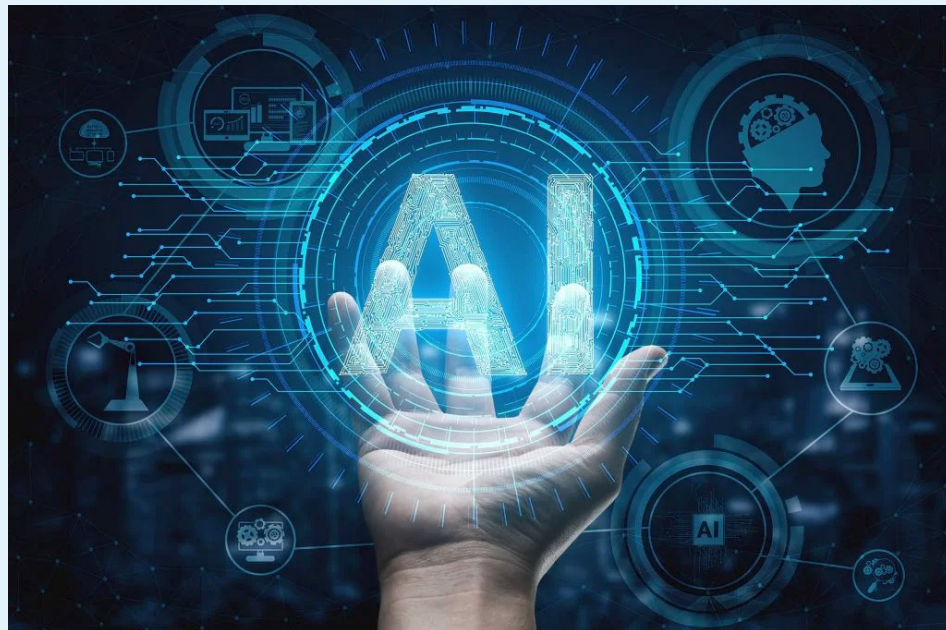
Artificial Intelligence and Peace, will be the official theme of the 2024 World Day of Peace.

A statement from the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development on August 8 described an "urgent need" to guide the development and use of artificial intelligence in a responsible way, requiring that "ethical reflection be extended to the sphere of education and law."

"Pope Francis calls for an open dialogue on the meaning of these new technologies, endowed with disruptive possibilities and ambivalent effects," it said.

The Vatican office noted that artificial intelligence technologies are having "a rapidly increasing impact on human activity, personal and social life, politics and the economy" and called for vigilance to ensure that technological development contributes to "the promotion of justice and peace in the world."

Years before the widely-popular release of the GPT-4 chatbot system, developed



by the San Francisco start-up OpenAI, the Vatican was already heavily involved in the conversation on artificial intelligence ethics, hosting high-level discussions with scientists and tech executives on the ethics of artificial intelligence in 2016 and 2020.

Pope Francis has repeatedly called for making "the intrinsic dignity of every man and every woman the key criterion in evaluating emerging technologies."

In March, the Pope met with tech industry leaders, ethicists and theologians at the

Vatican to consider the ethical development of AI, and in January he addressed industry leaders from companies such as Microsoft and IBM, as well as members of the Jewish and Muslim communities, during a Vatican conference on ethics in AI.

At the end of the conference, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim representatives signed a declaration calling on AI researchers to engage with ethicists and religious leaders to develop a framework for the ethical use of AI.

Last month, the Vatican's education and culture office published an introduction to a 140-page ethics handbook for the tech industry published by the Institute for Technology, Ethics, and Culture (ITEC) at California's Santa Clara University.

The World Day of Peace — instituted by St Paul VI in 1968 — is celebrated each year on Jan 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. The Pope provides a message for the occasion, which is sent by the Vatican to foreign governments around the world.

The Pope's message is expected to be released publicly in early December. — **By Courtney Mares, CNA**

Pope: Lisbon WYD was a "beautiful" experience

During his flight back to Rome from his Apostolic Journey to Portugal for World Youth Day 2023, on the evening of August 6, Pope Francis said he was very positively impressed by the huge participation and enthusiasm shown by so many young people in Lisbon and also by the successful organisation of the event, the best of all the ones he has attended so far (Rio de Janeiro, Krakow and Panama).

"For me, it was beautiful!", he told journalists travelling with him in his customary post-visit press conference aboard the return flight to Rome.

Commenting on the over a million youths joining the WYD, the Pope remarked "they are religious, they are looking for a non-hostile, non-artificial, non-legalistic faith,

for an encounter with Jesus Christ", which "is not easy", he said.

Some may object that young people today don't always abide by moral rules. However, Pope Francis remarked, we all make mistakes in life, and despite this, the Lord is always waiting for us because He is merciful."

"Who among us has not made a moral mistake in our lives? Everyone has! Life is like that, but the Lord is always waiting for us because He is merciful."

While highlighting the need to accompany young people, our future, as they "seek to look forward", Pope Francis stressed once again the vital importance of "dialogue between old and young" so they don't lose their roots. — **Vatican News**



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14.09.2023, Thursday

- 6.00pm i) Eucharistic Adoration
- ii) Holy Mass in English
- iii) Veneration of the Holy Cross
(ends at 10.00pm)

15.09.2023, Friday

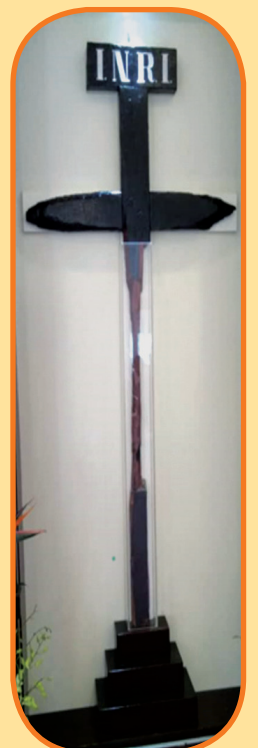
- 8.00am to 5.00pm - Veneration of the Holy Cross
- 6.00pm i) Eucharistic Adoration
- ii) Holy Mass in Tamil
- iii) Veneration of the Holy Cross (ends at 10.00pm)

16.09.2023, Saturday

- 7.00am Rosary in Bahasa
- 7.30am i) Holy Mass in Bahasa
- ii) Veneration of the Holy Cross
(ends at 5.00pm)
- 6.00pm i) Eucharistic Adoration
- ii) Holy Mass in English
- iii) Veneration of the Holy Cross (ends at 10.00pm)

17.09.2023, Sunday

- 7.30am i) Holy Mass in Mandarin
- 9.30am i) Holy Mass in English
- ii) Veneration of the Holy Cross (ends at 12.00noon)



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