

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.

# Celebrating the



# 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed

**This year marks the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, which produced one of Christianity's most enduring and influential documents — the Nicene Creed. Established in 325 AD, this declaration of faith continues to be recited by millions of Christians worldwide every Sunday. Its longevity speaks to the strength of its theological foundations, which have shaped Christian belief for nearly two millennia.**

The Creed's survival through the ages mirrors how history often preserves the best ideas and works, while less significant ones fade into obscurity. For example, in 18th-century Germany, hundreds of organists and choirmasters composed music for Sunday liturgies, yet today, only Johann Sebastian Bach's compositions remain a central part of the liturgical tradition.

Similarly, the Nicene Creed has survived the passage of time because of its profound theological significance. Despite being

centuries old, the Creed's words continue to shape the lives of millions. Every Sunday, worshippers across the globe affirm the core beliefs laid out by the Council of Nicaea, including the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. These theological truths continue to define Christian orthodoxy and influence the lives of believers in tangible ways.

The Creed's continued relevance is underscored by its historical significance. One common phrase, "not an iota's worth of difference," traces its origins back to the Christological debates at Nicaea, where the bishops discussed the distinction between the Greek terms "homoousios" (of the same substance) and "homoiousios" (of similar substance). The victory of the orthodox position, which affirmed that Jesus Christ is "true God from true God," secured the Creed's place in Christian doctrine.

However, what sets the Nicene Creed apart from contemporary religious trends is its focus on theology rather than ethics. Unlike modern interpretations of Christianity, which often emphasise moral teachings, the Creed bypasses much of Jesus' earthly life, including His parables and the Sermon on the Mount. Instead, it

emphasises Christ's divine nature, His incarnation, and His crucifixion. This focus serves as a reminder that Christianity is not merely a system of ethics but a faith rooted in the mystery of Christ's divinity.

This theological focus has inspired countless works of art, particularly sacred music. Composers such as Mozart, Schubert, and Bach have created beautiful compositions based on the words of the Nicene Creed, such as Bach's *Credo in Unum Deum* from the B minor Mass and Mozart's *Et Incarnatus est* from the Mass in C minor. These musical works remain beloved today for their ability to capture the beauty and depth of Christian belief.

The Creed's influence goes beyond art and worship. It also serves as a foundation for Christian ethics. Although the Creed does not explicitly address ethical issues, statements like "through him all things were made" remind believers of their responsibility to care for the world and each other. The Creed calls Christians to recognise the earth and all life as a gift from God, shaping a Catholic humanism that defends human life from the womb to the tomb and advocates for the protection of the environment.

The Creed's continued relevance can be attributed not only to its theological depth but also to the faith of the believers who recite it. Christians still declare, "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty," and affirm Christ's divinity, his resurrection, and the Holy Trinity. These beliefs are central to the Christian identity, even in a time when the Church faces divisions and challenges.

As the Catholic Church continues to evolve, particularly in the post-Vatican II era, it is important for preachers and theologians to revisit and explain the dogmatic beliefs that undergird the faith. While many modern sermons focus on the day's biblical readings, the Nicene Creed remains a vital expression of the Christian faith and an essential part of liturgical life.

The Creed encapsulates the core of Catholic belief and remains a defining element of Christian doctrine, despite the many changes the Church has undergone in the last 1,700 years. It serves as a testament to the lasting power of foundational theological truths and the enduring significance of the Nicene Council's work in shaping the faith of Christians worldwide.

NCR





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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The Church is experiencing a quiet but significant transformation in its mission and leadership as women religious step into once unimaginable roles. Pope Francis made headlines on January 6 by appointing Italian Sr Simona Brambilla, MC, as the first woman to serve as the prefect of a Vatican dicastery (see page 9). This ground breaking decision shattered what many have referred to as one of the Vatican's "stained-glass ceilings" and has been celebrated as a major step toward recognising the invaluable contributions of women within the Church.

Closer to home, the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur witnessed a similar milestone with Sr Margarete Sta Maria's appointment as the first female and religious to serve as the Director of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute (see page 12). Her role symbolises the growing acknowledgement of women's capacity to lead and influence the Church's pastoral mission. These appointments reflect the Church's slow but determined steps toward inclusivity and equity in leadership roles.

Women religious have always been an integral part of the Church's mission, often serving on the frontlines of education, health care, and social justice initiatives. However, their contributions are not limited to traditional roles. Today, many women religious are deeply involved in faith formation, counselling, and youth ministry — areas critical to the spiritual and emotional well-being of the faithful. Despite a prevailing misconception that nuns are elderly and no longer active, women religious continue to prove their vitality and relevance in diocesan and societal contexts.

In Malaysia, local religious women are making their mark in various ways. They

are catechists nurturing the faith of children, counsellors offering solace to the distressed, and advocates for justice in marginalised communities. These roles demonstrate their commitment to living out the Gospel in a world that desperately needs compassion and action.

While progress is being made, it is not without opposition. In Sri Lanka, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith recently banned female altar servers, citing traditionalist views (see HERALD, Jan 5, 2025 — pg 10). Such actions highlight the resistance that still exists within certain parts of the Church, where outdated attitudes toward gender roles continue to prevail. These restrictions can feel like a step backward, particularly when juxtaposed against the progressive moves of Pope Francis and other Church leaders.

This dichotomy underscores the ongoing tension between tradition and the need for reform. While the Church must remain rooted in its teachings, it is equally important to evolve and adapt to the signs of the times. Pope Francis has been a vocal advocate for this, emphasising the value of women's perspectives and leadership in building a more inclusive Church.

Pope Francis' advocacy for women's roles within the Church is grounded in his broader vision of synodality and inclusivity. "We need to create broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church," he said in 2021, emphasising that the Church cannot be truly synodal without the participation of women. His actions, including appointing women to positions of influence, reflect his commitment to this vision.

Sr Nathalie Becquart's appointment as the first woman to vote in a Synod of Bishops and

Sr Alessandra Smerilli's role as the secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development are further examples of this shift. These women are not only breaking barriers but also redefining what it means to serve the Church in leadership capacities. Their appointments send a powerful message that women's contributions are not optional but essential to the Church's mission.

The increasing prominence of women religious is a hopeful sign for the Church's future. However, the road ahead is not without challenges. Vocation shortages in certain regions, coupled with societal misconceptions about the relevance of religious life, remain significant obstacles. It is crucial for the Church to actively promote and support the vocation of women religious, highlighting their indispensable role in evangelisation and pastoral care.

The Church must also address the barriers that prevent women from fully participating in its mission. By fostering a culture of dialogue, openness, and collaboration, the Church can ensure that the contributions of women are not merely acknowledged but actively sought and celebrated.

As the Church navigates the complexities of the modern world, the voices and leadership of women religious will be instrumental in shaping its path forward. Their resilience, creativity, and unwavering commitment to the Gospel are a source of inspiration and hope. Women religious, with their rich legacy and vibrant presence, will undoubtedly continue to be a guiding light for the Church and society.

Patricia Pereira

## The miracle begins when the wine runs out

"They have no wine." With these words, Mary reveals a profound truth about our lives — a truth we all encounter at some point. There comes a day when the wine runs out. The glass sits empty. The celebration feels over. On that day, life can seem barren and dry, stripped of its vibrancy and vitality. Nothing within us feels alive or growing. Our world appears colourless, tasteless, and void of the richness we once knew. The bouquet of life is gone, leaving us feeling as though we are merely existing, not truly living.

Mary's words invite us to pause and reflect deeply. Where has the wine of our life run dry? Which relationships feel strained or lifeless? What parts of our soul remain unfulfilled and empty?

Each of us carries a story about the day the wine ran out. It might be the pain of losing a loved one, the end of a cherished friendship, or the breakdown of a marriage. Some stories echo a search for love and acceptance, while others reflect a thirst for meaning and purpose. Many tell of guilt, disappointment, or lingering regrets. For some, it's the fear of the unknown or the weight of failure and self-doubt. Others speak of an unnamed longing, a deep desire they cannot fully articulate. Stories of unanswered prayers, lingering doubts, and unspoken questions are familiar to most of us. And these are not just stories of the past — some of us are living them even now.

Behind each of our stories lies a deep hope and longing — a desire for the wedding of our life. We approach the wedding at Cana not merely as guests or spectators but as active participants, as a bride or groom,

yearning for union, intimacy, and wholeness.

Yet, despite our best efforts, good intentions, and hard work, the wine of our life often runs out. No matter how frequently we try to refill our glass, it remains empty. There is never enough. As time goes on, we become painfully aware that we cannot replenish the wine from our own resources.

When that day comes, it feels like a disaster, an embarrassment, a failure even. Perhaps that is how the bride and groom at Cana felt when the wine ran out. Mary's words to Jesus — "They have no wine" — are not a condemnation or judgment but a simple acknowledgment, a diagnosis of the situation.

Too often, we live under the illusion of our own self-sufficiency. That illusion shatters on the day the wine runs out, leaving the jars of our life empty and dry. In that moment, we are confronted with an eternal truth: we are the recipients, not the creators, of our life. We were never meant, nor expected, to rely solely on our own resources. Christ is the true vintner and the chief steward of our lives.

No matter how it feels or what we think, the day the wine runs out marks the beginning of a miracle. Christ doesn't merely refill our glasses; He transforms our lives, turning water into wine. It is, after all, the third day — the day of resurrection and new life. What was once colourless becomes vibrant red. What lacked flavour now tingles the tongue. What had no fragrance now carries a full bouquet. What seemed lifeless begins to ferment, becoming active and alive.

On the third day, our lives are filled to the brim with the good wine — intoxicating us with the life of God, inebriating us with

## Reflecting on our Sunday Readings

with Fr Rawi Alexander, OFM, Cap

### 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5;

1 Corinthians 12:4-11;

Gospel: John 2:1-11

the blood of Christ, and leaving us under the influence of the Holy Spirit. That's the miracle of Cana, and it has never ceased. Every moment of every day, Christ pours Himself into the empty jars of our lives. He is the good wine — extravagant, abundant, endless.

Every time that good wine is poured, transformation follows. We are brought "out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life" (Book of Common Prayer, p. 368). How it happens is a mystery I cannot explain, but I know it does happen. I have tasted the good wine. I have witnessed the miracle of Cana in my own life and in the lives of others.

I have seen death turn into life, sorrow into joy, and despair into hope. I have witnessed fear transform into courage and watched people accomplish things they never thought possible. I have seen empty lives replenished and broken marriages renewed, becoming vibrant and life-giving.

These and countless others are the miracles of Cana. They are the moments when Christ's glory is revealed, and we are illumined, shining with the radiance of His presence. His glory becomes ours — a shared radiance, two lives united in one.

"They have no wine," Mary said. But they will. The miracle always begins when the wine runs out.



# SMC launches Jubilee Year of Hope and 135th anniversary

Jennifer Duarte

IPOH: On New Year's Eve, many churchgoers gathered at the Church of St Michael (SMC) for the Mass celebrated by parish priest, Fr Aloysius Tan. He commended the congregation for choosing to come for Mass to express gratitude to God for the past year and to seek strength and hope for the coming year – the best place to be as the old year gave way to the new one.

Fr Aloysius' homily focused on the first reading from the Book of Numbers, where the Lord instructed Moses to teach Aaron and his sons how to bless the Israelites. Fr Aloysius then offered the congregation the three-fold traditional Aaronite blessing:

1. "The Lord bless you and keep you" – praying that we always recognise Jesus as our Saviour and Creator, providing strength and comfort.
2. "The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you" – praying that God's closeness, mercy, and love would be ever-present.



The performers in the short skit depicting the themes of the Jubilee Year.

3. "The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace" – praying for God's precious gift of peace to be experienced by all.

The Mass also marked the launch of the parish-level 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope, proclaimed by Pope Francis. Fr Aloysius encouraged the parish to renew their faith and trust in God's promises, despite the uncertainties of

the future. He announced that the parish would celebrate its 135th anniversary in 2025, noting that the French missionaries had brought the Catholic faith to Ipoh and established SMC in 1890. This anniversary symbolises the church's enduring presence in Ipoh as a beacon of hope.

In launching the year-long Jubilee celebrations, Fr Aloysius invited the parish to renew their commitment to works of charity, out-

reach, and evangelisation. He encouraged the community to share Jesus' love by committing to at least 135 acts of kindness, both within and outside the church, through their families, BECs, and ministries.

A short skit, organised by the youth ministry, visually depicted the themes of the Jubilee Year of Hope and the upcoming 135th anniversary. The church was briefly plunged into darkness, with children's voices expressing fear. Fr Aloysius entered, holding a lit candle, guiding the children to take the light and continue their journey in faith. A group of children, led by adults, proceeded up the aisle as the choir sang *Christ Be Our Light*. As they reached the altar, two banners were unveiled, one in English and one in Mandarin, symbolising the unity of the parish.

Reflecting on the skit, Mrs Annie Johnson, an evangelising catechist, shared, "As an adult, ushering the children from the darkness they feared to the light of the Star and Christ Jesus gave me a sense of responsibility and commitment to know, love, and serve Jesus more. I thank God for making me His witness."

**KUALA LUMPUR  
ARCHDIOCESE**

**Diary of Archbishop  
Julian Leow**

**January**

**19** Parish Pastoral Assembly – Church of St Thomas, Kuantan

**23** Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 – Orthodox Syrian Cathedral of St Mary the Theotokos, Brickfields

**PENANG DIOCESE**

**Diary of Cardinal  
Sebastian Francis**

**January**

**19** Confirmation – Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Ipoh at 8.00am

**19** Meeting with Orang Asli Delegation – Perak at 11.00am

**20** Dedication Mass – Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Penang at 8.00pm

**27-31** Visitation and Chinese New Year Masses – Kota Bharu, Kelantan

**MALACCA JOHORE  
DIOCESE**

**Diary of Bishop  
Bernard Paul**

**January**

**21-22** Clergy Month Recollection – MAJODI Centre

**23** Meeting – MJD Seminarians, MAJODI Centre

**25** Meeting – New Caritas Board, Penang

## Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #206

**Dear Friends of MJD, the Jubilee Year calls you to be Pilgrims of Hope.**

**New laws! Tighten or righten?** With the New Year, Malaysia takes over ASEAN chairmanship from Laos, with the theme "Inclusion and Sustainability". New laws come into effect:

- a) CASP licence for social media platforms to improve online safety, protect users and strengthen regulations over internet messaging services.
- b) Non-smoking control which includes 28 areas, now includes laundry shops and workplace buildings.
- c) Mandatory SOCSO for self-employed i.e. hawkers and licensed traders.
- d) *FLYsiswa*, flight subsidy for students using domestic routes increased
- e) KTMB introduces cashless payments for ticket purchases.
- f) All childcare centres (*taska*) are required to be registered with the Social Welfare Department and display the registration number plaques.
- g) Johor reverts to the Saturday-Sunday weekend.

New laws and amendments to tighten or to righten? Good laws protect the poor, the weak, the defenceless and the exploited. Good laws listen to grievances. Good laws redress injustice. Good laws are colour-blind.

**Bridge-building Times:** Paolo Coelho was having lunch with a Catholic priest and a young Muslim man. When the meal was served, all helped themselves except the Muslim, who was keeping the annual fast as prescribed by the

Quran. When the lunch was over, one of the guests, as he was leaving, remarked: "You see how fanatical these Muslims are! I'm glad to see that you Catholics are not like them." The priest replied: "He is trying to serve God just as I am. We merely follow different laws." The priest concluded, saying: "It's a shame that people only see the differences that separate them. If you were to look with more love, you would see what we have in common, then half the world's problems would be solved."

**A Thought for the Week: The Competition.** The cyclist noticed another rider ahead of him, about 1/4 of a km. He had a km to turn off, so he decided to overtake him. He began to pedal faster and faster, block by block, and now, he was only a hundred metres behind him. He imagined that he was in a triathlon. He caught and passed him, was feeling really good, thinking "I beat him". The other rider was not even aware of this race. After passing him, the cyclist realised that he had been so focused on competing, that he had gone six blocks past the turn. He had to turn around and go all the way back.

**The lesson from the race:** Isn't that what happens in life when we focus on competing with co-workers, neighbours, friends, family, trying to outdo them or trying to prove that we are more successful or more important? We spend our time and energy running after them and we miss out on our own paths to our destinies. There is no competition in the pursuit of one's destiny. We only compete with ourselves.

**Announcements for the Week:**

1. The *Ecumenical Prayer Service* will take place on Thursday, January 23 at

8.00pm at St Mary's Hall, Church of the Immaculate Conception, JB.

2. **Bishop's Christmas-New Year Muhibbah Dinner** for Clergy, Religious Congregations, MJD Staff and families, EIRD members and Inter-Faith brothers and sisters, is set for January 21 at 7.30pm at MAJODI Centre, with the theme: *Journeying Together as Bridge-builders*.

**QnQ. The Q asks? More bad things than good happen! Is it true?**

1. Bad things are always happening loudly. It can be an injury, a flat tire, a slip up that gets criticised - they are loud. Everybody talks about them and what a hassle they were.

2. Good things happen quietly. Name it: it can be a completed workout, a healthy meal, visiting a homeless person, or listening to a grieved person etc — they are hardly noticed. Reminds me of what Jesus said: Let not your right hand know, what your left has done.

3. What good things have you done quietly today? Choose to see and recognise the good things that get done quietly. It creates an impact on us.

**See The Holy Spirit @ Work:** The Holy Spirit is not "the Doer," but rather the "Helper." He will not do it without us, but if we engage Him, He will help us with what we need to make things happen. **Rock Joyner**

**Something To Tickle You:** Without faith, nothing is possible. With it, nothing is impossible. **Mary McLeod Bethune**

**Bishop Bernard Paul**



# Opening of Jubilee Year at PD pilgrimage centre

Steffrina Michael Simon

PORT DICKSON: The Church of the Immaculate Conception (CICPD) is one of the designated pilgrimage centres for the Jubilee Year of Hope.

On January 1, CICPD parishioners gathered for the opening of the Jubilee Year of Hope by Archbishop Julian Leow. It was attended by clergy from the Negeri district and parish priest, Fr Edwin Peter.

Prior to that, many parishioners participated in a one-day session by Fr Peter Anthony, which explored the significance of this year and how to embrace the opportunities for spiritual growth it offers.

The ceremony began with the sound of the shofar, calling all to worship and renewal. The hymn Pilgrim of Hope followed, as Archbishop Leow and the priests processed toward the church's lighthouse, symbolising guidance, refuge, and salvation — offering a beacon of hope for all who seek Christ. Four zone representatives, carrying the

light of faith, brought the light toward the lighthouse, embodying the pilgrimage of faith and spiritual growth the Jubilee represents.

A key moment in the ceremony was when Archbishop Leow lit the lighthouse, symbolising Christ as the eternal light of hope, guiding believers through life's trials. The Mass that followed focused on hope, renewal, and reflection.

In his homily, Archbishop Julian spoke on the Gospel of Luke (2:16-21), recounting the visit of the shepherds to the newborn Jesus. The passage highlights the eagerness of the shepherds to share the good news of the Saviour's birth and Mary's deep reflection on the events. This calls for contemplation of God's divine message, especially during uncertain times. The naming of Jesus on the eighth day signifies his entry into the Jewish covenant, marking his sacred mission.

As CICPD embarks on the Year of Hope, parishioners are committed to a deeper spiritual journey, fostering prayer,



Servers with Archbishop Julian Leow, parish priest Fr Edwin Peter and clergy from the district.



Archbishop Julian Leow switching on the light symbolising Christ as the eternal light of hope.

reflection, and community connections. A key focus of the Jubilee will be caring for others, particularly the natural world, which holds special significance for CICPD as a lighthouse church. Just as the lighthouse stands firm amidst the stormy seas, guiding sailors to safety, Christ remains a steadfast guide, offering hope and refuge.

The parish will engage in various activities throughout the year to foster prayer, reflection, and service, aiming to be instruments of hope by shining Christ's light into the world, especially to those in need.

## KL Archbishop visits Church of Jesus Caritas

KEPONG: On December 31, Archbishop Julian Leow was at the Church of Jesus Caritas, to open the Jubilee year of Hope. Jesus Caritas is another pilgrimage centre in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. He also blessed the newly renovated chapel.



Fr Simon Lau placing the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel.



Archbishop Julian Leow blessing the statue of Mother Mary.

## Pilgrimage inspires faith and reflection among students

MELAKA: On January 4, eight catechists and 20 English primary students from the Church of St Theresa, Melaka, embarked on a pilgrimage to three churches in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. The journey began with a blessing from Fr Louis Chin, assistant parish priest, before they set off.

The atmosphere on the bus was filled with the chatter and laughter of excited children as they made their way to the Church of St Francis of Assisi, Cheras. Upon arrival, the group was awestruck by the stunning church, perched on a hill and surrounded by lush greenery. The pilgrims were warmly greeted by the faithful of St Francis of Assisi's Pilgrimage Ministry.

All of us were amazed when we saw the beautiful stained glass on the life of St Francis of Assisi in the church, depicting his transformation, from a rich man's son

who lived the high-life to a humble servant of the Lord, from one who evaded lepers to one who embraced them with compassion, was a great encouragement of how much goodness one can bring forth with love of Christ.

The students also took part in the Way of the Cross, which featured life-sized statues. With deep reverence, the students took turns carrying the cross, reflecting on the intimate and personal connection with Jesus. This moment profoundly impacted the students, deepening their understanding of Christ's love.

Following the Way of the Cross, the group explored the chapel's display of relics of St John Paul II, St Francis of Assisi, Mother Teresa, St Rita, and St Pio. The students prayed for the intercession of these saints, who continue to inspire and guide

the faithful.

The next stop was the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist in Kuala Lumpur, where the group was greeted by Deacon Jonathan Andrew Rao, who is set to be ordained on January 25. Deacon Jonathan shared the rich history of the cathedral, which was consecrated and elevated to its current status in 1962. He also explained the Latin inscription *ECCE AGNUS DEI* on the altar, meaning "Behold the Lamb of God," which helped the students understand the significance of the Eucharist. The students also learned about the Chair of the Bishop at the Cathedral.

The students were fascinated to learn that the past two archbishops, Archbishop Dominic Aloysius Vendargon and His Eminence Anthony Soter Cardinal Fernandez, DD, were laid to rest at the

ground inside the Cathedral. The group was also moved by a drawing of Mother Mary with Baby Jesus, gifted by a Mexican lady, which beautifully portrayed the unconditional love and sacrifices of the Blessed Virgin.

After bidding farewell to Deacon Jonathan and taking a group photo at the statue of St Michael the Archangel, the pilgrims made their way to the Church of the Visitation in Seremban. There, they were warmly welcomed by Fr Philip Tay, OCD, and his parishioners.

It was indeed an awe-inspiring trip and a very blessed opportunity to visit two pilgrimage churches i.e. Church of St Francis of Assisi, Cheras, and Cathedral of St John the Evangelist. With spirit-filled hearts, the students gave thanks to God for what they were grateful for. **Irene Tan**



The children participating in the Way of the Cross at the Church of St Francis of Assisi.



The children at the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist.



# Minor Basilica sets focus on being a Church of Discipleship

Marlina Sara Sylvester

BUKIT MERTAJAM: The Parish Pastoral Assembly (PPA) for the Minor Basilica of St Anne took place on January 5, drawing close to 60 participants from various ministries. Present at the assembly was Cardinal Sebastian Francis, parish priest of the Minor Basilica, together with assistant priests Fr Nelson Joseph and Fr Bernard Hyacinth, SJ, and deacons Lazarus Jonathan and Dave Kameron. The assembly was chaired by Parish Pastoral Council chairman, Justin Gomez. The gathering began with participants reciting the Jubilee Prayer together, setting the tone for a spiritually enriching meeting. Deacon Lazarus Jonathan, the parish administrator, presented an overview of the Jubilee Year's theme, Pilgrims of Hope, as emphasised by Pope Francis. "The year 2025 is dedicated to Pilgrims of Hope," Deacon Lazarus explained. "In this

Jubilee Year, Pope Francis calls each one of us to spiritual renewal and to transform the world by reintroducing hope. A world without God is a world without hope, and without hope, there is no future." Deacon Lazarus encouraged attendees to reflect on where they need Christ's hope in their lives. "We are all called to be living signs of hope for others," he concluded. The assembly then moved to presentations from various ministries, including updates on the liturgical and finance ministries, plans for St. Anne's Feast 2025, and an urgent need for a major refurbishment of the parish's PA system. Ministry leaders discussed these matters collaboratively, emphasising the importance of enhancing facilities for the growing congregation. Cardinal Sebastian concluded the PPA with an inspiring message expressing his gratitude to the ministry leaders and volunteers for their dedication.



Cardinal Sebastian Francis speaking to the participants.

"You are the 'kaki tangan' (hands and feet), the eyes, and the heart of the Minor Basilica of St Anne. Pope Francis and the Holy Spirit are leading us toward this Jubilee, calling us to be a Church of discipleship.

Keep up the good work." The assembly concluded with tea and fellowship, fostering camaraderie among the parishioners as they prepared for the spiritual journey ahead.

## Plentong parish honours departing friars; welcomes new parish priest

PLENTONG, Johor: Nearly 500 parishioners gathered at the Church of St Joseph for a farewell luncheon honouring Fr Moses Yap, OFM and Fr Sixtus Pitah, OFM, December 15. The occasion also welcomed the new parish priest, Fr Matthew Bun, who began his service on January 1, 2025. Fr Moses, who has served at the Church of St Joseph for nine years since his posting in 2015, and Fr Sixtus, who completed two terms at the parish, were bid farewell with deep gratitude and affection. The event began with a parishioner's angelic rendition of the *Magnificat*, a hymn of praise to God and Our Lady, followed by an opening prayer led by Fr Moses. The church compound buzzed with activity as four buffet stations ensured smooth food distribution for the large crowd. A series of performances then added to the celebratory yet bittersweet atmosphere. The Evangelical concert team, under Fr Moses' guidance, performed *The Children of God and Love, Peace, Joy*, encouraging everyone to join in joyful praise. The Mandarin choir and youth groups



Some of the children and youth during the celebration.

sang both praise-and-worship songs and soul-stirring hymns, expressing their love for God and appreciation for the priests. English catechism students performed an Advent hymn, *Await the Lord with Hope*, and the Christmas carol, *What Child Is This*. The Bahasa catechism children closed the performances with vibrant modern dances. Speeches followed the musical tributes. PPC chairman Joseph Pong thanked Fr Moses for his tireless dedication to the

parish, nurturing the spiritual growth of parishioners and gently correcting their errors. Mandarin Apostolate chairman Paul Ho, representing the Mandarin community, spoke emotionally about the priests' contributions. He highlighted Fr Moses' instrumental role in expanding the Mandarin-speaking Legion of Mary from one troop to six and establishing a new Bahasa-speaking troop — all by the grace of God and Our Lady's intercession.

Both departing priests shared their reflections. Fr Moses likened missionary priests to clouds, moved by the wind according to God's will, reminding everyone that priests serve different communities as needed. He emphasised the priest's role in spiritually nourishing God's flock. Fr Sixtus expressed his heartfelt gratitude to parishioners for their shared journey over the years. Fr Moses warmly welcomed Fr Matthew Bun, expressing confidence in his leadership for the parish's future. The event concluded on an emotional note, as parishioners queued to take photos with the priests and offer their well wishes. Fr Moses, Fr Sixtus, and Fr Matthew gave their blessings to the congregation before departing. The parish community will deeply miss both Franciscan friars, especially their teachings, spiritual guidance, and joyous celebration of the Feast of St Francis. Their legacy of encouraging parishioners to praise God for all His creations and embrace the peace and joy of a simple life will remain cherished. **Christine H Lee**

## ArchKL begins 2025 Lenten Campaign briefing

KUALA LUMPUR: The Lenten Campaign briefing for the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur began on January 4 at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Bentong, Pahang. This is the first parish to receive insights into the upcoming 2025 Lenten Campaign, including its theme and planned activities. Participants were provided with information on how the campaign will unfold, emphasising the importance of reflection, community engagement, and spiritual growth during this significant season in the Christian calendar. The briefing aimed to foster a deeper understanding of the campaign's objectives and encourage active participation among parish members throughout Lent. The session for the Petaling district was held on January 11 at the Church of St Ignatius, Petaling Jaya. This year's Lenten Campaign theme is "Pilgrims of Hope," aligned with the theme for the Jubilee Year 2025 as announced by Pope Francis. The Papal Bull, titled *Spes Non Confundit*, translates to *Hope does not*

*disappoint*. This document is available for download on the AOHD website at [www.aohd.org/lent](http://www.aohd.org/lent), currently offered in English, Bahasa, and Mandarin. The Lenten Campaign briefing will encompass eight districts within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. We encourage everyone to register and attend this roadshow to stay informed about the activities and events planned for the Lenten season. Parishioners can register at: <https://forms.gle/d3PJctnXAKok5LrD9>. Additional briefings are expected to take place across other parishes in the Archdiocese in the coming weeks as follows:



Adeline James speaking to the attendees during the briefing.

Date	District	Parish	Time	Language
Feb 8 (Sat)	KL Central	Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Brickfields	10.00am	English, BM, Mandarin, Tamil
Feb 15 (Sat)	Klang	Church of St Anne, Port Klang	10.00am	English, BM, Mandarin, Tamil
Feb 16 (Sun)	North West	Church of St Jude, Rawang	11.30am	English, BM, Mandarin, Tamil
Feb 22 (Sat)	KL South	Church of St Francis of Assisi, Cheras	9:00am	English, BM, Mandarin, Tamil
Feb 23 (Sun)	KL North	Church of St Joseph, Sentul	11.00am	English, BM, Mandarin, Tamil
Feb 23 (Sun)	Negeri	Church of Visitation, Seremban	3.00pm	English, BM, Mandarin, Tamil



# Bahau chapel celebrates feast day

**Bernard Anthony**

BAHAU, Negeri Sembilan: The Chapel of Mary, Mother of God, marked its patroness' feast day on January 1, with a Mass at 10.00am. The celebration began with the recitation of the Rosary before Mass, drawing parishioners from Bahau and nearby towns, some returning from the cities to join the occasion.

Fr Nicholas Hoh, OCD from Casa Theresia, Seremban, served as the celebrant and preacher, with chapel administrator Fr Albet Arockiasamy, parish priest of the Church of St John Marie Vianney in Tampin, concelebrating the multilingual Mass. Fr Nicholas preached in English, Mandarin, and Bahasa Malaysia, while Fr Albet preached in Tamil.

Fr Nicholas began his homily by asking the congregation, "What do you desire or measure as a good year?" He acknowledged various responses, from health and peace of mind to good exam results and

career advancements. He emphasised that, despite differing perspectives, all seek peace and happiness in life, and a year marked by peace and confidence is one that is blessed by the Lord.

Reflecting on the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Fr Nicholas spoke of how God desires blessings for us, even amid life's challenges. He reminded the congregation that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, took on human flesh to grant us eternal life, transforming us from slaves into sons and daughters of God.

"Mary, our Mother, lived in peace despite her challenges because she was close to her Son, Jesus. She wants us to be close to Him too. At the beginning of this new year, let us open our hearts so that Mother Mary can lead us to Jesus so that we can receive His blessings and favours."

After Mass, Benediction was held, with Fr Albet carrying the Blessed Sacrament to bless the congregation in their pews. He invited the faithful to reflect on the events of



*The congregation during the parish feast day.*

2024 and bring them to Christ, just as Mary pondered everything in her heart.

In his speech, chapel adviser Michael expressed gratitude to God and Mother Mary for their blessings on the chapel and the small Catholic community in Bahau over the past year. He thanked Fr Albet, Fr Nicholas, and all those who have served the chapel.

As a token of appreciation, Fr Albet presented gifts to the altar servers and a few lay leaders. Chapel chairperson, Anthony Lim, also presented gifts to Fr Albet, Fr Nicholas, and seminarian Bro Charles.

The celebration concluded with a reces-

sional hymn, during which both priests blessed the congregation with holy water. The faithful gathered for a lunch fellowship in the chapel grounds, where the priests mingled and wished everyone a happy feast day and a prosperous new year.

The Chapel of Mary, Mother of God, established as a Catholic Centre in Bahau in 1974, continues to serve its small but flourishing community. With efforts to share and evangelise the Good News, the chapel remains a spiritual home for its parishioners, offering sunset Mass and other services to sustain the faith of its members.

## Restoration work at SFX Melaka to be completed by mid-2025



BANDARAYA MELAKA: The historic Church of St Francis Xavier, located on Jalan Banda Kaba, has been undergoing major restoration since July 2023. Built between 1849 and 1856 on the site of an old Portuguese church, the church is known for its iconic twin-spired neo-Gothic architecture.

While the church has stood as a beacon of faith for the Catholic community in the area for over a century, recent structural issues prompted urgent repair work. Termite infestation in the roof structures and columns, along with water damage from leaks, led to the decision to temporarily close the church for restoration.

In the interim, Masses have been celebrated at the nearby MPH/Madonna Hall. Parish priest, Fr Moses Rayappan, shared that despite some initial delays last year, the restoration is progressing on schedule. He expects the work to be completed by the second half of 2025.

"We are hopeful that the restoration will be finished on time," said Fr Moses. "I invite all parishioners to join in prayer for the success of this important work, that our beloved church may be restored and ready to serve the community once again." **Bernard Anthony**

## A mission of love and learning

KUALA LUMPUR: A team of 12 volunteers, led by the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD), embarked on a mission trip to Calcutta, West Bengal, India. Inspired by the legacy of Mother Teresa and guided by their faith in Jesus Christ, the group set out to serve the poorest of the poor while immersing themselves in the vibrant culture of one of India's most historic cities.

The volunteers were divided among four homes under the Missionaries of Charity: *Nirmal Hriday* – a home for the dying and destitute, *Prem Dan* – a home for the mentally ill and elderly, *Shanti Dan* – a home for women and girls with mental and physical challenges, and *Daya Dan* – an orphanage for adolescent males with disabilities.

It was a journey of learning and connection. We embraced the rich diversity of cultures and traditions shared by the residents and fellow volunteers from around the world.

The mission was not without challenges. The poor air quality in Calcutta, with an air quality index often reaching hazardous levels of 350 to 370, posed significant difficulties. Many experienced flu-like symptoms and persistent coughs which, at times, made serving effectively a real test of endurance.

Following the routine of the Missionaries of Charity sisters, our day began at 6.00am with Mass, grounding us in prayer and faith. A simple breakfast of milk tea, bread, jam, and bananas — prepared by the sisters — fostered a sense of community and camaraderie. After breakfast, we gathered for prayer before heading to our assigned homes.



*Volunteers praying together at the Mother's Tomb.*

From morning until noon, we engaged in doing laundry, spending time with the residents, and assisting those unable to feed themselves during lunch. At midday, we returned to our hostel for rest before heading back to the Mother House in the evening. There, we participated in Adoration alongside the sisters and fellow volunteers, followed by debriefing sessions every other evening. This structured routine balanced service with moments of reflection and renewal, sustaining us throughout the mission.

During the debriefing sessions, we shared our experiences and the challenges we faced. One volunteer serving at *Nirmal Hriday* recounted the heartbreaking moment of witnessing a resident's passing shortly after spending time with this person. Others reflected on the bonds formed with residents, many of whom eagerly awaited our visits and were visibly sad-

dened by our departure.

On the final day, as we said our goodbyes, we left with heavy hearts but a sense of gratitude. The connections we made left an indelible mark, reminding us of the power of love, service, and shared humanity.

Two volunteers were privileged to clean Mother Teresa's Tomb at the Mother House — a sacred task carried out only three times a year. One volunteer described the cleaning process as requiring immense attention to detail. Every element of the tomb's surroundings — walls, pews, paintings, and other items — was carefully cleaned by hand, ensuring nothing was overlooked.

After the initial round of cleaning, the volunteers took a brief 30-minute break before resuming their efforts. The second stage involved scrubbing the surface of Mother Teresa's tomb with soap, followed by a careful rinse with water and the final touch of drying it with a towel. While the task appeared straightforward, achieving the precise standards of care demanded nearly two hours of focused work. This experience impacted the volunteers, reminding them of the sanctity of their mission and the legacy of love and humility embodied by Mother Teresa.

The experience in Calcutta was uplifting and life changing. Our perspective in life has shifted significantly after this journey in Calcutta and we are all deeply grateful for all the graces from Our Lord. The team not only contributed through their service but also built connections with the residents and fellow volunteers from around the globe while learning invaluable lessons. **AOHD**



*A volunteer rinsing clothes with sanitiser.*



# Stop wasting food, mistreating creation

HONG KONG: Cardinal Stephen Chow of Hong Kong has stressed the need to stop wasting food, saying it aligns with respecting human rights and caring for God’s creation.

The Jesuit cardinal wrote an article on the dignity of food based on his experience attending a few Christmas dinners. The article appeared in his diocesan online publication, *Examiner*, on January 3.

“I was invited to a couple of large-scale banquets in the past weeks. What I have seen was certainly regrettable,” Chow said in the article.

He said that after the first or second course, most diners started moving around, networking, leaving the food, or eating it randomly. “Much food was wasted as the servers were seen serving and removing the untouched dishes round after round.”

“Does food have rights?” just as human rights, animal rights, children’s rights, consumer rights, and patient rights, he asked.

He said that for Christians, rights are based on the reality that God is the creator of all lives, humans are made in God’s image, and their dignity comes from God’s love.

“However, we must not forget that with privilege comes responsibility. We are missioned by God to take good care of God’s Creation,” he said.

“If we solely focus on our individual rights, that will undermine not only the rights of others but also their foundational dignity, especially that of the weaker parties,” he said, adding such actions “are violations of God’s loving intention in creation.”

Chow said he says this not because of his “vegetarian diet but out of respect for life and our duty to care of our Common Home.”

“Irresponsible consumption of anything, and food in particular, will eventually hurt ourselves and the sustainability of our ecosystem,” he warned.

Such disregard will “further damage the already troubled relationships between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots,’ between humanity and the rest of God’s creation,” he said.

He wanted his people to become “more respectful and graceful to the parties with lesser voices, which must include the natural environment, of which we are just one of the constitutive parties.”

Chow also encouraged them to consider hosting parties that would allow networking activities without wasting food.

“We need creativity and some cultural changes!” he said. [ucanews.com](#)



Cardinal Stephen Chow

BANGLADESH: The Catholic Church in Dhaka officially launched the Jubilee Year 2025 with a grand celebration at the Cathedral of St Mary, bringing together hundreds of faithful under the theme *Pilgrims of Hope*.

The event was led by Archbishop Bejoy Nicephorus D’Cruze and Cardinal Patrick D’Rozario, setting the tone for a Holy Year

## Jubilee Year 2025 begins in Dhaka with focus on unity and spiritual renewal

aimed at fostering hope, renewal, and spiritual growth.

In his homily, Archbishop D’Cruze called

for reflection and gratitude. “Gratitude for the many blessings we have received in our lives” was a central theme of his message.

Addressing the social issues of division and discord, he highlighted the call of Pope Francis to foster unity and understanding.

“In the streets we see bitterness and division among people. Pope Francis has called us to build friendships, uphold dignity, and demonstrate tolerance towards one another,” he noted.

The Archbishop also emphasised the transformative power of hope. “Let us become people of hope,” he urged.

“Those who are hopeful can face challenges with resilience, in a mature manner, and leading a better life. In this way we will realise that Jesus truly walks with us,” he added.

Diponkor Gomes, a participant from the parish of Tejgaon, shared that the Jubilee Year “is a time to nourish hope amid the

challenges we face today.”

“In Bangladesh and the rest of the world, we are witnessing conflicts, wars, and unrest. Many places are grappling with economic hardship and price increases that disrupt normal life,” he said.

He expressed hope and belief that the Jubilee Year would bring blessings, emphasising a personal responsibility as a disciple of Jesus to strive for self-improvement, embody Christ’s teachings, and apply them in daily life.

The Jubilee Year 2025, declared by Pope Francis, calls on Catholics worldwide to reflect on their faith and commitment to their mission.

The theme, *Pilgrims of Hope*, emphasises the importance of perseverance in faith during challenging times.

In Bangladesh, the Catholic community is called to focus on hope, gratitude, and unity during this Holy Year. [LiCAS News](#)



Archbishop Bejoy Nicephorus D’Cruze and Cardinal Patrick D’Rozario unveil the official logo of the Jubilee Year 2025, themed ‘Pilgrims of Hope,’ during the launch celebration at St Mary’s Cathedral in Dhaka. (Photo credit: AsiaNews)

## Puchong parish’s raffle draw raises over RM1 million

PUCHONG: The Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe’s much-anticipated raffle draw unfolded in a lively atmosphere at the parish’s Pastoral Centre, drawing a large and enthusiastic crowd. The event, held on the third floor of the centre, was filled with excitement and hope as attendees gathered for the grand occasion.

The proceedings began with a warm welcome and prayer led by parish priest Fr Raymond Pereira, fostering a spirit of gratitude and community among those present. Shalet Perix, Chairperson of the Building Committee, expressed heartfelt thanks to committee members, volunteers, raffle buyers, and contributors. She also extended

her gratitude to Fr Raymond, Archbishop Julian Leow, Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Bishop Bernard Paul, and clergy from various dioceses for their unwavering support.

Shalet highlighted the generosity of sponsors, noting that all 31 prizes were fully sponsored. This generosity played a significant role in the event’s success, which raised an impressive RM1,027,838 for the church’s initiatives.

The highlight of the afternoon was the raffle draw itself, which created moments of suspense and celebration. Several winners

were present to hear the exciting news first-hand and to collect their prizes, adding to the festive atmosphere. Winners who were not present have 45 days from the draw date to claim their prizes.

The event’s success underscored the strength and unity of the church community while marking a milestone in advancing the Building Committee’s initiatives. The organisers extended their gratitude to the sponsors, volunteers, and participants whose contributions ensured the event’s success. **Bridget Antoinette Pereira**

CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, PUCHONG			
RESULTS OF RAFFLES DRAW 29 DECEMBER 2024			
3 GRAND PRIZES		WINNING TICKET NO.	
1	1 <sup>st</sup> PRIZE – CAR BEZZA Auto 1.0G AQ1GZ2	32101	
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> PRIZE – MOTORCYCLE - Honda RS 150	65750	
3	3 <sup>rd</sup> PRIZE VACATION FOR 2 PAX TO BALI (FLIGHT & STAY -4D 3N)	56345	
13 MID TIER PRIZES			
4	4 <sup>th</sup> Prize iPhone 15 Plus	51090	
5	5 <sup>th</sup> Prize Samsung Galaxy Tab S9 FE	54031	
6	6 <sup>th</sup> Prize Samsung Galaxy Tab S9 FE	38494	
7	7 <sup>th</sup> Prize Samsung Galaxy Tab S9 FE	48665	
8	8 <sup>th</sup> Prize 55" Samsung Smart TV	55698	
9	9 <sup>th</sup> Prize 55" Samsung Smart TV	30735	
10	10 <sup>th</sup> Prize 55" Samsung Smart TV	78304	
11	11 <sup>th</sup> Prize 2-Door Refrigerator ≥ 427 L	62159	
12	12 <sup>th</sup> Prize 2-Door Refrigerator ≥ 427 L	59555	
13	13 <sup>th</sup> Prize Electrolux 7kg Dryer	62245	
14	14 <sup>th</sup> Prize Lenovo Laptop	69002	
15	15 <sup>th</sup> Prize Lenovo Laptop	63191	
16	16 <sup>th</sup> Prize Lenovo Laptop	32203	
15 CONSOLATION PRIZES		WINNING TICKET NO.	
1	1 <sup>st</sup> Consolation Prize – Xiaomi Robot Vacuum	44683	
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Consolation Prize – One Deluxe Suite 1 Night Stay at Symphony Suites Hotel (Ipoh)	59186	
3	3 <sup>rd</sup> Consolation Prize – Philip Air Fryer	35434	
4	4 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – ELBA Food Steamer	55349	
5	5 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – Panasonic Blender with Dry Mill	69457	
6	6 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – Russell Taylors Electric Multi Cooker	72077	
7	7 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – Electrova Baker Series Stand Mixer	58898	
8	8 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – ELBA Coffee Maker	59409	
9	9 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – Kenwood Chopper	71471	
10	10 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – Occean Sonic Electric Toothbrush / Panasonic Automatic Dry Iron	62115	
11	11 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – Philip Electric Kettle	35852	
12	12 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – Sharp Rice Cooker	71577	
13	13 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – Sharp Table Fan	35354	
14	14 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – JMM Multifunctional Household Fan	39306	
15	15 <sup>th</sup> Consolation Prize – A Gourmet Electric Kettle	51622	
*All terms and conditions on the reverse of ticket applies. For Raffles enquires : Shalet Perix (012-2100076) Jane Lew - (012- 3278068)			



Fr Raymond Pereira with his parishioners.



# Christians have a duty to prevent, condemn child exploitation

VATICAN: Pope Francis used his first general audience of the year to address the scourge of exploitation and violence against children, urging Christians worldwide not to remain indifferent to their pain and suffering.

Putting a spotlight on the “scourge of child labour,” the Holy Father lamented that there are “too many children forced to work” who are unable to smile, dream, or nurture their talents.

“In every part of the globe, there are children who are exploited by an economy that does not respect life, an economy that, in so doing, consumes our greatest store of hope and love,” he said on January 8.

Speaking to hundreds of international pilgrims gathered inside the Paul VI Hall in Vatican City, the Pope said society — especially Christians “who recognise themselves as children of God” — must not turn a blind eye to the plight of vulnerable children.



Pope Francis greets young people gathered for his general audience on January 8, 2025, in Paul VI Hall at the Vatican. (Vatican Media)

“[Christians] cannot accept that our little sisters and brothers, instead of being loved and protected, are robbed of their child-

hood, of their dreams, victims of exploitation and marginalisation,” he said.

In spite of great technological advance-

ments, the Holy Father said, such progress has often disregarded the dignity of children, “who are a gift from God,” and failed to address their current and future needs.

“Today we want to turn our gaze toward Mars or toward virtual worlds, but we struggle to look in the eye a child who has been left at the margins and who is exploited or abused,” he said.

“The century that generates artificial intelligence and plans multi-planetary existences has not yet reckoned with the scourge of humiliated, exploited, mortally wounded childhood,” he continued.

Before extending his greetings to different pilgrim groups from around the world, the Pope prayed: “Let us ask the Lord to open our minds and hearts to care and tenderness, and for every boy and every girl in the world to be able to grow in age, wisdom, and grace, receiving and giving love.”

Kristina Millare, CNA

## Synodal ‘pastoral conversion’ initiative for Archdiocese of Newark

NEW JERSEY: Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, in a letter addressed to clergy, religious, and faithful announced the launch of a multiyear “pastoral conversion” plan for the archdiocese based on the framework proposed by the final document produced by the Synod on Synodality.

“Pastoral conversion requires nothing more or less than our willingness to be open to what God’s word is saying to us and to listen to one another,” Tobin wrote, adding: “The term that best describes the journey that we are traveling together now is ‘synodality.’”

“Synodal leadership affirms the fact that every baptised person has the right and the responsibility to participate in the Church’s life and ministry,” Tobin wrote.

“The same is true of our ecclesial structures,” the archbishop said of Newark’s parishes, schools, institutions, and ministries.

Quoting the Holy Father’s first apostolic exhortation in 2013, which states “We cannot leave things as they presently are,” Tobin declared: “We must allow the Holy Spirit to renew us, as individuals and as communities, so that we can effectively carry the joy of the Gospel to others here at home and to the ends of the earth.”

Following the directive of the final document, the initiative, titled *We Are His Witnesses*, proposes a series of recommendations for structural changes to be implemented across the archdiocese in the coming years.

In the first place, Tobin revealed that he has instructed all parishes across the archdiocese to establish “fully functioning pastoral and finance councils” by July. At this time, the archbishop also said he expects all parish leaders to have completed training in “the synodal style of leadership with a mis-

sionary outlook.”

Tobin also shared that pastors have been asked to find ways to lead their congregations in “reflecting on what it means to be a ‘shared parish’” through small groups “based on the word of God,” while parishes across the archdiocese have been asked to “be open to new alliances with other parishes,” regardless of size or location.

“I want to make it clear that *We Are His Witnesses* is not a project with a hidden agenda for closing or consolidating parishes, schools, or other institutions,” Tobin noted in the letter. “We have something very different in mind, namely the pastoral conversion of our hearts and minds to prepare us, as an archdiocese, for the work of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ now and in the future.”

The initiative has been entrusted to auxiliary Bishop Michael Saporito, who



Cardinal Joseph Tobin, archbishop of Newark, New Jersey. (ACI Prensa/Daniel Ibáñez)

is expected to lead the newly-founded Commission on Pastoral Planning, a group of lay faithful, clergy, and religious, in presenting a comprehensive pastoral plan for Newark by the summer of 2026.

Madalaine Elhabbal, CNA



Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez (OSV News/Sarah Webb, courtesy Archdiocese of Philadelphia)

PENNSYLVANIA: Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez of Philadelphia has unveiled a decade-long initiative to rejuvenate the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, focusing on evangelisation rather than parish closures amid declining numbers of faithful and active priests. In a pastoral letter titled *An Invitation from Archbishop Pérez*, announced during weekend Masses on January 5, he declared,

## Philadelphia archbishop unveils new evangelisation plan with 50 ‘missionary hubs’

“I didn’t come here to close parishes; I came here to build up the Church of Philadelphia.”

The plan introduces “missionary hubs” aimed at fostering outreach and engagement across the archdiocese, which includes 214 parishes and 274 priests serving 1.55 million Catholics over five counties. At least 50 hubs will be established in parishes and other locations, each supported by full-time staff, including service coordinators, event specialists, and missionaries. These hubs will not replace parishes but will be subsidised by private philanthropic funding to ensure long-term sustainability.

The initiative encourages dialogue through 46 scheduled conversation sessions between February and June, inviting Catholics to shape the archdiocese’s future. Additionally, the archbishop introduced the possibility of Parish Life Directors — lay individuals, deacons, or members of consecrated life — who will manage parish operations without a resident priest, working under an auxiliary bishop’s guidance.

This approach reflects strategies used in African parishes, where lay catechists manage mission stations under a pastor’s supervision. Archbishop Pérez emphasized that this model allows retired priests to focus on pastoral care and sacraments without administrative burdens, leveraging their wisdom and energy to support the Church’s mission.

The archbishop highlighted the urgency of the Church’s renewal, citing that 83 per cent of baptised Catholics do not attend Mass. He attributed this to social fragmentation, the clerical abuse crisis, and cultural drift, stating, “We need to have urgency around this.” Despite these challenges, Pérez expressed hope, saying, “Our hope is in the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ, who is always calling us home.”

Pérez acknowledged the strained relationships some Catholics feel with the Church, vowing, “We can do better. I can do better.” His vision focuses on inviting those who feel distant — whether through disillusionment or disengagement — back into the fold. “This is our shared mission: to proclaim the

Good News of Jesus Christ’s love, mercy, and resurrection to a world that desperately needs it,” he said.

Drawing inspiration from Pope Francis’ *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pérez called for “great flexibility” in reimagining parish life, aiming for a “pastoral change of heart” over the next 20 years. While he acknowledged the inevitability of some parish closures, he stressed that forming missionary disciples is paramount, saying, “Pastoral planning focusing solely on changing our current parish footprint will not cultivate that culture.”

The initiative is a culmination of Pérez’s five years of dialogue with Catholics in a region he has long served, first as a priest and later as archbishop. His message is clear: renewal requires collective effort, trust-building, and embracing the baptismal call to evangelise. “Your encounters can mark the beginning of their return,” Pérez said, emphasising that the Church’s future depends on openness, creativity, and reliance on the Holy Spirit. Gina Christian, OSV



# A woman leads a Vatican office for the first time ever

VATICAN: On January 6, Pope Francis shattered one of the Vatican's long-standing "stained-glass ceilings" by appointing Italian Sr Simona Brambilla, MC, as the first woman to serve as the prefect of a Vatican dicastery.

While the historic nature of this appointment dominated headlines, the announcement also included some Vatican-specific terminology that might puzzle readers: What exactly is a prefect? A pro-prefect? And what is a dicastery?

Here's a breakdown to help clarify these terms.

## What is Sr Brambilla's new job?

Sr Brambilla, a member of the Consolata Missionaries religious order, has made history as the first woman to be appointed prefect of a Vatican dicastery. She now leads the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Vatican office responsible for overseeing religious orders — such as the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) — and other similar "institutes" in the Church.

This appointment marks a significant milestone, as no woman has ever held the role of prefect in any Vatican office before. Previously, the highest position a woman had attained in a dicastery was that of secretary, the second-highest role. Only two women have held this position: Alessandra Smerilli, FMA, named secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development in 2021, and Sr Brambilla herself, who became secretary of her current dicastery in 2023.

As prefect, Sr Brambilla succeeds 77-year-old Brazilian Cardinal João Bráz de Aviz, who has led the dicastery since 2011. Her role as the top decision-maker in the office underscores Pope Francis' commitment to increasing the presence of women in leadership positions within the Church.

Sr Brambilla's leadership extends beyond her new role. In early December, she was also appointed by Pope Francis to the Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod, the committee that oversees the implementation of the most recent synod and

## Why Now?

prepares for the next assembly.

Born in Monza, Italy, on March 27, 1965, Sr Brambilla earned a degree in nursing before joining the Consolata order in 1988. She later pursued psychology studies at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University, earning her doctorate in 2008. After taking her final vows in 1999, she served in Mozambique, engaging in youth ministry. In 2002, she returned to Rome to further her studies.

Sr Brambilla also demonstrated strong leadership within her congregation, serving two terms as superior of the Consolata Missionary Sisters from 2011 to May 2023. Her extensive experience and dedication to her vocation have prepared her for this groundbreaking role in the Vatican.

## What is a dicastery?

A dicastery is what the Vatican calls the different offices of the Roman Curia. Prominent dicasteries include the Dicastery for Evangelisation and the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. Previously, the Vatican bureaucracy included congregations, dicasteries, pontifical councils and commissions; in his 2022 apostolic constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*, Pope Francis made almost all these separate offices dicasteries.

## What is the Roman Curia?

The Vatican's organisation is split into two parts: the Roman Curia and the Vatican City-State. The City-State deals with practical things happening inside Vatican City: It is where you will find the event planning offices, the office in charge of St Peter's Basilica, the police, the Vatican Museums and so on. Women have generally risen to power more easily in the City-State than in the Curia, where ordination has traditionally been seen as more central to the exercise of official roles. For example, the head of the Vatican Museums is a woman.

The Roman Curia handles "churchy" matters like doctrine, clergy and religious life but also includes the Secretariat of State, which is in charge of the Vatican's diplomats, or nuncios. When we speak about women holding top roles in Vatican dicasteries, we're referring to top roles in the Roman Curia, specifically. (The City-State uses different names for its various offices.)

## Why didn't this happen before?

Before 2022, it would have been impossible for a woman to head a Vatican dicastery. That year, with *Praedicate Evangelium*, Pope Francis overhauled the governance of the Roman Curia. In addition to simplifying the naming of offices (making them all "dicasteries"), he changed the rules to allow people who were not ordained as priests or bishops to run Vatican offices, thus opening the top positions to women for the first time.

Since *Praedicate Evangelium* came into effect, Vatican watchers have been waiting to see when the Pope might appoint a lay prefect. As for why an appointment has taken two and a half years since the constitutional reform, one possibility could be internal resistance in the Vatican, which Pope Francis has said he faced when appointing women previously.

The appointment of Sr Brambilla might raise some eyebrows in the Vatican, specifically because, for the first time, a cardinal will be reporting to her. Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB, the former head of the Salesian order, will serve as pro-prefect under Sr Brambilla.

## What is a pro-prefect?

"Pro-prefect" is a title that was previously used to describe a non-cardinal who headed a Vatican congregation, one of the types of offices that was simplified to "dicastery" in the 2022 Vatican reform. After that reform but before the appointment of Sr Brambilla, it was only used to describe the top two officials in the Dicastery for Evangelisation, and it was used because Pope Francis himself is the prefect of that dicastery.

Its use in the case of Cardinal Artime is



unusual. Some have speculated that the cardinal has been made a pro-prefect in case some canonical issues come up within the dicastery that require action by an ordained bishop. (While the powers of Holy Orders and governance are separate in the Curia constitution, they are still intertwined in many places in canon law.) It is possible the Vatican will provide further explanation of the role in the coming days.

## What other Vatican offices could be headed by women in the future?

Following the 2022 constitutional reform, most analysts agreed that women could lead almost any Vatican office except for the Dicastery for the Clergy and the Dicastery for Bishops. (Interestingly, the Pope did appoint women as members of the Dicastery for Bishops for the first time in 2022, giving them a say in what names are forwarded to the pope for consideration to become bishops.)

The Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, which Sr Brambilla will head, has long been seen as one that could or should be run by a woman, since the majority of members of the orders or institutes of religious life around the world are women.

Likewise, most lay people in parishes are women, so the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life is often named among those that could be headed by a woman in the future. Just after the 2022 constitutional reform took effect, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, the prefect of that dicastery, told America, "I believe I could be the last cleric in charge of this dicastery."

**Colleen Dulle, America**

## Power and authority in the Church

Throughout history, there has been a broad, complex, and sometimes controversial reflection on the relationship between the power of orders, which is received with ordination and which enables one to administer certain sacraments — such as presiding over the Eucharist — and the power of governance, which gives authority over a part of the people of God, such as a diocese, a religious order, or even a parish.

For a long time, it was believed that the two powers were distinct and that it was possible to exercise them separately — St Thomas Aquinas shared this position, too.

As regards the Roman Curia, it was believed that all those who carried out their service in it received their power directly from the pope, who conferred authority on them regardless of whether or not they were ordained. This also applied to cardinals, whose authority derived from papal creation — which is not a sacrament. The pope chooses the cardinals as collaborators and advisers of the pope in the government of the Church.

This approach has characterised the history of the Church for a long time, so much so that there have been cardinals who were not priests — for example, Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli, Vatican secretary of state from 1848 to 1876, was ordained deacon but was not a priest. Further back in time, there were

cardinals appointed at a young age who only received orders after a long time, and even popes who were only deacons at the time of their election to the papal throne.

In the past, some abbots had not even been ordained priests and governed an ecclesiastical district, or there were figures who seem strange to us but who responded to this logic, such as the so-called bishops-elect, who governed dioceses without receiving episcopal consecration but did so because of their election. Other examples include the so-called mitred abbesses, "women with the pastoral staff," who exercised their authority over a territory and the faithful.

**Vatican II's impact on Church governance**  
Over time, however, another approach has emerged that goes back to the Church of the first millennium: The power of government is closely linked to the sacrament of holy orders, so it is not possible to exercise one without the other except within certain limits, which are rather narrow.

Hence, Pope John XXIII in 1962 decided that all cardinals should be ordained archbishops with the *motu proprio Cum Gravissima*.

This is the approach of the Second Vatican Council, which is found, for example, in *Lumen Gentium*, No. 21, in the Explanatory Note at No. 2, and in the two Codes of Canon

Law, the Latin and the Eastern one.

Vatican II authoritatively reiterated that the episcopate is a sacrament and that by episcopal consecration, one becomes part of the College of Bishops, which, together with and under the authority of the pope, is the subject of supreme power over the entire Church.

This approach was followed in the two Curia reforms that followed the Second Vatican Council: Pope Paul VI's constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae* (1967) and Pope John Paul II's *Pastor Bonus* (1988). John Paul II delineated the Curia into congregations and pontifical councils, which in lay terms might be defined as "ministries with portfolio" and "ministries without portfolio."

The congregations had to be governed by cardinals because they participated in the decisions of the universal Church with the Pope and, therefore, their heads had to have the rank of first advisers to the pope. The pontifical councils, on the other hand, could also be led by archbishops, but in any case, by ordained ministers because they still had to be in collegiality with the bishop of Rome — that is, the pope.

## Pope Francis' Curia reform: breaking new ground

The apostolic constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*, with which Pope Francis reformed the Curia in 2022, departed

from this approach. There was no longer a distinction between congregations and pontifical councils, which were all defined as dicasteries. Therefore, there was no longer a difference in who could be the head of the dicastery, a position that could also go to a layperson.

However, when presenting the reform of the Curia on March 21, 2022, the then-Fr Gianfranco Ghirlanda — created cardinal by Pope Francis in the consistory of Aug 27, 2022 — explained that there were still some dicasteries in which it was appropriate for a cardinal to lead and noted that the "constitution does not abrogate the Code of Canon Law, which establishes that in matters that concern clerics, clerics are the ones to judge."

In practice, the canonical mission was no longer given by order but by the pope's decision. This is why a layman like Paolo Ruffini could be at the head of the Vatican Dicastery for Communication.

This is the heart of the debate: Are there offices that can be exercised only by papal appointment, or are there offices that, despite papal appointment, can be exercised only if one is ordained? **Andrea Gagliarducci, CNA**

This is an extract from the original article. To read the full text, go to: <https://shorturl.at/FFNQU>



# Entering Jubilee 2025 with hope for our common home

The hope of a new year is here as the Catholic Church enters the 2025 Jubilee, a year-long period of forgiveness and mercy whose theme is taken from Romans 5: "Hope does not disappoint." The Jubilee also coincides with the 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' landmark encyclical on the environment.

The coming together of these events kindles in me a feeling of optimism for the future of our planet. The US is currently on track to reach 80 per cent or more of its emissions-reduction target under the Paris Climate Agreement, according to the Rhodium Group. While much work still needs to be done, this is progress. I am also encouraged by Church leaders, led by Pope Francis, using their voices. Archbishop Timothy Broglio, as president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), sent a powerful letter to Pope Francis, thanking the Holy Father for his "consistent reminder on the need to address the climate crisis and experience ecological conversion."

Archbishop Broglio acknowledged our current challenges in his message of gratitude, lamenting the suffering brought by natural disasters and noting that "devastating hurricanes and other events have levelled entire communities." Acknowledging both our progress and how much we have to do, gives me hope because we must be

honest about where we are to truly see where we must go.

As a group, the USCCB has taken important stances on the climate crisis, asserting its voice with clear policy positions. Last year, I advocated for their climate positions as part of a delegation of Catholic leaders visiting the White House to amplify Pope Francis' exhortation on climate, *Laudate Deum*. Archbishop John Wester, Bishop Edward Weisenburger, Sr Carol Zinn from Leadership Conference of Women Religious and Lonnie Ellis from In Solidarity made the trip together.

It was quite an experience to bring the Pope's message to the building where so much national policy takes shape. Within five months of our visit, the Environmental Protection Agency enacted all four of our policy stances — on mercury, methane, carbon pollution from power plants and emissions from heavy-duty vehicles. We weren't the only people raising our voices — groups advocating for public health and the environment have long pushed for these protections. Being part of democracy in action gives me hope, too.

Yet, as important as policy is, as a person of faith my hope ultimately resides in something deeper: the resurrection of Christ, and with it the restoration of all creation in the fullness of time. I think of Pope Francis' message on the World Day of Prayer for the

Care of Creation this past September. He linked our earthly and our eschatological hope: "Our Christian optimism is founded on a living hope: it realises that everything is ordered to the glory of God, to final consummation in His peace and to bodily resurrection in righteousness, as we pass 'from glory to glory.'"

Some may wonder whether hope, however, we define it, is enough to combat our many intersecting crises. The climate crisis itself can, at times, feel insurmountable. When we also see the prevalence of war, poverty, migration, authoritarianism and the breakdown of social bonds and institutions, things can feel hopelessly beyond our capacity to change.

When we are tempted to lose hope, we must remember that it is not a feeling or an emotion, but a virtue. Unlike emotions that come and go, virtues can be cultivated with purpose. The Holy Father touched on this in his message for the World Day of Prayer,

when he defined hope as "the possibility of remaining steadfast amid adversity, of not losing heart in times of tribulation or in the face of human evil." Hope animates our care for creation; it is both a first step and a final reward, an incentive as well as an intention. Let us enter the Jubilee year preparing to make St Paul's words our own: "For in hope we were saved." **Bishop Joseph J. Tyson, NCR**

**Rt Rev Joseph J. Tyson is the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Yakima in Washington state.**

## Rather than celebrating *Laudato Si'*, let's get to work

The *Laudato Si'* encyclical was a global event for Christians and, far beyond, for all environmentalists who saw it as Pope Francis' endorsement of their struggle. But has its content been truly understood? How should the message of *Laudato Si'* be applied? These are common questions in Christian communities. What a mistake! As if the encyclical, even supplemented by subsequent papal texts, were a series of steps to follow, when in fact it is an exhortation to get to work from spaces rich in fraternity among all living beings.

A change of world, a new cosmology — this is the most radical message of *Laudato Si'*. Let's be clear: it is neither a complete reset nor a return to square one, but an inheritance to receive and reinvent. Ecological insensitivity is a hallmark of modernity, including, paradoxically, among Christians, who have a particular responsibility toward Creation. As Bruno Latour (1947–2022), philosopher, anthropologist, and sociologist known for his work on science and technology studies tirelessly pointed out, it is an illusion to separate heaven from earth and believe one can save their soul while losing the world.

### Capitalism and sin

Great texts are characterised by their ambivalence because they capture the tensions shaping the world — our world, our worlds. *Laudato Si'* is no exception. The encyclical skilfully points to two forms of responsibility: on the one hand, a global system — capitalism and widespread consumerism; on the other, a local sin — the

evil and insensitivity in the human heart. But what about the middle ground? The social institutions, tools of generality, solidarities, powers, and counter-powers?

*Laudato Si'* has been received, on the one hand, as a critical counterpoint to international negotiations, and on the other, as a call for individual and small-group deepening of faith. What a mistake! Neither alone will ever suffice to change the world toward ecological civilisations. Neither alone can create the necessary shift to a new cosmology.

As Michel de Certeau (1925–1986), philosopher, historian, and sociologist, best known for his work on the relationship between culture, everyday life, and power structures, described societal shifts: "It seems an entire society expresses what it is building through representations of what it is losing."

### Christian Time

In this vast gap between the global and the local lies the processuality and cultural and physical phenomenality that define the inhabited Earth. Christians are both well-placed and poorly placed to address this.

They are well-placed because Christian time, as highlighted by historian François Hartog, creates a gap between urgency and the end of time, enabling a reflection on cri-

**Pope Francis' encyclical, published in 2015, is not a collection of recipes to be followed but a call to action to change the world in response to the consequences of climate change, says environmental historian, Grégory Quenet.**

ses through simultaneous non-simultaneity — the experience of multiple, often conflicting, temporalities existing at the same time. Hartog, known for his work on the concept of time, particularly in the context of history and its relationship to

culture and society, explores living both in the City of God and the City of Man, as well as in the Anthropocene, the time of nature and the time of societies.

They are poorly placed because they have inherited an industrial and spiritual modernity that has alienated them from fellowship with living beings and the soil. Hasn't the Church and its faithful accompanied and shaped modernity — naturalistic at first, then industrial, and eventually hyper-productive post-WWII?

### Eco-Modernism

This schizophrenia paradoxically predisposes Christians to ecological conversion. Pure ecological ideals lead directly to disaster. In the West, eco-modernism proposes starting from scratch, making everything "green" — energy, cities, transport.

Meanwhile, in emerging powers, the much-celebrated escape from poverty leads to unsustainable planetary consequences via historical catch-up. Pope Francis' call for "living well" recommends inhabiting inherited spaces differently, rather than dreaming of a restart that would only amplify en-

ergy use and resource extraction.

Christians are uniquely positioned to transform through inheritance, living between the "already" and the "not yet" — in the world's time while contemplating salvation. However, not all spiritual forces share this perspective; some absolve themselves of ecological responsibility, while others eagerly await the end times.

The ecological "born-again" movement is a millenarianism whose consequences — delight in collapse and war — should be measured on all living beings. On humans, who will bear the brunt, and on more-than-human entities, upon which humans will displace their self-inflicted harm.

### Getting to work

But are Christians today adequately equipped to exercise this discernment? Likely not. A glance at the research programs of Catholic institutions and pontifical universities — where nature sciences are often absent in Europe compared to Latin America — shows the terrestrial and spiritual remain disconnected.

Similarly, catechesis and theology still have much to do to recover texts and spiritualities at the heart of Christianity, as Pope Francis' recent visit to Corsica revealed, yet are too often dismissed as pagan. Blessing crops, praying for rain, addressing saints watching over springs, caring for soil that does not belong to us — practices evident for centuries but now forgotten.

Rather than celebrating *Laudato Si'*, let us get to work. **LCI (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)**



(Creation Justice KL)



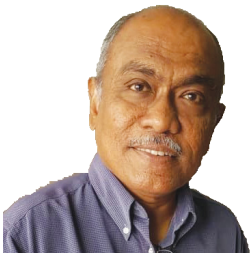
# Catechetical formation of candidates for Holy Orders

In the previous article, I examined the role of the priest as the catechetical leader of the parish community. What is clear is that the priest is expected to have adequate knowledge and competency in catechesis to lead the catechetical ministry in the parish. This leads us to the focus of the present article, namely, the catechetical formation of candidates for Holy Orders.

**Why study Catechetics?**  
In the past, especially from the Council of Trent (1545-1563) up to the early 20th century, catechesis was mainly considered the ‘handmaid’ of theology. It means that catechesis was seen as the imparting of a simplified form of theology to children and young people. The teaching of doctrine was emphasised and the goal was to ensure that the student knew and memorised the contents of the Faith well enough so as to be a ‘good’ Catholic.

From the 1930s onwards, there was a transformation in the way catechesis was understood and carried out. With advances taking place around the world in the fields of education, psychology, sociology and other areas of study, new ideas and concepts began to be incorporated into catechesis. This included concepts, such as methodology, pedagogy, theories of learning, lesson planning and the importance of considering the psychological, intellectual, cultural and social background of the learner.

After the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), as a renewed understanding of the Church emerged and affected almost every area of her life and mission, new developments in theology, liturgy, ecclesiology, pastoral theology, mission and other fields also greatly impacted the ministry of catechesis. As a result, a



Echoing the Faith

DR STEVEN SELVARAJU

new field of study, known as “catechetics”, as a branch of pastoral theology, appeared in the Church.

Catechetics is the systematic study of the history, nature, goals, principles and process of catechetics. It is an interdisciplinary field of study in that it draws on other disciplines, such as, theology, biblical studies, liturgy and sacraments, educational theories, social sciences and others. Regarding its aim, catechetics is concerned with

the process of initiation and growth in the Faith in relation to the mission of the Church.

**Growing awareness of the need for catechetical formation**  
It is the Second Vatican Council document *Optatam Totius*, the decree on the Training of Priests (1965), that initially mentions the importance of catechetical formation for future priests:

The pastoral preoccupation which should characterise every feature of the students’ training also requires that they should be carefully instructed in all matters which are especially relevant in the sacred ministry. These are, principally, catechetics, preaching, liturgical worship and the administration of the sacraments, works of charity...” (OT, 19).

The *General Catechetical Directory* (1971), the first major document on catechetics to be published after the Second Vatican Council, mentions the importance of catechetical formation for priests and deacons, and adds:

“... it is of great importance that a thorough catechetical preparation be given to students in seminaries and scholasticates, which should be completed afterwards by continuing formation...” (GCD, 115).

The next document to mention this aspect of priestly formation is *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community* (1990) which was published by the International Council for Catechesis (COINCAT), a consultative body of the Congregation of the Clergy. It states:

“Since the role of the priest in the community is irreplaceable, it is essential that candidates for the priesthood have a solid formation in catechetics. This is particularly true for adult catechesis, for which they need to learn to direct and collaborate with lay catechists (ACCC, 83).

In later years, although *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979), a key document on catechesis promulgated by St John Paul II, did not specifically mention catechetical formation for future priests, this aspect of priestly training was taken up again in the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997):

“...a fundamentally decisive element must be the catechetical formation of priests both at the level of the seminary formation as well as at the level of continuing formation. Bishops are called upon to ensure that they are scrupulously attentive to such formation” (GDC, 234).

## Aspects of catechetical formation for candidates for Holy Orders

The most recent document on catechesis, *Directory for Catechesis* published in 2020, in comparison to the previous documents, gives emphasis to the catechetical formation of candidates for Holy Orders. It stresses that candidates for the permanent diaconate should receive this formation as well. It points out that since “the quality of catechesis in a community depends in part on the ordained ministers who care for it... the process of forming candidates for Holy Orders cannot leave out the specific instruction on proclamation and catechesis” (DC, 151).

The Directory provides the following criteria for the catechetical formation of candidates for Holy Orders:

1. To become familiar with the understanding and experiences related to first proclamation (*kerygma*) and the various forms of catechesis.
2. To introduce them to a detailed and profound understanding of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
3. To explore the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) as a valuable tool for catechesis and mystagogy (post-baptismal catechesis).
4. To present the guidelines of the respective particular Church related to catechesis.
5. To guarantee a place in the curriculum for the study of catechetics, of the Magisterium on catechetical matters, of pedagogy and other human sciences (DC, 152).

The document also states that bishops should ensure that the above-mentioned criteria are integrated into the formative programmes for their candidates to the priesthood and the permanent diaconate (CD, 153).

**Conclusion**  
A study of the recent Church documents on catechesis leaves no doubt that it is essential for candidates for Holy Orders be formed in catechetics. Therefore, it is hoped that this aspect of catechetical formation is being given attention in the Church.

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The key ideas in the article are presented in illustrated format below. The illustrations are by Dr Steven Selvaraju. The images are taken from the public domain.

## CATECHETICAL FORMATION OF CANDIDATES FOR HOLY ORDERS

As the Catechetical Leader, the parish priest is expected to have an adequate knowledge and competency in catechesis in order to lead the catechetical ministry effectively.

This highlights the importance of catechetical formation for future priests. The Vatican Council document, *Optatam totius* (1965), and the *General Catechetical Directory* (1971) speak of the necessity for students in seminaries and scholastics to be provided thorough catechetical preparation. The document *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community* (1990) states: “Since the role of the priest in the community is irreplaceable, it is essential that candidates for the priesthood have a solid formation in catechetics.”

The *General Directory for Catechesis*, published in 1997 states, “...a fundamentally decisive element must be the catechetical formation of priests both at the level of the seminary formation as well as at the level of continuing formation. Bishops are called upon to ensure that they are scrupulously attentive to such formation” (GDC, 234).

The *Directory for Catechesis* (2020) points out that since “the quality of catechesis in a community depends in part on the ordained ministers who care for it... the process of forming candidates for Holy Orders cannot leave out the specific instruction on proclamation and catechesis” (DC, 151).

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5. To guarantee a place in the curriculum for the study of catechetics, of the Magisterium on catechetical matters, of pedagogy and other human sciences (DC, 152).

A study of the Church documents on catechesis leaves no doubt that it is essential for candidates for Holy Orders be formed in catechetics. Therefore, it is hoped that this aspect of catechetical formation is being given attention in the Church.



# I thank God for giving me a mission

**Elvina Fernandez**

From the historic town of Malacca, Sr Margaret Sta Maria has dedicated her life to the Canossian Sisters, inspired by the selfless lives of St Magdalene of Canossa and St Josephine Bakhita, who left behind a legacy of nuns and priests in Italy, dedicated to serving the poor, opening charity schools for children, evangelising the Gospel, and caring for the sick.

St Magdalene was canonised in 1988, following her founding of the Congregations of the Canossian Sisters and Canossian Fathers in the early nineteenth century. A century after her death in 1835, another Canossian saint, St Bakhita, was canonised during the Jubilee Year of 2000 and hailed as the "Saint of the Third Millennium" — our Universal Sister. She was also declared as the Patron Saint for Human Trafficking by Pope Francis in 2015.

St Magdalene encouraged the Canossians to extend their mission to foreign lands. The first foundation was established in Hong Kong in 1860, followed by China, Macau, East Timor, India, Singapore, and Malaysia, where the mission has thrived for 120 years since 1905. Today, the Canossians serve across Asia, Africa, the Americas, Europe, and Oceania, embodying St Magdalene's belief that "Charity is a fire that ever spreads out."

Sr Margaret's journey of faith began at the tender age of seven, and today, she stands as a testament to unwavering dedication and divine purpose. "I grew up and did my schooling in Malacca and my faith understanding grew while living with my grandmother. I knew from a very young age that this was my calling."

Young Sr Margaret's heart was filled with a fervent desire to serve. She attended Sacred Heart Convent, where her spiritual foundation was nurtured through Catechism, the Eucharist, and Bible Knowledge. Her involvement in the St Vincent de Paul Society, visiting the sick in hospitals and aiding poor families alongside the Canossian Sisters, kindled a deep and hidden vocation within her.

Upon completing secondary school, Sr Margaret worked diligently for two years, yearning to discern her path in life. With the fire of devotion burning in her heart, she realized her calling and decided to give her life to God in her earliest youth. "I was 20 years old then, realising that it was indeed my call and joined the convent."

Sr Margaret's transition to the convent was seamless. "The Sisters had known me since my school days and therefore it was a smooth discernment."

Her postulancy formation took place in Jinjang, Kuala Lumpur alongside two other women, for a year, followed by two years of novitiate in Singapore. "Then, in 1988, I

took my first profession and returned to Malaysia with temporary vows."

Embraced by the community, Sr Margaret served with love and compassion in kindergartens, parishes, and other assigned duties. Later in 1994, Sr Margaret embarked on a three-month tertianship programme in India in preparation for her perpetual profession.

"On Dec 27, 1994, with a heart full of faith, I made my final commitment to God at the Church of St Francis Xavier, Malacca and then pursued theology in the Philippines for four enriching years."

Returning to the Diocese of Malacca Johore, Sr Margaret was invited by the late Fr Simon Wong to join the Biblical Apostolate team. Since then, engaging in various diocesan ministries, including youth, catechetics, and parish retreats, she eventually became the head of the Pastoral Institute at MAJODI.

Her passion and dedication were evident in every task she undertook. After a decade of service in the diocese, she continued her theological studies in Toronto for two years before returning to assist Rt Rev Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang, from 2013 to 2016.

In 2017, Sr Margaret was appointed executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei (CBCMSB), only to be called to the Canossian Province of Indonesia as Provincial Superior shortly after. Her six-year tenure from 2018 to 2024 was marked by personal growth, cultural immersion, and the development of religious formation of the sisters and infrastructure.

When asked if there were any challenges in the journey, Sr Margaret said it was not always easy, yet her faith never wavered. "I had to quickly adapt, learning the new local language, embracing the culture, and built deep connections with the sisters and the community, who did not know me."

Reflecting on her journey, Sr Margaret shares, "God is faithful and present when one gives their best to Him." Her experiences have deepened her faith and brought her closer to those who believed in the mission entrusted to her.

"My passion always remains to make Jesus known and loved, empowering others to

evangelise, and living the congregational charism of charity in humility and humility in charity."

Sr Margaret made history on Sept 1, 2024, as the first woman and the first religious to lead the KL Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute (API). Reflecting on this significant milestone, she humbly shared, "I thank God for this opportunity to be part of His mission here."

As the director of API, Sr Margaret today continues her mission to serve the Lord and fulfil the mission and vision of the archdiocese in assisting the various ministries with their goals. "We must put our gifts together to serve the Lord and our community."

She added that it is important to celebrate, listen and walk together, taking initiatives to save mother earth, working together to live harmoniously, strengthening family relationship, and become a Church that nurtures reconciliation, healing and mercy. "The task of the API is to assist in making this vision a success in various levels from parish, district, ministries and commissions."

The Church, Sr Margaret added, needs all of us. "Now is the time for laity in action, increase of prayer in family life and discipleship of the youths." She added that we must remember to pray for others, and in that way, God will always lift us.

She also pointed out that each of us has a vocation in us. "Even if you are not a religious or a priest, God has a calling for each of us to serve in our own way."

Sr Margaret's story is a shining example of unwavering devotion and service. As she continues her journey as a Canossian Sister, her life remains a testament to the glory of God and the power of faith.

Her eyes sparkle with the joy of knowing she is fulfilling her divine calling, and her heart beats with a love that transcends boundaries. As we concluded the interview, Sr Margaret reminded each of us to, "Spend time in prayer and always remember to have God in our every day and share His love!"

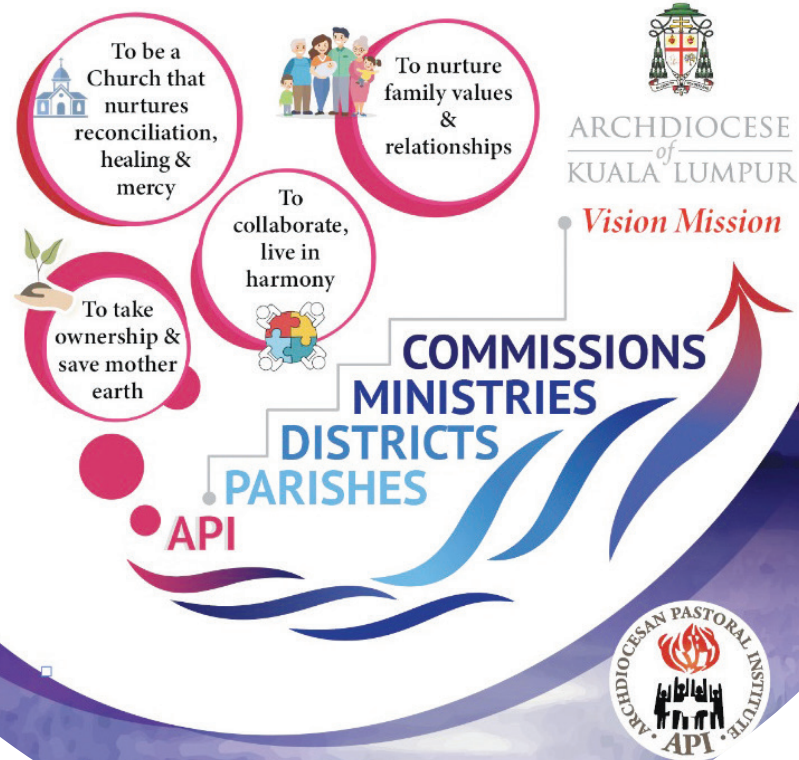
*Sr Margaret Sta Maria is pictured with Cardinal Sebastian Francis in Rome following his elevation to the rank of Cardinal by Pope Francis on September 30, 2023. On the left is Fr Andrew Khoo of the Institute of the Incarnate Word.*



*Sr Margaret Sta Maria with the Indonesian Sisters.*

## Towards A Synodal Church

*Celebrating, Listening and Walking*





The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU) is an ecumenical Christian observance that is celebrated worldwide. This year, the World Council of Churches (WCC) together with the Catholic Church's Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity (DPCU) has set January 18-25 2025 and has chosen the theme Do you believe this? (John 11:26).

This year 2025 will mark the 1,700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council in the year 325 in Nicaea. This commemoration celebrates the common faith of Christians as expressed in the Nicene Creed.

"Unity", according to the dictionary, is defined as a noun, meaning "the state of being joined together or in agreement or working together". In the Church context, Christian unity is a process, a journey and a work-in-progress.

Historically, the followers of Jesus Christ had undergone many divisions and splits (called schisms) since the first major schism in the year 1054, with the division of the Eastern and Western Churches. Down through the centuries, the many Christian heresies (false or erroneous teachings) caused further breakage from the mainstream Church. This resulted in many Church Fathers or Church Doctors that emerged, that has shaped the Christian theology today.

The big schism that occurred in the 16th century, called the Protestant Reformation, resulted in numerous Christian groups being formed. They in turn underwent their own schism, causing many splinter groups, which grew, and now form one of the many thousands of Christian denominations globally.

I will not dwell on the reasons for the schisms, as that will fall under the realm of Church history. Instead, this article focuses on why today the idea of ecumenism (the promotion of unity among the world's Christian Churches) is being championed by



## Reminiscing Church

RICHARD CHIA



Our Holy Father and the WCC.

The WPCU began in 1908 and focused on prayer for Church unity. By annually observing the WPCU, Christians move toward the fulfilment of Jesus' prayer at the Last Supper "that they all may be one." (John 17:21).

In the beginning, the prayer for Christian unity was for the unspoken purpose of praying for the return of non-Catholic Christians to the Catholic Church. Needless to say, such an observance would not attract many of our separated brothers and sisters to the prayer. It was subsequently changed to "for the unity of the Church as Christ wills it, and in accordance with the means He wills". The desire for Christians to pray together was part of the spirit of the age.

Pope Benedict XVI, in his General Audience on the first day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2012, asked, "How can we give a convincing witness if we are divided?".

The prayers, prepared and published jointly by the DPCU and the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order, contains resources, guidelines, biblical texts to share and instructions for preparing the ecumenical worship service. The local Churches will use these and develop into a prayer session with each participating Church taking turns to lead various sections of the worship service.

## The silent wife

I was involved in a family wedding recently, and as far as weddings go, it was a beautiful ceremony that united two beautiful people whom I absolutely love. In the days leading up to the wedding, I was tasked with proofreading the prepared wedding booklet and was rather befuddled with the first reading. My question was why this reading, or rather Bible passage, would be part of readings selected for weddings. But I did not kick up a fuss.

A week before the wedding, over breakfast at our local Klang *mamak*, my little cousin, (maybe not so little, she's eighteen now), who was enlisted to do the first reading, suddenly blurted out, complete with some massive eye-rolling, "but I'm not reading one line in that reading - 'a silent wife is a gift from God.'" I laughed out loud, but inwardly I was so proud of that little girl.

The reading from Ecclesiasticus [Sirach] 26:1-4, 13-16, 'A silent wife is a gift from the Lord, no price can be put on a well-trained character' certainly makes taking a wife sound like getting a prized cow, or a horse perhaps - the way I read it at least (out of context of course). I mean come on; do men these days really want a well-trained woman who does not have an opinion? I don't think such women even exist, not in my world at least. Any well-trained woman would have a lot to say about a lot of things, if not everything!

Well, I am not one of those who are capable of keeping silent, clearly not God's gift to men, so I discussed this with my little

group of Catholic enthusiasts, and we all agreed the Bible needs an update, or a rewrite, while the priest in the group contributed that this was written in a time where the silence of a woman was a noble thing.

Fair play, as the Bible also attributes loud women to being wayward and undignified, so it was a thing in the past, when women had no say. But how do we then interpret the Bible, or the said silent woman passage in this day and age? If there is no justifiable interpretation, the passage should be removed from at least wedding readings.

While I only stressed on the silent wife bit, the whole reading is in fact a little degrading to women these days:

*Like the sun rising is the beauty of a good wife in her well-kept house.*

*Happy the husband of a really good wife; the number of his days will be doubled.*

*A perfect wife is the joy of her husband, he will live out the years of his life in peace.*

*A good wife is the best of portions, reserved for those who fear the Lord; rich or poor, they will be glad of heart, cheerful of face, whatever the season.*



## On the Fence

JACELYN JOHNSON

*The grace of a wife will charm her husband, her accomplishments will make him stronger.*

*A silent wife is a gift from the Lord, no price can be put on a well-trained character.*

*A modest wife is a boon twice over, a chaste character cannot be weighed on scales.*

*Like the sun rising over the mountains of the Lord is the beauty of a good wife in a well-kept house.*

While I do need a well-kept house, it is not solely the responsibility of the wife. A well-kept house is a shared responsibility.

The reading starts with 'Happy the husband of a good wife, for his days will be doubled.' Firstly, what encompasses a good and perfect wife? Must she be silent and constantly cheerful to be a good wife? Secondly, will the wife's days ever be doubled? What is the standard for a good husband? And will the wife's days be doubled if she finds a good husband (presumably he shouldn't be silent, since communication is key)?

Several wedding readings in fact essentially state that a "good wife" basically just needs to be a chaste housekeeper, with her mouth shut, while constantly portraying

present.

In Sabah and Sarawak where integration among the diverse groups are better, ecumenical prayers are not confined to just one week in a year. Last year, the Association of Churches in Sarawak, together with the Catholic Church, organised an ecumenical prayer service in conjunction with the 61st Sarawak Day Celebration.

Obviously, there is lots of room for improvements in promoting Prayers for Christian Unity. Ideally it should be ingrained in us to do so naturally. We are not there yet. Thus, the reason I started by saying that "Christian unity is a process, a journey and a work-in-progress".

For those who have yet to experience these ecumenical prayer services, praying together in solidarity with our Christian sisters and brothers brings us together in oneness. It helps us recognise our commonalities, rather than our differences. It gives us opportunities to visit each other's places of worship, and hold joint meetings with a common purpose. Most of all, it helps us relate and bond with our Christian brothers and sisters.

Allocating one week a year to Christian unity is hardly enough, but it is a great start. If every Catholic lay faithful makes it a point to want to, and pray with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we will be one step closer to Christian unity. It should not be confined to our clergy and bishops to pray for Christian unity.

If you haven't already done so, do sign up to participate and invite others to join in this year's Prayer for Christian Unity Week, at a church near you.

*Richard Chia reflects on the Church in Malaysia's journey over the past forty years, highlighting its challenges, achievements, and progress toward embracing synodality.*

❖ *The views expressed are entirely the writer's own.*

a cheerful disposition, with grace and utmost modesty, while being completely subservient to her husband and then bear fruits of olives. I thank God (and my parents) every day that I was not brought up to be such a woman, and my husband, who would not have married me if I was such a woman.

I am pretty sure everyone reading this would agree with where I am coming from, and yes, we all acknowledge that the Old Testament readings do not apply to us much anymore, it is just historical stories, and no one should be held to those standards of expectations as we hit 2025. But for as long as those passages are choices for a wedding, it will be, or can be, an option for whoever prepares the booklet, and I imagine it can be the fan favourite of all mothers-in-law, as they dictate the perfect "good wife" for their sons.

To be fair, the congregation at the wedding, including the bride and groom, had no issues with the reading, (aunties and uncles were probably even proud), so this is just the rant of a wayward Catholic woman! And my point being, since communication is key in a marriage, silence and words should be shared responsibility, not one party's job.

*Jacelyn Johnson enjoys the occasional religious discourse and says it as it is, in an attempt to diffuse stereotypical observations.*

❖ *The views expressed are entirely the writer's own.*





Fr Ron Rolheiser

# Coming to peace with our lack of recognition

**W**e crave few things as deeply as self-expression and recognition. We have an irrepressible need to express ourselves, be known, recognised, understood, and seen by others as unique, gifted, and significant. A heart that is unknown, unappreciated in its depth, lacking in meaningful self-expression and recognition, is prone to restlessness, frustration, and bitterness. And, truth be told, self-expression is difficult, and full self-expression is impossible.

In the end, for most of us, our lives are always smaller than our needs and our dreams, no matter where we live or what we accomplish. In our daydreams, each of us would like to be famous, the renowned writer, the graceful ballerina, the admired athlete, the movie star, the cover girl, the renowned scholar, the Nobel Prize winner, the household name; but in the end, most of us remain just another unknown, living among other unknowns, collecting an occasional autograph.

And so, our lives can seem too small for us. We feel ourselves as extraordinary, forever trapped inside the mundane, even as there is something inside us that still seeks expression, that still seeks recognition, and that feels that something precious inside us is living and dying in futility. In truth, seen only from the perspective of this world,

much of what is precious, unique and rich, is seemingly living and dying in futility. Only a rare few achieve satisfying self-expression and recognition.

There's a certain martyrdom in this. Iris Murdoch once said: "Art has its martyrs, not the least of which are those who have preserved their silence." Lack of self-expression, whether chosen or imposed by circumstances, is a real death; but like all deaths, it can be understood and appropriated in very different ways.

If it is accepted unhappily as tragic, it leads to bitterness and a broken spirit. If, however, it is understood and appropriated in faith as an invitation to be a hidden cell inside the Body of Christ and the human family, to anonymously provide sustenance and health to the overall body, it can lead to restfulness, gratitude, and sense of significance that lays the axe to the roots of our frustration, disappointment, depression, and bitterness.

I say this because much of what gives us life and sustains us in our lives has not been provided by the rich and famous, the high achievers, and those to whom history gives credit. As George Eliot points out, we don't need to do great things that leave a big mark in human history because "the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not

so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs."

Well said. History bears this out. I think, for instance, of Therese of Lisieux who lived out her life in obscurity in a little convent tucked away in rural France who, when she died at age twenty-four, was probably known by fewer than one hundred people. In terms of how we assess things in this world, she accomplished very little, nothing in terms of outstanding achievement or visible contribution. She entered the convent at age fifteen and spent the years until her early death doing menial things in the laundry, kitchen, and garden inside her obscure convent. The only tangible possession she left behind was a diary, a personal journal with bad spelling, which told the story of her family, her upbringing, and what she experienced during her last months in palliative care as she faced death.

But what she did leave behind is something that has made her a figure who is now renowned around the world, both inside and outside of faith circles. Her little private journal, *The Story of a Soul*, has touched millions of lives, despite its bad spelling (which had to be corrected by her sisters after her death).

What gives her little journal its unique

power to touch hearts is that it chronicles what was happening inside the privacy of her own soul during all those years when she was hidden away and unknown, as child and as a nun. What she records in the story of her soul is that she, fully aware of her own uniqueness and preciousness, could unbegrudgingly give that all over in faith because she trusted that her gifts and talents were working silently (and powerfully) inside a mystical (though real, organic) body, the Body of Christ and of humanity. She understood herself as a cell inside a living body, giving over what was precious and unique inside her for the good of the world.

Anonymity offers us this invitation. There is no greater work of art that one can give to the world.

Jesus said as much. He told us to do our good deeds in secret and not let our left hand (and our neighbours and the world) know what our right hand is doing.

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



## Making a Difference

Tony Magliano

## May 2025 be a year in which peace flourishes!

In these early days of the new year, many of us are probably feeling a mixture of anxiety and hope – anxious about the many crises in our nation and world, yet hopeful that 2025 will be better.

In his January 1, 2025 World Day of Peace message titled *Forgive Us Our Trespasses: Grant Us Your Peace* Pope Francis appears to have similar feelings. But for him hope, especially hope in God that is expressed in concrete action, is the elixir to anxiety (see: [bit.ly/4gVEuYc](https://bit.ly/4gVEuYc)).

Reflecting on this Jubilee Year of Hope, the Holy Father writes, "We wish to hear the 'desperate plea for help' that, like the cry of the blood of Abel (cf. Gen 4:10), rises up from so many parts of our world – a plea that God never fails to hear. We, for our part, feel bound to cry out and denounce the many situations in which the earth is exploited and our neighbours oppressed. These injustices can appear at times in the form of what St John Paul II called "structures of sin", that arise not only from injustice on the part of some but are also consolidated and maintained by a network of complicity.

"I think, in particular, of all manner of disparities, the inhuman treatment meted out to migrants, environmental decay, the confusion wilfully created by disinformation, the refusal to engage in any form of dialogue and the immense resources spent on the industry of war. All these, taken together, represent a threat



Women light candles at an Orthodox church in Kyiv. (Vatican News)

to the existence of humanity as a whole. At the beginning of this year, then, we desire to heed the plea of suffering humankind in order to feel called, together and as individuals, to break the bonds of injustice and to proclaim God's justice. Sporadic acts of philanthropy are not enough. Cultural and structural changes are necessary, so that enduring change may come about" [emphasis added].

One of the many cultural and structural realities that morally demands our attention and action is the hellish military industrial complex's determination to fuel the world's many violent conflicts with weapons for sake of monetary profit (see: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUtxTvdSF\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUtxTvdSF_4) and <https://winwithoutwar.org/take-action>).

Trying to also raise our consciousness on other life and death issues, Pope Francis writes, "Foreign debt and ecological debt are two sides of the same coin, namely the mindset of exploitation that has culminated in the debt crisis. In the spirit of this Jubilee Year, I urge the international community to work towards forgiving foreign debt in recognition of the ecological debt existing between the North and the South of this world. This is an appeal for solidarity but, above all, for justice" (see: <https://turndebttintofope.caritas.org/>).

The Holy Father adds, "I also ask for a firm commitment to respect for the dignity of human life from conception to natural death, so that each person can cherish his or her own life and all may look with hope

to a future of prosperity and happiness for themselves and for their children. Without hope for the future, it becomes hard for the young to look forward to bringing new lives into the world. Here, I would like once more to propose a concrete gesture that can help foster the culture of life, namely the elimination of the death penalty in all nations. This penalty not only compromises the inviolability of life but eliminates every human hope of forgiveness and rehabilitation.

"May 2025 be a year in which peace flourishes! A true and lasting peace that goes beyond quibbling over the details of agreements and human compromises. May we seek the true peace that is granted by God to hearts disarmed: hearts not set on calculating what is mine and what is yours; hearts that turn selfishness into readiness to reach out to others; hearts that see themselves as indebted to God and thus prepared to forgive the debts that oppress others; hearts that replace anxiety about the future with the hope that every individual can be a resource for the building of a better world" (see: <https://www.loyolapress.com/retreats/start/3minuteretreat-proclaim-peace/>).

**Tony Magliano** is an internationally syndicated Catholic social justice and peace columnist. He is available to speak at diocesan or parish gatherings. Tony can be reached at [tmag6@comcast.net](mailto:tmag6@comcast.net).



# Little Catholics' corner

Can you spot SEVEN differences in the picture?



Hello children,

In today's Gospel we hear the story of Jesus' miracle.

Wine was an important part of a wedding and Our Lady felt bad for the people when they ran out of wine.

When Mary hinted to Jesus to do something, Jesus said that the time wasn't ready yet. But do you know what?

Jesus did what His mother wanted anyway!

He told the servants to fill six big jars with water

and when they did it turned into wine! And not just ordinary wine, but the very best.

We can learn from this story that we should listen to our parents. Jesus is God and even He obeys His mother!

Here another thing: if you need Jesus to help you with anything, pray to His Blessed Mother to ask Him for it.

You know, He will listen to His Mother!

Till we meet again. Be good, okay?

Love  
Aunty Eliz

## Cana Wedding

### Jesus Turns Water into Wine



"Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." (John 2:10)

Match the words in the box with the correct definition

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ One who is employed to perform services for someone else.
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ A clear, odourless, and tasteless liquid, H<sub>2</sub>O.
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ A ceremony joining a man and woman as husband and wife.
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ An event that cannot be explained by the laws of nature.
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_ A beverage made of the fermented juice of grapes.
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_ To eat or drink a small amount.
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_ Low in cost; of poor quality; inferior
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_ Of the highest quality; One that surpasses all others.

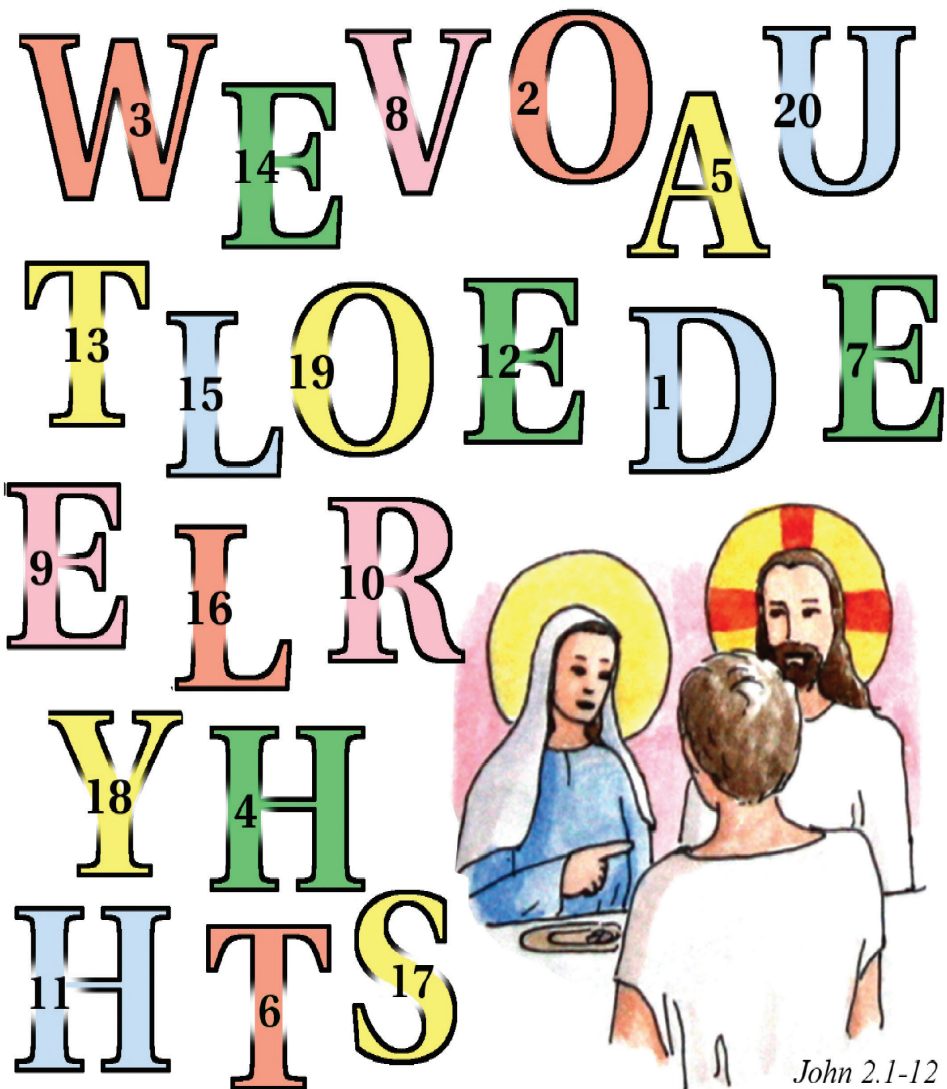


wedding  
wine

miracle  
servant

taste  
water

cheap  
best



John 2.1-12

Do you know what Mary said to the servants at the wedding feast at Cana?  
Sort out the letters by their numbers to find out!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12  
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Answer: Do whatever He tells you.





## Pope Francis encourages blind young people to be PILGRIMS OF HOPE

VATICAN: Pope Francis welcomed a group of children and young people from the Italian Union of Blind and Partially Sighted People in the Vatican's Clementine Hall on January 3, encouraging them to be pilgrims of hope during the 2025 Jubilee Year.

At the beginning of his Jan 3 audience, the Holy Father encouraged those present to repeat the "Pilgrims of Hope" theme of the 2025 Jubilee, getting louder and louder each time until he was satisfied with their enthusiastic response and congratulated them with a "bravo!"

Pope Francis then encouraged them to be "people on the journey" who always

have the desire to continue, "never stopping, never arriving, always with the desire to move forward."

In his talk, the pontiff recalled that a pilgrim is more than a traveller, because he has a particular goal: "A holy place, which draws him, which motivates him, which sustains him in his fatigue."

In the case of the ordinary Jubilee of 2025, he said, the goal is a Holy Door "that allows us to enter into new life, free from the slavery of sin, free to love and serve God and neighbour."

The pilgrim is also distinguished from the traveller, the pope said, because he is eager



"to encounter Jesus, to know him, to listen to his word, which gives meaning to life, which fills it with a distinct joy, a joy that does not remain 'outside,' on the surface, but fills the heart and warms it, a joy that is peace, goodness, tenderness."

Pope Francis then proposed examples of saints who show that "only Jesus can give this joy," citing Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, who is scheduled to be canonised this year; St Francis and St Clare of Assisi;

and St Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

The pontiff concluded by saying that pilgrims of hope are "children and young people who have encountered the Lord Jesus and have journeyed with him, and he is the hope for every man, for every woman, and also for the world."

By following this path, Pope Francis added, "we too will become small signs of hope for those we meet." **Nicolás de Cárdenas, CNA**

# YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE SYNOD – A CHURCH FOR ALL

**ZAMBIA:** In the spirit of Synod on Synodality, young people should be active participants in the mission and ministry of the Church. These were hopes expressed by the National Youth Coordinator for the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB).

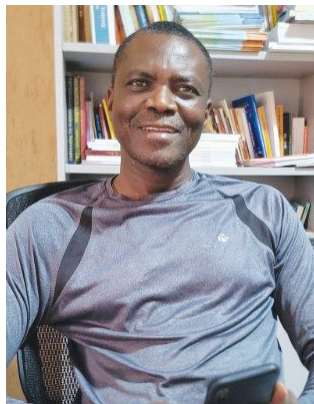
Fr Christopher Kunda *pic*, who also serves as Youth Coordinator for the Salesians of Don Bosco in Zambia, spoke about synodality and how it can have an impact on the lives of young people.

### Dialogue and implementing Synodality with the youth

Fr Kunda hopes that even if the Synod on Synodality sessions has concluded in the Vatican, the inspiration and new approaches enkindled will continue to inspire young people to be engaged in Church matters and ministry.

He also had a word for excluded young people, such as migrants and those who are less privileged, in prisoned, or who find themselves in difficult personal situations.

"As a Salesian working with young people, I hope that in the spirit of the Synod on Synodality, young people will be prioritised and inspired to become active participants in the Church's mission and ministry. With encouragement, young people can preach and minister to their peers and let the Gospel be heard worldwide," said Fr Kunda.



### The Synod as a challenge to young people

According to the national youth Coordinator, synodality means the Church does not speak in only one direction. Young people also need to play their part by embracing their responsibilities in the Church. What they do with their lives and how they live means that they, too, have a responsibility to care for themselves and others.

"Co-responsibility is that together with other young people, we can create this big movement that looks after the less privileged and cares for the earth, our common home," he said.

"In the Synodal Church, everyone has responsibility for what the Church is and what it is to become. This means that, by implication, we must all own up to what kind of Christian community we wish to create," Fr Kunda

emphasised. "No one group of Christians can claim to own the Church or have exclusive rights over it. The Synod reminds all of us that every member is essential. We all have different roles to play in the Church."

### Collaborative ministry at the service of youth

Fr Kunda emphasises collaboration and the call to responsibility in his interactions with Zambian young people. "Collaborative youth ministry means the process of bringing people on board because the mission is supposed to be a shared mission," he noted.

Young people, Fr Kunda emphasised, should also receive support as they navi-



Young Zambians at the 2023 World Youth Day in Lisbon.

gate their journey in life.

"The Synodal process is exactly this, that we walk with young people in their journey of faith, fears, dreams and anxieties," he explained.

He added that the Synod on Synodality is thus a welcome breath of fresh air that is bringing concepts such as those of inclusivity, especially for those considered less privileged and who are often marginalised. Some youth fall in this category, he noted.

It is also important for young people to be at the table where decision-making takes place and must be engaged at all levels of the Church. The onus is also on them, said Fr Kunda. "Young people

should learn new ways of being youth in a Synodal Church," he remarked.

In conclusion, Fr Kunda urged young people to embrace Synodality in their lives as a way of living and of being Church.

"Pope Francis has shown us that the Synodal Church is a listening Church," said the Salesian priest. "Young people are called to cultivate the virtues of listening and dialogue. They must be active participants and cannot afford to be left watching from the sidelines. They need to fold their sleeves and not wait to be invited into the Church. The Church needs their creativity in constructing a true Synodal Church that has inclusivity at its heart."

**Martha Mvula, Vatican News**



# SEEK25 highlights theology of the body as a remedy for modern identity crisis

WASHINGTON DC: The “theology of the body” was a central theme of the recent SEEK25 conference with several speakers drawing on the teachings of St John Paul II in their talks at the flagship Catholic event for young adults.

Speakers including Nebraska priest Fr Sean Kilcawley and Samantha Kelley, president of FIERCE Athlete, a Catholic women’s organisation that “promotes true and authentic femininity in sports,” called on young Catholics to dive deeper into their understanding of human sexuality and their identity as sons and daughters of God.

Several attendees at the conference, sponsored by Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), told *CNA* they had limited exposure to the theology of the body and had been surprised and moved by John Paul II’s teachings. From 1981 to 1985, the late pope devoted his Wednesday general audiences to catechesis affirming the dignity of life.

## A ‘nose-dive’ into John Paul II’s reflection on creation story

“This one probably hit me the hardest,” Meredith Cole, 20, a student at Virginia Tech, told *CNA* after Kelley’s talk, which was titled “Theology of the Body: Understanding Who You Are.”

Standing in line to meet the FIERCE president, Cole told *CNA* she felt Kelley “spoke to exactly what I needed to hear and what I’ve been praying with the past couple of days.”

“It’s important to know theology of the body because it teaches us about the way that God views us and views our bodies,” she said, noting that while she had some exposure to theology of the body through campus ministry at Virginia Tech, Kelley’s talk had “nose-dived into it.”

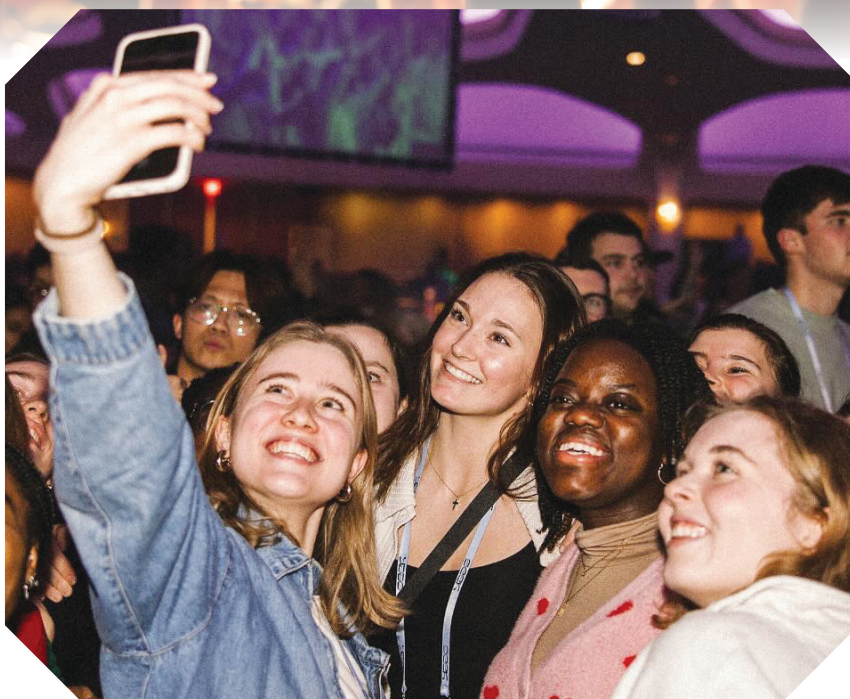
Kelley underscored the importance of first seeking a relationship with God to find fulfillment, a theme touched upon by Bishop Robert Brennan, Dr Matthew Breuninger, and Fr Chase Hilgenbrinck on the opening day of the conference.

She then delved into John Paul II’s teachings on human sexuality through the lens of the creation story.

“St John Paul II was really wise,” she said, “and he wrote this teaching, theology of the body, while he was in the throes of the sexual revolution, so there was a lot of confusion around masculine roles and feminine roles around sexuality, around relationships.”

“Sound a little bit familiar? We’re still dealing with this today,” she told a conference hall full of young Catholics, priests, and religious.

“This is not how it’s supposed to be. But in order to discover how it is supposed to be, we need to look back at God’s original plan,” she said.



Kelley drew from John Paul II’s teachings on the “original solitude” of man, which states that he “is alone” in the midst of creation, completely unique from the visible world and the other living creatures God had made.

In this original state of man, Kelley explained, “before Adam could be in relationship with another, he needed to be in perfect relationship with God.”

And when God determined Adam should not be alone and created Eve, Kelley pointed out, Eve’s first human experience was “being gazed at” by God and Adam, receiving their love.

Ultimately, Kelley explained, theology of the body is rooted in the way God originally created men and women.

“Men, you are external, you are called to give yourself to your bride, and so the height of your masculinity, what you’re called to, is sacrifice,” she said, adding that for women, “the height of our femininity is our receptiveness and our ability to bear life.”

As a former Division I athlete, Kelley recalled struggling with feeling feminine, since societal standards dictate that “if you are a girl and you like sports, you’re a tomboy.” But “it’s a lie,” she said: “Men, the fact that God created you as a man makes you masculine, period. Women, the fact that God created you as a woman makes you feminine, period.”

“We are God’s masterpiece,” she told the audience. “And so when you’re not the person that God created you to be, when you’re some facade of it, you distort God’s original plan.”

## ‘Original solitude’ as a way of healing

Fr Kilcawley spoke on “Living the Fullness of Love: The Healing Power of the Theology of the Body.”

Joshua Kamenitzer, a 19-year-old student at the University of Iowa, told *CNA* that before the conference, he had not been aware of John Paul II’s teachings.

“I thought it was really good,” Kamenitzer told *CNA*. “I had no expectations going into it. I thought it was going to be more about marriage, but then it ended up being more about just healing your relationship with God before you start doing anything outside of that.”

Fr Kilcawley had also focused on John Paul II’s idea of “original solitude,” telling the young Catholics gathered for his speech: “It should be enough that God delights in us.”

“That’s what that sense of original solitude means,” he said.

While Kelley’s talk focused on John Paul II’s teachings on sexuality and relationships between men and women, Fr Kilcawley approached the theology of the body from the perspective of his priesthood and how John Paul II’s teachings on identity helped him to heal childhood wounds.

Fr Kilcawley had lost his mother at a very young age and described struggling with his identity and failing to seek after God’s love, having struggled in his relationship with his father.

In the concept of original solitude, Fr Kilcawley explained that he became more fully aware of God’s “delight” in him, which helped him begin healing.

“In hearing about that concept and then letting it toss around in my heart, and knowing that it agitates me, that’s an invitation to healing,” he said, “knowing that it leads to Our Lord continuing to do his work over and over and over again.”

“At the end of the day,” the priest concluded, “the theology of the body is supposed to be lived out every day.”

The sold-out first-ever SEEK satellite event kicked off in the nation’s capital on January 2, with over 3,500 registered attendees, held at the same time as conferences in Salt Lake City and Cologne, Germany.

The two US locations for SEEK25 brought in a record-breaking 21,115 attendees hailing from all over the United States and Canada. Hundreds of priests attended, with a total of 617 in Salt Lake City and Washington, DC combined. **Madalaine Elhabbal, CNA**



(Photos/Focus Catholic facebook)



# Fr Dr Felix Wilfred — A visionary theologian and advocate for justice

INDIA: Fr Dr Felix Wilfred *pic*, a globally celebrated theologian, academic, and priest, passed away on January 7, 2024, at his residence in Chennai, India, following a heart attack. He would have turned 77 on Feb 21. His funeral was held on Jan 9 at St James Church, Puthenkadai, his native parish in Tamil Nadu's Kanyakumari district.

Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrão, President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) and the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), expressed deep sorrow over Fr Wilfred's passing. In a statement issued by

the CCBI General Secretariat, Cardinal Ferrão described him as "a beacon of intellectual and spiritual wisdom" whose profound contributions enriched the Church's mission across Asia and beyond.

"Prof Wilfred's life was a testament to his extraordinary dedication to theological scholarship, interreligious dialogue, and the promotion of justice and harmony," the Cardinal noted. He highlighted Fr Wilfred's leadership roles in esteemed institutions such as the Vatican International Theological Commission, the Indian Theological Association, and the FABC. "His profound insights, scholarly rigour, and compassionate pastoral approach have inspired theologians, clergy, and laypersons worldwide," he added.

Fr Wilfred's theological journey was remarkable for its breadth and depth. Born in 1948 in Puthenkadai to B. Arogyam, a school headmaster, and Mary Josephine, he excelled academically from an early age. After completing his schooling at 16, he moved to Rome in 1965 to study philosophy and theology at the Pontifical Urban University.



Ordained a priest in 1972, he furthered his education in Italian literature at the University of Perugia and French philosophy at the University of Caen-Normandy. As a student, he earned three gold medals for academic excellence and mastered multiple languages, including Latin, Greek, Italian, French, Spanish, and German.

Throughout his career, Fr Wilfred held key academic positions, including serving as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Chairman of the School of Philosophy and Religious Thought at the University of Madras. He also directed the Asian Centre for Cross-Cultural Studies (ACCS) in Chennai, which he founded

after his retirement. His academic engagements extended globally, with visiting professorships at institutions such as the University of Frankfurt, University of Nijmegen, Boston College, Ateneo de Manila University, Fudan University in China, and Trinity College, Dublin, where he held the Chair of Indian Studies as an ICCR Professor.

Fr Wilfred's contributions to theology and social justice were transformative. He was a staunch advocate for liberation theology, particularly in the Asian context, and worked tirelessly for the empowerment of Dalit Christians. Bishop Raja Rao of Vijayawada mourned his passing, calling him "a tremendous loss to the Church in India and the theological fraternity worldwide." Fr Philip Sudhakar of the Dindigul diocese described him as "a prophet of our times" who instilled liberation theology in Tamil Nadu seminarians.

A prolific writer, Fr Wilfred authored numerous books and articles, with translations in multiple languages. He edited *The Oxford Handbook of Asian Christianity* (2014) and his final work, *Religious Identities and the Global South: Porous*

## China's oldest priest dies at 104

### A life of faith amid 25 years of persecution

BEIJING: China's oldest priest has passed away, leaving behind a legacy of brave adherence to the faith of the Catholic Church in the face of persecution.

Fr Joseph Guo Fude, SVD, died on December 30, 2024, two months from what would have been his 105th birthday. He was one of the few remaining Catholic priests in China who had been ordained prior to the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

"Fr Guo is a symbol of the courageous faith and extraordinary suffering of China's Catholics," said Benedict Rogers, human rights activist and author of *The China Nexus: Thirty Years in and Around the Chinese Communist Party's Tyranny*.

Rogers noted that although the priest had "spent a quarter of a century in prison," he continued serving and ministering to his people through his 90s. "He treated prison not as the harsh injustice that it was but as an opportunity to grow in faith, spirituality, and prayer."

According to *AsiaNews*, which reported the Chinese cleric's passing, Fr Guo spent a total of 25 years in prison during his lifetime.

"Looking back on my life," Fr Guo reportedly wrote following the occasion of his 100th birthday, "prison became a place where I could reflect, pray, and grow spiritually ... My imprisonment gave me the strength to face life's challenges and continue to serve God, knowing that every trial was part of His divine plan. My experience in prison taught me that earthly riches are ephemeral, while faith in God is the only true wealth."

Born in February 1920, Fr Guo was ordained to the priesthood in 1947. He was first imprisoned in 1959 during China's ideological reform movement for "subversive activity against the state." He was imprisoned a second time from 1967 to 1979 on espionage charges and again in 1982 "for spreading the faith," according to *AsiaNews*.

"As we reflect on Fr Guo's remarkable and inspirational life," Rogers added, "let us take this opportunity to pray for the persecuted Church in China, advocate for religious freedom, and be guided by Fr Guo's example of persistent, determined, steadfast, and defiant faith in the face of brutal repression."

"Fr Guo's story is typical of Catholic clerics

## MEMORIAM



in loving memory of  
**PAMELA  
PALAKIRSHNAN AMBROSE**  
18 JULY 1981 - 18 DECEMBER 2024

For enquiries, please contact:  
Email: [memoriam@herald.com.my](mailto:memoriam@herald.com.my)  
Tel: 03-2026 8291

Dear relatives & friends,  
The ashes of our beloved Pam will be interred at the Bukit Mertajam Cemetery after a service at St Anne's Church on Saturday, 25 January 2025 at 9am.  
To commemorate Pam's 40th Day of Eternal Life, you are invited to a lunch on Sunday, 26 January 2025 at the Grand Happiness Restaurant at 12 noon.  
Kindly RSVP by 19 Jan  
Neubert 017-8783949  
Russell 016-4800004

*Borders and Novel Paths* (2021), underscored his enduring engagement with contemporary theological issues. He also served as editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Asian Christianity*, a peer-reviewed publication indexed in SCOPUS.

His pastoral vision complemented his scholarly impact. Fr Wilfred wrote in *Indian Currents* on Nov 14, 2022, "If change and renewal are to happen, the leaders should go beyond titles of Beatitude, Eminence, and Grace; discern and identify, as is done in the papal election, the bishop who has the qualities of leadership for the times."

In 2023, he delivered the prestigious Duffy Lectures at Boston College, further solidifying his status as a leading figure in contemporary theology and cross-cultural studies. Fr Wilfred was also slated to speak at the March 2024 International Conference on Mission in Rome, highlighting his continued relevance in theological discourse.

Cardinal Ferrão emphasised the lasting legacy of Fr Wilfred's groundbreaking work in bridging cultural and religious divides. "The Church in India owes a profound debt of gratitude to Prof Wilfred. His dedication to academic excellence, mentorship of students, and prolific writings leave an enduring legacy that will inspire future generations," he said.

Fr Dr Felix Wilfred's life and work exemplified a commitment to fostering dialogue, advocating justice, and enriching the theological landscape. His passing marks the end of an era, but his legacy continues to inspire and guide those who follow in his footsteps. **Agencies**

### 22nd Anniversary In Loving Memory of



**Alphonso Sta Maria  
(Sunny)**

**Departed: 24-01-2003**

Deeply missed and fondly remembered by loving wife, children, their spouses and grandchildren.

*Blessed are  
those who  
mourn, for  
they shall be  
comforted.*

Matthew 5:4

## NOTICE

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who lived during the Mao years," Hudson Institute policy expert Nina Shea said. "They all seem to have spent many years in prisons and labour camps and suffered greatly."

As for the current state of Vatican-China affairs, Shea recently reported on the plight of 10 bishops who have faced persecution at the hands of the CCP. Injustices in the report include "indefinite detention without due process, disappearances, open-ended security police investigations, banishments from their dioceses, or other impediments to their episcopal ministries including threats, surveillance, interrogation, and so-called reeducation." **Madalaine Elhabbal, CNA**





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2025 PILGRIMAGES

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### 13D Franciscan Shrines

VENICE - PADOVA - BOLOGNA - FLORENCE - PISA - SIENNA - LA VERNA - ASSISI - LORETO - LANCIANO - SAN GIOVANNI - MANOPELLO - ROME

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Basilica of St Antonio, Padova
- Duomo St Maria del Fiore, Florence
- Leaning Tower of Pisa, Pisa
- Basilica of St Francis of Assisi, Assisi
- Shrine of Padre Pio, San Giovanni
- Papal Audience
- St Peter's Basilica, Rome

**16 NOV**  
**FRIAR GERALD TERENCE**

**RM 14,300 p/p**

### 14D Marian Shrines

ROME - LOURDES - LOYOLA - LIMPIAS - SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA - PORTO - FATIMA - SANTAREM - LISBON

**25 MAY\***  
**FR PAUL SIA**

**07 SEP\*** **HIGHLIGHTS**

**12 OCT** Visit 2 of the Most Holiest Catholic Sites

- St Peter's Basilica
- Tomb of St James the Apostle

**26 OCT**

**RM 15,900 p/p**

### 11D Our Lady of Knock

DUBLIN - CLONMACNOISE - KNOCK - BUSHMILLS - BELFAST - STANSTED - WALSINGHAM - CANTERBURY - LONDON

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Dublin Castle
- Our Lady of Knock Shrine
- Our Lady of Walsingham
- Canterbury Cathedral

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## Jubilee pilgrimage centres in Malaysia

(Pic/St Teresa Oratory, Sungai Merah, Sibü)

**Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur**

- Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, KL
- Church of the Immaculate Conception, PD
- Church of Jesus Caritas, Kepong
- Church of St Francis of Assisi, Cheras
- Church of St Thomas, Kuantan

**Diocese of Penang**

- Chapel of Annai Velangani, Ipoh
- Church of the Assumption, Penang
- Church of the Holy Name of Mary, Permatang Tinggi

**Diocese of Malacca Johore**

- Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, JB
- Church of St Louis, Kluang
- Church of St Mary, Ayer Salak

**Archdiocese of Kuching**

- Cathedral of St Joseph, Kuching
- Catholic Memorial and Pilgrimage Centre, Mt Singai, Bau
- Church of St Peter, Padungan
- Gethsemane Pilgrimage Centre, Bunan
- Mt Hosanna Pilgrimage Centre, Sri Aman

**Diocese of Miri**

- Cathedral of St Joseph, Miri
- Church of St Anthony, Bintulu
- Church of St Edmund, Limbang

**Diocese of Sibü**

- St. Anthony's Heritage Centre, Sarikei
- Sacred Heart Chapel, Sg. Bawan Kanowit
- St Teresa Oratory, Sungei Merah

**Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu**

- Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, KK
- Church of St Michael, Penampang
- Church of St Peter, Kudat
- Church of St Peter Claver, Ranau
- Church of the Holy Rosary, Limbahau

**Diocese of Sandakan**

- Cathedral of St Mary, Sandakan

**Diocese of Keningau**

- Cathedral of St Francis Xavier, Keningau
- Church of St Anthony, Tenom
- Church of St Peter Bundu, Kuala Penyu
- Church of St Theresa, Tambunan
- Church of the Holy Spirit, Sook
- Holy Family Retreat Centre, Nulu Sosopon
- Keningau Retreat Centre, Tatal

## FEAST DAY CELEBRATION

### 7 - 16 February, 2025

## PILGRIMS OF HOPE

HOPE IN GOD, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE (MT 19:26)

# 100

CELEBRATING  
1928 - 2028

**THEME : PILGRIMS OF HOPE**

Hope in God, all things are possible (Matthew 19:26)

**கருப்பொருள் :** எதிர்நோக்கின் திருப்பயணிகள்  
மனிதனால் இது இயலாது. ஆனால், கடவுளால் எல்லாம் இயலும் (மத்தேயு 19:26)

**TEMA : ZIARAH HARAPAN**

Berharap kepada Tuhan, segala sesuatu adalah tidak mustahil (Matius 19:26)

主题：对天主怀有希望一切皆有可能（玛窦福音 19:26）

7 FEB-FRI	8 FEB-SAT	9 FEB-SUN	10 FEB-MON	11 FEB-TUE	12 FEB-WED	13 FEB-THU	14 FEB-FRI	15 FEB-SAT	16 FEB-SUN
<p><b>6:00AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>6:30AM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>7:00PM</b> Rosary</p> <p><b>7:30PM</b> Adoration &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>8:00PM</b> Mass (Multilingual)</p> <p><b>SUB-THEME</b> Mary's Hope in God's Salvation இறைவனின் மீட்பு திட்டத்தில் மரியாவின் நம்பிக்கை Harapan Maria dalam Karya Penyelamatan Tuhan 玛利亚对天主救赎的希望</p>	<p><b>6:00AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>6:30AM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>5:00PM</b> Rosary</p> <p><b>5:30PM</b> OLPH Novena &amp; Benediction</p> <p><b>6:00PM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>SUB-THEME</b> Mary's Unwavering Faith in God இறைவனில் மரியாவின் நம்பிக்கை Iman Maria kepada Tuhan yang Tidak Goyah 玛利亚对天主坚定的信仰</p>	<p><b>6:00AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>6:30AM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>7:20AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>8:00AM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>9:20AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>10:00AM</b> Mass (T)</p> <p><b>11:50AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>12:30PM</b> Mass (BM)</p> <p><b>5:20PM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>6:00PM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>SUB-THEME</b> Mary, Queen of Our Home மரியா, நமது இல்லங்களின் அரசி Maria, Ratu Rumah Kita 玛利亚, 我们家庭的女王</p>	<p><b>6:00AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>6:30AM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>7:00PM</b> Rosary</p> <p><b>7:30PM</b> Adoration &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>8:00PM</b> Mass (Multilingual)</p> <p><b>SUB-THEME</b> Mary, Mother of Nature மரியா இயற்கையின் தாய் Maria, Ibu Alam Semesta 玛利亚, 自然的慈母</p>	<p><b>9:30AM</b> Rosary</p> <p><b>10:00AM</b> Adoration &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>10:30AM</b> Mass (Multilingual)-Anointing of the sick</p> <p><b>7:00PM</b> Rosary</p> <p><b>7:30PM</b> Adoration &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>8:00PM</b> Mass (Multilingual)</p> <p><b>SUB-THEME</b> Mary, Mother of Mercy (Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes) World Day of the Sick மரியா இரக்கத்தின் தாய் (லூர்து அன்னை திருவிழா) உலக நோயாளிகளின் தினம் Maria, Bunda Kerahiman (Pesta Our Lady of Lourdes) Hari Orang Sakit Sedunia 玛利亚, 慈悲的母亲   (露德圣母瞻礼) 世界病人</p>	<p><b>6:00AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>6:30AM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>7:00PM</b> Rosary</p> <p><b>7:30PM</b> Adoration &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>8:00PM</b> Mass (Multilingual)</p> <p><b>SUB-THEME</b> Mary, Mother and Mediatrix of Grace மரியா, அருளின் நடுவர் Maria, Ibu dan Rahmat 玛利亚, 恩宠的母亲和 中保</p>	<p><b>6:00AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>6:30AM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>7:00PM</b> Rosary</p> <p><b>7:30PM</b> Adoration &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>8:00PM</b> Mass (Multilingual)</p> <p><b>SUB-THEME</b> Mary Pondered and Cherished All Things in Her Heart மரியா அனைத்தையும் தம் உள்ளத்தில் இருத்திச் சிந்தித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தார் Maria yang merenung dan Menghargai Segala di dalam Hatinya 玛利亚默存和珍惜一切在她的心中</p>	<p><b>6:00AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>6:30AM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>7:00PM</b> Rosary</p> <p><b>7:30PM</b> Adoration &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>8:00PM</b> Mass (Multilingual)</p> <p><b>SUB-THEME</b> Mary, Servant of the Lord மரியா இறைவனின் பணியாளி Maria, Hamba Tuhan 玛利亚, 主的仆人</p>	<p><b>10:00AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>10:30AM</b> Mass for Children (Multilingual)</p> <p><b>3:00PM</b> Mass (Myanmar)</p> <p><b>5:00PM</b> Rosary</p> <p><b>5:30PM</b> Adoration &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>6:00PM</b> Mass followed by procession thereafter Benediction (Multilingual)</p> <p><b>SUB-THEME</b> Mary, New Ark of the Covenant மரியா உடன்படிக்கையின் பேழை Maria, Tabut Perjanjian Baru 玛利亚, 新约柜</p>	<p><b>6:00AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>6:30AM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>7:20AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>8:00AM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>9:20AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>10:00AM</b> Mass (T)</p> <p><b>11:50AM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>12:30PM</b> Mass (BM)</p> <p><b>2:50PM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>3:30PM</b> Mass (Mand)</p> <p><b>5:20PM</b> Rosary &amp; Novena</p> <p><b>6:00PM</b> Mass (E)</p> <p><b>SUB-THEME</b> Mary, Woman of the Eucharist மரியா நற்கருணையின் பெண்மணி Maria, Wanita Ekaristi 玛利亚, 圣体的人</p>