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TERHAD

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Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Eph. 1:3



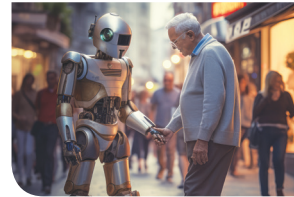
Bishop Cornelius celebrates 75th birthday, reflects on milestones

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Heartbeat of harmony

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Five takes on what the Pope said about AI

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KHARTOUM: The Catholic Bishops of Sudan and South Sudan are pleading for an end to the horrific war tearing apart Sudan.

"The fabric of Sudanese society has been torn apart, with people shocked, traumatised, and disbelieving about the level of violence and hatred."

"We cannot distance ourselves" from what is happening in Sudan since war erupted in the country in April 2023 say the Catholic Bishops of Sudan who describe "horrendous war crimes and human rights abuses committed by both sides."

In a statement issued by the Sudan and South Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference following a meeting that concluded on July 6 in Juba, the bishops appeal for a stop to the war, for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, advocacy for peace and preparation for post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and trauma healing.

"This is not simply a war between two generals," the statement continues, noting that "the military has inextricably embedded itself in the economic life of the country, and both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) each have a network of wealthy elite Sudanese and international individuals and cartels who benefit from their control of various sectors of the economy."

Apart from what the bishops describe as "horrendous war crimes and human rights abuses committed by both sides", they highlight how the people are suffering a catastrophic humanitarian disaster in a context in which "there is not even a clue to the light of peace dialogue that can bring hope for the Sudanese."

Expressing their concern that the leaders of the warring sides are not ready for peace, the prelates say the "time has come for them to 'think of the people and nation' noting that 'the more people get scattered, the more hatred grows among various Sudanese ethnic groups.'"

Yet, there appears to be no end in sight of the escalating conflict between the SAF and the RSF.

General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of the SAF, has resolutely closed the door to



(Vatican file photo)

dialogue to end the civil war.

"We are continuing in this battle until victory, and I repeat once again that we will not negotiate with an enemy who attacks us and occupies our lands," said General Al-Burhan as he visited his troops in areas surrounding the capital Khartoum that his army has seized.

The Sudanese capital has been the epicentre of fierce fighting between the SAF and the RSF for over a year.

Al-Burhan has often reiterated his refusal to bow to international pressure and sit at a negotiation table in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

According to *Fides* news agency, he claims that "we will not go to a negotiating table where they (the mediators) want to drag us by our ears, and we will not go to negotiations while the enemy still occupies our homes and plunders our wealth. We will not go to negotiations before the enemy leaves, and they (the mediators) must force them to do so if they want us to negotiate with them."

The humanitarian toll of the conflict is staggering. The RSF's new territorial sieges have forced at least 55,000 people to flee Sinja, the capital of Sennar.

According to the United Nations, at least

10 million Sudanese have been displaced since the war began in April 2023 and they often find themselves trapped in areas that the two groups are fighting over.

This includes approximately 80 people who have sought refuge in the Catholic mission of Dar Mariam in the Khartoumian district of al-Shajara.

This area, located near an armed forces base, has been at the heart of intense fighting and the refugees taking shelter there are suffering dire conditions without sufficient access to clean water and food. Attempts to free them have been unsuccessful. — *Agencies*

Why are there no papal audiences during July?

VATICAN: As every year during summer vacation time, the Vatican does not schedule any public, private, or "special" audiences for Pope Francis in the Vatican, including the general audience on Wednesdays.

The Vatican usually suspends such audiences on only two occasions: during the month of July and the week when the

pontiff carries out his spiritual retreat at the Vatican.

The Holy See's press office announced in a statement that the Holy Father's agenda will resume on August 7.

However, during this usual period of rest, Pope Francis will lead the *Angelus* on Sundays from the window of the Apostolic Palace of the Vatican.

Although the Holy Father doesn't spend the summer at the papal residence in Castel Gandolfo as popes have traditionally done, this year, as confirmed by the master of papal liturgical ceremonies, he will have a greater rest than in previous years.

Pope Francis will not preside at any public Mass for eight weeks, from July

8 to Sept 1.

After this well-deserved rest, Pope Francis will travel to Asia and Oceania for 11 days in September and will also visit Belgium and Luxembourg at the end of the same month. In October, the second and final session of the Synod of Synodality will take place in Rome. — *CNA*

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COMMENTARY

I love this work, but it's killing me

Clergy, chaplains, and other spiritual leaders are the bedrock of their communities. They celebrate our most joyous occasions, offer comfort in our darkest hours, and guide us with wisdom and compassion. Yet, the immense personal toll of their sacred work often goes unacknowledged. The burnout, trauma, and health challenges that spiritual leaders endure are significant, and their struggles deserve our attention and support.

The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the pressures on clergy, exposing them to heightened levels of stress and burnout. The increased polarisation within society has further exacerbated these challenges, leading to a significant number of pastors contemplating resignation. In the United States alone, over a third of pastors have considered leaving their vocations. However, this crisis is not entirely new; it has deep roots extending far beyond the pandemic's reach.

Research reveals a longstanding pattern of mental health struggles and occupational hazards for spiritual leaders. As psychology researchers who provide psychotherapy to spiritual leaders, teach seminarians, and study their experiences, we have seen these realities firsthand. The experiences of clergy and chaplains across various settings, including healthcare, education, and community services, are diverse. While many spiritual leaders thrive in their calling, a significant number grapple with serious risks.

One of the most profound challenges is the sense of "calling" that defines a spiritual leader's identity. This deep commitment, while noble, often leads to the sacrifice of personal time and well-being. The moral duty inherent in their work can make it difficult to set boundaries, causing spiritual leaders to overextend themselves. The plethora of responsibilities they bear — ranging from fundraising and rituals to public communication and facilities management — further complicates their lives.

Our research underscores the extreme and traumatic stress levels that spiritual leaders face, particularly those working in under-resourced congregations or high-stress environments like hospitals and correctional facilities. Years ago, one of us (Steve) participated in a study on spiritual leaders' well-being. Shockingly, nearly one-third of the sample exhibited clinical symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) — a rate surpassing that of military personnel post-deployment. The religious organisation that commissioned the study hesitated to publish these alarming findings.

This pattern has persisted. At the Daniels Institute, our team found similar results among Muslim, Jewish, and Christian leaders. Approximately one-third scored above the clinical cutoff for PTSD

symptoms linked to work-related stress. Clergy shared harrowing experiences, such as aggression from congregants and direct exposure to severe suffering. One poignant account involved being called to a home amid a domestic conflict or immediately after a suicide.

Spiritual leaders often feel perpetually on call, facing immense stress from community disagreements and, at times, threats to their financial security or personal safety. Conversely, a supportive congregation can significantly alleviate this burden, highlighting the importance of communal care for those who care for us.

The pandemic brought these issues into sharper focus. Our team facilitated online support groups for chaplains worldwide, attracting over 250 participants. These sessions revealed the profound struggles chaplains faced, from not being recognised as essential personnel to shouldering unprecedented responsibilities. They endeavoured to be at the bedside of dying patients and used technology to bridge the gap for grieving families, all while grappling with fears of infection. These challenges stirred deep existential and spiritual questions, leading some to experience moral injury — a profound inner conflict arising from navigating impossible choices.

In one particularly heart-wrenching session, a chaplain joined from her hospital bed, having contracted COVID-19. Her laboured breathing underscored her dedication to her vocation, even in her final days. Her death the following week left the group in collective mourning, illuminating the emotional toll this work exacts.

These support groups highlighted the necessity for spiritual leaders to have confidential spaces where they can seek support and share the complexities of their work. Despite nearly three-quarters of chaplains considering leaving their roles recently, 98 per cent described their work as deeply meaningful. As one chaplain poignantly stated, "I love this work, but it's killing me."

We must recognise and address the heavy burdens borne by our spiritual leaders. We must offer them the same compassion and support they extend to us. By acknowledging their struggles and providing the necessary resources, we can help ensure that they continue their vital work with the strength and resilience needed to serve their communities faithfully. — **By Steven Sandage and Laura Captari, NCR**

● **Steven Sandage is professor of the psychology of religion and theology at Boston University. Laura Captari is a clinical and research psychologist at The Daniels Institute, Boston University.**

This is an adapted version. To read the full article, visit: <https://shorturl.at/axgTF>

How do we respond to the mission?

The call to mission has always been one of the marks of the Catholic Church i.e., the Church is Apostolic. This was the mandate given by Jesus to His disciples just before He ascended into heaven. Over the centuries, we see this zeal for apostolic mission when we read of the various saints who went everywhere to proclaim the Gospel, penetrating almost every corner of the earth. In fact, after every Mass, this is what we are told to do.

When the Mass was celebrated in Latin, after the final blessing is given the words "Ite, missa est" which literally means "Go, it is sent." The English translation that we use today is "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your lives." In both cases, we can see some elements of mission. The phrase "it is sent" can be taken as sending out the Word of Christ through us since we have partaken of the Table of the Word and of the Eucharist. After receiving both of these, we are supposed to go in peace and to glorify the Lord with the way we live. This begs the question; do we truly go in peace and glorify the Lord with our way of living? If we are honest with ourselves, we know that sometimes we don't leave the Mass in peace and we most certainly don't glorify the Lord by our lives.

In today's Gospel, Jesus sent the Twelve Apostles in pairs to pave the way for His mission. Their mission was, first and foremost, to preach repentance and then only anointing and curing the sick. There are two important elements present



here. The first is that they were sent out in pairs. This is important for mission because one can provide the necessary support to the other and vice versa. Both can look out for each other to ensure that both do not stray from their mission or their path. Going out on mission alone can be dangerous even if one's faith is strong because, on our own, we might not be able to withstand temptations or challenges that come our way. When in pairs, both can help each other keep their peace and ensure that whatever each other do, it will be done for the glory of God and not for oneself. However, if both are to fall, then it will be disastrous. This is why both parties need to be constantly nourished by prayer and God's grace.

The second element is the preaching of repentance. This is the core mission of both St John the Baptist as well as Jesus, to repent from sin and to go back

to God. If a person refuses to repent, how can they receive God's love and mercy? It is only when we repent of our sins that we see our need for God. Only after we have repented that we can receive the source of life, which is Christ. This holds true for us as well. During the Mass, we repent of our sins through the words of the Confiteor followed by the Gloria, which is the glorifying of God's actions in our lives. This allows us to receive the Eucharist, the source and summit of our Christian living. If we ourselves are not willing to repent, how do we preach repentance to others or help them to see the need to repent.

The mission that has been entrusted to the Apostles is now given to us — to preach repentance and the Word of God. How many of us take this mission seriously and to heart? Whenever we think of the word mission, we only think of priests

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings

with Fr Philip Tay, OCD

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Readings: Amos 7: 12-15;
Ephesians 1: 3-14 (or 1:3-10);
Gospel: Mark 6: 7-13

or religious or sometimes lay people who go on missionary work. But that is a very narrow perception of mission. The current Synodal theme of Communion, Participation and Mission should provide the impetus for all of us to go on mission and not just a select few. However, if our lives do not reflect what we preach, then the words that we say and the things that we do will not mean anything. There are so many so-called influencers now trying to spread messages of hope and love but those are either morally driven or to gain popularity for themselves. We, on the other hand, do it for the glory of God.

Let us then resolve to always better our lives through the repentance of sin and to always have the peace of God in our hearts, especially after hearing the Word of God and receiving the Eucharist. After Mass, we are sent to carry these two things into the lives of those whom we meet, bringing them the joy of Christ and to bring glory to God by our way of living. That is what we are called to do.



KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

July

- 16-17 Clergy Monthly Recollection
- 18 Meeting – Archdiocesan Finance
- 20 Diaconate Ordination of Bro Jonathan Andrew Rao – Church of St Jude, Rawang
- 20 Confirmation – Church of Jesus Caritas, Kepong
- 21 Confirmation – Church of St Joseph, Sentul
- 21 Confirmation – Church of Visitation, Seremban
- 22 Meeting – AOHD Board
- 27 MCCBCHST Annual General Meeting
- 27 Confirmation – Church of St Thomas More, Subang Jaya
- 27 Confirmation – Church of the Risen Christ, KL



Launch of PROTEC 5 and the Season of Creation

Dear People of God,

Protect Our Earth, Protect Our Children (PROTEC) campaign Year Five – Use Less Paper and Wood
Season of Creation 2024 – To Hope and Act with Creation

Year 2023 was the hottest year on record with average global temperatures hitting over 1.4°C above preindustrial levels. This is a dangerous development, considering that the Paris Agreement aimed to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C, a limit we are likely to reach temporarily within these five years.

The world is simply not reducing greenhouse gas emissions fast enough, while destroying precious carbon sinks such as our natural forests. One of the leading causes of deforestation is timber logging.

Some 420 million hectares of forest were lost through deforestation between 1990 and 2020, and we are losing about

10 million hectares every year. When we kill our forests, we destroy the lungs of the planet, worsen global warming, kill precious biodiversity and threaten the survival of billions of people who rely on forests to live. We have to stop deforestation now. One thing everyone can easily do is to reduce their consumption of paper and wood.

We are now coming into the fifth year of the Protect Our Earth, Protect Our Children (PROTEC) campaign with the theme: **Use Less Paper and Wood**. This theme runs for one year from September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025. **PROTEC Year Five will be launched on September 1 in Kuala Lumpur** with Mass. We thank His Grace, Archbishop Julian Leow and the Creation Justice Commission of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur for hosting the launch events. This launch will coincide with that of the 2024 Season of Creation (Sept 1 to Oct 4) with the theme: *To hope and act with creation*.

The Episcopal Commission for Creation Justice of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei earnestly calls on **all the faithful in all dioceses to fully celebrate the PROTEC Campaign Year Five and the Season of Creation 2024**. While the human race has done much harm to creation, let us hold fast in faith to this promise that “where sin abounds, grace greater abounds” (Romans 5:20). May the grace of the Holy Spirit spur us to hope and may our hope bear fruit in loving and committed action to build God’s kingdom of love, justice and peace amidst a world in crisis.

Yours in Christ

Rt Rev Bishop Joseph Hii, DD
President

**Episcopal Commission for Creation
Justice of Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei**

July 1, 2024



PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Cardinal Sebastian Francis

July

- 11-17 Visitation of Relic of Padre Pio – National Shrine of St Padre Pio to various churches of Penang Diocese
- 18 Flag Raising & Mass for Volunteers at 6.30pm – Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam
- 19 Inter-denominational Christian Prayer Service at 12.00pm
- 19-20 Sybil Kathigasu Musical Opera – Segi University Hall, Kota Damansara, Kuala Lumpur
- 19-28 Novena and Feast of St Joachim and Anne – Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam



MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

July

- 15-18 MJD Clergy Outing
- 23 Third Caritas DEA meeting via Zoom
- 23 Meet – South Johor Vicariate Pastoral Council, Church of the Immaculate Conception, Johor Bahru
- 24 Meeting – Caritas MJD Exco, Caritas MJD Centre
- 27 Mass – St Anne’s Chapel, Pamol Estate, Kluang



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #180

F12
MJD NEWS
UPDATES

Greetings dear friends of MJD,

Flash floods, by-elections, sedition reports and protests against subsidy cuts make the scene. Teachers are choosing to retire early. The JB Causeway celebrates its 100th birthday, while congestion remains a perennial problem. Melaka was packed for the *Jom Heboh* Weekend. There is no hike in electricity charges. The Ministry of Education “opened its doors” for the public to give their input on the next education development plan. The Pope calls for peace, for more peacemakers and the worldwide release of war prisoners.

“Dishonest” Times: Hide the smallest things. Or exploit it! It is difficult to know what or who is truthful. When truthfulness goes by the wayside so does veracity, sincerity, authenticity, credibility, trustworthiness, reality and frankness. It is a fact that the best way to destroy a nation is not by weapons of war but by spreading distrust among its citizens.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said “The simple step of the courageous individual is to not take part in the lie. Truthfulness begins at home with our wives, husbands, children, neighbours and fellow workers, to shut the door on untruthfulness in those environments.” Dishonesty and outright lying are now flooding our media and news outlets, conditioning us to get used to it. Why this onslaught on truth? Plato answered: A true lover of knowledge strives for truth. Thomas Aquinas said: lovers of truth desire to bring about peace, joy, benevolence and mercy; It is selflessness for the common good. Peacemakers desire to create order, unity, the joy it creates, and to possess a compassionate heart and practise generosity. But truth gets kicked around, twisted and ignored because it demands labour, reverence and respect. There are misled people, dishonest people and people with no moral compass. Shakespeare added “Truth teaches reality and requires integrity. We have many ostriches with their heads buried in the sand.

A Thought For The Week: Complaints!

Maya Angelou’s grandma ran a general store and one thing that riled her was people complaining. They’d complain about the heat, the cold and a myriad of other issues Maya’s grandmother thought trivial. Whenever that occurred Maya’s grandmother would wait till the complainer left the store, call Maya over to her and say, “Sister, did you hear what Brother So-and-So or Sister Much-to-Do complained about? Sister, there are people who went to sleep all over the world last night, poor and rich and white and black, but they will never wake again. And those dead folks would give anything, anything at all, for just five minutes of this weather that person was grumbling about.

Lesson from the grandmother: Watch yourself about complaining. What you’re supposed to do when you don’t like a thing, is change it. If you can’t change it, change the way you think about it. Don’t complain.

Announcements For The Week:

1. The diocese congratulates **Msrgr Peter Ng and Fr Thomas Chong** who will be celebrating their **Silver Jubilee** (25 years) as priests; and **Fr Anthony Ng and Fr Lucas Ho** will be **Golden Jubilarians** (50 years) this year. More info next.
2. The **Regional Pastoral Assembly 2024**, popularly known as **PMPC 5** draws near. Delegates from the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, Diocese of Penang and the Diocese of Malacca Johore, numbering 500 are expected at MAJODI Centre from August 25- 27. It continues to be a time to listen, learn and be led by the Holy Spirit.
3. The **Mangrove Planting Project** initiated by Caritas-CJC MJD with the Nature Society, will see 49 participants sponsoring and planting 450 saplings at Kukup.
4. **Healing Seminar:** “By His wounds you have been healed”, 1 Pt 2:24 with Jude Antoine, is organised by the Charismatic Prayer Group of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, JB. Dates: July 20-21. Registration Fee is RM50. For

more info, contact: Fidelis 019-7488389 or Magdalene 019-7541409

5. Spiritual Warfare in the Last Days organised by the Church of St Louis, Kluang, for young people to learn about new diabolic influences. The session in English is on Saturday, August 3. The contact person is Maria 016-7787992. The session in Mandarin is on Sunday August 4. The contact person is Annie 016-7703138.

6. In an initiative to raise funds for the new church, the youth of the Church of St Theresa, Masai upcycled the old pillars unto crucifixes. Priced at RM35, each crucifix bears witness to the enduring spirit of devotion. As you hold this relic in your hands, you’re holding a piece of the church’s legacy.

To purchase the crucifix, please contact: Benedict 017-8650559, Joanna Kate 012-7886503 or Sharvinder 010-9282588

QnQ? Q asks: What is the leadership style of Jesus?

On May 5 and 6, the Leadership Conference promoted by Alpha took place in London. Pope Francis was present through a video message in which he explained leadership according to Jesus.

- 1) True leadership is centred on service.
- 2) It leads towards God the Father.
- 3) It is personal but not exclusive.
- 4) It is fruitful: it knows how to raise more leaders.
- 5) It works in a network.
- 6) It brings the tenderness and mercy of God.

See the Holy Spirit at work: “In the inner stillness where meditation leads, the Spirit secretly anoints the soul and heals our deepest wounds.” — St John of the Cross

Something to tickle you: God does not give us everything we want, but He does fulfil His promises, leading us along the best and straightest paths to Himself.” — Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Bishop Bernard Paul

Bishop Cornelius celebrates 75th birthday, reflects on milestones

KENINGAU: Bishop Cornelius Piong of the Diocese of Keningau celebrated his 75th birthday at the Holy Family Pilgrimage Centre in Nulu Sosopon on July 1. Cardinal Sebastian Francis praised Bishop Cornelius for his extensive experience, describing him as “more than just the Bishop of Keningau; he is a father, grandfather, leader, and *penghulu*. His golden experience will help the Diocese of Keningau become a synodal diocese.”

The celebration also marked the commencement of the 114th meeting of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei. The event was attended by notable figures, including the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski.

The festivities began with a Eucharistic celebration presided over by Bishop Cornelius and concelebrated by fellow bishops and clergy from Keningau, Kota Kinabalu and his classmates at College General, Penang. During the Mass, attended by more than 3,000 people, Bishop Cornelius expressed gratitude, stating, “Thank you all for your presence. This is not a celebration for me but a celebration for all of us.”

Reflecting on his milestones, Bishop Cornelius humorously remarked, “I myself did not expect to reach the age of 75, but I believe God allows and always enables me to be His instrument.” As the first Bumiputera bishop in Sabah, he recalled the 25th anniversary of the Diocese of Keningau in



The bishops and clergy after the Eucharistic Celebration.

2018, drawing inspiration from Jesus’ prayer in John 17. He emphasised three key points from the prayer: unity among followers, protection from evil, and living in holiness.

After the Mass, the celebration continued in the Dewan Keluarga Kudus with several noteworthy highlights. The prelate was presented with a brand-new four-wheel drive vehicle as a gift, and the Apostolic Nuncio presented him with a framed token of Pope Francis’ apostolic blessing. A brief biography of Bishop Cornelius Piong was also released during the event. Additionally, he received a surprise gift of a three-foot statue of the Virgin Mary from the staff of Kemabong Mission and the Cathedral of St Francis Xavier.

The celebration featured cultural performances from each parish, some of which

have won international awards. A Muslim politician, Datuk Annuar Ayub @ Banand, sponsored a birthday cake weighing more than five kilograms. The event also included a special performance by Bishop Cornelius, who sang his self-composed song *Maria Tina Za do Koupusan (Mary, Our Beloved Mother)*.

Fr Paul Mikin, the first priest ordained by Bishop Cornelius on September 9, 1993, highlighted the bishop’s virtues, saying, “God blessed Bishop Cornelius Piong, a fatherly figure, with qualities of patience, insight, unity, love, holiness, loyalty, diligence, wisdom, who has close relationships with God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and deep reverence for Mother Mary. He proves that the Sabahan native is capable of leading God’s people of all races.”

Cardinal Sebastian, a classmate of Bishop Cornelius at College General during the late 1960s and early 1970s, commended him as “the longest-serving member of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei.” He described Bishop Cornelius as “a good man, a faithful apostle, and a follower of God who dares to show the face of Jesus through speaking or acting in a very simple way.”

Bishop Cornelius recently celebrated his 31st episcopal anniversary on May 1. Born on July 1, 1949, in Kg Purun, Kuala Penyu, he was ordained as a priest on March 27, 1977. He was installed as the first bishop of the Keningau Diocese on May 6, 1993. His episcopal motto, “Belonging is Happiness,” reflects his commitment to fostering a sense of community and unity within the diocese.

Triple celebration at College General seminary

PENANG: College General Major Seminary hosted a special triple celebration on June 19, marking a significant day for the institution.

Firstly, it was the feast day of the college. The date is calendared as the feast day of St Philip Minh Van Doan and companions. St Philip Minh, born in 1815, was a student of College General from 1840 to 1846. As a priest, he returned to Vietnam in 1853, and was martyred by beheading for refusing to trample on the cross, for not denying his religion and for not revealing the whereabouts of his fellow priests. He is buried in Cai-mong, Vietnam and his relics are at College General. He was beatified in 1900 and canonised in 1988.

The seminary also celebrated the 25th sacerdotal anniversaries of six alumni: Msgr Jude Miranda, Fr Robert Daniel, Fr Michael Dass, Fr Terrance Thomas, Fr Albet Arockiasamy, and Msgr Peter Ng. The day was further enlivened by the birthdays of

rector Fr Simon Labrooy and seminarian Benedict Lim. The event was attended by clergy from the Penang diocese and other guests.

The celebrations began with a Mass animated by the seminarians, with Fr Terrance Thomas as the main celebrant. In his homily, Fr Albet reflected on his formative years at the seminary, highlighting the influence of his experiences, the guidance from formators, and the bond with fellow seminarians. Following the Mass, Cardinal Francis Sebastian spoke about the symbolism of the colour red, representing both the blood of martyrs and the fire of the Holy Spirit guiding the Church.

The celebration continued at the college refectory with a luncheon. The silver jubilarians shared reflections on their 25 years of priesthood, and the seminarians sang “You Are a Priest Forever” as a tribute to the priests.

First priest from Manggatal community

KOTA KINABALU: At precisely 10.23am on June 7, the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart resounded with a resolute “Present!” as Deacon Jerry Joseph Muhamat, aged 46, dedicated himself to a lifetime of service to the Church. This milestone heralded a momentous occasion for the Catholic community of Manggatal, celebrating Deacon Jerry as the first native son to embrace the priesthood from their midst.

Standing before the Archbishop of Kota Kinabalu, Most Rev John Wong, Deacon Jerry answered the call by Msgr Nicholas Stephen on behalf of the congregation, to be accepted into the Order of Presbyterium. The archbishop’s acceptance was met with thunderous applause, reflecting the congregation’s gratitude and joy.

Hailing from the newly elevated parish of the Good Shepherd, Manggatal, Fr Jerry is the second of five siblings born to Joseph Muhamat and Evelyn Gibok from Kg Pulutan, Manggatal. Before pursuing his calling, he completed a diploma in Business Studies at University Technology Mara, Kota Kinabalu, and worked in various companies, including his last position as a vocational trainer officer at Sabah Skill and Technology Centre.

Fr Jerry began his seminary formation in 2015 at St Peter’s College Seminary in Kuching, Sarawak. After eight years of training, he was accepted into the Diaconate Order on December 9, 2023, and served at Blessed Sacrament Church in Labuan. While ordinations typically occur at the candidate’s birthplace parish, the ceremony for Fr Jerry which was attended by 1,000 people, was held at the Cathedral due to space constraints at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Manggatal.

Adopting the words of St Paul to the



Newly ordained Fr Jerry Joseph with Archbishop John Wong.

Corinthians, “Do all that is entrusted to you in love” (1 Cor 16:14), as his priesthood theme, Fr Jerry emphasised in his maiden speech the foundational role of love in ministry. “Love is the foundation for all ministries,” he said. “It is the primary force that drives us to seek out the lost, cheer the downtrodden, share burdens, seek justice, spread mercy, and walk humbly before the Lord. Love unites us as the one Body of Christ in our mission to proclaim the Good News.”

Reflecting on the challenges ahead, Fr Jerry concluded, “I ask for your prayers in my journey as a priest. Only by knowing the boundless love of God and receiving support from the community can I fulfil this sacred responsibility.”

Fr Jerry has been appointed as assistant parish priest at the Church of St Michael, Penampang. — *Catholic Sabah*

● Turn to Page 12 for Fr Jerry Joseph’s vocation story



The clergy and seminarians at College General, Penang.

Collaborative study day for PIHDM leaders

PETALING JAYA: Leaders and representatives of the Parish Integral Human Development Ministry (PIHDM) from parishes across the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur gathered at La Salle Hall for a study day focused on understanding the PIHDM guidelines, exchanging views and suggestions, as well as fostering meaningful connections.

The convergence of great minds ignited vibrant discussions and the exchange of innovative ideas. This meeting was a testament to the power of collaboration, as the 40 participants delved deep into the guidelines, learning from one another and sparking new inspirations.

The session included a significant segment where the participants were divided into breakout groups according to their districts. In these groups, they thoroughly went over the guidelines, discussing how they could be implemented based on the unique needs and



During the meeting.

contexts of their respective parishes and to find ways to collaborate in order not to duplicate resources.

Following the breakout sessions, Dr Gary Liew, director of the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD) addressed questions and concerns raised by the leaders.

This interactive segment was crucial for clarifying doubts and ensuring a cohesive understanding of the guidelines across all PIHDMs. The director also shared upcoming events and opportunities to work with each other with all present.

The synergy of shared knowledge and col-

lective insight promises to yield fruitful outcomes, paving the way for continued growth and success in the areas of Integral Human Development, social welfare and community, as we commit to continue serving the greater community as one body, one church. — **By Dwayne Sadris**

Catechists must care for their mental well-being

KUALA LUMPUR: The annual RCIA Study Day, organised by the KL Archdiocesan Catechetical Ministry (KLACM), was held on June 29 at the Church of the Sacred Heart. This year's Study Day took a different slant, compared to previous years for two reasons. Firstly, while earlier topics were related directly to the RCIA, the topic for 2024 was *Remaining Faithful and Fruitful in Ministry: A Mental Health Awareness Programme*. Secondly, besides those involved in the RCIA, the formation programme was also opened to coordinators and catechists from other sub-ministries under KLACM, as well as those participating in the Catechist's Basic Theology Course (Journey through the CCC) and Catechist's Lay Formators Team.

Our mental well-being affects the effectiveness of our ministry

The Study Day was graced by the presence of Archbishop Julian Leow. In his opening remarks, Archbishop Julian pointed out that those serving in ministry should place importance on their own mental health. Unfortunately, many people in ministry often fail to do this. One main reason is that they tend to focus on the "doing" aspect of the ministry and neglect the "being" aspect— their emotional, physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

In addition, besides one's commitment to his or her ministry, a person is also constantly affected by marital or family issues, the need to balance between full-time work and ministry, secularisation, time management, parish and ministry conflicts and others. All these can lead to a sense of tiredness, discouragement and loss of zeal for ministry. As a result, people in ministry can experience mental,

emotional and physical fatigue or tiredness, and suffer "ministry burnout". Put simply, "ministry burnout" refers to the exhaustion and diminishing passion that a church leader or a person in ministry can experience after prolonged and excessive stress from the work they've been called to do.

However, because many people tend to associate "mental health" with "mental problems", they think they do not suffer from "mental issues". This causes them to not pay attention to the effects of "ministry burnout" that they experience. It can result in some catechists becoming easily frustrated with people or circumstances, or wanting to leave the ministry. In this regard, greater awareness has to be created about the importance of the mental well-being of those in ministry.

Archbishop Julian emphasised that the Study Day being held was very timely, and will serve as an important reminder for catechists to care for their mental well-being to continue to be faithful and fruitful in their ministry. It is all the more important since many people suffered mental health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic and most are still feeling the effects today. While prayer and the regular celebration of the sacraments are the ideal ways for catechists to safeguard and grow in their vocation, as human beings they also have to take care of the intellectual, emotional, physical and mental aspects of their lives.

Greater awareness of mental health is needed
Fr Philip Chua, ecclesiastical assistant for the Archdiocesan



Topics covered at the Study Day

The day's programme was divided into three parts. The first session entitled *Understanding Mental Health* was presented by Brenda Shalini, a registered and licenced counsellor and lecturer. She highlighted the common mental issues and helped the participants of the Study Day identify symptoms and signs related to these issues. In sharing the definition of mental health,

Brenda stated that our mental health is connected closely to our emotional and physical well-being. In other words, "mental health" is not only about what affects our mind, but also our entire "being".

In the second session, Joshua Matthew, clinical psychologist, spoke on *Emotional Regulation and Stress Management*. He shared that the common mental health issues that have become of increasing concern include mood disorders like depression,

anxiety and bipolar disorders, and stress-related disorders and adjustment disorders. He proposed practical skills to regulate our emotions through a number of techniques which include "checking the facts", problem solving, and "opposite action". These have to be practised consistently in order to be developed into a habit. An important point highlighted by Joshua is that, often, we tend to react emotionally to situations based on "assumptions". It is crucial, therefore, to find out and confirm the actual facts before we react or respond.

The third and final session entitled, *Self-care and purposeful living* was also presented by Joshua. He helped the participants practise a few self-care techniques. It was amusing yet touching, to see all the participants take part seriously in the activities during the session, which include deep-breathing, grounding techniques like the "5-4-3-2-1 technique", and mindfulness approaches towards thinking and behaviours. To many who took part in the activities, it was an "eye-opener" and a reminder as to how they can care for their mental well-being through simple but effective self-care techniques.

A word of thanks to AMHM

In his closing remarks, Dr Steven Selvaraju, Director of the KL Archdiocesan Catechetical Centre, expressed his gratitude to Fr Philip Chua and his team consisting of Joshua and Brenda, who presented the sessions, as well as Warren Lee, Vivian Lock and Juanne Ong, for their efforts in creating awareness about mental health through the Study Day programme. "We are also grateful to AMHM for the service and other forms of support they provide to Catholics in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur and beyond", said Dr Steven, before concluding the programme with a prayer of thanksgiving to God. — **KLACM**



The participants listening intently before participating in one of the activities.

Thai deaf delegation pay courtesy call on KL archbishop

KUALA LUMPUR: A Catholic deaf delegation from Thailand, led by their spiritual director, Fr Peter Bhuravaj Searaariyah, recently paid a courtesy call on Archbishop Julian. Also present were Bishop Joseph Hii of Sibul, Fr Michael Chua, the ecclesiastical assistant for the Archdiocesan Catholic Ministry for the Deaf (CMfD), and Yuwadee Pricharat, a Thai-English translator.

The visit coincided with Fr Peter's sacerdotal anniversary, marked by a small cake-cutting ceremony. Fr Peter, a hearing priest fluent in Thai Sign Language, serves Catholic deaf communities across various dioceses in Thailand. He had recently conducted a three-day retreat at the Stella Maris Retreat Centre in Penang, attended by members of his community and the CMfD.

Following a breakfast discussion, Archbishop Julian gave the guests a personal tour of his chapel, explaining the iconography of the mural paintings by the late Fr Ruetens. The delegation then visited the Community Service Centre for the Deaf (CSCD). CSCD, a non-profit organisation funded by the adjacent Silent Teddies Bakery, provides free education and vocational training opportunities to deaf children.

Cindy Leong, founder of Silent Teddies, and Rose Ng, CSCD principal, guided the group through the bakery's kitchen to observe ongoing production. The tour also included the newly renovated learning centre, café, and arts space, designed to cultivate deaf entrepreneurial skills and financial independence.

Several CMfD members joined the visit, making it a day of celebration and fostering a deeper understanding of deaf culture, deaf advocacy, and inclusivity within the community. — *By Melina Sylvia Ann*

Heartbeat of harmony

PETALING JAYA: The Ministry for Special Needs of the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD) hosted a vibrant 'Drum Circle' on June 29 at the Church of St Ignatius. The event saw over 70 participants, including individuals with special needs and their parents, come together to experience the rhythm and joy of drumming.

The day began at 9.00am with a warm welcome from the ministry coordinator, Shane Dicom, who led an opening prayer and warm-up exercises. The 'Drum Circle,' led by Edwin Nathaniel, a music instructor with over 20 years of experience teaching individuals with disabilities, kicked off around 9.30am.

Nathaniel started with simple body percussion exercises and gradually introduced drumming activities, encouraging participants to feel the beat and rhythm. The interactive session captivated the participants' attention and fostered socialisation skills as they took turns leading



Everyone learning the joy of drumming.

and following rhythmic patterns.

The event was a heartwarming experience for both, participants and parents. Families cherished the opportunity to engage through

music, whether communicating verbally or through gestures, as they played instruments alongside their children. — *Ministry for Special Needs, AOHD*

Catholic Sabah gets new associate editor

KOTA KINABALU: Peter @ Peter Zeter bin Kombiong of Kg Logkou Baru, Tuaran, has been appointed as the associate editor for *Catholic Sabah*, effective July 1, 2024. Peter, who joined *Catholic Sabah* as a sub-editor in 2023, brings extensive experience in journalism and photojournalism to his new role.

He succeeds Linda Edward, the former associate editor, who is now serving as the executive secretary to Archbishop John Wong.

Catholic Sabah, a licensed newspaper and media website owned by the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu since 1957, will benefit from Peter's seasoned expertise. Peter began his journalism career in 2005 with *HERALD*, managing the Bahasa Malaysia section



for eight months. He undertook a distance learning in Journalism at the London School of Journalism. He holds certifications in philosophy (1998) and theology (2002) from

St Peter's College Seminary in Kuching, Malaysia.

After a stint in Kuala Lumpur working for Air India and Air Asia, Peter returned to Sabah in 2007 to resume his career as an adjuster. In 2009, he was invited by Dominic Lim, then executive secretary to Archbishop John Lee, to join the Archdiocesan Human Development Commission (AHDC), now known as the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants.

Peter's recent election as vice chairman of the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants (ECMI) further underscores his dedication and leadership in the field.



DIOCESE OF PENANG

PKK/BDN/2024/07/188

1. Fr Christopher Lim in the Diocese of Penang

Kindly be informed that Fr Christopher Lim Han Lee of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes, Australia is currently in the Diocese of Penang under the accompaniment of Fr Edmund Woon. Fr Christopher is from the home parish of Church of the Immaculate Conception, Pulau Tikus and will be in the diocese until October 10.

2. Cause of Beatification and Canonisation for Sybil Kathigasu

I wish to announce that in consultation with His Grace, Most Reverend Julian Leow, Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur and with his blessings, I am appointing Fr Eugene Benedict from the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur to assist in the initial process of working for the cause of beatification and canonisation of Sybil Kathigasu, a missionary disciple of the Diocese of Penang who is buried at the cemetery in the Church of St. Michael, Ipoh, Perak. Read more at: <https://shorturl.at/aw89m>

3. 2024 Feast of St Anne and St Joachim, Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam

The Novena and Feast of St Anne this year will begin on July 19 and culminate on July 28. Let us pray for all pilgrims, volunteers, celebrants and confessors as we experience a meaningful and grace-filled celebration

through the intercession of St Anne and St Joachim. For the schedule, visit: <https://shorturl.at/ieXni>

4. Visitation of Relic of Padre Pio from the National Shrine of St Padre Pio, Philippines

We are privileged to have with us the relic of Padre Pio from the National Shrine of St Padre Pio in Batangas, Philippines from July 11 – 17. This relic will be visiting the parishes in the Diocese of Penang in July. Sharing with you the schedule of the visits in each parish for your kind veneration: <https://shorturl.at/JoGmR>

5. Msgr Aloysius Spirituality Centre in Penang Road

The formerly known Penang Diocesan Pastoral Institute (Stella Maris Penang Road) will now be named Msgr Aloysius Spirituality Centre (MASC) in honour of the late Msgr. Ignatius John Aloysius who served as Vicar General to the first four Bishops of the Diocese of Penang. This Spirituality Centre is open to all for bookings of accommodation and hall under the leadership of Fr Edmund Woon. For reservations and bookings, kindly contact the administrator of this centre: <https://shorturl.at/Cz5j7>

6. PDYN Leadership Retreat 2024

The Penang Diocesan Youth Network

(PDYN) is organising Leadership Retreats this year. The next upcoming dates are August 5–8 at the Church of Christ the King, Sungai Petani, Kedah and December 2–5 at the Church of St Anthony, Teluk Intan, Perak. These leadership retreats are open to all parish youth and campus students from ages 18 - 29 years old. For registration and more information, please visit <https://shorturl.at/JsVWN>

7. Eighth Anniversary of Seeds Ministry

The Seeds Ministry will be celebrating its eighth anniversary with Mass on July 13 at the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Ipoh, Perak. There will also be the promulgation of the Seeds Ministry's Statutes and the commissioning of two full-time Catholic Young Lay Missionaries, Jonathan Charanraj and Samuel Theivendran. May the Lord continue to bless The Seeds Ministry in their faithful outreach to young people.

8. Asia Pacific Catholic Affinity Group Meeting at Stella Maris, Penang

There will be an Asia Pacific Catholic Affinity Group meeting from July 17 - 19 in Penang. The Asia Pacific Catholic Affinity Group is a collaborative body between the Bible Societies of the Region and the Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC). The purpose of this meeting is to explore the global adaptation of the youth Bible

initiative that has been developed and implemented in the region and is about to be released globally, and specifically the best way to engage with the Catholic Church globally.

9. Shawn Stanly Anthony Dass, Winner of the Rise Educator Award 2024

Together with all in the Diocese of Penang, I congratulate Shawn Stanly Anthony Dass from City Parish, Penang on his recent achievement as the winner of the Rise Educator Award 2024. May his dedication in the field of education continue to be a source of inspiration and hope to all. To view the video, go to: <https://rb.gy/nk57f4>

10. Second Batch of Distance Education Programme in Theology (Depth), a two-year course

I congratulate the 49 participants who completed the Distance Education Programme in Theology (DEPT) which started in February 2020 and ended in May 2024. Participants from the various dioceses including participants from the Diocese of Penang, were among those present at the graduation ceremony. For photos and the list of participants, visit <https://rb.gy/4xbnjh>

Sebastian Francis
Cardinal Sebastian Francis

Notifications and Updates

Feast day celebrations

Chapel of St Peter, Malim Nawar, Perak



The small Catholic community of the Chapel of St Peter in Malim Nawar humbly welcomed pilgrims from neighbouring parishes for their parish feast day on June 29.

The once run-down chapel underwent extensive renovations a year ago, transforming it into a conducive and beneficial space for sacred worship. The chapel now features new statues of St Peter and St Paul on either side of the altar.

Chapel Administrator, Fr Simon Anand, who also serves as the parish priest of the Church of the Sacred Heart in Kampar, celebrated and preached during the feast day Mass, which was preceded by the Rosary.

In his sermon, Fr Simon highlighted the significance of St Peter and St Paul in Christianity. "Peter, apostle to the Jews, holds the key to the Kingdom of God. Whatever you

bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," he quoted from Matthew 16:18-19. "Whereas Paul, apostle to us Gentiles, non-Jews, brought the Gospel of Christ to the nations."

During his homily, Fr Simon shared about the 1986 discovery of the Ancient Boat, a 2,000-year-old fishing vessel believed to be St Peter's boat. After 11 years of study, this remnant was majestically excavated from the Sea of Tiberias (Sea of Galilee) and is now housed in a museum.

As the chapel is dedicated to St Peter, Fr Simon recounted three Gospel stories highlighting Peter's profound experiences with Jesus. First, when Jesus asked His disciples in Caesarea Philippi, "Who do people say the Son



of Man is?" Peter declared Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, despite being in a place of worship of many gods. Fr Simon emphasised Peter's courage and his divine revelation, encouraging the congregation to "speak the truth, follow in Jesus' footsteps, and profess your faith with prudence."

In the second story, Peter walked on water at Jesus' command but began to sink when he became afraid of the storm. Fr Simon encouraged faith and trust in Christ, even in the face of difficulties. "Our faith cannot be risk-free," he said. "In our ministry, do we have the courage to be like Jesus, as Peter did, or do we stay safe in the boat?"

The third story involved Jesus instructing Peter to cast his nets into the deep sea. Initially hesitant, Peter obeyed and was rewarded with

a miraculous catch. Fr Simon urged the congregation to be genuine in their prayers and real with Jesus, just as Peter was. He reminded them that Peter, despite his initial doubts, became a humble apostle and was established by Jesus as the first pope.

He concluded by praying for the congregation to emulate Sts Peter and Paul in their courage, deep faith, and zeal to proclaim the Gospel of Christ.

After Mass, Fr Simon thanked those who had contributed to making the feast day meaningful and prayerful. He noted that there are currently only four Catholic families in this rural town, with weekend Mass celebrated once a month.

The celebration concluded with a dinner fellowship on the chapel's grounds. — **By Bernard Anthony**

Church of Sts Peter and Paul, Banting, Selangor

The Church of Sts Peter and Paul (SPP), Banting, celebrated the feast of its patron saints from June 27 to 30. The four-day event drew a significant number of pilgrims from various parishes within the Kuala Lumpur Archdiocese, enriching the spiritual growth and experience of all attendees.

The triduum commenced on June 27 with Fr Gregory Chan, Klang District Senator, leading the first day's celebration under the theme *Fishers of Men*. The following day, parish priest Fr Eugene Benedict focused on the theme *Go on Mission*, while SPP's former parish priest Fr Richard Anthonysamy, SJ, concluded the triduum on the third day with the theme *Celebration of Faith* (BEC).

On Sunday, June 30, Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam concelebrated the 9.00am Mass, themed *Celebration of Faith* (Youth), with Fr Eugene.

The parish BECCOT coordinator and a youth addressed the congregation on the last day of the triduum and on the feast day respectively. Emphasising on the importance of gathering in BECs, the coordinator stated, "As we continue to gather in our BECs, we aim to cultivate key values that were decided on during our parish pastoral assembly – openness, unity, hospitality, fellowship, acknowledging the multifaceted talents of our beautiful SPP community by the Langat river."



Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam (right) with Fr Eugene Benedict (centre) and an altar server.

The youth representative shared on the parish's vision and mission for the year which prioritises youth formation. "The Youth ministry is given priority in terms of having formation from within and outside the parish. They are introduced to the various ministries in SPP to develop a more open mind. Additionally, SPP youth volunteer in multiple activities in the parish, meet and interact with people from other religions, and work towards being proactive and competitive members of society."

The celebration fostered a spirit of unity and faith among the parishioners and pilgrims, marking a memorable event in the church's calendar.

Church of St John the Baptist, Sg Siput, Perak

During the solemnity of the Nativity of St John the Baptist on June 22, Fr Mark Michael delivered an insightful homily at the Church of St John the Baptist in Sg Siput, emphasising the healing power of Jesus Christ and the importance of living by His word.

"We have a healer in Jesus Christ. Embrace His word and immerse yourself in the Word of God. These words bring life and healing. Are we living out His word in our daily lives? What is Jesus saying to me today?" Fr Mark preached to the congregation.

The parish priest highlighted the significance of John the Baptist, describing him as the last prophet whose birth and death are celebrated by the Church. John the Baptist, known for speaking the truth and leading a moral life, ultimately lost his life for his steadfast honesty. His message always pointed to Jesus Christ, urging people to prepare the way for the Lord and ready themselves for the coming of the Messiah.

Addressing the packed congregation at the 71-year-old church, Fr Mark stressed the need for repentance and sincerity in cleansing of one's sins. "First, we need to get rid of our sins through truthful and sincere repentance. This is what we celebrate — truth. Are we truthful to ourselves?" he asked. He further quoted Jesus, saying, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." If you are disobedient, you are no follower of Jesus. Be obedient to the word of God. Ponder, listen, and obey the word of God. Joy came into the world and joy is given to those who live in truth," Fr Mark concluded.

After the Mass, Fr Mark led the assembly in a candlelight procession around the church, holding the monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament. The procession concluded with Benediction. Additionally, a beautifully decorated statue of St John the Baptist was placed at the church foyer for the faithful to visit and seek the saint's intercessions. — **By Bernard Anthony**



Fr Mark Michael leading the assembly in a candlelight procession.

A unified celebration at Jesus Caritas Church

KUALA LUMPUR: The Church of Jesus Caritas recently hosted a Mass for CHARIS KL, bringing together members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal from the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.

CHARIS Kuala Lumpur ecclesiastical assistant, Fr Clement Lim, was the main celebrant, with parish priest of Jesus Caritas, Fr Simon Lau, concelebrating.

Fr Clement delivered an inspiring sermon that focused on the power of the Holy Spirit to bring transformation and unity to the Church. He emphasised the importance of being open to the Spirit's gifts and using them for the greater good of the community.

After the Mass, the congregation gathered at Decroocq hall for fellowship. — **By Felicia Samuel**



The members of CHARIS KL at the Church of Jesus Caritas, Kepong.

14 new saints to be canonised in October

VATICAN: Pope Francis will celebrate a Mass of canonisation for 14 people, including the 11 “Martyrs of Damascus,” on Sunday, October 20, The Vatican announced this after the College of Cardinals voted to approve the canonisations of 15 people in a consistory on the morning of July 1.

The date of the much-anticipated canonisation of Blessed Carlo Acutis will be set at a later time, according to the July 1 press release. He is expected to be canonised during the 2025 Jubilee Year, along with other beatification candidates.

The “Martyrs of Damascus” were murdered “out of hatred for the faith” in Damascus, Syria, sometime during the night of July

9–10, 1860. The event took place during the persecution of Christians by Shia Druze, which spread from Lebanon to Syria and resulted in thousands of victims.

A Druze commando entered a Franciscan convent in the Christian quarter of Bab-Touma (St Paul) in the Old City of Damascus and massacred the friars Manuel Ruiz López, Carmelo Bolta, Nicanor Ascanio, Nicolás M. Alberca y Torres, Pedro Soler, Engelbert Kolland, Francisco Pinazo Peñalver, Juan S. Fernández, and three laymen who were biological brothers — Francis, Abdel Mohti, and Raphaël Massabki.

Upon refusing to renounce their Christian faith and convert to Islam, the 11 were brutally killed,

some beheaded with sabres and axes, others stabbed or clubbed to death. The martyrs were beatified in 1926.

One of two women to be canonised on Oct 20 is Blessed Elena Guerra, known as “an apostle of the Holy Spirit.”

A friend of Pope Leo XIII and the teacher of St Gemma Galgani, Elena Guerra (1835–1914) is known for her spiritual writings and her passionate devotion to the Holy Spirit.

Canadian sister Blessed Marie-Léonie Paradis, founder of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family, will also be declared a saint on Oct 20. Born Virginie Alodie on May 12, 1840, in L’Acadie, Quebec, the blessed founded her institute,



Pope Francis announced he will celebrate a Mass of canonisation for 14 people, including the 11 “Martyrs of Damascus,” on Sunday, October 20, 2024. (Vatican Media)

whose purpose was to collaborate with and support the religious of Holy Cross in educational work, in 1880 in New Brunswick.

Today her sisters work in over 200 institutions of education and evangelisation in Canada, the United States, Italy, Brazil, Haiti, Chile, Honduras, and Guatemala.

Italian Blessed Giuseppe Allamano, who will also be canonised Oct 20, founded two

religious congregations: the Consolata Missionaries (for men) and the Consolata Missionary Sisters (for women).

Born in 1851, Allamano was deeply influenced by the spirituality of the Salesians and St John Bosco as well, as his uncle, St Joseph Cafasso, a noted priest and spiritual director who was known as one of Turin’s “social saints.” — **By Hannah Brockhaus, CNA**

How much does a beatification process cost?

ROME: In May 2023, the French bishops voted in favour of the beatification of Cardinal Henri de Lubac, a significant 20th-century Jesuit theologian who deeply influenced the Second Vatican Council and contemporary Church thought. A year later, Rome also gave its approval. After a committee was appointed by Bishop Éric de Moulins-Beaufort, president of the International Association of Lubac, and Archbishop Olivier de Germay of Lyon, the diocese officially opened his beatification process. Their mission? Establish a crowdfunding campaign by the end of 2024 to finance this process. The procedure, from initial research to submitting the file to the Roman office for review, is expensive.

Financing the research

The primary expense is the cost of the investigation to compile the postulator’s dossier. This involves studying the theological and moral virtues of the future blessed, which requires

historical research and gathering testimonies. The amount — and thus the cost — of this documentation work depends on the individual’s works, longevity, or any controversies they may have sparked during their lifetime.

“Typically, the dossier is supported by a diocese or a congregation, which appoints a cleric or at least someone already employed by the diocese, to dedicate themselves to the research,” explained Emmanuel Tourpe, a philosophy professor in Strasbourg and coordinator of the crowdfunding campaign for Lubac’s cause. In this beatification case, the situation is “very particular,” he explained. “The best expert on Cardinal de Lubac is a layperson.” Although the dossier is officially backed by the Diocese of Lyon, the task of compiling it was entrusted to Marie-Gabrielle Lemaire, a theology researcher at the University of Namur in Belgium.

Since she is not paid by the Diocese of Lyon, she and the

committee need funding to pay “the equivalent of a part-time researcher for three years,” Tourpe said. However, the committee had to scale back its ambitions. Currently, the crowdfunding campaign aims to raise €38,000 (RM192,163.19). “Enough to cover six months of research in 2025, during which we will try to progress as much as possible,” Lemaire noted.

Filing fees

Once the candidate’s dossier is assembled and the diocesan phase is completed, the dossier is then handed over to a postulator in Rome. “The postulator is akin to a lawyer,” explained Augustin Mohrer, an economics professor and author of *La Fabrique des saints* (The Making of Saints). “Being well-versed in Vatican procedures, the postulator will refine, enhance, and advocate for the dossier, which will be reviewed by a college of theologians in Rome, then by the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints.”

At this point, two new budget items emerge: the postulator’s fees, “equivalent to those of a lawyer, about €2,000 (RM10025.06) per day,” Mohrer estimated, adding that the postulator’s workload would typically span about fifteen days. Then, there are the filing fees requested by the College of Theologians and the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, amounting to “about €45,000 (RM226,517.79),” according to the economist. “But this amount can quickly increase depending on the dossier, which can range from 100 to 15,000 pages, and the necessary verification time.”

Invisible costs and tough competition

The most expensive aspect, Mohrer revealed, “are the invisible costs, aimed at pushing the candidate’s cause up the pile.” According to the economist, competition is fierce: around 2,500 beatification dossiers are pending in Rome, and processing a candidacy takes between 12–

15 years. Over this period, one must consistently advocate for their postulant. Do some people give money directly to the Causes of Saints? Mohrer dismisses this notion. Practically, these invisible costs involve frequent trips to Rome and potential additional fees for the postulator.

“The wealthier a diocese, the more influential it will be in advocating its cause,” the researcher explained. Consequently, there are significantly more European than African or Asian-beatified individuals. This is somewhat contradictory, as Rome aims to have more saints from distant lands, particularly South America, since the Pope is Argentine. In 2014, Pope Francis implemented a tariff grid for postulators’ fees to achieve fairer treatment of dossiers. “But again,” the economist emphasised, “it is the invisible costs that are the most expensive and very difficult, if not impossible, to control.” — **By Lucile Coppalle with Alix Champion, LCI (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)**

BECs in DR Congo told to reinvent themselves to attract youth

KINSHASA: “Everyone has a viewpoint to express, a gift to offer in service to the Church,” said Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo of Kinshasa, emphasising the importance of inclusive leadership to engage youth and ensure succession within the communities.

Cardinal Ambongo was speaking during Mass recently at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame du Congo for parish leaders from the approximately 2,000 Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) in the archdiocese based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo national capital.

However, for this to happen, everyone must find their place, a challenge made greater by the fact that young people seem to be drifting away from the BEC. “Leaders must encourage everyone to speak up and be open to new ideas to bring young people back into our BEC,” Cardinal Ambongo said.

“In the church, many young peo-



ple, unfortunately, lose interest in the life of the BEC,” said Eugène Yange, a BEC parish leader at the Sacred Heart Church. “Yet, they are called to form families, the basic unit of tomorrow,” he continued, seeing a “challenge to ensure succession within the BEC.”

“The difficulty, on the one hand, is that many laypeople still expect everything from the priests, even

Congolese faithful hold their hands open at the Pope’s Mass during his visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo in January 2023. (Vatican Media)

organisationally, which hinders the life of the BEC,” said Munor Kabondo, parish president of the BEC at the Church of St Perpetua. “On the other hand, there is also a sort of interference from some clergy members in the actions of the BEC.”

Cardinal Ambongo has also taken

this account. He asked the faithful not to consider priests as “bosses.” “In pastoral work, in synodality, there are no bosses,” stressed the cardinal. “The priests are spiritual guides.” He also asked priests to regularly participate in BEC meetings like all other members, not as masters or lecturers.

Furthermore, like other BEC leaders, Kabondo highlights the challenge of self-reliance. “The mission entrusted to us by the Church to evangelise at the grassroots level is immense and requires resources to accomplish it better. Today, self-reliance is not easy, given the country’s situation,” Munor said.

Created by the Congolese episcopate about 50 years ago, the BEC brings together groups of 20 Catholic families from the same neighbourhood within each parish. BEC is a grassroots evangelisation mission entrusted to the laity by the Church. These communities are typically led by lay leaders who play a crucial role in the organisation and spiritual guidance of the members. They work alongside the clergy to ensure the community’s needs are met and to encourage active participation in Church activities. — **By Prisca Materanya, LCI (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)**

Forum explores synodality for inclusive Church reform in Asia

DHAKA: A three-day seminar on Synodality, hosted at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh Centre, has cast a spotlight on the transformative potential of inclusivity and dialogue within the Asian Catholic Church.

The event, drawing participants from across Bangladesh's eight dioceses, focused on deepening understanding of synodality as a collaborative and consultative approach to Church governance and community engagement.

"Synodality is a dynamic vision of the Church, revealed through the process of setting ongoing goals," said Sr Nathalie Becquart, XMCI, under-secretary for the Synod of the Vatican.

One of the key themes of the seminar was the adaptation of synodality to the unique socio-cultural landscape of Asia.

Fr George Plathottam, SDB, executive secretary of the social communication office of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, urged Catholics to "listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit as we embrace the synodal process, promoting mutual respect, cooperation, and walking together with all."



Participants engage in a group discussion during the Synodality seminar at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh Centre in Dhaka, focusing on collaborative and inclusive approaches to church governance and community engagement. (LiCas News photo/FABC OSC)

The priest highlighted how the Church could address local challenges such as poverty, migration, and cultural diversity through a synodal approach, promoting mutual respect and cooperation.

"Dialogue and mutual respect for each other's culture are essential," he noted.

Pius Costa, a participant in the seminar

and a former government official, shared his reflections on how synodality influenced their personal and professional lives. "My journey with brothers and sisters of other faiths requires maintaining synodality with them," Costa remarked.

The seminar also delved into the challenges of implementing synodal processes within

traditional Church structures.

Archbishop Bejoy N. D'Cruze of Dhaka shared his personal experiences with synodality, focusing on the Christian community's role in a multi-religious and cultural Bangladesh.

He pointed out the current influences of power, money, and intolerance within the community and stressed that these issues could be mitigated through the principles of synodality.

"Just as Jesus Christ empathised with the sufferings of others, we too must listen attentively to others, welcome and embrace others with our hearts," the prelate said.

Archbishop Kevin Randall, the Apostolic Nuncio to Bangladesh, reiterated Pope Francis' vision of a Church that listens and collaborates, marking a pivotal step towards fostering a more inclusive and understanding Church community.

"The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has taken a step to create a beautiful connection among everyone in our Church, helping us develop a good heart for listening to others," he said during the concluding Eucharistic celebration.

— LiCAS News

Japanese bishops issue new ecological guide

TOKYO: The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan (CBCJ) recently launched a new publication titled *Behold, It Was Very Good — An Invitation to Integral Ecology*, marking its first major release since *A Gaze Towards Life*.

This latest document, released on July 1, seeks to address the urgent environmental challenges highlighted during Pope Francis' 2019 visit to Japan, which was themed *Protecting All Life*.

CBCJ president Archbishop Isao Kikuchi said after the papal visit in 2019, "Japanese bishops resolved that in order to 'protect all life'... ecological concern should be given priority, thus we established the *Laudato Si'* desk."

The book draws its inspiration from the Pope's encyclical — *Laudato Si'*, and under the guidance of Bishop Daisuke Narui, the *Laudato Si'* desk has been pivotal in its development, the prelate added.

The text, aimed at fostering a deeper understanding and action towards environmental

issues, is available on CBCJ's website and in bookstores for 800 yen, targeting a broad educational outreach.

Katsuhiro Obara, president of Doshisha University, said the book compiles the Catholic Church of Japan's responses to the various challenges posed by the encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

"As readers progress through the book, which includes discussions on issues such as Minamata disease and other societal problems in Japan, they will find clues to personalise these global challenges. Moreover, the questions posed by this book reach beyond to other religions and the general society," he said.

The book is structured around three core actions: Seeing, Discerning, and Acting — principles that are rooted in the Church's teachings and aimed at fostering a sustainable and harmonious relationship with our planet.

Archbishop Mitsuo Takami, retired prelate of Nagasaki, emphasised that the environmental crisis requires a concerted effort from all

humanity to appreciate and protect our natural world as a divine gift.

"Today, the natural and living environments on Earth, which is 'the home we all share,' are in a critical situation," he said.

The book does not only appeal to the Catholic faithful in Japan but also reaches out to society at large, urging a radical renewal of lifestyles across various communities and sectors.

"To respond to what is happening on Earth, our common home, it is necessary to first understand what is happening, make judgments based on appropriate principles, and then, based on those judgments, decide what needs to be done and implement it," said the bishops' conference.

The bishops said the initiative reflects the Church's commitment to integrating faith-based stewardship with broader social and environmental responsibilities, reinforcing its role as an influential voice in global ecological discourse. — By Mark Saludes, LiCAS News



Behold, It Was Very Good — An Invitation to Integral Ecology, a new book by the Japanese Bishops' Conference. (LiCas News Photo/ Archbishop Isao Kikuchi)

Oklahoma orders Bible to be taught in schools

OKLAHOMA CITY: The Oklahoma school superintendent — the highest education official in this American state — issued this directive on June 27, instructing public schools in the southern US state to teach the Bible — a controversial decision likely to fuel the cultural wars fracturing America.

"Every teacher, every classroom in the state, will have a Bible in the classroom and will teach from the Bible," explained Ryan Walters, at a press conference announcing the memorandum. "Immediate and strict compliance is expected in every school," he said.

"The Bible is a necessary historical document to teach our kids about the history of this country, to have a complete understanding of Western civilisation, to have an understanding of the basis of our legal system," the Republican official stated.

His decision comes barely a week after the governor of Louisiana, also a Republican, signed a law requiring the display of the "Ten Commandments" in all classrooms.

An association immediately challenged the law in court, claiming it was unconstitutional and violated the separation of Church and State. The measure announced in Oklahoma



is also likely to end up in court.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibits the establishment of a national religion or the preference of one religion over another. The previous week, Walters praised the Louisiana law, expressing his intention to emulate it. "We've got to bring God back in school and not allow the radical left to turn our schools into atheist centres that only speak about our country without any kind of influence by their faith," he insisted on Fox News.

As part of the "Bible Belt" in the southern United States, Oklahoma recently attempted to fund a private religious school with public funds, a first in the United States. The local judiciary rejected the project this week, but the case could go to the Supreme Court. — LCI, (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)

'First' church in Japan celebrates 150th anniversary

TOKYO: Tsukiji Church, a cornerstone of Catholic heritage in Tokyo, celebrated its 150th anniversary with a Thanksgiving Mass on June 30, presided over by Archbishop Isao Kikuchi.

Known also as the Old Cathedral of St Joseph, it stands as the first Catholic church in Tokyo, Japan.

Established in November 1874 by the Paris Foreign Missions Society, a Roman Catholic missionary organisation, the church initially served as the cathedral for the bishop of Tokyo, marking the seat of the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Japan.

With the establishment of the Archdiocese of Tokyo in 1891, Tsukiji Church functioned as the cathedral until 1920, after which the cathedral status was transferred to Sekiguchi Church (St. Mary's Cathedral).

The church was destroyed in the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and subsequently rebuilt in 1927. Its design, inspired by St Madeleine Cathedral in Paris, mirrors the classical structure of an ancient Greek temple, with a facade featuring six Doric columns and a gable adorned with carvings of lilies and roses. On June 1, 1999, Tsukiji Church was recognised as one of Tokyo's historical buildings.

In his homily, Archbishop Kikuchi noted that

the Tsukiji Church was founded during a period when it was still difficult for Christians to operate freely, highlighting that it was only in 1873 that the ban against Christianity was lifted.

He reflected on the severe hardships faced by early missionaries, saying, "150 years ago, both the missionaries and the faithful must have faced difficulties that are unimaginable to us today."

He emphasised the foundation of hope and collaboration between foreign missionaries and Japanese believers upon which the church was built.

He reminded the faithful that the first missionaries advanced Christianity amid persecution, by steadfastly moving forward.

"When we feel powerless, the temptation is to retreat to past glories rather than forge ahead. But time only moves forward. Going backwards is not an option," said the prelate.

Archbishop Kikuchi urged the Catholic faithful to move forward with a positive attitude. "Let us be a Church that shines the light of hope. This light is kindled by our mutual support, our synodality, our solidarity, and most importantly, the presence of the Lord walking with us," he said. — By Mark Saludes, LiCAS News

Pretoria's archbishop sees priests as spark for synodal communities

Inspired by the Second Vatican Council's call for a Church in communion, Pope Francis launched the Synod on Synodality, a call for a more inclusive, collaborative Church – a synodal Church, an invitation for all members to actively participate in the life of the Church.

But as the second session of the Synod approaches, a crucial question remains: How do we get there? How can we bridge the gap between the ideal and reality?

In an interview with *Vatican News*, South African Archbishop Dabula Mpako shared an important input: "Priests must become catalysts for synodal communities."

From hierarchy to collaboration

Archbishop Dabula Mpako (*pic*) of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Pretoria, emphasised the need for a "paradigm shift" within the Church.

This shift requires moving away from a clergy-centric model towards a synodal one that embraces the full participation of all God's people and empowers all its members.

"Priests must shed clerical attitudes and habits," he said, "becoming not just leaders, but catalysts for communities to embrace shared decision-making."

Archbishop Dabula Mpako said, the Church needs "a 'spiritual conversion' at all levels — personal, parochial, diocesan, and universal."

This conversion, he explained, requires a transformation in the attitudes and habits of priests themselves. Letting go of "clerical attitudes" is crucial.

Instead, priests are called to become "catalysts for synodal communities." This new role demands a collaborative spirit, where priests act as facilitators and guides, empowering the voices of laity and religious sisters and brothers within the Church.

Embracing the synodal virtues

This new model demands the cultivation of "synodal virtues," Archbishop Mpako explained. Leaders must actively "go to the peripheries," listening attentively to the voices of those who often feel marginalised. It requires openness to diverse perspectives, and a willingness to transcend oneself and receive new insights with humility, he said.

The archbishop emphasised the importance of walking together, not just within parishes, but across dioceses and the universal Church.

Synodality is not about solving problems, he noted, but about creating a new model: a Church infused with the Holy Spirit, where structures and processes naturally reflect a collaborative spirit.

That means moving away from a top-down model to one where everyone, clergy and laity alike, has a voice. "This isn't about solving problems, it's about a complete transformation," he insisted.

Rekindling the Spirit of Vatican II: A transformed Church

"The core principle of the Church as 'communion' and the 'People of God' was already established by Vatican II. Now, it's time to rekindle this spirit, transforming local Churches, parishes, and dioceses into vibrant communities where all voices are heard and valued," Archbishop Mpako said.

This transformation will revitalise existing structures, ensuring they operate with a renewed commitment to shared decision-making.

Looking ahead to the second session of the Synod, Archbishop Mpako expressed confidence, noting extensive consultations that have already taken place and work on the preparatory document (*Instrumentum laboris*).

This focused approach, he said, will lead to a more productive gathering compared to the first session. — **By Sr Roselyne Wambani Wafula, Vatican News**

Choosing for the common good

Revisioning the Church as synodal

In strongly secular cultures, where religion is seen as unnecessary, and in others, where Christianity is viewed as oppressive, it's crucial to be faithful Christians. The synodal conversation must emphasise Christian love amid political divisions, avoiding fundamentalism and exclusion within the Church.



Pope Francis arrives to celebrate the closing Mass at the end of the Synod of Bishops assembly in St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, October 29, 2023. (Photo/Maria Laura Antonelli/Avalon/MaxPPP)

world view that ensures the exclusion of others so the "sacred few" will be safe.

Living in our own cultural and linguistic contexts, it's easy to overlook the perspectives of others. However, this should not deter us from listening and engaging in dialogue.

We see this in the Church, where minority groups, using the language of violence and hatred, become insistent on the validity of only one world view — their own. In doing so, they often co-opt the liturgy as their whipping boy, where the liturgy is made answerable for the clash of political world views, and the sanctuary becomes the place of the death of truth, love, and mercy. We see this in the violence aimed at Pope Francis, especially by so-called traditionalists and by some conservative episcopates. We see in these and other examples how culture and political divisions are used to justify ecclesial positions.

At the University of Regensburg in 2006, Pope Benedict XVI insisted that the Christian faith must adhere to the conviction that violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of reason: "The truly divine God is the God who has revealed Himself as *logos* (Word of God) and, as *logos*, has acted and continues to act lovingly (*agape*) on our behalf." Here, Pope Benedict indirectly united *logos* to *agape* and reason to nonviolence. Benedict reminds us of St Augustine's epistemological condition: "*Non intratur in veritatem nisi per caritatem*"; "One does not enter truth except through charity."

The criterion of love

Caritatem (charity) is St Augustine's reference to *agape* — self-giving love — at the heart of the Cross and the Eucharist. *Agape* makes it possible for God's Word (*logos*), which is at the heart of the Christian faith, to remain open to the modern world and

not slide into unyielding fundamentalism, ashamed belief, or violent hate speech.

Pope Francis has beautifully articulated that "God manifests Himself in historical revelation, in history. Time initiates processes, and space crystallises them. God is in history, in the processes." This is a powerful reminder that faith is not a distant concept but a lived experience. Believers live their faith in various forms and degrees of intensity but always against one criterion: the criterion of love.

Christian faith must be prepared to give up all forms of rigidity and become a discernment process in the world, culture, and history. Pope Francis describes this process as welcoming "differing currents of thought in philosophy, theology, and pastoral practice" (EG 40). Jesus, who shapes Christians to live their faith, shapes us from within a relationship of unfolding mystery. For you or me, it is an ongoing process of becoming open to the presence of God. Jesus is not a "monolithic dogma."

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis writes of the need for the Church — as individuals and as a community of believers — "to grow in her (our) interpretation of the revealed Word and in her (our) understanding of truth." Speaking to each of us directly, he writes: "For those who long for a monolithic body of doctrine guarded by all and leaving no room for nuance, this might appear as undesirable and leading to confusion. [Because] in this way, we hold fast to a formulation while failing to convey its substance. This is the greatest danger. Let us never forget that 'the expression of truth can take different forms. The renewal of these forms of expression becomes necessary for the sake of transmitting to the people of today the Gospel message in its unchanging meaning'" (EG 40-41). — **By J.P. Grayland, LCI** (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)

Five takes on what the Pope said about AI

Pope Francis recently achieved two significant milestones. First, he became the first supreme pontiff to attend the Venice Biennale, a contemporary art festival, on April 28, marking the 129th year since its foundation in 1895. Second, he was the first pope to participate in the Group of Seven (G7) summit at Borgo Egnazia in the city of Fasano in Puglia, Italy, from June 13-15, upon the invitation of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

At first glance, these two events might seem unrelated — what does a contemporary art festival have to do with an intergovernmental forum like the G7? However, they are more closely related than they appear.

The theme of the Holy See Pavilion at the Biennale, “*With My Own Eyes — Con i miei occhi*,” encapsulates Pope Francis’ intentions to engage in both witnessing firsthand (seeing with his own eyes) and inviting others to do the same. The Vatican Pavilion at the Biennale invited visitors to witness the Giudecca Women’s Prison and the artwork of its residents. This initiative

serves not only as a display of beautiful art but also as a critique of waste and the throwaway culture, themes that Pope Francis eloquently addressed in his Puglia G7 speech June 14. His focus on witnessing, and encouraging others to witness and react, underscores his commitment to social justice and inclusivity.

Do Pope Francis’ recent firsts — the Venice Biennale and the Puglia G7 address on artificial intelligence (AI) — benefit the Church and its mission?

I believe so. AI is currently a focal point for every institution of higher education. Surveys on AI and academic integrity are being conducted at my home institution, Seton Hall University. Various other institutions have developed guidelines for incorporating generative AI into teaching. For instance, the University of Kansas has implemented specific guidelines, while the University of Hawaii has adopted a decentralised approach, recognising that instructors are best positioned to assess the benefits, limitations and ethical considerations



(Freepik)

specific to their academic disciplines and courses. Georgetown University is offering guidelines on how to design assignments us-

ing ChatGPT. The advent and proliferation of AI are irreversible; AI cannot be undone or entirely controlled.

What Pope Francis said at Puglia G7

1. Relevance and Influence of the Church What Pope Francis is doing at the Puglia G7 continues the efforts initiated by the Rome Call for AI Ethics in February 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic. He emphasises the same principles outlined in the Rome Call document: transparency, inclusion, responsibility, impartiality, reliability, security and privacy.

Pope Francis’ address at the G7 on AI positions the Church as a relevant and influential player, offering valuable insights to the political leaders of the world’s seven most advanced economies. The Church cannot remain on the periphery of such a significant issue. By actively participating in the G7, Pope Francis demonstrated the Church’s openness to science and scientific research, thereby preventing a recurrence of the “Galileo closure.” This sentiment is indirectly referenced in *Gaudium et Spes* (No. 36), which critiques certain mindsets among Christians. In addition to his role as a religious leader and Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis also holds a political position as the head of the Vatican City State.

2. AI and Human Control

Pope Francis asserts that AI, created through God-given human creativity, should serve humanity and remain under human control. He begins his speech with references to Sacred Scripture, describing the genesis of AI as a manifestation of the creative potential bestowed upon humanity by God. This perspective aligns with the teachings of Vatican II, particularly *Gaudium et Spes*. Nearly 59 years ago, *Gaudium et Spes* anticipated technological advancements and said technology “is now transforming the face of the earth and is already trying to master outer space.” (No. 5)

Vatican II acknowledged that the rapid development of science and technology has introduced new problems, necessitating novel approaches to pastoral work. Additionally, *Gaudium et Spes* (No. 36) emphasises the importance of ethical principles and moral norms in scientific research, while also affirming that sciences and human activities have the right to their own methodological autonomy. This rightful independence of

science entails respecting the inherent moral norms present within creation, which are relevant to each discipline’s specific method of inquiry.

All things, including science and AI, are created by God and are sustained by His hand. *Gaudium et Spes* (No. 36) underscores that advancement in technology is the product of collective human labour, which, for believers, operates in harmony with God’s will. Since God cannot contradict Himself, AI is a manifestation of the God-given creative potential of humanity, and we must ensure its responsible and ethical use.

3. Significant Benefits and Challenges of AI in Education

Pope Francis makes an important distinction between “generative” AI and what is genuinely required by students engaged in academic courses; writing scholarly papers; and developing innovative, interdisciplinary thinking and new hypotheses that demand authentic research. While generative AI can produce text, information, images and videos in response to prompts using generative models, it can never replace human ingenuity and genuine reflection. Similarly, predictive AI can make forecasts but cannot substitute for the human mind’s creativity and critical thinking.

Furthermore, Pope Francis highlights an additional concern: Generative and predictive AI risk consolidating prejudice, disseminating fake news, and perpetuating repetition. This observation is particularly pertinent for educators:

Students are often much better prepared for, and more familiar with, using artificial intelligence than their teachers. Yet they forget that, strictly speaking, so-called generative artificial intelligence is not really ‘generative.’ Instead, it searches big data for information and puts it together in the style required of it. It does not develop new analyses or concepts, but repeats those that it finds, giving them an appealing form. ... Education should provide students with the possibility of authentic reflection, yet it runs the risk of being reduced to a repetition of notions, which will increasingly be evaluated as unobjectionable, simply because of

their constant repetition.

4. Human Dignity and Ethical Decision-Making

Centering on human dignity aligns with the February 2020 Rome Call for AI Ethics, which advocates for an “algorithical” vision — an approach emphasising ethics by design. Machines cannot make decisions; only humans, endowed with God-given intelligence and compassion, are capable of making decisions and ethical choices. Delegating decision-making to machines or AI is not only unethical but also prone to inaccuracy.

Pope Francis emphasises human dignity and decision-making, likely alluding to the manipulation and selection of human embryos by machines in the context of human reproduction. Franciscan priest Fr Paolo Benati, the Vatican’s go-to person on AI, appointed by Prime Minister Meloni as President of the AI Commission for Information and a member of the United Nations Advisory Board on Artificial Intelligence, asserted this connection in a recent interview with the Italian Logos. Such practices are unethical, as humans should not make these decisions, and it is even more concerning when these decisions are left to machines. Pope Francis underscores this point by stating:

We would condemn humanity to a future without hope if we took away people’s ability to make decisions about themselves and their lives, by dooming them to depend on the choices of machines. We need to ensure and safeguard a space for proper human control over the choices made by artificial intelligence programs: human dignity itself depends on it.

The same principle applies to uncontrolled “lethal autonomous weapons.” Human control and decision-making are imperative, as no machine should have the authority to choose to take a human life.

5. Politics Matters

Politics serves the society, and a better kind of politics, a far-sighted politics that is capable of a new, integral and interdisciplinary approach to handling the different as-

pects of the crisis, will serve society better, an argument Pope Francis made in his 2020 encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti* (Chapter 5). Shifting attention to the ethical level, Pope Francis emphasises the need to balance power dynamics beyond mere economic considerations. Technological advancements should not perpetuate injustice or widen the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Instead, technology should unite people and governments, fostering a culture of encounter.

Pope Francis advocates for human-centred, humanising and bridge-building technology at the Puglia G7. Technology should benefit all and be accessible to everyone. He warns the West of lost value which centred on the human person and the dignity of the human person, stating:

Technology is born for a purpose and, in its impact on human society, always represents a form of order in social relationships and a disposition of power, which enables someone to take action and prevents others from doing so.

Overall, Pope Francis’ interventions at the Venice Biennale and the Puglia G7 were well received by world leaders, demonstrating the Church’s active engagement with modern challenges. As a faculty member who is searching to draft policies and include AI tools constructively in teaching, I found Pope Francis’ intervention inspiring and constructive. AI should have a soul, or we theology professors can search for AI’s soul. This work was started by Fr Rocco Malatacca, and it draws parallels between AI and biblical language — Hebrew, in a recent study. In sum, by highlighting how technology can unite people and serve as an ecumenical, interfaith agent, Pope Francis demonstrates the Church’s commitment to addressing contemporary global challenges, transcending frontiers and divisions. — **By Ines Murzaku, Register**

● **Dr Ines Angeli Murzaku is Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Director of the Catholic Studies Programme, and the Founding Chair of the Department of Catholic Studies at Seton Hall University in New Jersey.**

I met God in different situations

By Fr Jerry Joseph Muhamat

I never thought about entering the seminary. My goal was to have a job with a good salary, buy a house, and start a family. However, God had other plans for me.

In 2010, when I was in Limbang, in the northern part of Sarawak, God opened my heart to see my purpose here on earth. I was at the Church of St Edmund when it happened. I was praying when, suddenly, I felt as if I was standing at the sanctuary, praising God.

I looked around and observed the people at Mass. I saw how they were really hungry for God's presence. Their prayers opened my heart to think about my vocation, but I doubted myself.

Once again, God showed me a sign. After Mass, on the way to meet my friends, I saw an announcement about a priestly ordination. I did not read the name but noticed the age: 45 years old. I wondered if it was a coincidence. After that, I tried to put it out of my mind and continued my day as

usual.

But God did not give up on me. He called me again by making my days in Limbang challenging. My relationship with my colleagues turned sour, and every day brought disputes. Finally, I decided to ask my manager to move me back to Sabah, but he refused. I resigned within an hour, but he called me back to inform me that he had agreed to transfer me to Sabah. I continued my work with new staff in a different environment. After several months, I resigned from the company and joined another. After three years, I resigned again because I couldn't concentrate on my job. Something was missing inside me, and I started looking for it. This feeling had intensified after my transfer to Sabah.

I attended a Vocation seminar in early 2013, but I wasn't ready to join the seminary. I attended a Vocation retreat in October of the same year, but I gave the same answer to the Director of Vocations. In 2014, I joined another Vocation retreat and this time, I said yes to my calling. I went to the Initiation Year (IY) at St Peter's College Minor Seminary in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah,



Fr Jerry Joseph Muhamat (centre) with his classmates Fr George Vaithynathan (left) and Fr Kennedy Nakudah (right) after his priestly ordination.

in 2015 and continued my journey at College General, Penang. I proceeded with my formation at St Peter's College Major Seminary, Kuching, Sarawak, from 2019 until April 2023.

Looking back, I realise that I was never alone on my journey to the priesthood. God was always there. Every day, I met God in different situations, making my life in the seminary interesting. We don't know what the future holds. Some say it is a mystery, but for me, it

remains a mystery only if I do not answer the call.

As a newly ordained priest, this is just another journey I need to go through. There is still much to learn. To the young people out there, the call is there. You just need to respond to it. Each of us has a calling, but it comes in different ways. Finally, continue to pray for me so that I may fulfil my duty as a servant of the Lord. "Here am I among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27b).



Fr Jerry Joseph cutting his cake.

God called me to use radio to reach and inspire His people

Being a journalist in a media house was a dream since my teenage years, as was my desire to become a religious sister. Sr Peter Anyango, whom I admired during my primary education, influenced me greatly. Her infectious laughter and mannerisms inspired me to be like her. Sr Peter, the headmistress of Holy Rosary Primary School where I studied for four years, embodied qualities I admired, fuelling my desire to become a religious sister.

Simultaneously, I wanted to spread the Gospel of Jesus to the world. However, the prevailing notion at the time was that one couldn't be both a religious sister and a journalist. The traditional roles of sisters were nurses, teachers or catechists, not journalists. The internal conflict led me to ponder: "Which path should I choose?"

Growing up, my father's small radio introduced me to educational and entertaining programmes, with religious content and choir music being particularly captivating. This exposure sparked my love for media at a young age, and I familiarised myself with radio presenters and news anchors, associating every voice on air with a name. This early exposure laid the foundation for my passion for the media industry.

Upon completing my secondary education, I faced the decision of following in Sr Peter's footsteps or pursuing a career like the female radio presenters I admired. Ultimately, my inclination towards becoming a religious sister led me to join the convent, setting off on the path to sisterhood. However, I always held onto a whispered promise to God that one day I would combine my calling as a journalist with spreading His word through broadcast media.

Today, I share my journey working at a radio station.

The road to becoming a journalist was not without challenges. My superiors were sceptical when I expressed my desire to study

journalism, an unconventional choice within the convent walls. Despite the need to wait for the right opportunity, I persevered, trusting in God's timing. The fulfilment of pursuing my dream was worth the wait. Upon completing my Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication, I landed a role at *Radio Waumini*, a Catholic radio station in Kenya.

Stepping through the station's doors on my first day, I felt a sense of relief and excitement, knowing I was embarking on the path I had always longed for.

One of the things that I liked and that stood out to me the most was the sense of solidarity among the on-air crew. Everyone was so passionate about their work, and it was infectious. For my part, I felt heavenly. I felt a certain fulfilment and satisfaction behind the mic, handling editing, mixing audios and blending music with discussions. My enthusiasm and that of the listeners highlighted the impact of broadcasting. They listened actively, sought clarifications and asked for a repeat of topics they felt were important and not very well understood.

One of the highlights of my time at the radio station was getting to meet and interview some incredible personalities. I interviewed apostolic nuncios, bishops, superiors' general of religious institutes, sisters, women and young people. I was at home doing what I had always wanted to do.

I produced and presented several programmes, including "Morning Reflections" Monday to Friday; "Voice of the Shepherd" on Sundays; and "Church Round-up" and "Gender Issues." The most impactful and most loved of these programmes was "Morning Reflections." The show had its own clientele among clergy, sisters and devout churchgoing Catholics. Through this programme, I recognised the influence of the microphone and the various demographics reached by the radio.

From what my listeners would say to me,



Sr Adelaide Ndilu at Radio Waumini in Nairobi, Kenya (NCR photo/Adelaide Ndilu)

I understood God was using me to reach and inspire His people who, at times, are wounded and heartbroken due to so many worries and cares of the world. The positive feedback I received inspired me to keep researching topics of discussion on air in order to remain relevant.

As all these praises continued to pour in, I recalled my prayer during my early years when I wanted to be a sister and a journalist. This truly was a prayer come true. God really answers our petitions — innocent and naive as they may be.

"Sister, your reflections are so insightful. Did you study theology?" the priests would ask. "Are you Sr Adelaide of *Radio Waumini*?" The smiles, handshakes and indescribable excitement said it all. Some would come literally to ask for an audio recording of a topic I had reflected upon. I felt so humbled and yet grateful to God for using me as His instrument to reach and touch souls.

One evening, a gentleman arrived at the studio and said he had been listening to the programme while taking public transportation to work. Unfortunately, he arrived at his destination before the programme ended, so he had come to request the audio.

On another occasion, two ladies were driving in the streets of Nairobi and spotted

me walking along the streets. They stopped the car and inquired if I was Sr Adelaide. I remember that week I had been discussing the topic of the seven sacraments and that day I had talked about the sacrament of penance. One of the ladies remarked, "Sister, it had been years since I went for confession, but listening to you this morning and how passionately you spoke about the sacrament, I couldn't let the day pass without going to confession." Then they suggested, "Sister, why don't you think of selling these reflections on cassettes?" But, how could I start making money from a talent given to me freely? No, I couldn't.

All of us at the radio found great satisfaction in connecting with listeners and receiving feedback on the shows and music we aired. It was so rewarding to hear how we were making a positive impact on people's lives through our programming.

Overall, my experience working at a radio station was incredibly rewarding and fulfilling. I learned a great deal about the industry and gained valuable skills that will serve me throughout my career. I will always look back on my time at the radio station with fond memories and gratitude because becoming a sister and a journalist was a prayer truly answered. — **By Sr Adelaide Ndilu, NCR**



WORD IN PROGRESS

Karen-Michaela Tan

I did not know it at the time, but I attended convent school at the nadir of Catholic missionary education as Malaysia used to know it. While it would be years before crosses were removed from the brothers-run schools and convents, the move to 'de-Christianise' missionary schools was already taking root. The stories of being educated by stern nuns were not mine. They belong to men and women now in their late sixties and older, who actually remember being taught by missionary sisters from Ireland.

Yet, I know I have been shaped by my primary years in St Teresa's Convent in Brickfields. We had catechism every Friday, taught by our formidable headmistress. At the end of the lesson, she would give each girl a shiny 50 sen coin. Invariably that same amount would be given to a ragged little student whom most girls shunned.

I asked Mrs Cheow one day why the student was rewarded when she had not attended class. I didn't dare question her validity as a Catholic because I was at the time church-going but not baptised. Stout Mrs Cheow told me something I have carried with me since: "We must bring God's love to people in the way they understand. If a person is hungry, they need to be fed so they can hear God's voice over the rumble of their stomachs. The money I give Bernadette allows her to have at least one meal today."

We may have lost Sr Enda Ryan, the last great Irish educator of her generation, and in tandem, any right the Catholic Church may have over the grounds our schools were built on, and in the purvey of teachers, or even the tokenism of a dotted line linking a parish to a parochial school, but what we still have in the school system are teachers who are Catholic. They may be a minority, but they exist. And they are still making sure the love of Christ is felt in schools, at the time of life students feel the most pressured and lost.

My teen is in a public school whose English Language Head is Catholic. A relatively new arrival to the school, he has taken to standing at the main gate on Mondays to greet students. Small gesture as it may be, it makes the students feel seen. Renowned for his creative lessons and innovative teaching methods, he has also become a trusted adult to many teens. Known to be firm but fair, Mr E has the uncanny ability to sift truth from falsehood (particularly useful when grading group work). With an inner sixth sense honed from decades of teaching, he is also amazingly good at giving extra care and attention to teens who are going through difficult times. Some may say this is just par for course for a teacher who has been in the system for so many years. I say that Mr E bothers to care because he knows the role he has been entrusted with. To him, being a teacher is not just a profession, but a charism. He believes he was called, and he believes the one who called him has equipped him for the job.

Schooled by Christ

In 1 Kings 17:7-16 when the prophet Elijah emerges from hiding, he is instructed by God to head to Zarephath where he is told a widow would supply him with food. The first widow he meets is preparing for her very last meal. Sidon was in the throes of drought. The little food available for sale was far beyond the means of a woman with no rich relatives and powerful allies. When Elijah met his benefactress, the widow was gathering sticks to make a fire to prepare one last meal for her son and herself, and then succumb to starvation.

In the midst of this scarcity, Elijah tells the widow not to be afraid, and urges her to make him a scone before preparing her last meal. If you're a baker, you'd know that a scone would have taken all the flour the woman had left in her jar. And yet, there was still enough left over. Like the magic porridge pot of fable, the widow's jar of flour and jug of oil fed three people every day until the rain came and crops could be sown again. Undoubtedly the provision did not stop until the family were able to grow food of their own again.

Each time when the nation shakes its head over reports of students being hurt or demeaned by teachers, I hold on to the hope of that one jar of flour and one jug of oil. I trust in that one Christian teacher in any school who carries Christ in him or herself, who is brave enough to swim against the current of apathy, and dare to care. I trust that God endows these educators with the courage to stand up and decry something that is not right or just, and gives them persistence in ensuring the kingdom of

God is present in school, expressed by the teacher(s) and experienced by the students.

There is a concept in psychology which has been gaining prominence of late. 'Glimmers' are small moments in life which elicit a spark of joy, or a feeling of peace and happiness. Some psychology practitioners call it 'hope' or 'awe'. I prefer to think of it as tangible reassurances from a loving Father who wants His children to know that He is with us in every trial of life. Once, long ago, God the Father sent God the Son to be His love incarnate, the real human embodiment of divine love that does not diminish through millennia.

Until the second coming, God will have nobody but ours. Even if we do not teach in the public school system, as parents, we can find ways to get through those school gates. We can serve on the parents' committee, PTA, act as chauffeurs and chaperones to inter school events, or help coach sports. I train the school's public speaking candidates, and in my time with them try to pass on some life lessons. Sometimes I am successful, other times, not as successful as I would like. But I don't give up because my presence as a Catholic in school amplifies the work already done by Catholic teachers. One of us is flour, the other, oil. Together we strive to produce bread for the journeys of as many students as we can.

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

BE OUR GUEST

The power of song: How the choir shaped my relationship with Christ

By Judy Rozario



Ephesians 5:19: "...speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord."

Joining the church choir in my teens was a game-changer for my faith journey. What started as a way to hang out with friends after catechism turned into an experience that shaped my relationship with Christ in ways I never anticipated.

Coming from a traditional and only-child upbringing, my godfather convinced my mum that it was healthy to have me sign up for the choir, as a means of connecting with other children and making friends.

In the choir, I learned the fundamentals of music and how to sing in different keys. We practised correct breathing techniques (from the belly!) and also learned about teamwork. If one of us messed up, we had to start from the top. When there were no children's Masses to prepare for, we watched musicals, movies and even celebrated each other's birthdays.

One day, our choir mistress put on 'Sister Act' — and that was it — our Easter Masses were never the same. We, the sopranos, couldn't wait to chime in with our 'Salve Regina's during 'Hail Holy Queen'.

Colossians 3:16: "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts."

As we rehearsed hymns and anthems, I started to really open myself up to the lyrics. A simple tune, coupled with a few verses held words that conveyed powerful prayers, stories and messages drawn straight from the Bible.

Repeating these songs week after week made the biblical truths stick. It helped me internalise messages of hope, love, and redemption, making them a part of my daily thought processes.

The choir demanded a level of discipline and commitment that spilled over into my spiritual life. Practice began at 11.30am, and we would begin and end every session with the prayer: "I am good, I am blessed, I am lovable, O' Lord. I am good, I am blessed, I am lovable. Yes, Lord."

Almost 20 years later, I still say this prayer fervently, repeating it when I'm anxious, scared or stressed. This routine of praying helped me develop a stronger personal devotion habit. The breathing techniques I learned during my choir days help me stay calm when storms hit.

Being part of the choir meant being a part of a community. We became a family; we prayed for each other, celebrated together, and supported one another during tough times. Although my choir friends and I were in different grades and different schools, none of that mattered when we were at practice.

My choir community supported me through various phases of my life. This

fellowship was a tangible expression of Christ's love and taught me the importance of Christian community. It proved that following Christ is not a solitary journey but one we undertake together.

Singing in the choir helped me develop a deeper understanding of worship. Leading the congregation in song is a humbling experience. Before we sang, our choir mistress would remind us that this was not a performance. To help others connect with God, we had to also be connected with Him.

There's something about music that goes beyond words. There are days when harmonies and melodies brought me closer to God in a way that silent prayer couldn't. On days I find myself tongue tied when talking to the Big Guy, I sing to Him. I let hymns say the things I struggle to say.

I fondly remember moments in the choir when I felt real encounters with the Holy Spirit. So many times, I've choked back tears while singing, "Take all that daily toil, plants in my heart's poor soil. Take all we start and spoil, each hopeful dream. The chances we have missed, the graces we resist. Lord in Your Eucharist, take and redeem."

Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them."

I believe God listens. He listens when we pray silently. He also listens when we sing (even if it hurts His ears.) He listens to us in every language.

Some Sundays, I'm called to praise God

in a different tongue — so I attend Mass in different languages, sometimes in different Catholic churches. I personally love how every hymn is heavily influenced by the different races and cultures that praise the same, one and only God. I love the way music unites us at Mass and sways us. How it reaches the deepest regions of our hearts and forces us to surrender. I love how God speaks to us so lovingly, even without words.

If you're a parent, consider enrolling your child in a choir. The experience equips them with a deeper understanding of their faith and offers them a strong, supportive community. I still keep in touch with some of my childhood friends from the church choir.

If you're struggling with your own faith, why not join a choir? It's a powerful way to connect with God. You might even find your relationship with Christ enriched in ways you never imagined. Plus, you'll make a few friends along the way.

The best part of all about joining a choir is that God will show you how to find your voice and use it in a way that is pleasing to Him.

● **Judy Rozario** is a young Catholic adult navigating her faith life while balancing the roles of loving wife, filial daughter, responsible pet owner, and active community member. She keenly observes human emotion and behaviour, and enjoys discussing books, religion, and music.



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Praying when it seems useless

Prayer is most needed just when it seems most useless. Michael J. Buckley, one of the major spiritual mentors in my life, wrote those words. What does he mean by them?

In the face of so many problems we can get the feeling that praying about them is useless. For example, in the face of the discouragement and helplessness we feel before some of the mega problems in our world, it is easy to feel that praying about them is useless. What will my prayer do vis-à-vis the wars raging in different parts of the world? What's the value of my prayer in the face of injustice, famine, racism, and sexism? What will my prayer do vis-à-vis the divisions and hatred now dividing our communities? It is easy to feel that praying about these situations is useless.

The same holds true about how we often feel about the value of prayer when serious illnesses beset us. Will prayer bring about a cure for someone with terminal cancer? Do we expect a miraculous cure? Mostly, we don't, but we continue to pray despite the feeling that our prayer won't change the situation. Why?

Why pray when it seems useless to do so? Theologians and spiritual writers have given us various perspectives on this which

are helpful, though not adequate. Prayer, they say, is not meant to change the mind of God, but to change the mind of the person who is praying. We don't pray to put God on our side; we pray to put ourselves on God's side. As well, we have been taught that the reason it might seem that God doesn't answer our prayers is that God, like a loving parent, knows what is good for us and answers our prayers by giving us what we need, rather than what we naively want. C.S. Lewis once said that we will spend a lot of time in eternity thanking God for those prayers that God didn't answer.

All of this is true and important. God's ways are not our ways. Faith asks us to give God the space and time to be God, without having to conform to our very limited expectations and habitual impatience. We can indeed be grateful that God doesn't answer many of our prayers according to our expectations.

But still, ... when Jesus invited us to pray, He didn't do so with a caveat: *but you need to ask for the right things if you expect me to answer your prayer.* No, He simply said: *Ask and you will receive.* He also said that *some demons are only cast out by prayer and fasting.*

So, how might the demons of violence,

division, hatred, war, hunger, global warming, famine, racism, sexism, cancer, heart disease, and the like be cast out by prayer? How is prayer useful in any practical way in the face of these issues?

In brief, prayer doesn't just change the person who is praying, it also changes the situation. When you pray you are, in fact, part of the situation about which you are praying. *Sincere prayer helps you become the change you are praying to bring about.* For example, praying for peace helps you to calm your own heart and bring a more peaceful heart into the world.

While this is true, there is also a deeper reality at play. More deeply, when we pray there is something happening that goes beyond how we normally imagine the simple interplay between cause and effect. By changing ourselves we are changing the situation; yes, but in a deeper way than we normally imagine.

As Christians, we believe that we are part of a body, the Body of Christ, and that our union there with each other is more than some idealised corporate community. Rather, we are part of a living organism in which every part affects every other part, just as in a physical body. Because of this, for us, there is no such a thing as a private

act – good or bad. I hesitate to suggest that this is analogous to the immune system inside the human body because this is more than an analogy. It's real, organic. Just as in a human body there is an immune system which protects the health of the overall body by killing off cells and viruses that are endangering its health, so too inside the Body of Christ. At all times, we are either healthy cells bringing strength to the immune system inside the Body of Christ or we are a virus or cancerous cell threatening its health. Praying about an issue makes a difference because it helps strengthen the immune system inside the Body of Christ – precisely as it is dealing with the issue about which we are praying. While on the surface prayer can sometimes feel useless, it is doing something vital underneath – something most needed precisely when we feel that our prayer is useless.

● **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



As I was contemplating

Fr Gerard Steve Theraviam

The task of being a parish priest includes seeing that the financial books are balanced, and having the Magnificat Community Centre building project on my hands means that I have to be in 'fund-raising mode' all the time — which I find difficult as I am not the sort that finds putting outstretched arms asking people for money easy! Yet this comes with the job scope and at least, I am not asking for money for my own personal needs. These days I often joke with my parishioners that the money is there but the problem is that it is still in their pockets! And so, my building fund team is always on the go and just this week, we are celebrating another million Ringgit milestone — but there is a long way to go and I do worry about donor fatigue as, perhaps, some will say we are taxing them too much.

Thus, this week I would like to look at giving in our Catholic context. Unlike other churches that follow the Old Testament practice of tithing ten per cent of earnings, we see the importance of giving but leave the quantum to the generosity of the individual. Perhaps, in our large parishes that can work because of the sheer numbers, but I have also been in a tiny parish where one would sometimes hope that a kind benefactor would suddenly appear like a knight in shining armour.

Perhaps the most important point to recognise is that God is the ultimate Giver — all that we have is gifted from God. We definitely need money, but let us not make it a god that brings us towards greed and avarice! God's gifts are not just for our selfish desires and wants but rather, to be shared with our neighbour. We are stewards

of all that God has given, and we certainly must share. As stewards, God is the owner and giver of our money — we are only managers of it. Giving need not necessarily imply only generosity, but also justice, as we distribute our wealth to those who are in greater need. Underlying all this is a trust that God will provide for all our needs (not greed!).

One thing I strongly feel is that parishes need to be transparent about their collections and their accounts. I have personally witnessed the fact that people will give more if they can actually see how monies are being used, and especially if they are being used well and not being frivolously frittered away. There is a need for financial accountability at every level, especially when we look at our country and all the controversies like the 1MDB fiasco.

However, I do think that we must welcome every single contribution (and contributor!), no matter how big or small. It warms my heart when I receive a bag of coins that someone has given us or that a little child gives from their pocket-money — the widow's mite indeed. But perhaps, we all need to think and discern what we offer to God. Often, when the collection is going around, people are scrambling into their handbags and wallets to see what spare change they have! Have we actually thought and prayed about what we should offer to God? Surely if we budget for everything else, then one of our budget items must include what we give to church as well as other charitable causes. Thus, I am all for planned giving!

Am I giving grudgingly from my extra, superfluous wealth, when I lavishly spend multiples more on an expensive meal, or clothes, or concert tickets or other entertainment? Do I give till it means that I have to forgo something in order to make

Giving all you have got!



that gift? Do I share happily and generously or do I do so feeling pressured? Our motivations for giving are important.

Do I make a great show of my giving or do I not let my left hand know what the right is doing? Do I give without expecting anything in return? Perhaps some give in the hope that God would bless them even more abundantly, thinking erroneously as proponents of the so-called 'prosperity gospel' do? God loves a generous and pure heart!

Having said all this, our giving cannot be limited to just money. We are all called to share our Time, Talent and Treasure. Some people are happy to hand over their cash but refuse to give their time or talent. While money is needed, what we need most is personal involvement of everyone in the mission of the Church. The donations we receive are not merely for maintenance but, more importantly, for mission. And mission cannot happen without the personal

effort and time of many people. Indeed, many hands mean less work for everyone. We need more labourers to 'turun padang' and get their hands dirty, not expect a few people to shoulder all the work. If we ALL did our part, then we could expand the scope of our mission without overtaxing the few willing ones.

In the meantime, I shall keep on asking all and sundry to give generously. Likewise, I shall personally go on giving all I can in terms of Time, Talent and Treasure — and when I am no longer able to do so, I shall support the mission by the very important work of prayer.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

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

Little Catholics' Corner

Dear children,

When Jesus was here, on earth, He travelled around from village to village, teaching, healing people, and casting out demons.

One day, He called His twelve disciples and said, "I want you to go out, two by two. I am giving you all of

the authority you need to cast out evil spirits."

That sounds like a pretty big task, doesn't it? I imagine the disciples thought to themselves, "Wow! I had better go home and start packing!"

But then Jesus gave them further instructions. "Take nothing for your journey except a walking stick — no

food, no traveller's bag, and no money. You can wear sandals, but no extra clothing" — how could the disciples possibly make this journey?

They found people who would welcome them and they stayed with them in their homes. These people fed them and gave them everything they needed for the journey.

The Bible tells us that the disciples went out telling everyone they met to repent from their sins and turn to God. And they healed many sick people.

Children, perhaps we can start to become God's herald by doing good and praying for those in need!

Aunty Eliz

1. To deliver a sermon; to proclaim the Word of God _____.

2. A stick or cane carried as an aid in walking or climbing _____.

3. To instruct, train, or give knowledge to others _____.

4. A trip over a great distance _____.

5. Shoes consisting of a bottom part held onto the foot by straps _____.

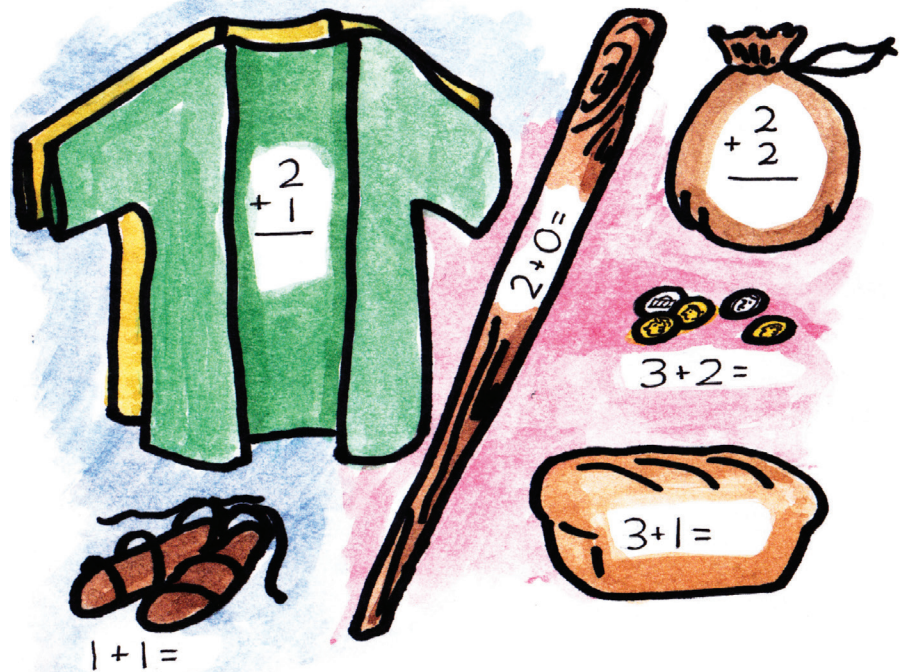
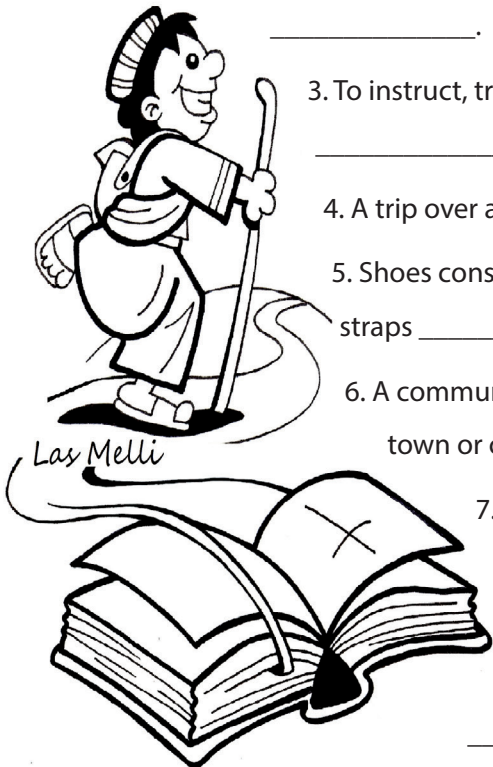
6. A community where people live that is smaller than a town or city _____.

7. Something that is bad or wrong; wicked _____.

8. A basic food made from flour, water, and yeast mixed together and baked _____.

9. Coins or bills used to buy things _____.

10. The number of disciples Jesus chose _____.



Jesus sent the Apostles out two at a time to teach the people about Him, heal the sick and cast out demons.

What did He tell them to take with them?

Add up the numbers. The ones that equal two are the things that Jesus told the Apostles to take.

Mark 6:7-13

ffois puw sjppuws

VILLAGE
TEACH

TWELVE
BREAD

STAFF
SANDALS

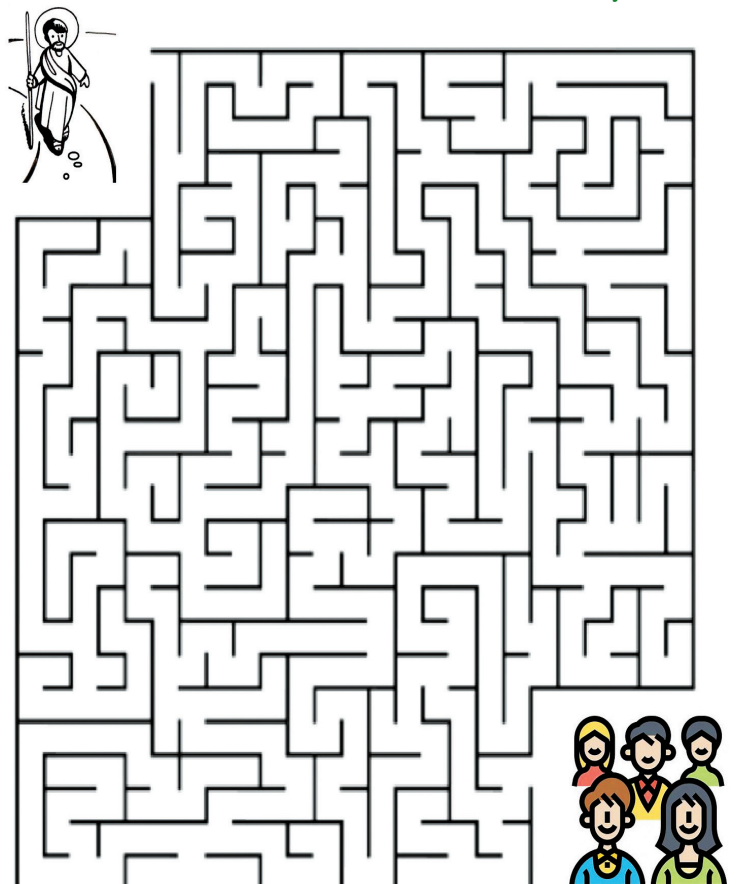
EVIL
PREACH

JOURNEY
MONEY

Can you spot SEVEN differences between the two pictures



HELP JESUS' DISCIPLE TO FIND OTHERS WHO WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT JESUS.



YOUTH

July 14, 2024

Seoul Archdiocese transforms Cathedral into campsite to involve youth

SEOUL: The Archdiocese of Seoul has transformed the backyard of Myeongdong Cathedral into a campsite to engage with younger members of the Church.

Approximately 600 young people gathered on the evening of June 28 for the “Camp at the Cathedral” event, organised by the World Youth Day (WYD) Seoul 2027 Local Organising Committee (LOC).

The event aimed to build bridges between the Church and its younger followers through dialogue and shared experiences.

Themed *Do not fear: I am with you* (Isaiah 41:10), the setting was unlike anything previously seen at the Cathedral.

The backyard was configured as a campsite, with groups of ten sitting in circles on camping chairs, facilitated by clergy, sisters, or volunteers.

The arrangement included finger food and refreshments, creating an intimate and welcoming environment.

Initially, many young attendees were surprised and a bit cautious about sitting close to bishops, but as the evening progressed, barriers dissolved and meaningful conversations unfolded.

During the event, four young keynote speakers addressed the challenges contemporary youth face and shared their faith experiences. Each presentation led to group discussions, inspired by the Synod.

Sang-wook Lee, president of the Youth Federation of the Archdiocese of Seoul,

highlighted the diminishing support from the Church that many young volunteers encounter, and the resultant spiritual apathy.

“We need new community events that are not conventional, and good leaders to help young people find the meaning of service,” Lee said.

Archbishop Peter Soon-taick Chung expressed his gratitude for the young participants’ honesty and willingness to share their stories.

“It was a precious time to hear the stories of your lives. I am grateful to the young people for their valuable time. We will continue to organise various gatherings to share stories with you as the protagonists,” he remarked.

Echoing Pope Francis, the prelate added, “God loves us just as we are, no matter what we accomplish or who we become. May you experience, through the WYD preparation process, that God is always with you in your joys, sorrows, and hurts.”

In a statement, the LOC said its initiative mirrors Archbishop Chung’s dedication to hearing the voices of young people.

“Camp at the Cathedral” successfully exemplified this vision and provided a unique platform for dialogue between the Church’s leaders and its future stewards,” the statement read.

Last year, Pope Francis announced Seoul as the host city for World Youth Day 2027. In response, Archbishop Chung, committed to creating an event that promotes “fraternity, spirituality, and social cohesion” across different cultures and religions. — **By Mark Saludes, LiCAS News**



Archbishop Peter Soon-taick Chung of Seoul cheering with his team. (LiCAS News Photo/Committee for Communications, Archdiocese of Seoul)



A corner of the “Camp at the Cathedral” event venue. (LiCAS News Photo/Committee for Communications, Archdiocese of Seoul)

12 amazing facts about the life of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati



VATICAN: Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati (*pic*), born on April 6, 1901, to a prominent and wealthy Italian family, became a popular role model soon after he died on July 4, 1925, at the age of 24. He could be declared a saint during the Catholic Church’s 2025 Jubilee Year, according to the head of the Vatican’s office for saints’ causes.

According to the website dedicated to him by the US Catholic bishops, for years Frassati has been “a significant global patron for youth and young adults — and has a special place in the hearts of young people across the United States as well. St. John Paul II declared him a patron for World Youth Days and deemed him ‘the man of the beatitudes’ as he exemplified those blessings in his everyday life.”

Here are 12 amazing facts about his short but very intense life:

1. Despite being raised by agnostic parents, Frassati’s inclinations to help others manifested in his childhood. Once, as a child, he answered the door to find a mother begging with her son who was shoeless. He took off his own shoes and gave them to the child.
2. At an early age, he joined the Marian Sodality and the Apostleship of Prayer and obtained permission to receive daily Communion, which was rare at the time.
3. At the same time, he was known among his friends as “Il Terrore” (“The Terror”) due to his fondness for practical jokes.
4. At 17, he joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society and dedicated much of his spare time taking care of the poor, the homeless, the sick, and the demobilised servicemen returning from World War I.
5. In 1919, Frassati joined the Catholic Student Foundation and the Popular Party, whose principles were based in the social doctrine of the Church. He strongly opposed the rise of fascist leader Benito Mussolini and

was jailed in Rome after joining the protest of the Catholic Workers’ Association.

6. He became notable for giving literally everything he had to the poor. He would even use his bus fare for charity and then run home to be on time for meals.

7. An avid and accomplished mountain-climber, he saw many parallels between Catholic life and his favourite pastime. He would regularly organise trips into the mountains with occasions for prayers and conversations about faith on the way up or down from the summit.

8. After what would become his final climb he wrote a simple note on a photograph: “Verso L’Alto” (“To the heights”) — a phrase that has become a popular Catholic motto.

10. Pier Giorgio Frassati was declared “Blessed” in 1990 by Pope John Paul II, who called him a “man of the beatitudes” and a “joyful apostle of Christ.” A year before, after visiting his tomb, John Paul II revealed that he also had felt in his own youth “the beneficial influence of his example.”

“He left the world rather young,” he said, “but he made a mark upon our entire century.”

11. In her biography of her brother, Frassati’s sister, Luciana, wrote that “he represented the finest in Christian youth: pure, happy, enthusiastic about everything that is good and beautiful.”

12. Pier Giorgio Frassati’s popularity is big among young people, especially in America. Many apostolates have been created with his name, and he is regarded as the patron of students (mainly because he wasn’t good at school), young Catholics, mountaineers, youth groups, Catholic Action, Dominican tertiaries (he became one), and World Youth Day. — **CNA**

NEGERI SEMBILAN: In a spirit of unity and faith, 93 young participants from the Church of the Visitation, Seremban; Church of St Theresa, Nilai (CSTN); Church of St Aloysius, Mantin (CSAM); Church of the Immaculate Conception (CIC), Port Dickson and Chapel Bonda Maria, Kampung Tekir came together for the highly anticipated lived-in Confirmation Camp 2024 at the CSTN Pastoral Centre.

The camp, facilitated by Church of the Visitation Youth Pastoral Worker Sabrina Smith and her team, embraced the theme inspired by St Catherine of Siena: *Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire*. This theme resonated deeply with the youth, fostering self-discovery and spiritual growth throughout the camp. Guiding the young participants were Frs Christopher Soosaipillai, Phillip Tay OCD, and seminarian Brother Charles.

Christian Gagarin Collins, from the Church of Visitation, Seremban, shared his heartfelt reflections on the camp. "I'm honoured and glad to have joined this Confirmation Camp, as I had many different experiences and also learnt a lot, especially during the talks given by the priests and youth members. The Praise and Worship lifted the mood with its instrumental and inspirational lyrics."

Asella Grace, from CIC, shared her reflections on the camp's teachings and spirituality: "My first impression when I came here was that everything was new and unfamiliar to me. I learned about self-esteem, our boundaries, and the importance of the Holy Spirit. Praise and Worship were the best part of the camp. I loved the song 'Hari ini'; I related to it so much."

Vanessa Liberty Lucas, a participant from CSTN, expressed her appreciation for the camp's content and activities. "I enjoyed the



topics we discussed throughout this camp, such as self-esteem, girl and boy relationships, and the Holy Spirit. I had a very rough week but the camp lifted my spirits. I learned a lot from my group mates, and during every activity, the presence of the Holy Spirit was felt. This camp was the best one yet. I wish I could relive it. Next stop, Confirmation."

Vivien Vivania from CSTN was keen to highlight the healing and community-building aspects of the camp. "My favourite activities were the Praise and Worship and inner healing sessions. I felt very calm and happy because I was making new friends and learn-

ing new things."

Leandra Chloe Joseph Chong, also from CSTN, appreciated the opportunities for self-expression and meaningful discussion. "I was moved by the inner healing session, especially the letter writing to our parents. It helped me open up as I have always found it hard to express myself face to face."

Benedict Fernandez echoed his fellow CSTN confirmands and cheekily added, "I asked a girl for her Insta and got it! That was the cherry on the cake!"

Benedict Kar AK July, from the Chapel of Our Lady, Kg Tekir found value in the teach-

ings about sin. "The activity I enjoyed was learning about sin. I found it meaningful because I learnt about mortal sins and deadly sins. I gained new knowledge in the faith and built new relationships."

As the camp concluded, the participants left with renewed faith, strengthened friendships, and a deeper understanding of their spiritual journey. The Confirmation Camp 2024 was a testament to the power of community, faith, and self-discovery, setting the stage for these young individuals to set the world on fire with their faith and authenticity.

Anyone who's experienced puberty will benefit from Disney/Pixar's latest masterpiece, *Inside Out 2*.

While not touted as a spiritual film, "Inside Out 2" is a spiritual experience, as Disney/Pixar films tend to be. On the surface, the film presents itself as a coming-of-age tale of Riley Anderson, a young girl learning how to handle her emotions. But the movie's themes tend towards the existential and can help us re-evaluate the foundation (or lack thereof) we have in the Divine.

The original *Inside Out* followed 11-year-old Riley as she navigated new and uncomfortable emotions that arose from her family's cross-country move. Joy, Sadness, Disgust, Fear and Anger were personified by endearing characters at her inner "Headquarters" who sorted through her memories, personality, friendships and real-time experiences. By the end of the film, the crew — and by extension, Riley herself — learned that Joy was not the only valid emotion.

The newly released sequel picks up with Riley on the cusp of puberty. Joy tells us that in her maturity, Riley has begun to create a new dimension of herself. She now has a "Belief System," physically depicted as luminous threads deep in Riley's mind that can be plucked to hear its particular resonance: "I am a good person," "I'm kind," "Mom and Dad are proud of me." The threads of these beliefs ascend into Riley's Headquarters and form her seemingly spirited and positive "Sense of Self." To help ensure that the "Sense of Self" remains strong, uplifted and inherently good, Joy regularly sends Riley's negative thoughts to

CATHOLICS MAY FIND SURPRISING RESONANCE IN 'INSIDE OUT 2'

the "Back of the Mind."

As we all know, this picking and choosing cannot be sustained. Soon puberty hits, causing chaos and destruction in Riley's head. Suddenly, the core gang is infiltrated by new emotions: Envy, Embarrassment, Ennui, Nostalgia and the "villain" of the story, Anxiety.

Anxiety is a take-charge gal. She presents herself at first as a positive force in Riley's life. She plans for the future. She lays out scenarios Riley may face so that she can be better prepared when the time comes. She takes it upon herself to break Riley's standing "Belief System" and announces to the other emotions, that with Riley entering high school, she needs a new and improved, more complex "Sense of Self."

While this seems to work temporarily, soon Anxiety takes charge of Headquarters and her unhelpful traits dominate. She uses Riley's imagination against her, creating literal "projections" of worst-case scenarios, which eventually culminates in

Riley's "Sense of Self" becoming a repeating drone of "I'm not good enough." Anxiety is in full throttle, and Riley's mental health becomes victim to a ground-breaking depiction of a teenage anxiety attack after a particularly pivotal hockey penalty.

At this point, only Joy can break through the tornado of confusion, pleading with Anxiety: "You need to let her go." Anxiety realises that, despite her best efforts, she cannot control Riley. The collective gang of emotions come to understand that trying to sway the outcomes of life does not make the bad go away, it only causes more trouble.

As wholesome as Joy's intentions were in shielding Riley from heartache and embarrassment, her interaction with Anxiety forces her to see that hiding all of Riley's more difficult experiences or shortcomings was actually unhealthy for the girl's "Sense of Self."

This is where the message of *Inside Out 2* can invite us into a deeper insight into our relationship with God. Many of us in faith-based struggles can see ourselves in Riley. From the beginning of our spiritual development, we are told to seek joy, to "not let our hearts be troubled," to cast all of our anxiety onto Christ, for we mean more to Him "than many sparrows." But surrender is not easy. Many of us Catholic Christians find the course treacherous — and for those predisposed to anxiety, cultivating a relationship with God can be an even more formidable task.

We tend to start on a positive note. As young children in faith formation, the focus is primarily joy: We are taught that God is love and that we are to love our neighbour as ourselves. But soon enough we are introduced to the concepts of sin, eternal damnation and camels passing through

the eyes of needles. If catechesis is misguided, the emphasis might lean too heavily on what we are forbidden to do, as opposed to what we are called to do. That disconnect can create "Belief Systems" and "Senses of Self" that are built on rocky soil, despite the best intentions.

The internalised message, much like Riley's, morphs from "God loves me" into "I am not good enough." We might begin to question our worth or battle with scrupulosity. Even saints like Ignatius Loyola and Thérèse of Lisieux struggled with characteristics of this mental health condition, akin to obsessive compulsive disorder. These conditions can completely blind us to the beauty that is God's mercy.

If we build our belief systems on blind optimism or even worse, on anxiety, we are not truly experiencing the grace of God.

God calls us to be our full selves. And as much as we hate to admit it, our full selves are a mix of good and bad. I am a good person — and I am selfish. We have become so accustomed to the binary (light and dark, good and evil, heaven and Hell), that we fail to see that humanity lies somewhere in the middle. We can use the knowledge of our weaknesses and acceptance of our complexities to move the needle closer to God.

God does not expect perfection. As C.S. Lewis so eloquently wrote in *Mere Christianity*: "Why, then, did God give them free will? Because free will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having." After all, who wants to receive love from someone doing it out of obligation or anxiety?

As *Inside Out 2* so vibrantly demonstrates, human nature comes with a spectrum of emotions: Sadness, Fear, Disgust, Anger, Ennui, Anxiety and Embarrassment, just to name a few. But in God, the core of our "Belief System" can be love and fullness of self; and knowing we are loved and accepted, flaws and all, can help lighten the yoke of our mental health struggles.

That's a lesson Riley — and all of us — eventually will learn. — **Katie Lemaire, NCR**



The doctor with a big heart

KOCHI, India: National Doctors' Day is celebrated to recognise the contributions of doctors to communities and individual lives. The day is observed on different days in different nations.

In India, Doctors' Day is observed on July 1, in memory of Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, physician and first chief minister of West Bengal. He was born on July 1, 1882, and died on the same date in 1962.

Personally, this year's Doctor's Day dawned with a sense of great loss. It was only much recently that one of my favourite teachers in Government Medical College, Kottayam, passed away.

To a doctor, nothing can be more melancholic than the loss of a teacher who had selflessly, and with sincere dedication, love and a palpable sense of caring, lent their shoulders to their students to perch on, to give them a better understanding of the subject. To later progress through the demanding profession. To serve humanity by caring for the ailing.

Dr Jacob P Thomas (JPT Sir to his students who adored him) had broad shoulders, being a man of considerable build. The big man always embellished his imposing physique with omnipresent mirth, ranging from a gentle smile to peals of laughter. Surgeons are known for their *joie de vivre*, lightheartedness and more relaxed demeanour, unlike their physician counterparts, who are more book-wormish, preferring to reside within the leaves of their Bible – 'Harrisons Principles of Internal Medicine'. For some reason, the moment surgeons don the professorial garb, they tend to be more intense, purse-lipped and kind of 'walled off'.

Probably brought about by the intensity of their strenuous trade, and the pressures of having to walk the talk before their impressionable young students. But JPT Sir, the burly teacher with curly hair and a luxuriant moustache, would have none of that. He wore his gentle firmness, effusive exuberance, and cheerfulness on his



Dr Jacob P Thomas

sleeves, which endeared him to his students.

Though JPT Sir had taught me as lecturer during MBBS, my rapport and familiarity with him abounded as a postgraduate student in Surgery. He was more a big brother to me personally than a teacher. As the person responsible for patients requiring surgical intervention, while on duty in the Emergency, JPT Sir never shied away from instilling confidence and necessary skill into hesitant fingers of beginners that held the forceps and scalpel – to mould fine surgeons out of 'raw material'.

At rounds, he taught us the art of dealing with the suffering gently. If possible, with a smile. Surgical patients had painful wounds and sores to be tended.

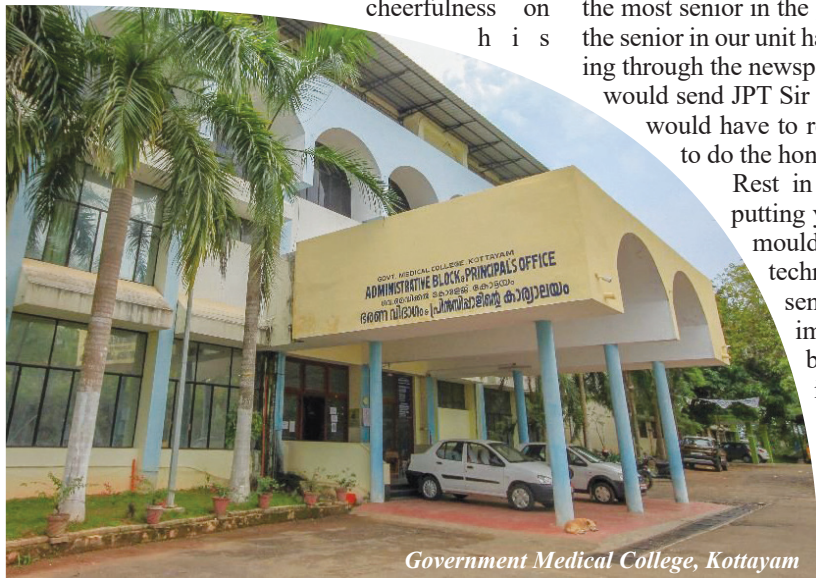
His presence in examination halls during surgery practical exams – personification of 'pressure-cooker atmosphere' – was always a stress-buster for highly-strung examinees. He would literarily roll about the hall, reassuring candidates with his trademark smile, and a gentle tap on the shoulders.

His presence in various surgical units gave us students something to look forward to. When the professor would pose questions to students during case presentations, JPT Sir would shake with laughter, with a silencer attached, of course, when not-so-brilliant students like myself would squirm and fidget inside the white coat with nervousness before the professor's questions, which demanded smart answers.

Serving to relieve the tense moments in the room, he would come up later, during rounds (he had a rapid gait despite his build) after the teaching session, put his heavy hands around our shoulders and ensure our ignorance on the subject lay buried.

With him around, there never was a dull moment. It was a practice to wind up daily rounds with a coffee session at the Indian Coffee House within the campus. It was an unwritten rule and propriety that the most senior in the group would pay the bill. But the senior in our unit had the uncanny habit of glancing through the newspaper as the bill arrived, which would send JPT Sir into roars of laughter until he would have to retrieve his wallet out himself to do the honours!

Rest in peace, JPT Sir. Thanks for putting your big heart to good use by moulding us into surgeons who are technically competent, gentle and sensitive to the ailing, and, more importantly, into good human beings who wouldn't consider it inappropriate to break into laughter at funny moments that an otherwise busy and stressful profession throws up occasionally. — **By Dr George Jacob, Matters India**



Government Medical College, Kottayam

MEMORIAM

*If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord.
So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.*
— Romans 14:8



30th Day Memorial In Loving Memory of Lourdes Roch

Born: 26th February 1928
Departed: 8th June 2024

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

Forever in our thoughts,
loved and cherished by
wife, daughters and family members.

Memorial Masses will be held on
Saturdays 13th, 20th and 27th July
at 6pm during Sunset Masses at the
Church of Assumption, PJ.

*For this light
momentary
affliction is
preparing for us
an eternal weight
of glory beyond all
comparison, as we
look not to the
things that are
seen but to the
things that are
unseen. For the
things that are
seen are transient,
but the things that
are unseen are
eternal.*

2 Corinthians
4:17-18

In Loving Memory of
Patrick Michael
@ Bosco
31st Jan 1952 - 26th June 2010
(14th yr anniversary)

In Loving Memory of
Madam Jayakanoo
@ Mrs S.A Michael
17th Sep 1923 - 18th July 2014
(10th yr anniversary)

*The years we've shared have been full of joy.
The memories we've made will go on and on.
We haven't stopped crying since you went away,
and we've asked God time and time why couldn't you stay.
You fit up our life, our hopes, and our dreams.
You've opened our eyes to see what it all means.
So now that you're gone how can we forget;
Because you were the greatest out of all we have met.*
Always loved and missed by Family

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6th Anniversary In Loving Memory of



Martine Therese Lai Pin Lee
(05.05.1955 – 04.07.2018)

*"I have the strength to face all conditions
by the power that Christ gives me."*
(Philippians 4:13)

Deeply missed and remembered by family members.

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REST IN PEACE

Indon govt to boost Catholic tourism on Flores Island

JAKARTA: The Indonesian government is intensifying efforts to capitalise on the potential of Catholic religious tourism on Flores Island, often referred to as the "Missionary Island."

This initiative aims to increase visitor numbers, promote economic growth, and preserve local culture through religious tourism.

In a report by *The Jakarta Post*, Tourism and Creative Economy Minister Sandiaga Uno emphasised the unique allure of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), particularly Flores Island.

He highlighted the island's rich Catholic history and the harmonious inculturation between the Catholic Church and local culture as key attractions for religious tourists.

"Flores Island in NTT is renowned for its Catholic history and heritage. It's often referred to as the Missionary Island. This island has tremendous potential for religious tourism, especially through the inculturation between the Catholic Church and the local community's culture," said Sandiaga.

He noted that this inculturation not only boosts religious pilgrimage tourism but also fosters economic growth and cultural preservation.

To support tourism development, the government has included four annual events

in the 2024 National Events Calendar, two of which focus on religion and culture: the Golokoe Festival in Labuan Bajo and the Bale Nagi Festival in Larantuka.

These events, alongside regular Catholic religious and cultural festivals like Semana Santa (Holy Week) and the Lembah Kisol Festival, are expected to draw more tourists to the region.

Bishop Siprianus Horat of Ruteng echoed this sentiment, stressing that tourism should be rooted in local culture and spirituality.

"Tourism is essentially a pilgrimage, tracing the footsteps of God in the joyous encounter of humanity and the universe. Therefore, the Diocese of Ruteng has designed and continues to promote holistic tourism in the region known as Bumi Congka Sae [the great Manggarai Earth] Flores, characterised by spirituality," he said.

The growth of religious tourism in Indonesia aligns with the government's broader strategy to diversify tourism products and promote economic growth through pilgrimage activities.

These activities stimulate service sectors like hospitality, transportation, and local crafts, creating a ripple effect that benefits the entire community. — *LiCAS News*

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FEAST OF ST. ANNE & JOACHIM

Pamol Estate, Kluang, Johor

(under the preview of Church of St. Louis, Kluang)

புனித அன்னம்மாள் & ஜோக்கிம் திருவிழா
பாமோல் தோட்டம், குளுவாங், ஜோகூர்



இறைவேண்டல் செய்யக் கற்றுத்தாரும்

Teach Us to Pray

40th Anniversary Mass for Feast of St. Anne & Joachim, Pamol
Preside by Rt. Rev. Bishop Bernard Paul

Date / நாள் : 27.7.2024 சனிக்கிழமை Saturday

Time / நேரம் : மாலை மணி 6.30pm

இடம் : பாமோல் தோட்டம், குளுவாங், ஜோகூர்

Venue : Pamol Estate, Kluang, Johor

புனித அன்னம்மாள் & ஜோக்கிம் திருவிழா பாமோல் தோட்டம், குளுவாங், ஜோகூர். இறைவேண்டல் செய்யக் கற்றுத்தாரும்

திசுதி கிழமை	நேரம்	நிகழ்வு
18.7.2024 வியாழன்	7.30 8.00	நவநாள் & திருப்பலி தமிழ் புனித அன்னம்மாள் கொடியேற்றம் விண்ணிலாகில் இருக்கிற எங்கள் தந்தையே
19.7.2024 வெள்ளி	8.00	நவநாள் & ஜெபமாலை தமிழ் உமது பெயர் தூயது எனப் போற்றப்பெருக !
20.7.2024 சனி	8.00	நவநாள் & ஜெபமாலை தமிழ் உமது ஆட்சி வருக !
21.7.2024 ஞாயிறு	8.00	நவநாள் & ஜெபமாலை தமிழ் உமது திருவுளம் விண்ணிலாகில் நிறைவேறுவது போல மண்ணிலாகிலும் நிறைவேறுக
22.7.2024 திங்கள்	8.00	நவநாள் & ஜெபமாலை தமிழ் எங்கள் அன்றாட உணவை எங்களுக்கு இன்று தாரும்
23.7.2024 செவ்வாய்	8.00	நவநாள் & ஜெபமாலை தமிழ் எங்களுக்கு எதிராகக் குற்றம் செய்வோரை நூங்கள் மன்னிப்பது போல எங்கள் குற்றங்களையும் மன்னிப்பும்
24.7.2024 புதன்	7.30 8.00	நவநாள் & ஜெபமாலை திருப்பலி தமிழில் எங்களைச் சோதனைக்கு உட்படுத்தாதேயும்.
25.7.2024 வியாழன்	8.00	நவநாள் & ஜெபமாலை தமிழ் தீமையிலிருந்து எங்களை விடுவித்தருளும்.
26.7.2024 வெள்ளி	7.30 8.00	நவநாள் & ஜெபமாலை தமிழ் திருப்பலி ஆமென்



திருவிழா

27-07-2024 சனிக்கிழமை

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