

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

TERHAD

PP 8460/11/2012 (030939) ISSN: 1394-3294 | Vol: 31 No. 17 | May 12, 2024

www.heraldmalaysia.com

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

1 John 4:11-12



A day of spiritual enrichment for the Klang district

■ P5



AI and the wisdom of the heart

■ P9



Unveiling the realities of diverse professions

■ P16



Pope Francis thanks all the parish priests in the world

VATICAN: “The Church could not continue without your dedication and your pastoral service.” With these words, Pope Francis expressed his deep gratitude to parish priests worldwide in a letter addressed to the clergy.

The Holy Father presented this letter to 300 priests attending the Synod on Synodality’s “World Meeting of Parish Priests” at a gathering in the Vatican on May 2. During this meeting, he remarked that it was “an opportunity to hold in my prayers all the parish priests globally to whom I extend these words with great affection.”

The Pope expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the tireless efforts of the priests to spread the Gospel across the globe. He acknowledged the wide range of challenges these pastors face and noted that their diverse perspectives and experiences greatly enrich the process of synodality.

Parish priests, he insisted, know from within the life of God’s People, including

their joys, hardships, resources and needs.

“For this reason, a synodal Church needs its parish priests,” the Pope stressed, saying that without priests, we will never be able to learn how to walk together and to set out on the path of synodality.

“If parishes are not synodal and missionary, neither,” he warned, “will the Church be.”

Pastors, the Holy Father encouraged, are called to accompany the communities they serve in the synodal process, while, at the same time, committing themselves to prayer, discernment and apostolic zeal.

The Lord, the Pope said, asks us today to listen to the voice of his Spirit and to advance in the direction that He points out to us. “Of one thing we can be sure: he will never leave us without his grace.”

Pope Francis went on to offer three suggestions to inspire parish priests in their activity and mission.

First, the Pope urged them to live out their specific ministerial charism in ever greater service to the varied gifts that the Spirit sows in the People of God.

“It is urgent to discover with faith, the many and varied charismatic gifts

of the laity, which are indispensable for evangelising any number of human situations and contexts,” he said, expressing his conviction, that, in doing so, they will bring to light “many hidden treasures,” and “feel less alone in the demanding task of evangelisation.”

“You will experience the joy of being true fathers, who do not dominate others,” he said, “but rather bring out in them, men and women alike, great and precious possibilities.”

Second, he urged them to learn to practise the art of communal discernment, employing for this purpose the method of “conversation in the Spirit”, which has proved so helpful in the synodal journey and in the proceedings of the synodal Assembly itself.

“I am certain that you will reap from it many good fruits, not only in structures of communion such as parish councils,” he said, “but in many other fields as well.”

Third and finally, the Pope urged them to base everything they do on a spirit of sharing and fraternity among themselves and with their bishops.

“We cannot be authentic fathers unless

we are first sons and brothers,” he said, “And we cannot foster communion and participation in the communities entrusted to our care,” he continued, “unless, before all else, we live out those realities among ourselves.”

Both the synodal and missionary Church and the ongoing process of the 2021-2024 Synod, “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission” needs parish priests and their voice, the Pope emphasised.

Therefore, the Pope invited those who have taken part in the International Meeting “Parish Priests for the Synod” to be missionaries of synodality, first, among themselves and, once they return home, with their fellow parish priests.

“Dear brothers, I am at your side in this process, in which I myself am taking part,” the Holy Father reassured.

Pope Francis concluded by imparting upon them his Apostolic Blessing, asking for their prayers, and encouraging them to stay close to Our Lady who always shows us the way. — *Agencies*

● See also page 11

HERALD

ESTABLISHED 1994

Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre
5, Jalan Robertson, 50150, KL
Tel / Whatsapp: 03-20268291

Website : www.heraldmalaysia.com

Facebook : www.facebook.com/heraldmalaysia

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

**EDITOR**

Patricia Pereira
editor1@herald.com.my

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Social Media Coordinator
Sandra Ann Inbaraj
sandra@herald.com.my

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Youth Section
Amanda Mah
amanda@herald.com.my

**BAHASA MALAYSIA**

Melania Liza Magnus
liza@herald.com.my

**MANDARIN**

Adelina Wong
yin4482@gmail.com

**TAMIL**

RK Samy
rksamy3@hotmail.com

Advertisements / Subscription
advertisement@herald.com.my

MEMORIAM
memoriam@herald.com.my

LETTERS
letterseditor@herald.com.my

GUEST EDITORIAL

Navigating communication in the digital age

Artificial intelligence (AI) holds the promise of making vast troves of knowledge accessible like never before. It has the power to bridge language barriers and sustain digital connections, as evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as we marvel at its rapid development and widespread adoption, we must remember that AI, including innovations like ChatGPT, while impressive, lacks the essential human capacity for wisdom. It can provide information but not the depth of insight that comes from the human heart.

As we reflect on the theme for the 58th World Day for Social Communications, *Artificial Intelligence and the Wisdom of the Heart: Towards a Fully Human Communication*, Pope Francis calls us to heed the importance of integrating technological advancements with our innate humanity. In a world at risk of being “rich in technology and poor in humanity,” we must cultivate wisdom of the heart. This wisdom allows us to navigate the complexities of our decisions, relationships, and societal challenges with compassion and integrity.

While AI facilitates digital connections, it also presents the danger of isolating us from authentic human interaction. Our reliance on AI-driven communication risks distancing us from the warmth and empathy that only human connections can offer. Moreover, the proliferation of fake news in digital spaces challenges our ability to discern truth and preserve our humanity amidst technological progress.

In the realm of Catholic communications, where social media platforms play a crucial role in disseminating information and fostering community, we are called to exercise discernment and responsibility. While social media can serve as a tool for spreading love and serving others, it also carries the risk of manipulation and domination. Thus, it is imperative to uphold truth, engage with human experiences, and safeguard the dignity of every individual. Our use of technology should enhance human dignity and promote the Gospel’s message of love and truth. However, if misused, these technologies could foster divisions and undermine the very fabric of our human community.

Moreover, the integration of AI into our operations offers immense potential. AI assists in translating documents and materials into our local languages, streamlining and automating repetitive tasks like scheduling social media postings. This saves time and resources, allowing us to focus more on meaningful engagement and service.

There are already some sessions and formations being organised in our respective arch/dioceses to discuss the ethical implications of AI. By having more open conversations and exploring its potential benefits and drawbacks, the Catholic Churches in our region can ensure AI is used responsibly and ethically. AI is a developing field. The way it impacts churches will likely continue to evolve in the coming years.

Pope Francis, in his message for the World Day of Peace on January 1, 2024, noted that

if used rightly, AI could significantly enhance sectors like agriculture, education, and culture, potentially improving life for entire nations while fostering human fraternity and social friendship.

Yet, the critical measure of our humanity, as Pope Francis urges, is how we utilise AI to include and uplift the marginalised and needy. This inclusivity is the true benchmark of our humanistic application of technology.

The rapid evolution of AI and tools like ChatGPT raises pertinent questions about the future of traditional media, including print. While AI may change how we consume media, it is unlikely to cause the demise of print media entirely. Instead, it presents an opportunity for convergence, where traditional and digital media coexist, each serving unique needs and preferences.

Finally, we must consider whether our reliance on AI, like ChatGPT, for tasks such as writing, may impede the development of our talents. As Catholic communicators, it is vital to balance the use of these tools with the cultivation of our intellectual and spiritual gifts, ensuring it enhances our potential rather than diminishes it. Let’s reflect on how we can integrate AI with wisdom and compassion, enriching both our communication and our humanity. — **By Daniel Roy Santiyagu (Chairman, Episcopal Regional Commission for Social Communication)**



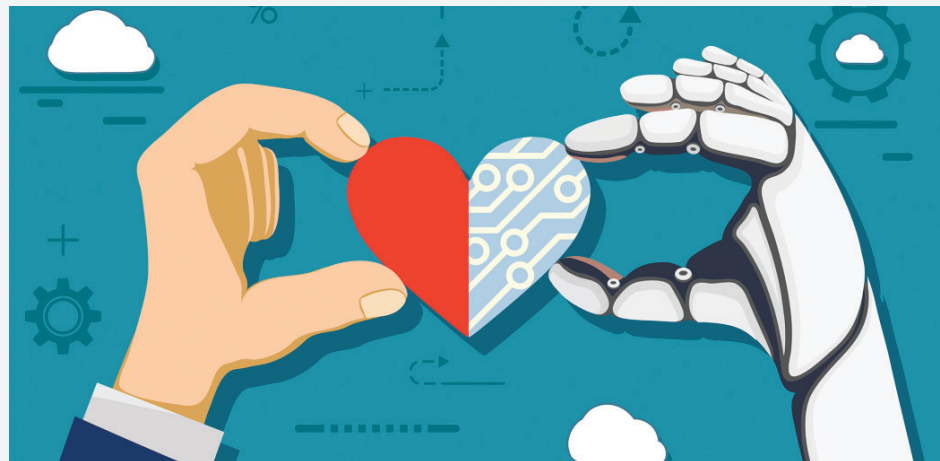
Embracing the wisdom of the human heart

Today, as we reflect on the Word of God on this 58th World Day of Social Communications, we are reminded of the profound truth that lies at the core of our existence: the wisdom of the human heart. In a world increasingly dominated by technology, it is crucial to remember that no AI, no matter how advanced, can ever replace the wisdom that emanates from the depths of the human soul.

In our readings today, we are presented with passages that speak to the essence of humanity and the power of human connection. In the Acts of the Apostles, we witness the disciples grappling with the loss of Judas Iscariot, one of their own. Despite the betrayal and the pain it caused, they recognised the importance of human relationships and the role each individual plays within the community of believers.

From 1 John, we are reminded of the fundamental truth that God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God. Love is the essence of our humanity, the force that binds us together as one family. It is through love that we find meaning and purpose in our lives, and it is through love that we are called to communicate with one another.

And in the Gospel of John, we hear the words of Jesus as He prays to the Father for His disciples. He acknowledges the challenges they will face in the world but prays for their protection, not from the world itself, but from the evil that threatens to divide and destroy. Jesus understood



the power of human connection and the importance of standing together in the face of adversity.

My brothers and sisters, as we reflect on these readings, let us not forget the wisdom that resides within each of us. In a world where technology continues to advance at an unprecedented pace, it is easy to become enamoured with the capabilities of AI and the promise of a more efficient and connected future. But let us not lose sight of what truly makes us human: our capacity to love, to empathize, and to communicate with one another on a deeply personal level.

While AI may excel at processing data and performing tasks with remarkable speed and precision, it will never possess the depth of emotion or the richness of experience that defines the human

condition. It is our ability to connect with one another on a heart-to-heart level that sets us apart and gives meaning to our lives.

As Pope Francis has reminded us, communication is not simply about transmitting information; it is about building bridges between individuals and fostering genuine human relationships. It is about seeing the dignity and worth of each person we encounter and recognizing the inherent value of their humanity.

Hence, let us embrace the wisdom of the human heart and strive to communicate with authenticity, compassion, and love. Let us not be afraid to share our joys and sorrows, our hopes and fears, knowing that it is through our openness and vulnerability that we truly connect with one another.

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Fr George Vaithynathan

7th Sunday of Easter (B)

Readings: Acts of the Apostle 1:15-17, 20-26;

1 John 4:11-16

Gospel: John 17:11-19

As we live our lives to the fullest, may we be mindful of the sacred gift of human communication and the profound impact it has on our lives and the lives of those around us. And may we always remember that no matter how advanced technology may become, it can never replace the wisdom that resides within the depths of the human heart.

Let us invoke the assistance of the God, that we will always be in touch with the gift of human persons through this prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of human communication and the wisdom that resides within each of us. Help us to always communicate with authenticity, compassion, and love, recognising the inherent dignity of every person we encounter. Grant us the courage to share our true selves with one another and to build bridges of understanding and empathy wherever we go. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

Cardinal Sebastian graces PAS *Hari Raya* open house

PERLIS: Cardinal Sebastian Francis graced the central-level PAS *Hari Raya* Open House event at Dewan 2020 in Kangar on April 27, extending a hand of fellowship and understanding among attendees.

Tuan Abdul Rahman Kassim, the liaison officer for Inter-Communal Relations at PAS Pusat, warmly welcomed the cardinal, facilitating introductions with the gathered dignitaries. Representing the Diocese of Penang, which encompasses states led by PAS including Kedah, Perlis, and Kelantan, this gathering fostered invaluable bonds of fraternity.

Among the prominent PAS leaders present were Mursyidul Am Tuan Guru Dato' Hashim Jasin; President Tan Sri Abdul Hadi Awang; Deputy President Dato' Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man; Secretary General Datuk

Seri Takiyuddin Hassan, as well as Perlis Menteri Besar Mohd Shukri Ramli, and Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor.

Accompanying Cardinal Sebastian were Fr Francis Xavier, parish priest of the Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Kangar; Deacon Dave Kameron of the Minor Basilica of St Anne; Sr Florence Nemesius and Sr Lucynia Jeprin from the FSIC congregation; Arokiadass Anthonysamy from the Penang MCCBHST and CFM, and Christopher Kushi, legal officer. Patricia Lim Seok Ai, the PPC chairperson of Kangar parish, also brought three university students — Stephanie Benjamin Kudumpal, Duane Regen, and Lee John — to partake in the festivities, providing them with a first-hand experience of the *Hari Raya* Open House tradition.



KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

May

- 13 Feast – Church of Our Lady of Fatima, Brickfields
- 15-16 Clergy Recollection
- 16 Meeting – Archdiocesan Finance Committee
- 18 Confirmation – Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Klang
- 19 Confirmation – Church of the Sacred Heart, Bentong

PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Cardinal Sebastian Francis

May

- 7-16 Rite of Canonical Possession of the Titular Church - Parish of Holy Mary, Cause of Our Joy, Visitations to the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, Dicastery of Social Communications and Dicastery for Evangelisation of Peoples, Rome
- 19 Feast - Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Penang @ 10.00am

MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

May

- 15 Meeting – South Johor Vicariate Clergy, Church of Christ the King, Kulai
- 18 Annual General Meeting – Villa Paulos
- 18 Confirmation – Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Johor Bahru



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #173

F12
MJD NEWS
UPDATES

Greetings dear friends of MJD,

The nation remembers the 10 Navy personnel who perished in the Lumut helicopter mishap. Let us be united with the mourning. Severe weather sweep across continents: tornadoes in US and China, flood and extreme heat in Africa, India and Bangladesh. Earth tremor measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale shook the north-west of West Java. Air quality has worsened to unhealthy levels in Banting, Rompin, Kimanis, with Putrajaya and Shah Alam nearing the unhealthy mark. While climate change and bad air is worrying, the election air in US, Spain and KKB does not help either. Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Tajikistan were polled as the four most polluted countries. A groundswell against the Israel-Gaza invasion is sweeping through US campuses. World Bank reports find Malaysian students lagging behind Vietnam in years of learning and reading proficiency. In Samoa, churches spend millions building cathedrals when debts and poverty are skyrocketing. Good news or bad news?

“Bounce Back” Times: Individuals have defied the odds to rise from defeat or disasters. Once backward nations have emerged as new tigers. Once never known to be sports savvy, many have their names etched in the Halls of Fame. Often, I wonder, when will I see our nation, our churches, or our sportsmen soar? Many of us hope to see a comeback, a bounce back or recovery. People are generally hopeful. Will we ever see a bounce back?

We all face pain and hardships. Whether it's a career setback, breakup, or health scare, building resilience is crucial for navigating life's challenges.

Resilience is our ability to bounce back; handling tough times by stay-

ing mentally flexible and emotionally flexible. How do they do it? Practise acceptance. Focus on what you can change. Set new goals. Think optimistically. Connect for support. Take care of yourself. Work on problem-solving skills.

The disciples bounced back. Those who encountered Jesus were renewed. In Christ Jesus, many witness to the new freedom, new life and new man. They bounced back.

“True encounter with Christ liberates something in us, a power we did not know we had, a hope, a capacity for life, a resilience, an ability to bounce back when we thought we were completely defeated, a capacity to grow and change, a power of creative transformation.” — Thomas Merton, *He Is Risen*

A Thought for the Week: Merchant of Death.

About a hundred years ago, a man looked at the morning newspaper and, to his surprise and horror, read his name in the obituary column. The newspapers had mistakenly reported the death of the wrong person. His first response was shock. Am I here or there? When he regained his composure, his second thought was to find out what people had said about him. The obituary read, “Dynamite King Dies.” And also “He was the merchant of death.” This man was the inventor of dynamite and when he read the words “merchant of death,” he asked himself a question, “Is this how I am going to be remembered?” He got in touch with his feelings and decided that this was not the way he wanted to be remembered. From that day on, he started working towards peace. His name was Alfred Nobel and he is remembered today by the great Nobel Prize.

A lesson from the merchant of death:
Just as Alfred Nobel got in touch with

his feelings and redefined his values, we should step back and do the same. How do you want to be remembered? What would people say about you at your wake or funeral?

Announcements for the Week

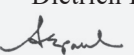
1. Join MJD's Creation Justice Ministry's collaboration with Caritas MJD, the Forestry Department, on the *Mangrove Project*. Join us in Restoring Mangroves, exploring Kukup Island and the Stingless Bee Farm on Sunday July 28! Contact the Creation Justice Committee of your parish for more details.

2. The *Special Children's Parents Support Group* want to reach out to parents with special children who have, autism or any mental or physical disabilities. Open to all language groups. Contact Veronica Dass Tel: 016 2095001.

3. **Diocesan Priesthood Vocation Discernment Weekend in Mandarin** will be held on May 18-19 at the Church of St Louis, Kluang with the theme *Good for us to be Here* (Mk 9:5). For more details, please contact Msgr Peter Ng.

The Lord walks with you. “God will never direct us to be prideful, arrogant and unforgiving, immoral or slothful or full of fear. We step into these things because we are insensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit within us.” (Charles Stanley). Be led by the Spirit.

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

True leadership begins with inner transformation

By Elvina Fernandez

KUALA LUMPUR: Leaders of the Church of St Anthony gathered for a day of recollection April 27, to delve into a day of spiritual nourishment and growth in their leadership journey.

They represented a tapestry of services within the parish (ministries and BECs).

Their shared purpose was clear — to deepen their spiritual understanding and enhance their service to both the parish and its community, so that the Church of St Anthony would continue to thrive, guided by leaders who walked the path of spiritual growth.

Fr Gerard Theraviam, parish priest of the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist led the sessions. His gentle demeanour and insights immediately put everyone at ease. His wisdom and commitment to nurturing servant leaders set the tone for the day.

During the session, Fr Gerard emphasised that true leadership begins with an inner transformation — a journey of the soul. He encouraged the leaders to cultivate virtues such as humility, compassion, and patience. “A leader who serves with love,” he said, “is a beacon of light for others.”

The sessions unfolded in Dewan Dominic at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre (APC),



Participants choosing a photo that best reflect themselves.

where the parish leaders gathered as one to learn, share, and grow together. They listened intently as Fr Gerard spoke about the importance of ensuring the continuity of their leadership and service in the church by preparing the next generation of leaders to continue the good work that they do for the Lord.

“Leadership,” he reminded, “is not about the years of serving; it’s about aspiring to inspire and make each individual in the team a better version of themselves.” He added that leaders should always ask the question — why we do what we do and who it is for. “Then every task

is a joy and done with a firmer purpose.”

The participants contemplated their own lives — busy schedules, responsibilities, and the need to pause and listen to the whispers of the Lord to guide their actions.

Fr Gerard encouraged the leaders to always put the team’s vision, mission, and goal in prayer. “We can do all things through Him, Who strengthens us.”

Parish priest Fr Dr Clarence Devadass, who also joined the sessions in prayer, sharing, and reflection, emphasised the power of being still and leaving things to God.

“As leaders,” he explained, “we are sometimes too occupied with what’s next, an ongoing race of moving from one thing to another, but we must remember to stand still and leave it in prayer with God. Only then can we lead with focus because God is leading the way and making it happen in His time.”

The leaders also engaged with Fr Michel Dass, the parish’s new assistant parish priest. His youthful enthusiasm and humour charmed everyone. Fr Michel shared stories of his journey to the priesthood, emphasising the joy of serving God’s people as a good shepherd.

“We, as leaders, must be the shepherds who go after the lost sheep, and that will make us stronger as a church, community, ministry, or team.” He added that a leader should know his sheep and put their skills to the best use to serve the parish.

The session ended with closing remarks by Fr Gerard and Fr Clarence, followed by a closing prayer by Fr Michel. The leaders left the day of recollection with a deeper sense of purpose — a commitment to lead from love, with purpose, and in prayer. At the end of the sessions, the leaders departed, knowing that their service is a sacred calling and that they have indeed been chosen to fulfil the Lord’s purpose for His people.



DIOCESE
OF SIBU

Priests on transfer and commission appointments

The following appointments have been made effective May 1:

1. Fr David Lau will assist at the Church of St Teresa, Sg Merah Mission. He is the ecclesiastical assistant for Pastoral Health Care, and the Catholic Nurses’ Guild. He is also the hospital chaplain.
2. Fr Richard Lau will assist at St Mary’s Divine Mercy Mission Jalan Awang Ramli Amit. He is the ecclesiastical assistant for Pro-Life, Natural Fertility Awareness Service and the Society of St Vincent De Paul.
3. Fr. K. Y. Rajan, CMF will assist at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He is the ecclesiastical assistant for Social Communications and Youth.
4. Fr Shyam, CMF will assist at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. He is the ecclesiastical assistant for School and Campus Ministry.
5. Fr Ivan Fang, MHM will assist at the Church of Christ the King, Bintangor Mission. He is the ecclesiastical assistant for St Joseph’s Mission Animation Centre, Sentosa and for Mission.
6. Fr Edward Raymond will assist at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He is the ecclesiastical assistant for the Neocatechumenal way and Lay Apostolate.
7. Fr Francis Go OFM Cap will assist in the Mandarin Apostolate of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He is the ecclesiastical assistant for Youth.

As we await the Liturgical celebration of the Pentecost; may we have a fruitful ministry in a more synodal Church, discerning under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Bishop Joseph Hui Teck Kwang
April 24, 2024

Advancing Southeast Asia’s Biblical Mission



CBF-SEA delegates at the Cathedral of St Joseph, Kuching.

KUCHING: In a significant follow-up to the 10th Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF) held in Argentina last year, a seminar addressing pertinent topics for Southeast Asia convened in the Archdiocese of Kuching from March 11 to 15. Hosted by Archbishop Simon Poh, the seminar drew participants from across the region.

Representatives from Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, comprising clergy, religious and laity, congregated to engage in discussions. Associate members followed the programme via Zoom.

Notable attendees included Fr Jan Stefanow, SVD, the general secretary of the Catholic Biblical Federation, who travelled from Rome to contribute his insights.

Archbishop Simon Poh, Archbishop Basilio Athai from Myanmar and Bishop Francis Arprondratana Vira from Thailand provided key perspectives during the seminar.

Bishop Pablo Virgilio S. David, presi-

dent of the Catholic Bishops Conference in the Philippines, addressed the gathering remotely, emphasising the importance of regional action plans within the broader framework outlined by the Catholic Biblical Federation.

During the seminar, Archbishop Simon challenged participants to explore innovative approaches to evangelisation in Southeast Asia, sparking lively dialogue and inspiring attendees to take proactive steps in their communities.

Waltraud Linnig, a prominent figure from the Mother of Life Centre in the Philippines, presented a compelling paper on integrating biblical principles into catechetical formation, while Geraldine Clare Westwood highlighted the urgent need for environmental stewardship, drawing on biblical teachings to underscore the moral imperative.

Despite physical constraints, contributors from around the world, including John Bergin from New Zealand, shared insights on contemporary issues facing youth, offering perspectives rooted in Scripture

and the teachings of the Church.

Cardinal Charles Bo of Myanmar, though unable to attend in person due to prior commitments, delivered a message via video, encouraging participants to embrace hope and reflection as they navigate the challenges ahead.

The seminar also provided a platform for countries to showcase their unique pastoral practices, fostering a spirit of collaboration and camaraderie among attendees. Beyond the formal sessions, participants had the opportunity to explore the local culture and heritage, further enriching their experience.

A significant moment was when the Kuching prelate, Archbishop Simon, graciously accepted a role as one of two consultants for the CBF-SEA, cementing his commitment to the region’s ongoing biblical mission.

Overall, the seminar proved to be a memorable and enlightening experience, reinforcing the importance of collaborative efforts in advancing the Catholic Biblical Federation’s mission in Southeast Asia.

A day of spiritual enrichment for the Klang district

By Nesa Dhevasahayam

KLANG: In honour of the month of Mary and the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Klang District Pastoral Council organised a one-day retreat titled *Eucharist and Mary* on May 1. This event saw participation from over 500 parishioners from the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Church of St Anne, Church of St Peter and Paul and Church of the Holy Redeemer.

The retreat featured multilingual sessions led by various priests — Fr Gregory Chan conducted the English session, Fr David Arulanatham led in Tamil, Fr Gnana Selvam Berentis and Fr Eugene Benedict presented in Bahasa Malaysia, while Fr Martin Then, CDD, the assistant parish priest of the Church of St Ignatius, Petaling Jaya. During the homily, themes of fulfilling God's will through the Eucharist were highlighted, alongside reflections on the

The day began with a vibrant praise and worship session, setting



Group sharing

the stage for a series of enlightening talks. These discussions delved into the profound connection between the Eucharist and Mary, drawing parallels between Mary and the Ark of the Covenant, to enhance understanding among the faithful. Topics such as the proper spiritual prepara-

tion for receiving the Eucharist and the depth of devotion to it were also explored.

Participants were moved by powerful testimonials that deepened their faith and understanding of the Eucharist. The retreat concluded with a holy hour and a Mass con-



Adoration

celebrated by the clergy of the Klang District, together with Fr Martin Then, CDD, the assistant parish priest of the Church of St Ignatius, Petaling Jaya. During the homily, themes of fulfilling God's will through the Eucharist were highlighted, alongside reflections on the

virtuous life of St Joseph, aligning with his feast day.

The day was a profound experience, inspiring all to live more fruitfully in the presence of Jesus for the glory of God, the betterment of the Church, and the good of all people.

SMC launches Ministry Day

IPOH: As the sunset Mass concluded on April 27, parishioners eagerly streamed into the Peter Pang Hall of the Parish Activities Centre, marking the commencement of the first parish event of the year for the Church of St Michael (SMC) — the official opening of Ministry Day.

During the Mass, parish priest Fr Anthony Liew had spoken about how we should all use the gifts God had given us. "By serving in ministry, one could learn to serve one another and experience God's love more," he preached in his homily.

More than 30 ministries and groups had put up an exhibition of their activities (past and present) and their objectives for being in ministry. There was also an hour-long slide presentation of ministerial activities. At SMC, there are liturgical and non-liturgical ministries. Touching on the liturgical ministries, which ranged from the wardens to the choirs, Fr Anthony complimented all those who served faithfully in their ministry during Masses to ensure that all experience God's love and presence.

For the non-liturgical ministries, there were those who helped out

the Orang Asli by visiting them in their villages. Visits to them with medical help and daily necessities were more frequent before but today, because of lack of manpower, the members of the Sahabat Orang Asli do not visit them as often. The Ministry to the Poor also had their fair share of service to the poor families (Catholic and non-Catholic). It was hoped that the aid given and the personal contact through visits made would help break the chains of poverty.

Prayer is also an essential component of our faith. As such, there were ministries at SMC which focused on prayer. These included the Legionaries of which there were six praesidia, four of which were for the Mandarin-speaking and two for the English-speaking. There is the Padre Pio group that prays for the sick, visits them and helps family members during difficult times. There is also the Wake groups (English- and Mandarin-speaking) that help at wake services in times of bereavement. They are truly a source of consolation to the family members as many conversion stories were the result.

Next, Fr Anthony also touched

on building the faith through the catechism classes for students, RCIA sessions for adults and faith formation ministry for anyone who wanted to deepen their faith. He stressed that we all need to know about the church setup and the part that it plays in our everyday lives. With a good foundation in faith, one will always be able to turn to God when one feels helpless.

However, he concluded by saying that we cannot only love God. We need to join a ministry to connect with God and with one another. If we are active in ministry, we will not find Mass boring or feel lonely in Church. We will have a sense of responsibility as a parishioner, to be of service to one another.

His straightforward plea 'Can you help?' saw many signing up for at least one church ministry during the exhibition. He reminded the parishioners that St Michael's Church (or any other parish for that matter) can be a more vibrant parish with committed, responsible and dedicated parishioners, regardless of who the parish priest is, as parish priests do not stay in one parish for long! — *By Jennifer Duarte*

Parish marks first year-anniversary



Archbishop John Wong cutting the anniversary cake.

MENGGATAL, Sabah: On April 21, the Church of the Good Shepherd marked its first anniversary since being elevated to a full-fledged parish, a milestone event attended by approximately 500 parishioners. The celebration was graced by the presence Archbishop John Wong, who administered the Sacrament of Confirmation during his visit.

The celebration, taking place amidst warm temperatures, saw the archbishop extending Easter greetings in his homily, emphasising the resurrection of Christ and His role as the Good Shepherd. "The Lord has risen from the dead. Not only does He want to be with us but He wants to stay among and within us," said Archbishop John. He encouraged the congregation to embody the kindness, love, and mercy of Christ in their daily actions.

The archbishop also recognised the occasion as a quadruple celebration: the fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday,

the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, and Confirmation day for the parish confirmands. During the Mass, 83 individuals received the anointing of chrism oil and First Holy Communion, reaffirming their baptismal vows in a ceremony that infuses the Holy Spirit, enabling them to live Christ-centred lives.

Archbishop John urged continued prayers for priests, sisters, religious, and catechists for their ongoing devotion to the church. The ceremony also included a call to support and nurture vocational calls within the church community.

Post-homily, the Holy Mass transitioned to expressions of gratitude from Mr. Severinus Abel, chairman of the Parish Pastoral Council for GSCM, and the rector Fr David Sham. Both thanked parishioners for their dedication and cooperation in supporting the parish's journey toward independence and preparedness for future transformation programmes.



Parishioners checking out the exhibition display by the various ministries.

Fostering a prayerful community

By Charmaine Amanda

KUALA LUMPUR: An hour of adoration, meditation, praise, and worship, with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, from April 15 to 21, prepared the community of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Setapak for a prayerful celebration of its feast and the 61st World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Throughout this sacred time, they reflected on the themes of Communion, Participation, and Mission, deepening their spiritual connection and commitment.

Fr Peter Anthony started off the first day by challenging the faithful to ponder if they truly seek the God of blessings or merely seek the blessings of God. Jesus multiplied the loaves when He saw the people gathered, hungry, thirsty and longing for the Messiah. In return, Jesus also took care of their earthly needs by giving them bread to eat. He invited the faithful to come in union with Christ and remain in Communion with Christ. Fr Jean Claude, in his homily, reflected on the word 'advocate'. An advocate believes, support and promotes an ideology or belief. If we are to be an advocate of Christ, we are expected to forcefully live our lives demonstrating our belief and conviction in Jesus.

On day two, Fr George Harrison reflected on being fully alive, joyful and spirit filled Christians, which makes us powerful witnesses of Jesus Christ. "How do we attract the other towards Jesus as Stephen did?" He questioned the pilgrims if they were looking for the miracles of Jesus or thirsting for the Jesus of all miracles. He urged those present to consciously, convincingly and consistently choose the Bread of Life under all circumstances.

The following day, Sr Retta Savariannan of the Canossian Daughters of Charity, gave an

impactful and thought-provoking presentation on Communion and Community before Mass. During the Eucharistic celebration, Fr Gnana Selvam gave an account of his personal vocation journey and how the prayers of the Bestari Jaya community for 54 years yielded fruit when a priest was chosen and ordained from amongst them. He urged the people not to undermine the power of prayer. Prayer is talking, speaking and listening to the Lord. Jesus always welcomes and embraces us with outstretched hands in our prayer journey. In His time, He grants the desires of the heart of a praying community and satisfies our inner joy.

After three days of reflection on *Communion*, the focus evolved to the theme of *Participation*, where prayer becomes an action. Fr Michel Dass emphasised that, as we unload our troubles at the bosom of the Good Shepherd, He loads us with His love, the Bread of Life. The Good Shepherd hugs and listens to His broken, wounded, lost and painful sheep, which is you and me. Prayer is a prerequisite to participate in the mission God has set for us, as a busy life makes prayer harder but prayer makes a busy life easier. He challenged the community not to be fixated on rituals and rigmaroles of set prayers but to earnestly pour out our hearts' content to the kind and gentle Good Shepherd in our own prayerful encounter with the risen Lord.

On the morning of the fifth day, Fr James Gabriel led the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick which was administered to the sick and elderly of the parish. Many who were physically ill were comforted by the warmth, care and promise of the Good Shepherd. As a growing city parish, caring for the elderly is strongly embedded in the fabric of the community as a testament of witness to synodality.

The evening Mass was presided over by the



Fr Andrew Manickam OFM Cap leading the procession with the Blessed Sacrament.

shepherd of the Archdiocese, Archbishop Julian Leow. In addressing his flock, he called the faithful to ponder on their purpose in this world as he himself asks the same question daily. 'Why am I the bishop of Kuala Lumpur?' Jesus gives us His body and blood in the Eucharist so that we can inherit eternal life beyond the grave. Like Saul, sometimes, we too persecute the Church and God's people by refusing to answer God's call. In those uncertain times, he reminded the people to turn to the Eucharistic Lord as a prayerful community.

Throng of pilgrims came in full force on the main feast day on April 20, participating in Mass, adoration, and procession of the Blessed Sacrament. Fr Andrew Manickam, OFM, Cap shared that mission is crucial in the life of a Christian. The true calling of a Christian's life is when we realise our mission in this world and humbly accept it. The procession of the Blessed Sacrament through the housing areas in the periphery of the church was indeed a significant blessing as the parishioners not only witnessed to the Eucharistic Lord in a profound walk but also saw many non-Christians raising their

palms to adore the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance.

On the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Kuala Lumpur Archdiocese Vocation Director, Fr Vincent Thomas, explained the word "vocation" which derives its meaning from the Latin root 'vocare', meaning "to call." In the Catholic Church, our "vocation" refers to God's call for us and our life. Jesus calls all of us in a unique and intimate way to know Him, love Him, follow Him and serve Him. Many of us are eager to do mission and yet, if we are unable to reach them on our feet, we can attain them on our knees. Hence the importance of orienting mission in the form of prayer, especially in the family. Prayer is the engine to move mission. Prayer is the only tool to promote vocation to the priesthood, religious life, parish ministry and family life.

Parish priest, Fr Mitchel Anthony Joseph thanked the Feast Day organising committee and all parishioners who came in full force to foster a prayerful community in Setapak. He hoped that this seed of prayer will one day blossom and bear fruit in each family.



DIOCESE OF PENANG
PKK/BDN/2023/08/165

Notifications and Updates

As we conclude the fifty days of the Sacred Season of Easter with Pentecost Sunday, the Church recalls the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, the beginnings of the Church and the start of her mission to all tongues and peoples and nations. The celebration of Pentecost gives a context to all our efforts as missionary disciples of Christ.

Encouraged and affirmed by the first experience of Pentecost, may the infilling and outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our very own lives inspire and guide us to be missionary disciples of Joy, Mercy and Hope in our every thought, desire, decision, and act of love every single day. Let us offer up our time, talent and treasure in this effort and call for discipleship.

1. The Rite of Canonical Possession of the Titular Church - Parrocchia Santa Maria Causa Nostrae Laetitiae

Following my appointment in being created Cardinal and becoming part of the clergy of Rome, as an expression of the unity of the Church, I will be away in Rome from May 7 – 16 for the Rite of Canonical Possession of the Titular Church - Parish of Holy Mary, Cause of Our Joy. I invite all the parishes in the Diocese of Penang to remain united in prayer and in solidarity with the Church of Holy Mary, Cause of Our Joy. For details go to: <https://bit.ly/4aZ113B>

2. Certificate in Theology - Mandarin

I congratulate Ms Angela Huang from the Parish of St Michael, Ipoh who has recently obtained a Certificate in Theology conducted in Mandarin. This online study is by the Catholic Theological Institute of Singapore encompassing a prerequisite of six modules for certificate and six modules for a diploma course. For more go to: <https://bit.ly/3UncW4m>

3. 58th World Day of Social Communications 2024 – Formation and Celebration

In conjunction with the 58th World Day of Social Communications 2024, the Diocesan Social Communications Ministry will be organising a day of formation with several workshops on May 25 and 26, from 2.00pm to 7.00pm, at the Catholic Diocesan Centre, Macalister Road, Penang and Church of the Sacred Heart, Kampar. Parish representatives and all who are interested in social communications are most welcome to join in this event. For details go to: <https://bit.ly/3Wp7ccJ>

4. Symposium - Intersectionalities between Spirituality and Sociology

In collaboration, the National Cancer Society Malaysia (NCSM) and Caritas Penang Diocese will be organising a symposium titled "Intersectionalities

between Health, Spirituality and Sociology" on May 25, 2024, from 8.30am to 4.30pm at Dewan NCSM-Caritas, Homes of Hope @ Simee Ipoh, Perak. Be a part of history: Witness the launch of the NCSM-Caritas Symposium 2024 and Dewan NCSM-Caritas. Participate in insightful sessions on health, spirituality, sociology, a forum discussion, and a hands-on workshop with experts from NCSM, Mount Miriam Cancer Hospital, and Caritas Penang Diocese. For more details go to: <https://bit.ly/44nvB4A>

5. Penang Diocesan Vocation Team

Vocation promotion is the duty and responsibility of every member and it should become a priority carried out with love and dedication by all. Together with the team and your parish priest, I invite you to be courageous in discerning together and accepting the call of God with openness and joy. For details go to: <https://bit.ly/3UGqw43>

6. Fr Anthony Liew leaves for his studies in Rome

Fr Anthony Liew will leave for Rome for his studies in Licentiate in Spiritual Theology for a period of two years. We wish him the very best and continue to keep him in prayers as he embarks on this new journey in Rome, strengthened by the

Holy Spirit. Fr Anthony Heng CDD will take over as Parish Administrator of the Church of St Michael, Ipoh with effect from June 1, 2024.

7. 39th Diocesan Tamil Catholic Charismatic Rally 2024

The Tamil coordinating team of the Diocese of Penang will be organising a Tamil Charismatic Rally on June 3 from 8.30am – 5.30pm at the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Butterworth. I invite you to come and be enriched by the empowering of the Holy Spirit through this rally. For more details go to: <https://bit.ly/4dxSSFc>

8. 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 from July 19 and culminate on July 28. Let us pray for all pilgrims, volunteers, celebrants and confessor as we experience a meaningful and grace-filled celebration through the intercession of St Anne and St Joachim. For details go to: <https://bit.ly/49D0tit>

Sebastian Francis

Cardinal Sebastian Francis

Understanding the mission of the Canossians

By Bernard Anthony

MELAKA: In conjunction with the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, a group of Catholics from several parishes in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur visited the Sacred Heart Canossian Convent May 1.

Sr Shanti Mariadass, the Superior and Sr Clare Chin and Sr Jennyfer were on hand to

welcome the group's visit. Many were first timers.

The purpose of the visit was to have a first hand experience in knowing and understanding the life, work and mission of the Canossian Sisters by visiting the Canossian museum and to pray at the chapel for more vocations, especially to the priesthood and religious life and to encourage and cultivate the seed of vocation



The pilgrims at the Canossian museum



KL Pilgrims with the Canossian Sisters.

in the families of those present. They also wanted to encourage the sisters of our love, care and support and to give a 'Love Gift' in solidarity with the Canossian Sisters, for use in their mission.

Sr Shanti welcomed all and gave an enlightening briefing on the history and mission of the Canossian sisters in Malaysia. She mentioned that this year marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of St Magdelene of Canossa (1774-2024), their foundress.

Presently there are 30 Canossian sisters serving in Malaysia. In Melaka, the Sacred Heart

Canossian Convent, established in 1905, has five sisters. Two other sisters are based at the Montfort Youth Centre in Ayer Salak.

The sisters are managing the adjacent Sacred Heart Convent Kindergarten which has 60 children. They also teach Bible Knowledge at their secondary school Convent, after school hours. They also support some 10 poor families in the vicinity of this convent.

Sr Shanti gave the visiting group each a Prayer Card of St Magdalene of Canossa with a 2nd class relic (cloth) of the saint, af-

ter a prayer session and reflection held in the convent's chapel.

In the Canossian museum which the group also visited, Sr Shanti and Sr Clare provided answers and explanations about the artefacts and articles on display. The visitors gained better insights of the life and sacrifices of the Canossian sisters in Malaysia over the last 119 years of mission in the country.

Besides serving in a few other places; the Canossian Sisters manages the Miriam Home for the Aged in Kluang, Johor, taking care of some 40 residents.

Formation for evangelisers

BUKIT MERTAJAM, Penang: Thirty lay faithful gathered in the Minor Basilica of St Anne, for a Formation for Evangelisers from April 27 to 28. This is the second such formation organised by the School for New Evangelisation, an initiative of the Penang Diocesan New Evangelisation Commission.

The talks were presented by Fr Ryan Innas from the College General, Penang and Martin Jalleh, a lay preacher. Other sessions included Praise and Worship, Testimonies, Role Plays and Group Spiritual Conversations. The formation was capped with a Pentecost Experience and Commissioning.

The Praise and Worship sessions led by Anthony Wong at the beginning of each day's formation set the participants in the right composure to focus on the activities of the day.

Fr Ryan touched on the topics, *Kerygma* — Good News for the World and Evangelisation through Inculturation in the Community. He stressed that the *Kerygma* is the

effective Christian proclamation of what God does in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. This is because it awakens faith and leads someone to accept Jesus as Lord of all Creation and Saviour of the World resulting in the person deciding to entrust oneself to Jesus Christ and follow Him every day.

Martin Jalleh shared about *Faith: A Personal Relationship with Jesus; Be a Witness to Christ: Sharing Your Story* and the *Holy Spirit being the Protagonist of Mission*. He reiterated that our message conveyed in evangelisation ought to be clear and concise connecting our faith with our real life. Consistency is important in that we need to "walk the talk". Our testimony is to be centred on Christ and not self-centred! Charity, love, holiness, humility, communication, a touch of humour and our honour of God stand out as important attributes for any evangeliser. We are also reminded of the importance of the Holy Spirit in our mission from

whom we draw our strength and perseverance.

Two young men, Martin Lee and Augustine Hew shared their testimonies glorifying God for what He has done in their lives. Many of those present were truly moved and touched by their inspiring stories.

All participants benefitted from the Role Play and Group Spiritual Conversations as they opened up their hearts and minds to share their personal thoughts and experiences including their inmost feelings about evangelisation.

The Pentecost Experience was a proven encounter with the power of the Holy Spirit as Arokiasamy and the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit Prayer team prayed over the participants invoking the Spirit upon them, to go forth to evangelise as Missionary Disciples.

Finally, Deacon Lazarus Jonathan carried out the commissioning of the lay faithful which emphasised that all of God's people have evangelisation as a common ministry. — *By Stephanie Cheong*



Three participants for the Formation for Evangelisers with their lighted candles.

Letters to Editor

F is for FACTS (which matters)

Dear Editor,

I refer to Anil Netto's column 'G is for genocide in Gaza' (HERALD, April 28).

Its disconcerting to read a columnist spinning a yarn with emotional tugging and embellishing it might-be and what-ifs and opinions of politicians to paint a narrative of which the writer has no nerve to say it out loud.

The writer's anti-Israel sentiment is very evident. If so, it should be backed up with facts, not fantasy.

Historians and academics are straining their senses and intellect to label what's happening in Gaza as a genocide. However, the columnist gleefully labels it as one. With no facts forthcoming.

Hamas's terroristic act of killing 1200 was not even mentioned or discussed. Instead that crack is papered over and the retaliation is condemned instead.

A state is worthless if it can't defend its citizens.

Blame for the current death toll of 35000 can be laid solely on Hamas. One wonders what "strategic planning model" did these terrorist use when deciding to murder 1200 innocent party goers and kidnaping a further 300++. Were they actually expecting a hero's welcome instead of the current war? In war lives are lost. Fact.

Hamas brought this destruction down on the Palestinians. And the Palestinians themselves are complicit to this destruction by first keeping Hamas in power since 2006 and second CELEBRATING the terroristic attack on October 7, 2023.

This war will end when Hamas is removed. Either by force or voluntarily. Fact.

Fantasies like that weaved by the Sunday Observer columnist is very unhelpful.

AL
via email

Send your letters to ► letterseditor@herald.com.my

The Editor, HERALD, 5 Jalan Robertson, 50150 KL | Please include your name and address. Letters without name and address will not be entertained.

Embrace, don't fear, disagreements

VATICAN: Unity within Christian communities and the unity of all the churches will grow only as believers draw closer to Jesus and learn to be honest in examining if they are listening to the Holy Spirit or to their own preferences, Pope Francis told leaders of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

"We are called to pray and to listen to one another, seeking to understand each other's concerns and asking ourselves, before enquiring of others, whether we have been docile to the promptings of the Holy Spirit or prey to our own personal or group opinions," Pope Francis said May 2 as he welcomed to the Vatican Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury and the primates of the Anglican churches.

"Surely, the divine way of seeing things will never be one of division, separation or the interruption of dia-

logue," the Pope said. "Rather, God's way leads us to cling ever more fervently to the Lord Jesus, for only in communion with him will we find full communion with one another."

Pope Francis read his speech to the group, but also set aside time to respond to the primates' questions, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, told reporters. The questions, she said, allowed the Pope to talk about "his own passions in ministry, unity in diversity, harmony, and he said in several ways that 'war is always, always, always a defeat.'"

The Anglican primates are the senior bishops, archbishops or moderators of the 42-member churches of the Anglican Communion; they meet every two years. A spokeswoman for the Anglican Communion said 32 of the primates were present in Rome. The

primates' meeting April 26-May 3 marked their first group pilgrimage to Rome. Their visit included daily Bible studies on the Book of Acts, focusing on leadership and what it means to share together in joint mission and witness, as well as discussions and pilgrimages to St Peter's Basilica and the tomb of St. Peter and to the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls and the tomb of St Paul.

During their meeting, the primates were reviewing a paper on structure and decision-making in the Anglican Communion and proposals for addressing differences and disagreements within the church.

Pope Francis told them how the Easter season readings of the Acts of the Apostles reminds all Christians of the joys and struggles the Christian community has faced from the beginning.



Pope Francis greets Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury, spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion, during a meeting with Anglican primates in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican May 2, 2024. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

"Amid so many glorious pages that speak of faith and fraternity, courage in the face of persecution, the joyful spread of the Gospel and its opening to the Gentiles," he said, "the sacred author does not conceal moments of tension and misunderstanding, often born of the frailty of the disciples, or different approaches to the relationship with past tradition."

But the lesson, the Pope said, is that the Holy Spirit must be allowed to work in the hearts of individuals and in the community.

"We must not be afraid of disagreements, but embrace them, leaving the primacy to the Paraclete," the Pope said.

Pope Francis also told the Anglicans that he knows the role of the pope, the Bishop of Rome, "is still a controversial and divisive issue among Christians," but he said he hoped ecumenical study and dialogue, encouraged by St John Paul II, would continue trying "to understand how the Petrine ministry can develop as a service of love for all."

— By Cindy Wooden, CNS

Spare our churches, say Baltimore Catholics

BALTIMORE, Maryland: Hundreds of Catholic residents of Baltimore packed the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen recently to give their often-impassioned reactions to a process that could lead to the closure of nearly two-thirds of the city's parishes.

Several parishes from the state's largest city organised large contingents to attend the April 30 meeting, which was the final of three listening sessions for the Archdiocese of Baltimore's "Seek the City" parish restructuring proposal. They made their presence known with custom-made T-shirts or ethnic attire, with some even carrying large banners that begged Archbishop William Lori to spare their churches.

Parishioners from the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in the Mount Washington neighbourhood of the city printed a banner that proclaimed: "SOS! Save Our Shrine." The group from the largely-Filipino parish also participated vocally in



Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore pack the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen during a concluding listening session on the archdiocese's major parish restructuring plan on April 30, 2024. (CNA photo/Matthew Balan)

the session, including an emotional plea from John Tagle, a high school student. Tagle worried that his parish would be gone when he returned home from college.

A non-Filipino member of the shrine, David Bender, bluntly stated:

"The proposal does not make spiritual sense."

Many of those wearing custom T-shirts came from Holy Rosary, a parish in the Fells Point neighbourhood that has connections to two Polish canonised saints. Some of

their group wore ethnic attire and waved the white and red flag of their Eastern European homeland.

A young woman from Holy Rosary wondered why the archdiocese would shutter a place that was visited by St John Paul II (when he was Cardinal Karol Wojtyla in 1976). The parish is also directly tied to the canonisation process of St Faustina Kowalska, as it was the site of a documented miraculous healing attributed to the Polish sister.

Auxiliary Bishop Bruce Lewandowski gave a grim assessment as he spoke to local media before presiding over the listening session. "This is difficult. It's heart-wrenching," he emphasised. "But we're at a pivotal moment in the city Church. We need to do this."

Lewandowski led the attendees in prayer before starting the main presentation about the parish closure/consolidation proposal under "Seek the City." He, along with two lay

consultants, began a slideshow that first gave an overview of the two-year process leading up to the current juncture.

The trio then unveiled several slides that outlined the proposal to shrink the city's parishes from 61 parishes to 26 parishes. The City of Baltimore, along with some immediate surrounding parts of neighbouring Baltimore County, was divided into five regions (centre, east, west, north, and south). While the first four regions would have three to five consolidated parishes, the south region would be reduced to only two.

An additional two parishes have been designated "personal parishes": St Ignatius, which is administered by the Jesuits, and St Alphonsus, the home of the Traditional Latin Mass in Baltimore. During the listening session, the archdiocese disclosed that a final decision on the "Seek the City" proposal would be made by mid-June. — By Matthew Balan, CNA

Guinea-Bissau's vibrant youth assemblies

BISSAU: As happens every year, during the Fifth Sunday of Easter, the two dioceses of Guinea-Bissau have held youth congresses and festivals in their respective dioceses

of Bissau and Bafata. Over three thousand young people attended the Bissau event, while a thousand others were in Bafata.

Over the years, the three-day con-

gresses and festivals have become moments of faith formation, reflection, and communion for young Catholics drawn from different parts of Guinea-Bissau.

Organised by the respective Diocesan Commissions for Adolescence and Youth in the two dioceses, this year's event brought together thousands of young people from the dioceses to celebrate their faith and discuss issues relevant to their communities under the theme *The truth will set you free*.

During the three-day event, the youth participated in catechetical sessions, moments of communal and personal prayer, and social activities. There were lively discussions, such as on the role of young people in evangelisation.

In addition to religious and faith formation activities, the diocesan

days of encounter were also an occasion to promote tolerance, national cohesions and integration among participants. This was done mostly through moments of conviviality and leisure, such as games, art, cultural presentations as well as music and dance. The overall aim was to bring about the appreciation of co-existence and encourage peaceful living through play and skits.

At a personal level, for many young people, the three days of the congress were a unique opportunity to strengthen their spirituality and connect with and network with others who share similar challenges, faith, and ideals.

"I was able to meet young people from other regions and share experiences that will forever remain in my life," said one of the participants.

The Diocesan Commissions for

Adolescence and Youth coordinators in the two dioceses also praised the annual youth gathering. Fr Abulai Sanha, in-charge of the youth ministry in the Diocese of Bissau, spoke highly of the youth congress and festival's impact and benefits.

"The whole experience is positive for the young people. Although it is not perfect, I consider the annual youth gatherings to be positive and beneficial for the young participants," he said.

In the Diocese of Bafata, Fr Naresh Gosala praised the way in which young people from the Diocese participated in the various events.

"All parishes, without exception, participated with great joy and enthusiasm. The young people were fully present with all their hearts," he said. — *Vatican News*



Inter-diocesan Catholic Youth Day, Bula, Guiné-Bissau. (Foto concessa da Casimiro Jorge Cajucam (Rádio Sol Mansi))

In his message marking the 58th World Day of Social Communications, Pope Francis calls on people worldwide to develop a “wisdom of the heart” as we navigate the era of artificial intelligence.

Celebrated on May 12, this year’s theme *Artificial Intelligence and the Wisdom of the Heart: Towards a Fully Human Communication* ties in with the Pope’s earlier message for the World Day of Peace, which focused on the ethical development of artificial intelligence (AI) systems.

In his message, the Holy Father proposes a reflection on “a change that involves everyone, not only professionals,” arousing “enthusiasm and disorientation” and inevitably confronting basic questions:

“What is man, what is his specificity and what will be the future of this species of ours called homo sapiens in the age of artificial intelligence? How can we remain fully human and direct the ongoing cultural change towards the good?”.

Starting with the heart

Quoting the Italian theologian and writer Romano Guardini, who in the “Letters from Lake Como” states, “It is true that these are problems of a technical, scientific, and political nature; but they can only be solved by man,” the Pope indicates the perspective of approach to reflection, which “cannot but start from the human heart,” as “Only by endowing ourselves with a spiritual gaze, only by recovering a wisdom of the heart, can we read and interpret the novelty of our time and rediscover the way to a fully human communication.”

In continuity with the themes of the previous Days, “listening with the ear of the heart” and “speaking with the heart,” he then reaffirms the biblical meaning of the heart as a “place of freedom and the most important decisions of life”, “symbol of integrity, unity,” and “above all interior place of the encounter with God” and therefore of the wisdom of the heart. “Wisdom of the heart, then, is the virtue that enables us to integrate the whole and its parts, our decisions and their consequences, our nobility and our vulnerability, our past and our future, our individuality and our membership within a larger community”.

Opportunity and danger

In bringing the concept of wisdom back to the technological world, he clearly affirms:

No doubt, machines possess a limitlessly greater capacity than human beings for storing and correlating data, but human beings alone are capable of making sense of that data



AI and the wisdom of the heart

“We cannot demand this wisdom from machines” and, while acknowledging that “No doubt, machines possess a limitlessly greater capacity than human beings for storing and correlating data, but human beings alone are capable of making sense of that data,”

he observes that the word “intelligence” is misleading and that, rather than requiring machines that look human, it is necessary to “awaken humanity from the slumber induced by the illusion of omnipotence, based on the belief that we are completely autonomous and self-referential subjects, detached from all social bonds and

forgetful of our status as creatures”.

It is the heart, therefore, to make a difference in technology and systems: “Depending on the inclination of the heart, everything within our reach becomes either an opportunity or a threat. Our very bodies, created for communication and communion, can become a means of aggression. So too, every technical extension of our humanity can be a means of loving service or of hostile domination”.

Pope Francis also recalls the problems re-

lated to misinformation — from fake news, to deep-fake, to the creation and dissemination of false images that seem perfectly plausible, of which he happened to be the object, to other alterations and simulations of reality. While acknowledging the progress of the new frontier of generative intelligence, he warns about the possible risks and pathologies and that “It is important therefore to understand, appreciate, and regulate instruments that, in the wrong hands, could lead to disturbing scenarios,” since, “Like every other product of human intelligence and skill, algorithms are not neutral”.

He therefore reiterates the need to take preventive action and to implement ethical regulation for which he renews his appeal to the international Community “to forestall harmful, discriminatory, and socially unjust effects of the use of systems of artificial intelligence and to combat their misuse for the purpose of reducing pluralism, polarising public opinion or creating forms of group-think”.

Grow in humanity

“All of us are called to grow together, in humanity and as humanity.” It is a “qualitative leap”, the challenge that the Pope identifies to be up to “a complex, multi-ethnic, pluralist, multi-religious, and multicultural society.” Faced with the great possibilities of good linked to artificial intelligence, there is in fact the risk of the “datisation” of people and reality, reduced to statistical calculations.

“The digital revolution can bring us greater freedom,” but it can also make us prisoners of echo chambers that echo their views and interests. “It is unacceptable that the use of artificial intelligence should lead to groupthink, to a gathering of unverified data, to a collective editorial dereliction of duty,” is the cry of Francis, who sees the risk of damaging humanity itself, with information separated from the existential relationship, which “involve correlating not only data but also human experiences; they require sensitivity to faces and facial expressions, compassion and sharing”.

He does not fail to turn his thoughts to world conflicts and the “parallel war” through disinformation campaigns, and to reporters who are injured or die in the field to document what they see, “For only by such direct contact with the suffering of children, women and men, can we come to appreciate the absurdity of wars”.

The message for the 55th World Day of Social Communications – ‘Come and see’ (Jn 1:46) comes to mind. Communicating by meeting people where and how they are, in which he exhorted to a “journalism on the field.” Today he glimpses

the positive contribution of artificial intelligence, only “if” it will accompany the journalists without annihilating them, enhancing professionalism and empowering them with its critical capacity.

Questions for today and for the future

Pope Francis leaves some questions that are very spontaneous as indicators of real critical issues raised in the various professional fields related to communication, information, publishing, documentation and the transmission of knowledge, and the free expression of thought. How do we prevent sources from being reduced to one alone, thus fostering a single approach, developed on the basis of an algorithm? How instead do we promote an environment suitable for preserving pluralism and portraying the complexity of reality? How can we make sustainable a technology so powerful, costly, and energy-consuming? And how can we make it accessible also to developing countries?

“The answer we give to these questions is not pre-determined; it depends on us. It is up to us to decide whether we will become fodder for algorithms or will nourish our hearts with that freedom without which we cannot grow in wisdom,” concludes the Pope appealing to human responsibility and to the free exercise of one’s faculties to ‘nourish’ the heart. — *Agencies*

● To read the full message, go to: <https://bit.ly/3Qs6KXs>



Pope's study groups show evolving synod process, theologians note

In 1960 — two years before the start of the Second Vatican Council — Pope John XXIII established 10 preparatory commissions to lay the foundation for what would become a landmark event opening up the Church to the modern world.

Among the major outcomes of the 1962-1965 council was the establishment of the Synod of Bishops, meant to promote greater collegiality between bishops and the Pope. And under the Francis papacy, the synod has evolved dramatically, including for the first time ever in 2023, the participation of lay people who have a right to vote on the assembly's final document.

"This new type of synod, with lay people, is clearly a novelty, an experiment," said Villanova University theologian Massimo Faggioli. Part of that experimentation has meant the synod process is evolving in real time, as some organisers have noted.

Most recently, following last October's first assembly of the synod on synodality, Pope Francis decided to establish working groups to study some of the most controversial issues that have emerged in the synod so far — and declared that the groups will remain in effect beyond the synod's final assembly in October 2024.

"I'm not shocked that it's happening now," said Faggioli, noting that, prior to Vatican II, working groups were established and adjusted once the council got underway.

According to Faggioli, the new working groups are "an important acknowledgement that a different kind of work is needed." But he, and other theologians, also caution that many open questions remain.

Controlling the conversation?

Among the issues that the 10 study groups will address are how bishops are selected, seminary formation and the role of women in the Church — some of the most discussed and divisive issues that surfaced at the synod on synodality in October 2023.

In announcing the groups, the head of the synod secretariat, Cardinal Mario Grech, said

that the new structures would help to deepen theological reflection. They also would allow the respective Vatican dicasteries, whose work is affected by certain topics, to become more collaborative with one another, he said.

Fr Dr Clarence

Devadass, director of the Catholic Research Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and one of the synod's Asian delegates, said he believes the study groups will help provide a stronger biblical and theological basis for many of those issues.

"This was kind of missing in the first session," he said.

Fr Clarence said he doesn't believe that the study groups are an effort to begin to control the conversation or rein in debate, but rather, "to take another step to be able to deepen the conversation."

Arnaud Join-Lambert, a theologian at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium and a member of the synod's methodology commission, said that the creation of study groups came as a surprise, but could be perceived as a response to the observation of many that the 2023 assembly overlooked the expertise of theologians.

But he also warned of another dimension that could be seen as more problematic.

"It could be a method of excluding properly theological questions from the synodal discussion" when it reconvenes, he said.

Faggioli concurred that the decision to "provide more theological meat" is a "positive sign," but he said that the number of commissions and the membership — meant to include the Vatican's synod office, theological experts, members of the Roman curia, canon lawyers and the International Theological Commission — leads to a "very complex architecture" that makes it difficult to assess.

While NCR has confirmed that a number of the commissions have been formed and have met, the membership of the commissions has not been made public. A spokesperson for the Vatican's synod office did not respond to a request for comment on whether this will remain the case.

How will the study groups affect October's assembly?

During the month-long 2023 synod assembly, there was intense debate over the role of women's ministry, sexual ethics and the role of the laity, among the many issues that were raised throughout the month.

With the creation of the study groups — that will report to the synod in October 2024 but will continue until June 2025 — it remains unclear what to expect when synodal delegates reconvene in Rome this fall and what will be the agenda of the second assembly.

"The great success of the synodal process so far is that it has succeeded in bringing together actors who no longer spoke much to each other, and in correlating theological reflection, magisterial discernment and the *sensus fidei*," said Join-Lambert, who remains unsure how the study groups will affect this dynamic.

Following the 2023 assembly, episcopal conferences and dioceses around the globe were asked to organise follow-up consultations that are due to the synod office by May 15, which will help form the basis of the *instrumentum laboris*, or working document, for the second assembly.

The creation of the study commissions, according to Faggioli, is a sign that Francis' "preference is to have the second session, and the synod on synodality in general, an exercise in the practice of synodality more than about theological discussion."

He said this is already taking effect, with parishes, dioceses and other Catholic groups utilising synodal discernment in their own operations and decision-making.

"I think this is what Pope Francis is hoping for," Faggioli said. "A new energy."

But what will remain of the issues that surfaced from the grassroots during the three-year process that included listening sessions of millions of Catholics from around the world?

Historian

and theologian

Dr Catherine

Clifford, who is

a professor at St

Paul University

in Ottawa and

a Canadian lay

delegate to the

synod, said that while the issues themselves

are "not the central focus" of the upcoming

assembly, "we're working toward a Church

where these questions can only be dealt with

in a synodal manner."

For starters, she said, this means "you cannot

have a synodal Church where there are

no women participating at every level of the

structures and decisional practices of the life

of the Church, no question."

The creation of the working groups, said

Clifford, is a way to both preserve the issues

as wide-open questions, and to better focus

the second synod assembly on the practice

and process of synodality itself.

Clifford said that the study groups' work

must be "open, transparent and accountable

so that we have more insight into how these

decisions are being made."

She noted that over the years, the Vatican

has often established study commissions for

particular issues, only to not make their find-

ings public.

In fact, the final synthesis document

for the 2023 synod assembly specifically

called for the results of earlier papal and

theological commissions on the subject of

women deacons to be presented for further

consideration at the 2024 assembly.

"I have a responsibility as a delegate to

say, 'look all these secret studies have gone

on and we don't know what the upshot has

been,'" said Clifford. "The way these issues

have been dealt with over the last 50 years has

undermined the confidence of the baptised

faithful."

A synodal Church, she said, necessarily

entails that, "before taking a decision, the

magisterium does all of its homework and

listens to everyone and takes decisions

based on widely accepted data, that we

make evidence-based decisions or that we're

responding to the real possible needs that

people are experiencing." — By Christopher

White, NCR



Synodal assemblies and listening sessions are not a new Catholic invention; gatherings of the faithful to pray, discuss divisive issues and seek a solution together are as old as the Hebrew Scriptures, a Canadian theologian told clergy at the World Meeting of Parish Priests for the Synod.

The Bible is filled with references to the “assembly” of the faithful at crucial moments in the history of the Israelites, and again as the newly formed Christian communities dealt with growing numbers, increased diversity and signs that the community was neglecting the widows and orphans, the theologian, Fr Gilles Routhier, told the priests May 1.

Gathered at a retreat centre outside of Rome from April 29 to May 2, the approximately 300 parish priests were sharing their experiences of ministry and collaboration to provide input for the second assembly of the Synod of Bishops on synodality, which is scheduled for October. Participants were chosen by their bishops’ conferences or Eastern Catholic synods to represent parish priests working in different environments and with different levels of experience. Fr David Garaman, from the Diocese of Sandakan, was the representative from the conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei.

Their focus May 1 was on structures like pastoral councils, finance councils and other bodies that promote shared discernment in parishes and dioceses.

Fr Routhier said that in situations marked by tension, there is a natural temptation “to try to take possession of all spaces of power and self-affirmation” when what is needed is time, patience and a willingness to let the Holy Spirit speak to the assembly.

Fr Tomáš Halík, a Czech theologian, elicited laughter when he told the priests, “There are still places where the parish priest sees himself as the pope of his parish.”

“But the Church confers the gift of infallibility on only one of its members, and then only under strictly limited conditions,” he said. “And if even a pope relies on several consultative councils to help him make his decisions, how much more should a parish priest listen to those he has been sent to serve?”

“We must not approach others with the pride and arrogance of the monopolistic owners of truth,” Fr Halík said. “Truth is a book that none of us has yet read to the end. Only Jesus can say, ‘I am the truth.’ We are not Jesus. We are only disciples and followers of the only one who is allowed to say, ‘I am the truth.’”

Shared responsibility is ancient faith practice



Fr Halík told the pastors that the synodal practice of listening to one another without interruption or immediately trying to change another’s point of view can benefit their parishes, communities and the wider world, even in situations of great diversity and differences.

“The Church was born at Pentecost as a sacrament of understanding,” he said. By the power of the Holy Spirit, at Pentecost, the Apostles were able to address people of different cultures and languages “with clarity and conviction. Let us offer this healing power to the wounds of the Church and the world.”

When St Francis of Assisi heard a voice calling him to repair the Church, he initially thought it was a call to fix up a building, Fr Halík said, but eventually, he understood it was a call to help renew the entire Church.

“Perhaps Pope Francis and the whole Catholic Church is only gradually realising that the synodal renewal is a process that does not concern the Catholic Church exclusively,” he said. “It is about much more than the transformation of the clerical mentality and rigid institutions of the Catholic Church into a dynamic network of mutual communication.”

Synodality, he said, can be a school teaching people how to exercise solidarity, cooperation and ecumenical communion “in the broadest and deepest sense,” embracing not just the Christian churches, but “all human beings and all forms of life on earth.”

“The parish priest is a man of the people and for the people. Like Jesus, he is open to the crowd, constantly open to the crowd, to help each and every one understand that they are a letter from Christ,” said Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary general of the General Secretariat of the Synod, in opening the event.



Priests work in an English-language small group April 30, 2024, with facilitator Sister Maria Cimperman, a Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as part of a meeting of parish priests from around the world gathered at Sacrofano, outside of Rome, to share their experiences and contribute to the ongoing synod on synodality. (CNS photo/Courtesy of the Synod of Bishops)

The first day’s discussion was based on the theme *The Face of the Synodal Church*, while the second day’s discussion focused on *All Disciples, All Missionaries*. On the third day, the participants came together to study *Teaching Ties, Building Communities*.

In reflecting on the overall scope of the Synod on Synodality, which will reconvene in October for its second and final assembly, Cardinal Grech told participants that at the centre of this process is an understanding, and sharing, of personal narratives.

“Our stories are human stories, but human stories in which God, Jesus, is present,” the cardinal remarked.

“Sometimes we need others to help us see God’s presence in our stories. This is our mission, this is the mission entrusted to us, to you, my dear brothers,” he said.

Cardinal Grech told the clergy gathered that “being synodal does not simply mean walking together, but rather, walking with God, or better to say, God walking with us.”

“Synodality is about God, before being about the Church,” he continued.

The World Meeting of Parish Priests for the Synod was first announced in February and is jointly organised by the Dicastery for the Clergy and by the General Secretariat of the Synod in response to the first synod assembly’s synthesis report, which identified a need to “develop ways for a more active involvement of deacons, priests, and bishops in the synodal process during the coming year.”

“There is no synod without a bishop, but allow me to say today there is no synod without a parish priest,” Cardinal Grech said to the participants. “That is the reason why we felt the need to make this meeting, so that we can enrich our preparation in view of the next session for the synod of bishops.”

The meeting culminated with an audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican on May 3, followed by Mass, celebrated by Cardinal Grech, in St Peter’s Basilica. — *Agencies*

Cardinal William Goh shares his thoughts on the synod

What I liked about that synod was the retreat and the small-group sharing — in that group sharing, we truly were able to journey with each other, listen to each other, without judgment, and accompany each other, especially when we were among bishops. It’s much easier because we understand our own struggles and difficulties and challenges and also aspirations. That’s the good thing about the synod. And I think that is the way, not just for the universal Church, but also for the particular Church, local Church, that we need to listen to, journey with each other. I think that is very helpful, so that there will be a greater understanding and communion between the clergy and the laity, so that we walk as one, so that we will truly be coming together as one Church.

But the synod, I think that, for me, is really great. That is the most important thing. I benefitted from the synod. But when you have a plenary assembly where everybody is giving intervention [talks], that becomes a little bit more sensitive, because we are not able to be as open or direct as we wish to be ... for fear that we might offend people who have other views.

In an exclusive interview with EWTN News recently, Cardinal William Goh, the archbishop of Singapore, spoke on several topics, including the Synod on Synodality. The cardinal suggests the need for “another level” to the Synod on Synodality beyond its second and final assembly this October — namely a bishops-only synod. The existing synod, which includes bishops, clergy and laypeople, “cannot really be considered a theological dogmatic synod,” he says, because not all of the delegates are theologically trained. We feature an extract of the interview here.



So, it needs a lot of courage to state what you need to say and be open about it. But I suppose there is also a subtle pressure that what we say, if it is not appreciated by some quarters, may not go very well. So, I think

that is also a subtle pressure. And I think, most of all ... at the end of the day, although it has been underscored that the synod is not a parliamentary session, which it is not, but there is voting at the end. So, the voting, in

the mind of people, although it is not a parliamentary session, but I think most people would take the votes as a kind of consensus making. Of course, at the end of the day, it’s the Holy Father who takes the decision; and that’s what he has done.

So, I think, in the area of consultation, it is helpful for the Church, and I think it’s very important also for the prelates to listen also to the laity. But as has often been said, or some bishops are suggesting, perhaps there should be another level where it is really a Synod of Bishops, after hearing the laypeople, after journeying with them; there should be that level of bishop synods, where the bishops can come together, because that synod [with laity] cannot really be considered a theological dogmatic synod, because not all are theologically trained.

All those who vote are not theologically trained. So, you might need to have another level, where it is just basically bishops, with the Holy Father, to determine certain doctrinal issues. In terms of pastoral outreach, I think for that kind of synod, it would be helpful; but when it comes to doctrines, I think it’s a bit different. — *Register*

“When is Father coming to my house for Mass?”

By Bob Ho

Special child Brian Lim was overjoyed this Easter season when his dad, Benedict, was baptised at Easter and Mass in the BEC was celebrated in his home recently.

For five years, the differently-abled relentlessly asked every priest he met: “When is Father coming to my house for Mass?”

On April 5, Brian’s wish was fulfilled when 38 members of the St Jude BEC from the Church of St Ignatius (SIC) participated at the Mass celebrated by SIC’s assistant parish priests, Fr Thomas Koo, CDD and Fr Martin Then CDD, in his home.

Brian’s love for Jesus had him glued to his device streaming “live” Mass during the pandemic. He continues even now, joining online Masses from around the world. His family joins him when he casts it over TV, moving his dad towards accepting Christ as our saviour.

It was around this time last year, also at Brian’s home, that parish priest Fr Lawrence Ng, CDD, invited Benedict to join the RCIA. Now both parents are Catholics.

Brian, 27, lives with dyspraxia, a development coordination disorder (DCD). He only started walking when he was two years old, and could only say single words at age four.

God gifted him with a talent only few could master – sculpturing balloons into creative art toys for children. Brian is happy when donning his clown costume, sharing God’s gift at children’s parties and spreading God’s love.

During Advent, he was Santa Claus at the National Cancer Society of Malaysia, mesmerising the children with his talent.

God’s gift came as a 10th birthday present of balloons and a CD on balloon sculpturing. Brian learned by watching the video and honing his skills from YouTube.

He is loved by both children and adults, including Archbishop Julian Leow, whom he delighted

with a bouquet of balloon flowers at SIC’s 35th anniversary celebration.

Brian was also the clown wowing the children of Rumah Ozanam during the Lenten almsgiving programme.

On April 27, Brian and his mom, Rose, attended the Mass with the Differently-Abled (Special Needs) celebrated by Archbishop Julian at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Kuala Lumpur.

“Brian is very well loved ... our BEC embraces his uniqueness with all our hearts,” said Kim Ang, who fondly recalls Brian as a very young boy who could hardly sit still for a few seconds “but is now an indispensable member of our BEC family”.

The St Jude family witnessed Brian’s transformation into the most constant in the BEC; listening quietly, ever ready to volunteer to host the next meeting, and most eager to attend all Masses. Brian is the permanent St Jude’s flag-bearer at every feast day of St Ignatius.

Barbara Edmonds calls Brian “The Voice of AMEN”. She quipped: “You would be sure to know of his presence in church. An exuberant member we are proud of.”

Jesus said “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” (Matthew 7: 7-8). Brian knocked. The door opened. Alleluia.



Brian with his parish priest Fr Lawrence Ng, CDD during the Church of St Ignatius’ 35th anniversary celebration.



The St Jude BEC members with Frs Thomas Koo and Martin Then at Brian’s house for Mass.

WE SAID ‘YES’ TO JESUS

Today here I Am, Lord

I come from a lineage of Ibans in Sarawak and none are Christians. In our culture, we just make sure we do good deeds and our goddess will reward us during the *ming* ritual — a ritual where we make offerings to the goddess and ask for our wishes to be granted.

When I was a young boy, my uncle brought home a movie video titled “The Passion of Christ” to our home and we watched it together. To me, it was a tragic movie with a bad ending. But it was not boring. I remember vividly my uncle muttering “... so pity, He did nothing wrong yet they killed him”. Somehow, the storyline stuck in my head.

In Primary six, I started boarding school. One night, a Primary three student gathered all of us together and read the Bible. I do not know why I was willing to join them. I listened to him quietly till the end and we prayed together. God really works in mysterious ways.

In lower secondary school, I would join a Christian gathering every Friday. But I just wanted to make new friends and, of course, there was a sweet charming girl among them. Later I studied at a prestigious science college for my Forms Four and Five



education. Somehow, I was embarrassed to say that I was not a Christian. So, I joined my friends and went to church. My first church was St Joseph’s Church, Kuching. From embarrassment, slowly I felt drawn towards Christianity.

In university I joined the UKM Catholic Student Society and actively attended church and retreats. I realised

I was not Catholic, yet sometimes I received holy communion. I always felt guilty and the guilt never felt good. Many friends from the Church of the Holy Family, Kajang invited me to become Catholic. But I always turned down the invitation for 10 years until someone I loved encouraged me to join the RCIA...and I accepted the invitation.

My journey to Catholicism has been a long one. Not that I need to pay for anything. It has been given to me for a long time since primary school. God plans everything. I am lucky, very lucky. I believe our Lord Jesus Christ has been with me since young and after my baptism at the Easter vigil this year, I have started my new life as a Catholic, a child of God. How grateful I am. Here I am, Lord. — **By Benedict Jeffry Unyang Anak Seli**

A journey of unexpected grace and transformation

As I reflect on my journey, I am humbled by the transformative power of faith. Raised in a family deeply rooted in Hinduism and Buddhism — my mother being Hindu and my father, Buddhist, I found solace in the rich tapestry of spiritual traditions that shaped my worldview. Yet, amidst the familiarity, I felt a stirring, a call to explore beyond the confines of my upbringing.

I began to witness the guiding hand of God in my life through a series of extraordinary events. In 2019, I attended the pre-advent Divine Potta Retreat in Klang and experienced something truly remarkable. As I listened to Fr Augustine Vallooran, I witnessed what appeared to be tongues of fire atop him, reminiscent of the Pentecost story from the Bible. This sight shook me to the core and sparked my curiosity. Yet, I still resisted the pull of faith.

In 2023, I began attending Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Penang (CHS) merely out of curiosity. Yet, another inexplicable event unfolded. I had a vivid dream where the CHS parish priest



approached me and asked, “Was who you saw during the retreat St Peter? Despite my unfamiliarity with the figure, this dream was a resounding affirmation of the retreat’s significance, propelling me towards Christianity. These experiences stirred something profound within me.

And so, with an open heart, I embarked on the 2023 RCIA journey and was recently baptised. Each step a revelation

and a testament to God’s boundless grace and mercy.

My journey towards Catholicism has been one of unexpected transformation and growth. Through the love and support of the community, as well as the guidance of mentors and facilitators, I have found a sense of belonging and purpose I never thought possible.

As I navigate this new terrain, I am grateful for God’s blessings but also mindful of the challenges that lie ahead. But, with faith as my compass, I am ready to embrace the road ahead with unwavering trust in God’s plan. — **By Debbie Therese Lee Lin Jun**



WORD IN PROGRESS

Karen-Michaela Tan

If you are around the age of 40, you probably belong to the Sandwich Generation of middle-aged adults who are still actively raising children while increasingly assuming the responsibilities of care for ageing parents. It can be daunting to no longer be able to rely on help from our own parents, and instead, become their drivers, schedule-keepers, and face it, naggers of both the young and the old.

The Fifth Malaysian Population and Family Survey by the National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia in 2022 revealed that 70 per cent of elderly Malaysians live with extended family.

Eight out of ten elderly parents receive financial assistance from their children, with 48 per cent of children paying their parents' bills, while 67 per cent help to buy food and other household goods for aged parents. This is a daunting burden of care, from every perspective.

I began to feel it keenly myself when my mother was diagnosed with Parkinson and Alzheimer's. Because my parents lived alone, just out of my allowed radius of travel due to COVID lockdown restrictions, my father was left to care for her on his own. He was 78, mum was 75.

Dad was a real trooper; feeding his spouse, shuffling her to the bathroom whenever she needed, diapering her at night and changing her

from night clothes to day wear in the morning. Theirs was the epitome of 'for better and for worse'. He only allowed me to hire a day nurse to assist in the more mundane tasks of sitting with mum while he went out grocery shopping. Otherwise, his social life shrank to nothing. Dementia-stricken mum did not know what was going on, but my friendly, outgoing father withered during this time. When he finally decided to place mum in a care home, my brother and I had to ensure the place we selected would be somewhere my father would be at peace to relinquish mum into. The discovery of Graceland, in the hills of Petaling Jaya, was a blessing. From the ownership, care team, house set-up, engaging daily schedules, and resident tortoisés and dogs, the siblings immediately knew dad would approve.

The financial outlay could have wrecked us though. A monthly commitment to care and lodging, the purchase of medication and care items, all made a dent in our already COVID-depleted savings. Yet, the space to breathe that it afforded my dad was worth teetering on the brink of insolvency. Without having to be on high alert all the time, dad regained his positive outlook on life. When he was her primary caregiver, his prayer every day was for God to let him live long enough to care for his wife. Once mum was at Graceland (managed by a wonderful Catholic who arranged for regular communion for the patients), the shackles of guilt dad had placed on himself were unlocked.

He still prepared a meal and visited every day to feed his wife, and pray with her, but he

could also reclaim his lunches with friends, and take time to amble the hypermarkets which he loved.

My mother's death in July 2023 was not the end of my responsibilities though. While my father is healthy and mobile, I now increasingly have the care of my 87-year-old mother-in-law. As her only Catholic relative, the duty of ensuring her weekly Mass attendance falls to me.

Annemarie is an exceptional mother-in-law. This woman and her *Legion of Mary* friends went to my wedding dinner venue early, and placed maraschino cherries and mint leaves in each of the 300 water glasses to make my medieval-themed wedding more festive.

She also, when the sixth month of pregnancy elapsed without my beginning to 'nest', took it upon herself to transform the guest room into the nursery. When my mothering instincts didn't quite emerge upon birth, it was my mum-in-law and husband who took care of the baby.

I must confess that post the care of my mother, my mother-in-law's slightly erratic behaviour – constant repetition of stories, her incorrect interpretation of some situations – wearied me. I had just come out of an emotionally gruelling parental situation and did not feel I had it in me to take on another ageing parent. But the abrupt way my husband treated his mother made my heart ache. Despite the fact that I was exhausted from the years of my mother's dementia-fuelled conversations, I felt I had to saddle up once again and ride the white horse of rescue back into the fray.

These days I find myself in a rather interesting sandwich. My mother-in-law comes to church with my father, daughter and I, and she has Saturday dinner with us. Her eccentricities make my dad roll his eyes, but I know my father is proud that I am repaying my in-law's kindness.

In doing this I find myself in the company of one of the Bible's best examples of filial piety, the Moabess Ruth who, after her husband's death, chose to stay with her mother-in-law in a strange land, in spite of Naomi's advice for both her widowed daughters-in-law to return to their respective homelands.

Each time when I feel stretched to my emotional limits caring for my in-law, I remind myself of her kindness to me, and her continued good-natured acceptance of her life as it is now. Her God is my God, and while our lives do not emulate Ruth 1:16 – 17 exactly (Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die — there will I be buried.), I can understand the frustration of an older person having to relinquish control of many aspects of their lives to those they depend on. Knowing how badly I myself would react to that, I strive to ensure my care for her honours the good deeds of her past, and the dignity that people of advanced age are still worthy of.

● 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.

Love sandwich



GETTING SIDETRACKED

Agnes Ong

“Maybe God is trying to tell you something. Like, give up?” Giuseppe, my ex-boss, jokingly asked.

I fiddled with my glass of water. We had cleared our breakfast and settled into a cosy chat in Giuseppe's warm kitchen in Brussels. I had just shared with Giuseppe about my disappointment at failing my second attempt at the Camino de Santiago.

Barely three hours of walking out of Sarria, Spain, where I began my pilgrimage, my previously injured lower leg muscle acted up. The pain was so excruciating that I limped to the nearest wayside coffee stand to ask the owner to help me call for a taxi to take me to my next stop.

Likewise, my first attempt at the Camino de Santiago eight years prior had ended prematurely in an emergency room of a local medical centre near Portomarin early on my second day of walking after I twisted my ankle when I slipped and fell on the gravel path the day before.

The Camino de Santiago

Legends abound about the origins of the Camino de Santiago or the Way of St James, a route so famous that UNESCO has recognised a few of its many routes, the Camino Frances (French route) and Routes of Northern Spain (Primitive, Coastal, Interior of the Basque Country-La Rioja, and Liébana), and the end-of-the-pilgrim's journey, Santiago de Compostela Old Town, as being of “Outstanding Universal Value” in 1993 and 1985, respectively.

One of the legends states that St James the Greater, son of Zebedee, returned to Jerusalem from Hispania, where he was evangelising, to attend to the Virgin Mary. When he was in Jerusalem, he was arrested for preaching Christianity and ordered to be tortured and

Care to attempt an ancient pilgrim's journey?

beheaded by Herod Agrippa I, the King of Judea.

His disciples, Theodore and Athanasius, stole his body and smuggled it into Hispania, where he had last carried out his evangelisation. The boat they were on landed in Cape Finiserra. While crossing the Libredón forest, the animals transporting the body refused to move further. Thus, St James was laid to rest there.

Later, in one ninth-century record, a hermit who lived in the old town of today's Santiago de Compostela saw lights floating in a nearby forest one night and sent for the local bishop. Upon investigation, they found three tombs – one of St James and his two faithful disciples, Theodore and Athanasius.

The rest, as they say, is history.

It was on that same site that the ninth-century King Alfonso II, a pilgrim of the Camino de Santiago himself, built a chapel over the sepulchre in Compostela. King Alfonso III later expanded this and, over the centuries, the modest building evolved to be the grand Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela today. In medieval Christendom, the city of Compostela, where St James' tomb is purported to have been located, was so significant that it rivalled both Rome and Jerusalem.

Walking the Camino

This ancient pilgrim's journey has existed for over a thousand years and has seen its fair share of pilgrims through the ages. These include King Alfonso II, who built the first chapel over the tombs, to the Catholic monarchs of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castille in 1486, and St Francis of Assisi.

In contemporary times, Pope John Paul II, Angela Merkel, Stephen Hawking, and celebrities Shirley Maclaine and Martin Sheen are among those who have completed the Camino.

Embarking on the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage is a journey open to all, regardless of your starting point or personal motivations. The only requirement is that you carry the Pilgrim's Credencial or accreditation, which you can obtain from either the Pilgrim's Office

in Santiago de Compostela or authorised institutions. This document is crucial as it validates the progress of your journey through stamps, documenting where you've visited, dined, and stayed. Today, there is also a digital credential app available.

At every stop along the way, try to make it a point to attend a Mass at the local parish, which is typically held between 5.00pm and 7.00pm (check the local listing). Attending these Masses will re-affirm your steadfastness in completing the Camino.

Just as there are many routes leading to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, where the Shrine of St James is, there are various ways one can complete the Camino journey in the Christian spirit of devotionis affect, *voti vel pietatis causa* (motivated by devotion, vote or mercy). If you opt for walking or riding on horseback, you must complete at least the last 100km. Alternatively, you can cycle the 200km to the Cathedral.

Depending on your budget and comfort level, you can go for an on-ground tour package where all your needs, including a proper visual map and itinerary, luggage transfers, dining options, and comfortable accommodations, are met. For the budget-conscious, you can opt to stay at either the private or city-owned *albergues* (dorms) and dine simply on take-outs or grocery store selections and follow the scallop shell or yellow arrow Camino signs.

Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela

When you finally arrive at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela as a pilgrim, do participate at the high noon Mass for pilgrims where the grand spectacle of the Botafumeira is swung at the end of the Mass. It is typically packed, so it is best to be there at least 45 minutes before Mass begins. After Mass, visit the relics of St James and his disciples situated below the Main Altar, and say this prayer to St James:

St James, Apostle, chosen among the first, you were the first to drink the cup of the Master and you are the great protector of



Outside the Pilgrim's Reception Office in Santiago de Compostela, where I received my Pilgrim Credencial.

pilgrims. Make us strong in faith and happy in hope on our pilgrim journey, following the path of Christian life, and sustain us so that we may finally reach the glory of God the Father. Amen. I wish you all ¡Buen Camino!

For more information, please refer to The Official Website of the Pilgrim's Reception Office in Santiago de Compostela at <https://oficinadelperegrino.com/en/> or scan the QR code.



● Agnes Ong is a self-professed curious traveller and lifelong learner with a lamentable tendency to get into sidetracked experiences. She aspires to explore as many historical UNESCO sites as possible, funds permitting. Agnes has a travel-slash-work-slash-dump everything IG at @agnes_gets_sidetracked



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Who are our real faith companions?

I work and move within church circles and find that most of the people there are honest, committed and, for the most part, radiate their faith positively. Most churchgoers aren't hypocrites. What I do find disturbing in church circles though is that many of us can be bitter, mean-spirited, and judgmental in terms of defending the very values that we hold most dear.

It was Henri Nouwen who first highlighted this, commenting with sadness that many of the bitter and ideologically driven people he knew, he had met inside of church circles and places of ministry. Within church circles, it sometimes seems, almost everyone is angry about something. Moreover, within church circles, it is all too easy to rationalise that in the name of prophecy, as a righteous passion for truth and morals.

The algebra works this way: because I am sincerely concerned about an important moral, ecclesial, or justice issue, I can excuse a certain amount of anger, elitism, and negative judgment, because I can rationalise that my cause, dogmatic or moral, is so important that it justifies my mean spirit, that is, I have a right to be cold and harsh because this is such an important truth.

And so we justify a mean spirit by giving it a prophetic cloak, believing that we are warriors for God, truth, and morals when, in fact, we are struggling equally

with our wounds, insecurities, and fears. Hence, we often look at others, even whole churches made up of sincere persons trying to live the Gospel, and instead of seeing brothers and sisters struggling, like us, to follow Jesus, we see "people in error", "dangerous relativists", "new age pagans", "religious flakes", and in our more generous moments, "poor misguided souls". But seldom do we look at what this kind of judgment is saying about us, about our own health of soul and our own following of Jesus.

Don't get me wrong: Truth is not relative, moral issues are important, and right truth and proper morals, like all kingdoms, are under perpetual siege and need to be defended. Not all moral judgments are created equal, and neither are all churches.

But the truth of that doesn't override everything else and give us an excuse to rationalise a mean spirit. We must defend truth, defend those who cannot defend themselves, and be faithful in the traditions of our own churches. However, right truth and right morals don't all alone make us disciples of Jesus. What does?

What makes us genuine disciples of Jesus is living inside His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and this is not something abstract and vague. If one were searching for a single formula to determine who is Christian and who isn't, one might look at the

Epistle to the Galatians, Chapter 5. In it, St Paul tells us that we can live according to either the spirit of the flesh or of the Holy Spirit.

We live according to the spirit of the flesh when we live in bitterness, judgment of our neighbour, factionalism, and non-forgiveness. When these things characterise our lives, we shouldn't delude ourselves and think that we are living inside of the Holy Spirit.

Conversely, we live inside of the Holy Spirit when our lives are characterised by charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, long suffering, constancy, faith, gentleness, and chastity. If these do not characterise our lives, we should not nurse the illusion that we are inside of God's Spirit, irrespective of our passion for truth, dogma, or justice.

This may be a cruel thing to say, and perhaps more cruel not to say, but I sometimes see more charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, and gentleness among persons who are Unitarian or New Age (people who are often judged by other churches as being wishy-washy and as not standing for anything) than I see among those of us who do stand so strongly for certain ecclesial and moral issues that we become mean-spirited and non-charitable inside of those convictions. Given the choice of whom I'd like as a neighbour

or, more deeply, the choice of whom I might want to spend eternity with, I am sometimes conflicted about the choice. Who is my real faith companion? The mean-spirited zealot at war for Jesus or cause, or the gentler soul who is branded wishy-washy or "new age"? At the end of the day, who is living more inside the Holy Spirit?

We need, I believe, to be more self-critical vis-a-vis our anger, harsh judgments, mean-spirit, exclusiveness, and disdain for other ecclesial and moral paths. As T.S. Eliot once said: The last temptation that's the greatest treason is to do the right thing for the wrong reason. We may have truth and right morals on our side, but our anger and harsh judgments towards those who don't share our truth and morals may well have us standing outside the Father's house, like the older brother of the prodigal son, bitter both at God's mercy and at those who are, seemingly without merit, receiving it.

● **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

In our lives as Christians, as we seek to live a life of prayer, we are encouraged and aided by the example and witness of the Lord Jesus Himself. He shows us how to live as the children of God. He shows us the path of prayer.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: "When Jesus prays He is already teaching us how to pray."

As we follow His way of prayer, we are taught how to believe in God, trust Him, and love Him above all else. Prayer gives us the grace we need to live the life shown to us by the Lord Jesus. Without the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, we cannot live faithfully as the children of God. The *Catechism* notes: "[Jesus'] prayer to his Father is the theological path (the path of faith, hope, and charity) of our prayer to God."

Faith, hope, and love are theological virtues because they are the means of our relationship with God. *Theos* is Greek for God. It is from this word that we get the term "theological." And so, in this context, we are not speaking about the sacred science of theology. In this usage, "theological" is not a reference to the academic field that studies the truth of God.

In the usage of the term in the context about prayer, "theological" simply means pertaining to God. Faith, hope, and love are theological since we need them to know, trust, and love God. The prayer of the Lord Jesus is the theological way by which our prayer can be born, nourished, and have credence before God.

While the Lord Jesus models the life of prayer for us and His prayer has power in itself, he nevertheless goes even further and gives us direct teachings on prayer. The *Catechism* says: "But the Gospel also gives us Jesus' explicit teaching on prayer.

When Jesus speaks of prayer, there's no ambiguity or confusion



Like a wise teacher He takes hold of us where we are and leads us progressively toward the Father."

And so, the Lord's direct teachings on prayer are not abstract or removed from the awareness and understandings of His initial listeners. He meets people where they are and leads them to where they need to be, namely, in the bosom of the Father.

The *Catechism* continues: "Addressing the crowds following Him, Jesus builds on what they already know of prayer from the Old Covenant and opens to them the newness of the coming Kingdom."

The Lord Jesus has profound and deep teachings on prayer that he wants to reveal to the world and especially to his disciples. There is much the Lord wants to say about prayer, since it is a vital and personal relationship with God. It is

precisely this relationship that the Lord Jesus will restore and open up again for all humanity.

After the Lord speaks of prayer as His initial listeners understand it, He then moves them to higher and more intimate understanding of prayer. He takes them from the status of slaves and beggars and raises them to the dignity of children and members of the family of God. Among the many tools He uses in His teachings, the parables stand in prominence. The Lord enjoyed using parables. They could be immediately understood and yet still contain a depth that required further reflection and discovery. The parables cannot be controlled not exhausted in their meaning and lessons.

The *Catechism* teaches: "Then [Jesus] reveals this newness [of prayer] to them in parables."

While the parables serve an instrumental and theological purpose, they also must be superseded. The parables are needed, but after teaching for some time and leaving the parables with us for the duration of time, the Lord gave clear and succinct teachings about the Father and Holy Spirit. The *Catechism* asserts: "Finally, [Jesus] will speak openly of the Father and the Holy Spirit to His disciples who will be the teachers of prayer in his Church."

We will need the knowledge of the Father's love and the powerful assistance of the Holy Spirit to respond to the call of prayer and to persevere in its way. The Lord spoke openly and plainly about the Father and the Spirit, so that there would be no confusion or ambiguity when it comes to prayer and its essential place in our relationship with the living God. —

By Fr Jeffrey F. Kirby, *Crux*

Little Catholics' Corner

Dear children,
How often do you think we should pray? Once a day? Before meals? Before we go to bed at night?

One of the prayers that I would like to share with you is the prayer that Jesus prayed the night before He was crucified.

Jesus knew that He would be re- turning to heaven and that His disci- ples would be left behind.

Here are the things that Jesus prayed for His disciples:

- That they would be one as He and the Father were one
- That God would protect them

from the evil one

- That they would be made holy by the truth of God's Word

The prayer that Jesus prayed for His disciples is for us too. He said, "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message."

That's you and me! We must live in this world, and Jesus prays that we might remain faithful to His teach- ing so that the world will know that God sent His Son and that God loves them.

Love
Aunty Eliz

Find and circle the hidden words in the puzzle below

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

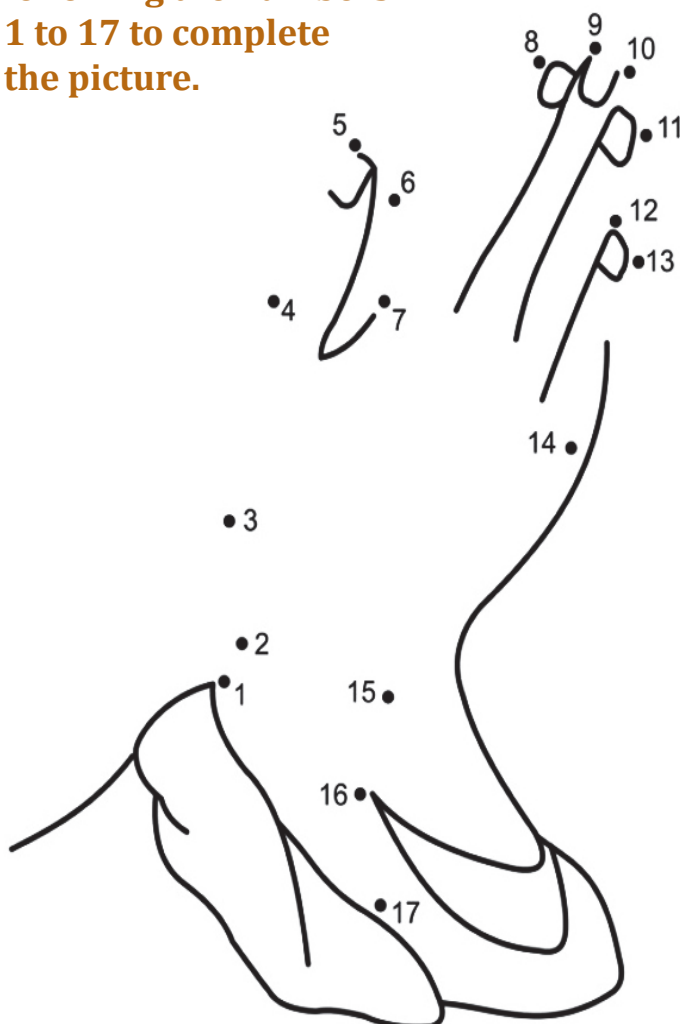


ACCEPT ONE GAVE SAFE EVIL OBEY
SCRIPTURE JOY LOST WORD WORLD
TRUTH PROTECT BELIEVE PRAYER

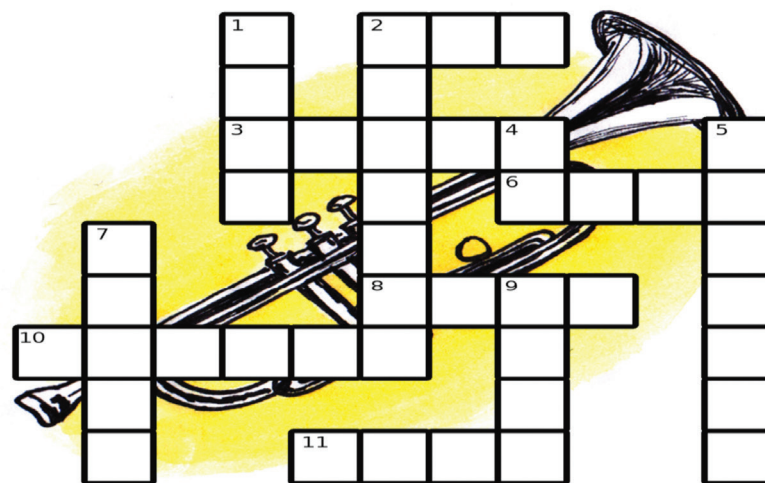
Happy Mother's Day



Connect the dots
following the numbers
1 to 17 to complete
the picture.



Psalm 47 Cross-Word



Unscramble the words in CAPITAL letters.
Then you can fit them into the puzzle.
(A means across and D means down.)

LAL (2A) you peoples, clap your hands,
shout to God with cries of gladness,
For the Lord, the SOMT (8A) HHGI (1D),
the EMOSA EW (2D),
is the TREAG (3A) king
VROE (6A) all the HTREA (7D).

God mounts his throne amid shouts of joy;
the Lord, amid UMPRET (5D) blasts.

GISN (9D) praise OT (4D) God, sing praise;
Sing SIEARP (10A) to our INKG (11A), sing praise.

Answer to Psalm 47: Down: 1 high 2 awesome 4 to 5 trumpet 7 earth 9 sing
Across: 2 all 3 great 6 over 8 most 10 praise 11 king



LET'S PRAY

God, as we search
for the path that
will lead us safely
through this world,
we place our trust
in You and ask for
Your guidance and
protection.
In Jesus' name,
Amen.

YOUTH

May 12, 2024

PENANG: The Church of Divine Mercy welcomed youth, working adults and parents to its first ever career fair, organised by its Learning Centre, on April 28. The “Career Exploration Day 2024” with its tagline Career Journey: The Inside Story, aimed at providing a platform for various ‘career sharers’ to share the inside stories of their career journey – everything about their day-to-day job scope, the dos and don’ts, work-life balance, the educational requirements and other tips and ideas that cannot be found in any conventional career fair.

The idea behind this Career Exploration Day was conceived during a meeting of the Learning Centre team at the beginning of the year. The project leaders, Loke Yiing Jia and Alicia Jeremiah Perera felt that young people often lack opportunities to truly understand different careers or even get the chance to speak to the experts in the careers of their choice. They might choose careers based on surface-level information or false expectations about a job, thus leading to disappointment or frequent career changes. Hence, to bridge this gap, *Career Journey: The Inside Story* came about to provide young people with unfiltered insights into various professions and the realities of the working world.

The organising team of the Career Exploration Day leveraged on the rich professional backgrounds of parishioners to provide young people with first-hand insights into various careers. 53 parishioners generously came forward to volunteer as career sharers for this event and to share their career journey experiences and wisdom with the youth.

These 53 career sharers are all well-experienced, highly acquainted working-adults/retirees from a wide range of industries that included aviation, banking, business development, engineering, information technology, sales, medical and health, logistics, supply chain, event planning, education, engineering, corporate

UNVEILING THE REALITIES OF DIVERSE PROFESSIONS



Career Exploration Day 2024

communications, as well as archaeology and zoology. The visitors were given this golden opportunity to ask the career sharers first-hand questions regarding their future career plans from their desired industry.

The Learning Centre team wanted to provide the young with information beyond what is offered by conventional education fairs. While education fairs are valuable, they often focus on university and college programmes, admission requirements, and potential job titles. They may not delve into the day-to-day realities of most careers, except for well-established professions like medicine, law, or engineering. With these objectives in mind, the team felt that a casual dialogue or chat format between career sharers and the youths would enable more fruitful discussion and networking than the usual talks.

The Career Exploration Day had about 139 visitors who came from other parishes in



Career sharer with demonstrations of his job scope.

Penang – Church of Risen Christ, City Parish, Church of the Immaculate Conception, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, as well as parishioners from the Church of Divine Mercy. Many were intrigued by this unique way of discovering an interest in a particular occupational field before fully embarking on that career journey. This event gave the visitors clarity and better understanding of how to choose the right career path and of course, secure a job in the future. Not only did the visitors gain knowledge and insight, but the career sharers as well as the organising team had the opportunity to mingle and network.

“The event was good. I have a better idea on what I can do now,” said Rose Maria from Church of the Immaculate Conception, currently working. Other youth from CDM felt that the time given could have been longer as the event greatly benefited them, and they had so much more that they wanted to know and explore.

Linda Shalini from City Parish felt that

despite the short time spent, the event was an eye-opener. “For me, I personally got to know more in-depth regarding the area of supply chain. Got some advice from Ms Mary based on her working experience in supply chain and now I have got a clearer direction on what to do next.”

Career Exploration Day quickly became an exciting event to plan as the idea of having experienced people share the inside story of their job scope unfolded. The team wanted it to be as laid-back as possible to not bog the visitors down with admission requirements, college and university programmes, job titles, down payment deposits and so on. This event is to go beyond academic qualifications to show young people the diverse possibilities within each field.

With the success of this career fair, the Learning Centre team is looking forward to other similar events shortly, that would greatly benefit the public, near and far. — *By Pamela Vinsence, Loke Yiing Jia and Anne Rowena David*



Youths listening intently to a career sharer with vast work experience.

CSSUM Annual Camp makes its return after five years

CHERAS: After a long hiatus, the Catholic Students' Society of Universiti Malaya (CSSUM) successfully brought back its long awaited annual camp with the theme *Let Faith Arise*. The camp took place April 11-13 at the Church of St Francis of Assisi.

Fifty participants from educational institutions in Peninsular Malaysia attended. CSSUM provided a safe space for them to connect and grow in faith together, especially for those who did not return home during the *Raya* holidays.

There were numerous highlights during the camp. The multiple sessions by Bro Martin Steven OFM Cap, greatly assisted participants in understanding the relationship between their faith and themselves and improving it. Bro Marthin also introduced the Taizé Prayer, a first-time experience for almost all participants, who were deeply grateful for the peace and sense of faith it provided.

The Praise and Worship sessions, led by talented singers and musicians organised by CCCUM, were particularly significant as participants were seen singing proudly and dancing joyfully, all united in the common goal of praising God together, thus maintaining a positive and energetic atmosphere throughout the camp.

Additionally, the Games and Dynamics



team coordinated numerous activities that brought joy and fostered bonding among participants. One of the most memorable activities was the *Explorace*, where participants were tasked with visiting multiple unique stations with different games around the church compound, aiming to accumulate as many points as possible. It felt like an exhilarating adventure, with the antici-

pation of what each challenge would bring, while also testing teamwork capabilities. Importantly, each activity held a valuable lesson directly related to the camp's theme or on our own faith.

The annual camp was a huge success because CSSUM had an amazing committee and supportive participants who came together and made it really enjoyable for

everyone. The success of this event inspires CSSUM and every one of us to continue to provide more opportunities for students to deepen their faith while also making lasting connections.

Conclusively, it is the camp's theme *Let Faith Arise* that we should carry in our daily lives so that we may inspire those around us alongside this journey of faith in life.

Stay connected to Jesus

SHAH ALAM: Fr George Harrison was officially installed as the new parish priest of the Church of the Divine Mercy, Shah Alam by Archbishop Julian Leow on April 28.

The installation coincided with the Sacrament of Confirmation for 70 candidates. The celebration, which took place during the 10.00am Mass, saw the participation of parents, godparents, sponsors and the faithful of CDM.

In his special message, Archbishop Julian reminded the confirmands to stay connected to Jesus, the true vine, through prayers, reflections, meditations, and the holy Eucharist to be successful missionary disciples of Christ.

On behalf of the parish, we thank the Lord for our new shepherd. We also congratulate our new confirmands. May the Holy Spirit be your guide on life's journey as Christ's witnesses.



Archbishop Julian Leow anointing a confirmand with chrism oil.



WORSHIP NIGHT IN PREPARATION FOR SYD-6

SANDAKAN: The Youth Apostolate of St Mary's Cathedral organised a "Worship Night" recently in conjunction with the upcoming Sabah Youth Day 6 which will be held from September 16-20 in Keningau.

The pilgrimage of the Youth Cross and Mother Mary Icon in the diocese started on March 16 and has gathered approximately 130 young Catholics, including parents.

The night began with an opening prayer, followed by praise and worship by the CHARIS BM and Star of Yahweh Covenant Community. They presented 13 spiritual songs accompanied with a tambourine dance, accompanied with lively

rhythmic songs.

After the hymns, the Youth Apostolate deputy coordinator, Corey Felino Henry, gave an appreciation speech to all parties who had helped directly or indirectly to make the "Worship Night" a success.

In Corey's speech, he called on all the youth to join in prayer with the Youth Cross and the Mother Mary icon which will be in the cathedral till April 19 before it will be sent to St Peter's Chapel, Manila River on April 21.

Apart from that, there were also food and drink booths to raise funds for the youths to participate in the upcoming Sabah Youth Day 6. — **By Macshamus Bilcher**



Priest shot dead in South Africa

Catholic bishops there decry 'pandemic' of murder

PRETORIA, South Africa: Fr Paul Tatu Mothobi, a member of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata (CSS/Stigmatines) and former media and communications officer of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC), was reportedly murdered in South Africa recently.

According to a notice from the congregation's South Africa-based provincial secretary, Fr Jeremia Thami Mkhwanazi, Fr Tatu died on Saturday, April 27, "after sustaining a gunshot."

Fr Tatu, a native of Lesotho's Archdiocese of Maseru, was ministering in South Africa's Archdiocese of Pretoria. According to reports, his lifeless body was found with gunshot wounds in his car on a national road in South Africa, which runs from Cape Town through Bloemfontein, Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Polokwane to Beit Bridge, a border town with Zimbabwe.

In an April 29, statement, SACBC members expressed condolences, describing his killing as "not an isolated incident," recalling the March 13 murder of Fr William Banda, the Zambian-born member of St. Patrick's Missionary Society (Kiltegan Fathers), who was shot in the sacristy of the Holy Trinity Cathedral of South Africa's Tzaneen Diocese.

"Fr Tatu worked for several years as the SACBC media and communications officer with dedication; we are saddened by his tragic death. We extend our condolences to the Stigmatine congregation, to which he belonged, and to his family," bishops from Botswana, Eswatini, and South Africa said in the one-page statement signed by SACBC president Bishop Sithembele Sipuka.

"It must be noted that the death of Fr Paul Tatu is not an isolated incident but rather a distressing example of the deteriorating state of security and morality in South Africa," the Church leaders added.

The murder of Frs Tatu and that of Banda, SACBC members lamented, "occurs amid growing concerns about the increasing disregard for the value of life, where people are wantonly killed."

Born in 1979 in Teyateyaneng, a town in Lesotho's district of Berea, Tatu joined the Stigmatines in 1998. He studied philosophy at St Francis House of Studies in Pretoria from 1999 to 2000 and moved to Botswana for his novitiate.

Before theological studies, the late priest took a year off from priestly formation to live with and teach miners in South Africa's Free State. He later resumed his studies, joining Pretoria-based St John Vianney Seminary, under the Stigmatines, for theology. He was ordained a priest in 2008.

The Stigmatines later sent him to Tanzania as a missionary, where he pursued media and communication studies at Mwanza-based St Augustine University of Tanzania of the Tanzania Epis-



Father Paul Tatu Mothobi was found dead of gunshot wounds on April 27, 2024, in his car on a national road in South Africa. (CNA photo/SACBC)

copal Conference.

Fr Tatu was also a collaborator of ACI Africa, CNA's news partner in Africa, more recently assisting with an April 9 story about an initiative to address drug addiction in youth.

In the April 29 statement, the bishops underscored the need for authorities in South Africa to protect human life.

"On behalf of the bishops, I appeal to all people responsible for these murders to refrain from thinking that they can do what they like with people's lives. Life belongs to God, and no one has a right to take it as one pleases," the statement said.

The bishops decried lawlessness in South Africa, addressing President Cyril Ramaphosa's government: "Mr. President and Police Minister, there is a growing impression among South Africans that criminals are freely murdering the citizens with no fear of consequences."

"A deliberate termination of the life of one person affects not only the person killed but a whole network of relationships of that person," the SACBC statement continued. "... Killing one person brings about pain and misery to many people."

The statement called on the government to put in place "immediate and effective measures to ensure the security of law-abiding citizens who work hard to support their families and for our Catholic priests who spend their lives serving the people of this country."

"We appeal to you to make the well-being and safety of our people a top priority," the bishops said. "As a Church, we are at your disposal for discussion and strategies to stop the murder of innocent people, which is now becoming a pandemic in this country." — *ACI Africa*

MEMORIAM

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

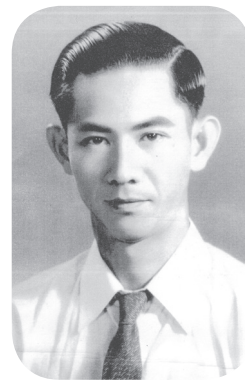
2nd Anniversary In Loving Memory of



CATHERINE LOUIS
16th March 1939 –
14th May 2022

Words are few,
thoughts are deep.
Memories of you Mom
are ours to keep.
We love you Mama.
Rest in peace.

21st Anniversary In Loving Memory of



**Victor Boey
Yin Hoay**
Departed:
11-05-2003

Dearest Papa,
We have missed you deeply
these twenty one years.
We treasure all you have done
for us and all the sacrifices you
made for us,
Enduring a lot of pain
and hardship at work.
You have set us all a
very good example through
your deep faith in God and
the way you lived so honestly.
Thank you Papa.
We pray and we know
God our Father has already
rewarded you with a place
in heaven.

Fondly remembered by
all your children,
their spouses, grandchildren
and great-grandchildren.

1st Anniversary In Loving Memory of



**CAPTAIN STEVEN
GERARD**

20th February 1953
11th May 2023

My beloved husband
Jasley Sebastian
Children : Yvonne Gerard
Moses Gerard,
Aaron Gerard
and grandchildren.

11th Anniversary



Vincent Thomas s/o Jacob Sigamoney
(Toppan Moore @ IDT & Roy Trading Co)

15.04.1957 – 15.05.2013

It has been 11 years that you've left us with your
Precious Memories, Enchanting Smile & Your Voice
uniquely expresses our Hearts and Minds.

We Miss You Appa

Fondly Remembered by
Wife - Selvarani, Children & Grandchildren.

NOTICE

The cost for
placing a
memoriam is
RM100
per column.

For enquiries
please contact us:

Tel/WhatsApp:
03-2026 8291
Email: memoriam@herald.com.my

You who have made
me see many
troubles and
calamities
will revive me
again;
from the depths
of the earth
you will bring me
up again.
You will increase
my greatness
and comfort
me again.

Psalm 71:20-21

3rd Anniversary Forever in Our Hearts MARIE ANTHONY



5.10.1939 – 10.5.2021

"The years may pass,
but still, you stay.
As near and dear
as yesterday."
We miss you, Amma.
Love you dearly,
Your children,
grandchildren & in-laws.

BE FORMED AND INFORMED

SUBSCRIBE TO

The Catholic Weekly
HERALD

We provide news, commentaries and teachings on the Catholic Church.

Get the physical copy of *HERALD* delivered to your doorstep.

You can also subscribe for your loved ones.

Subscription Rates:

COUNTRY	YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION (49 issues)
Malaysia	RM195
Singapore	RM1,306

For enquiries, please contact:

HERALD

5, Jalan Robertson, 50150 Kuala Lumpur

Tel/WhatsApp: 03-2026 8291; E-mail: advertisement@herald.com.my;

Website: www.heraldmalaysia.com

TRINITY FUNERAL SERVICES

SDN BHD 1027544-D

FOR FREE AND NO OBLIGATION
CONSULTATION, PLEASE CALL

Jude Anthony

019-241 5215 or 016-275 5215

No 17, Jln Anggerik Doritis BB, 31/BB, Kota Kemuning,
Section 31, 40460, Shah Alam, Selangor
☎ +603-5131 5459 +603-5131 0330
✉ trinityfuneralservices3@gmail.com

REST IN PEACE

Interreligious education promotes fraternity

ABU DHABI: Religions are called to a "shared journey in which believers of different faiths learn to know and respect each other, promoting together ethical and spiritual values for the good of humanity." Bishop Paolo Martinelli, Apostolic Vicar of Southern Arabia elaborated on this concept at the meeting *Convening of Champions, Ethics Education to contribute to global citizenship and build inclusive and peaceful societies*.

"The religious dimension is absolutely constitutive of the educational experience. In fact, religion goes to the heart of the anthropological experience as it concerns the relationship of each person with God, in order to collaborate with all people of goodwill for a society more human and more fraternal," said Bishop Martinelli during the Abu Dhabi event that took place from April 23 to 25.

The meeting, hosted by the Committee of Human Fraternity and the Muslim Council of Elders was promoted in collaboration with UNESCO, Arigatou International, the Guerrand Hermes Foundation for Peace and the KAICIID Dialogue Centre.

According to *Fides* news agency, Bishop Martinelli upheld the Document on Human Fraternity signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar which, he said, "marks a new chapter in the history of the



The Committee of Human Fraternity and the Muslim Council of Elders hosted a meeting on interreligious education.

relationship between religions and it is a precious tool for the interreligious education."

Noting that "Interreligious education implies, first of all, recognising that every human being is a religious being, made to be in relationship with God and with others seeking the common good," Bishop Martinelli said that education "must form religious sentiment, that is, the constitutive reference to the transcendent, omnipotent, merciful and creator God who wants all the faithful to treat each other as brothers and sisters."

The Apostolic Vicar pointed out that the private schools the Vicariate is running in the United Arab Emirates aim to contribute to "this interreligious education that trains the

new generations in collaboration and solidarity among all."

"Religions together have the task of reminding humanity of the need to take care of the religious and ethical dimension of life" the Bishop continued, pointing out that "Without God human beings become inhuman."

As the Abu Dhabi document states, interreligious education communicates "hope for all humanity: the possibility of creating a more fraternal and human society, where there is tolerance, coexistence, solidarity and social friendship."

"The new generations," Bishop Martinelli concluded, "ask adults to be witnesses that a world of peace is possible." — *Vatican News*

Apply for the Zayed Sustainability Prize

VATICAN: Since 2008, the Zayed Sustainability Prize has been a beacon of hope for global sustainability, recognising and empowering innovators who are driving positive change worldwide.

The Zayed Sustainability Prize invites individuals, organisations, and schools from around the globe to showcase their innovative solutions and transformative impact in the fields of Health, Food, Energy, Water, Climate Action, and Global High Schools. From technology, community and education, every initiative can make a difference and is invited to be submitted.

To apply to the Zayed Sustainability prize you are invited to register through the online portal, thus beginning your application process (<https://bit.ly/4dpZYLW>).

You can then submit your application with the help of the documents and FAQs answered on the website.

Please note that the deadline is June 23, 2024. Once submitted, entries cannot be edited.

The judges of the Zayed Sustainability Prize include politicians, businessmen and women, and representatives of indigenous groups, covering all walks of life.

The prize money of 1,000,000 USD (RM4.7 million) goes towards developing and sustaining the winning plans and projects.

The Zayed Sustainability Prize is an opportunity to join a global community of changemakers dedicated to building a sustainable future for generations to come. — *Vatican News*

Pope Francis receives the King of Jordan



Pope Francis receives King Abdullah II of Jordan. (Vatican Media)

VATICAN: Pope Francis received King Abdullah II and his entourage in the Vatican's Apostolic Palace on May 2.

The Director of the Holy See Press Office, Matteo Bruni, told journalists there was a "very cordial dialogue," at the private encounter which lasted 20 minutes.

After their conversation this morning, and greetings with the Jordanian delegation, there was the traditional exchange of gifts between the leaders.

The Holy Father presented King Abdullah with a mosaic depicting the papal blessing in St. Peter's Square, the work of mosaicists from the Vatican's Mosaic Studio, as well

as volumes of the various papal documents issued throughout the pontificate, including his Message for the World Day of Peace 2024.

King Abdullah II reciprocated by gifting the Pope a metal sculpture made of Arabic letters.

Pope Francis and the Sovereign of the Hashemite Kingdom have known each other since the start of the Holy Father's papacy.

Their first meeting was in 2014 for the occasion of Pope Francis' Apostolic Journey to the Holy Land, which also included a stop in the Jordanian capital of Amman. — *Vatican News*

EX
KL

2024

Europe Pilgrimages

14D Marian Shrines
ITALY | FRANCE | SPAIN | PORTUGAL

RM 15,900
pp

Immerse yourself in Papal's blessing and venerate before the shrines of Our Lady.

22 Sept Fr. Mark Michael	14 Oct Fr. Xavier Andrew	24 Nov * Fr. Richard Anthonsamy SJ
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------------------

15D Medjugorje + Eastern Europe
CROATIA | BOSNIA | HUNGARY | POLAND | CZECH

RM 16,900
pp

A journey of peace, prayer, conversion and reconciliation

14 Oct	Fr. Albet A.
--------	--------------

13D Franciscan Shrines
MILAN | VENICE | PADUA | FLORENCE | PISA | ASSISI | LANCIANO
LORETO | MANOPELLO | SAN GIOVANI | ROME

RM 13,900
pp

Embark on a transformative pilgrimage to the Franciscan Shrines of Italy

17 Nov	TBA
--------	-----

- All Inclusive
- No Hidden Cost
- Hassle Free

TRAVEL & TOURS SDN BHD
(237364 - TIKKKP8377)
No. 10 (1st Floor) Jalan 17/54,
Seksyen 17, 46400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor
Email: info@topaztravels.com

For more info:

+6 019 - 6688471

www.topaztravels.com