

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

Phil 3:8-9

Keeping alive the legacy of Cardinal Soter

By Julie Lim

KUALA LUMPUR: The legacy of Malaysia's first cardinal has been written into the annals of history in a book titled, *The Cardinal: The Life and Times of His Eminence Anthony Soter Cardinal Fernandez*. The project was spearheaded by E. Samson, with an editorial team comprising individuals who had worked closely with Cardinal Soter.

"Cardinal Soter's vision was so pastorally oriented as leader of the Church, not only in Malaysia, but also in the region. He had a vision that was so far sighted. He didn't think in a singular way, but thought holistically. He didn't just have one focus in mind, he had many things that built up the Church," said Samson the author, at the launch on March 31, 2022, at the Stella Maris International School in Damansara.

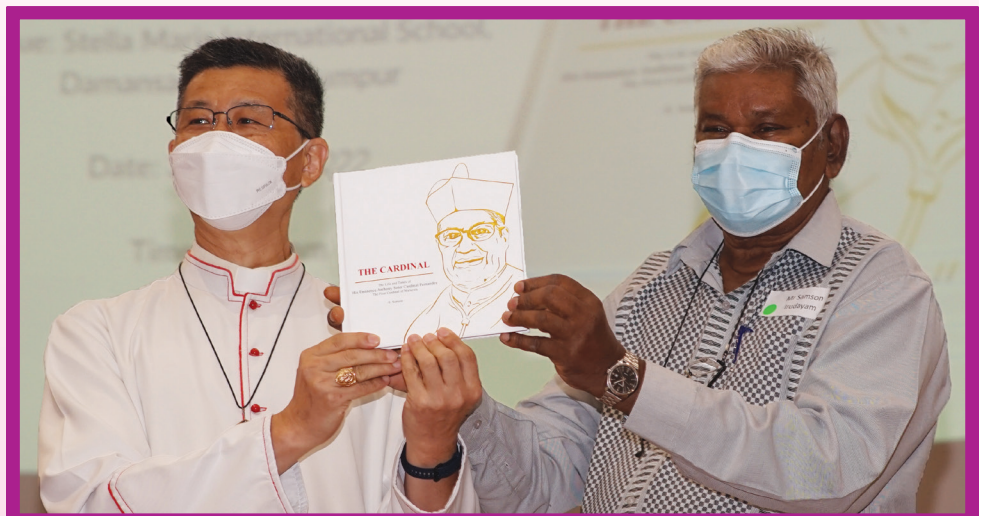
Though he regretted that the Cardinal was not able to see the book, Samson was grateful to have read a few chapters to Cardinal Soter who then made corrections to the text.

The book contains tributes and memories from the young and old, featuring people from all walks of life and different religious backgrounds as well as those whose lives that the Cardinal touched in one way or another.

Samson also expressed gratitude that the book had reached fruition, and paid tribute to the contributors, which include Rev Dr Hermen Shastri, General Secretary of CCM; Bro Augustin Julian, FSC and Brig Gen (Rtd) Dato' Richard Robless, Chairman Council of Directors, Yayasan Tan Sri Dominic Vendargon.

The book launch commenced with an opening prayer by Fr Dr Clarence Devadass, Director of Catholic Research Centre, who expressed gratitude for the gift of Cardinal Soter whose life touched the hearts of many and left memories to last a life time.

"May this book not only inspire many but also be a tool to spread love, joy, peace, goodness, and faithfulness. Help us all to grow closer and nurture the bonds of community – values that Cardinal Soter exemplified by his



Archbishop Julian Leow and E. Samson holding aloft the book *The Cardinal: The Life and Times of His Eminence Anthony Soter Cardinal Fernandez* at the launch on March 31, 2022.

life," prayed Fr Clarence.

In his speech, Dato' Richard spoke about the inspiration and legacy of Cardinal Soter which was the impetus behind the formation of the Stella Maris group of schools.

"In 1987, the then Archbishop Soter had convened a conference amongst Catholic educators, religious teaching congregations and lay persons, at the Infant Jesus Convent in Cheras, to discuss the situation and circumstances surrounding Christian mission schools, and to discern the Church's mission and response to the changes and challenges that were taking shape. The conference resulted in the formation of the Malaysian Catholic Education Council and, subsequently, the birth of the Archdiocese's agenda in private education.

"The first Stella Maris school opened its doors in 1994 in Jalan Robertson, Pudu. Encouraged by the success of this first school, Archbishop Soter initiated the incorporation of Yayasan Tan Sri Dominic Vendargon to control and house under one roof, all of the Archdiocese's interests in private education. The Foundation today owns and operates four private schools, including one that offers an international curriculum.

"All four schools stand brightly lit as stars born from the burning desire and quest of one man. This is his legacy. This is his testament. And while we may have lost our mentor, we look at what he has left and we stand thankful and grateful to God for this great and loyal servant of His.

"His vision for education was something

close to his heart. And despite all the handicaps and challenges that we were confronted with, he always encouraged us on. He used to say, whatever your cross, whatever your pain, work in the Lord's vineyard will always be very difficult. But be encouraged for He will always be with you," said Dato' Richard.

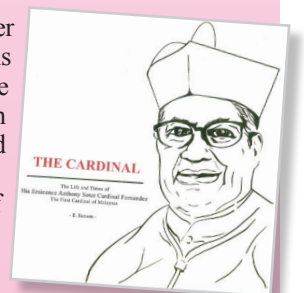
Archbishop Julian Leow hopes the book will serve as a historic legacy for the younger generation, and for those who may not have had the opportunity of knowing Cardinal Soter, who passed away on Oct 28, 2020, at the age of 88.

"Let us continue to keep alive this legacy that Cardinal Soter has left us. Let it not die but let it continue to grow and to bloom. And to take the Church in Malaysia to the next level. Inter-faith dialogue and ecumenism were foremost in Cardinal Soter's mind, to build the Church and to contribute to the growth of this nation," said Archbishop Julian.

Family members of the late cardinal, friends, and members of the clergy and religious attended the event.

The hardcover coffee table book is published by the Catholic Research Centre (CRC) and retails at RM30.

To get a copy of this book, please contact CRC at 03-20266472 or email: publication@crc.org.my.



Sandakan Diocese uses revised SYPG hymnal, stops projection

■ P5



AOHD launches mobile clinic for the marginalised

■ P6



Bowled over by Winifred

■ P12



For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

Prayer for the Synod

Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name. With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions. Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right. All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Someone recently mentioned that it's only natural for people to seek self-glorification. The message implied was that, when people talk about their work, it's because they want recognition. They want to be acknowledged for their hard work, contribution and capability.

'Self-glorification' may seem too harsh a term. I think it's only natural for us to want some form of gratitude. There is no harm in accepting credit where credit is due and yes, occasionally, we do like our egos stroked. At the same time, we have to keep ourselves grounded. In the words of the late Steve Jobs, "We need to be on guard against arrogance, which knocks at the door whenever you're successful."

If ever there was an epitome of humility, then we need look no further than the life and times of the late Anthony Soter Cardinal Fernandez (*Keeping alive the legacy of Cardinal Soter* – Pg 1).

From hospital assistant, to priest, to bishop, to archbishop and, finally, cardinal, he never forgot his humble beginnings and it was this endearing nature that enabled him to be both a servant of God and prince of the Church.

In 2017, during the thanksgiving Mass to mark his appointment as cardinal, he uttered these words in all simplicity, "To all of you, I wish to remain just Soter, without any titles." Anyone who has had the privilege of knowing the late cardinal will certainly attest to this, as evidenced by the hundreds of tributes posted on social media when he passed away in October 2020. The messages and anecdotes affirmed a resonating appellation to him as a man who always embraced meekness rather than the high office of power and authority.

He propounded the concept of servant leadership and 'walked the talk' himself.

Though often shying from the limelight, Cardinal Soter never shied away from his responsibilities or from his role as a kindly shepherd and fatherly figure, as aptly described by a member of the Presbyterium ... "Small in stature yet assertive in presence, unafraid to stand up for a just cause but always ready to back down if reconciliation was attained, quick to reprimand when things went wrong, but never far from putting his hands around the shoulder of someone in pain."

The late cardinal often listened more than he spoke. He propounded the concept of saying less of 'I' and more of 'you'. Sometimes, humility means not speaking at all. Humble is the person who remains silent while others vie to be heard in self-glorification.



Jesus stoops down to raise us up

The readings this Sunday have a common thread. Each one reveals that the most important intention or purpose of God for human beings is to set them free. God endeavours to draw them out of the various captivities, of being trapped in their destructive realities, towards what Paul called "the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:21).

The prophet Isaiah, in the first reading (Isa 43: 16-21), compares the liberation and homecoming — God's hospitality — that will take place with the past liberation from Egypt, leading to forming Israel as a nation. Both the Exodus and the return from Exile prefigure, in Christian perspective, the Paschal liberation that God will bring about through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. The people will be formed to rise again and sing God's praises (Isa 43: 21).

St Paul, a former Pharisee with great zeal for the law, tells us in the Second Reading (Phil 3: 8-14) how "I have indeed been taken possession of" by Jesus Christ, captured by Him and set free. Using one of his favourite images — athletic competition — Paul describes his position in the race now, i.e. he is not back at the start, he has not yet arrived at the perfect finish but he is still running, putting the past behind him with his eyes set upon the finishing post and prize that lies ahead.

Does our Christian spirituality and life trap us or capture us to live in the

guilt of the past, in trapped-regret of our own "Egypt", in the shame of thinking that we are not worthy, not good enough of being "taken possession of by Christ Jesus"?

Do we see ourselves as God sees us and loves us? A God who calls us to be a pilgrim people, leaving the past behind and setting our sights on journeying towards God?

In the Gospel today (John 8:1-11), the main point of the scribes and Pharisees is not to get the woman punished but to set a trap for Jesus. Would Jesus defy the law of Moses or would He condemn the woman to death? Only the occupying Roman powers can condemn someone to the death penalty (Jn 18:31).

What did Jesus write on the ground? We do not know! Perhaps, He was only doodling, an action which shows no interest in the issue of the blood-thirsty crowd before Him. He has no interest in their deceitful traps. The writing, however, provides a moment for the opposition to melt away, to diffuse the tension present, to take away the focus of the accusers on the woman.

Jesus has been put in a tight spot, a trap. How does He get out of the trap? Jesus chooses not to confront the law directly. "He looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again" (Jn 8: 7b-8). Only the person who has never sinned could have

a right to condemn another! Perhaps, the eldest start to leave first because of their longer life of accumulated sin.

Jesus has a better way of dealing with sin than condemnation and punishment. The narrow or rigidly punitive legal way is not the way for Him. To be sure, He does not deny or condone sin. It appears that the woman is in fact guilty; however, we might as well ask where her male accomplice is. It takes two to tango! Where is the justice of the law that the scribes and Pharisees claim to practise?

To note a subtle point in the story: Jesus never really looks at the woman while the scribes and Pharisees "persisted with their question" (v. 7). As long as the accusers continue their blood-thirsty demands, they are not able to look at the woman with equal dignity despite her sin! His bending down and writing may be a way to avoid playing into the hands of the accusers. After the accusers have left and when the woman is left alone, now Jesus is able to deal with her in a dignified manner, on equal footing as a human person. From this humble position, He is now able to talk to her as a woman. "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? Neither do I condemn you".

Jesus, who is the only one without sin (2 Cor 5:21), the only one with the credentials to judge her from "on high", actually goes down humbly on the ground and looks up at her to restore her dignity

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings

with Fr Bernard Arputhasamy, SJ

5th Sunday of Lent (C)

Readings: *Isaiah 43:16-21;*
Philippians 3:8-14;
Gospel: John 8:1-11

and self-esteem. Jesus stoops down low in order to raise her up!

He is more concerned to rescue the woman from her terrible plight and set her free for a new life: "Go and sin no more".

How often are we quick to condemn and punish others, thinking that we are practicing Catholics, religious people in the state-of-grace in order to feel "self-righteous"? Are we sometimes harsh and even quick to condemn and punish, rather than rescue and accompany people on the path to life?

Lent is about conversion of heart and deeper knowledge of God, about how we can look for ways to show the merciful heart of God as Jesus Christ has done.



Fr Bernard Arputhasamy SJ is the Assistant Priest of the Church of Jesus Caritas, Kepong.



KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop
Julian Leow

April

- 2 *Installation of Parish Priest – Church of St Jude, Rawang*
- 3 *Installation of Parish Priest – Church of Sacred Heart, KL*
- 5 *Chrism Mass – Cathedral of St John, Kuala Lumpur*
- 5-6 *Clergy Monthly Recollection*



PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop
Sebastian Francis

April

- 5 *Council of Priests (COP), Stella Maris*
- 5 *Chrism Mass – Cathedral of the Holy Spirit (8.00pm – Live-broadcast)*
- 5-6 *Clergy Monthly Recollection – Stella Maris, Penang*
- 6-7 *Permanent Deacons' Formation – Stella Maris, Penang*
- 9-17 *Holy Week – Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam*



ARCHDIOCESE OF KUALA LUMPUR

Chancery Notice

CHAN/CD/06/2022

Guidelines for Celebration of Holy Week Liturgies 2022 in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur

Beginning April 1, 2022, as Malaysia enters the “Transition to Endemic” phase, the government has eased its COVID-19 restrictions for congregational prayers at places of worship. In view of the country’s gradual return to normalcy and in tandem with the easing of restrictions, the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur endeavours to move in a similar direction as we approach the upcoming Holy Week liturgies.

Even as we progress to this new phase, we are cautious and mindful of the need to do so in a careful, controlled, and incremental manner to protect the health and safety of our congregants. While we aspire to celebrate the Holy Week liturgies as we did in pre-pandemic times, we remain concerned with the prevailing daily infection rates. As such, our proposed easing measures serve as important safeguards for all the community of faithful, especially the vulnerable groups that in-



clude our elderly and children.

In consultation with the Archdiocesan Crisis Task Force, Archbishop Julian Leow D.D. has issued some guidelines for the liturgies in the upcoming Holy Week celebrations (kindly refer to the Appendix in the given link).

The celebration of the Paschal Triduum is the apex and heart of the whole liturgical year. As we come to celebrate the Holy Week liturgies after two years

of stringent restrictions, we praise and thank God for the opportunity to return and come back together to worship as Church.

In anticipation of fully reopening soon, the Archdiocese seeks your continued cooperation and diligence in exercising personal responsibility and adherence to the necessary protocols of this new phase.

Wishing everyone a Blessed Holy Week and a Joy-filled Easter.

Rev Fr Dr Clarence Devadass
Chancellor
Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur
March 31, 2022

click the below link for the full details:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11OwFsqv8A2drcxGEuMoGOKDGY0hpX7bb/view>



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #82



Greetings and Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you, dear People of God.

Holy Week is drawing near. Last week’s Gospel on the Prodigal Son reminded us about “coming to our senses”. It means awareness, acknowledgement and appropriate action. That’s what the squandering young man did. But around us, we witness a senseless multitude. They fail to see sin and wrong. If we do not come to our senses, we will lose our home.

Time of the “Praedicate Evangelium”: On March 19, 2022, Pope Francis promulgated this new apostolic constitution, reforming the structures of the Roman Curia and the administration at the Vatican. *Praedicate Evangelium* in English means Preach the Gospel. The reform stresses on evangelisation as the central task of the Church, in the context of the missionary nature of the Church. It is like reminding ourselves that everything, from the parish office to the parish ministries, from the staff to the hospitality ministers, very Catholic - young and old, work or serve to “preach the gospel”. We cannot practise dichotomised lives. We cannot be hypocrites... Let everything we do in or at the marketplace, workplace or everywhere, **glorify the Lord.**

Listen. Be docile. Be led by the Spirit.

A Thought for the Week:

The Pearl vs The Alligator’s Teeth!

A snobbish tourist was visiting a small Australian village when he noticed a local man wearing a highly ornate necklace that featured 10 alligator teeth. He approached the man and, in a condescending manner said, “Goodness, what a fancy necklace! I guess you people must value alligator teeth the same way my people value pearls.” The man replied, “Well, anyone can open up an oyster.”

Something to reflect on:

Nothing of worth comes without sweat and tears, struggle or hard work.

Joan Chittister said: *Struggle is the gift of new life in disguise. There is beauty in the dark valleys of life. It is called hope. Her book is entitled “Scarred by Struggle, Transformed by Hope”.*

Announcements for this Week:

1) **The Catholic Men’s Group**, which meets every Tuesday, from 9.30pm – 11.00pm, are organising a webinar entitled “**The Post Pandemic Man**”, with Deacon Dr Sherman Kuek, on **April 24**, 8.00pm-10.00pm. Contact Deacon Leslie Petrus at 016-7179038 for further details.

2) **The Federation of Christian Mission Schools Malaysia (FCMSM)** is organising a forum entitled “**Crisis in Leadership Succession in Mission Schools**”, on Saturday, April 30, 2022, from 9.00am – 12.00 noon via zoom. Follow the link to register. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdXXR3p5lcB2iG_YvBkgN-Njl4XhiltCkviwn7ATyqsAwmOnCQ/viewform

3) Pre-Synod Feedback-Study Days For MJD

- April 2, 2022 for South Johore Vicariate at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, JB (four-in-one Assembly)

- April 27, 2022 for Malacca Vicariate at the Church of SMC (M), St Peter’s Church (E), St Francis Xavier (T), Our Lady of Guadalupe (BM)

- May 3, 2022 for MJD @ Church of the Immaculate Conception, JB from 9.00am-1.00pm

This is the Catholic community’s time to view its achievements, its weaknesses, and the expectations of people; and address its shortcomings.

This week’s Question and Query:

The Q asked, Do you think “synodality” will work?

1) **Synodality is an initiative of the Catholic Church to reflect about its journey, to listen to one another from**

the heart such that our hearts too will burn as we listen, to the Jesus in the other person, who is sharing his or her faith journey as experienced. *In genuine faith sharing, usually one’s heart burns within as we listen to another’s faith story.*

2) **For the Church to “journey together” means listening to ‘what the Spirit is saying to the churches, being docile to the Spirit, and being led by the Spirit as the People of God.**

For this to happen, the Church:

- a) Must **pray without ceasing**, pray with a goal and connecting with God who is present in the world.

- b) Must **do penance**, which is the denial of sin and earthly pleasures in our life, renunciations we do for ourselves, our neighbours, the Church, and for the many wrongs that plague our society today.

- c) Must **move out of its comfort zone**, build bridges and roads into our lives and communities via pastoral charity, through service.

3) **The Synodal Process reminds us of our foundational vocation:** we are called to Communion (our oneness); Participation (our engagement); and Mission (our giving). We connect with the Lord within in prayer, to share the promptings of the Spirit in our communities, and build together His Kingdom here and now.

God bless you all. **“Religion has a set of dogmatic rules. But Spirituality invites us to reason about everything, and to question everything.”** We are the living bricks of God’s Temple.

Let us together, you and I, build His Church.

Bishop Bernard Paul
April 1 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAAZ7xvg9vc>

Entering a deeper mode of prayer

By **Christin Ong**

MELAKA: Fr Thomas Chong SJ, shared points on reflecting, praying, and meditating to 65 persons on March 27 at the Church of St Theresa.

The Lenten recollection began with the parish prayer of "Walking Together as Children of the Light". Explaining the Spiritual Exercises he said, "We go with a specific purpose, asking for a specific grace as we come to the point of reflection. When we move into prayer, we need to enter a transition stage (a different mode), thus creating a disposition into our gift, and thereby receiving our gift (which may be unexpected)."

Fr Thomas broke down the text in Genesis 18:1-14 to further explain the exercise: In verses 1-8a, Abraham is rushing about managing reality – he is in control; In verses 8b-9, Abraham enters into a different mode of being – an active waiting, being alert to the situation, giving up his control and responding quickly; In verses 9-14, Abraham receives



Participants engrossed in the Lenten Recollection at the Church of St Theresa, Melaka.

a gift — an unthinkable gift (Sarah laughed because she disbelieved); And in verse 14, Is anything impossible for the Lord?

Like Abraham, we too are asked to enter into a deeper mode. The key is first, reverence — a sense of awe before someone much greater, so being aware of our limits and shortcomings; and second, receptivity — openness to receive an unexpected gift.

Fr Thomas also touched on Luke 10:38-42 — Mary has chosen the better part. For those of us serving in ministries, the better part is to run about, being busy like Martha. But in a recollection, we need to change gear — to sit and to listen, to be like

Mary. To ask for grace we need:

(i) to be open and available (Gen12:1-4, Heb 11:8-12);

(ii) to trust in God's goodness (Lk 12:12-32) and

(iii) to be filled with an active desire to receive God's gift (Ps 61:1-8, Jn 1:35-39, Lk 11:1-4).

This followed a 40-minute-session of silent personal prayer and reflection using the above-suggested texts.

The theme for the second session was *Faithfully Loved – to hope and desire that God rekindles the fire within us*. Fire is the image of passion, energy, creativity, joy, enthusiasm, and life. For some of us, this fire may have diminished or even extinguished, after many years of

service or due to hurts. An invitation to find our energy again is to set all things right in God's love.

Fr Thomas referred to Caravaggio's painting on *The Calling of St Matthew* in Mt 9:9 — which depicts Jesus pointing a finger at Matthew (Matthew also points his finger at himself). He said Jesus' outstretched hand and the finger is an allusion to creation as in Michelangelo's painting depicting God creating Adam. Jesus extends his finger to recreate Matthew, calling him to new life. Matthew was in darkness and distracted; the light shone on him to give him new life; plus, the light from the cross will be a part of this new life — Matthew responded im-

mediately. Jesus is also pointing His finger at me.

The takeaway from the second session was that my heart is awakened to God's unfailing presence; and to God who faithfully loves me into new life.

Fr Thomas also shared on the Witness of Israel. Israel's history is my history too. He spoke on the two crises the Israelites faced. The first crisis is the Covenant breaking in Sinai — the golden calf (Ex32:1-8, 15-35), and the second crisis is the Exile to Babylon in 587BC (2Kings 25); and God's response was shown in his steadfast love and faithfulness (Ex34:6-7a; Isa 54:8-10).

Jesus is God's loving-kindness and faithfulness made flesh (Jn 1:14). Jesus is full of grace and truth, steadfast love, and faithfulness. Once again, participants spent time in silent personal prayer and reflection for about 90 minutes. They were given reflection questions and Bible texts to choose to reflect on.

After the time of personal prayer, participants gathered to share their experiences during the recollection.

Visitation Lenten Retreat



Fr Xavier Andrew with the participants of the two-day Lenten Retreat at the Church of the Visitation.

SEREMBAN: The Church of the Visitation organised a Lenten Retreat themed *Discipleship: Be Salt and Light!* on March 26 and 27, 2022.

Parish priest, Fr Xavier Andrew, was the retreat master. The two-day event, which saw 50 participants from different parish ministries, included formation sessions, group discussion and fellowship.

On the first day, Fr Xavier began with 'Discipleship' by quoting John 8:31: "So Jesus said to those who believed in Him, "If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples."

"To be a Christian disciple is to be a follower of Christ, but the cost of following Jesus Christ is your life. It will cost you everything. You will have to say no to temptations and things of this world. You must follow Him through trials, suffering, loneliness, and humiliation.

"This is because the Christian faith isn't just a matter of human effort or intellectual belief; it's a supernatural reality. If you are a follower of Jesus, it's God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, living inside you who fills you and enables you to live out and grow in discipleship and disciple-making."

During the 'Salt of the Earth' session, Fr Xavier quoted from Matthew 5:13 "You are the salt of

the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot."

He explained that to 'be salt' means to deliberately seek to influence the people in one's life by showing them the unconditional love of Christ through good deeds.

On being the 'Light of the World', Father quoted Matthew 5:14-16. He shared eight points on how to become the light of the world. It included being on constant spiritual footing, sharing your faith in Christ, recognising open doors, acting in these moments, pointing them to Jesus, taking light where it's dark, shining together as the Church and living surrendered to the Lord. On how to produce light, the padre quoted John 8:12: "I am the light of the world. He who follows me, shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." The day ended with a group discussion.

Following Mass on the second day, the session on 'Habits of Highly Effective Disciples' kicked off, highlighting habits like developing informed minds, cultivating hearts on fire, living contemplative lives that experience God's presence in all things, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. The challenge of highly effective discipleship is the

possibility that too much emphasis on informed minds makes us Pharisees, too much emphasis on hearts on fire makes us Zealots, too much contemplative lifestyle makes us Sadducees, and with too much emphasis on the Holy Spirit, we go out of control like the Corinthians.

At the next session on 'Discipline in Discipleship', Fr Xavier quoted Luke 9:23: Then He said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."

The eight disciplines of discipleship are, reading or studying the Scriptures, making time for prayer, participating in the Eucharist, joining cell groups, praising and worshipping God, listening to a personal trainer/coach/spiritual guide and taking up the cross.

In the final session on 'Jesus and Mentorship', Father drew from Proverbs 9:9 "Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning". He said Jesus' life exemplified all the great qualities found in the best leaders, the best friends, and the most loving people. Three things' mentees should do is, listen to their mentor/s, sit in his or her presence, and know greatness when in its presence. The session ended with a group discussion and overall sharing. — *By Sabrina Smith*

Discerning and Deciding: Experiencing Jesus

PETALING JAYA: An online Lenten formation titled *Discernment and Deciding: Experiencing Jesus* for 42 participants was held on March 26 at the Church of St Ignatius.

The Archdiocesan BEC Animating Team (ABECAT) conducted the formation which began at 9.30am, covering three sessions, *Identity and Temptation of Jesus, Outlook: Jesus' Call to Mission and Destiny: The Way of The Cross*.

Parish priest, Fr Lawrence Ng CDD, welcomed Fr Mitchel Joseph, the Ecclesiastical Assistant of ABECAT, and Rita Krishnan and thanked them for their commitment in conducting the formation during this Lent.

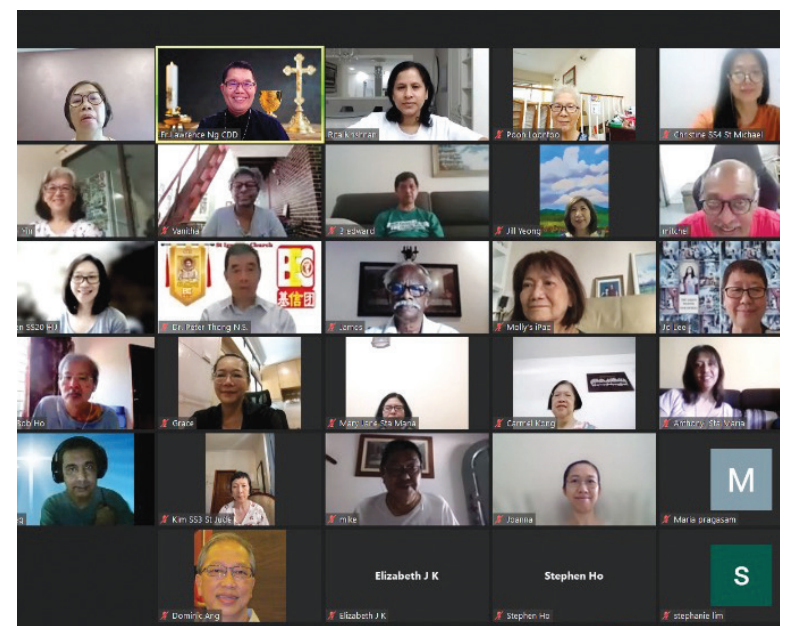
He found the programme content to be appropriate and timely. He reminded parishioners to deepen their relationship with God and

one another during this Lent, encouraging them to take notes for their spiritual growth.

Assistant parish priest, Fr Martin Then CDD, also commented on the suitability of the formation in improving the daily prayer life of the faithful, especially in attaining spiritual renewal.

It was an interactive session, with good reflections and in-depth sharing and thought provoking questions. At the end of the programme, Fr Mitchel reminded the faithful to recognise their purpose of serving the Church without self-interest and personal agenda, but only to discern and listen to the voice of God. Rita, in her closing remark pointed out on ways God keeps in touch with his beloved people — the BECs.

The session ended at 1.00pm with the Synod Prayer by the BECCOT Coordinator, Jo Lee.



A screengrab of the faithful during the formation organised by ABECAT.

Sandakan Diocese uses revised SYPG hymnal, stops projection

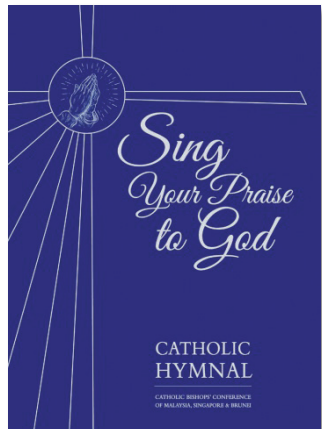
SANDAKAN: The Diocese of Sandakan has started using the revised edition of *Sing Your Praise To God* (SYPG) 2020 hymnal from the beginning of Lent this year. The Diocese has also stopped the projection of hymns at Mass.

This revised hymnal was endorsed on the First Sunday of Advent on November 29, 2020 by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei (CBCMSB) as the official Catholic hymnal for this region.

The Liturgy Commission of Sandakan Diocese organised a series of choir formation to introduce and promote the use of this Hymnal among choir members and the faithful.

Neil Mah, a member of the Liturgical Music Committee (LMC) of the Episcopal Regional Liturgy Commission (ERLC) for CBCMSB, was invited to conduct the first formation held on Feb 27, 2022 at St Mary's Cathedral.

This hybrid session, attended by about 30 physical participants comprised choir members and interested parishioners of the Cathedral, was also livestreamed via YouTube platform to over 60 participants



The Sing Your Praise to God hymnal is the official hymnal of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei.

from across the Diocese in Tawau, Lahad Datu, including some from the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu.

In this first session, Neil shared the history of the hymnal which was first published by CBCMSB in 1970 to meet the needs of the faithful to come together to worship God in spirit and in truth at every Mass.

Neil went on to inform the second edition, printed in 1985, besides having more hymns, has devotions and prayers added to it. Since then the Hymnal has not been updated.



Neil Mah briefing the participants on a better understanding of the SYPG Hymnal.

Thus, in 2014, CBCMSB mandated ERLC to undertake the task of revising and improving it.

The participants were informed that the ERLC then formed the LMC to work on this endeavour. Mah was the sole representative from Sabah in this Committee of 10 that comprised of clergy and lay from various arch/dioceses in the region proficient in the areas of liturgy and liturgical music.

The Committee re-visited the liturgical and co-related documents of the Second Vatican Council, and with constant consultations with the bishops of the CBCMSB, for-

mulated the guiding principles for determining the hymns to be included, as well as adding the Mass Antiphons and music notation. The Committee also acknowledged all copyright owners of all hymns selected and sought permission for their use in the Hymnal.

Neil then introduced the content of the Hymnal which include the Order of Mass, Antiphons and hymns in English. He also showed the elaborate index listings that aid the user to search hymns by title, first liner, and also by the various liturgical seasons.

Participants were then led to bet-

ter understand the guiding principles used in the Hymnal.

After the English choir groups started to use the Hymnal for the first two Sundays of Lent, Fr David Garaman, the parish priest of St Mary's Cathedral received encouraging feedback from the parishioners on the improvement in singing and hymn selections used at Mass.

The Cathedral also took the opportunity to get parishioners to buy the Hymnal for use at Mass, considering the present pandemic SOP prevent those at Mass to use common shared books and materials.

The role of the Responsorial Psalm

SANDAKAN: Neil Mah was invited back to the Cathedral of St Mary to conduct the second series of formation to choir members on March 25 – 26.

The sessions were held in hybrid mode, with physical attendance of 50 English choir members from the Cathedral and nearby churches, and about 200 joined online from other parishes in the three arch/dioceses in Sabah.

On the evening of March 25, with references to various liturgical documents, Neil touched on the role of the Responsorial Psalm in the Liturgy, "an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word and which has great liturgical and pastoral importance, since it fosters meditation on the Word of God" (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no 61).

Participants were then led to see

and experience the various genres of psalms, and how the use of chant, time and key signatures, chords, melodic structure and different organ registers, all play a cohesive role in focusing greater attention to the text being sung, ultimately fostering greater meditation and understanding of the first reading.

On the first part of March 26 morning, Neil led the participants to discover the beauty and treasure of the church's liturgical music, the Gregorian chant, which is "especially suited to the Roman liturgy: therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 116).

Neil went on to explain Gregorian chant is the church's own music, born in the church's liturgy. Its

texts are almost entirely scriptural, coming for the most part from the Psalter (Psalms).

"For centuries it was sung as pure melody, in unison, and without accompaniment, and this is still the best way to sing chant if possible. Gregorian chant is in free rhythm, without meter or time signature," said Neil.

He elaborated further many psalm tones have been written since the Second Vatican Council. They are much like Gregorian chant psalm tones with their free rhythm and their repeatable melodic formulas.

Neil continued, "What distinguishes the chant is that the songs are actual prayers and text vital to the liturgy. When the priest sings, 'The Lord be with you,' and the congregation responds in song,

"and with your spirit," they are singing a Gregorian chant, because those holy texts are an essential part of the Mass."

"If you are singing a part of the liturgy that is an essential part of the Mass, you are singing a Gregorian chant. Even if you are singing a simple response, that's a chant. It's one of the reasons the chant is traditionally sung *a capella* in plain, monophonic tones, making the text the focal point of the music", Mah explained.

Participants were then shown the various psalm tones (four-liner, three-liner and two-liner) provided in the Hymnal and Neil demonstrated how to apply these psalm tones to the Antiphons for Mass.

Neil also coached the participants how to chant the common Order of Mass with proper breathing, articu-

lation and stress techniques.

The second part of the morning was spent in learning the collection of Easter hymns in the Hymnal.

The participants benefitted from the series of formation held. Fr David Garaman the parish priest of St Mary's Cathedral, encouraged the choir members to apply what they had learnt and to improve progressively, with the hope of elevating the liturgical and worship quality of the Cathedral being an example for the other parishes in the Diocese to follow.

Fr David said more formations are planned especially for the other language choir groups in the Diocese, so that the faithful may be drawn deeper into that full, active and conscious participation of the soul and lifted in singing the praise to God.



Parishioners praying at one of the outdoor stations of the cross at the Church of St Jude, Rawang.

Meditate on Christ's passion outdoors

RAWANG: This Lent, the Church of St Jude Thaddeus erected banners depicting the traditional 14 Stations of the Passion of Christ, starting from the foothill of the parish to the church court-yard to encourage the faithful to pray the Way of the Cross.

In addition to images portraying Jesus' from His condemnation to His entombment, a 15th station, of an empty wooden cross, was set up across the church facade to symbolise the triumphant defeat over death at the crucifixion and resurrection. Here, the faithful are invited to write

requests/prayers and drop them inside a petition box, and every week parish priest Fr Vincent Thomas prays over the petitions before burning them.

Besides Fridays in Lent, when the Way of the Cross is recited both inside the church and outside, Fr Vincent is encouraging parishioners to come as individuals or groups, families, BECs or ministries to meditate on the passion of Christ and pray the Way of the Cross outdoors. The church grounds are open from 6.00am to 10.00pm daily. —

By Bernard Anthony

AOHD launches mobile clinic for the marginalised

By Julie Lim

KUALA LUMPUR: The Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD) has launched a mobile clinic aimed at providing basic medical care for migrant workers, refugees and indigenous peoples in locations where they live and work.

Director of AOHD, Teo Kar Im said that the initiative was mooted during a conference of the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants (of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei) held in July 2021. According to her, many migrant workers do not seek medical treatment in hospitals and clinics for fear of getting arrested and placed in detention camps. As a result, many of them had died due to



Migrant workers waiting patiently for their medical check-up.

various illnesses. "Migrant workers were literally dropping dead, not because of COVID-19, but because they suffered from various ailments. The main illnesses plaguing migrant workers are high blood pressure, diabetes, skin problems and asthma," she says.

AOHD's efforts to launch the mobile clinic faced numerous challenges. The first three launches

were postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. On March 20, 2022, the first mobile clinic was finally launched at an Indonesian *kongsi* in Selangor. During the trip, the team provided basic medical care to approximately 30 patients. That particular trip was a collaboration between the Church of the Divine Mercy (CDM) in Shah Alam and AOHD.

"CDM parish priest, Fr Alan Pereira, was supportive of this initiative and pooled together a medical team and volunteers from the parish who were efficient, filled with zest and compassionate towards the migrant workers," said Kar Im.

The mobile clinic initiative is a collaboration between parishes and AOHD. In the partnership,

the parish provides the medical team comprising minimum two medical doctors, nurses, pharmacist, administrative personnel and ushers. AOHD will provide the 'hardware' such as medication, van (and driver), etc. Each trip is held between 9.30am and 1.00pm and is able to provide basic medical care for between 30 to 35 patients. The budget for each trip is approximately RM1,000 which is mainly to cover the cost of medication. This will be borne by AOHD.

All parishes are welcome to collaborate with AOHD to send the mobile clinics to locations within the geographical boundaries of their respective parishes. For more information about the mobile clinic initiative, please contact Kar Im at 018-201 9988 or imteo@aohd.org

Bringing Christ's compassionate love to the migrants

KUALA KUBU BAHRU: An outreach programme was held at a sawmill in the interior of Kalumpang town, some 20km from Kuala Kubu Bahru town, on March 20, 2022.

Fr VA Michael, together with Patrick his lay leader, led a group of Catholics from Kuala Lumpur to meet some 75 Indonesian migrants and their families. These general workers, who are Catholics from Flores in Indonesia, earn meagre wages and have lived in simple wooden huts around the factory for the past five years.

The migrants welcomed the guests, and Mass was celebrated in a dilapidated building.

In his homily, Fr VA said we must have pure hearts to receive Jesus. "From a heart of stone to a heart of love, the need to clean our hearts, the need to change our weakness to become witnesses of Christ in the world". The priest emphasised the importance of receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

After Mass, Fr VA introduced the day's guests to the migrant community and said that, their visit was to better understand the migrants' living conditions and to be in communion with each other in Christ. Later, the migrants and guests were seen chatting in small groups.

Some 642 kgs of essential foodstuffs were distributed to the mi-

grants who were filled with joy as they praised God for His blessings.

Migrant leader Alex, in his speech, expressed his warm welcome to the guests and was happy and thankful to God and Fr VA for collaborating with the KL group to provide some essential items especially during these hard times.

Since becoming parish priest of the Church of St Paul the Apostle, Kuala Kubu Bahru in January, Fr VA has been reaching out to Catholics in the area. Every Sunday, he celebrates Mass in Bahasa Malaysia at the sawmill building for the migrants, as many do not have transportation to travel to church.

— By Bernard Anthony



Fr VA Michael celebrating Mass with the migrants and KL group.

Kick-starting recycling programme in parishes

KUALA LUMPUR: In support of the *Laudato Si* Action Platform, a programme on environmental conversion was held to encourage parishes to initiate recycling efforts. The programme was held on March 26 at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre in Kuala Lumpur. It was organised by the Creation Justice Commission of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur and the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD), in collaboration with Tzu Chi Foundation.

The programme was attended by representatives from various parishes in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. Also in attendance was Most Rev Julian Leow, Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur; Fr Andrew Manickam OFM Cap, Ecclesiastical Assistant for the Creation Justice Commission of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur; Teo Kar Im, Director of AOHD; Fr Eugene Benedict, Director of Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute and Sio Kee Hong, Deputy CEO of Tzu Chi KL Selangor.

The programme kicked off with a presentation on Tzu Chi Foundation followed by a presentation on



From left: Fr Andrew Manickam OFM Cap, Sio Kee Hiong and Francis Tan.

the critical state of the environment and what people can do to conserve it.

Francis Tan, station master for the Tzu Chi recycling centre in Taman Desa, Kuala Lumpur shared on the process to start a recycling programme in parishes. Tan is also a parishioner of the Church of the Holy Rosary. To start a recycling programme, parishes must first establish a team and announce the initiative to parishioners. The recycling team must then decide on the items they would like to recycle, such as paper and aluminium cans. Next, recycling bins must be placed at strategic and convenient locations around the church for parishioners to drop off their recy-

clables.

There must also be clear signages with interesting images, as visuals creates more impact compared to text. Concurrently, parishioners must be educated on the impor-

tance of recycling and their role in caring for the environment. To sustain the programme, the collection of recyclables must be monitored and measured, and there must be an active recruitment of volunteers.

Fr Andrew encouraged participants to begin recycling programmes in their parishes because efforts to conserve the environment must begin somewhere. He assured that the Creation Justice Commission will work with parishes to sustain their recycling programmes.

Archbishop Julian reminded participants on the message of *Laudato Si*, an encyclical by Pope Francis

about the importance of caring for planet earth, our common home. He said that it is important to conscientise the community on the critical state of the environment. "We are still relaxed about the environment being destroyed. We haven't woken up yet, we are still thinking we will be around for the next 100 years," he said.

Archbishop Julian also shared that in his home parish of the Church of the Visitation in Seremban, the senior citizens had raised RM20,000 for the church building fund by recycling papers. — By Julie Lim



Representatives from the various parishes in the KL Archdiocese at the Laudato Si' Action Platform briefing on March 26, 2022.



For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

KK Archdiocesan staff join the synodal consultation

By Linda Edward

KOTA KINABALU: During the archdiocesan synodal consultation on March 19, the staff of the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu discussed their experiences with the Catholic Church. They shared how it shaped their life and faith, as well as the obstacles encountered in the Catholic community.

Held at the Catholic Archdiocesan Centre (CAC), this was the first of two parts of the synodal process for the staff, which looks at the broader aspect of a person's experience of the Church. The 90-minute consultation held on the Solemnity of St Joseph, the patron saint of the Universal Church, and the KK Archdiocese was followed by Mass at the Centre's chapel.

Archbishop John Wong, head of the CAC, presided over the first staff Mass at the new centre. Emphasising the importance of



Synodal consultation among the Archdiocesan staff in Catholic Archdiocesan Centre on March 19, 2022.

faith, he said God chose St Joseph to look after His Son who is the one building the Church. He added, "St Joseph is also eager to help us in life. Ask the Holy Family to intercede for us and help us. All of us have faith; it is given; it is for you to live it."

The prelate also asked his staff about their experiences in the Church and encouraged their faith. "Is your experience in the

Church a negative one, and not a smooth one? No matter what happened, be glad God is with you. Look at it positively, all of this happened because God has a plan," he said and thanked the staff for their contribution to the archdiocese. The archbishop mentioned the significance of the hierarchy in the Catholic Church guided by the Holy Spirit and the importance of obeying the

pope and the bishops.

The synod prayer *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus* is constantly recited to invoke the help of the Holy Spirit for a fruitful synodal journey towards the Synod of Bishops in 2023 in Rome.

The second part of the consultation will be held on April 9 with a different set of questions. — *Catholic Sabah*

Caring for special needs children

JOHOR BAHRU: 'Who will take care of my special needs child when I am gone?' is the dreaded question a parent of a special needs child faces. When these parents are young and in control of the situation, such matters seldom arise, but reality sets in when the parent or parents become sick or face their mortality, and time is not on their side.

The Special Needs Childrens' Parents' Support Group, under the Diocesan Commission Family, Laity and Life, Diocese of Malacca-Johore, initiated a seminar to discuss the topic.

Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Joseph Jacob Panikulam, MBBS MPM was the presenter. Dr Joseph is also a Senior Lecturer, at the School of Medicine, Taylor's University, and Consultant at Mind Faculty Solaris and Valley Psychiatrists Specialists Kuala Lumpur.

Held on March 27, 2022, the two-hour public session via Zoom saw all 100 seats snatched up quickly. There were several enquiries about the availability of care centres, or if the churches have plans to help care for these children, who are now adults, once their current caregivers have passed on.

Another sensitive topic raised was the role of siblings of special needs children. Many have been deprived or short-changed of parental love and attention, as the focus is often on the special needs child. Although they may have understood their parents' difficulties, they probably experienced years of growing up alone. So, to what extent should they be involved, and is it fair to expect them to play a prominent role when they have their paths to pursue?

The forum was designed to tackle these issues in an informal question-answer discussion. Dr Joseph began by highlighting the various types of special needs in children and adults, ranging from physical, mental, both or multiple.

In Malaysia, about 10 per cent of the children born are special children, and they come under the care of three government ministries, Health, Education and Social Welfare. Although laws are enacted to protect those with disabilities, they are policies. The government is changing the education aspect to be integrated into normal schools, so these children can be in a special class



(Unsplash photo/RODNAE Productions)

within the school compound. He also said many of these children are kept hidden until they are adults. Unfortunately, most government institutions lack proper funding, resources, and qualified personnel.

Sadly, some can never be independent and need lifelong care. Although there are private homes, some set up by a group of parents, private nursing homes, and NGOs like Bethany home and Cheshire home, they are limited and sometimes not resourced to handle some of the disabilities.

A lawyer advised that every parent of children with special needs leave a will or trust fund to be used for their care upon the parents' demise. However, there may not be an assurance that instructions of the will and trust bestowed are executed.

In Singapore, the government has set up a body to ensure these wills are complied with accordingly. They are liable to legal action if they fail to do so. Lawyer Helen Lee, who had been involved in enacting laws to protect disabled people in Malaysia, is encouraging parents to come forward and create a force to make our government enact such a law. In Japan, parents of disabled children formed an action group that made the Japanese government enact such a law. — *By Deacon Dr Leslie Petrus, DCFL-MJD*

The role of siblings

A parent shared that her son, who dreamt of being a pilot, had given up his career plan because of his differently abled sister. The mother felt extremely guilty as she thought it was unfair to her son, as did many other parents in the group. Another parent suggested sibling involvement could be limited to periodical visits to ensure the disabled sibling is okay, and this could also be done remotely.

On the Church's involvement, Dr Joseph said, one must experience what it's like to have a disabled child, to understand the need for such residential and care centres. He suggested that parents gather and form a formidable force to realise this home for children of special needs. He proposed approaching big corporations and people keen on providing funds, while the Catholic Church could provide moral and spiritual support, or even a premise for use. The parents, and those interested could provide the personnel and training resources.

In conclusion, the parents want this endeavour to be taken up by the Family Life Commission, Diocese of Malacca Johore to be the beginning of something more to be done for families with special needs children. They have also agreed to form a support group based on the type of disabilities, rather than lumping them all together.

Crucified with Christ

MELAKA: Recently, the Church of St Francis Xavier held a Lenten retreat for the parishioners. The goal of the retreat was to prepare them for the Easter celebration. The theme 'Crucified with Christ' was the focus for this Lenten season.

Fr Moses Rayappan, the parish priest guided the four-session retreat on the *Image of God, The Fall of Man, Crucified with Jesus and Surrendering to God's Love*.

The retreat began with an input, Bible verses relating to the respective sessions followed by Q&A discussion and a time of self-reflection. The objective of the retreat was to assist the parishioners to comprehend in great depth the significance of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Hence, the retreat was a Christ-centred encounter that the parishioners were able to experience. A variety of response that they have received states that the retreat has helped them to develop a notable relationship with Christ. — *By Jacqueline Jonathan*



Participants listening to Fr Moses Rayappan.



Spending some time in reflection.

Korean Catholic museum aims to preserve, promote heritage



Church leaders, government officials and guests mark the opening of Gwangju Catholic Museum on March 19, 2022. (UCA News Photo/Gwangju Archdiocese)

SOUTH KOREA: Gwangju Archdiocese has opened a museum to preserve, promote and study the history and heritage of the Korean Church including valuable records, artifacts and sacred relics.

Archbishop Hyginus Kim Hee-jong of Gwangju opened and blessed Gwangju Catholic Museum in the presence of church leaders, local politicians and government officials on March 19.

"The museum will strive to develop Catholic culture through historical relics and become a place to explore and spread the truth," Archbishop Kim said during the opening ceremony.

Fr Stephen Kim Young-soo, who is in charge of the museum, said the new initiative seeks to spread the Gospel through various activities, with an aim for universal human development.

Gwangju city mayor Lee Yong-seop, who attended the programme, commended the church authority for opening the museum.

"I hope Gwangju Catholic Museum will become a space for spreading the truth and a space for communication and solidarity," he said.

On the same day, the museum kicked off a special exhibition titled "Light on this Earth." It features Catholic relics from the first century to modern times and artefacts donated to the museum by local Catholics.

Gwangju has played an important role in the Church's history in Korea. During a period of persecution against early Christians in Korea in the 19th century, hundreds were massacred by imperial forces for refusing to renounce their faith. — ucanews.com

Pope to visit 'peace lab' in Malta

VATICAN: At the conclusion of Wednesday's General Audience, Pope Francis spoke about his Apostolic Journey coming up this weekend, to the Mediterranean island of Malta.

The Pope said he looks forward to visiting that "luminous land", following in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul, who was warmly welcomed there after being shipwrecked at sea, on his way to Rome.

He said this Apostolic Journey will offer a unique opportunity "to go to the wellsprings of the proclamation of the Gospel" and experience for himself the Christian community there whose lively history goes back thousands of years.

Looking forward to meeting the Maltese, Pope Francis paid them tribute for their modern-day welcome and commitment shown to "so many brothers and sisters seeking refuge".

One of the many stops of Pope Francis during his visit will be the John XXIII Peace Laboratory which has, for the past 20 years, dedicated itself specifically to providing shelter for migrants and refugees, and has become one of the top volunteer organisations



Migrants dry their clothes aboard a tourist boat some 20 kilometres from Malta, on June 2, 2020. (Crux photo/Rene' Rossignaud)

in Malta to do so.

Since its establishment in 1971, the John XXIII Peace Lab has sought to be a beacon of hope and justice for the needy in Malta, and more recently, it has become a source of unprejudiced welcome for migrants and asylum seekers entering Europe.

During his visit, the Pope will be welcomed

by the centre's staff and will meet with around 200 migrants. He will hear testimonies and songs and will make a speech before leading a brief prayer and moving onto his next stop.

Malta is at the centre of the Mediterranean, a landing point for many migrants and refugees seeking safety and a better life. — [Vatican News/Crux](http://VaticanNews/Crux)

Brazilian court allows installation of Marian statue

SAO PAULO: The Court of Justice of São Paulo has authorised the construction of a statue of Our Lady in Aparecida, after a more than two-year legal battle involving an association of atheists who want to prevent the installation of the Marian image.

The monumental stainless steel statue, donated by artist Gilmar Pinna in 2017, is about 165 feet tall, nearly 65 feet taller than Rio de Janeiro's Christ the Redeemer. The pieces of the work, which remained in the construction stage, are located near the Rodovia Presidente Dutra, the main highway between Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

In October 2019, Judge Luciene Ferreira Allemand ruled in favour of a lawsuit filed by the Brazilian Association of Atheists and Agnostics to prohibit the installation of the work, alleging the supposed use of public funds and the alleged donation of municipal land to promote the Catholic faith, which would be detrimental to the secular state.

However, the city appealed the decision and, on March 9, the judges of the Ninth Chamber of Private Law of the Court of Justice of São Paulo reversed the ruling and determined that the work of art is justified because the main economic focus of Apare-

cida is religious tourism, which attracts thousands of people and promotes local commerce.

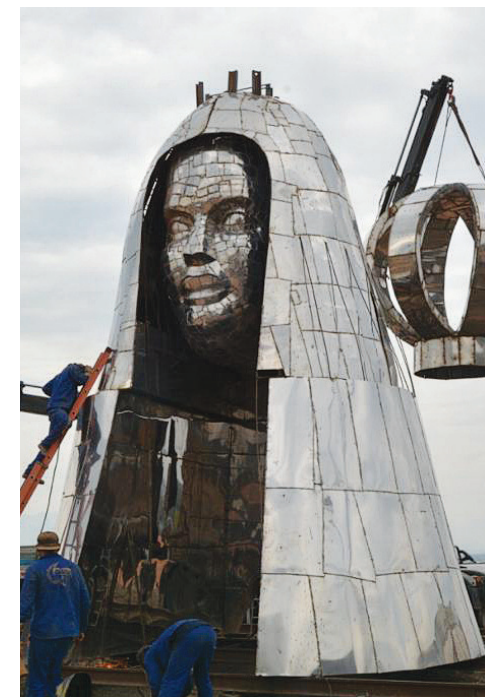
The judges also noted that at that time, the principle of secularism of the state was not violated by the mayor.

"Aparecida is the Marian capital of Brazil, and this judicial decision recognised the religiosity of the Brazilian people," the mayor said, following the ruling.

The court order also ruled that five other sculptures of Our Lady of Aparecida, built by the same artist and placed in different parts of the city in 2017, on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the discovery of the original image of the Virgin, should not be removed.

It is traditionally held that the original statue of Our Lady of Aparecida, which is housed in the Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida, was found in 1717 by three fishermen who, after praying to Our Lady, miraculously caught many fish after a morning of no catches.

Miguel da Costa Carvalho Vidigal, a lawyer and the director of the Union of Catholic Jurists of Sao Paulo, hailed the decision of the Ninth Chamber of Private Law, "first,



Assembly of the statue of Our Lady of Aparecida. (CNA photo/Courtesy of Gilmar Pinna)

because the national order was respected, to the detriment of the judicial activism so present in our days."

And "second, because the history of our country, so closely linked to the Catholic religion, has been preserved," he added. — By Diego Lopez Marina, CNA

Seattle archdiocese redeveloping property into affordable housing

NEW YORK: The Archdiocese of Seattle and its St James Cathedral will sell and redevelop four properties in the city's First Hill neighbourhood as part of a project that aims to create affordable housing and steer the neighbourhood towards carbon neutrality.

"Creatively thinking about how we can better use our properties to achieve the mission of the Church is exactly what we need to do as good stewards of God's gifts," Archbishop Paul Etienne of Seattle said in a statement. "Redeveloping our real estate in a very efficient and sustainable way not only reflects our Catholic value for our common home, but also provides us with resources

to carry out our greater mission of bringing Christ to others."

The archdiocese will sell and redevelop the properties with developer Westbank.

Westbank and its affiliate, Creative Energy, meanwhile, have partnered with Swedish Health Services to modernise the Seattle area health care system's infrastructure with a goal of being carbon negative by 2030.

"Recognising all of nature as the handiwork of God, Pope Francis calls us to do all we can to protect the earth from further destruction," Etienne said. "Minimising our impact on the earth is our responsibility as Catholics. Working with sustainability ex-

perts like Westbank and Creative Energy will ensure that the redevelopment uses green building techniques, processes and materials, while alleviating future environmental impacts."

The four buildings the archdiocese will sell and redevelop include the St. James Cathedral Pastoral Outreach Centre, the archdiocese's old chancery building, and the historic Connolly House, which will be preserved as part of the agreement with Westbank, according to a joint news release from the parties involved.

As part of the redevelopment of the buildings, Westbank plans to create upwards of

1,300 residential homes that will be connected to this new district energy system. The redevelopment plan could also generate over \$25 million (RM105 million) for Seattle's Mandatory Housing Authority fund, according to the news release. This money would go to low-income and affordable housing buildings, including Catholic Housing Services.

In the years since the encyclical, a number of individual US dioceses have also committed themselves to the vision of *Laudato Si'* through different local initiatives — the efforts by the Archdiocese of Seattle being the latest. — Crux

New document on Catholic Education: identity and challenges

The underlying principle of the new “Instruction” issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education is that educating is a passion that is always renewed. The document released today by the Congregation is entitled *The Identity of Catholic Schools for a Culture of Dialogue*. It is a concise and practical tool based on two motivations: “the need for a clearer awareness and consistency of the Catholic identity of the Church’s educational institutions throughout the world”, and the prevention of “conflicts and divisions in the essential sector of education”. The document falls within the goals of the Global Compact on Education, desired by Pope Francis so the Church may remain strong and united in the field of education, and thus carry out its evangelising mission and contribute to the construction of a more fraternal world.

The Church is mother and teacher

In particular, the Instruction highlights that the Church is “mother and teacher”: its educational action, therefore, is not “philanthropic work” but an essential part of its mission, based on fundamental principles, first and foremost, the universal right to education. The other principles that are developed are: the responsibility of everyone — first of all of the parents, who have the right to make educational choices for their children in full freedom and according to conscience, and of the State which has the duty to make different educational options available within the framework of the law — and within these, the Church’s basic principle for education in which evangelisation and integral human promotion are intertwined.

The Congregation for Catholic Education releases a new “Instruction” for Catholic educational institutions focusing on the identity of Catholic schools and on current challenges.

Also considered is the formation of teachers, so that they may be witnesses of Christ; collaboration between parents and teachers, and between Catholic and non-Catholic schools; the concept of Catholic schools as “communities” permeated by the evangelical spirit of freedom and charity, thus providing formation and promoting solidarity. In a multicultural world, we are also reminded of “a positive and prudent sex education,” a significant element that students must receive as they grow up.

The culture of care

Catholic schools, the document highlights, also have the task of educating for a “culture of care,” in order to convey those values based on the recognition of the dignity of every person, community, language, ethnicity, religion, peoples, and all the fundamental rights that derive from it. A culture of care is precious “compass” for society, forming people dedicated to listening, constructive dialogue and mutual understanding.

In constant dialogue with the community

In constant dialogue with the entire community, Catholic educational institutions



A Catholic missionary school in Lebanon. (Vatican News photo)

must not be a closed model in which there is no room for those who are not “totally” Catholic. Warning against this attitude, the Instruction recalls the model of an “outgoing Church”: “We must not lose the missionary impulse to close ourselves in an island — the document reads — and at the same time, we need the courage to witness to a Catholic “culture” that is universal, cultivating a healthy awareness of our own Christian identity”.

Clear qualifications and legislation

Another focal point of the document is the need for clarity of competencies and legislation: it can happen, in fact, that the State imposes on Catholic public institutions “behaviours that are not in keeping” with the doctrinal and disciplinary credibility of the

Church, or choices that are in contrast with religious freedom and with the very Catholic identity of a school. In such cases, it is recommended that “reasonable action be taken to defend the rights of Catholics and their schools, both through dialogue with state authorities and through recourse to the competent courts”.

To educate is always an act of hope

The Instruction concludes by emphasizing that Catholic schools “constitute a very valid contribution to the evangelisation of culture, even in countries and cities where an adverse situation stimulates the use of creativity to find adequate paths,” because, as Pope Francis says, “to educate is always an act of hope”. — **By Isabella Piro, Vatican News**

Identity of Catholic schools to be respected by teachers, students

The 20-page Instruction affirmed the importance of a Catholic educational project with an evangelical goal and explained the role that teachers and administrators play in its achievement.

“The whole school community is responsible for implementing the school’s Catholic educational project as an expression of its ecclesiality and its being a part of the community of the Church,” the document from the Congregation for Catholic Education said.

“Everyone has the obligation to recognise, respect, and bear witness to the Catholic identity of the school, officially set out in the educational project,” it continued. “This applies to the teaching staff, the non-teaching personnel, and the pupils and their families.”

The Congregation for Catholic Education explained in the introduction that it had been “confronted with cases of conflicts and appeals resulting from different interpretations of the traditional concept of Catholic identity by educational institutions.”

Many of these conflicts, it said, concerned rapid changes in society, including the process of globalisation and the growth of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

“It seemed therefore appropriate to offer a more in-depth and up-to-date reflection and guidelines on the value of the Catholic identity of educational institutions in the Church, so as to provide a set of criteria responding to the challenges of our times, in



Distanced and masked students pray in their classroom at St Francis de Sales School in Las Vegas. (NCR photo/Las Vegas Diocese)

continuity with the criteria that always apply,” it said.

One of the issues addressed in the new Instruction is the role of teachers and administrators of a Catholic school. The Instruction said that the witness of lay and consecrated educators was “increasingly relevant to achieving the integral formation of students.”

Quoting from the 1997 document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, it said: “In fact, ‘In the Catholic school’s educational project, there

is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom. The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained, but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered. All of which demands an atmosphere characterised by the search for truth, in which competent, convinced, and coherent educators, teachers of learning and of life, may be a reflection, albeit imperfect but still vivid, of the one teacher.”

The Instruction said that teachers in a

Catholic school also bear witness to the Catholic identity through their lives and should be hired with that in mind.

It said that if this cannot be upheld, it may be necessary to dismiss a teacher from their position, but this option should be reserved as a last resort.

School leadership, it continued, has the “right and duty” to intervene if teachers or students do not comply with the universal, particular, or proper law of Catholic schools.

The Instruction also upheld the responsibility of parents to be the primary educators of their children, recalling that they also have the “priority right” to make a choice about how and where their child is educated.

The Catholic Church’s interest in education, it explained, is more than philanthropy or filling a social need, but stems from the Church’s role as mother and teacher.

Quoting *Gravissimum Educationis*, the Second Vatican Council’s declaration on Christian education, it said: “To fulfil the mandate she has received from her divine founder, of proclaiming the mystery of salvation to all men and of restoring all things in Christ, Holy Mother the Church must be concerned with the whole of man’s life, even the secular part of it insofar as it has a bearing on his heavenly calling. Therefore, she has a role in the progress and development of education.” — **By Hannah Brockhaus, CNA**

Pope Francis speaks of peace, but...

VATICAN: “The Pope speaks against rearmament, but... The Pope does what the Pope should, but... The Pope can only say what he says, but...”

There is always a “but” that, in many embarrassing comments, accompanies the unequivocal “no to war” declared by Pope Francis, in order to contextualise and downplay the Pope’s statements.

Since they cannot interpret the words of the Bishop of Rome in the desired sense, since they cannot in any way “bend” them in support of the accelerated arms race following the war of aggression unleashed by Vladimir Putin against Ukraine, they elegantly distance themselves from it, saying that the Pope can only say what he says, but then politics must decide.

And the politics for Western governments consists in deciding to increase the already many billions spent on new and increasingly sophisticated weapons. Billions that could not be spent on families, healthcare, work, hospitality, to fight poverty and hunger.

In the footsteps of his immediate predecessors, particularly St John Paul II, Pope Francis repeats that war is an adventure of no return. Pope St John Paul II’s words on the occasion of the two wars in Iraq and the war in the Balkans were also “contextualised” and downplayed, even within the Church.

The Pope who, at the beginning of his pontificate, urged us “not to be afraid” to open “the doors to Christ,” pleaded in vain in 2003 with three Western leaders intent on overthrowing Saddam Hussein’s regime, asking them to stop. Almost 20 years later, who can deny that the anti-war cry of St John Paul II was not only prophetic but also imbued with deep political realism? It is enough to look at the ruins of martyred Iraq, long since transformed into the reservoir of all terrorism, to understand how



Local residents sit on a bench in the besieged city of Mariupol. (Vatican News photo/Alexander Ermochenko)

far-sighted the gaze of the holy Polish Pontiff was.

The same thing is happening today. From a Pope who does not surrender to the inevitability of war, to the tunnel with no exit represented by violence, to the perverse logic of rearmament, to the theory of deterrence that has flooded the world with so many nuclear weapons capable of annihilating humanity several times over.

“I was ashamed,” Pope Francis said in recent days, “when I read that a group of states has committed to spending two per cent of their GDP on the purchase of weapons, as a response to what is happening now. The madness! The real answer is not more weapons, more sanctions, more political-military alliances, but another approach, a different way of governing the now globalised world — not by being menacing, as is the case now — a different way of setting up international relations. The model of care is fortunately already in place, but unfortunately, it is still subservi-

ent to that of economic-technocratic-military power.”

Pope Francis’ “no” to war, a radical and convinced “no”, has nothing to do with so-called neutrality nor can it be presented as a partisan position or motivated by political-diplomatic calculations. In this war, there are the aggressors and there are the attacked. There are those who attacked and invaded, killing unarmed civilians, hypocritically masking the conflict under the guise of a “special military operation”; and there are those who strenuously defend themselves by fighting for their own land. The Successor of Peter has said this several times in very clear words, condemning without qualification the invasion and martyrdom of Ukraine that has been going on for more than a month.

This does not mean, however, that he “blesses” the acceleration of the arms race, which, moreover, had already begun some time ago, given that European countries increased their military spending by 24.5 per cent as of 2016: because the Pope is not the “chaplain of the

West” and because he repeats that today, being on the right side of history means being against war and seeking peace without ever leaving any stone unturned. Certainly, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* considers the right to self-defence.

However, it lays down conditions, specifying that recourse to arms must not provoke evils and disorders more serious than the evil to be eliminated, and it recalls that in the evaluation of this condition, “the power of modern means of destruction” has a great weight. Who can deny that humanity is today on the brink of the abyss precisely because of the escalation of conflict and the power of “modern means of destruction”?

“War,” Pope Francis said at the *Angelus* on Sunday, “should not be something inevitable. We should not accustom ourselves to war! Instead, we need to convert today’s disdain into a commitment for tomorrow. Because, if we come out of this as we did before, we will all be guilty in some way. Before the danger of self-destruction, may humanity understand that the moment has come to abolish war, to erase it from human history before it erases human history.”

There is, therefore, a need to take seriously the cry, the repeated appeal of the Pope. It is an invitation addressed precisely to politicians to reflect upon and to commit to.

There is a need for firm politics and creative diplomacy, to pursue peace, to leave no stone unturned, to stop the perverse spiral that in a few weeks is waning the hope of an ecological transition and is giving new energy to the big business of trade and trafficking in arms. It is a wind of war that, by turning back the hands of the clock of history, takes us back to an era that we hoped had been definitively abandoned after the fall of the Berlin Wall. — **By Andrea Tornielli, Vatican News**

The danger of keeping silent

There is ‘a time to keep silent, and a time to speak’. These words, as you well know, are not my own. They are taken from the book of Ecclesiastes, 3,7. There is a time for silence and a time for words. The two go together: there is not one without the other. A time of silence without a time to speak, as well as a time to speak without a time for silence lead to unpleasant consequences. Silence should lead to speech, and speech should lead to silence. Speech without silence easily becomes hollow words. Silence without speech can easily lead to a state of apathy and irresponsibility.

Unfortunately, the Church is not an exception. Often, it has spoken where it should have remained silent. And, often, it remained silent where it should have spoken. I’m not referring here to the Church’s engagement *ad extra*, with the external world, although what I am saying is also applicable to this realm. Often, the Church could have been more vociferous in its fight for justice, in its defence of the poor, but chose to keep its mouth shut. On the other hand, often the Church should have been more prudent, but chose to speak and speak too much. Sadly, this is all true. However, I wish to focus on the Church’s engagement *ad intra*, with itself and the different realities that constitute it. I wish to focus on the culture of silence in the Church, on those internal problems about which the Church should have spoken but chose, because it was convenient, to remain silent. There are problems, issues, within the Church about which we choose to remain silent rather than speaking. The clearest example which comes to everyone’s mind is the sexual abuse crisis that the Church went through and is still going through.

Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, gave the following homily at the opening Mass of the conference on Synodality in Campion Hall in Oxford on March 23, 2022.



The many ‘What abouts ...’

Unfortunately, this is not the only instance of a problem in the Church about which we choose to remain silent. What about the general silence concerning the deep divisions within the Catholic Church? Between conservatives and liberals? Between those who exclusively want the ordinary form and those who want the extraordinary form? What about the political divisions in the Church? What about the divisions between the local Churches in the global west and the local Churches in the global south? What about the continuous struggle to make the priesthood of the baptised work hand in hand with sacramental priesthood? What about the role of women in the Church? How can one explain we have Catholics who want to exclude certain categories from our pews?

These are all issues in the Church about which we rarely have a frank and open discussion. These are issues which we all acknowledge to be present but about which we prefer to remain silent. Or, even worse, choose to raise these issues within smaller groups made up of people having a common opinion. Rather than having an open, frank, discussion, we end up in a Church made up of cliques. Rather than dialogue, we have a culture of us against them. The Church should speak about these issues, but often chooses to remain silent.

In the gospel of Luke (11:14-23), Jesus drives out a demon that was mute. I think that this is a very interesting detail, especially considered in light of what I have already said. The demon

prohibits the possessed man from speaking. He forces him to remain silent. Silence at a time when speech is needed, is a sign of evil, a sign of the devil. When we choose to remain silent rather than speak, because it is more convenient, we are collaborating with this evil.

A time to speak

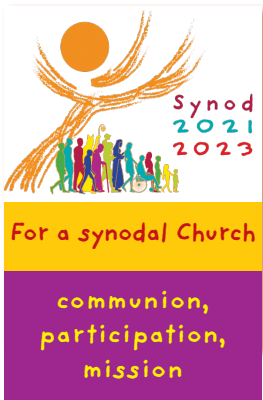
Many people have doubts about the synod, many people think that it is a big risk. Many people are wary of the dangers that this process might bring. I understand these preoccupations. But, perhaps, we have not quite understood what the synodal process is all about. This is not a process of revolution: The Pope does not want to change the Church into something that it is not. This is not a wiping out of tradition. This is not a process of democratisation. Rather, the synodal process is a time for speech. A time to let the voice of the Church speak and bring forward the issues, the problems that inhabit our synodal Church. For a long time, we chose to remain silent, but now it is time to speak. It is time for the local Churches to voice their concerns. It is a time to let the liberal and conservative sides of the Church to speak, frankly and openly, and air their concerns. There is a time to remain silent, and a time to speak, and the synodal process is privileged time and space in which the inner voice of the Church is allowed to speak, a time and space in which the Holy Spirit is allowed to speak, through the different organs of the Church. For a long time, we chose to re-

main silent, now it is time for the polyphony that constitutes the Church to be played ... and don’t be surprised if there are some false notes along the way.

A time for silence and discernment

I speak of false notes because I recognise and acknowledge the fact that this synodal process is not easy. It is not exempt from mistakes, human weaknesses, misinterpretations, confusion. Even Jesus’ good deed, His miracle of driving out the devil, was misinterpreted, created confusion, was mistaken for an act of the devil. This is all true. But remember, there is a time for silence and a time to speak. Or rather, there is a time to speak and a time for silence. The synodal process is not only a time to speak but a time for silence. Our speaking about the issues of the Church needs to be accompanied by a time of silence, a time of discernment, a time to make sense of what will have been said, a time for the pope, the bishops and the Church to meditate on what was heard and to find the path forward. To keep silent when one is supposed to speak, could be diabolic, but to keep silent after having had a time to speak is divine. This is the holy silence that should accompany the synodal process. And only this silence that comes with the time to speak, will help reduce mistakes, incomprehension, confusion.

There is a time to keep silent and a time to speak. This is what Ecclesiastes says. This is what the synod will endeavour to do. This is what we should all endeavour to do, for we are all part of this synodal process. Let us not keep silent, when we are called to speak. May the voice of the Spirit within us speak. But also let us not speak, without keeping silent. Only this silence will help us understand that the words that the Church speaks are not only the words of men, but the words of God. — **ICN**



How can the Synod of Bishops tackle Africa's huge divisions?

The Church in Sub-Saharan Africa, like others around the world, began its synodal process in October 2021. It runs through April 2022 and leads to the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2023.

The theme, *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission*, is beautifully captured in a 60-page document titled "Official Handbook for Listening and Discernment in Local Churches, in Dioceses and Bishops' Conferences."

The desired communion which the Synod calls for is based on Jesus who reconciled us with the Father through the Holy Spirit. On this basis, we are rooted in the love and unity of the Trinity. Inspired by the Word of God and living tradition of the Church, we are grounded in the *sensus fidei* (p.13).

Sadly, Africa is battling with challenges such as illiteracy, poverty, disease, conflicts and political unrest. These are the consequences of greed by the elite and ruthless political class. Sadly, they constitute a huge discount for the expected communion that everyone should enjoy in terms of justice and equity — hallmarks of ecclesial fraternity.

By the same token, it is regrettable that in Africa, ethnic affiliation seems thicker than the waters of baptism. How will the Synod address the gap between the rich and the poor, literate and non-literate, urban residents and rural dwellers, men and women, the young and the old, and clergy and the laity? In specific terms, can the Synod draw lessons from Rwanda to stem the tide of ethnic divisions ca-



A woman cleans an Ivorian Popular Front poster before a Mass in a Catholic church in Mama, near Gagnoa, Ivory Coast, on June 13, 2021. (UCA News photo)

pable of curbing genocides across the continent?

The document maintains that all who belong to the People of God — the laity, consecrated and ordained — should "engage in the exercise of deep and respectful listening to one another" by creating "space for us to hear the Holy Spirit together" towards guiding "our aspirations for the Church of the Third Millennium" (p.13).

The Church invites us to make those at the margins of society feel at home through engaging them in meaningful dialogue, discernment and taking pieces of advice which relate to pastoral care. This means that the Church must relate to various social concerns.

In 2021, the United Nations Population Fund estimated that "around 50 million people above the age of 60 account for around five per cent

of Sub-Saharan Africa's population" but lamented that "in the past, most of them turned to their families for help but that practice is becoming less widespread."

With the largest number of children (over 19 million as at 2017) among its migrant population, what is the place of children in this Synod? What would be the place of refugees who have fled countries like Chad, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia and Central African Republic? What of ecumenism in Nigeria, Egypt, Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya where there is often friction between Christians and Muslims?

The mission of the Church is "to witness to the love of God in the midst of the whole human family" through the social, economic, political, geographical and existential peripheries of the world in fulfilment of "God's kingdom" (p.13). The syn-

odal process at local level involves discernment through listening, creating space for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, ensuring that everyone is treated equally and aggregating inputs in a well-articulated manner (Cf. pgs.15-16).

Unfortunately, 28 of the world's poorest countries in the world are in Africa; half of the African population lives in poverty (on US\$1.90, RM8.00 or less a day), without access to basic human needs like nutrition and clean water. Some 15 out of the 54 countries in Africa are fighting wars and violence by armed groups. According to reports, 27 per cent of people on the continent are directly affected by bloodshed, mayhem and post-traumatic stress. In 2019, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project disclosed that there have been 21,600 incidents of armed conflict in Africa. How will the Synod respond to these humanitarian needs that constitute existential threats?

Members of the hierarchy should avoid the temptation of wanting to lead, instead of being led, by the Holy Spirit. They should also look beyond the visible confines of the Church to "the worlds of economics and science, politics and culture, arts and sport, the media and social initiatives" (p.21) for fresh insights to contemporary challenges. Also, the synodal process must not be seen as a kind of secular parliament where only "those who are already involved in church activities" (p.22) are heard.

Does involving everyone mean that the Church should soft-pedal on the reception of Holy Communion by divorced and remarried couples?

Well, the gracious words of Pope St John Paul II that we should embrace "love and responsibility" are key. Historian Jeffrey Mirus recommends that the Church "desperately needs leadership from those who understand that the right rules are as necessary as they are liberating, and who can teach "the rules" so that we can grasp their foundations and their inner meaning."

In conclusion, the Synod should create more avenues for active listening and sincere consultations. After all, "the synodal process is not the end but a new beginning" (p.36).

Despite the seeming challenges facing the African continent, Pope Benedict XVI opines that he sees "grounds for hope in Africa's rich intellectual, cultural and religious heritage" (*Africae Munus*, No. 9).

Because politicians have failed the continent, the masses now look to the Church to share Jesus' message of hope with a traumatised society. The Church in Africa has the capacity to rekindle the hope that the world's second largest continent can resist ideological colonialism in all its ramifications. Through wise investment in "Catholipreneurship" (a self-sustaining Church) and co-responsibility, the Church in Africa can remain afloat in matters of faith, morals and visionary leadership. — **By Fr Justine John Dyikuk, ucanews.com**

● *Fr Justine is a lecturer in mass communication at the University of Jos in Nigeria, editor of a Caritas newspaper and convener of the Media Team Network Initiative (MTNI) in Nigeria.*

NCR board 'journeys together' in synodal listening session

In the James Norbury book *Big Panda and Tiny Dragon*, Big Panda asks: "Which is more important, the journey or the destination?" Tiny Dragon replies: "The company." This vignette captures the substance and spirit of Pope Francis' call for a universal synodal process between now and 2023. The synod on synodality, the Pope has said, is about "journeying together".

The preparatory document issued by the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops from the Vatican describes the purpose of the process and the fundamental question:

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together": How is this "journeying together" happening today in your local Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together"?

Recently, I was blessed with the opportunity to participate in a small piece of this journey with 17 members of the *National Catholic Re-*

porter (NCR) Board of Directors. The two hours we spent "journeying together" in response to the Pope's invitation were moments of grace and a gift of rich dialogue.

We shared where we find joy in our experience of Church and where we encounter difficulties, obstacles and wounds in our faith journey as part of the Catholic Church.

Most of all, we shared our hopes for the future. These hopes are grounded in a profound belief in the Good News of the Gospel and the universal call to holiness that Jesus proclaimed and that was emphasised at Vatican II.

The hopes of the participants are also grounded in the theological reality that, by our baptism, we are all "agents" of the Gospel and need not wait for cues or direction from the ordained to preach and live the Gospel in and to our homes, communities, and world.

Beneath the anger and frustration with the Church, participants



(Unsplash/Nazin Babshova)

expressed a desire for the Church to be what it could be — a community where all are welcome without regard to race, language or way of life.

Experiencing a world of poverty and violence, participants want the Church to preach and live the Gospel of nonviolence. Participants called upon Francis to continue to teach the immorality of the posses-

sion or use of nuclear weapons. In fact, participants would like Pope Francis to issue an encyclical on the Gospel of nonviolence that was preached and lived by Jesus and to which we are called today.

One of the most poignant moments in the discussion was when participants talked about their adult children and their alienation from

the Catholic Church. The feeling was more about how the Church has left their children than about their children "leaving" the Church.

While some participants shared a very positive experience with their local parish, others instead, find their primary faith community in self-organised small groups of people who are disenchanted with their local parishes and bishops.

One of the things that impressed me most was a combination of hope and low expectations for institutional change expressed by the participants. As one person put it: "The hope has to begin with us, not with the institutional Church." Whether or not the institutional Church makes the called-for changes, participants are deeply committed to continue a journey of faith that is Gospel. — **By Jim Purcell, NCR**

● *Jim Purcell is a current member of NCR's board of directors and a past president of the group.*

RUMINATIONS

Everyone has a mission and purpose

One of the reflections I came across in *Our Daily Bread* was by Alyson Kieda, who shared about a girl named Jen, who was born without legs and abandoned in the hospital. Yet, Jen says that being put for adoption was a blessing. "I am here because of the people who poured into me." Her adoptive family helped her to see she was "born like this for a reason." They raised her to "never say can't" and encouraged her in all pursuits — including becoming an accomplished acrobat and aerialist!

Jen's words "born like this for a reason" reminds me that I am a child of God, created in the image of God, to know, love and serve Him. I was made for a reason — to worship Him. God created me and people like Jen for a reason.

In the Bible, God used those who seemed incapable for their calling. Moses is a classic example. When God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, he stammered (Exodus 3:11; 4:1) and protested, "I am slow of speech and tongue." God replied, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes the deaf and mute? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go, I will help you speak and will teach you what to say (Ex.4: 10-15).

Many parents of special needs children may have thought that it was sin in them that caused their children to be born this way. They may have carried this guilt for years, but they can take courage from the words of Jesus in John 9: 1-3 ... As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him."

Every parent prays for a normal and healthy child. The birth of a child is a symbol of hope and joy but to some, this is not so — it is something unexplainable. The whole scenario changes when they are, instead, 'blessed' with a special child who may never become independent but will be forever be dependent on the parents, even for their basic needs.

In Mark 7:24-30, we see the faith of the Syrophenician woman. She was desperate for her child to be healed that she was willing to be treated like a dog. This could also be the desperation that some of the parents of 'special needs children' experience day in and day out. There are some parents who are driven to abandon their child and it is sad. But the parents who persevere, who do all that is humanly possible, who make innumerable sacrifices which, at the end of the day may still not be enough, they blame themselves for it. I have met parents who devised special equipment and tried everything possible to help their child achieve basic living skills. The progress is difficult to quantify and no one will ever know the effort invested. There will be mistakes and wrong moves. The parents have to endure insults and 'unwelcome' advice.

Some parents of a special needs child are exhausted. The mother's gaze is filled with both love and anxiety as she contemplates her child's future with hopelessness. When young, they have the energy to cope, but as they age and are beset with their own health issues, they feel defeated. The husband/father may display strength and stability but at the core of him, he too feels he has failed. What dreams and hopes they must have had when they first met and fell in love, had plans for how their family would be but then, along came this 'special' child and everything shattered.

Every human being is created in the image of God, with a mission and purpose. These children are here for a reason and a purpose, not for themselves but for their parents, a divine purpose and reason.

God graciously helps us along the way. Jesus never promised us that there would not be potholes and bumps in the path of life but He promised that He would walk with us. The destination is guaranteed for parents of these special children who enable their ordinary parents to live extraordinary lives.

There is something special about parents with special needs children. They reflect grace, compassion and humility. The years of caring for their special children indirectly makes them saints and makes God present to others. The paradox is that they do not realise it. Is this not what Jesus answered in John 9: 3? "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him." I rest my case. Nothing more. God has the last word on this issue.



Deacon Dr Leslie Petrus has a keen interest in exploring life's issues and witnessing the presence of God.

Bowled over by Winifred

By Gwen Manickam

Malaysia's number one female cricketer is the only player chosen to represent Malaysia at the Inaugural FairBreak Invitational T20 next month. Bringing gender equality in cricket to the forefront, this world-first invitational women's cricket tournament will see six franchise teams comprising players from 36 countries play in an ICC sanctioned tournament. It runs from May 1 to May 15, 2022, in Dubai in conjunction with Cricket Hong Kong.

Klang born Winifred Anne Duraisingam told the *HERALD*, "This is my biggest achievement thus far. I don't know which team I will be in, but we will train together for two days before the tournament starts. I am looking forward to playing in a league with women from other countries."

Cricket batted its way into her life at age eight, when she used to watch the neighbourhood boys play on the street outside her home. However, they would not allow her to bat because she was a girl. The second of three children, she also used to watch her elder brother play the sport in school before he went on to play for the Malaysian team.



Winifred (seated in the centre) with her teammates.

When she was 10-years-old, her uncle, David Mahadevan, who used to coach the boys, taught Winifred that whoever gets the wicket gets to bat. So, he trained her to bowl, and she started taking wickets. She said the boys would be silent and a little embarrassed that a girl was taking their wickets.

Winifred joined the Kemboja (Kuala Langat) Club, a neighbourhood team at 13. At a tournament against another club, she was the only female player on both teams and managed to bowl against ex-Malaysian national cricketer Hector Durairatnam. Impressed with her skills, he asked her uncle who the small boy bowling was, to which David exclaimed, "That's my niece!"

At that memorable game, there was also a scouter from the National Women's team and in 2007, the teenage girl from Banting went on to join the Malaysia Women's Cricket Team. As captain of the team since 2014, Winifred has played at multiple games, both locally and abroad. David, who passed on last year, was pleased with her achievements.

Winifred, an all-rounder in cricket,



meaning a player who regularly performs well at both batting and bowling, was one of 15 players awarded a contract by the Malaysian Cricket Association last April, a first for female cricketers in the country. In November 2021, she was named captain of Malaysia's side for the 2021 ICC Women's T20 World Cup Asia Qualifier tournament in the United Arab Emirates.

The 29-year-old graduated with a Bachelor of Education with honours in sports and recreation from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia two years ago. Due to the pandemic, Winifred only started her first job at SMK Lembah Keramat teaching Physical Education, English and Geography, a month ago.

"We've only been having classes online. I am looking forward to meeting my students this week."

A parishioner at the Church of Sts Peter and Paul, Banting, Winifred played an active role in the youth ministry before sports commitments and work took up her time.

"God has guided me and showed me the path. He gave me the patience to wait for my job. He has always been by my side."

Her dream is to start her own women's cricket team — either in school or as a club and to one day play in the World Cup.

Late Catholic activist wins Pakistan's highest bravery award

Iqbal was born into a poor family in Muridke near Lahore. His financially burdened father, Saif Masih, decided to leave the little boy at a tender age. Inayat, his mother had borrowed 600 rupees from Arshad, a local business person who owned a carpet weaving factory. Arshad wanted the boy to work as a bonded labourer till the debt was paid off.

The exploitation of Iqbal and several other children began the day he joined the carpet weaving factory. He was made to work 14 hours a day, with a 30-minute break. Despite working for seven days a week and paying three cents for the loan, the loan got bigger. The more horrific tale was yet to begin. At the time he joined the factory, he was only 10. When he came to know of the abolition of bonded labour by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, he, along with his friends, escaped and went to the local police station, where they narrated their ordeal. Police, instead, took Iqbal back to Arshad who tied him upside down. At the direction of the police officer, Iqbal was chained to the carpet machine and Arshad forced him back to work and meted out a combination of physical abuse and starvation.

Pakistan's government has awarded one of its highest civilian awards to a Catholic carpet maker who was assassinated for advocating against child labour. President Arif Alvi conferred the Sitara-e-Shujaat award for bravery to Iqbal Masih in Islamabad on March 23.



Courage and will to overcome all difficulties encouraged Iqbal, who once again escaped from the factory. He joined the Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF) of Pakistan to help stop child labour around the world. By this time, he had become a prominent face of the anti-slave movement.

At 12, Iqbal found a way to attend a freedom-day celebration held by the Brick Layer Unions. There he learnt about his rights as a labourer and that debt slavery had been outlawed a few years ago. Iqbal volunteered to narrate his horrific tale and one of the union leaders, Ehsan Ullah Khan, organised

an effort to free Iqbal from bondage. After much convincing about the illegality of his factory, Arshad freed Iqbal and some of the other child slaves. During this period, he finished four years of schooling in just two years and helped nearly 3,000 Pakistani children who were trapped in slavery. He made speeches in the factories and asked the children to speak their minds.

Iqbal was killed in Muridke on April 16, 1995, shortly after returning from a trip to America. He was only 12. His funeral was attended by as many as 800 mourners.

He was the biggest source of inspiration behind the formation of several organisations such as 'The Free Children', a Canada-based charity and the Iqbal Masih Shaheed Children Foundation which has started over 20 schools in Pakistan. In January 2009, the United States Congress established the annual Iqbal Masih Award in honour of Iqbal Masih, for the elimination of child labour. — *Agencies*

Practical versus Theoretical

The Bible iterates that children are a gift from God - "children are a heritage from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). When a child is born into the family, he or she has the right to be nurtured, provided for and have a safe environment in which to grow. However, many times, work schedules and other interests keep parents very busy and, often times, the child is crowded out. When it comes to guiding and parenting, you want to be an effective parent who will influence the outcome of your child, be where your children are; "in their frame of mind."

Why is that so important? It is important because knowing where your children are at, helps you to know your strong points, your limitations and, it helps you to be creative in your parenting style, while giving you a chance to learn and improve on your weak areas. We make assumptions about our children and think that they see things the way we do. We are wrong. Therefore, see things at their level, just as Jesus did. Jesus came down to our level in order to lift us up. So, be a practical parent, not a theoretical one. Customise solutions based on the problems your children are experiencing.

Erik Erikson, a psychosocial theorist emphasises that, as human beings, we experience eight stages of development over our life span. At each stage of development, the ego makes positive contributions through mastering attitudes, ideas and skills. Children develop into healthy, well-adjusted adults by mastering the eight stages only if they can overcome the psychological conflict during each stage. According to Erikson, successful completion of each stage results in a sense of competence and healthy personality. However, failure to master the skills of the eight stages leads to feelings of inadequacy. Guided by these stages, let's explore this particular facet that has been pleasantly



Purposeful Parenting

Christine Fernandez

enlightening to me - the psychosocial theory of Erik Erikson.

The ten commandments teach us habits that we need to develop to live life in right relationship with God, self, and others, by creating priorities, giving respect, recognising dignity and maintaining integrity. It tells us Christians how to live. In the same way, psychosocial theories provide a frame work for understanding human behaviour, thought and development.

When parents have a broad understanding about the how's and why's of human behaviour, they will understand themselves and others better. Isaiah 31:1-3 talks about *Trust versus Mistrust*, where God wants for us to go to Him when necessary. It is the same with children and parents or caregivers. Just as God wants us to turn to Him in times of crisis, so too do we, as parents, want our children to turn to us in times of crisis. Erik Erikson emphasises that, from birth to 12 months of age, infants must learn that adults can be trusted. This is the *Trust versus Mistrust* stage of an infant's life. Your child is dependent upon caregivers and if you, as a parent or caregiver, is responsive and sensitive to your child's needs, then a sense of trust is developed. Your child will see the world as a safe and predictable place. However, unresponsive caregiving can lead to feelings of anxiety, fear and mistrust. Moreover, infants whose needs are not met appropriately, or who are treated cruelly, will grow up with a sense of mistrust for people.

The profound consequence of need not met during childhood will often be carried into adulthood and can manifest as: low-self-esteem, lack of healthy boundaries, struggles with relationships, and difficulty with moderation, just to name a few. Therefore, help your infants develop trust, without completely eliminating the capacity for mistrust. You do not need to be a perfect parent, just be reliable.

So, how do we parent positively? Firstly, help your infant feel safe and secure by responding positively to their cries and cues because safety and security builds trust, and trust builds hope. Secondly, provide responsive care that matches the needs of the infant. Thirdly, support the developing skills of your infant by giving just enough help so he/she can master the skill and take on the challenge without becoming overwhelmed. Limit changes as much as possible, since routines are important for the safety and security of your child. Finally, practise good self-care — mentally, emotionally and spiritually, because parenting is hard work.

It is essential that we keep in mind that God created the universe and everything in it in stages and, at each stage said, "It is good" (Genesis 1:31). This sense of will to live and flourish is evident in the second stage of Erikson's theory, *Autonomy versus Shame*. Between the ages of two through to four, your sweet, innocent bub becomes a selfish, defiant toddler and this stage is also referred to as "the terrible twos". At this stage of the child's life, there are rapid changes and advancement in motor skills whereby the child experiences some control over the world while experiencing and expressing both positive and negative feelings most passionately with primary caregivers. They will test their limits with you. Here is where you set your boundaries lovingly. Since your child has yet

to learn discretion and self-control, be the reliable parent or caregiver by setting limits and providing a safe and consistent environment. Be mindful that at this stage of your child's life, the goal is for the child to develop a sense of self-control without losing self-esteem. However, as a parent, if you are over controlling and discourage exploration, the result often will be: anxiety, fear, shame, defiance and low self-esteem for the child.

Therefore, how do we parent positively? Firstly, allow and encourage safe exploration of current environment that is age-appropriate by offering minimal assistance as this is a learning process and failure should be regarded as a learning curve. Secondly, even if the task is not completed "just right", use positive affirmation and praise while focusing on righting the wrong without shaming the child. Thirdly, instead of giving vague mandates, give clear specific options and choices by verbalising the specific behaviour that is unsafe/unacceptable and outline a replacement behaviour that would be acceptable. Finally, communicate with your child about his/her feelings, both positive and negative and offer options of how they can control the negative ones and use praise for a job well done. As your child progresses through this stage, a delicate balance of encouragement and support, coupled with guidance and protection, is vital. Therefore, "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might" (Ephesians 6:10).

This is part one of the article and will be continued in my next column.

● **Christine Fernandez** is a social worker, counsellor, chaplain, parent and grandparent. She would love to hear your parenting stories. Do drop her a line at: chris55sebi65@yahoo.com.au

A humbling experience with children in the Autism Spectrum

World Autism Awareness Day is an internationally recognised day on April 2 every year. CHERYL KRISTINE, who works with special needs children writes about her personal experience.



Honestly, I never knew the existence of the word autism or anything about autistic children until 2017, when a friend approached me to help with a school holiday programme for special needs children. That was my first encounter with them. They looked normal to me. However, I noticed the difference in their behaviour. The more I volunteered at the centre, the more I learnt about them. They are wonderful kids in their own way. I've learnt about the many challenges they face in their daily life and how some cope well using techniques or tools provided to help them manage better.

I have also learnt that no one method fits all. It has to be individualised based on each child's need and coping mechanism. Even the learning style can differ from one child to another. Some of the children/people with autism can perform very well in certain areas of their interest. Again, every child is different. The autism spectrum is so wide that no one person can comprehend everything. It takes an open, non-judgemental mindset to observe and understand these children. In fact, they are just like you and me.

The first lesson they taught me was to

slow down. I was always in a hurry and always wanted to complete things fast but they couldn't care less about me. They moved at their own pace. Most importantly, I saw them happy being themselves.

Clearly, my world and theirs differed. Every time I observed these children, I saw many things that I wanted to change in them but in actual fact, they were changing me. They taught me what real humility is, they taught me that it is ok to fail, and to keep trying, they taught me to just be myself and to love myself the way I am. They taught me the real meaning of being human. They also reminded me of my own limitations.

From then on, life changed for me, I have had people telling me that something is different in me, that I am so happy and joyful, that I am so calm (not that I was a crazy woman before). Internally, when I was able to accept myself and the situation I was thrown into, I felt so calm and joyful. There is this sense of peace within me. I also began to realise that I used to be so anxious about everything but when I accepted things the way it was and learnt to lean more on God, I was not only able to identify that feeling but was also able to manage it by going to the



prayer room, taking deep breaths, or saying the Rosary. Children/people with autism feel anxious too when they are in unknown or uncertain situations. When they are anxious, I feel for them, simply because I know how chaotic it feels within oneself.

This year's theme for World Autism Day is "Inclusion in the Workplace". However, some of these children/youths will not be able to hold a job like you and me. So, what happens to them? I listen to some parents pouring out their hearts about their worries on what will happen to these children when the parents are no longer alive. That is really a tough question to answer.

I encountered an incident where a parent was looking to place his daughter in a home as he was a single parent and was not able to keep an eye on her. He did not have any relatives who were willing to care for his daughter. When I contacted a home, I was

asked if the girl was able to dress herself, clean herself, eat herself and so on. This got me thinking because there are children who are not able to function to this level. So, what happens to them? This lesson taught me about gratitude. Today, I am grateful for the life that I have and for where I am at this point in my life. I am thankful for my work, my family, friends and how God created me to be.

I think God placed me at this centre not only to learn from these autistic children but to use the skills, knowledge and gift that God gave me to help them and their families. During this time of Lent, I would like to suggest that you reach out to families with special needs children and just be there for them. These parents need all the support they can get from the community. As the saying goes, "it takes a village to raise a kid".

The therapy of a public life

Forty years ago, Philip Rieff wrote a book entitled, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*. In essence, he argued that, today in the Western world so many people need psychological therapy mainly because our family structure has grown weak and many community structures have broken down. He contends that in societies where there are still strong families and strong communities there is much less need for private therapy; people can more easily work out their problems inside of family and community. Conversely, where family and community are weak, we are mostly left to handle our problems on our own — with a therapist rather than with family.

If Rieff is right, and I suspect he is, it follows that the answer to many of the issues that drive us to the counselling couch lie as much, and perhaps more, in a fuller and healthier participation in public life, including church life, than in private therapy. We need, as Parker Palmer brilliantly suggests, the therapy of a public life.

What's meant by this? What's the therapy of a public life?

Public life, life shared inside a family and community, beyond our private selves and private intimacies, can be powerfully therapeutic because it draws us out of ourselves and into the lives of others, gives us a certain rhythm, and connects us with resources beyond the poverty of our own lives.

To participate healthily in other people's lives can take us beyond our private obsessions. It can also steady us. Public life generally has a certain rhythm and a regularity to it that helps calm the chaotic whirl of restlessness, depression, and sense of emptiness that can so often destabilise our lives. Participation in public life gives us clearly defined things to do, regular stopping places, regular events of structure and steadiness, and a



Fr Ron Rolheiser

rhythm - commodities no psychiatric couch can provide. Public life links us to resources beyond ourselves, and sometimes they are the only thing that can help us.

While doing studies in Belgium, I was privileged to attend the lectures of Antoine Vergote, a renowned doctor of psychology and the soul. I asked him one day how one should handle paralyzing emotional obsessions, both within oneself and when trying to help others.

His answer surprised me. In essence, he said this: "The temptation you might have as a priest is to simplistically give the advice: 'Take your troubles to the chapel! Pray it through. God will help you.' It's not that this is wrong. God and prayer can and do help. But, obsessional problems are mainly problems of over-concentration, and over-concentration is broken largely by getting outside of yourself, outside of your own mind, your own heart, your own life, and your own space. So my advice is, get involved in public things, from entertainment, to politics, to work. Get outside of your closed world. Enter with resolve into public life!"

He went on, of course, to qualify this so that it differs from the simplistic temptation to bury oneself in distractions and work. His advice here is not that one should run away from doing painful inner work, but that solving one's inner private problems is also dependent upon outside relationships, both relationships of intimacy and those of a more



(Unsplash/Adrianna Geo)

public nature.

Here's an example. For more than a dozen years, I taught theology at Newman Theological College in Edmonton, Canada. Our campus was small and intimate and we had a strong community life. Occasionally, a man or woman who was working through some emotional fragility or instability, would show up on campus, not enrol in any formal classes, but simply hang out with the community, praying with us, socialising with us, and sitting in on a few classes. Invariably, I would see them slowly get emotionally steadier and stronger, and they found that new strength and balance not so much from what they learned in any of classrooms as they did by participating in the life outside of those classes. The therapy of a public life is what helped heal them.

For us as Christians, this also means the therapy of church life. We become emotionally stronger, steadier, less obsessed, and less a slave to our own restlessness by participating more fully and healthily within the public life of the church. Monks have secrets worth

knowing. They have long understood that a regular program, a daily rhythm, participation in community, a mandate that you must show up, and the discipline of a monastic bell calling everyone to a common activity (whether this suits him or her or not at the time) have kept many a man and woman sane and emotionally stable.

Regular Eucharist, regular prayer with others, regular meetings with others, regular duties, and regular responsibilities within an ecclesial community not only help nurture us spiritually, they help keep us sane and steady. Private therapy can sometimes be helpful, but public, ecclesial life, with its consistent daily rhythms and demands, more than anything else, can help keep us steady on our feet.

● **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.**

My Lenten search for grace

Do you have a favourite song? You know, one to which you remember all the words, no matter how long ago you first heard it?

I thought about that the other day when I was scrolling through Facebook and came across a meme that a friend of mine had posted. The meme featured the words, "Why is it that I can remember the lyrics to a song from 20 years ago but can't remember why I walked into the kitchen?"

I immediately started laughing because the words were so true.

But then I also thought about the fact that while I may know all the lyrics, I might not have really listened to the words and fully grasped the overall concept or meaning of the song.

For some of them, I wish I had paid a little bit closer attention to the message of the song. But then there are others that, had I truly heard them would have provided a needed lift.

The songs that we sing at church can fall prey to our lack of attention, sometimes, too. Each of them was written with a very specific meaning behind them and message to convey.

But as with those popular hits of our generation, we have been singing them so often and for such a long time that perhaps we are just reciting the words and not taking in the overarching meaning of what we're singing.

I was recently reminded of that at Sunday Mass when we sang one of those songs. The song was "Amazing Grace." I have heard the song so many times — both in church and



The hymn "Amazing Grace" reminds me that because of Jesus' loving sacrifice that we will celebrate at the end of this Lenten season, I am a beloved child of God -- sins and all. (CNS file photo/Harold Levine, courtesy Church of Our Saviour)

many other places, so I'm not exactly sure why this time was different.

But, for some reason, I found myself really being drawn in by the first line: "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me."

It was the word "grace" in particular that stood out to me. I'm not sure why it caught my attention. But it did and continued to stick with me for the next few days. Being as it was the season of Lent, I started to think about grace in that context of those 40 days.

Maybe it was because I was disappointed in myself. Yes, this wretch was failing to fulfil

my Lenten promises as we neared the end of the season.

After all, whatever I was challenging myself to do for these 40 days certainly paled in comparison to Christ's sacrifice. And yet, here I was failing to live up to my rather simple, in the scheme of things, promises.

But then I thought of that word again: grace. Where was the grace in my Lenten season? Why was I not granting it to myself? Certainly I was fulfilling the purpose of these 40 days in some way, even if not the way I had planned.

And, after all, if Christ believes I am worth dying for, certainly I can offer myself some

grace for what I see as my shortcomings and stumbles.

That is exactly what that timeworn and beautiful song reminds me to do. It reminds me that because of Jesus' loving sacrifice that we will celebrate at the end of this Lenten season, I am a beloved child of God — sins and all. For that, I should offer myself the sweet sound of amazing grace. — **By Susan Hines-Brigger, CNS**

● **Susan is a mother of four, ranging in age from 23 to 11. She is also an executive editor of St Anthony Messenger magazine.**

Little Catholics' Corner



Colour this picture

“So when they continued asking Him, he straightened up, and said unto them. He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”

John 8:7

Dear Girls and Boys

How does Jesus treat sinners?
 In the Old Testament, God gave His people rules that said they should punish the people who sinned. That's why in today's Gospel, the Pharisees and scribes brought a sinful woman to Jesus, to see what He would say about the law.
 Instead of saying they should punish her according to the law, Jesus said they should only punish her if they themselves had never sinned.

Sometimes we hear about someone else committing a sin. God does not want us to be mean to that person because of what they have done.

That does not mean they didn't sin. Jesus told the woman to go and not sin again. Meaning she had sinned, but He was giving her another chance. We should try to be merciful like Jesus, and we should be kind to sinners because we are sinners too.

Aunty Gwen
 gwen@herald.com.my

True or False?

In today's Gospel reading, the scribes and Pharisees brought a sinful woman in front of Jesus. Do you know the rest of the story? See if you know which of these statements are true and which are false:

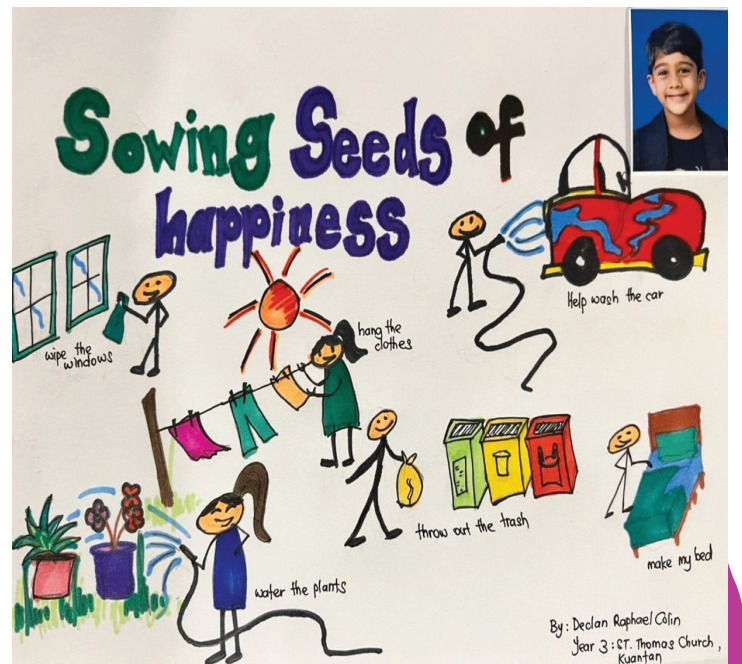
1. The law said that a sinful woman like this one should be killed. (True or False)
2. The men were going to stone the woman anyway, they didn't care what Jesus thought. (True or False)
3. Jesus didn't say anything right away; He just started writing on the ground with His finger. (True or False)
4. Jesus said that whichever of the men had never sinned should be the first to throw a stone at the woman. (True or False)
5. One of the men threw a stone at her. (True or False)
6. All the men walked away without throwing a stone. (True or False)
7. Jesus forgave the woman and told her not to sin anymore. (True or False)

We asked some little ones what Lent means to them, and what are some activities they are doing during Lent ... We will be featuring some of the arts and crafts done by children from several parishes. This week, we take a look at contributions from the Church of the Visitation, Seremban, Church of St Philip, Segamat, Church of St Jude, Rawang and Church of St Thomas, Kuantan.



Levinson Joseph, 12
 Church of the Visitation, Seremban

Hayley Sia, 10, Church of St Philip Segamat



By: Declan Raphael Colin
 Year 3: St. Thomas Church, Kuantan

Declan Colin, 9
 Church of St Thomas, Kuantan



Xavier Sia, 8, Church of St Philip, Segamat



Rhea Kumar,
 Church of St Jude, Rawang

YOUTH

APRIL 3, 2022

INDONESIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH HAILED AS HERO FOR BUILDING CHURCHES



Albertus Gregory Tan

JAKARTA, Indonesia: An Indonesian Catholic youth has been honoured with a prestigious award for his inspiring initiative of building more than 150 churches in remote areas of the country through public fundraising.

Albertus Gregory Tan, 31, who hails from the Archdiocese of Jakarta, is among seven recipients of the 2022 *Kick Andy Heroes Award* announced on March 27.

Andy F. Noya, the host of the popular *Kick Andy Show*, hailed the awardees for being “heroes who work selflessly and in silence” and for being such a “great inspiration to all.”

Tan started his initiative in 2011 under the aegis of the Caring for the Catholic Church movement, which is now the Vinea Dei Foundation. Raising funds through social media, it has constructed 163 churches for poor Catholics in remote areas.

Over the last few years, the foundation has also expanded the scope of its assistance by providing scholarships for around 40 children from underprivileged families.

Tan said he would be handing over the 50-million Rupiah (RM14,650) award money to the foundation. “It would be better to give it to all those who have helped realise my dreams for the Indonesian Catholic Church,” he said on March 29.

“After verifying the proposals, the foundation determines how the funds will be allotted to the selected projects”

He expressed his gratitude to all who had donated over the years so that “a lot of Catholics are able to worship properly, and students can continue to hang on to their dreams and find a way to achieve them.”

Tan said the 11 years since the initiative began have been a very valuable time for him as he continued to “learn to love, give myself and consistently do what’s best for

the Church and its faithful.”

Tan and the 42 volunteers at the foundation continue to receive requests from Catholics for help. However, these should be put forward as proposals through local church authorities such as the parish priest or bishop.

“After verifying the proposals, the foundation determines how the funds will be allotted to specific projects,” he said, adding that they hoped local Catholics will participate as much as they can.

Apart from Tan, other winners of the award include Maria Louisa Rumateray, a doctor who works in Papua’s remote areas; Raldi Artono Koestoer, a professor at the University of Indonesia who helps premature babies from underprivileged families; and Ratnawati Sutedjo, who since 2001 has run a movement to empower people with disabilities and Down syndrome. —

By Ryan Dagur, ucanews.com

CIC Youth animate Lenten Holy Hour

PENANG: The youth of the Church of the Immaculate Conception (CIC), comprising altar servers, Latin choir, Teens Ministry, young single adults and the children’s choir, organised a Lenten Holy Hour on March 20.

The theme was “Growing in Friendship with God this Lent”, with the intentions focused on young/youth and on the Gospel reading of John 15:12-15. The session was led by Fr Simon Labrooy, the Rector of College General.

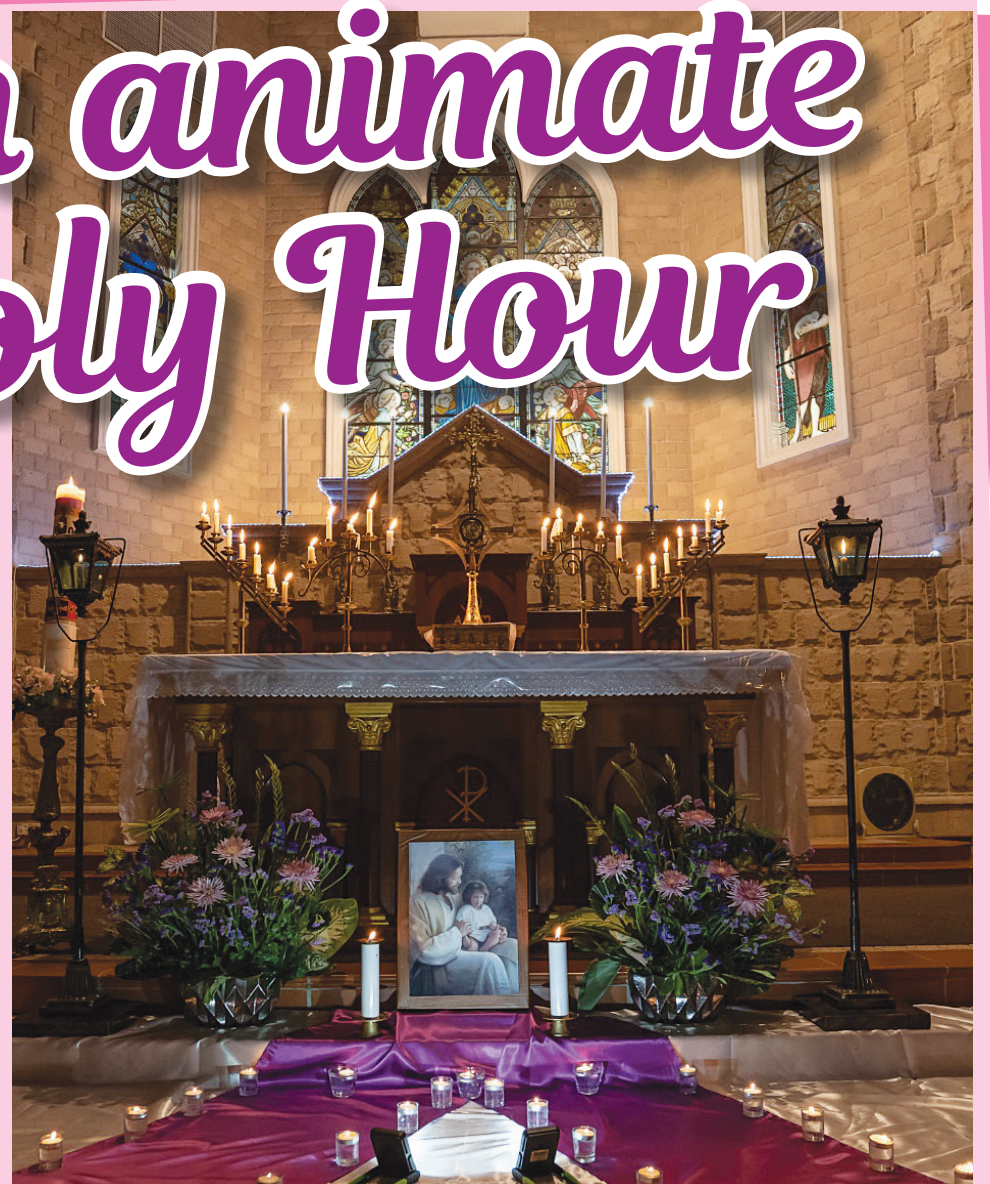
The Holy Hour was conducted using the Taizé method. Taizé is a prayerful form of music known for its simple yet rich and meditative character. The melody is repeated over and over as a kind of centering prayer. This Taizé prayer is filled with song, Scripture reading and silent meditation. The Taizé prayer has been known to bring together young people as it offers a refreshing change in comparison to their

normal chaotic lifestyles.

“Veni Sancte Spiritus” was sung to welcome the Holy Spirit and “Humbly We Adore Thee” was sung while the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. Prominent Taizé music like “Bless the Lord My Soul”, “Jesus, Remember Me”, “Stay With Me”, “Oh Lord, Hear My Prayer” were chanted throughout the different parts of the Holy Hour.

Some guided questions were also given to the faithful to reflect on. They were asked: How they have been a friend to others? Have they been Christlike to others? And also, How they have been embracing God’s relationship with them? This was followed by petitions read by different representatives from the youth cluster. The focus was on people of Ukraine and Russia, young people of the world, church leaders and parish communities.

The Holy Hour ended with Benediction, followed by concluding words from parish priest, Fr Jude Miranda. — By Nicholas Khor



The altar at the Church of the Immaculate Conception set up for Holy Hour animated by the parish’s youth.

KL Cathedral's 12-day water conservation challenge

KUALA LUMPUR: Water, one of the most fundamental natural resources for all living things, should be considered on the top of our pyramid. However, we tend to take the importance of water for granted. We sometimes forget that 70 per cent of Mother Earth's surface, and approximately 60 per cent of the human body, is made up of water, without which, survival of any kind would be impossible.

Hence, in conjunction with World Water Day, celebrated annually on March 22, the

St John's Young Adult Ministry organised a 12-Day water conservation challenge. There were different challenges each day from March 14 to 25.

The simple challenges given were: collecting or harvesting rainwater to water your plants on Day-Four. On Day-Eight, to constantly check for leaks and fix them immediately while, on Day-10, to minimise the usage of glasses daily. Each day's challenge was posted on social media platforms, various groups and channels

for parishioners to carry out the challenge and upload their effort to spread awareness of water conservation.

Some challenges were also related to chores as the majority of households' high usage of water is from washing machines, showers, baths and the list goes on. On Day-Six, the challenge was to use the washing machine for full loads only and, on Day-Seven, to take shorter showers and turn off the shower while soaping up.

It was also emphasised by the Young

Adults that this should not just be a one-time activity but should be incorporated as a lifestyle change to be practised by all as part of their commitment to saving Mother Earth. We should know the importance of water conservation as, with the increasing rate of water pollution, clean and safe water is essential for everyone. Every drop of water that can be conserved will only help us all in the long run.

Remember, save water, save life. — *By Alysson Ann Lourdes*



YOUTH LAUNCH LENTEN CAMPAIGN AT CIC

PENANG: The youth of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, led by Adelyn Phun, Nicholas Khor and Simon Joseph, surprised the faithful, as they launched the Lenten Campaign 2022 during the weekend Masses of March 5 and 6. At the main entrance, parishioners were welcomed with a huge heart logo which symbolised Jesus welcoming everyone back to Him with an open heart. Near the altar, a crucifix and an empty potted plant were spotted.

The launching was divided into three parts. The first was the procession of the materials for the launch by the youth. There were three baskets containing Lenten envelopes and prayer leaves and a love box to place the Lenten envelopes. The baskets were: RESTORE, RENEW and REBUILD. RESTORE meaning the repairing and bringing together of the community of faith which has gone through many hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

RENEW means refreshing our hearts and minds by shining a light of hope and moving forward in the midst of this time of uncertain-



ty, and REBUILD is building a new home by making the church our common home and remembering that Jesus is the centre of our home and will always be. The love box was decorated with elements of this year's Lenten campaign, namely: FAITH, SIGHT, HEART, COMMUNITY, EAR and OUR COMMON HOME.

For the second part, the youth together with Fr Simon Labrooy, the Rector of College General, Fr Ryan Muthu, the Formator of College General, and Bro Lordkennylistler who is on his pastoral attachment, were invited to come for-

ward and write on the prayer leaves and hang them on the empty potted plant to symbolise the growth of the community's faith during Lent.

The third part took place at the end of the Mass where youth representatives handed out the Lenten envelopes to everyone.

Parishioners were invited hang their prayer leaves on the potted plant throughout Lent to let it "grow". Besides that, they were also asked to give their Lenten donations generously as it would go a long way to help those in need.

Young people in the Diocese of Santiago prepare for WYD Lisbon 2023



CABO VERDE: Some of Cabo Verde's youth representatives recently met with diocesan authorities in Praia, the nation's capital. They met under the leadership of Arlindo Cardinal Gomes Furtado, the Bishop of Santiago. According to Fr José Cabral, the meeting listened to the concerns, challenges and successes of the Diocesan Youth Secretariat.

Fr Cabral further said diocesan youth representatives felt encouraged by Cardinal Arlindo, who assured the youth leadership and all the youth of his support to youth ministry.

The Diocese of Santiago has since said apart from preparations for WYD Lisbon 2023, the diocese is also focussing its attention to April 24, the day for the diocesan music festival. — *Radio Nova de Maria - Cape Verde, Vatican News*

Hey everyone,
In the previous issues, we have shared some basics of the smartphone camera features.

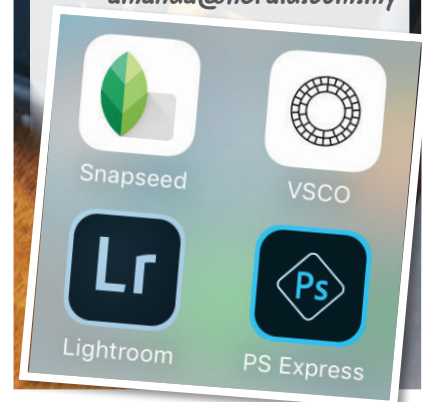
Next, composing and taking your smartphone photo is just the first step to making it visually compelling. Some photos may appear too dark or too bright or the colour balance and the composition is not right.

Here are some editing apps you can try:

- ▶ VSCO
- ▶ Snapseed
- ▶ Photoshop Express
- ▶ Lightroom

Don't over do it, only make subtle adjustments to your picture.

Amanda
amanda@herald.com.my



Jesuit theologian's death saddens Indian Catholics

NEW DELHI: Fr Poulouse Mangai, (pic), a renowned professor of theology who worked among rickshaw pullers of Old Delhi area, died on March 26 after a brief hospitalisation.

A message from Archbishop Anil Couto of Delhi expressed sadness over the death of "our dear Fr Poulouse Mangai, SJ, professor of theology at Vidyajyoti College."

Fr Mangai was a prolific writer and editor of *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflections*, Asia's top theological publication. He was 64.

A week ago, Fr Mangai was found with an enlarged prostate and was admitted to Holy Family Hospital in Okhla, a south Delhi suburb, says a message from Jerome Francis, secretary to Calcutta provincial Fr Raphael Hyde.

After Fr Mangai developed breathing difficulties, a CT scan of the chest showed a patch indicating tuberculosis. This was confirmed by a bronchoscopy. When his

condition stabilised he was shifted to an ordinary room. The priest suffered a few mild heart attacks in the afternoon and was put on ventilator as his blood pressure and pulse rate went down. He died at 5.30pm.

Archbishop Couto hailed Fr Mangai as "a dedicated priest fully involved in the various ministries of the Archdiocese of Delhi" and sent his "heartfelt condolences to the 'Vidyajyoti family.'"

Fr Mangai had taught Pneumatology (study of the Holy Spirit) and Sikhism in Vidyajyoti for the past 20 years. He was planning to retire from teaching on turning 65 on Sept 15.

He was born in 1957, at Kalady in the southern Indian state of Kerala. He entered the Calcutta province of the Society of Jesus on June 26, 1987, and was



ordained a priest on Nov 11, 1995.

Before joining the Jesuits, he worked as a mathematics lecturer under the department of Collegiate Education of the Kerala government. He studied philosophy from Chennai's Satyanilayam Institute and theology from Delhi's Vidyajyoti where he later worked as a professor.

He had a doctorate from the Indian Institute of Spirituality under the St Peter's Pontifical Institute in Bangalore (now Bengaluru).

He was interested in religion, inter-faith dialogue, theology, spirituality and people's movement. He was the author of the book, "Spirituality of People's Movement: A Christian Search in the Indian Context." He had also written more than 150 articles. — **By Stan Alla, mattersindia.com**

Korean Church pays tribute to Catholic patriot

SEOUL: The Archdiocese of Seoul in South Korea paid tribute to Catholic patriot and independence hero Ahn Jung-geun, (pic), with a special Mass on his 112th death anniversary.

Archbishop Peter Chung Soon-taik of Seoul presided over the Mass themed "Remember, those who have become Salt and Light" together with the auxiliary bishops at Myeongdong Cathedral in the South Korean capital on March 26.

It was the first in a series of memorial Masses aiming to honour the faith of ancestors of the modern and contemporary history of Korea and to follow in their footsteps, according to a press release from Seoul Archdiocese.

In his homily, Archbishop Chung hailed Ahn as "a patriotic martyr" who sacrificed his life like Jesus.

"Ahn Jung-geun is a patriotic martyr who is hailed as one of the most respected independence heroes in Korea. We can see Jesus carrying the Cross through the sacri-

fice made by Ahn which achieved the independence of our country from Japan while aiming at promoting lasting peace in Asia," said Archbishop Chung.

The prelate said that Ahn's life and sacrifice are lessons for all to bring justice and peace in a world plagued by wars.

"Ahn also teaches us a lesson as a patriotic martyr that we should all become apostles to bring justice and peace to the world where there are currently ongoing wars and on the Korean Peninsula where the division is becoming more firmly entrenched," he added.

Ahn Jung-geun was born on Sept 2, 1879, in Haeju of Hwanghae province, now part of North Korea. His parents, Ahn Tae-hun and Kim A-ryeo, were Buddhists. He was the eldest among four siblings.

Ahn and his fam-



ily members became Catholics in 1897. Ahn took his baptismal name Thomas. He then married and had two sons and a daughter.

After his conversion, Ahn became a collaborator with foreign Catholic missionaries serving in the country. He also secured funding from the Catholic Church to establish two Catholic schools where he served as the principal. Ahn helped missionary priests in the propagation of Catholicism in Korea.

Ahn also joined a nationalist movement to free Korea from Japanese occupation.

As part of his independence struggle, Ahn shot dead Hirobumi Ito, the four-times prime minister of Japan and first Japanese resident governor-general of Korea, on Oct. 26, 1909, in Harbin, northeast China.

He was arrested and imprisoned by Japanese imperial forces. He was tortured in custody and executed by Japanese forces on March 26, 1910, in Lushun prison in China. He was only 31. — **ucanews.com**

Pope expresses condolences upon death of Cardinal Naguib

VATICAN: Pope Francis has expressed his condolences upon learning of the death of Cardinal Antonios Naguib (pic), Patriarch emeritus of the Coptic Catholic Church, who passed away on March 28.



A leading figure of the 250,000-strong Catholic Coptic community, Cardinal Naguib died at 87 in the Italian hospital in Cairo, following a long illness.

In a telegram addressed to Patriarch Ibrahim Isaac Sedrak of Alexandria, Pope Francis expressed his closeness to the entire Patriarchal Church for its loss.

Highlighting his "commitment in the field of development and social service" for the needy and suffering, the Holy Father said Cardinal Naguib was a perfect "example of a good shepherd" for his Church.

Pope Francis also prayed through the

intercession of the Virgin Mary that the Lord may "welcome this faithful servant into the heavenly Jerusalem."

Cardinal Naguib was born on March 18, 1935, in Samalout, Egypt. He studied at the Intertribal Maadi Seminary in Cairo and then at the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome.

He was ordained to the priesthood in 1960 after obtaining a degree in Theology and Sacred Scriptures, and contributed with other scholars to a new translation of the New Testament into modern standard Arabic.

He was ordained Bishop of Minya in 1977 and elected Patriarch of Alexandria in 2006. During his seven years as Patriarch of Alexandria, he was also the president of the Synod of the Coptic Catholic Church and president of the assembly of the Catholic hierarchy of Egypt.

Pope Benedict XVI elevated him to the cardinalate in 2010 one month after he served as the recording Secretary of the Synod of Bishops for the Middle East.

MEMORIAM

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Email: advertisement@herald.com.my
Tel: 03-2026 8291

33RD ANNIVERSARY



CHARLES MUTHU
(12.5.1916 - 8.4.1989)

*Wonderful memories woven in gold
These are the treasures we tenderly hold
Deep in our hearts you will always stay.
Loved and remembered everyday.*

37th Anniversary In Loving Memory of



Emile Victor Lessler
Departed: 07-04-1985

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever."

Lovingly remembered by Lucy, children - Julie, Rita, Bunny, Linda, Hazel, Gerard, Kelly, Selena, their spouses, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

12th Anniversary In Loving Memory of



ANTHONY SATHAWAN S/O R. P. ALWAR

19 August 1949 to 8 April 2010

*"Miss you Pappa"
I miss you more than ever.
Your guidance and your love.
But, I know you're still watching silently from above
The love you gave still warms me the way it always will
But leaving left an empty space that time can never fill.
From heaven you're still giving the love you always had.
I know you hear me talk to you.
I will always love you Pappa.*

Fondly remembered by your dear family.

1st Anniversary In Loving Memory of



Marianthony Peter A/L Marianthony
Returned to the Lord: 9th April 2021

*We miss you, Achaan,
A little too much, a little too often,
and a little but more every day...
Cos' we love you,
So nothing, and nobody, not even time will change that.
For it's hard to forget,
Someone who gave us so much to remember.
Loved and missed by Children & spouses,
grandchildren and great-grandchildren.*

6th Year Anniversary In Loving Memory of



MADAM MARIAMMA THOMAS

From the Lord :
29th Oct 1938
To the Lord:
2nd April 2016

*In life we loved you dearly
In death we love you still
In our hearts we hold a place
That only you can fill.*

A Memorial Mass will be celebrated at St Joseph's Church, Jalan Sentul, K.L. on Sat, 2nd April at 6.00pm.

Deeply loved and forever cherished by Children, Grandchildren and loved ones.

Lenten campaigns by the dioceses

Below is the information on Week Five of the Lenten Campaign kits prepared by the three Arch/Dioceses in Peninsular Malaysia. Links are also provided to help you in your journey to Easter and beyond.



Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur

Based on the Lenten Campaign theme, weekly sub-themes and reflections, focus action and activities have been prepared by the Ministry/Commission/Parish in the Archdiocese leading each week's campaign during the Lenten season.

For this week's Gospel according to John 8:1-11, the focus is on families bonding in communion, and fraternity to build true relationships (based on *Fratelli Tutti* 87). The proposed action plan for the faithful is for the young people to journey in families/ small communities, share their testimonies and witness their experiences of building social friendships.

Salt of the earth and light of the World

Week Five: Building social friendship and a renewed encounter

K.A.M.I (Kerana Allah Mengasihi I) Kawan by ASAYO Kuala Lumpur encourages young Catholics to build social friendships inside and outside the Church. We encourage young people to come together and journey to encounter Jesus through outreach and service to families and small communities. In this reach-out programme, we hope to instil and inspire the faithful - in their own personal missionary vocation - to be responsive to the needs of others: first, to the needs of an

individual; then to the needs of a family; then, community needs; and then, needs of the world (see *Christus Vivit* 253, *Fratelli Tutti* 66).

As each family/community has varying situations and difficulties, they also have different yet valid needs; so, each group would be communicating with these families, discerning and discovering ways to assist the persons in need, as part of their personal journey. ASAYO Kuala Lumpur will also accompany each group to help

process and provide aid as and when the group needs it.

To sum up using the words of Pope Francis: "Human beings are so made that they cannot live, develop and find fulfilment except 'in the sincere gift of self to others'... Life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity; and life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity" - *Fratelli Tutti* 87.

Tune in on Sunday, April 3 at 8.00pm on <https://Tv.ArchKL.org>



Diocese of Malacca Johore

Message of Laudato Si'

Moreover, when our hearts are authentically open to universal communion, this sense of fraternity excludes nothing and no one. It follows that our indifference or cruelty towards fellow creatures of this world sooner or later affects the treatment we mete out to other human beings. We have only one heart, and the same wretchedness which leads us to mistreat an animal will not be long in showing itself in our relationships with other people. Every act of cruelty towards any creature is "contrary to human dignity". We can hardly consider ourselves to be fully loving if we disregard any aspect of reality:

"Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism". Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.

Laudato Si' #92

"Make a stand! Be heard as a Catholic community and as concerned citizens"

Week Five: Religion for love or cruelty?

GOSPEL — John 8: 1-11
'Let the one among you who has not sinned be the first to throw a stone'

REFLECTION
1 John 4:7-8 may hold one of the most important passages in the bible for our Christian life. John beautifully tells us, "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love." Mother Theresa is said to have shared, "We can do no great things, only small things with great love."

The religious leaders were not concerned about the law of God, its meaning, and its purpose. They did not appear to be guided by the question, "what is the most loving thing they can do for this woman?" They just wanted to trap Jesus, and they used the woman they caught to do it. In their way, the religious leaders used religion as a weapon to attack Jesus and as justification to stone the woman to death.

This week, let us ask ourselves what living a life as one who has accepted Jesus mean for us. Then let us consider this in relation to some attitudes that we may have in our relationships with others.

Lenten Sessions available



February 28 to April 12:

Topic: SJCF Weekly Prayer Meeting

Time: 7:45pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/94924119204>

Meeting ID: 949 2411 9204

Passcode: SJCF2022

LENTEN COMPANION

by Fr Mark Touns

The BECs/Zones of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit is inviting you to a personal encounter with the Gospel on Thursdays at 8.30pm.

April 7 - This is the way back to God

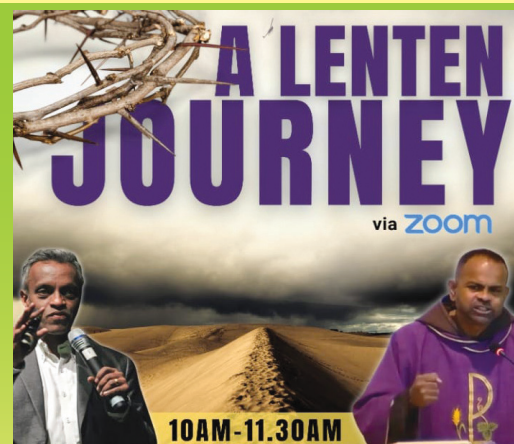
April 11 - Praying at the foot of the cross

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://bit.ly/CHSlent2022>

Meeting ID: 86875647886

Passcode: CHSLENT



12 MAR
REPENTANCE
AND
ACCEPTANCE
BY JUDE ANTOINE

26 MAR
SALVATION
FOR THE
PEOPLE
BY JUDE ANTOINE

9 APR
SACRIFICE
AND
GLORIFICATION
BY FR MICHAEL RAYMOND

ZOOM ID : 228 195 7133

PASSCODE : bapd

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR EASTER TRIDUUM, EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

with extended homily by Fr Gerard Theraviam on April 11 and 12.

Time : Visitation Hall
Venue : Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, Penang



Diocese of Penang

Prayer for our Earth

A prayer for our earth was published in Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si*.

All powerful God,
You are present in the universe and in the smallest of Your creatures.
You embrace with Your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with your peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in Your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it,

that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognise that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards Your infinite light.
We thank You for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle, for justice, love, and peace.

Restore

Week Five: Call for Action. What would you do differently?

After hearing, reflecting, praying and sharing, what would you do differently from now on?

- How can we be an agent of restoration ?



Malaysians in solidarity with Ukraine

By Gwen Manickam

KUALA LUMPUR: In response to the humanitarian appeal from CARITAS Malaysia to support the conflict-affected people of Ukraine with food, drinking water, safe accommodation and hygiene kits, a local community of doctors, some 30 donors and the Women's Desk Ministry of the Archdiocesan Office for Human Development, raised contributions in the form of medical supplies and hygiene kits to send to the war-torn nation.

Within 10 days, the team of volunteers collected and packed 36 boxes weighing about 30 kgs each, with bandages, adhesive taps, cotton wool, intravenous (IVs) equipment, diapers, sanitary napkins and hygiene kits, among other things.

On March 31, 2022, a handing over ceremony was held at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre (APC), Kuala Lumpur. Present were Most Rev Julian Leow, Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, Ambassador of Ukraine to Malaysia, His Excellency Olexander Nechytaylo, the First Secretary, Trade and Economics, Andrii Mygas and representatives of the donors and volunteers.

President of Caritas Malaysia and Bishop of Malacca-Johore Diocese, Rt Rev Bernard Paul said, in a speech read on his behalf, "In solidarity with the suffering people of Ukraine, we who are gathered here and the many who are in the background, want to express our condemnation of the evil that



Archbishop Julian Leow blessing the boxes as His Excellency Olexander Nechytaylo the Ambassador of Ukraine to Malaysia bows his head in prayer.

has befallen the nation of Ukraine. No war is justified. No armed intrusion of a sovereign nation is permissible. War is evil.

"We want to play our small part in sharing what we have with the many who have lost much in your country. On behalf of the Catholic Church of Malaysia, through the office of Caritas Malaysia, we offer these medical packages to the agencies in Ukraine to disburse them to the wounded and the hospitalised. These are material help, but more important are prayer, love, and brotherly and sisterly support. That's what we can give right now. The greatest

desire is to see the end of the war, the return of peace, and the rebuilding of Ukraine."

In his speech, Archbishop Julian said, "We want to show solidarity with the suffering people of Ukraine, and the effort of the laypeople, doing their bit to show compassion and help bring a little relief is heartwarming. In the event of a disaster, it's usually men and women on the street who come forward immediately to show care and concern, and this time was no different. We hope it will be the first of more aid to come from CARITAS and the dioceses in Malaysia."

Blessing the items to be sent, Archbishop Julian prayed, "Dear heavenly Father, we ask you to bless this shipment to ensure its safe journey and delivery. We thank you for the generous donors and those who spent hours collecting and packing the items. Bless the whole process, those who contributed in any way and those about to receive these much-needed supplies. When they use these items, may they know that Malaysia and the world are with them and praying for them."

Nechytaylo said "I stand before you, representing Ukraine, a nation subjected to war and a devastating situation. I thank CARITAS Malaysia, the Catholic Church of Malaysia and all the brothers and sisters represented here. You have demonstrated solidarity and your initiative to gather all these items will always be remembered in Ukraine. What is more important is, please keep us in prayer."

He recited a prayer from Psalm 27: 1-3 "The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to devour[a] me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besieges me, my heart will not fear; though war breaks out against me, even then I will be confident."

"Your words, your prayers, and your very practical help will help keep us going," said the Ambassador.

Cardinal delivers Pope's ambulance to Ukraine



Pope Francis blesses the ambulance. (Vatican Media)

LVIV, Ukraine: In a concrete sign of closeness, support and help to the Ukrainian population experiencing great suffering because of war, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, who heads the Office of Papal Charities, has brought a fully equipped ambulance to Lviv.

Ukrainian authorities, who are providing for some 250,000 internally displaced people from war zones, received the gift from Pope Francis who had blessed the vehicle in the Vatican before its departure.

"It is a great privilege for me to hand over the special gift of the ambulance on behalf of the Holy Father", said Cardinal Krajewski. "It has a symbolic value, because the ambulance is used to save lives."

"I have already handed over this ambulance to the prefect of Lviv and he thanked me, he thanked the Holy Father and said that the ambulance is destined for the paediatric hospital to save the children who come from war areas," the Papal Almoner explained.

The gift will be assigned to the regional Center for Mother and Child Health. One Ukrainian official said it was an important gift because the number of refugees in the area has increased significantly. "Thank you Cardinal Krajewski! We thank Pope Francis for his prayers, for remembering Ukraine: it gives us strength! We want our next generation not to see war and to be healthy," he said. — *Vatican News*

Ukrainian archbishop tearfully recounts the horrors, heroism of war

ROME: With his voice often trembling and tears sliding down to his beard, the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church spoke via Zoom about the death and destruction Russia is raining down on his people and his country.

Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych repeatedly apologised for the tears and acknowledged the contrast between his daily video messages of encouragement to his people and his talk during the webinar March 29, sponsored by Rome's Pontifical Oriental Institute.

He started the videos to keep in touch with his people and "just to let people know that I am alive, the city of Kyiv lives," he said, his voice breaking.

"Forgive me for my tears, but I think I can (cry) with you," he said. "With my people, I feel an obligation to be a preacher of hope, a hope that does not come from military power or from the possibility of diplomacy — we don't have those hopes yet — but a hope that comes from faith."

"Today, I am speaking to you from Kyiv. It's a miracle," Archbishop Shevchuk said. "The strength of the Ukrainian people is being revealed as a miracle that is surprising the world."

In too many cities in Ukraine, the archbishop said, the Russians have "razed everything to the ground" and the only food the people have is what they get from the churches and other aid agencies.

The city of Slavutych, near the failed Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, is sur-

rounded, he said, and an Eastern-rite Catholic priest and his wife there welcomed their third child into the world "in the midst of a terrible assault."

"The baby was born in a hospital without electricity and without water," Archbishop Shevchuk said. "When the war started, knowing that the baby was about to be born, I tried to intercede to get my priest and his family brought to safety. He told me, 'You are my bishop and I received from you the mandate to be the pastor of these people. I can't leave.' And he stayed. For the last three days, I haven't heard from him."

People will rebuild the churches and houses and bridges and factories destroyed by Russian shelling, he said, but the people killed will be reunited with their loved ones "only on the day of the resurrection of the body."

Archbishop Shevchuk choked up talking about the bravery of his priests and their wives, but his tears really began to flow when he spoke about reports of thousands of people, including children, being taken against their will to Russia and their passports being confiscated.

"I feel an obligation to be the voice of this suffering people and to be a simple witness to the reality being lived by our people in Ukraine. I never would have imagined being the head of the Church in a time of war. No one is ever prepared for war except for the criminals who plan and put it into action," he said. — **By Cindy Wooden, CNS**