

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

Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,
To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.
1 Cor. 1:1-2



Local shepherds pray for late pope

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Togo bishops urge for peace

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Inspirational stories — Helena Michael

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Historic funeral of an emeritus pope

VATICAN: In one of the rarest of scenes in two millennia of Catholic Church history, Pope Francis, on January 5, presided over the funeral Mass of his predecessor, the late pope emeritus Benedict XVI, and offered a subtle send-off to someone he extolled as a pastor who “spread and testified” to the Gospel his entire life.

The funeral rites, in accordance with Benedict XVI’s wishes, took place with much simplicity. The Requiem Mass had a few changes to the traditional papal funeral as the late pope emeritus was not the reigning pope at the time of his death.

The funeral began with Benedict XVI’s wooden coffin being taken from the basilica to St Peter’s Square as the Sistine Chapel Choir sang the *Salve Regina, In Paradisum*, and other hymns. The simple cypress coffin, with Benedict’s coat of arms emblazoned on it, was placed in front of the altar looking out on the square.

An open book of the Gospels was placed on it. The thousands of people who were at the square then joined in reciting the sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary.

When the Rosary ended, Pope Francis arrived in a wheelchair and took his place on a chair in front of the altar, looking out at the coffin.

Next, 125 cardinals processed out from the basilica and took their seats at the right-hand side of the altar. Among them was 90-year-old Cardinal Joseph Zen of Hong Kong, who received special court permission to travel to Rome for the occasion.

All the cardinals concelebrated the solemn, sung Latin Mass together with 500 other bishops and 3,700 priests from all continents.

Instead of delivering a eulogy, as many people had expected, Pope Francis focused his reflections primarily on the life of Christ — a theme frequently explored by the late pope emeritus, including in a trilogy of books on Jesus of Nazareth, which he penned during his nearly eight-year papacy — rather than dwelling on the contours of his predecessor’s long life and influence.

Then, for the only time in the homily, Fran-

cis named his predecessor as he concluded with these words full of hope: “Benedict, faithful friend of the Bridegroom, may your joy be complete as you hear His voice, now and forever!”

Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, 88, the dean of the College of Cardinals, led the celebration of the Eucharist at the altar at which the Sistine Choir sang, while Francis sat at the side of the altar. The cardinal was assisted by the college’s vice dean, the Argentine-born Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, and by Cardinal Francis Arinze (the next most senior cardinal), who had returned from his holiday in Nigeria for the funeral.

Benedict’s funeral Mass followed the standard protocols for a traditional funeral liturgy, with the exception that there were no final prayers offered by Eastern Catholic churches or the Diocese of Rome, as those prayers are specific to the death of a reigning pope.

At the end of the Mass, Pope Francis imparted the final commendation and farewell.

The cardinal dean then blessed the casket with holy water and incensed it. As he finished, the choir sang *In Paradisum deducant te Angeli...* (“May the Angels lead you into Paradise...”). At that stage, all the cardinals moved

into the basilica to be there before the casket arrived.

Ten pallbearers then lifted the coffin, and Francis put his right hand on it, in a final gesture of fond farewell, before they carried it away for burial in the crypt of the basilica in what had served as the temporary resting place of John XXIII and later, of John Paul II. (Their remains were transferred to the basilica following each one’s beatification.)

Once the casket arrived in the crypt, it was placed first in a zinc coffin and then in a second, outer coffin made of elm wood, in accordance with the tradition for the burial of popes. Benedict’s remains, secure in these three coffins, were then interred in the tomb of his predecessors.

The funeral brought an end to a near decade-long era, in which a former pope shocked the world with his resignation in 2013, lived within a monastery inside the Vatican under the title of ‘pope emeritus’, while the reigning pope lived only a few steps away. — *Agencies*

● Turn to Pages 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 23 and the Back for more.

The last time a pope celebrated the funeral of his predecessor was in 1802

VATICAN: It is understandable that the celebration of Benedict XVI’s funeral by Pope Francis has been presented as something unprecedented in the history of the Church in modern times.

Undeniably unprecedented was Pope Benedict’s resignation, motivated by reasons of age and the lack of physical and mental strength to be able to sustain the responsibilities and the burden of commitments associated with the pontificate.

But a reigning pontiff blessing the body of his predecessor before burial is a fact that has a quite recent precedent within the context of the 2000-year history of the Church.

It happened in February 1802, with the solemn funeral of Pius VI, celebrated in St Peter’s Basilica by his successor, Pius VII. The deceased, born Giannangelo Braschi (Cesena 1717 - Valence 1799), was elected pontiff in 1775, and after a long reign, died in exile in France, a prisoner of Napoleon.

The funeral took place in Valence immediately after his death, while the novendialis (the nine days of mourning before a conclave) were held in Venice, the city where the cardinals had gathered to elect a successor.

Pius VII, who was elected on March 14, 1800, wanted to have his predecessor’s remains brought back to Rome. They were exhumed in December 1801 and travelled from Valence to Marseilles and from there,

by ship, to Genoa. Having landed in Italy, the body of the exiled pontiff began a triumphal pilgrimage, with solemn obsequies celebrated at each stop. On Feb 17, 1802, “the magnificent triumphal entry into Rome” took place, with the cardinals awaiting the remains at Ponte Milvio. The solemn funeral ceremony was celebrated in St Peter’s Basilica in the presence of Pope Pius VIII. — **By Andrea Tornielli, Vatican News**

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Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre
5, Jalan Robertson, 50150, KL
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Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur,
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**EDITOR**

Patricia Pereira
editor1@herald.com.my

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**

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

**WRITER**

Children's Section
Gwen Manickam
gwen@herald.com.my

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Youth Section
Amanda Mah
amanda@herald.com.my

**BAHASA MALAYSIA**

Melania Liza Magnus
liza@herald.com.my

**MANDARIN**

Adelina Wong
yin4482@gmail.com

**TAMIL**

RK Samy
rksamy3@hotmail.com

ADMINISTRATOR

Advertisements/Memoriam
advertisement@herald.com.my

LETTERS

letterseditor@herald.com.my

COMMENTARY

Love for liturgy was the beginning and end of Pope Benedict's life

It's an interesting thing when a pope dies, even a pope emeritus. In many respects, they are beyond our daily affairs, and yet they are closely united to us as shepherds and spiritual fathers. When a Holy Father dies, it affects us in ways that might even surprise ourselves. This is particularly true when it is a pope who has influenced our thought, moulded our discipleship, or inspired our spiritual life.

For many Catholic Christians, and people of goodwill, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI was just such a figure and influence. He was one who spoke softly, but carried a big message. Many a person strained to hear him when he spoke, but they were willing to do it because of what he was saying.

As a pastor and teacher, Pope Benedict always sought to speak the truth in love. He was a man who cherished clarity and spoke and taught in a systematic way. He was willing to hold his ground on theological points when things were true and sound, just as he was willing to acknowledge weak points or areas in need of development in his own arguments. There was no hubris in his spirit.

Pope Benedict was a person completely dedicated to Jesus Christ. From his own experience under Nazi Germany, he held no illusions about political agendas, or social movements, or even inner Church camps of thought. He submitted to truth wherever it could be found, just as he argued against falsity or lies wherever it was discovered. No group or school of thought could claim him for themselves.

And so, as much is being written and spoken about him, three points stand out:

1) The secret to Pope Benedict's life as a disciple and priest of Jesus Christ was his deep love for sacred liturgy. It was the place where he encountered God. It was the place where the professorial introvert could be with God in the midst of the Church. As the liturgy is the summit and source of the entire Christian way of life, so the same could be said about the life of Pope Benedict. The liturgy was his source, just as it was his summit. It was the beginning and the end of everything he did.

In the liturgy, we have orthodoxy, which is properly understood

as "right praise," namely good and true worship. It was only from right praise that Benedict understood we could have right doctrine (which is the more popular understanding of the term orthodoxy). Benedict didn't just skip to right doctrine. He understood the need to encounter God first, and only afterwards hear and speak about him.

In our world today, too many people claim an orthodoxy on one extreme or the other. They are too willing to pass over right praise. They want the absolute authority of God without God. As such, their doctrine is quickly adulterated and becomes ideology. Pope Benedict, as a priest and scholar, had very little time or patience for ideology. He saw its tyranny on the intellect and upon human life.

2) Since Benedict's teachings flowed from his encounter with God, he was able to see the harmonious interaction between faith and reason. Of the many principal themes that can be seen in his writings, preaching, and teaching, the interconnectedness of faith and reason stand out. He was concerned about the rationalism, fideism, and fanaticism that occur when either faith or reason claim a sole competence to knowledge. Benedict saw both faith and reason as necessary for the human spirit to flourish. He realised that any discord between them needed to be reconciled if the contemporary world was to prosper in matters of the spirit.

3) With the dynamism between worship and doctrine, Pope Benedict saw the essential call to orthopraxy, namely, to right action. He modelled his entire pontifical teaching on the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. He called all disciples to live virtuously and to faithfully follow the way of the Lord Jesus. This way of life summoned believers to care for the poor, the sick, and the abandoned. Benedict addressed this call and gave substantial teachings on the Church's social doctrine.

These three simple points are highlighted from the life and legacy of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. So much more can be said of him and his witness in the life of the Church, but after a few points, the heart is moved to memories and to silent gratitude. —

By Fr Jeffrey F. Kirb, *Crux*

Jesus coming towards me

If I saw Jesus, would I recognise Him? If He came towards me, would I bow down before Him or would I run away from Him — turn my back on Him? This question is not so hypothetical. In fact, it is easily answered by the choices I have made in the difficult times of my life. Have I chosen



God over myself? His Will over mine; His selflessness or my selfishness? This is a question you can ask yourselves — Have I abandoned my spouse, broken my promises or vows, thrown chaos and confusion, darkness and fury over all who are around me? Yes, I can answer this question too. All I need to do is open my eyes and see what I have done.

John saw the Lord coming towards him and immediately recognised him. He told his disciples, the gems of his hard labour, to no longer follow him but to follow the Lord. John had a very good thing going. He had lots of customers. He had lots of followers. He had lots of fans. Business was good.

And then one day it all went away. Jesus took it all away from the Baptist, every single bit of it: his message, his customers, his fans, even his followers. And what's even more remarkable about all of this is that John accepted it. In fact, he even predicted it: "A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me."

Wow! John understood: My life no longer belongs to me. It is not I who lives in me, but Christ who lives in me. John understood that if you want to get ahead in God's world, then truth and humility are the way to go.

Saints do not give to the world themselves; they give to the world Christ. John, like Mary, gave to the world the Son of God. Lord, let there be light, and there was Light!

A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me. What does it take to be a disciple of the Lord? Humility. What does it mean to be humble? To accept myself for what I am. I am a speck of sand — in time and in space! I am a dot in the universe — in length and in width! Our planet is not even in the centre of our solar system! And I think to myself... How comforting this is. Nothing I do makes any difference. I can do whatever I want.

But in reality, in the eyes of all that can see, I am a spiritual giant! Taller than any redwood, more conscious than any existing matter, more intelligent than our sun, more nurturing than Mother Nature, more loving than all the precious stones below, and much more forgiving than the Universe! I belong to my Creator in a unique, singular way! I belong to the Lord who is my Father, my brother, my God. Only man and woman can look up into the sky and say, "What a beautiful night." No animal, nothing can do that! Only man and woman can say, "I am here", and no one can take my place. And what is truly remarkable is: My God knows me. "To those who accepted Him, He gave power to become children of God." Now I know who I am. I can make a difference! "Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will!"

Now I must accept who the Lord has made me to be: His child. I will not run away from the Lord. I will run to the Lord and embrace Him. He has given me depth and length, purpose and meaning. He who

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Fr Alfonse Nazzaro

2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time (A)

Readings: *Isaiah 49:3, 5-6;*
1 Corinthians 1:1-3;
Gospel: *John 1:29-34*

ranks ahead of me is coming to me! I am His and He is mine. I am not an insignificant speck. I am a drop of God's infinite love, capable of making another smile, of bringing joy to another, of opening heaven to those sunk into despair.

This power to become children of God means to rise above the existing confusion of this world and set some order to it! We have been called to bring some light; to open the skies and discover the heavens above. To see life for what it is: an overflow of God's love. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will. I will not succumb to the greatest lie ever! That is, "I'm so sorry. I can't help you."

May I never be comforted in thinking that I am a speck! May I be terrified in knowing that I am a drop of love — infinite love — from God! This drop makes all the difference in the world.



Fr Alfonse Nazzaro is a priest of the Diocese of Dallas, Texas.

IMPORTANT DATES

January 18 - 25:
Christian Unity Week
 Theme: *Do good; seek justice*
 (Isaiah 1:17)

January 22:
Sunday of the Word of God
 Theme: *Synodality and the Word of God*

January 29: Catechetical Sunday
 Theme: *Renewing the Church with Families of Faith* (1 Cor.16:13-14)



KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

January

- 16-18 Clergy Annual Pastoral Assembly
- 19 Christian Unity Prayer - KL Central District
- 28 Red Mass – Church of Holy Family, Kajang
- 29 Parish Pastoral Assembly – Church of St Thomas, Kuantan



PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Sebastian Francis

January

- 15 Sacrament of Confirmation – the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Ipoh at 8.00am
- 17 Council of Priests (COP) – Stella Maris at 10.00am
- 17 & 18 Clergy Monthly Recollection – Stella Maris
- 18 Eucharistic Celebration – 25th Sacerdotal Anniversary of Fr Arulnathan Joseph at the Church of St. Anthony, Nibong Tebal at 7.00pm
- 18 & 19 Permanent Deacons' Formation – Stella Maris



MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

January

- 17-19 Annual Clergy Discernment 2022/Clergy Monthly Recollection
- 30 Caritas Malaysia Diocesan Heads & Ecclesiastical Assistants Meet
- 31 Caritas MJDOHD Exco Meet

Sibu Diocese launches seventh year of Creation Justice

SIBU: The Bishop of Sibu, Rt Rev Joseph Hii, launched the *Year of Soil and Reconciliation - Interconnectedness with All Creation* in light of the *Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* on January 2, 2023, during a special Mass at the Sacred Heart Cathedral (SHC).

Concelebrating with Bishop Joseph were chancellor Fr Alphonsus Tang, Sacred Heart Cathedral's rector Fr Philip Hu, St Mary of Divine Mercy Church's rector Fr Paul Chee, SHC assistant priest Fr Cruzito Manding, and Fr Oniz Kihokolho. Also in attendance were representatives from the various parishes in the Diocese of Sibu and the People of God.

The diocese has journeyed in synodality and persevered into its seventh year of the decade of Creation Justice which began in 2017 with the theme *Creation Justice – Evangelisation in Union with Creation*.

This was followed by *The Joy of Love – Let's begin from home* in 2018. The next



Bishop Joseph Hii blesses the soil.

year's theme was *Freedom – Rejoice and be glad: Call to Holiness*. In 2020, the topic was *Water and Baptism – Gift to all Creation*, followed by *Air and Confirmation – Breath of Life in all Creation* in 2021, and last year, *Food and Eucharist*.

In his homily, the prelate urged the People of God to bring peace to the world. But to

do this, "we need to be at peace with ourselves, at peace with creation, and at peace with God".

After Mass was the "Walk for Peace", in conjunction with the World Day of Peace.

Parishioners who came for the event received a letter from Bishop Joseph and prayer cards in four different languages.



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #116



A blessed New Year 2023 to all of you out there. A grace-filled time to all of you.

Some call it the time of the GOATs. The time of the "Greatest Of All Times". Lionel Messi, the current FIFA superstar. Pele, the acclaimed Brazilian footballer. The late pope emeritus Benedict XVI, theologian and scholar, who courageously stepped down, paving the way for Pope Francis. Who is the GOAT for you? They are the ones who touch lives, leave behind a legacy and share their lives and wealth with the needy.

Remembering Times: *We forgive* the past, the unkind and their unkindness. "Forgiving changes the perspective. Forgetting loses the lesson", quotes Paolo Coelho.

We remember the passing on of Pele, pope emeritus Benedict XVI, the 31 who perished at Batang Kali and the victims of the Indonesian earthquake, the South Philippine storms and Sabah king tide phenomena.

We remember the call of the Good Samaritan to pick up the broken, to hear their cries and to support the appeals, organised by Caritas Malaysia.

We remember the MJD50, the history, the stories and the mission.

We remember the many pastors, the pastoral workers, the community leaders who walked, lived and cared for us.

We remember the diocese, our communion of parishes, communities, BECs, ministries, families and persons.

We remember that the call and mission continues, becoming a disciple is ongoing and living the Gospel is unchanging.

We remember that the Synod is the way of being Church, built on listening, together discerning and united pastoral action.

We remember the need for prayer, for praying people to move mountains ie racism, religious bigotry, corruption and discrimination in the country.

A Thought for the Week: Missed Chances

Successful people make things happen instead of waiting for things to happen. Two stories to begin with: Nokia refused Android, Yahoo refused Google. That's their story. But these are the lessons for us:

- a) Learn to take risks
- b) Embrace changes
- c) If you refuse to change with time, you might perish.

The Spirit is a spirit of newness. The Spirit in the Church inspires her to be ever new, ever alive and ever relevant. Like fresh water, she is invigorating. Like the unquenchable fire, she enkindles. Like a gentle breeze, she invites us to new life. Listen to the Holy Spirit.

Announcements for this Week

1. The Art of De-stressing and Letting Go, a two-day free-of-charge session by Fr Charles Chin from the Diocese of Penang, will be held in Good Shepherd Seminary, Malacca, on January 14-15 and in Mission Pastoral Institute, MA-JODI Centre on February 11-12 from 9.00am to 7.00pm.

2. The Auxiliaries, a community of single women, committed to the Bishop of the Diocese, professionals consecrated to mission, invites all female, single adults. Meet the auxiliaries in Melaka on February 18 and 19; in South Johor on March 24 and 25. More details to follow.

6. The new logo represents the MJD's next pastoral thrust. It reflects the following:

- a) *The 4-Es*, ie. encountered, enlightened, empowered and evangelising is the type of Catholics and diocese we want to be; the 4-E process is the foundation for all faith formation.
- b) *The fish* shaped image is the *ichthys*, the secret symbol of the early Christians, pointing to our historical link with the early Church.
- c) *The flow* of the fish image indicates

a people's journey, coming from one direction, and spiralling upwards to a new call and mission.

d) *The words A Light of Hope* refers to our journey for the next few years in these pandemic-hit times, moving together as a synodal Church.

e) *The butterfly* is our dream, to become inclusive, bridge-building, and creative Catholics and diocese.

f) *The logo encompasses our history, our story and our mission.*

This week's Question and Query. The Q asks: How does one face one's fear?

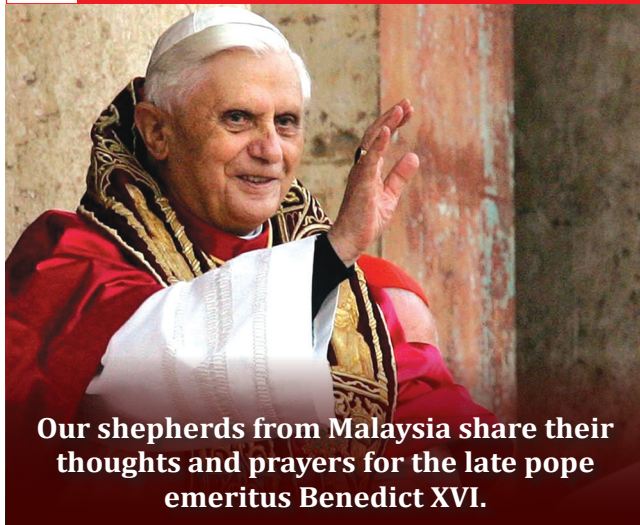
Paolo Coelho suggests the following:

1. *When you find your path, you must not be afraid. You need to have sufficient courage to make mistakes. Disappointment, defeat, and despair are the tools God uses to show us the way.*
2. *And one has to understand that braveness is not the absence of fear, but rather, the strength to keep on going forward despite the fear.*
3. *Being human means having doubts and yet still continuing on your path.*
4. *Talent is a universal gift, but it takes a lot of courage to use it. Don't be afraid to be the best.*
5. *Always control your fate: You are what you believe yourself to be. You have two choices, to control your mind or to let your mind control you. If you conquer yourself, then you conquer the world.*

Continue with wonder and appreciation of what is before you. It is a new day, a new week and a new year. Miracles do happen. God bless you all. Be safe.

Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is perspective, not the truth. — Marcus Aurelius

Bishop Bernard Paul



Our shepherds from Malaysia share their thoughts and prayers for the late pope emeritus Benedict XVI.

Remembering pope emeritus Benedict XVI

Archbishop Julian Leow

“I had the privilege to meet Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI while I was a student in Rome in 2008. I was invited to accompany Archbishop John Lee of Kota Kinabalu when he went to receive his pallium.

“I was privileged to shake his hand and kiss his ring. He was a truly soft-spoken man/Pope.

“Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam once told me, while he was eating at a restaurant in Rome with other Bishops and priests, the then Cardinal Ratzinger walked over to greet them – showing his humility and disposition to verbally welcome foreign, non-Romans to Rome and making them feel welcome.

“In spite of his many accomplishments and the many challengers he faced as pope, his relationship with the Lord, kept him rooted and steadfast.

“Let us pray for him, the universal Church. Let us pray for Pope Francis to continue to lead us and let us pray for ourselves, that we too as Church will intercede for one another.”



Archbishop Julian Leow blesses the portrait of pope emeritus Benedict XVI during Mass at the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, Kuala Lumpur, January 5, 2023.

Bishop Sebastian Francis

“Pope Benedict appointed me as Bishop of Penang in 2012. I have come to feel a close bond with him especially after reading his last spiritual testament released after his death. He showed his deep simplicity and focus on the Love of Jesus Christ for him and his love for Christ. He was both a man of Christ and of the Body of Christ, the Church and the two were one reality for him. The clarity of inspiration of his last Spiritual Testament is amazing. Thank you dear Joseph Ratzinger, pope emeritus Benedict XVI, for your simplicity and courage. Pray for us and your successor Pope Francis as we journey towards a Synodal Church.”



A screenshot of Bishop Sebastian celebrating the evening Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Penang on January 4, 2023.

Archbishop John Wong

“Pope emeritus Benedict XVI gave immense love to the Church through his teachings and writings. Though he had not been to the Asian lands, the local Churches have benefited much from his theological insights. May his soul rest in peace.”



Bishop Cornelius Piong

“When I was in Rome in 2008 for the *Ad Limina* visit, the late pope emeritus asked me where the Diocese of Keningau is located. I showed him the map of Malaysia and pointed to him the location of the diocese. He encouraged me to continue serving the faithful. The late pontiff “will be remembered as a renowned theologian, with a lifetime of devotion to the Church, guided by his principles and faith. Now he is in heaven and I am certain that he will always pray for us.”

Bishop Julius Dusin Gitom

“With sadness in our hearts, we prayerfully remember pope emeritus Benedict XVI as one who profoundly inspired the faithful through his theological writings and encyclical letters during his pontificate. Certainly, as a man of great faith and love for the Church, he will continue to be an inspiration for all. I pray that, by God’s mercy, the angels and saints welcome him into his heavenly home”.

Bishop Bernard Paul

“The Diocese of Malacca Johore expresses our sadness upon learning of the passing of our dearly beloved pope emeritus, Benedict XVI, on Saturday, December 31, 2022, at the age of 95. He was a renowned scholar and theologian who was a stalwart defender of the Catholic faith. Among the characteristics attributed to the late pope were humility, nobility, and kindness. May our dearly departed pope emeritus, Benedict XVI, now find embrace in the loving-kindness of our God.”



Clergy at the Requiem Mass at the Chapel of St James in Majodi Centre, Johor on January 5, 2023.

Archbishop Simon Poh

“My first encounter in person with Pope Benedict XVI was during the World Youth Day in Cologne 2005. Before the concluding Mass, we spent the vigil in the open Marienfeld where the Mass was celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI the next day. This was his first World Youth Day after succeeding Pope St John Paul II. It was an amazing experience for me to see how the Lord continued to use Pope Benedict XVI, who was 78 years old at that time, to reach out to the youth.

“At the following World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008, I accompanied around 50 young people to celebrate with Pope Benedict XVI. It was amazing that Pope Benedict spoke to our hearts.

“I came to see another dimension of Pope Benedict XVI, not as the strict Cardinal Ratzinger but as a Pope who, in the footsteps of Pope St John Paul II, continued to connect and inspire the young people.

“The Catholic Church in Kuching expresses our gratitude for the gift of pope emeritus Benedict XVI to the Church and especially his silent presence and prayer for the Catholic Church when in retirement at the Vatican. *Requiescat in pace.*”

Archbishop Simon Poh with the Book of Condolence at the Holy Family Chapel, January 3, 2023. (Today's Catholic photo/KchArchdiocese)



Bishop Joseph Hii

“I would like to join millions of Christians throughout the world in paying my deep respect to pope emeritus Benedict XVI.

“Pope emeritus was a highly intelligent theologian of our times, a great defender of our faith. Above all, a Giant catechist. Yet he was soft spoken, humble and prayerful. His life was a living testimony to us, an exemplary Christian leader who willingly retired when his health gave way. He spent his retirement praying fervently for the conversion of the whole world. His last parting words, ‘Lord, I love you’ is the legacy he left for us.

“Thank you, pope emeritus Benedict XVI. We love you. Pray for us.”



Bishop Joseph Hii celebrating the weekday Mass on January 5 at the Sacred Heart Cathedral's Chapel.

Bishop Richard Ng

“Besides being a humble person, I will remember pope emeritus Benedict XVI as an intellectual giant in teaching and guiding the Church to the Truth. His legacy, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) is, and will continue to be, the reference point for Church teaching for a very long time. May he rest in peace and receive his eternal reward.”



Bishop Richard Ng with Bishop Bernard Paul during the 7.00am morning Mass at the Chapel of St James in Majodi Centre, Johor on January 5, 2023.

Franciscan Friars continue to shepherd Risen Christ Church

By AJ Michael

AIR ITAM, Penang: Parishioners of the Church of the Risen Christ (RCC) hosted a dual get-together on December 30, 2022 at the parish hall to thank outgoing parish priest, Friar Arul Mariadass OFM, and Postulant Director Friar John Soh, OFM. The event was also to welcome the incoming parish priest, Friar Esmond Chua OFM, and assistant priest, Friar Crispus Mosinoh, OFM.

The change comes with Friar Arul completing his two-term (six-year) tenure as parish priest at RCC. The



(From left) Friar John Soh, Friar Crispus Mosinoh, Friar Esmond Chua, Friar Arul Mariadass cutting the celebratory cake.

evening began with a thanksgiving Mass presided over by Friar Arul, with Friars Esmond and Crispus concelebrating.

In the speeches by the PPC chairman, Senior Citizens group, and the Mandarin Apostolate coordinators, it was evident how Friar Arul cap-

tured the hearts and minds of parishioners across all ages. His down-to-earth simplicity and immense grasp of the scriptural teachings in dealing with the realities of Basic Ecclesiastical Communities left a lasting impact on the community.

During his stewardship, parishioners grasped a better understanding of the principles and tenets of the Franciscan way of life, which is to proclaim the Gospel of life through an intense life of prayer, penance, and poverty. One prominent aspect is the practice of community living, a life focused on togetherness in brotherhood and communion and

existence for one another.

The speakers also thanked Friar John for his tireless contribution and unconditional service to the parish. In his departing speech, Friar Arul thanked the congregation for their loving support throughout his tenure and added that this gives him the impetus to move on and accomplish his new mission in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The event ended with a sumptuous dinner and parishioners mingling with the friars. Christ's love was felt everywhere.

Friar Esmond last served as the assistant priest at the Church of St Mary of the Angels, Singapore.

Helping the homeless and needy

PUCHONG: The Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe's charismatic prayer group, known as The Disciples of Christ, began its mission to provide monthly groceries for 15 to 20 needy, underprivileged families and single mothers in 2018.

Soon their mission expanded to feeding about 150 homeless persons with pre-packed meals and mineral water every Saturday around the capital, covering Segi College (near the Cathedral of St John), Bukit Nanas, Bukit Bintang, and Chow Kit areas.

Every five months or so, they provide blankets for about 100 to 150 street friends.

The Disciples of Christ recently began providing pre-packed meals to Myanmar refugees and their children, many below 12 years old, near Bukit Cheras.

Last December, they organised their first Children's Christmas Party for the Myanmar refugees. Some 130 children attended and had a fun time playing games and receiving gifts from Santa.

Coordinator Benedict Soosai said,

"We thank God for the Church of St Francis Xavier's monthly contribution of 20 bags of rice and gifts during the recent children's party.

"To continue this mission, we seek your support in the form of cash, materials like basic groceries, milk powder, Maggi noodles, sardine cans, mee hoon, diapers for children, face masks, clothing and toys, and volunteers to help with distribution."

Please join us on this mission to help the homeless and the needy. For more information kindly contact Ben at 019-473 2531

Recite the Rosary daily to combat evil



Archbishop Julian Leow and Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam posing with the servers and others.

KAMPUNG PANDAN: Hundreds of parishioners converged at the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Health for a special Sunset Mass on December 31, 2022, to celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, give thanks for 2022, and pray for a joyous and blessed New Year.

Archbishop Julian Leow presided at the English Mass with Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam concelebrating.

Archbishop Julian, in his homily, invited the assembly to listen as Jesus did to what Mother Mary said at the wedding in Cana, even though His time had not come.

The prelate said, "This New Year, let us pledge to Mary, Mother of God, to recite the Rosary daily as the weapon to overcome evil."

After Mass, the archbishop thanked the Chapel's administrator, Msgr Stanislaus Soosaimariam for his support, guidance, and encouragement towards the growth of his flock's faith and the liturgy team for making all the arrangements for the Holy Mass.

The chapel comes under the preview of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jalan Peel, and its parish priest Msgr Stanislaus. — **By Bernard Anthony**

Ministering to those in prison

SEBERANG PERAI: The Rehabilitation Unit of Seberang Perai prison organised a Christmas Eucharistic celebration for Christian inmates. The programme was jointly organised with the Catholic Prison Ministry (CPM) at the Sports Hall, Seberang Perai prison.

Five CPM members, led by Fr Arulnathan Joseph, were present to conduct a few talks and Mass.

A total of 54 inmates attended the programme.

Also present were PP S.Tanabal a/l Socklingam, deputy director of Seberang Perai prison, and KIP Mohd Azanil bin Shafiei, head of



Fr Arulnathan Joseph celebrating Mass for the inmates.

the Rehabilitation Programme Unit (PPI).

CPM also purchased food and drinks from the prison canteen which were distributed to the inmates present.

The event was a success, with the collaboration of CPM and the prison officers.

At the end of the programme, the PPI Head Unit presented the guests with some appreciation gifts.

OLF launches Diamond Jubilee celebrations

KUALA LUMPUR: The Church of Our Lady of Fatima (OLF), Brickfields, officially launched its Diamond Jubilee celebrations on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, January 1, 2023.

The event commenced after the final blessing with opening remarks by the organising committee chairman, Adrian Marcellus. The congregation then sang the Jubilee Thanksgiving Hymn.

Parish priest Fr William Michael addressed the congregation, highlighting three key points of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

First, he spoke on the history of the church, which was originally built to cater to the relatively small, Tamil-speaking faithful of Brick-

fields. Now, OLF is a city parish catering to the needs of the multi-lingual and multi-ethnic faithful of the cosmopolitan metropolis that Brickfields has become. Fr William added that OLF is now proudly home to Malaysia's diverse citizenry and an equally diverse community of foreign nationals embracing a plethora of cultures and languages.

Fr William then introduced the theme of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, Journeying with Our Blessed Mother to Her Son, which encapsulates the unique role of Mary in the life of the faithful. Fr William said Mother Mary continues to intercede for us while reminding us of her simple message

in the Gospel of St John 2:5 to "Do whatever He tells you."

Fr William emphasised that, although the demands of our faith are not easy, Mary is always journeying with us and guiding us to Her Son, as she has done for OLF's parishioners over the last 60 years.

Lastly, Fr William paid tribute to the parish's priests and lay leaders, both living and those who have passed on. He thanked them for their dedicated and selfless service in building the vibrant faith-filled community that OLF has become.

Following his address, Fr William unveiled the Jubilee logo to thunderous applause. The logo designer, Limy Thomas, was presented with a token of appreciation be-



Fr William Michael, Fr Nepolean Albert from Thanjavur Diocese, India and Diamond Jubilee Organising Committee Chairman, Adrian Marcellus at the 60th anniversary celebration launch.

fore everyone recited the Diamond Jubilee prayer and the Jubilee banner unfurled.

The ceremony concluded with the choir and congregation singing the Jubilee theme song, composed

by the parish's Tamil Apostolate.

For more information on the OLF Diamond Jubilee celebration programme please visit www.olfkl.com. — **By Adrian Marcellus and Susai Anthony**

Church's care for poor must go beyond survival needs, says Cebu archbishop

MANILA: The Catholic Church's work for the people, especially the poor, must go beyond the needs for mere survival, said Archbishop Jose Palma of Cebu.

The prelate said the Church's care for the poor is important for their "integral well-being" and "love for neighbour includes upholding their dignity as fellow human beings and as children of God."

Archbishop Palma made the pronouncement during the launch of Cebu Caritas' justice and peace programme last month.

"This is the true meaning of our faith, and this is the true consequence of our love," said the prelate.

He expressed hope that the programme will continue to empower the marginalised,

who should not be "just passive receivers," but active agents of their own well-being and development.

In its advocacy statement, Cebu Caritas stressed that "it is not enough that the *Anawim* (the lost, the least and the last) are provided aid, relief, food, health care, shelter, and other basic necessities."

"They should also be made aware of their basic human rights," it said.

"Through a grassroots-based education and information programme, the *Anawim* are enabled and empowered to exercise their rights as citizens and to actively participate in governance and to hold public officials to account," added the Caritas Cebu statement. — *LiCAS News*



Volunteers provide legal aid to those who attended the launch of Cebu Caritas' Justice and Peace Programme at the Balamban Sports Complex December 10, 2022. (UCA News Photo/Cebu Caritas)

In 2023 we will build a new Sri Lanka



Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith

COLOMBO: "This year we should build a new Sri Lanka by uniting with our brothers and sisters," said the cardinal in a video message addressed to the country's Christian community.

"Although 75 years have passed since the independence of the country, today the Sri Lankans have become slaves of the world," said Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith.

He said Sri Lanka will risk an economic degradation "if the current situation continues."

"But I believe that, with an intelligent and just attitude, we should not allow the country to be destroyed," said the cardinal.

"In this new year we decide to work together, with courage and selflessness, to recover from this great destruction," he added.

The Catholic Church leader said 2023 should be a year to love Sri Lanka even as "in terms of progress it is not where it should be."

"Many countries that became independent in the same year are far ahead," he said.

"Due to reckless choices and intransigent attitudes, today we are seen as one of the poorest countries in the Asian region," he said, adding a reminder that "poverty is not only external, but also internal." — *LiCAS News*

Pakistan Catholics hail appointment of first nuncio to UAE

KARACHI:

Church leaders in Pakistan have welcomed the appointment of a 54-year-old Lebanese archbishop by Pope Francis as the first apostolic nuncio to the United Arab Emirates.



The Vatican announced the appointment of Msgr Christophe Zakhia El-Kassis, titular archbishop of Roselle, on January 3.

Archbishop El-Kassis has been serving as nuncio in Pakistan since November 2019 and is expected to reach Abu Dhabi next month.

Archbishop Joseph Arshad, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Pakistan, said the transfer is a great honour for Archbishop El-Kassis.

"Finally the nunciature is being upgraded to ambassador level. It will further cement diplomatic relations and improve understanding between the Holy See and the United Arab Emirates. This is a good beginning, a very positive sign for the New Year," he said.

The Archbishop of the Islamabad-Rawalpindi diocese lauded Archbishop El-Kassis for playing "a good role" in leading the mission in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

"He is a friendly person and established good relationships with the government and the Church. He visited many parishes and institutions. It was an encouraging sign for the local Church. I hope the Christian community of the UAE, most of them foreigners, will be supported likewise. Already several churches have been built in UAE which has shown a great interest in improving interfaith efforts between Christians and Muslims and bringing closeness among religions, especially the Vatican," Archbishop Arshad said.

Archbishop El-Kassis holds a doctorate in both Civil and Canon Law. He entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See in 2000 and in the following years until 2019, he was assigned as the apostolic nunciatures to Indonesia, Sudan, Turkey, and also served in the Secretariat of State of the Holy See. He speaks Arabic, English, Italian, French, Indonesian, German and Spanish. — **By Kamran Chaudhry, ucanews.com**

Vietnam has two new bishops

HANOI: Catholics from two dioceses in Vietnam expect their new bishops to unite all people and build local churches.

Bishop Emeritus Peter Nguyen Van De of Thai Binh ordained his successor, Bishop Dominic Dang Van Cau, at the square of Thai Binh Bishop's House in Thai Binh City December 31.

Some 30 archbishops and bishops across the country concelebrated the open-air ceremony, joined by hundreds of priests and attended by thousands of people.

Archbishop Joseph Vu Van Thien of Hanoi said that local people were highly delighted to attend the first episcopal ordination since 1979 when the late Bishop Joseph Dinh Binh was ordained at the Thai Binh Cathedral.

Bishop Cau is the first prelate who is from the local Church and is the seventh bishop of the 86-year-old diocese. Among his successors, two were from Spain and four were from other dioceses in Vietnam.

"It is really wonderful that the diocese, with most of its members who are farmers and fishermen, produces the first native prelate. This historic event shows that the local Church has grown up," Fr Thomas Doan Xuan Thoa, pastor of Trung Dong Parish, said.

Fr Thoa, head of Nam Tien Hai deanery, said Bishop Cau has experienced hard times and well understood local people's lifestyles, so he is expected to set up practical pastoral initiatives for people in the two rural provinces of Thai Binh and Hung Yen.

He noted that the pastor and his sheep know full well what is expected and consequently, they will work together to promote community solidarity to build up the local Church.

Joseph Vu Ngoc Bien from Cat Dam Parish



Bishop Dominic Dang Van Cau (centre) blesses local faithful during his episcopal ordination in Thai Binh December 31. (UCA News Photo/giaophanthaibinh.org)

said he and the new bishop have been friends since they were children.

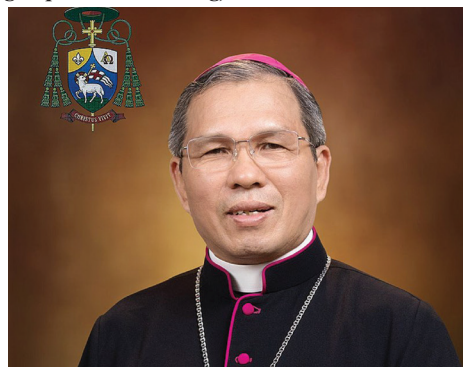
Bien, 68, said that the new bishop is friendly and kind and sings well so it is easy for him to meet other people, especially people in need. He should pay pastoral visits to remote sub-parishes that need loving care from Church leaders.

Anne Tran Thi Ngat said she and her son travelled 50 kilometres from her house in the Tien Hai district by motorbike in cold weather to attend the episcopal ceremony.

"We are terribly proud of our new native bishop. We pray for him to be in good health and take great care of poor people in remote areas," the 41-year-old mother of one said.

During his thanksgiving Mass at the Thai Binh Cathedral on the following day, Bishop Cau, whose episcopal motto was *Ecce Venio (Behold, I come)*, admitted that serving the diocese as a prelate is an onerous burden.

The 60-year-old bishop called on all people to pray for him, cooperate with him, and support him in serving their beloved diocese.



Bishop Joseph Bui Cong Trac

Thai Binh Diocese has some 200 priests serving 136,000 Catholics.

On Jan 3, Archbishop Joseph Nguyen Nang of Ho Chi Minh City ordained Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Bui Cong Trac at the archdiocese's Pastoral Centre. Thousands of people attended the episcopal ordination.

The Church in Vietnam still has four vacant dioceses of Ban Me Thuot, Ha Tinh, Nha Trang and Phat Diem. — *ucanews.com*

Togo bishops urge for peace

TOGO: During Christmas and the New Year, the Catholic bishops of Togo traditionally send greetings. But this year, these messages were particularly marked by calls for peace.

In his message, Bishop Benoît Alowonou of Kpalimé, president of the Togo Bishops' Conference (TEC), noted that "the announcement of the peace of Christmas is today confronted with a world at war where contempt for the weak, terrorism, the pride of the powerful and the violence of the strongest reign".

The president of the TEC wished "peace and joy to all the sons and daughters of the Diocese of Kpalimé, to our country Togo, to Africa and to the world".

Similarly, Archbishop Nicodème



Members of the Episcopal Conference of Togo (CET). (ACI Africa photo)

Barrigah-Bénissan of Lomé wished "peace, happiness, health and hope" and prayed that God would grant humanity their desire "to live free from terrorist attacks, in a climate of true brotherhood". He called on each person to assume his or her responsibility for the advancement of peace. Like him,

several bishops insisted on the "principles of justice and peace".

"The realisation of these wishes require our adherence and our sincere, free and responsible collaboration," said Bishop Dominique Guigbile of Dapaong, who recalled that God is at work for "a more united and fraternal

world where true love, justice and peace among all men reign".

The newly appointed bishop for the Diocese of Atakpamé, Bishop-elect Moïse Touho, challenged Catholics to "Let us carry each other in prayer, so that God may bring about His peace for us; and let us ourselves be this peace

that we desire so much for our loved ones and for all."

Referring to Pope Francis' message for the World Day of Prayer for Peace, Bishop Isaac Jogue Gaglo of Aného urged everyone "to draw paths of peace together, since no one can save himself alone".

But beyond the crises and despair, Bishop Célestin Marie Gaoua of Sokodé expressed the hope that "the efforts to build this peace will bear good fruit".

Equally confident and optimistic, Bishop Jacques Longa of Kara prayed that God would give everyone and the whole world "more peace and joy in the year 2023". —By Charles Ayetan, (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)

Russian commission investigates deadly New Year's Day strike



The aftermath of recent shelling in Makiivka. (Vatican News)

MOSCOW: Ukraine said it carried out a New Year's Day strike in the occupied region of Donetsk, killing as many as 400 Russian troops and injuring 300 more.

Moscow denied those figures and claimed nearly 90 Russian servicemen died in the Ukrainian attack on a college for conscripts in the city of Makiivka.

Russia's Defence Ministry blamed the attack on troops' unauthorised use of mobile phones. Russian Lieutenant General Sergey Sevryukov told reporters that "a commission is still investigating the incident".

But he stressed it was "obvious that the main reason the attack could happen was the switching on and massive use of mobile

phones by Russian forces despite a ban". He added: "This factor allowed the enemy to locate and determine the coordinates of the location of military personnel."

Sevryukov said that only two were intercepted of the six missiles fired by Ukrainian armed forces shortly after midnight on New Year's Day. He recalled that the ceiling of the building collapsed and that many Russian troops died.

"Immediately after the tragedy," he said, military personnel united in caring for victims. "First aid was provided, and the wounded were evacuated to medical facilities." But he admitted that beneath the rubble, in his words, "the number of our comrades who died in-

creased to 89. Among the dead is the regiment's deputy commander, Lieutenant Colonel Bachurin".

It is unusual for Moscow to confirm any battlefield casualties. Instead, the losses were due to increased pressure on President Vladimir Putin, who ordered the Russian invasion of Ukraine last February.

With losses mounting, a patriotic group urged Putin to mobilise millions of men and to close the borders "to ensure victory in Ukraine".

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky claims Moscow is planning a full-scale mobilisation, a step Russia said wasn't considered yet. —By Stefan J. Bos, *Vatican News*

Death of Pope Benedict XVI makes it to website of China's 'official' Church body

BEIJING: The death of Pope Benedict XVI was the headline of the "official" website of the Patriotic Association of Chinese Catholics, the Church body controlled by the Chinese Communist Party.

"Let us entrust Benedict XVI to God's mercy and ask Him to guarantee him eternal rest in paradise," read a post on chinacatholic.cn of the Patriotic Association.

The head of the "official" Catholic body, Archbishop Giuseppe Li Shan, was nominated to the post in 2007 with the approval of Benedict XVI, reported *AsiaNews*.

The news of Benedict XVI's

death was taken from the official communication on the pontiff's death released by the Holy See preceded by the title "pope emeritus Benedict XVI rests in the arms of the Lord."

Meanwhile, the space dedicated to the death of the pontiff on xinde.org, the site most read by Catholic communities in mainland China, took a much larger space.

AsiaNews' gallery of images on the life of Benedict XVI included a photograph that portrays him together with a group of Chinese faithful in the courtyard of St Peter's Basilica. — *LiCAS News*



Christian cemetery vandalised in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM: In the latest of a series of acts of vandalism against Christian sites across Israel, several graves have been damaged by vandals at the Protestant cemetery of Mount Zion in Jerusalem, Israeli media reported.

A security camera video shared on social media shows two apparently Jewish men wearing *kippot* breaking into the cemetery and smashing the gravestones. The footage dates to January 1.

Photographs handed out by the

police, who arrived at the scene after receiving a report of vandalism, showed toppled gravestones and broken masonry.

The cemetery was opened in 1848 by then-Bishop of Jerusalem, Samuel Gobat, and is now owned by the Church Missionary Trust Association Ltd, an Anglican organisation.

The incident comes as the outcry continues over far-right National Security Minister Itaman Ben-Gvir's 15-minute "walk" around

the Al-Aqsa compound. The ultra-nationalist leader, who was sworn in the new Netanyahu government recently, visited the site on Jan 3 in a move that has drawn condemnation from the Arab world and the international community.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, known to the Jewish people as the Temple Mount, is sacred to both Muslims and Jews. For Muslims, it is considered the third holiest site located inside the Old City of Jerusalem.

The desecration of the Christian gravestones has been strongly condemned by Jerusalem's Anglican Archbishop, Hosam Naoum, who has termed it as a "clear hate crime" against Christians. "This act is not just cowardly but disgusting, and any person with blood through their veins would reject such behaviour," Naoum told a press conference recently.

It is the latest of a series of acts of vandalism, including hate graffiti and arson attacks, perpetrated

ed by extremist Israeli activists against Christian sites in the country. Targets struck in the past years include the Basilica of Nazareth and Catholic and Greek-Orthodox buildings. Mosques and Muslim places of worship have also been targeted.

Christian leaders in the Holy Land have repeatedly warned that their communities are under threat of being driven from the region by extremist Israeli radical groups. —By Liza Zengarini, *Vatican News*

Benedict XVI — Priest



With Joseph Ratzinger's death, the Catholic Church loses one of the greatest minds in its 2,000-year history. A leading German theologian who took part in the Second Vatican Council, he rose to worldwide prominence after his 1981 appointment as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF).

The role earned him the disparaging moniker *God's Rottweiler* from the media for his uncompromising defence of Catholic teaching in the face of open dissent within the Church and growing indifference to the faith in Western society at large.

Those who knew Joseph Ratzinger well, however, regarded him as a gentle and modest man of the Church who was blessed with a scholarly encyclopedic mind who defended the truths of the faith with clarity and power.

"Pope Benedict was a prophet, unafraid to challenge the perils and emptiness rampant in a world that had thrown aside the Truth revealed by God and nature and capitulat-

Benedict's pontificate — which began with his election in April of 2005, succeeding Pope St. John Paul II, and ended with his almost unprecedented resignation in February of 2013 — was peppered by a series of trials, including the clerical sex-abuse crisis, the leaking of confidential papal documents, a Muslim backlash and communication mishaps. At the same time, these years marked a period of liturgical restoration that aimed to reverse the abuses of the past, the initiation of a process of reform of the Curia, most notably in the area of finance, and a continuation of the central themes of the post-conciliar New Evangelisation of the Church that had been emphasised throughout John Paul II's groundbreaking 25-year pontificate.

ed to the worship of self," Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York told the *Register*.

The pope emeritus was "capable of deeper theological reflection than his critics, who lack respect and are ideologically blinded," Cardinal Gerhard Müller wrote in 2019, and was "able to get closer to the source of the fire that has set the Church's roof ablaze."

And Benedict summarised his mission with characteristic humility and concision.

"One has to make do with what time one has," he observed in his retrospective 2016 book with Peter Seewald, *Pope Benedict XVI, Last Testament: In His Own Words*. "I was conscious that my task was of another kind: that I must try above all else to show what faith means in the contemporary world, and further, to highlight the centrality of faith in God, and give people the courage to have faith, courage to live concretely in the world with faith."

Priest and *peritus*

Born on Holy Saturday, April 16, 1927, in the Bavarian town of Marktl am Inn, Joseph Alois Ratzinger was the youngest of three children whose father was a policeman and mother a hotel cook. Joseph and his two older siblings, Georg and Maria, remained remarkably close throughout their lives.

He was only six years old when the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, and his staunchly Catholic parents were hostile to the regime. He entered seminary at age 12, but two years later, in 1941, he was compelled to join the Hitler Youth, serving in an anti-aircraft battery and setting tank traps in Hungary before deserting with his brother in April 1945 and continuing with his priestly formation.

Ordained in 1951, he earned a doctorate in theology at the University of Munich in 1957.

Several teaching posts followed, and his striking gifts as a theologian drew the attention of Cardinal Josef Frings of Cologne. At the cardinal's invitation, he served as *peritus* (theological expert) at the Second Vatican Council and was influential in the development of the Council's dogmatic constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*.

He had been critical of the closed, conformist elements of the pre-conciliar Church and was considered one of the more progressive figures in the Council. His desire to try to reconcile perennial teachings of the Church with

modernity, in a "hermeneutic of continuity," remained throughout his life.

In 1966, he accepted Swiss theologian Hans Küng's invitation to lecture at the University of Tübingen, remaining there until 1969, when he moved to the University of Regensburg, where he later became vice president.

At Tübingen, his students remarked on his practice of celebrating Mass before he began his lecture, thus encouraging them to speak "with" God before they spoke "about" Him, as one former student explained to his biographer, Peter Seewald. His lectures at the university served as the foundation for his 1968 book, *Introduction to Christianity*, an instant classic that offered a brilliant defence of biblical Christianity grounded in the Creed and is still included in the syllabi of Catholic seminaries and university theology departments.

But as his progressive-minded peers evoked the "spirit" of the Second Vatican Council, which had concluded in December 1965, to demand sweeping changes to Catholic doctrine and discipline, the Bavarian theologian judged that the ensuing confusion had left many of the faithful adrift.

"The kind of priest who is no more than a social worker can be replaced by the psychotherapist and other specialists," he warned in a radio broadcast in 1969, as he prophesied that Christian communities would shrink in num-



Picture taken on June 29, 1951 shows Josef Ratzinger (R) and his brother Georg in Freising, Bavaria, during their ordination.

bers, while growing in purity.

In 1975, to mark the 10th anniversary of the Council's conclusion, he authored an article publicly articulating his conviction that the only proper way to interpret the Second Vatican Council was in strict continuity with previous Church councils, such as the Council of Trent and the First Vatican Council. Accordingly, its teachings could not be used to justify a rupture with the continuity of Tradition.

In 1977, to the surprise of almost everyone — including Fr Ratzinger himself — Pope Paul VI named Fr Ratzinger Archbishop of Munich and Freising, and the archbishop-

elect adopted *Cooperatores Veritatis* (*Co-Workers of the Truth*) as his episcopal motto.

He was quickly elevated to cardinal that year. And four years later, in 1981, Pope John Paul II appointed him prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

He remained at the side of the Polish pontiff until his death in 2005, serving as one of his closest advisers.

As "Co-Workers of the Truth" (which is drawn from the *Third Letter of John*), the Pope and prefect put their shoulders to the task of stabilising the Church and fulfilling the Council's true mandate of reform.

Prefect

While at the helm of the CDF, Cardinal Ratzinger sought to clarify and defend the faith, address new challenges to Catholic sexual and medical ethics, and end abuses in sacred worship.

He was responsible for a host of significant documents, including instructions in the 1980s detailing doctrinal flaws associated with Marxist-oriented liberation theologies, and the 2000 declaration *Dominus Iesus*, which reasserted the unique salvific role of Jesus and of the Catholic Church. Yet he also remained closely involved in John Paul's efforts to engage other Christian denominations and faiths, especially Judaism and Islam.

Among his most important contributions was his oversight of the drafting process that resulted in the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Released in 1992, it represented a groundbreaking attempt to resolve persistent doctrinal confusion through the formulation of the truths of the faith.

In 2001, the CDF was given authority for



A 2004 file photo of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and Pope John Paul II. (CNS file photo)

investigating clergy sexual-abuse cases, and Cardinal Ratzinger oversaw the congregation's expanded role in prosecuting cases from the United States and other countries, the result of a long-delayed reckoning with episcopal negligence and cover-ups that would shape the legacy of his own pontificate and cast a shadow on his final years as

pope emeritus.

Cardinal Ratzinger was instrumental in securing the Holy See's endorsement of the *Norms and Charter for the Protection of Young People*, which was approved by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002 and became a model for episcopal conferences all over the world in dealing with the

abuse crisis.

After John Paul's death in 2005, Cardinal Ratzinger, as dean of the College of Cardinals, celebrated the pontiff's funeral Mass before a vast global audience. His homily expressed his personal sorrow at the passing of a beloved friend, while celebrating the extraordinary faith and courage of the deceased pope, who had become increasingly debilitated by Parkinson's disease in his final years.

The funeral Mass raised the prominence of the German prefect as the cardinals prepared to elect a successor who could match John Paul's stature and continue his campaign to revitalise Catholicism in Europe.

On the first day of the conclave, Cardinal Ratzinger delivered an electrifying homily that warned of a "dictatorship of relativism that does not recognise anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely of one's own ego and desires."

The most powerful antidote to this tyranny, he said, is a friendship with Christ that "gives us a criterion by which to distinguish the true from the false."

Prefect, Pope, rest in peace

On April 19, 2005, Ratzinger was elected pope at the age of 78. He took the name of Benedict XVI, principally after St Benedict of Nursia, the patron saint of Europe and the founder of Western monasticism.

One of his self-declared goals was to strengthen Catholicism across Europe, and initiate a dialogue on the secular assumptions undergirding the continent's political and legal systems.

During a 2011 address before the Bundestag, Germany's parliament, he recalled the totalitarian rule of the Nazi state and warned that a de-Christianised politics left the continent "in a state of culturelessness," and thus vulnerable to "extremist and radical movements [that would] emerge to fill the vacuum."

In continuity with his predecessor, Benedict preserved an orthodox position on matters of sexuality, priestly celibacy and ecclesiastical governance.

Likewise, he took immediate steps to continue John Paul's ecumenism, as well as his dialogue with Judaism and Islam.

In 2009, he erected a canonical structure that allowed Anglicans to become Catholics while retaining their patrimony and liturgy.

During his pontificate, Benedict wrote three encyclicals: *Deus Caritas Est* (*God Is Love*) in 2005; *Spe-*



Pope Benedict XVI appears on the balcony of St Peter's Basilica as the new Pope is introduced to the world on April 19, 2005. (CNS file photo)

Salvi (*Saved by Hope*) in 2007; and *Caritas in Veritate* (*Charity in Truth*) in 2009; and four post-synodal apostolic exhortations, including *Sacramentum Caritatis* (*The Sacrament of Charity*) on the Eucharist as the source and summit of the Church's life and mission in 2007 and *Verbum Domini* (*The Word of the Lord*) on Holy Scripture in 2010.

In these texts, Benedict's striking gifts as a theologian, philosopher and writer were on display, particularly the luminous clarity of expression and effective mining of central scriptural and liturgical images.

"You can trace his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* to the seminal ideas of his book *Introduction to Christianity* and how we envision God," the late Cardinal William Levada, Congre-

gation for the Doctrine of Faith prefect during Benedict's pontificate, told the Register in a 2017 interview.

"God is a relationship. God is love. The relationship between Father, Son and Spirit is fundamentally a spiritual relationship of love, and that is the fundamental reality of creation."

"These are dramatically important insights he offered to a technological age that wants to solidify everything according to a scientific pattern," said Cardinal Levada.

As the leader of the universal Church, Benedict issued 13 papal decrees (known as *motu proprio*), one of the most significant being *Summorum Pontificum* in 2007 that allowed unprecedented freedom for priests to celebrate the form of the

Mass used before the reforms that followed the Second Vatican Council (Pope Francis abrogated the decree in July 2021). Benedict also found time to complete three volumes of his book *Jesus of Nazareth*.

He visited 29 countries during his eight-year pontificate, including the United States in 2008, during which he addressed the United Nations' General Assembly in New York. In 2006, he made a tense visit to Turkey just a couple of months after he gave his famous "Regensburg Address" — a lecture that set off a firestorm of criticism in the Islamic world due to a quote from a 14th-century Byzantine emperor that was taken out of context by critics. But the incident yielded positive fruit in the Common Word initiative aimed

at improving Catholic-Muslim relations and deterring Islamic extremism.

Further controversy erupted in 2009, when Benedict revoked the excommunications of four bishops of the Society of St Pius X whom Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre (1905-1991) had consecrated in 1988 against the will of Pope John Paul II. Adding to the tensions, unknown to Benedict, one of the bishops, Richard Williamson, had denied the Holocaust.

Throughout his pontificate, Benedict had to contend with a flood of sexual and physical abuse allegations against priests. In 2006, in one of his most consequential actions, he ordered Fr Marcial Maciel Degollado, the founder of the Legion of Christ, to leave public ministry and retire to a life of "prayer and penitence" following a Vatican investigation of allegations that he had sexually abused minors and seminarians.

Benedict was also required to address a continuing series of clergy abuse crises in Germany, Ireland and the United States, as well as accusations that he himself was responsible for covering up cases as Archbishop of Munich and later as CDF prefect. The Vatican strenuously denied the charges against him, arguing that Benedict's handling of the cases instead showed "great wisdom and firmness."



Resignation and pope emeritus

Pope Benedict XVI announces his intention to resign the papacy during a meeting of cardinals February 11, 2013. The surprise announcement, which he made in Latin, took place in the Hall of the Consistory in the Vatican's apostolic palace. (Vatican Media)

On February 11, 2013, Benedict shocked the world and the College of Cardinals by announcing in Latin, at a consistory of cardinals, that he would resign at the end of that month, citing age and health concerns. The first pope to resign since Gregory XII in 1415, the now-pope emeritus pledged to serve the Church "hidden from the world" and "dedicated to prayer." He retired from public life and moved to a converted former convent in the Vatican Gardens but retained several external trappings of the papacy, including a white cassock and zucchetto, and the title of His Holiness.

Apart from occasional interviews, articles and contributions to books, including one with Cardinal

Robert Sarah that reinforced the discipline of priestly celibacy in the Latin Rite, Benedict remained largely silent and only left his convent to visit his dying brother in 2020. His sister Maria, who spent much of her adult life managing his correspondence and caring for his personal needs, died in 1991.

The pope emeritus and Pope Francis maintained cordial relations. But when the distinctive priorities of their pontificates occasionally sparked controversy and a flurry of headlines followed, there were calls for new protocols governing the public role and statements of the next pope emeritus.

And in February 2022, as the German Catholic bishops continued to address the mishandling

of historic clergy-abuse cases, the Archdiocese of Munich released the findings of its own archdiocesan investigation, which concluded that Benedict XVI "can be accused of misconduct" for his handling of four cases between 1977 and 1982, when he was serving there as its archbishop.

However, these claims were formally rebutted by four of his advisers, and the Vatican defended his strong response to the abuse crisis, including the prosecution and laicisation of hundreds of clerical predators. In a recent interview with *America* magazine, Pope Francis reaffirmed this defence of Benedict, commenting, "The leader in taking these decisions was Benedict XVI."

Preparing for final judgement

In a separate letter responding to the Munich investigation that served as a profound and memorable coda for his ministry as a priest, archbishop and pontiff, the pope emeritus asked for the forgiveness of abuse survivors, noting that he had "borne great responsibility in the Catholic Church."

Concluding his letter, Benedict looked toward his judgment before God.

"Quite soon, I shall find myself before the final judge of my life. Even though, as I look back on my long life, I can have great reason for fear and trembling, I am nonetheless of good cheer, for I trust firmly that the Lord is not only the just judge, but also the friend and brother who Himself

has already suffered for my shortcomings, and is thus also my advocate, my 'Paraclete,'" he wrote.

"In light of the hour of judgment, the grace of being a Christian becomes all the more clear to me. It grants me knowledge, and indeed friendship, with the judge of my life, and thus allows me to pass confidently through the dark door of death."

"In this regard," he concluded, "I am constantly reminded of what John tells us at the beginning of the Apocalypse: he sees the Son of Man in all His grandeur and falls at His feet as though dead. Yet He, placing His right hand on him, says to him: 'Do not be afraid! It is I ...'" — **By Edward Pentin and Joan Frawley Desmond, Register**



Pope Francis visits Benedict XVI on August 27, 2022. (Vatican Media)

A lesson in humility for the Church

Amerciless irony of history. There is a risk that we will remember only one thing about Benedict XVI: his departure. With his “renunciation” in February 2013, the German pope had taken everyone by surprise. Above all, he made a quasi-revolutionary gesture, unthinkable until now for a pope: the successor of Peter, the vicar of Christ, does not resign! But Benedict XVI did.

This rather shy man, not very inclined to media stunts, was able to take his leave in a particularly spectacular way. However, we should not have been surprised by his resignation. It was part of the logic of his pontificate. All we had to do was listen to him, which we didn’t do enough of.

That evening in April 2005, in St Peter’s Square, we should have paid more attention to his first words: “I am a humble worker in the Lord’s vineyard.” “Humble worker”: a quite distant quote from the famous “do not be afraid” of his predecessor! One would like to see it as a figure of speech, a Gospel quotation repeated for the occasion. It was not. All his life as Pope, Benedict XVI considered himself as the “humble worker”, one there only to be at the service of the Church and therefore of Christ. And it is in this sense that his resignation must be understood.

A more humble papacy

Strange pope: bringing out the oldest liturgical trappings, those that, for many Catholics, remind us of the time when the Church dominated with its “superbness”, and at the same time taking so much care to remind us of his

own weaknesses, to minimise his role.

Certainly, this pope neither had the strength of John Paul II, nor the popularity of Francis. Frail, introverted, he seemed to be crushed between his predecessor and his successor. However, these eight years have undoubtedly left a greater mark on the history of the Church than the memory they leave in the media.

First of all, because this pope gave a great lesson in humility to the whole Church. Everything in his attitude, how he often recalled the rightful place of the successor of Peter, his willingness above all not to put himself at the centre of the Church, proposed another mode of papacy, more modest, and less absolute than his predecessor. And also, less personal than his successor Francis who is so willing to play the game.

A poor manager — the Vatileaks affair has heavily tarnished the image of his pontificate outside the Church — Pope Benedict drew the outlines of a humbler papacy, more human in essence. It should make us Catholics reflect in this era when the idols in which we have believed are falling one after the other.

We should have listened to this man who was haunted by the failures of his century but refused to see the triumph of a society without God — where liberal individualism and the most savage capitalism reign — as the only solution to the tragic excesses of the great totalitarian ideologies. In a disoriented world, prone to what he called “relativism”, which no longer knows which values to hold on to, Benedict XVI proposed an original path, which has been too quickly caricatured: a re-

turn to Tradition. For Ratzinger never wanted to turn back the clock, nor to freeze the Catholic world in an immobile thought.

Illnesses and weaknesses of the Church

For him, tradition must be renewed, alive, inspired. It is the possibility of drawing on the memory of Scripture to understand the present and better respond to the challenges of the future. Perhaps, in our 21st century, threatened with extinction (a result of the disasters we ourselves have helped to bring about), we will one day remember this old man in white who invited us to draw from our past the resources to free ourselves from the present.

We thought this pope was concerned with defending the Church as a besieged fortress. Another false idea! Never has this pope been more sensitive and lucid about the illnesses and weaknesses that plague the institution. The prestigious theologian felt it was also his duty to tackle what is perhaps the worst aspect of the history of the Catholic Church in the last fifty years, the scandal of sexual abuses by some priests.

In this respect, Benedict XVI has taken the opposite view from his predecessor, and also from the men of his generation, who have often minimised the extent of the crisis. During his trips to the United States and then to Malta, he humbly asked for forgiveness for the sins committed by priests in the Catholic Church.

For this Augustinian, who was fundamentally pessimistic about human nature, one cannot separate the glorious Church from its own flaws and failings: the dark side is an integral



Pope Benedict XVI published his third encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* in 2011. (Vatican Media)

part of the Church. As he said in 2010 in Portugal, “the greatest persecution of the Church does not come from outside but from within”. It is this same radicality that explains, in the end, his gesture of resignation.

Faced with a Curia that, completely forgetting its own legitimacy, obstinately pursued the preservation of its privileges and temporal power, Benedict XVI chose to use spiritual power. In this sense, the resignation of Benedict XVI was intended to prepare the pontificate of Francis for a necessary renewal, by doing the work of Truth.

Applying for himself what he said of his master, St Augustine: “He did not feel he had a vocation to pastoral life but realised later that God was calling him to be a pastor among others and thus to offer people the gift of the truth.” (Audience of January 9, 2008). — By Isabelle de Gaulmyn, LCI, (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)

“He did all things well”

There was a time — it encompassed most of the 1980s — that Catholic publishers weren’t very interested in what the largely unknown Fr Joseph Ratzinger of Germany had to say about Christian morality, the mystery of the heart of Christ, the role of religion in post-Marxist Europe or, for that matter, any other topic.

US Jesuit Fr Joseph Fessio was an exception. The California priest had already become convinced of the highly academic German priest’s ability to synthesise Christian truth and complex theological issues and express them succinctly, as well as in a way that encouraged deep reflection and meditation.

By intention and providential design, *Ignatius Press*, established by Fr Fessio in 1978, became the sole English-language publisher of the pre-papal books and the biography of the man who was elected Pope Benedict XVI in 2005.

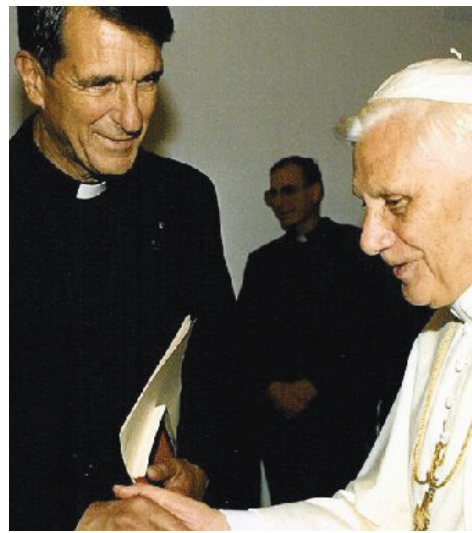
“We knew we wanted to publish translations of fine European theologians like Ratzinger, Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar and others,” Fr Fessio told *Catholic News Service* before the retired pope’s death Dec 31. “It was kind of a golden age of Catholic theology, in the mid-20th century. But their works were rarely translated into English. That was our mission.”

Pope emeritus Benedict’s body of writings will be his legacy, said Fr Fessio. *Ignatius Press* pledges to keep his core writings in print.

“He will be not only a saint but a doctor of the Church someday,” Fr Fessio predicted.

Fr Fessio gained a deep-seated admiration of Fr Ratzinger in the early 1970s, while pursuing a doctorate in theology at the Univer-

Benedict’s former student reflects on his mentor



Fr Joseph Fessio SJ with Pope Benedict XVI. (Catholic World Report photo)

sity of Regensburg, in what was then West Germany. His thesis, *The Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, was directed by Fr Ratzinger, his professor and mentor.

During that process, he also gleaned an appreciation of his mentor’s great intelligence.

“We had these seminars with theological and doctoral students — maybe seven or eight of us — and he’d be directing the seminar. They’d last about two hours, and he’d make sure everyone had his chance to speak. He would ask people what they thought about this or that, and at the end, he would sum up the whole seminar in just a few very long, German sentences. He had a tremendous power of synthesis. He listened so well. He grasped things immediately, and

he organised them very organically,” said Fr Fessio.

The Jesuit said that later, when then-Cardinal Ratzinger oversaw the writing of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, he saw the same qualities.

“He had the tremendous ability to understand what others were saying and writing,” Fr Fessio added. “He could be critical, but he was fair, and then he would present what he thought was a more accurate view of things.”

“He really had a serene and humble insight. He was such a great person and had a great mind.”

After graduation, Fr Fessio began to participate in the annual three-day-long reunions of his mentor’s “Schulerkreis,” or group of former students. Fr Ratzinger, meanwhile, was named the archbishop of Munich and Freising, and soon afterward, a cardinal.

In 1989, under Cardinal Ratzinger’s tutelage, Fr Fessio and three others were instrumental in forming a house in Rome called Casa Balthasar — a place of discernment for young men and women. The house took its inspiration from the life and works of Adrienne von Speyr and two highly regarded theologians: Jesuit Fr Lubac, whom St John Paul elevated to cardinal in 1983, and Fr von Balthasar, named a cardinal by St John Paul II in 1988.

At the time Casa Balthasar was established, Cardinal Ratzinger had been appointed prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith by St John Paul II. He became cardinal-protector of the home and remained involved with Casa Balthasar into

the beginning of his papacy.

Pope emeritus Benedict’s capacity to understand, summarise and evaluate extended beyond the great theological discussions for which he was known, said Fr Fessio. “It was philosophy, literature, history, art, music — all these things that make up the so-called humanities. He was immersed in, and interested in, all these things.”

“He had a warm and wonderful sense of humour. It would come up all the time,” Fr Fessio added. “He would grasp the irony of things.”

When members of the Schulerkreis would gather with him to pray, celebrate Mass and share meals and engage in discussion, not all the discussions were of an ecclesial nature. But Pope Benedict could speak to them all.

“He was a great listener and conversationalist, always with a warm sense of humour. He has done all things well. He was a wonderful orator and speaker, preacher, writer and thinker.”

Fr Fessio also said the late pope’s great love for the Church was always evident.

“His insistence on the continuity of the Church before and after Vatican Council — that was an important part of his papacy. In fact, he emphasised that in the very first talk he gave when he was made pope. He was elected around 6:30 at night, and the next morning at 9:30 he gave a talk in Latin, which he himself wrote without any help, and he made it very clear that he was a pope of the council — but we had to see the council not as a rupture from previous Church teaching, but rather, in continuity with it.” — CNS

The fashionable Pope

When Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI in 2005, observers across the globe noted with interest that he had opted for red outdoor shoes, reviving a centuries-old tradition that had lately gone dormant. Red dress shoes, worn by anyone, are a statement. But for Pope Benedict XVI, the statement may have been about his relationship with the Catholic Church — and how he saw his role in it.

His red shoes became something of a trademark, inspiring *ABC News* to call him a “fashionista” and *Esquire* to name him “accessoriser of the year.” At another point, his loafers sparked controversy after false rumours claimed they were crafted by the high-end Italian fashion house Prada.

Were they really Prada? In the end, after all those rumours and all that tongue-clucking, no. But were Benedict’s red shoes still worth all the hype and attention they garnered? Arguably, yes.

The Vatican later clarified that the shoes were custom-made for him not by Prada but by other Italian cobblers. Some were by Antonio Arellano, based in Rome. Others were by Adriano Stefanelli, in the northwest Italian city of Novara.

Historically, all popes wore red shoes — before Benedict’s predecessor, Pope John Paul II, whose tenure lasted nearly three decades,



Pope Benedict XVI with the hat called “saturno” during his public audience in St Peter’s Square at the Vatican. (photo/Evandro Inetti)

exercised his right to opt out and switched to a more demure burgundy. (They also wore red indoor slippers, before Pope Paul VI discontinued the practice, for good, in the 1960s.)

The colour has a variety of significances: Some believe it is a reminder of Jesus’ bloodied feet when he was crucified, while others believe it represents the spilled blood of Catholic martyrs.

During his nearly eight years on the throne of St Peter, Pope Benedict had always looked absolutely perfect, sartorially speaking, whether garbed in elaborate vestments for an Easter liturgy or clad in the simple but meticulously tailored white caped cassock that he wore on more ordinary occasions.

He was the Duke of Windsor of popes.

Benedict would go on to revive a few other papal clothing traditions as well. In 2006, he wore a red *cappello romano* sun hat (also known as a *saturno*), a style that hadn’t been worn since before John Paul II. And that came a year after what Vatican-watchers remember as a rare internet-breaking pope fashion moment: the Christmas *camauro* of 2005. A few days before the holiday, at a special outdoor edition of his weekly “general audience” appearance, Benedict wore a traditional papal winter head covering, historically made of red velvet with a white ermine trim. Which looks — uncannily, adorably — like a Santa Claus hat.



Pope Benedict XVI arrives at St Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City during his only visit to the United States, April 15-20, 2008. (Vatican Media)

The style had not been worn by a pope since John XXIII, who died in 1963.

Other highlights:

- Celebrating Mass in 2008 at Washington’s National Park stadium in a billowing scarlet satin chasuble trimmed with crimson velvet and delicate gold piping.
- Greeting worshippers in Rome, his chasuble this time woven of emerald-green watered silk with a pattern of golden stars.
- Canonising Kateri Tekakwitha, the first Native American saint, while attired in a *fanon*, a gold-and-white striped shoulder covering, dating to the eighth century, that only popes may wear.

Over the last couple of decades,

the Roman Catholic Church has been besmirched with ugliness, scarred by clerical sexual predation abetted by clueless and self-promoting bishops. Benedict used beauty to demonstrate tangibly that the Catholic faith that he and the members of his Church shared is itself beautiful and indestructible, and that it shines through despite all human efforts to wreck it.

He has reminded a world that looks increasingly ugly and debased that there is such a thing as the beautiful — whether it’s embodied in a sonata or an altarpiece or an embroidered cope or the cut of a cassock — and that earthly beauty ultimately communicates a beauty that is beyond earthly things. — *Agencies*

A look back at the cat-loving pope’s favourite feline friends

The late Benedict XVI was known for his intellectual acumen as a theologian and philosopher, but perhaps his most relatable quality was that he was a cat person.

As we remember the life and legacy of the pope, here is a look at his favourite feline friends from Bavaria to the Vatican gardens:

Vaticats

“God’s Rottweiler” was actually more of a cat-lover than an attack dog. When Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the future Benedict XVI, served as the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he would often feed the many cats that lived in the Vatican gardens.

Jeanne Perego, the author of a children’s biography of the life of Benedict XVI through the eyes of a cat, told *CNA* how the Bavarian pope was a true “Cat-holic.”

“He never passed by a cat without petting it,” Perego said.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, who worked side by side with Ratzinger in the Roman Curia, has said that cats were “a great love” for Benedict.

The cardinal told *Famiglia Cristiana* shortly after Benedict’s election how the future pope would talk to the Roman street cats: “He stopped and said a few words in German, probably in Bavarian dialect.”

“He always brought the cats



Pope Benedict XVI pets Pushkin the cat, held by Fr Anton Guziel, at the Oratory of St Philip Neri in Birmingham, England, September 19, 2010. The pope visited the oratory after beatifying Cardinal John Henry Newman. (CNS file photo/L’Osservatore Romano)

something to eat and pulled them back to the courtyard of the congregation,” Bertone said.

Bavarian cats

The late pope’s love of cats had deep roots. His older brother Georg said in an interview before his death that the Ratzinger family had their own cats when they lived in Hufschlag, “along with others that passed through the garden.”

Konrad Baumgartner, a theology

professor at the University of Regensburg, where Ratzinger taught in the 1970s, recalled that “the place was full of cats.”

He said that when Ratzinger walked out of the church, the cats would follow him: “They knew him and loved him. He stayed with them and caressed them for a long time.”

Chico

Chico was a red tabby cat who

belonged to the Ratzinger’s neighbours in Pentling, Bavaria, immortalised in the illustrated book, *Joseph and Chico: The Life of Pope Benedict XVI as Told by a Cat*.

“Chico was a big reddish cat with a lot of character,” Perego, the author of the children’s book, said. She said that she was inspired to write the book while researching Benedict’s early life in Bavaria and meeting Chico, whom the international press were already referring to as “his cat.”

In the book, Chico the cat narrates the life of Joseph Ratzinger from his childhood in Germany to his election as the 265th Roman pontiff. Archbishop Georg Gänswein, the pope’s personal secretary, wrote in the book’s introduction: “The pope also loves cats and all animals because they are creatures of God.”

Chico, who was already fully grown at the time of Benedict’s election as pope, died in 2012, according to Perego.

Pushkin

During Benedict XVI’s apostolic trip to the United Kingdom in 2010, he visited the Birmingham Oratory established by St John Henry Newman.

At the oratory, the Pope encountered an unexpected friend — a fluffy black cat named Pushkin. The oratory cat wore a ribbon with the papal colours, yellow and white, around his neck for the oc-

casion.

Journalists snapped photos as Pope Benedict stroked the cat’s chin and ears. He said: “Aren’t you pretty? What’s his name? How old is he?”

Pushkin, who was 10 years old at the time, went on to live another eight years and even penned his own memoir, *Pushkin the Pontifical Puss: Tails of an Oratory Cat*, which also details the time he met Princess Michael of Kent.

Contessina and Zorro

After Benedict XVI retired to Mater Ecclesiae Monastery inside the walls of Vatican City State, he continued to greet some of the cats who lived in the Vatican gardens. Two of the Vaticats in particular made an impression.

“Contessa and Zorro, two cats that live in our gardens, come often to say hello to the pope emeritus,” Gänswein told the Italian magazine *BenEssere* on March 25, 2016.

At a time when the pope emeritus was largely hidden away from the world, a photo of Benedict holding the little gray and white cat named Zorro caught the world’s attention.

Contessa, also known by the diminutive, Contessina, was a black and white kitten who was also photographed alongside the pope emeritus during his years of retirement living within Vatican City’s walls. — *By Courtney Mares, CNA*

Ruminations

The Lord pointed me to the exact location

I always regard it as the most important 'God-incident' moment in my life, which can never be dismissed as a mere coincidence. This miraculous moment happened nearly 40 years ago and it completely changed my destiny. When angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, her destiny completely changed. A similar 'God-incident' moment changed the destiny of my education and, hence, transformed my whole life.

Well, my faith story specifically pinpoints the incredible work of our Trinitarian God that took place over two consecutive days. Yes, our Trinitarian God 'dropped' a bridge from the heavenly abode at lightning speed. The timely delivery of this 'bridge', smoothly and speedily connected my secondary education to tertiary education. The process of how the 'bridge' was secured before me has been a true mystery till this day! It was beyond my expectation or imagination. Let me explain why I make such a convincing claim.

It is a known fact that the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) public examination is held at the end of Form Five. The subsequent four months or so would be an anxious wait for students before they received their result slips from the Ministry of Education. I was in this position almost forty years ago.

That particular year, the results were released on April 1. Sometime in the last week of March that year, three of my schoolmates came to visit me on their bicycles. I was living in a small rural village in Melaka. As we chatted for a while, one of them asked about my future plans after SPM. I told them: "Wait and see how good my results are. If my results are good, then I may pursue Form Six." Schools with Form Six were located in the city, which was about 25 km away from my village. The only means available for me was public transport by bus, which was not very frequent or regular.

Hearing my response, one of my friends said: "Why don't you apply to some universities that take in students with good results after SPM. I saw an advertisement in a Malay daily stating how to get the application forms from the universities. This opportunity is only for students from the Science stream." I quickly enquired if he had that newspaper. He replied that his father would have used it to pack groceries for customers in his shop. It was not the digital era. Newspapers were the primary source of information. Envelopes and stamps were the only means of correspondence, especially in rural areas.

Feeling helpless after they left, I prayed to our Trinitarian God, with Mother Mary as my trustworthy intercessor. The following morning, I went to the little town that was about five km away from my village by bus. I just rang the bell and got off the bus as it stopped near a roundabout.

As I stood gazing around, I saw a relatively new Mara building across the road. I walked hurriedly into the building. The first person I spotted was a Malay youth who was operating a photocopier machine. I approached him and asked: "I heard about application forms to universities after Form Five. Do you know anything about that?" He responded: "I bought two sets of application forms for Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. A set costs RM5. Do you want?" My joy knew no bound and I quickly took a set and gave him RM 10, telling him to keep the change. I went home in amazement, completely bewildered at the miraculous way our Lord had led me to the application form. My heart was full of thanksgiving and praise for our Lord. (The whole conversation between the Malay youth and I was in Bahasa Malaysia).

A few days later, the SPM results were released and my academic achievements fulfilled the requirements for the degree programme in Science with Education. After almost a month, I received the offer letter to study in UTM, specialising in Mathematics and Computer Science. The Ministry of Education offered me a scholarship to complete my studies. I successfully obtained my scroll five years later and went onto a fulfilling career as a teacher in various schools.

In hindsight, I can only say, without any doubt, that those three schoolmates who told me about the study opportunities in the university were God-sent. When I acted on that message, the Holy Spirit led me to the exact location, to the right person, who gave me a set of forms without which I would have missed the opportunity of a whole colourful life experience.

Hence, our Lord is true to what He says: "Ask and you shall be given; seek and you shall find; knock and the door will open."



Z. Measias John
is a parishioner of the
Church of St Thomas More,
Subang Jaya

Give, and it will be given to you

By Gwen Manickam

The calling to serve in the Diocese of Penang's youth ministry was so deeply embedded in Helena Michael that she spent more than 13 years in the Lord's vineyard.

Currently a freelance corporate trainer and co-founder of Pedals Academy, Helena reminisces about the best of her roaring 20s and 30s, helping to guide youth in the northern states of the peninsula, and how she continues to use those skills to date.

The bubbly Butterworth native and former parishioner of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary spent a large part of her formative years serving in the parish's youth ministry before spearheading the youth division of the charismatic prayer group there.

During her foundation year of reading law, Fr Edmund Woon, who was newly ordained and overseeing the youth, invited Helena to join the ministry as a full-time youth worker. The 20-year-old Helena, already struggling to keep her interest in pursuing her major, jumped at the opportunity to do what she loved... working with young people. Naturally, Helena's mother was not happy with her decision to quit tertiary education, and it took some convincing by the then Fr Bernard Paul that God would provide and take care of her daughter.

The Penang Diocesan Youth Coordinating and Animating Team, (DYCAT) as it was known then, was set up as a version of the Kuala Lumpur Archdiocesan Single Adults and Youth Office (ASAYO Kuala Lumpur). It had a Tamil and Chinese-speaking coordinator, and Helena was hired as the English-speaking coordinator. The youth office is now known as Penang Diocesan Youth Network (PDYN).

Helena, Jason Robert (another youth coordinator), and Fr Edmund were sent to Australia for a three-month training stint under the National Evangelisation Team (NET). Upon the trio's return, Helena and Jason were bound to the diocese by a two-year contract.

"My NET training not only prepared me for youth ministry, but it also set the foundation for the work I do today," said the 48-year-old.

"NET's formula is simple — use young people to run retreats and facilitate meetings. We spent six weeks learning how to give talks that incorporate testimonies, how to conduct Praise and Worship sessions, and lead a small group, to name a few. The next six weeks involved hands-on training for us to immerse ourselves in the local ministries and put into



Helena Michael facilitating a Marriage Encounter retreat recently.

practice the theories we'd learnt.

"It was an eye-opening experience on the effectiveness of running these youth programmes versus the I-talk-you-listen model," said Helena, the youngest of three girls.

The general structure of youth formations in Penang today is NET-based. It includes Praise and Worship sessions, talks with a skit, input from attendees, personal testimony related to the topic, and small group sharing.

Two years later, in 2000, Helena was nudged by her then-boyfriend, to look beyond just serving in the diocese and pursue higher education. With Fr Fabian Dicom's support, she approached the Bishop of Penang, Rt Rev Antony Selvanayagam. After crunching the numbers, the prelate agreed to a full scholarship to earn an undergraduate degree, at a university of her choice.

"I was truly blessed to get a full scholarship. I made the Dean's List every semester and, in 2004, I earned a double degree with Honours in a Bachelor of Secondary Education majoring in Religious and Values Education, and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, from the De LaSalle University, Manila, Philippines."

In 2002, during her sophomore year, Helena was recognised by the Philippines International Friendship Organisation as one of the top three outstanding international students in the Philippines. The other two recipients were from Nepal and Nigeria.

Upon returning, Helena was contracted to serve the diocese for 10 years.

"It wasn't an issue as I felt it was my calling, and I was always going to serve the diocese. In 2006 I married Joachim Francis Xavier, who was also actively serving in the diocese."

Overseeing the youth ministries in 28 parishes across five states eventually took a toll on Helena, and in 2011 she opted out of completing her bond with the diocese and moved to the capital with her husband.



Helena (fifth from left) with retreatants at a "Persons Are Gifts" camp held at the Church of St Michael, Ipoh.

"I was lucky the board of directors, after some convincing, agreed to release me without paying the RM2,000 fine for every year I did not fulfil my contract."

In Kuala Lumpur, Helena joined HELP University as a lecturer and worked there till 2022. In 2014, she received another scholarship to earn her post-graduate Masters of Applied Psychology in Coaching, at HELP University.

"Although I was in a university environment, I was still doing the same things I did in the diocese, only this time, I could not speak about Jesus. I ran my classes like a camp. I applied the tricks I learnt in youth ministry to keep my students entertained. My work felt effortless, and I enjoyed it."

Abiding by her *alma mater's* motto "to teach minds, touch hearts, and transform lives," Helena started a youth movement in the university (much like the ministry). She trained young people to run/facilitate workshops and sessions for other young people instead of lecturing them.

It was only last year, as she felt the gap between the 17-year-olds and her late 40-something getting wider and harder to connect, did Helena move on to pursue free-lance corporate training.

Helena still incorporates elements from her ministry days, much to the bewilderment of the corporate executives and heads she coaches.

Looking back, Helena said there were many memorable moments while serving in the diocese. Her most cherished was a trip to Hua Hin, Thailand in 1999 for the First Asian Youth Day celebration, with youth from the three peninsular dioceses, in preparation for World Youth Day 2000, in Rome.

On her connection with God, Helena, whose favourite Bible verse is Jeremiah 29:11 said, "It's a roller coaster. Sometimes I struggle to pray, read the Word of God, or meditate. But I see Him and His providence in everything I do."

"While serving in the diocese, doing the work was my spirituality. My connection with God is probably different from those who spent time in deep prayer. Listening to Praise and Worship songs is another way I connect with Him."

"I don't go around preaching about God. My aim is that my encounter with people gives them the Jesus experiences, in that I witness Jesus to everyone I meet and interact with."

Helena and Joachim are now parishioners of the Church of the Risen Christ and have been appointed as Youth Advisors by the parish priest, Fr Edwin Peter.

Navigating an increasingly 'conservative' Malaysia

New Vs Old Malaysia

"New" often conjures up a sense of hope and freshness. A yearning to make whole again all that was broken, and to start on a clean slate every year.

Ironically, often, a big part of the yearning for a 'new' Malaysia usually throws us back to the "good old days" — days of a more liberal Malaysia where we ate at each other's houses with less hesitance, where English was widely and more well-spoken.

Even within the Church, albeit rather paradoxically, we see people reminiscing the days where Holy Communion was only given behind altar rails and on the tongue, when women wore veils to church, when Easter Vigil had double the number of readings, and so on.

What is often omitted though, are the positives that came along with the perceived and often exaggerated negatives.

We have WIFI and air conditioning, modern medicine, instant news, and faster transportation.

Surely that is more welcome than hearing from your doctor how your tuberculosis was almost surely going to kill you, no matter how perfect his English was while saying it!

We would also need to accept that Malaysia today is not the same as of the yesteryears. In many ways — demographically, socially, economically. In many ways we have progressed, and in some, arguably, regressed.

The reality is, we will never be fully happy either with everything new or old.

We will need to adapt to the changing society, with different needs and wants from the generation before them. Recognising these changes, if and where valid, and accepting the rights of those making those changes, the sociopolitical realities that come with it, instead of having the urge to not cede a single point, would go far



MAKING SENSE

Emmanuel Joseph

in convincing those seeking these changes, to maintain status quos, grant concessions and not fight belligerence with adamance.

Of course, certain changes could create uneasiness or even fear among minorities.

Rising Conservatism?

In the national context, we encounter this reaction whenever we see triggers of rising conservatism, whether real or imagined.

When dress codes are imposed, sometimes by little Napoleons in the civil service, or over-zealous school administrators. When restrictions are imposed on things like gambling or the sale of alcohol.

Sometimes they aren't even administrative decisions but commercial responses to emerging consumer patterns like Islamic banking or sprouting of new *tudung* brands.

Isolated incidents can sometimes be blown out of proportion but setting the track back to moderate is appreciated by many, including politicians who may have found themselves too far right or left to affect change. Reprimands or suggestions by civil society functions as political cover that opens dialogue and enables policymakers to act without fear of overt censure or political backlash.

There is a need to exercise caution, and isolate discernible trends and patterns from a one-off event which, unfortunately, gets more publicity due to its alarmist and sensationalist nature. These incidents also sometimes, confusingly, serve as catalysts to such patterns and

trends, or exacerbate existing ones.

Conservatism is, however, almost unmistakably on the rise, not only in this country, but in neighbouring ones, and across all religions. It may be necessary to choose the battles one can win and those that are futile, or even damaging, to the overall cause.

Carving out an acceptable safe space to practise one's beliefs, culture, gender expression, and artistic freedoms, and enshrining it beyond assail, should be the foremost priority, engaging in dialogue and seeking first, as St Francis did, to understand before being understood.

Separating the wheat from the chaff

How does this translate into something actionable? The first is to identify whether something is affecting your rights or if it's something you're just not comfortable with but is harmless. The first is a struggle worth getting into, the second is, well, something you just need to get used to.

Now that you've ascertained it is something valid affecting your rights as a minority, consider building alliance with similarly affected parties, or people who would be sympathetic to your cause.

Most religious conservatives don't want to shut down your church nor convert your family. Many of the knee-jerk reactions are provoked by irresponsible politics, trying to score short-term mileage at the cost of long-term harmony.

There is now, more than ever, a need to talk to one another, to dispel rumours and inaccuracies designed to split our communities.

Educate ourselves and engage in dialogue. For example, someone who may be fed a short video or TikTok showing Middle Eastern Catholics praying in Arabic with a misleading accusation of 'Christianisation' occurring, in-

stead of only being a combative point, could instead ignite potential dialogue on the many languages and liturgies used in Catholic or our sister churches, Orthodox worship, quite different from the monocultural practices of many other faiths.

People fear what they do not know, and the same rings true from both sides of the pew.

Sometimes fundamentalism rises as we fail to understand the fundamentals of each other's faith, culture, and beliefs.

Narrowing the divide

So where do minorities, Catholics included, stand amidst all the noise?

Despite the odds stacked against it and people who may have a true hidden agenda, we are called to reach out. Sharing the faith should not be limited to preaching, but sharing of values, culture, history, traditions and practices, many of which we share with our fellow Malaysians, owing to a common Asian heritage of all our faiths.

We could also share our problems, concerns and fears, and may be surprised to find that many of these are also shared with our friends from other faiths.

Solving common problems, like a food basket programme or more recently, flood mitigation, could also provide windows to conversations that lead to better understanding, which in turn reduces mutual suspicion and mistrust, narrowing the gap that exists between communities.

● Emmanuel Joseph oversees IT as his 9-5 job and from 5-9, he serves a few NGOs, think tanks and volunteer groups. He serves as an advisor for Projek Dialog and is a Fellow with the Institute of Research and Development of Policy.

A call to love them first, teach second

As missionary disciples, our engagement with students should be shaped by our love for God and for our neighbours. The goal of catechists (also called religious educators or faith educators) is to lead their students to encounter Christ and then journey with them to develop an intimate relationship with Him. The most effective way to open others to the experience of God's love is through a credible witness of God's love.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) in paragraph five states 'Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.'

We do not teach mathematics, science, history or languages, as is common practice in schools. Catechism requires a different way of teaching and different approaches. We are leading them to Christ in a very challenging environment — the onslaught of social media, immorality, and materialism. Thus we should create opportunities for them to build a strong foundation in faith and to encounter Christ every day.

Pope Francis encourages catechists "to never get tired of their ministry, to avoid a 'school lecture' type catechesis, and to strive to offer a "living experience of the faith that each of us wishes to pass on to the new generations."

Teach as Jesus taught — with love and spirit

When Jesus was on earth, He showed great

Catechism is derived from catechesis, or the Greek *katekheisis*, which means 'to teach by proclaiming' or 'to teach orally', as the Apostles did by following the example set by Jesus Christ. Catechism does not refer to instruction just by question and answer, but the inculcation or instilling of knowledge and virtues to the learners. The role of a catechist is to 'echo' the Church's teachings, setting a role model by living the faith. In this context echoing is not a mere shout of 'Hello, how are you?' and expect the echoed 'I am fine'.

love and mercy to all people. He taught the poor, the rich, the infirm, the outcast and the children. He taught us to love everyone and to help one another. He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). If we show love to the children we teach, they will experience the love of God and be motivated to learn more about the faith. Catechists can learn from how Jesus taught from the road to Emmaus as described in Luke 24: 13-35.

Jesus used clear and simple language, illustrations and stories from daily life. His lessons included many everyday experiences that we can relate to. He taught using parables such as the lost sheep, the search for a coin, the mustard seed, and the tares and wheat.

Jesus often referred to the Scriptures when he taught. For example, in Matt 21:42, Jesus says, "Have you not read in the Scriptures, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone ...?"

Creating a positive learning environment

The best learning environment is where God's love prevails. We always begin class with a prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to guide us and open the hearts and minds of the students (and

of us, too). When the Holy Spirit is present in the class, everyone is spiritually strengthened and brought closer to the love of Christ.

Being a catechist means more than teaching a lesson in class. We make the students feel welcome and show that we care about them. Make an earnest effort to get to know each of them, as well as their parents, as individuals. They may need our shoulders to cry on when they have problems, when they are sad or when they have trouble.

We should encourage everyone to participate in class and voice their concerns. Draw out those who are shy and reticent. Avoiding judgmental remarks will further reinforce a positive environment. We might get them to read a quote or Bible passage or tell a story. We could ask them to sing a song or play an instrument. We might invite someone to give a testimony or share a personal experience related to the theme of the lesson. We could also share our own experiences.

We often find it difficult to capture the interest of those who have a short attention span. One key is our own enthusiasm in teaching. Rely on the Holy Spirit. We could explore various innovative teaching methods to enliven our teaching. Sparking interest is especially impor-

tant at the beginning of a lesson. When we plan our lessons, we should look for ways to begin with an introduction that sparks interest in our students.

From learning to living

Besides teaching the planned lesson, the ultimate goal is to move gradually from learning to living. We want to equip and inspire them to live the Gospel. Here are some suggestions.

Through prayer we communicate with God and draw close to Him. Jesus' disciples asked him "Lord, teach us to pray", and we too should teach them how to pray, pray with them and for them.

We help students apply what they learn to the circumstances of their lives. In today's ambivalent world, we need to teach them to make decisions based on Scripture by asking ourselves, "What would Jesus do?" We should also explain to them the teachings of the Church.

Discernment is a way to figure out how best to respond to His love in our daily lives. We must learn to search inwardly, to align our own will to His will, to learn what God is trying to tell us.

Catechists have been called to *make disciples*, "... go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations. Baptise them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of time." (Mt 28:18-20).

The diligent efforts of catechists will be greatly rewarded if we faithfully obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit and lead students closer to Christ. — *By Professor Emeritus Dr Christopher Ng*



Fr Ron Rolheiser

The anthropological function of gossip

In his novel, *Oscar and Lucinda*, Peter Carey offers this colourful image of gossip. The setting is a small town where there are rumours about the priest and a particular young woman. Here's his metaphor: "The vicar of Woolahra then took her shopping and society, always feeling shopping to be the most intimate activity, was pleased to feel the steam pressure rising in itself as it got ready to be properly scandalised — its pipes groaned and stretched, you could hear the noises in its walls and cellars. They imagined he paid for her finery. When they heard this was not so, that the girl had sovereigns in her purse — enough, it was reported, to buy the priest a pair of onyx cufflinks — the pressure did not fall, but stayed constant, so that while it did not reach the stage where the outrage was hissing out through the open valves, it maintained a good rumble, a lower note which sounded like a growl in the throat of a smallish dog."

What an apt image! Gossip does resemble steam hissing from a radiator or the growl of a small dog, and yet it's important. For most of our lives, we form community around it. How so?

Imagine going out for dinner with a group of colleagues. While there isn't overt hostility among you, there are clear differences and tensions. You wouldn't naturally choose

to go out to dinner together, but you have been thrown together by circumstance and are making the best of it.

You have dinner together and things go along quite pleasantly. There's harmony, banter, and humour at the table. How do you manage to get on so well despite and beyond differences? By talking about somebody else. Much of the time is spent talking about others on whose faults, eccentricities, and shortcomings we all agree. Alternatively, we talk about shared indignations. We end up having a harmonious time together because we talk about someone or something else whose difference from us is greater than our differences from each other. Of course, you are afraid to leave the table because you already suspect whom they will be talking about then! Your fear is well founded.

Until we reach a certain level of maturity, we form community largely around scapegoating, that is, we overcome our differences and tensions by focusing on someone or something about whom or which we share a common distancing, indignation, ridicule, anger, or jealousy. That's the anthropological function of gossip — and it's a very important one. We overcome our differences and tensions by scapegoating someone or something. That's why it's easier to form

community against something rather than around something and why it's easier to define ourselves more by what we are against than by what we are for.

Ancient cultures knew this and designed certain rituals to take tension out of the community by scapegoating. For example, at the time of Jesus, within the Jewish community a ritual existed that essentially worked this way: At regular intervals, the community would take a goat and symbolically adorn it with the tensions and divisions of the community. Among other things, they would drape it with a purple cloth to symbolise that it symbolically represented them and push a crown of thorns into its head to make it feel the pain of their tensions. (Notice how Jesus is draped in these exact symbols when Pilate shows Him to the crowd before the crucifixion: *Ecce homo ... Behold your scapegoat!*) The goat was then chased off to die in the desert. It leaving the community was understood as taking the community's sin and tension away, leaving the community free of tension by its banishment.

Jesus is our scapegoat. He takes away our sin and division, though not by banishment from the community. He takes away our sins by taking them in, carrying them, and transforming them so as not to give them back in kind. Jesus takes away sin in the

same way as a water filter purifies, by holding the impurities within itself and giving back only what is pure.

When we say Jesus died for our sins, we need to understand it this way: He took in hatred and gave back love; He took in curses and gave back blessing; He took in bitterness and gave back graciousness; *He took in jealousy and gave back affirmation; and He took in murder and gave back forgiveness.* By absorbing our sin, differences, and jealousies, He did for us what we, in a less mature and less effective way, try to do when we crucify each other through gossip.

And that's Jesus' invitation to us: As adults, we are invited to step up and do what Jesus did, namely, take in the differences and jealousies around us, hold them, and transform them so as not to give them back in kind. Then won't we need scapegoats any more, and the steam-pipes of gossip will cease hissing and the low growl of that smallish dog inside us will finally be silent.

● **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.



'It is good'

Three messages to take to heart in the New Year

A hand in the lower right hand corner writes and circles goals for the new year, such as 'join gym', 'save money' and 'find a new job', on a green chalkboard in white chalk.

At the start of each new year, many of us examine our lives and, based on what we know of ourselves and how we receive the overly harsh, ever-heckling judgments of the world, make resolutions for our self-improvement. We make promises to ourselves — and sometimes to God and our families: We're going to be thinner; we're going to become patient; we're going to embrace disciplines that will help us grow as human beings.

Most of us won't keep our promises for very long, and often, the first ones to hit the pavement with a resounding "splat" are those we've made to heaven, or to our families.

The reason for that is simple: No matter how much we want to change some aspect of ourselves, God knows us intimately, as do our

families. Where there is intimacy, we generally let go of artifice, because we can — because we know that where we are loved unconditionally, we are loved in all of our faults and weaknesses, and thank God for that. The world of work acquaintances, friends and the utter strangers who populate our social media threads (and to whom we hand over way too much of ourselves for inspection and eventual verdicts, yay or nay) is very different.

For their "likes" or button-conveyed "hearts," we may work at our resolutions just a little bit longer, because we are truly addicted to those dopamine hits of instant approval. Also, we have been conditioned by marketers and ad campaigns to believe that no, we're not good enough as we are — not in our looks, our homes, not even in how we do laundry. Don't you know that if your T-shirts don't smell like springtime, you're failing?

The deal with New Year's resolutions is that

no one expects us to succeed. Everyone makes them with great intentions and an absolute certainty that they will fail — that our instinct to interior growth and exterior shrinkage, finagled into a promise by an arbitrary date, is a mean invitation to begin the new year with a big fat sense of failure.

This year, as we grimace at our swollen waistlines thanks to holiday feasting, or vow never again to over-imbibe, or to shout in anger or raise a fist while driving, let's resolve to work mindfully on a few ideas that can help us build the sort of inner serenity which, once gained, can become the foundation for all of those other good intentions. None of them is harsh or burdensome, although any might prove challenging enough. Remembering just these three things throughout the year, however, can colour so much of the rest of it.

It doesn't really matter what anyone else does, only that we recognise what we are

called to do, and that we do it with our whole hearts. The opinions others have of us are really none of our business.

Whether we get the credit we deserve for the good things we manage doesn't matter, either. Jesus Christ knows what is true. The world quickly forgot all the good He did, and it was unjust to Him, too.

As Christians, we have no work of our own, only the work God has placed before us — so in the end, it's really God's work that we do, and that's all that really does matter. We serve a crucified Lord who calls us. If we answer that call in 2023, we will be equipped for the job.

And none of that, taken up in honesty and in good faith, needs to touch our egos: not for the better or the worse, no matter whether everything ends up a small "splat" or a great success. God will still say to you, "It is good that you exist." — **By Elizabeth Scalia, OSV News**

Little Catholics' Corner

Let's Colour



Compare the picture on the left with the picture on the right. Circle the 13 things that are different.



NEW TESTAMENT BIBLE QUIZ

- Where was Jesus born?
 - Nazareth
 - Bethlehem
 - Jerusalem
 - Capernaum
- What job did Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, do?
 - Fisherman
 - Carpenter
 - Tentmaker
 - Shepherd
- What is the name of the disciple who betrayed Jesus?
 - Simon Peter
 - Andrew
 - Bartholomew
 - Judas Iscariot
- How did Jesus die? He was
 - flogged to death
 - crucified
 - stoned
 - burned outside the city wall
- Who gave Jesus gifts when He was born?
 - Wise men
 - Mary
 - Shepherds
 - Innkeeper



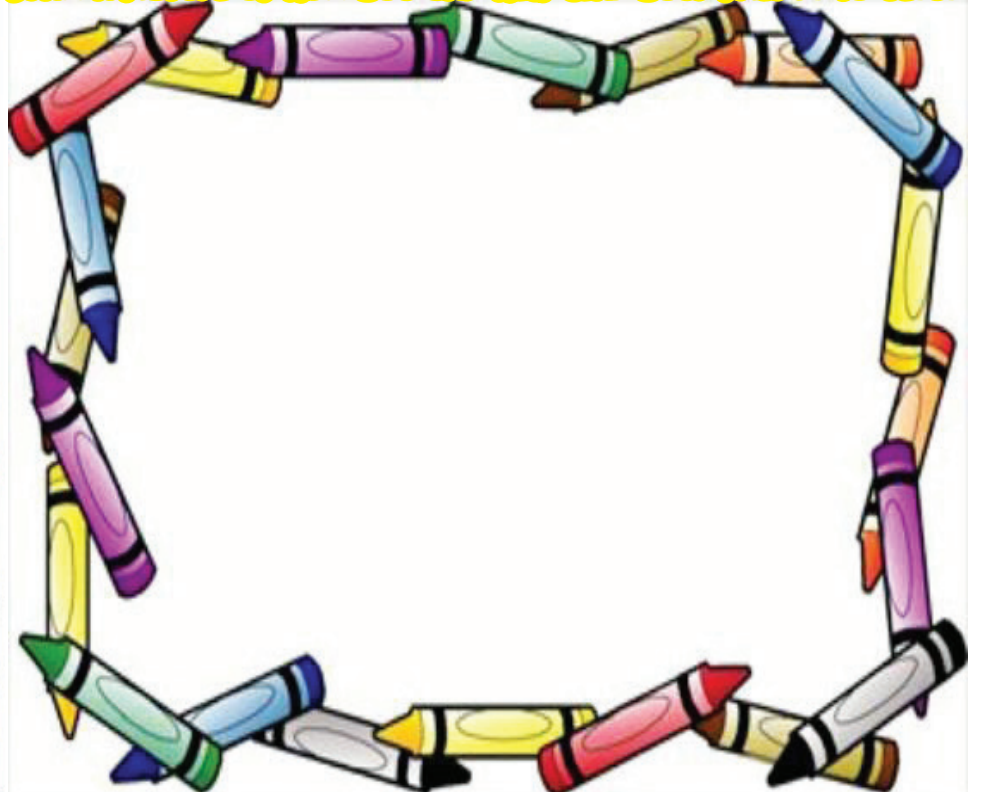
- What did Jesus feed the 5,000 people with?
 - Loaves and fish
 - Corn and roast lamb
 - Almonds and figs
 - Herbs and fruit of the fields
- Name of the prayer Jesus taught the disciples...
 - The Prayer of Jesus
 - The Prayer of Peace
 - The Lord's Prayer
 - The Prayer of the Righteous
- What did Jesus do for Lazarus?
 - Cooked him dinner
 - Took him for a walk
 - Healed him from a fever
 - Raised him from the dead
- Who wanted to kill Jesus when he was a baby?
 - Caesar
 - John the Baptist
 - Herod
 - Wise Men

Hello children, Everybody thought John the Baptist was a great preacher and prophet. Some people thought he might be the Messiah who would save their people — but John knew that that was not his job. When Jesus came to him to be baptised at the River Jordan, John pointed at Him and told the people, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" He told the people he was not the great one; Jesus was. John also told the

people to repent of their sins and be baptised. St John the Baptist is an example to all of us — we should show others the way to Jesus. As children, one of the best ways to do this, is to be kind, loving, caring and generous to others daily, so we reflect God's glory.

Love
Aunty Gwen

DRAW A PICTURE OF HOW YOU CAN HELP LEAD YOUR FRIENDS TO JESUS



YOUTH

JANUARY 15, 2023

Benedict XVI's love for World Youth Day demonstrated as he lay in state

ROME: In St Peter's Basilica on the first week of January, tens of thousands of visitors saw him dressed in striking red posthumous vestments — the same as he wore in Sydney at World Youth Day in 2008. On January 5, he was buried in them.

"Pope Benedict XVI remarked to me on many occasions how much he loved his visit to Sydney to celebrate World Youth Day in 2008," Archbishop Anthony Fisher, O.P. of Sydney wrote on his Facebook profile. "What a wonderful tribute."

Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney at the time of World Youth Day in Australia, said that he had been "delighted and honoured" to host Pope Benedict in Sydney.

"We had some beautiful memories there. One of the loveliest photographs is of him, and I happened to be beside him, on the row of the boat coming up Sydney Harbour on a perfect day for the opening Mass," Cardinal Pell recalled. "It was beautiful."

World Youth Day, a meeting of youth from around the globe with the pope begun by Pope St John Paul II, is organised every two to three years in a different corner of the world. When



Pope Benedict walks with youth from Latin America and Africa during World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany. (CNS file photo/Catholic Press Photo, Pool)

St John Paul II died in April 2005, preparations for the summer World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany, were already underway, and Pope Benedict was enthusiastic to continue the legacy of his predecessor.

"With that decision, Benedict XVI made the Polish pope's 'invention' as part of the ordinary life of the Catholic Church forever," said Yago de la Cierva, executive director of World Youth Day in Madrid in 2011.

World Youth Day in Madrid was the third and final of the events that Pope Benedict attended before his 2013 resignation.

De la Cierva recalled how Benedict instantly mesmerised the young people who had been waiting for him in the Spanish capital. When he was driving from the airport to the Vatican embassy through the streets of the city, the affection was visible — and loud.

"I could see from the car of the entourage

how people looked at the pope with such overflowing affection that even the civil authorities' officials that accompanied me were moved to tears," de la Cierva recalls.

But what really will go down in history of the Madrid event is the Saturday vigil. Aug 20, 2011, was the hottest day of the summer in Spain, with a temperature reaching 102 degrees Fahrenheit. At night, the hot day transitioned to a brutal storm, with torrential rain and driving winds. Lightning struck the light towers, and make-shift chapels set up at the Cuatro Vientos airport collapsed.

At the scene, the choir deserted the stage, thinking it was on the verge of collapse. Assistants were covering Pope Benedict with three umbrellas. But the pope refused to leave the stage. "He was standing there and repeating, 'If the young people are here, how can I leave them?'" added de la Cierva.

The fact that his love for World Youth Day was highlighted by Benedict XVI even upon his death is something very special for World Youth Day organisers.

"I saw this love in person, and it comes as no surprise to me, but I must admit it's such an incredibly touching moment and legacy to be remembered forever for the organisers of World Youth Day," de la Cierva said. — **By Paulina Guzik, OSV News**

Filipino Jesuit University wins world debating competition

MADRID: Debaters from the Jesuit-run Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines won the World Universities Debating Championship for the first time in the history of the Southeast Asian nation.

The Filipino debaters beat the world's top universities, including Harvard University and Oxford University, on their way to victory in the championship, dubbed World Debate Olympics, at Madrid, Spain from December 27 to January 4.

In the grand finale, the Ateneo de Manila team, composed of David Africa and Tobi Leung, faced off against teams from the Princeton University of the United States, Sofia University of Bulgaria, and the Tel Aviv University of Israel.

The teams argued whether it was preferable to have "a world where all individuals have a strong belief in *Ubuntu* — a philosophical belief which literally means "I am

because we are."

The Philippine debaters argued against the motion, saying that people's identities were not shaped by, and their obligations were not primarily owed, to their communities.

The Jesuit University hailed the "historic win."

"The Ateneo Debate Society are world champions as they won the World Universities Debating Championship (WUDC) held in Madrid, Spain. This is the Philippines' first-ever title in the competition's 43-year history," the Ateneo said in an online post.

The university also congratulated Africa and Leung, both holding majors in Mathematics, for securing spots among the top 10 best speakers in the world.

"Leung and Africa were awarded as the second and eighth best speakers of the world, respectively. Leung attained the highest best-speaker position that a Filipino has ever held



he grand final of the World Universities Debating Championship in Madrid, Spain. (UCA News Photo/Ateneo Debate Society)

in WUDC history," the university added.

The Catholics Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) also sent its blessing and wishes to the team while urging more Catholic school students to engage in debate as a mode of seeking the truth.

"Every debate is for the truth. Debate is a format in order for people to understand, to drive us closer to the truth. In debates, ideas

are tested. Concepts are not taken for granted easily because we need the best ideas to stand out. Debating is truth-seeking," Fr Donald San Juan, the CBCP youth commission executive secretary, said.

Fr San Juan said the debate should be promoted to all Catholic schools to develop critical and communication skills among students. — ucanews.com

A look back at pope emeritus Benedict XVI's participation in World Youth Days



Pope Benedict XVI addresses volunteers of World Youth Day 2011 in Madrid, Spain, Aug 21, 2011. (Vatican Media)

VATICAN: In his last World Youth Day before retirement, Pope Benedict XVI encouraged young people across the world to preserve Christian joy within their hearts.

On each World Youth Day, the late pope emeritus exhorted young people to follow the guidance of the Gospel by using different themes from Scripture.

Below are all the times from 2005 to 2012 Benedict XVI encouraged young people at World Youth Day to live the Gospel message.

World Youth Day 2005

Benedict's first World Youth Day as pope was celebrated in his native country, Germany.



Speaking to 1.2 million people in Cologne, he encouraged all to find the joy that is offered in Sunday Mass. The theme of World Youth Day in 2005 was *We have come to worship Him*.

World Youth Day 2006

Benedict encouraged young people to read the Bible during his 2006 World Youth Day

address. Celebrations were in local dioceses across the world on Palm Sunday, April 9.

The theme for that World Youth Day was *Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*.

World Youth Day 2007

In 2007, during a local celebration of World Youth Day, Benedict offered a deep reflection on love and its importance in everyone's lives.

The theme of the day was *Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another*. In part of his address, he spoke to those who were engaged to be married and encouraged them to seek the Church's guidance in their vocation.

World Youth Day 2008

World Youth Day 2008 was in Sydney, Australia, from July 15–20 and had as its theme *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses*.



Speaking to the 500,000 attendees from

across the world, Benedict encouraged the young people to be renewed by the Holy Spirit by staying close to the sacraments.

World Youth Day 2009

Local celebrations took place for World Youth Day on April 5. The theme for the day was *We have set our hope on the living God*.

In his Palm Sunday address, Benedict called for young people to follow St Paul's example of witnessing to Christ.

World Youth Day 2010

During the local World Youth Day celebrations on March 28, Benedict called on young people to not give up on their dreams in the face of adversity. The theme was *Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? (Mark 10:17)*.

World Youth Day 2011

Speaking to 1.4 million attendees in Madrid, Spain, Benedict encouraged young people to make Jesus the centre of their lives.



The theme for the Aug 16–21 World Youth Day was *Planted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the faith*. Twenty-nine thousand people from the United States attended.

World Youth Day 2012

The theme for the local celebrations of World Youth Day on April 1 was *Rejoice in the Lord always!*

In his address on Palm Sunday, Benedict gave guidance on how to preserve Christian joy within one's heart. — **By Joe Bukuras, CNA**

Christmas play reflects on God's love

KUCHING: The Emmaus Youth Ministry of Blessed Sacrament Church (BSC) brought the story of the birth of Christ back into focus during the Advent season by enacting the Nativity story on December 16. Parishioners who attended the event were asked to reflect on the love of God and how the birth of Christ brought salvation to our world.

At the start of the evening, those who attended were treated to delectable finger food after the opening prayer, led by the Emmaus Adult Ministry leader, Pauline Lim. This was followed by a brief introduction and recap of the history of the Emmaus Youth Ministry, which began as an extension of the Jesus' Kids Ministry launched in 1996 at BSC.

After the introduction, parishioners enjoyed a mixture of drama and songs as the youths and young adults in costumes enacted four scenes from the Nativity story. The darkened hall was lit by a spotlight that framed each scene, which was also accompanied by a few verses of familiar carols that accentuated the deeper meaning of each act.

More than 25 youth and young adults were involved in the project. Prior to the preparations, the youth were given reflections on the biblical narrative and the importance of proclaiming the Good News via songs. They were also given drama and music training leading up to the event. The musicians, singers, actors and set makers took a few months to rehearse and prepare.

To conclude the evening, Cecelia Lai, the youth ministry's leader, thanked the parish community for their ongoing support and prayers. The youth used to conduct annual Christmas carolling during the Advent sea-



Emmaus youth pose for the group photo at the end of the Christmas Play. (Today's Catholic Photo/EmmausYouth)

son. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the group celebrated Christmas by recounting the Nativity and holding a reunion for families and friends instead.

Christina Eng, the group's mentor, remarked that it is God's grace that has kept the group going for the last twenty-odd years. The group has nurtured Catholic youths and church leaders over the last two decades. She is heartened to see some former members of the group, despite facing the challenges of work and family life, coming back to serve and form the new youths. She thanked the adult community of the parish for their support and encouraged the younger youth to rise up and serve the ministry for the glory of God. — **By Lillian Law, Today's Catholic**



The Three Magi with the Holy Family Scene.

The spiritual testament of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

The Holy See released the spiritual testament of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, dated August 29, 2006



Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in prayer.

When, at this late hour of my life, I look back on the decades I have wandered through, I see first of all, how much reason I have to give thanks. Above all, I thank God Himself, the giver of all good gifts, who has given me life and guided me through all kinds of confusion; who has always picked me up when I began to slip, who has always given me anew the light of His countenance. In retrospect, I see and understand that even the dark and arduous stretches of this path were for my salvation and that He guided me well in those very stretches.

I thank my parents, who gave me life in difficult times and prepared a wonderful home for me with their love, which shines through all my days as a bright light until today. My father's clear-sighted faith taught us brothers and sister to believe which stood firm as a guide in the midst of all my scientific knowledge; my mother's heartfelt piety and great kindness remain a legacy for which I cannot thank her enough. My sister has served me selflessly and full of kind concern for decades; my brother has always paved the way for me with the clear-sightedness of his judgements, with his powerful determination, and with the cheerfulness of his heart; without this ever-new going ahead and going along, I would not have been able to find the right path.

I thank God from the bottom of my heart for the many friends, men and women, whom He has always placed at my side; for the co-workers at all stages of my path; for the teachers and students He has given me. I gratefully entrust them all to His goodness. And I would like to thank the Lord for my beautiful home in the foothills of the Bavarian Alps, where I was able to see the splendour of the Creator Himself shining through, time and again. I thank the people of my homeland for allowing me to experience the beauty of faith, time and again. I pray that our country will remain a country of faith and I ask you, dear compatriots, not to let your faith be distracted. Finally, I thank God for all the beauty I was able to experience

during the various stages of my journey, but especially in Rome and in Italy, which has become my second home.

I ask for forgiveness from the bottom of my heart from all those whom I have wronged in some way.

What I said earlier of my compatriots, I now say to all who were entrusted to my service in the Church: Stand firm in the faith! Do not be confused! Often, it seems as if Science — on the one hand, the natural sciences; on the other, historical research (especially the exegesis of the Holy Scriptures) — has irrefutable insights to offer that are contrary to the Catholic faith. I have witnessed from times long past the changes in natural science and have seen how apparent certainties against the faith vanished, proving themselves not to be Science but philosophical interpretations only apparently belonging to Science — just as, moreover, it is in dialogue with the natural sciences that faith has learned to understand the limits of, the scope of its affirmations and thus, its own specificity.

For 60 years now, I have accompanied the path of theology, especially biblical studies, and have seen seemingly unshakeable theses collapse with the changing generations, which turned out to be mere hypotheses: the liberal generation (Harnack, Jülicher, etc.), the existentialist generation (Bultmann, etc.), the Marxist generation. I have seen, and see, how, out of the tangle of hypotheses, the reasonableness of faith has emerged and is emerging anew. Jesus Christ is truly the Way, the Truth, and the Life — and the Church, in all her shortcomings, is truly His Body.

Finally, I humbly ask: pray for me, so that the Lord may admit me to the eternal dwelling, despite all my sins and shortcomings. For all those entrusted to me, my heartfelt prayer goes out day after day

Benedictus PP XVI

● Source: Vatican News



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6th Anniversary
In Loving Memory of



Wilma Pereira

Departed on 19th January 2017

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And Whisper In Your Ear
How Much We Love and Miss You
and Wish You Were Here
Days Will Pass And Turn Into Years
But We Will Always Remember You With Silent Tears.*

Sadly Missed and Fondly Remembered by
Brother, Sisters, Nephews and Loved Ones.

In Loving Memory



MDM. S. SUSY NATHAN

Born: 10-08-1930
Departed: 14-01-14

Fondly missed by
children, grandchildren
and loved ones.

*Your presence we miss,
Your memories we treasure,
Loving you always,
Forgetting you never.*

*"The Lord is my shepherd,
there is nothing
I shall want."*

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
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eternal life in the great beyond. Thank you
for your spiritual guidance and sharing the
wisdom of Christ through His words and
songs that will remain in our hearts.
You lived your life in accordance to the
Holy Spirit's guidance day and night.*

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Caritas Malaysia launches second appeal for relief funds

KUALA LUMPUR: Caritas Malaysia, an official arm of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia (CBCM) engaging in works of charity, relief, integral human development, care for creation, and social services, needs your support to continue its good work.

In December 2021, Caritas Malaysia Relief Fund was launched to raise funds for the many Malaysians affected by floods. The initial appeal raised RM1.168million and thus far, relief commitments amounting to RM901,901.00 have been made.

Caritas Malaysia responded to all local appeals received. An aid of RM186,901.00 was distributed to Malaysians affected by floods and fire in Semenanjung, Sabah, Sarawak — urban and rural communities, the homeless, and migrants living among us.

They also extended Malaysian solidarity for the basic needs of thousands of children and people affected by the civil war in Myanmar (RM231,360.00), the populations suffering severe hunger due to the economic crises in Sri Lanka (RM229,145.00), the flood victims across Pakistan (RM91,294.00), those affected by the earthquake in Indonesia (RM46,875.00), medical aid and cash dona-



(Malysiakini photo/Azreal Ishak)

tions for refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine (RM116,326.00).

The organisation recently launched its second appeal for the Caritas Malaysia Relief Fund nationwide, which runs from Jan 5, 2023, until Feb 22, 2023.

This drive enables contributions from dioceses and individuals or bodies for relief efforts, local or abroad. It supports the dioceses and communities in need and who are short of funds or resources to respond and, it gradually builds up people, processes, and structures

to have a more organised and systematic approach to relief efforts.

In addition to raising funds to support those in need, the organisation aims to invest in training staff and volunteers, particularly with the onset of climate change and ecological disasters.

They will join hands with local authorities and other organisations to educate Malaysians on the various causes and preventive measures of climate change and how to provide relief work during the resultant disasters. They

also need to make provisions to help some of the poorer communities rebuild their lives post-disaster and put in place mechanisms to strengthen their resilience. This will be long-term work for the Malaysian Church and Caritas.

"We propose putting aside a certain amount annually towards this purpose, to build the capacity of our volunteers and staff in relief work nationwide, for rehabilitation and community development post-disaster, as well as to communicate effectively with all donors and the public. The National Office has drawn up a finance policy for Caritas Malaysia as well as the Relief Fund. It will be discussed at the next board meeting," said Caritas Malaysia President, Bishop Bernard Paul, in a letter to the local arch/bishops.

A dedicated account is now open for the relief fund donations. The Relief Fund remains available to all dioceses where help is needed. However, each diocese, as traditionally practised, finances its social mission activities through its annual Lenten campaign and other activities.

For further information visit caritasmalaysia.net.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols reflects on funeral of pope emeritus Benedict XVI

VATICAN: In one way it was a very straightforward celebration of a funeral Mass as would take place at the death of any Catholic in any parish church. And yet, in another way, it was a uniquely historical event and an event of great emotional depth and stature.

I think we can say it's the first time (in over 200 years) that a pope has buried a pope who has just died, and in that sense, there was a uniqueness to it. But I think it was also a moment in which, for me certainly, there was a heightened sense of loss — a sense of my own sadness that Benedict is no longer with us in person. At the same time, the ceremony was an unshakable expression of faith and trust in the promises of Jesus. So, we had both sadness and hope, we had the grief of loss and the certainty of faith.

There were some words used in one of the prayers that appealed to me, particularly, and it was an appeal to Mary Salus Populi Romani, that she would intercede for Benedict to now see the face of Jesus and that we would be comforted on our pilgrim way.

Those words touched me because I reflected on how much Benedict, his life and his spirituality, was focused on a relationship with Jesus. Those books that he wrote about Jesus of Nazareth in some ways summed up not only his learning, but also his spirituality and his prayer.

The other day, Archbishop Georg Gänswein, who knew him better than anybody did, was saying that it was that image of Jesus always accompanying the Church, always being with the Church, that was the

most radically fundamental thing in pope emeritus Benedict's life.

And I was thinking of the time when I was in St Peter's Square when he gave his last homily as serving pope before he left for Castel Gandolfo. In that homily, he used the image of Jesus asleep in the back of the boat when the storm came on the Sea of Galilee and the disciples were frightened.

Archbishop Gänswein repeated that and gave a little gloss on it. He said, "Benedict used to say, 'but now Jesus never sleeps and He's always with us'."

So, during the Mass, I was thinking about those things and, quite simply, how lovable Benedict was and therefore thanking God for the gifts that He gave us through him. — **ICN**



Speaking shortly after the Requiem Mass in St Peter's Square for pope emeritus Benedict XVI, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, described the funeral as, in one way "a straightforward celebration of a funeral Mass," in another way, as a uniquely historical event "of great emotional depth and stature."



Before the wooden coffin is closed, Benedict XVI's personal secretary Archbishop Georg Gänswein and Msgr Diego Giovanni Ravelli, the Vatican's lead master of ceremonies for papal liturgies, place a white veil over the late pope's face. The action on January 4, 2023, is part of the funeral rites for popes. (Vatican Media)



The funeral Mass for the late pope emeritus Benedict XVI in St Peter's Square at the Vatican on January 5, 2023. (Vatican Media)