

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

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HERALD

THE CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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Rev. 1:5-6

And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.



Parishes begin the synodal process

P4



Clergy transfers in the KL Archdiocese

P5



The Pope and the Poor

P12

The gift of the Eucharist

US Bishops foster Eucharistic devotion with new document

BALTIMORE: US Bishops are calling on American Catholics to “enter more deeply by faith and love” into the Mystery of Mysteries, the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Meeting for the Fall General Assembly of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the bishops, on November 17, approved a document dedicated to the Eucharist with a secret electronic vote of 222 in favour and just eight against, with three abstentions - an overwhelming consensus of over 95 per cent.

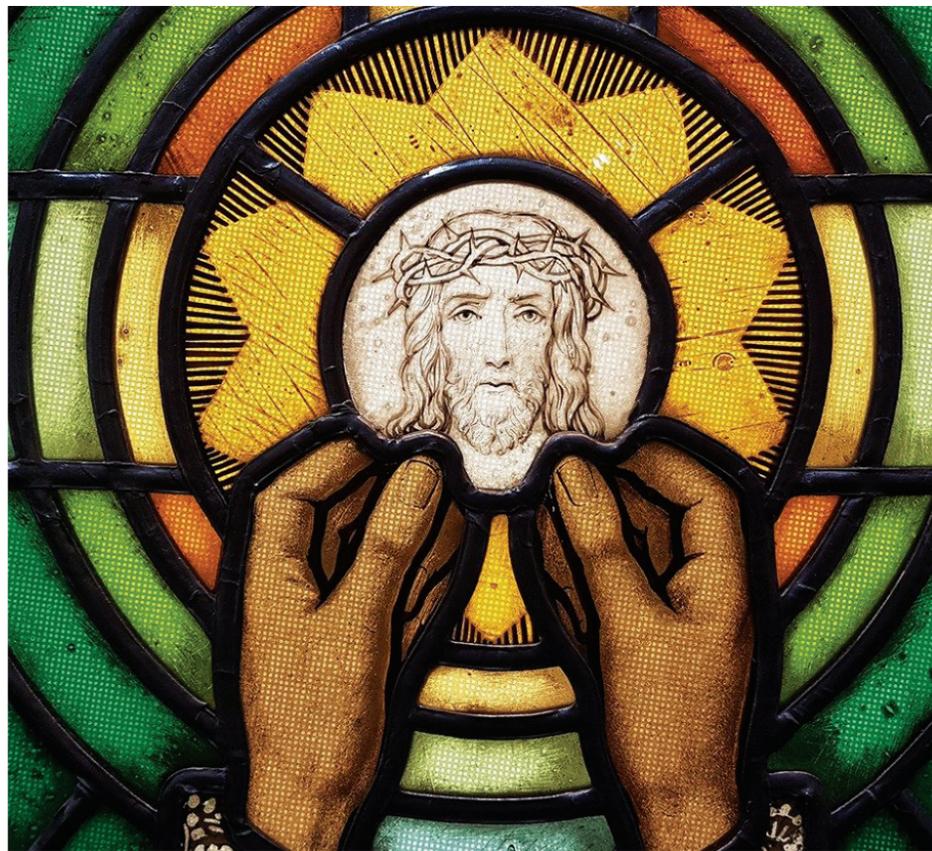
Entitled *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church*, the document is divided into two sections: *Christ's gift of Himself in the Eucharist and Our response to that gift*.

The document seeks to remind Catholics of Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist and that God is generous in giving His grace “if we, by His grace, humbly ask Him to give us what we need.”

“The Lord is with us in the Eucharistic Mystery celebrated in our parishes and missions, in our beautiful cathedrals and in our poorest chapels,” it reads.

The COVID-19 pandemic has discouraged some people from participating in the Mass in person, while others have felt their desire to adore Christ in the Eucharist strengthened. The document urges Catholics to never forget Jesus' words that “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within you” (Jn 6:53).

The Bishops' document reflects at length on the “gift” of the Eucharist, and recalls that the Eucharist “is nothing less than sharing in the



The Bishops of the United States vote to approve a document entitled “The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church”, and link it to a pastoral plan for Eucharistic renewal. (Vatican News photo)

very life of God, in the communion of love among the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

The Eucharist must be understood as a sacrifice, a “re-presentation of the sacrifice of Christ by which we are reconciled to the Father.”

Another essential aspect is the Real Presence of Christ, say the bishops. “The reality that, in

the Eucharist, bread and wine are truly transformed into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ without ceasing to appear as bread and wine to our five senses, is one of the central mysteries of the Catholic faith.”

The Bishops also call on American Catholics to worship Christ in the Blessed Sacra-

ment through Adoration, Processions and Forty Hour Devotions, as well as receiving Holy Communion.

The Eucharistic document then turns to our response to the gift of the Eucharist.

“Having been sanctified by the gift of the Eucharist and filled with faith, hope and charity, the faithful are called to respond to this gift,” it reads. “Indeed, it is only natural that we give thanks to the Lord for all that He has given to us.”

Our gratitude is best expressed when we take “a full, conscious and active part in the liturgical celebration.” This means paying attention to the prayers, Scripture readings and homily, as we also participate with our bodies by singing, kneeling, sitting, and standing.

The document notes that the Eucharist also involves our transformation in Christ, which touches on every aspect of our Christian lives, including our public life.

Receiving Christ in the Eucharist fills us with love that should extend to those around us, especially toward the poor and the most vulnerable.

Conversion is another important aspect, since our reception of the Eucharist can harm us if we receive the Sacrament in a state of mortal sin.

In conclusion, the document recalls that the Eucharist is food for our Christian journey, one which pushes us to engage in the Church's mission.

“At the very end of the celebration of the Eucharist, we who have received the Body and Blood of Christ and have been incorporated more profoundly into his Mystical Body are, likewise, sent out to proclaim the Good News for the salvation of the world: ‘Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.’ — *Vatican News*

Vatican releases theme for Pope's 2022 World Peace Day

VATICAN: Lasting peace in the world can be achieved only by responding to the needs of current and future generations, the Vatican said, as it announced the theme Pope Francis has chosen for his 2022 World Peace Day message.

Education, work, and dialogue between generations: tools for building lasting peace will be the theme for the January 1 commemoration and for the message Pope

Francis will write for the occasion, said a Vatican communique published on November 13.

The Vatican said education, work and dialogue are consistently evolving and that Pope Francis' message will “propose an innovative reading that responds to the needs of current and future times”.

The Pope's message, the communique said, will be an invitation “to read the signs

of the times with the eyes of faith, so that the direction of this change awakens new and old questions with which it is right and necessary to be confronted”.

Pope Francis will seek to answer questions about education and how it contributes to lasting peace, the Vatican said. He will also address how work can “respond more or less to the vital needs of human beings on justice and freedom”.

Lastly, the Vatican said the Pope's message will also look at the extent to which generations are in solidarity with each other and whether governments “succeed in setting a horizon of peace”.

The Pope's full message for World Peace Day, traditionally released by the Vatican in mid-December, is sent, through Vatican diplomats, to the leaders of nations around the world. — *ucanews.com*

RUMINATIONS

A prodigal daughter's 50-year journey in the wilderness

In my recent book, *Late Have I Loved Thee*, I wrote about how although I was so fortunate to grow up a Catholic in the bosom of the Lord, when I got caught up with the hedonism of life, how carelessly I put Jesus aside. It was a long period of 50 years in my self-inflicted 'wilderness' before I was able to find and return to God, and when I did, I received not only His forgiveness but the full bounty of His love — endless, unconditional and life-changing.

My story is like that of the profligate Prodigal Son in the Bible who, after squandering his inheritance, returns to his father for forgiveness and finds that he is not scorned but is welcomed back with open arms and heartily celebrated with the fatted calf!

In my case, I was the Prodigal Daughter, enjoying a materialistic 'Godless' existence as a lawyer in Tokyo, New York and Hong Kong. I had grown up with a most solid Catholic upbringing from my parents, grandparents and the extended circle of aunts and uncles, all of whom were Catholic to their core. But, when I left my faith, God did not abandon me. I did not know it then, but the imprints of my Catholic upbringing and education during my childhood were already deeply embedded in me. God never quite goes away; just like the 'Hound of Heaven' in the poem by Francis Thompson, God continues to pursue us until we come back to the fold.



By
**Joan Foo
Mahony**

At school in Kuala Lumpur, at the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus, Bukit Nanas, I was blessed to know Sr Daniel Ee who taught me more than English; she became my friend and the 'guardian angel' who opened my eyes to the wonder of the words of God in the Bible. That imprint stayed with me.

Today, my huge family live all over the world. Some lead nominal Christian lives; most are quite ardent Catholics. My cousin Theresa Foo is a cantor and pianist in the Holy Family Church in Kajang and my cousin Pat Foo sings in the choir of St. Francis Xavier's Church. None of my siblings ever miss Sunday Mass. They derive great happiness from their faith. In fact, most of my extended family members never really strayed away from the Church — as I did — the crazy butterfly flitting to Buddhism and Hinduism and then finally back to finding Jesus!

I have been married to Terry Mahony for 33 years. Being married to a practising Catholic husband; observing his Catholic piety — how he never missed Sunday Mass or his evening prayers — no matter where in

the world we were — all this made an indelible mark on me. In Hong Kong, more signs and wonders from God — when we moved to our new apartment, we had no idea that it was close to a church; just down a street to the beautiful Gothic style Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Indeed, there would be no excuse not to go to church! And then there was Rome and the Vatican City, where Terry's pro bono work at the Jesuit Foundation in Rome meant that we would go every year to Rome for Terry's board meetings. We even met His Holiness Pope Francis when we were invited to Mass at his private chapel in Santa Marta at the Vatican. Signs and wonders indeed.

Finally, God gave me the big push! He sent me his good shepherd in the form of Fr Thomas Montanaro LC a priest from Rome who was visiting Hong Kong in January 2019. Through a good friend, I was invited to a small dinner in Macau and there this soft-spoken and articulate priest fully opened my eyes to the glory of the Kingdom of God. Fr Thomas soon returned to Rome, but he continued guiding me via WhatsApp and email and soon, I asked myself why on earth I was still waiting to come back fully to the Lord. So, over Easter in 2019, I went to confession in Hong Kong and then for Holy Communion with Terry. He was beaming from ear to ear; this was the first time in our marriage that we had gone together for the Eucharistic sacrament.

For 50 years, my ego and my attachment to the good life had kept me away from the path of divine love. Today, I can truly say that with the renewal of my Catholic faith, I have found, and been given, a unique and highest form of love which is separate from the love of fathers, mothers, relations and distinct from the physical and tender passion of lovers.

As St Augustine wrote, this joyous love for God; this personal relationship with Jesus is pretty special; difficult to really describe. By loving God, I learnt how to construe humanity and how to love mankind. I also learnt that God's love for us is unconditional and boundless.

Former lawyer and now author and publisher, Joan Foo Mahony writes and publishes an array of subject matters as Catholic in its universality as Joan is herself a Catholic in her faith. Joan's recent book "Millennials meet Mary" (a biography of the Virgin Mary) was launched in May 2020 at the Vatican Museum to a worldwide audience at the height of the COVID Pandemic by Zoom Webinar. Another book written during the COVID Pandemic is "Late Have I Loved Thee" — Joan's Testimonial where she shares her spiritual journey.

For Joan's other books, visit: www.jffpublishing.com and www.millennials-meetmary.com

A King of compassionate love

The world is not what it was before. It is going through critical times. It witnesses, in an unprecedented way, growing incidents of violence, economic polarisation, racism, poverty, systematic oppression, religious fundamentalism, cultural breakdown, environmental pollution and, added to this, there is the novel coronavirus. There is nothing in our lifetime that has affected the world as radically as COVID-19.

These challenges have raised the existential question — what is the meaning and purpose of life? Are compassion and love still meaningful in the present scenario? Or have they lost all meaning in the present-day context?

There is an ever-growing degradation of human values. There is a constant fear that hinders the development of a self-actualised person in the language of psychology, spiritual person in the language of a religion and an informed person in the language of secular. As a result, we are growing into a civilisation of indifference and insensitivity.

All the problems in our society can, directly or indirectly, be traced back to a lack of reverence and recognition of the divine in human beings — in one's own self and others. Lack of awareness of the divine, both immanent and transcendent, personal and impersonal, is the root cause of all the malaise in our world. A loss of sense of the sacred has given way to rampant individualism, excessive consumerism, and fundamentalism. In a world that is conflict-ridden,

understanding the need for infusing God-awareness in human beings is crucial.

I have taken the theme "Are you the King of the Jews? And so, you are king?" Jesus answered "Yes, I am a King", but He is a king of compassionate love. I also intend to explore some ways and means of addressing the challenges of the third millennium through the universal kingship of Jesus Christ. There is every hope that kingship of Jesus Christ can always bring about transformation in human beings.

Human beings are looking for fulfilment and happiness. *Gaudium est spes* appeals to all people to not be afraid of seeking to find the true meaning of life. We are lost in the uncertainties, worries and cares of the world. The document calls us to "go deeper" and thus to live a meaningful life. In the pursuit of happiness and fulfilment, humans pursue a horizontal path of wealth and power. But a deeper reflection on human reality indicates that horizontal paths can't give us real meaning or a life of fulfilment. What gives real meaning is the vertical path, a transcendence towards God.

Being preoccupied with one's own little self is the root cause of all problems. All sorts of problems, ups and downs, vagaries of life affect one's life. Many are the paths available to human beings, "to go beyond" this little egoistic self. However, not all paths are valid and legitimate. Many follow the path of addictions — to alcohol, things, relationships, habits, positions, name and fame, etc — to forget their

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Fr Cyril Mannayagam

Christ the King

Readings: Daniel 7:13-14;

Revelation 1:5-8;

Gospel: John 18:33b-37

problems. However, it does not help one in the long run. Religions provide us with various paths to move beyond one's own little self and towards transcendence. One such path is the kingship of Jesus Christ — a compassionate love. It was practised by towering personalities such as Jesus, the Buddha and, in recent times, Mother Teresa. Love comes from God and returns to God. Love can transform everything.

Firstly, the Kingship of Jesus Christ is compassion and love. Secondly, we are here to reflect God's compassion and love. However, our selfish and egoistic self does not realise the true spirit of religion. As a result, we tend to grow in sectarianism and fundamentalism which divides person from person. Today, many want to be spiritual but not religious. Compassionate love can bridge the gap between spirituality and religiosity.

Finally, another name for God is compassionate love. If human beings are filled with compassion and love, they can't remain with their selfish and egoistic self but will naturally transcend themselves. Having experienced compassion and love means to move towards transcendence, which becomes the *summum bonum* of our life. The best expression of transcendence is found in the words of St Augustine,

"Our hearts are restless until they rest in you." By nature, God is transcendent, and humans are transcending. Hence, our aim in life is to transcend to the Transcendent.

What Jesus did 2000 years ago, you and I are expected to do today. He said "love one another as I have loved you." This commandment can be accomplished through only compassionate love. And what unites all of us is humanity. This humanity must be built on compassionate love. Science and technology were acting like semi-gods and goddesses, but the pandemic has made us understand their limitations and be humbled before nature.

Hence, the new world order must be built on love and compassion. "For the compassion of human beings is for their neighbour, but the compassion of the Lord Jesus is for every living thing."

● *Fr Cyril Mannayagam is from the diocese of Malacca-Johore. He is currently a lecturer at St Peter's College in Kuching.*

Penang Diocese Diary of Bishop Sebastian Francis Nov/Dec 2021

- Nov 21** *First Holy Communion – Minor Basilica of St Anne, BM*
- Nov 22** *Christ the King Talk (Malacca Johore)*
- Dec 1** *Parish Pastoral Assembly – Minor Basilica of St Anne, BM*
- Dec 8** *Final Profession of Sr Winnie Vun FMM – Kota Bahru*
- Dec 24-26** *Christmas – Minor Basilica of St Anne, BM*

Fr Lazorous Uhin celebrates sacerdotal silver jubilee

KENINGAU: Fr Lazorous Uhin celebrated the silver jubilee of his priesthood on November 11 with Mass at the Cathedral of St Francis Xavier.

Concelebrating with him were Bishop Cornelius Piong, Frs Bonaventure Unting, Wilfred James, David Gasikol, David Mamat, Joseph Gapitang and Fr Dr Charles Chiew. Deacon Bede Morti Lambutan assisted.

In his homily, Fr Lazorous reflected on his priestly journey through the reading that day which was about the kingdom of God. He stated that during his 25 years of priesthood, he realised how important the role of a person with the title of “priest” is in spreading the kingdom of God which is full of love.

Fr Lazorous also thanked Bishop Cornelius for his presence, the chairpersons of the various committees, his family members and parishioners who came to support.

Looking back at the challenges, starting

from the day he decided to answer the call to be a priest, Fr Lazorous said it was something very “difficult” at first. “My parents objected to my decision to enter the seminary and so I had to quietly leave for Kuching. While in the seminary, I once failed a particular subject. Thankfully Fr Charles Chiew was always there to help me. Those challenges made me feel unworthy but, in the end, those challenges strengthened me. After all, just as the Gospel of John 15:16 says, “You did not choose me, but I chose you,” he added.

Bishop Cornelius Piong expressed his gratitude that Fr Lazorous had answered the call to be a priest. “It is true that God calls us, and not only does He call us, He will also sustain us.

“A priest must be active in his community. Why? Because we have a mission, which is, to bring and present the kingdom of God to the people.” — **By Juanis Marcus, Catholic Sabah**



Fr Lazorous Uhin



Deacon Bede Morti Lambutan

Diaconate Ordination of Bede Morti Lambutan

KENINGAU: *Love of a Friend* from John 15:13 was the theme chosen by seminarian Bede Morti Lambutan for his diaconate ordination on October 30.

The Ordination Mass was held at the Keningau Diocesan Square and presided over by His Lordship Bishop Cornelius Piong.

Prior to his ordination, Deacon Morti had undergone pastoral exposure in the Legion of Mary, Charismatic Renewal Movement and Children’s Liturgy, Hospital Sentosa,

Cheshire Home, Home of Peace, Youth Ministry for CYM St. Barnabas, Kg Skiat Lama, Bau, Campus Ministry of the Archdiocese of Kuching, St Theresa Church, Tambunan, St Anthony Church, Bintulu and St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Keningau.

During his speech, Deacon Morti thanked all who were involved in his formation. “We know the call is a mystery. However, the spirit of the community was often with me, and this help enabled me to unravel the mystery of the call. You are all friends.

Friends who radiate the Love of Christ,” explained Deacon Morti.

Bishop Cornelius congratulated Deacon Morti and called all parties to continue to help him, especially to pray for him so that he can be ordained a priest. “In the past, only a few parishioners served in Nabawan, but through constant effort, like a mustard seed, the kingdom of God grows slowly, and the proof is in the ordination today,” said Bishop Cornelius. — **By Juanis Marcus, Catholic Sabah**



DIOCESE OF MALACCA JOHORE



MJD News Update #66

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

A blessed feast day to the Catholic Community of Kulai, whose patron is Christ the King. The Pope has called for the World Youth Day to coincide with this feast. On the First Sunday of Advent, the MJD launches the “Road to MJD50 in 2023”.

Listening Time. The Synod Process unveils and reveals several significant reflections.

This consultation requires conversation, listening and discernment. The objective of the Synod process is simply a personal and collective conversion to a more synodal way of being Church.

It is a *kairos* moment, adopted to the local context to include people of other faiths; participation of congregations and movements within local Churches. There is disbelief among Catholics that they are being consulted on the internal life of the Church. They fear expressing themselves because of a certain culture, and fear of church authority can impede honest sharing. Let this exercise of the Synodal Process be a sharing, an encounter of others, deep listening and discerning the movement of the Spirit in all things.

A Thought for the Week: Repeated Jokes

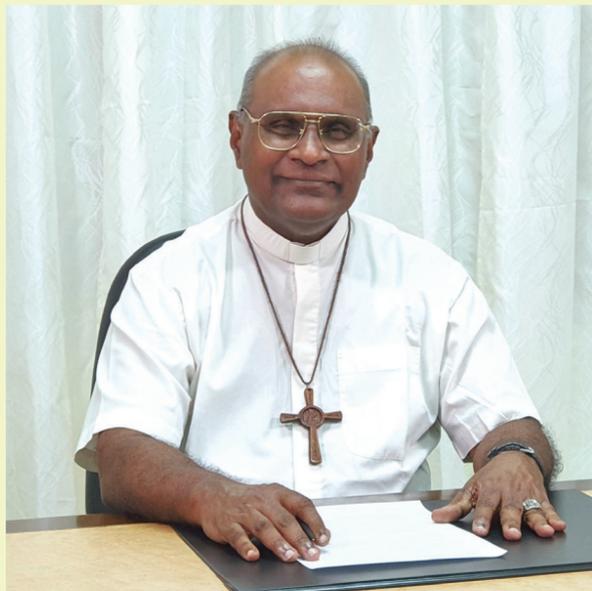
People had been coming to the wise man, complaining about the same problems every time. One day he told them a joke, and everyone roared with laughter. After a couple of minutes, he told them the same joke and only a few of them smiled. When he told the same joke for the third time, no one laughed. The wise man smiled and said: “You don’t laugh at the same joke over and over.

So why are you always crying about the same problem?”

Something to think about: Worrying won’t solve your problems, it’ll just waste your time and energy.

Announcements for this Week:

1. The *Annual Clergy Discernment* for the year 2021 is over.



MJD prepares for 2022 with the theme: *Salt of the Earth and Light of the World*. It is about remembering our baptismal call to Communion, Participation & Mission. Outstanding focus for the year is the Synodal Process and its conclusion in June 2022, the launch of MJD50 and the ongoing PPAs.

2. The MJD Young People Network have begun their *Malacca Johore Diocese Young People Day (MJDYPD)* in preparation for the World Youth Day on the Feast of Christ the King. On the 20th, the youths will meet to dialogue with the *Bishop and the two Vicar Generals*. On the 21st, there will be the MJDYPD Mass celebrated by the Bishop.

3. *Advent is here again.* It is a time to prepare for the coming of the Lord, the second coming not the first Christmas, not the baby Jesus.

4. *New SOPs for Malacca Johore parishes.* Categorized as National Recovery Plan Phase 4, the following are guidelines from the Kementerian Perpaduan Negara:

Religious activities, prayers and worship, and wedding ser-

vices for Rumah Ibadat Selain Islam are permitted, provided:

- The *number of persons* allowed depend on the capacity of church after physical distancing of one metre has been factored in.
- There is *no time limit* restriction on worship, liturgy or rituals.
- The *parish health teams or parish leaders* are responsible for the congregation’s compliance with guideline regarding personal hygiene, face masks and physical distancing.

This week’s Question and Query.

The Q asks: *Why must we face the Real You?*

1. Only the spiritually mature are aware that they are not the persona (mask) that many present to others.
2. Facing the “Real You” liberates. One recognises their manufactured self-image as a creation of their minds, desires, and choices (even the opinions of others).
3. Carl Jung said: “Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves”. In the end, the face we turn toward ourself is the face we will turn toward the outer world.
4. The first reality is you. Know yourself to know the world and the others. People who accept themselves accept others. People who hate themselves hate others.

Thank you for reading. *Simply love what God sees in you. Many of us never go there because, to be loved in this way is to live in the naked now, and it is indeed a very naked moment.* (Fr Richard Rohr)

Let us continue “Building His Kingdom” Together.

Bishop Bernard Paul DD
November 19, 2021

[Click here to watch the video](#)



The synodal process in the KL Archdiocese

KUALA LUMPUR: Pope Francis invited the universal Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission. The Church of God is convoked in Synod.

The road entitled “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission” was launched in Rome on October 9 and 10, 2021, while others Churches around the world launched it on Oct 17, 2021. This path of synodality, journeyed together, enacts and manifests the nature of the Church as the pilgrim and missionary People of God.

“How does this “journeying together,” which takes place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to Her; and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?”

Most local parishes have begun to inform the faithful about the synod.

Prayer for the Synod *Adsumus Sancte Spiritus*

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

CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

The Synodal process was launched on October 29 with an online briefing for the parish’s ministry leaders by Fr Dr Clarence Devadass and Fr Bernard Hyacinth SJ.

We have also invited others not associated to these groups to email their respective answers either to the BEC coordinators or to the Secretariat directly.

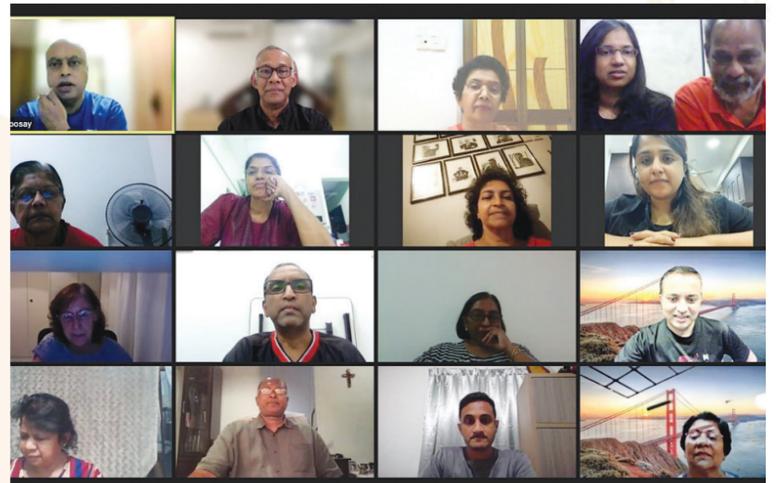
It was certainly an information-rich experience and something new to everyone. To begin with, everyone was awed by the magnitude of this exercise. There were many questions, and participants faced many emotions during the briefing and during the process with their respective groups.

Besides the actual process being

very tedious and challenging, all members are finding the time given to do the exercise too short. Some find the questions too deep, while others think the exercise is limiting the people’s capacity to consider other issues. Despite the anxieties and challenges, everyone thinks it is a good exercise and it’s bringing people together.

Most importantly, we are excited and looking forward to how and where the Holy Spirit is leading all of us.

The parish will answer all themes across ministries and BECs with each attempting at least two themes. Members are encouraged to share the questions with friends and family. Each BEC member is tagged to a senior member, in an



attempt to go through the questions verbally and take notes of their sharing. Ministry coordinators will

collate all responses and submit them to the parish by November 28.— *By Jacob Dass*

CHURCH OF ST JOSEPH



The nine-member Parish Synod Team (PST) recently presented the synodal process to their BEC and ministries leaders. The Church aims to do all 10 themes across its 34 BECs, with 10 groups of three BECs each, addressing one theme. Other ministries and groups, including the differently abled Eagle’s Wing Ministry, will attempt at least two to three themes each. Catechism teachers are to work with students starting from standard three.

Materials have been distributed via text messages and email, and almost everyone is now in the Synod-

al process. From now till December 2021, parishioners are invited to listen and discern their synodal before putting their thoughts, insights and reflections onto paper when answering the 10 fundamental questions in recalling experiences (Communion), re-reading the experiences (Participation) and gathering fruit to share (Mission).

“As we undertake this task, let us be reminded that by listening and discerning as a community, we are building up our faith in the “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.” — *By Fr George Packiasamy*



CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF GOOD HEALTH

Parishioners of the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Health, Kg Pandan, were given a briefing on the three phrases of the synod by seminarian Brother Gabriel Puvan, after the 5.30pm Mass on Sunday, November 7, 2021.

Bro Gabriel said, “In our prepara-

tion, we are called to listen to Jesus through the Scripture based on three scenes — ‘Jesus’, ‘The Crowd’ and ‘The Apostles’.”

At the parish level, a representative from each of the four main language groups will to discuss, reflect and proceed accordingly.

In the Preparatory Phase: Diocesan phase, parishioners from the BECs, ministries and/or language groups can complete the question sheets given, focusing on themes No II, III or VIII. — *By Bernard Anthony*

• More reports next week



Links to Synod questionnaires

KOTA KINABALU ARCHDIOCESE

<https://forms.gle/N9FW9FXBGM-srvnxA7>

PENANG DIOCESE

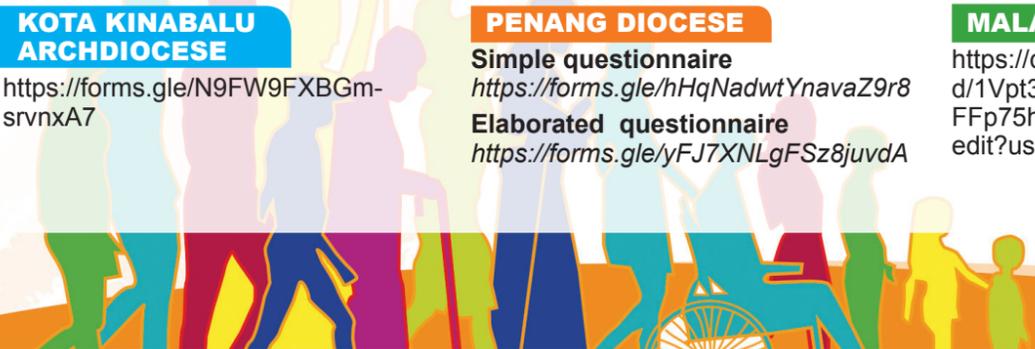
Simple questionnaire
<https://forms.gle/hHqNadwtYnavaZ9r8>
Elaborated questionnaire
<https://forms.gle/yFJ7XNLgFSz8juvdA>

MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Vpt3BKv_SYA7_CmnAKPs-FFp75hoiu3SKxAqn1EiS4gA/edit?usp=sharing

MIRI DIOCESE

<https://forms.gle/nNaru6ApiajT8Ad49>
QR code for the teens questionnaire





ARCHDIOCESE OF KUALA LUMPUR

Chan/MC/27/2021

Clergy transfers in KL Archdiocese

1.0. After having consulted the members of the College of Consultors, His Grace Most Rev Julian Leow DD, the Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, has appointed the clergy named in the appendix attached hereto to the various parishes as listed in the same appendix. These appointments will take effect from January 10, 2022.

2.0. Each Parish Priest/Administrator is to contact the Archdiocesan Finance Committee to make arrangements for a financial handover to the incoming priest(s) of all temporal goods, accounts, books and registers kept at

each parish.

3.0. Each Parish Priest/Administrator is to prepare a pastoral handover file/ manual which should include the following information:

- a. All current staff, terms of employment/contract (full time/part time/pastoral workers), current salaries/allowances
- b. A summary of any building/renovation/upgrading project
- c. The Parish Pastoral Plan
- d. Programmes/events/feast days for 2022
- e. List of all weddings in 2022, outstanding PNIs, CMPC presenters

ing PNIs, CMPC presenters

- f. List of ministry heads and contact details
- g. List of BEC Coordinators and contact details
- h. List of PPC, PCC, Language Apostolates and PFC members and contact details
- i. List of hospitals (public and private) covered by the parish
- j. Any other special pastoral practices / customs or areas of care, eg, campus ministry, migrant outreach, orang asli communities, cemeteries, kindergarten etc.

4.0. His Grace Archbishop Julian Leow would like to seek the cooperation of all the faithful, especially lay leaders and parish staff, to give your full support and assistance to facilitate a smooth handing over of all parishes during this period of transition.



Fr Michael Chua
Chancellor
Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur
November 19, 2021

KL CENTRAL DISTRICT



Cathedral of St John, KL
Fr Gerard Theraviam
Parish Priest
Fr Robert Kham
Priest in residence



Church of St Anthony, KL
Fr Clarence Devadass
Parish Priest



Fr Eugene Benedict
Assistant Priest



Church of Holy Rosary, KL
Fr Dominic Tan
Parish Priest



Fr Joachim Tan
Priest in residence



Church of Our Lady of Fatima, KL
Fr William Michael
Parish Priest

PAHANG - TERENGGANU DISTRICT



Church of St Thomas, Kuantan
Fr George Packiasamy
Parish Priest



Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Mentakab
Fr Terrance Thomas
Parish Priest



Church of the Sacred Heart, Bentong
Fr Clement Lim
Parish Priest



Catholic Mission, Terengganu
Fr Dionysius (Danny) Mathews
Parish Administrator

KL NORTH DISTRICT



Church of St Joseph, Sentul
Fr Frederick Joseph
Parish Priest



Msgr James Gnanapiragasam
Priest in residence



Church of Jesus Caritas, Kepong / Chapel of Kristus Aman, TTDI
Fr Simon Lau
Parish Priest



Fr Bernard Hyacinth SJ
Assistant Priest



Church of Christ the Light, Desa Jaya / Chapel of Christ the King, Selayang
Fr Peter Anthony
Parish Administrator



Church of the Good Shepherd, Setapak
Msgr Mitchel Joseph
Parish Priest



Fr Jean-Claude Lourdes
Priest in residence



Church of the Risen Christ, KL
Fr Edwin Peter
Parish Priest

KLANG DISTRICT



Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Klang
Fr Gregory Chan
Parish Priest



Fr Ferdinand Magimay
Assistant Priest



Church of St Anne, Port Klang
Fr David Arulanatham
Parish Priest



Church of the Holy Redeemer, Klang
Fr Andrew Kooi
Parish Priest



Chapel of St Theresa, Pandamaran
Fr Paulino Miranda
Priest in residence



Church of Sts Peter and Paul, Banting
Fr Richard Anthonsamy SJ
Parish Administrator

NEGERI DISTRICT



Church of the Visitation, Seremban
Fr Xavier Andrew
Parish Priest



Fr Kenneth Gopal OCD
Assistant Priest



Fr Philip Tay OCD
Assistant Priest



Church of St John Marie Vianney, Tampin
Fr Albet Arockiasamy
Parish Priest



Church of the Immaculate Conception, Port Dickson
Fr Jestus Pereira
Parish Priest



Church of St Theresa, Nilai & Church of St Aloysius, Mantin
Fr Christopher Soosaipillai
Parish Priest



Fr Christopher Loh OCD
(will assist with Mandarin Masses on weekends)

KL SOUTH DISTRICT



Church of St Francis of Assisi, Cheras
Fr Paul Cheong OFM Cap
Parish Priest



Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, KL (Chapel of Our Lady of Good Health)
Fr Stanislaus Soosaimariam
Parish Priest



Church of the Holy Family, Kajang
Fr Michael Chua
Parish Priest



Fr Bonaventure Rayappan
Assistant Priest



Fr Philip Chua
Assistant Priest
(assigned for Mandarin Masses at the Church of the Sacred Heart on Sundays).



Fr Francis Go OFM Cap
(assigned for Mandarin Masses at the Church of the Good Shepherd on Sundays).

NORTH WEST DISTRICT



Church of St Jude, Rawang
Fr Vincent Thomas
Parish Priest



Church of St Paul the Hermit, Bestari Jaya
Fr James Gabriel
Parish Priest



Church of St Paul the Apostle, KKB
Fr V. A. Michael
Parish Priest



Church of Our Lady of Mt Carmel, Cameron Highlands
Fr Augustine Lee
Parish Priest

PETALING DISTRICT



Church of the Assumption, PJ
Msgr Leonard Lexson
Parish Priest



Fr Biju
Priest in Residence



Church of St Francis Xavier, PJ
Fr Norris Seenivasan SJ
Parish Priest



Fr Alvin Ho SJ
Assistant Priest
(Subject to new appointments at a later date).



Church of St Thomas More, Subang Jaya
Fr Patrick Boudville
Parish Priest



Church of St Ignatius, PJ
Fr Lawrence Ng CDD
Parish Priest



Fr Martin Then CDD
Assistant Priest



Fr Anthony Chan CDD
Assistant Priest



Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Puchong
Fr Raymond Pereira
Parish Priest



Church of the Divine Mercy, Shah Alam
Fr Alan Pereira
Parish Priest

Deacon Michel Dass
Assistant Priest

Pandemic forces changes to Sabah's clergy annual retreat

KOTA KINABALU: If I were able to make an investment for my future today, what would I be willing to invest in for my happiness?

This was the first question posed by Archbishop Julian Leow, via Zoom, to the clergy of Sabah during their annual retreat. Archbishop Julian is this year's retreat master for the annual spiritual exercises of the Sabah clergy.

Over the course of five days, from November 8-12, the Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur led the clergy of Sabah through a series of meditations. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and the difficulty of flying over to Sabah, he had to guide the retreat remotely through video call.

In his reflections, the archbishop led us to reflect on all the important things we would invest in, and the most important would be relationships. And this was the main theme of the retreat.

Beginning on Monday evening with the introductory meditation, we were asked to evaluate all our relationships individually. He listed the five important relationships we should have as priests namely, our relationship with God, the self, the presbyterium, society and the environment.



Mass during the Clergy Retreat at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Nov 8-12, 2021.

Each day, we attended two meditations, each specifically focusing on two relationships. The archbishop shared many personal and pastoral experiences which many of us could relate to very easily. In each meditation, he also led us to reflect on certain points in each of these relationships in relation to our priesthood.

On the first meditation focusing on our relationship with God, we were asked how close we are to God and if we have drifted far from him during this pandemic and have lost our identity as priests.

The second meditation was on the relationship with self; we were called to examine our lives and ask "Am I then spurred to question, challenge and be concerned about myself?"

In the third meditation, we were further asked to look at our other relationships, namely our family, friends and ex-colleagues before we entered the seminary.

The fourth meditation centred on our relationship with the presbyterium, where we reflected on the status of our relationship with our fellow priests who are our closest collaborators. In the fifth meditation, Archbishop

Julian shared some of the difficult decisions he had to make as bishop to his presbyterium.

During the sixth and seventh meditations on relationship with society, we were asked to look towards the attitude of God towards sinners and emulate him.

The last meditation helped us to reflect on our relationship with the environment and our role as its stewards.

The clergy of the three Sabah dioceses typically would spend five days together in Bundu Tuhan for devotion, prayer, and to participate in the meditations and spiritual exercises. Mass, Lauds and Vespers and Holy Hour are celebrated together as well, and the sacrament of reconciliation is provided throughout the duration of the retreat.

Unlike previous years however, the clergy of the three dioceses could not gather in Bundu Tuhan this year due to the pandemic. Only the clergy of the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu gathered at Sacred Heart Cathedral while those of the Keningau and Sandakan dioceses, just like our retreat master, could only participate through Zoom from their respective parishes. — **By Fr Joshua Liew, Catholic Sabah**

KL Presbyterate meet online for CAPA

KUALA LUMPUR: The Clergy Annual Pastoral Assembly (CAPA) is a gathering of priests of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, usually held in January, to reflect on pastoral issues. It is a time for the clergy to understand themselves better so that they're able to become better pastors to their flock.

Since the first phase of Synod 2023 is underway in the global Church, Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, Most Rev Julian Leow, decided to bring forward CAPA to November 2021 so that the clergy could also share on the ten Synodal themes provided by the Vatican.

"The clergy of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur will be meeting for CAPA where we will, like all members of the laity, ponder upon the questions of the Synod. As clergy, we will also discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church and to us," said Archbishop Julian.

"Another reason for bringing CAPA forward is because in January 2022, the priests of the Archdiocese would have just relocated to their new parishes following the reshuffle and transfers of clergy that takes place every six years."

The current CAPA, which was held from November 16 to 18, was initially planned as a physical event at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre. However, since a few members of the clergy tested positive for COVID-19 and a few

others were undergoing quarantine after being in close contact with COVID-19 patients, a pastoral decision was made to conduct the assembly online instead.

Members of the clergy who were looking forward to meeting their comrades in person after almost two years apart were disappointed at the decision at not being able to meet in person. However, it was a decision made for the well-being of everyone.

During CAPA, the clergy were divided into groups of six members to tackle the ten synodal themes. They were also given opportunities to provide feedback after listening to the response from each group. All feedback was compiled and presented as summary findings on the final day. In the evenings after dinner, the clergy caught up with each other through chitchat, stories, and jokes.

True to the spirit of the Synodal journey of walking together as Church, the laity were invited to join the clergy in vespers and Holy Hour, which were livestreamed via YouTube. This was held on the second day of CAPA.

The Director and Assistant Director of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute, Fr Eugene Benedict and Fr Edwin Peter respectively, who were proactive and diligent in preparing daily updates about CAPA to be shared with the laity,



KL Clergy Annual Pastoral Assembly from Nov 16-18, 2021.

said that they received positive feedback.

"Some of the people had shared with me that the daily updates helped them join the clergy in prayer. This is collaborative ministry in action," said Fr Eugene.

"Another person said that she had been touched by testimonies of the clergy on their struggles and experiences. She hopes the laity will be aware of these challenges faced by priests and will support them with continuous prayer," said Fr Edwin.

In his closing remarks, Archbishop Julian

said that the exercise of listening to each other is a healing process. He urged the clergy to continue listening to the Holy Spirit and pointed out the need to listen from the experiences of the laity and religious.

"In this process, it is important to be patient with one another, as we need everyone," he says. — **By Julie Lim**

To read more on the CAPA, go to: <https://www.heraldmalaysia.com/news/updates-on-capaday-2-and-day-3/628435>

Children and the Cyberworld

Children are probably the most vulnerable group of users in the cyberworld. Whilst the Internet is a source of information for children to learn and communicate, they are also exposed to various risks that could impact their psychological development.

In a recent episode of the *Catholics @Home* podcast, Dr Fam Jia Yuin, a lecturer with the Department of Psychology at HELP University, and Shamir Rajadurai, a crime prevention specialist from Prevent Crime Now, spoke about the risks affecting children in the cyberworld.

"There are always risks and threats

in every situation. But with the Internet, we're exposed to different types of danger," says Shamir.

"According to research, 70 per cent of children globally between the ages of 17 and 18 have accidentally encountered pornography on the internet. What's even more alarming is that 20 per cent of all internet pornography involves children. That's how easily pornography is available on the internet."

Citing paedophiles as a risk for children, Shamir explains, "Paedophiles are adults who prey on underage children for their sexual pleasure. Their *modus operandi* is



to befriend and slowly build trust with the child until they're able to manipulate the child into committing sexual acts. The paedophile may even threaten to blackmail the child by posting the child's nude photos on social media."

Apart from common risks such as child grooming and pornography, Dr Fam said that children are also exposed to psychological risk.

Children could also develop low self-esteem and negative body image issues by comparing themselves to celebrities and influencers who exude 'perfect' looks.

"When children use the Internet for a reasonable amount of time, it becomes a positive experience in learning. They will have entertainment as well. But when they're seated in front of the device for long hours, then it could lead to addiction," he says.

"According to the American Academy of Paediatrics, parents should limit the screen time for their children to two hours per day.

"While parents may be able to limit the amount of time their children spend on the Internet, their children are still thinking about it even when they're not using it. Therefore, imposing a time limit to Internet usage will not solve its psychological impact."

"Not many parents are aware of the side effects or the content that their children are viewing over the Internet and social media. It is important for parents to monitor and filter what their children are viewing," said Dr Fam. — **By Julie Lim**

To view this podcast, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CVMI/fvDPA>

Visitation parish organises free/flea market for those in need

SEREMBAN: A free/flea market held at the Catholic Centre in the Church of the Visitation on October 30 and 31 raised RM4027.00.

This money will be channelled to the Visitation Parish Integral Human Development (PIHD) Ministry's fund to continue the work of reaching out to people in need.

All the items given were sourced from our parish's *Laudato Si*, 3R (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) project and from some kind parishioners who supported the flea market. They ranged from clothing, cuddly

toys, books, household items, bags, shoes, decorative objects, accessories, carpets, and electric appliances to Christmas trees.

Volunteers worked diligently for eight days to set up the free/flea market. Fr Xavier Andrew's occasional surprise visits gave a good boost to them all.

The idea of the F/F market was specially to invite our PIHDM adoptees and FIN (Friends In Need) to come and shop for items they needed, which were offered at very low prices. Some items were given away

free, especially clothing.

On Oct 30, the adoptees were given their monthly dry food rations plus RM100 cash as a Deepavali gift.

On Nov 7, Tzu Chi teams came to the Catholic Centre and collected the remaining clothing for recycling.

Other items were set aside for future flea markets.

Many thanks to all volunteers and contributors for their support towards our common goal on Pope Francis' call to *Laudato Si*'. — *By Megan Chai and Bernadette Wong*



People looking through the items at the free/flea market.

St John's Cathedral celebrates World Day of the Poor

KUALA LUMPUR: Pope Francis, in his message at Assisi in conjunction with World Day of the Poor said, "Every one of us needs others, and even weakness, if experienced together, can become a strength that will make the world better."

"We do not face difficulties alone but together, and only together can we overcome them, without giving in to the temptation to give up and fall into loneliness or sadness. His encouragement to us to "Know how to be content with the little we have and to share it with others," is the most important motivation for us to continue to do His will in our service to the poor and we hope to make a difference in our little ways through the Parish Integral Human Development (PIHD) of the Cathedral of St John.

Following the 9.00am Eucharistic Celebration, there was a flurry



Project Handyman team and volunteers distributing food and provisions to the needy.

of activity by the PIHD team to jump into action to receive their adoptees and give them their rations for the month for the first time in person since the MCO.

Mary Teoh, the new coordinator of PIHD, collected 25 food packs from the Free Food Society (FFS). The PIHD team then filled the

trays of each adoptee with the food packs from FFS, the church and a mix of items donated by generous members of the BECs, for which we are most grateful. The adoptees happily received bags of rice, bottles of oil, flour, sugar, biscuits, beverages of sorts, noodles, washing detergent, toiletries, and more.



Many hands made the work light and the distribution went well. Some packs were delivered by BEC members living in the vicinity of the adoptees. For those who could not come to the Cathedral, their packs were delivered to them.

On the same morning, not too far from the Cathedral, the Project

Handyman team, under the auspices of the PIHD, was busy at work. Rich Kavanaugh, the initiator of Project Handyman and Theresia, our PIHD representative, along with volunteers from the American and Myanmar community and other regular volunteers, were busy helping to move Samaritan Hope Home to a larger and better location, five shops down the road. There were about 30 volunteers — men, women, young and old — who worked tirelessly to help the move. They all felt tremendous joy and reward working as a team to support Samaritan Hope Home which feeds the homeless and needy daily. Despite encountering many challenges, everything fell into place. 'Together — we can do it' was the theme of the day!

It was a day well spent doing our bit for the needy on World Day of the Poor.

RCIA outreach to St Francis Xavier Home for the Elderly

CHERAS: Every year, the St Ignatius Church (SIC) Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) inquirers have a chance to participate in an outreach programme to the St Francis Xavier Home for the Elderly at Cheras, Kuala Lumpur, under the care of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

This year was challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, that did not stop the RCIA Class of 2021-2022 English and Bahasa inquirers from spreading their love and care to the needy. Through the love and grace of Jesus, the inquirers together with facilitators and baptised RCIA Catholics over the past years collectively raised sufficient funds to arrange purchases of provisions and appealed contributions from some corporations.

On November 9, representatives comprising RCIA inquirers from the English and Bahasa groups, sponsors, together with three RCIA facilitators, went to the Home to deliver the provisions. The goods purchased piled up at the event hall of the Home and a sum of cash was brought as well. Sr Maria Angela welcomed all inquirers and facili-



The visitors presenting the mock cheque to Maria Angela.

tators. She also thanked the donors and contributors for their generosity despite challenging moments.

However, the inquirers did not get a chance to visit and take a walk to have an overview of the Home or enjoy mingling and have fellowship with the residents. Nevertheless, they have brought to the Home Jesus' compassion, love, care, and kindness. — *By Penny Chong*

Caritas SHC/CMI distributes food packs to the needy

KOTA KINABALU: Caritas SHC/CMI celebrated the Fifth World Day of the Poor by giving out 300 food packs to the needy. This was conducted at the right wing of Sacred Heart Parish Centre.

Pope Francis established the World Day of the Poor in 2016 at the end of the Church's Jubilee Year of Mercy. The day is celebrated with a different theme on the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, a week before the feast of Christ the King. The theme of this year's World Day of the Poor, held on November 14, was taken

from Mark 14:7 "The poor you will always have with you".

Eighteen volunteers helped out at the various stations, keeping with the SOP protocols: filling out forms by applicants, assessing the authenticity of the applicants and dispatching the prepared food packs in room B3.

However, due to the short notice given to the people and hampered by stormy weather, only 115 packs were given away on this occasion.

Caritas SHC/CMI was set up in the Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish

and its sub-parish of the Church of Mary Immaculate in April 2021 and played an active role in helping needy families during the MCO.

It is headed by Sirau Yal.

For this year's World Day of the Poor, the mission project of food aid to the needy was spearheaded by Engsun and supported by parish priest Fr Paul Lo.

Caritas SHC/CMI also revealed its plans to focus on the educational needs of underprivileged children. — *By Catherine Wan, Catholic Sabah*



Pictures show the procedure, from filling out a form, followed by an interview then the applicant leaving with the food aid.

Korean Catholics feed hundreds on World Day of the Poor

SEOUL: Church officials in South Korea have observed the World Day of the Poor by feeding hundreds of hungry and homeless people.

Cardinal Andrew Yeom Su-jong, outgoing archbishop of Seoul Archdiocese, Archbishop-elect Peter Chung Soon-taek, and Auxiliary Bishop Benedictus Hee-Song Son joined dozens of volunteers at Myeongdong Bajib, a free soup kitchen for homeless people, on November 14.

Some 400 homeless and hungry people received dishes that included rice, soup, three side dishes, rice cake and snacks.

The prelates sweated as they served meals to hundreds of people, with smiles on their faces, reports the *Catholic Times of Korea*.

A homeless man said the food was

delicious because it was prepared with "love and care."

Cardinal Yeom said it is the duty of every Christian to work with others to support and welcome the poor and needy so that they can feel they are "good persons and precious."

He is among the founders of Myeongdong Bajib which has been distributing food to hundreds of poor people three days a week since January. It collaborates with the One Body One Soul (OBOS) Catholic movement and the Energy and Chemicals Division of SK Group, the third-largest conglomerate in South Korea.

The initiative later developed a free healthcare service for sick homeless people.

Archbishop-elect Chung said that

such services are essential to establish a Church of the poor.

"We need to realise that we are all poor before God, so we need true solidarity and sharing. We have to keep celebrating the World Day of the Poor by paying more attention to the poor," the prelate said.

On Nov 12, Archbishop Thaddeus Hwan-ki Cho of Daegu Archdiocese and auxiliary Bishop John Bosco Shin-Ho Chang delivered lunch boxes, warm clothes and quarantine materials to Joseph House, a church-run centre for homeless and elderly people.

The centre, which has been run by Sacred Heart of Jesus sisters since 1989, has been offering free meals to 120-150 people per day during the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent



Catholic volunteers serve free meals to poor people at a church-run soup kitchen in Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul, on Nov 14, 2021. (UCA News Photo/Catholic Peace Broadcasting Corporation)

times, the centre has been grappling with a lack of funds as the number of people seeking food has increased significantly to 300-380 each day.

Archbishop Cho said it was important to think about the poor always, not just occasionally. — *ucanews.com*

India's 'most persecuted village' has new priest

BIHAR: Tiangia, dubbed as "the most persecuted village" during the 2008 persecution of Christians in India's eastern state of Odisha (formerly Orissa), has a new priest.

Fr Bikash Nayak was ordained priest for the Diocese of Buxar in Bihar on November 6 and celebrated his first Mass in his village on November 13.

The diocese of Buxar has a population of 33,000 Catholic faithful, with 17 parishes and 19 priests.

"Neither the persecution nor the threat to my life by the fundamentalists could stop my will to dedicate my life to the Kingdom of God," the new priest was quoted as saying.

Fr Nayak said that he had to hide in the forest during the attacks on Christians in 2008.

He also recalled the "example" of Fr Bernard Digal, treasurer of the Archdiocese of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, who was killed during the years of persecution, as one of his inspirations.

"He came from my village, he was my relative," said the new priest. "Innocent Christians fell victim to this anger," he added.

Odisha, which is located on the Bay of Bengal, is known for its tribal cultures and its many ancient Hindu temples. The capital, Bhubaneswar, is home to hundreds of temples, notably the intricately-carved Mukteshvara.

Fr Nayak, 29, is the ninth priest to come from the village of Tiangia.

He entered the Mashih Gurukul Seminary of Varanasi in Uttar



Fr Bikash Nayak

Pradesh in 2010 and continued his studies in Nagpur and Delhi.

"I am proud of my son whom God has miraculously saved from the hands of radical groups," said the priest's mother.

"I remember sleepless nights in the forest with my children, with nothing to eat or drink," she said at the end of the celebration in the village. — *AsiaNews*

Source: *Licasnews.com*

India's tribal Christians under pressure to give up faith

MADHYA PRADESH: Indigenous Christians in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh say they are under increasing pressure to give up their faith due to mounting pressure from Hindu activists.

"Our people are being forced to give up Christianity and join the Hindu religion," said Patrick Ganava, a Catholic from the predominantly tribal Jhabua district.

He said Hindu activists and organisations were conducting special drives in villages to pressure Christians to apostatise, which was a cause for worry.

"There is propaganda against Christians in the district, but come what may, we will not give up our faith in Jesus," he said on November 16.

The anti-Christian campaign, coupled with police arrests of 10 Christians including six pastors on Nov 10 for alleged religious conversion, has emboldened right-wing Hindu groups, Ganava said.

"It is unfortunate that we are being



Indian Christians stage a protest in Kolkata in January 2020 against the violation of their religious and social rights by governments and groups who have been openly threatening minorities. (UCA News photo)

portrayed as people working only for converting people to Christianity," said Fr Rocky Shah, public relations officer of Jhabua Catholic Diocese.

The priest said he took the initiative and wrote in local newspapers explaining Christian worship and baptism, trying to clarify common misconceptions. "But nothing changed. The situation is such that our prayer services are being falsely depicted as religious conversion activity," said Fr Shah.

He recounted how a mob of over 1,000 tried to demolish a century-old

grotto dedicated to Mother Mary on Nov 10 in Thandla in their diocese, but the timely intervention of the police saved it. But the mob persisted with their demand for demolishing the grotto, alleging it was serving as a spot for conversion activities.

"Earlier, in September, they threatened to demolish churches that were built illegally at the district headquarters. They are now moving into the interior. Timely intervention by the police saved us so far, but we are not sure what will happen tomorrow," the priest said. — *ucanews.com*

Priests call for UN intervention in Indonesia's Papua region

WEST PAPUA: A coalition of close to 200 Catholic priests called for peace in Indonesia's Papua region, even urging the United Nations to intervene in the conflict-ridden territory.

In a statement, the priests said they support moves to invite the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights "to come, see and hear the actual human rights conditions in Papua."

The signatories to the statement include diocesan priests and members of the Franciscan, Augustinian, Jesuit, and Missionaries of the Sacred Heart congregations.

They called on the Indonesian government to review policies such as the deployment of more troops in the area, calling them "counter-productive" and stating that they encourage more violence.

In a statement released this week, the priests called on other countries to urge separatist groups and the government's security forces to declare a ceasefire.

The Church leaders claimed that some government officials have even accused priests of supporting separatist groups, thus endangering the lives of the clergy.

"There are even those in government who accuse priests who talk about human rights issues of being among the separatists," read the priests' statement.

They also said that "everywhere

[soldiers] are shooting civilians," adding that "there is no transparent legal process to address such rights violations, let alone end them" in the territory.

"The Church in Papua is present among the suffering people," said Father John Bunay, spokesman for the priests, in a statement quoted by the International Christian Concern.

The priest, however, claimed that Catholics bishops "are silent over what is happening."

"We hope our voices echo in the hearts of the people," he said.

In 2020, the Papuan Council of Churches called on the Indonesian government to stop sending troops to the region, saying that it would not solve the "systemic violence" in the country's easternmost province.

The council — comprising representatives from, among other associations, the Indonesian Christian Church in Papua, the Papua Kemah Gospel Church, and the Evangelical Church in Indonesia — wrote to Indonesian President Joko Widodo to voice its concern.

Papua has been plagued by separatist conflict for decades and access for foreign journalists is often restricted. In the past year there have been sporadic and deadly attacks involving security forces and indigenous Papuans, including the killing of several Papuan minors. — *Licasnews.com*



Three Papuan boys watch an Indonesian military Mi17 helicopter at Erwer airport in Agats, Asmat district, in West Papua on Jan 27, 2018. (UCA News Photo/Bay Ismoyo)

The Church exists to evangelise

BALTIMORE: While the Catholic Church's position in the world has altered, its evangelistic mission "does not change with the culture, or politics, or the spirit of the age," Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles reminded his fellow bishops at their fall assembly on November 16.

"Again and again, the Holy Father reminds us: The Church exists to evangelise. There is no other reason for the Church. To be a Christian is to be a missionary disciple. There is no other definition," said Archbishop Gomez, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"The Church's position in society has changed. We cannot count on numbers or our influence in society.

None of that ever really mattered anyway," he said. "We are here to save souls. And Jesus promised us that if we seek His Kingdom first, everything we need will be given to us."

"What is the best way to help our people to live and work and minister as Catholics in this moment? How can we help our people to raise their children and engage with their neighbours and the culture? As a Church, how should we evangelise and go about the task of striving for justice and the renewal of our society?" Archbishop Gomez asked.

"Many of the differences that we see in the Church these days are rooted in the different points of view that we have over how the Church should answer these basic questions," he said.



Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles

The archbishop's address touched on some of the same themes he raised in a speech he delivered by video on Nov. 4 to the Congress of Catholics and Public Life in Madrid, Spain. His remarks then sparked

both praise and criticism for his critique of "wokeism" and other ideological social justice movements that he said run counter to the Church's understanding of humanity's God-given dignity and freedom.

"For most of our history, the story that gave meaning to our lives was rooted in a biblical worldview and the values of our Judeo-Christian heritage. It was the story of the human person created in God's image and invested with an earthly vocation to build a society where people could live in freedom, with equality and dignity," Gomez said.

"What we see all around us now, are signs that this narrative may be breaking down. This is one of the consequences of living in a secular society. We all need God to help us

to make sense of our lives, so when we try to live without God, we can become confused," he said.

"Many of our neighbours are searching. They are looking for a new story to give meaning to their lives, to tell them what they are living for and why," Gomez said.

"But my brothers, our neighbours do not need a new story. What they need is to hear the true story — the beautiful story of Christ's love for us, his dying and rising from the dead for us, and the hope he brings to our lives."

"The Church's mission is the same in every time and place," Gomez said. "It is to proclaim Jesus Christ and to help every person to find him and to walk with him." — **By Shannon Mullen, CNA**

Blessed Carlo Acutis named a patron of Eucharistic Revival campaign

BALTIMORE: Blessed Carlo Acutis will serve as the patron of the first year of a new three-year Eucharistic Revival project the US Bishops approved on November 17, a designation that entrusts a critical initiative to the intercession of a popular modern Catholic hero known for spreading devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

Acutis, an English-born Italian Catholic who died in 2006 at age 15 shortly after being diagnosed with leukaemia, used his technical prowess as an amateur computer programmer to share information online about Eucharistic miracles. He is the first Catholic from the Millennial generation to be beatified.

Among the sentiments Acutis shared online is his testimony that "the more often we receive the Eucharist, the more we will become like Jesus, so that on this earth, we will have a foretaste of Heaven".

That same message is at the heart



Blessed Carlo Acutis

of the bishops' Eucharist campaign, which was endorsed on Nov 17 during the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' annual fall assembly in Baltimore. Patrons for the other years of the campaign were not announced.

Set to officially launch with dioc-

esan Eucharistic processions around the country on June 22, 2022 for the feast of Corpus Christi, the effort will include the creation of a new Eucharistic revival website, the development of new teaching materials, special training for diocesan and parish leaders, a travelling team of Eucharistic preachers, and a host of other initiatives.

The campaign will culminate with a National Eucharist Congress, the first of its kind in the United States in nearly 50 years, to be held July 17-21 in Indianapolis, Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens, one of the architects of the revival campaign, announced on Nov 17.

The bishops' campaign, which many Catholics view as long overdue, comes at a time when devotion to the Eucharist is lagging among those who identify themselves as Catholic, surveys and other indicators show. — **CNA**

Football match against racism and discrimination



Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi presenting the jersey of the "Pope's Team - Fratelli Tutti". (Vatican News photo)

VATICAN: At the initiative of Pope Francis, the representatives of the World Roma Organisation and the "Pope's Team - Fratelli Tutti" will play a fraternal football match, which is much more than just friendly, according to the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Culture. The dicastery on Tuesday, November 16, presented the *Fratelli Tutti* match to reporters at a press conference in the Vatican.

The *Fratelli Tutti* football match will be played on Nov 21 at 2.30pm (9.30pm Malaysian time) on the training grounds of Italy's Lazio football club at Formello, some 25 kilometres north of Rome.

On this occasion, funds will be raised to support the project "A kick against exclusion," promoted by the Pope's Diocese of Rome to encourage the inclusion of the Roma and other most vulnerable people.

The "Pope's Team - Fratelli Tutti" is composed of Swiss Guards, Vatican employees, children of Vatican employees, priests who serve in the Secretariat of State, the Roman Curia, and the

Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy. To testify to the concrete commitment to inclusion and the meaning of the match, three young migrants, welcomed by the Community of Sant'Egidio, and a young man with Down's syndrome who participates in the Special Olympics events, will play for the Pope's Team.

In a statement released earlier, the Pontifical Council said that the Pope accepted the proposal of the World Roma Organisation to organise a football match to relaunch the commitment against racism and discrimination.

The instructions of Pope Francis on the education of young people are at the core of the inclusive sports experience proposed by the World Roma Organisation. Children and young people are involved in a method aimed at preventing all forms of marginalisation, with a special focus on minorities and people with disabilities. In 2017, the UEFA Foundation for Children recognised and encouraged this educational system on football pitches. — **Vatican News**

Benedict XVI meets with recipients of the Ratzinger Prize

VATICAN: Benedict XVI met with four recipients of the Ratzinger Prize at the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery in the Vatican on November 13.

The meeting lasted one hour and allowed each of the academics to discuss their work with the pope emeritus, according to a statement from the Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation. Before parting, the group prayed a Hail Mary together.

Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz, a specialist on the German philosopher Edith Stein, and Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger, an Old Testament theologian from Germany, were presented with the 2021 Ratzinger Prize by Pope Francis in an award ceremony at the Vatican on Nov 13.

The 2020 Ratzinger Prize winners, Australian professor Tracey Rowland and French philosopher Jean-Luc Marion, were also present to receive the award since the 2020



Recipients of the Ratzinger Prize are pictured with retired Pope Benedict XVI after a ceremony for the conferral of the prize by Pope Francis at the Vatican Nov 13, 2021. (Vatican Media/Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Foundation)

prize ceremony was cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

At the awards ceremony in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace, Pope Francis said that the conferral of the award was an opportunity to express "affectionate, grateful and admiring thoughts" for his predecessor for whom the award is named.

The Ratzinger Prize was launched in 2011 to recognise scholars whose work demonstrates a meaningful contribution to theology in the spirit of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who

went on to become Benedict XVI.

"Today we thank him in particular because he has also been an example of passionate dedication to study, research, written and oral communication; and because he has always fully and harmoniously united his cultural research with his faith and his service to the Church," the Pope said.

Candidates for the prize are chosen by the scientific committee of the Ratzinger Foundation and presented to the Pope, who approves the winners. — **CNA**



GUEST EDITORIAL
Fr Eugene Benedict

Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

It sounds like Greek, but it's Latin. It's the opening words of the prayer to the Holy Spirit, historically used at Councils, Synods, and other Church gatherings for hundreds of years. It was prayed at every session of the Second Vatican Council. It is attributed to St Isidore of Seville (circa 560 – April 4, 636). It is proposed for use in the *Caeremoniae Episcoporum* 1984 (n 1173) as an invocation to the Holy Spirit for an ecclesial assembly of governance or discernment (thus synodal). We are being encouraged to pray this while on the synodal path of the Synod 2021 – 2023. *Adsumus* has the sense of, “in your presence,” and in English, may be translated as “We stand before You” (or as Google Translate - Latin to English - puts it, “we are here”). I want to draw attention to the Prayer for the Synod in this reflection.

The opening line of this prayer, “We stand before You, Holy Spirit” draws us into the depth of God himself in the “You,” and in this, endless possibilities. I find myself re-creating this awe-inspiring scene as described for us in Exodus 3: 1 – 17. I am in awe as I behold the all-Holy omnipresent “You” of the Holy Spirit. We would do well to keep reminding ourselves of this as often as possible during this 2021 – 2023 synodal process. We should do this in all our group discussions, meetings, chats etc on the 10 thematic questions for this Synod. In fact, we would do well to “talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deuteronomy 6 :7).

Equally important is the very first word of this prayer, the “We.” It is a sense of who each one of us is, together with the community of the Church. Isn't this what we are about in this synodal process of journeying together?

In this journey together as Church, the prayer expresses our hearts' desire and we ask of the Lord, “with You alone to guide us.” We are giving God permission to come in whichever way He wishes, when we pray “make yourself at home in our hearts” and “Teach us the way we must go . . . how we are to pursue it.”

In this eagerness to pursue the depths of synodality, we acknowledge “that we are weak and sinful.” That is, we do not keep the focus, we may “promote disorder” and allow “ignorance to lead us down the wrong path” and let “partiality influence our actions.” Aware of this, we desire to “find in [God] our unity.” Our goal is to “journey together to eternal life”, for missing this, we will surely “stray from the way of truth and what is right.” Lastly, “all this we ask of You” is like the antiphon to the psalms we use at prayer. Having said this, we need to trust God “at work in every place and time”, for our DNA is the communion of the Father and the Son, for ever and ever. Amen.

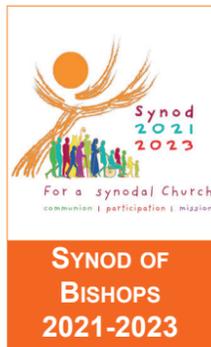
The Synod prayer expresses the process of it all, i.e., our journeying together. The practice of this journeying is listening. We need the art of listening — to each other and to as many as possible across the parishes in our diocese. Most important in all this, we need to be listening to the Holy Spirit. We need to begin and end on our knees. Perhaps, even, consider the whole process on our knees.

Failing this, we will be edgy, restless, relentless, and even itching to quickly draw up programmes, strategies, and plans that will be just plastic. There are many scriptwriters out there who can do a fantastic job of this. It will be impressive only on the first reading and forgotten once it is under the piles of papers, documents, reports and printouts on our desks, or the PDF and Word documents that already fill our phones. Even more, the World Wide Web is constantly bombarding us with reflections, interviews, and excerpts of sermons from every corner of the Church in our world. And yes, why not learn from others? But we are proud of who we are as Church in Malaysia and of what the Lord is doing for us. In this synodal process, let's be attentive.

● Fr Eugene is (since Oct 15, 2021) the newly appointed Director of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute (API) of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur together with Fr Edwin Peter as assistant director.

Do continue this conversation with him via email — eugene@archkl.org.

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SYNOD OF
BISHOPS
2021-2023

Are Catholics ready for synodality — is it too radical?

Are we Catholics really ready for the radical and transformative change that synodality unavoidably requires? Or is this question challenging but quite premature?

What has been launched is a journey — over two years — with the Synod of Bishops not scheduled to occur until 2023. The notion that we risk becoming museum pieces is confronting. As the impacts of the secularisation of society continues, we have had to accept the realities of reduced congregations, a decline in vocations, parish amalgamations and churches closing.

An ageing population raises potent questions about the future of many parishes and ensures doom for some. Every statistical collection shows that fewer and fewer people call themselves Catholic.

It took 60 years for the changes that Pope Pius X proposed in 1901 for active participation by the faithful in the liturgy to be enunciated by Vatican II (1962-65). Then another 60 years later, the Synod of Bishops' assembly on synodality has been launched by Pope Francis for 2023.

The mustard seed sown by *Lumen Gentium* has risen boldly above the ground. The People of God were commandingly described in that Vatican II



(UCA News photo)

document. The Church was recognised as comprised of a pilgrim people, a sojourning people, on the road towards the “new heavens and the new earth” (Revelation 21:1). All the People of God participate “in the one priesthood of Christ” (LG 9). But to be fair, Pope Francis identified the need for change in 2014 when he recounted the story of a cardinal telling the Synod assembly of 2001 “what they should discuss and what they should not. That won't happen now,” the Pope assured readers of the Argentine *La Nation* after his election. Seven years later, we are being asked to really listen, actively,

with the ear of the heart.

Are we ready to consider a new form of governance and abandon a monarchical model of Church, shed some control over our ecclesial lives, to move beyond criticising clericalism to abandoning it, to forgo attachment to feudal values and treat people equally — listening to them and engaging with them?

The laity will likewise have to abandon lay clericalism. Perish the thought, but is it possible that religious and lay people may participate as equals and command a vote and participate in governance in some form, even on major issues?

What might true synodal change mean?

Given the deep and repeated Gospel message of love, of dealing with neighbour, of forgiveness, of service and service of servants, there is much room to ponder how we have fumbled governance, and become attached to ancient structures and forms that have not been adapted.

As Catholics, we are blessed to have the richest tapestry of saintly lives to inspire and guide us, to offer us example and nurture our prayer life. Yet there seems a glaring disconnect in the manner we at times conduct ourselves. Search for where Jesus taught us, at times, to be superior in our collective dealings, removed in our structural forms, aloof to community members, and reluctant to respond to the signs of the times. That might be possible if we can ignore the Beatitudes, the response to the request by James and John for priority status, the direction “not to lord it over anyone” (1 Peter 5:3), the charge to the 72 disciples (Luke 10:1-24), the gift of Eucharist, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Are these part of the Gospel values to which the faithful are calling for a return?

In truth, the Church is really not much different from the professions, or governments, or corporate life and everyday dealings. There are abundant examples of clericalist type behaviour, lack of transparency and rigid appeals to history, outworn precedent and poor behaviour equally represented in all those spheres. Not to mention the lack of proper recognition of women and their unequal inclusion. As a global collection, we are good at community. We have been from the earliest days of the Church. We have wonderful communities of every shape

and size and have many great leaders. Pope Francis is a standout. But we also have a rigid attachment to a seemingly immutable pyramid. Despite Vatican II explaining the corrected nature of this symbol — with laity being served at the top — we adhere to old ways.

What if on the journey we are now taking, along with the Spirit, we started to act out the qualities of real community, of task sharing in the context of equality, interpersonal responsiveness, open dealings with each other and sharing of ideas with honesty and mutual trust.

We could, with renewed vigour, embrace the Eucharist as the font and summit of the Church's life where we all think of ourselves and act as a community, coming together to celebrate the ultimate redemptive act of Calvary, receive the sacred body and blood of Christ in community and truly appreciate that we are thereby chartered to go out as community to carry His Word into the world, secularised or however we find it.

We know we can no longer confine ourselves inside the walls of our beloved churches. The market square demands our presence. Because we are community we can adapt to the variety of demands and expressions that are demanded, as challenging as it may be. No doubt this will impact how we present, how we attire, how we behave, the options we select, the places we go and, importantly, the age profile we target. Then as we continue the journey, the sense of genuine community must flow around the new circle and embrace everyone.

The unique position of bishops and their role as *Shepherds of the People of*

God must be recognised, by them and by us, as all participate together in communion and mission — openly and productively.

Right or wrong question?

What has been launched is a journey, a prayerful path of communication, mission and participation. We are all asked to join. And the process is not being left to chance. Pope Francis has established a global communications network including everyone.

It is time to refine aspects of the old pyramid symbol — both upright and inverted. Because if our journey is ultimately to encounter a different Church, we need a different structure and a baptismal approach to participation that fully recognises and builds on the charisms that were conferred on us all. In that different Church, governance and leadership will remain key components. It will be more like a global labyrinth with a few bumps and multiple entry points. Surely some will find the path rocky and the destination uncertain. It is meant to be. A known stretch would be a denial of the essence of the journey.

Pre-eminently we need the light of the Spirit. And we must be open to a push from “the coach” occasionally. We have much to listen to, to discuss and pray about. How else can it be different? The invitation reads clearly — WE ARE ALL INVITED. — By Justin Stanwix, LCI ([https:// international.la-croix.com/](https://international.la-croix.com/))

● Justin Stanwix is a deacon at St Mary Star of the Sea Parish, Milton in the Diocese of Wollongong (Australia).



General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

Synodality and the “listening Church” in this digital age



(Unsplash photo/Ajif Kusuma)

The Synod of Bishops’ secretariat in Rome has put extensive emphasis on listening — to God in the Holy Spirit and to one another. But in the Christian tradition, the act of listening is always connected to reading: not just Scripture, but also whatever is conducive to listening to the revelation of God in history and our lives in order to discern the ways God speaks to us today.

The problem is that there are new forms of illiteracy and ignorance today that affect the Church, and this is a key element in understanding why some Catholics seem indifferent to or uninterested in the “synodal process”. Some of the reticence is rooted in an opposition to Pope Francis or the Second Vatican Council. But the problem is actually much deeper

From the printing press to social media

The Reformation and the Council of Trent (1545-63) took place in the 16th century during the age of the printing press, and books made an important impact on the religious culture and theological debates of that time. The First Vatican Council (1869-70) was held in the 19th century during the age of newspapers, magazines, and the emergence of public intellectuals. When Vatican II (1962-65) rolled around, we were already in the age of television and mass media. And now we have the synodal process 2021-2023, the biggest consultation of the People of God in Church history. It is taking place in the age of digital and social media, a phenomenon that has shown the Church to be deeply

divided along generational and cultural lines.

Many who belong to the Catholic gerontocracy are digitally illiterate, while people in other sections of the Church are illiterate in a more traditional sense of the word. Even in Catholic institutions of higher education, we have many people who are “graduated but not literate”. There are disturbing signs of a plummeting cultural level among today’s Catholics. In Europe and the Western world, many Catholic newspapers, magazines, and publishing houses have shut down over the past few years.

The end of an era

After nourishing the intellect of Catholics for generations, especially during Vatican II and the first dec-

ades following the Council, there are now fewer avenues for the cultural production and consumption of writing that can help believers make sense of the signs of the times.

One of the latest examples is the shocking news of the bankruptcy and closure of one of Italy’s most important Catholic publishers, Edizioni Dehoniane. Based in Bologna, it has produced many essential volumes over the years, including the Italian edition of the much-acclaimed Jerusalem Bible. The closing of this publishing house marks the end of an era for Catholic culture in Italy and raises serious concerns about how believers will continue to be intellectually engaged in the

future.

The Roman Curia, the Vatican and the pontifical universities and academies in Rome were once centres of cultural production and consumption, but today this is no longer the case or, at least, not to the same extent it once was. I have lost count of how many religious bookshops in the Eternal City have closed over the past few years and I wonder how many more will be shuttered. The problem is not just the emergence of e-commerce, digital libraries, or the pandemic. What we are witnessing is a substantial change in the culture of Catholics compared to the expectations raised by the reforms of Vatican II.

Devotionalism is overtaking intellectual rigour



(Unsplash photo/ Priscilla Du Preez)

The question is whether Catholics still read about religion and the Church; and, if so, what they are reading. High school and college professors are used to dealing with the declining level of literacy among their students — a decline in the ability to read critically, write intelligibly, and orient oneself in the cultural canon required not only of a professional, but also of a citizen.

Theology is not exempt from this trend. In the last few years, a return of devotionalism (something different from devotions) has taken the place of intellectual rigour. In seminaries, there is a new emphasis on basic human formation and psychological screening, which has been made necessary by the sex abuse scandal, as well as by the difficult family and personal backgrounds from which many priesthood candidates come. But, unfortunately, human formation — as essential as it is — has often come at the expense of historical, philosophical, and theological formation. This

is not only a problem that affects seminarians and the young clergy. It is also a problem of ideology in the Catholic Church at large.

Books are not just objects, but also companions

The consumption of content provided by religious blogs and website has further pushed pre-existing currents of devout anti-intellectualism. The so-called “proud ignorance” is not unknown in militant Catholic circles, where Vatican II theology is bashed as a sellout to secularism. If one looks at the militant Catholic websites favoured by many seminarians, young priests and various ecclesial activists, it is easy to understand why Catholic publishing is in crisis — especially for the kind of books and magazines that one could loosely call “Vatican II Catholicism”.

However, on the neo-traditionalist and anti-Vatican II side of the spectrum, there seems to be an energy that liberals are ignoring at

their own peril. The crisis of Catholic publishing is not just a problem for those who directly or even indirectly work in this industry.

Books are not just objects: they are an emanation of a personality and can be good companions and friends that chase away moments of solitude and sorrow. They provide a kind of companionship that persons of faith cannot find in digital or social media. There is a kind of militant anti-intellectualism which is truly a disaster, and it is truly anti-Catholic without knowing it. The most important Church document on listening and reading is *Dei Verbum*, the Vatican II Constitution on Divine Revelation. It offers an understanding of the faith that is not intellectualistic, while also rejecting anti-intellectualism.

Intellectual disarmament before huge cultural challenges

Self-abandonment in faith is not without direction. It necessarily in-

cludes commitment to the Word, which must be listened to and read. Reading the Scriptures is not just a Protestant thing. And Christianity is not a “religion of the book”, in the sense that it is not bound to a literalist reading of the Holy Writ. We believe the Scriptures have emerged under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And reading and interpreting them includes an intellectual process, without which there is no tradition of the Church.

But there seems to be an intellectual disarmament before the huge cultural challenges facing the Church in the global world of today. It’s a disarmament that affects different ideological corners of Catholicism in different ways.

Some of the Church’s “cultural warriors” understood before, and in a better way than most progressives, that this is not the time to divest from theological culture. The crisis of Catholic culture has an impact on the synodal process 2021-2023 and on Pope Francis’ pontificate.

A Church that invites people to listen must invest in culture

Catholics who have kept alive the theology of Vatican II over the last few decades have been better equipped to understand the link between the Pope’s synodality and the tradition of the Church. That’s because they are part of a generation of avid readers. Unfortunately, it is an ageing generation and most of those who belong to it are already retired. Church leaders are eager to emphasise that synodality is not a political mechanism but a spiritual process. This is true, but that spir-

itual process relies on basic skills that we learn from the humanities and liberal arts. There is a contradiction between a Church that invites Catholics to listen and at the same time does not understand the necessity to invest in culture.

The need to address ignorance among Church leaders

In ancient culture, during a time when the biblical canon was formed and for many centuries afterwards,

learning happened largely by listening. In oral culture, the act of reading was not essential. Then in the Middle Ages and the early modern period, we moved to a visual culture where religious content was dominant. In this age of digital and social media, we are bombarded with ubiquitous images freed from the monopoly of art (especially religious art).

In previous centuries when the religious message reached Christians through different channels, illit-

eracy was not such an impediment to growth in faith. But today the inability to read critically has more serious consequences for the life of the faith. Not all Catholics are expected or required to be bookworms or to own a library — literally or figuratively. But the expectations must be higher for the Church’s ordained and lay leaders. Being a “listening Church” does not mean just listening to one another or listening to the Holy Spirit. It also means listening to what culture — religious and secu-

lar — has to say to the Church.

The Council of Trent tackled the problem of ignorance among the clergy. Today, some 450 years later, there are signs that the Catholic Church is once again facing that same problem, at a moment when its leadership is or should no longer be identified only with the clergy. The assumption that Church leaders can afford to be ignorant is just another form of clericalism. — **By Massimo Faggioli, LCI** (<https://international.la-croix.com/>)

The Pope and the poor

ASSISI, Italy: With a pilgrim's staff and mantle, Pope Francis entered Assisi's Basilica of St Mary of the Angels with 500 economically or socially disadvantaged people and the volunteers who walk alongside them.

The Pope's pilgrimage to Assisi on November 12 was dedicated totally to the poor, ahead of the World Day of the Poor on Nov 14.

A France-based charity, Fratello, brought 200 poor pilgrims from France, Poland, Croatia, Switzerland and Spain. The Jesuit Refugee Service's Centro Astalli brought refugees from Congo, Angola and Nigeria. The Community of Sant'Egidio brought the residents of a shelter for the homeless located just outside St Peter's Square at the Vatican and Italian diocesan Caritas volunteers brought hundreds of the people they work with each day.

Six of them shared their stories with Pope Francis — stories of crime and prison or of drugs and alcohol, stories of being forced to flee their homeland or living on the street, but especially stories of steadfast or newfound faith, of finding a helping hand and of learning to see the face of Christ in the poor.

The crowd kept applauding to encourage Sebastián, a Spaniard, as he struggled with sobs to tell his story of drug addiction and prison. He said he was convinced "that my sins could not be forgiven because I had done so much



Pope Francis embraced each of those who shared their stories and thanked all of the poor for "this experience of encounter and of faith". (Vatican Media)

evil" until he met a priest, who introduced him to the charismatic renewal movement.

Qadery Abdul Razaq, an older Afghan refugee who had worked with the Italian army, thanked the government for getting him and his wife to safety, and Caritas for providing housing and food, and help with their resettlement.

But, he said, "We thank them most of all for treating us like their parents and not like children."

His voice, like Sebastián's, broke as he pleaded with the

Pope and the Italian government to help get his adult children to Italy as well.

Marianna, 43, a Romanian widow, told the Pope she came to Italy in search of work but became ill and now relies on her children and, often, Caritas, for what she needs.

"Even before praying to God to give me health, I ask him to give me the strength to keep going," she said.

Pope Francis embraced each of those who shared their stories and thanked all of the poor for "this

experience of encounter and of faith."

The Basilica of St Mary of the Angels is built around the Portiuncula, the small chapel where, Pope Francis explained, "St Francis welcomed St Clare, the first brothers and many poor people who came to him."

"He received them simply as brothers and sisters, sharing everything with them," the Pope said. "This is the most evangelical expression we are called to make our own: hospitality," which means opening the door, "the door of our house and the door of our heart, and to allow the person who knocks to come in and feel welcomed, not ashamed".

"An open heart and outstretched hand" are always the first step in creating a true encounter, he said. It also is the way to experience the truth that "every one of us needs the other, and that even weakness, if experienced together, can become a strength that will make the world better".

If people don't learn how to encounter each other with sincerity, he said, "we'll move toward a very sad end".

For too many people, the presence of the poor in their cities is "an annoyance," he said. "Sometimes we hear it said that those responsible for poverty are the poor — an added insult!"

"So as not to carry out a serious examination of conscience on one's own actions, on the injustice of certain laws and economic

measures, on the hypocrisy of those who want to enrich themselves excessively, blame is laid at the feet of those who are weakest," Pope Francis said.

"It is time for the poor to be given back their voice," he said.

"It is time for eyes to be opened to see the state of inequality in which many families live," the Pope insisted. "It is time for sleeves to be rolled up so dignity can be restored by creating jobs."

"It is time to be scandalised once again before the reality of children who are starving, reduced to slavery, tossed about in the water in the aftermath of a shipwreck, innocent victims of every sort of violence," the Pope said. "It is time that violence against women cease and that they be respected and not treated like bargaining chips."

"It is time for the circle of indifference to be broken so as to discover once again the beauty of encounter and dialogue," Pope Francis said.

Before leading the poor in prayer, the Pope thanked them for all the effort they expend to survive.

"To hold out" or hold on "is not a passive action" he said. It takes courage, strength, and persistence in finding "reasons for not giving up when confronted with difficulties, knowing that we do not experience them alone but together, and that only together can we overcome them". — **By Cindy Wooden, CNS**

Migrant labourers' "messiah" wins journalism award

NEW DELHI: A Catholic nun who braved the coronavirus pandemic and official apathy to reach out to hundreds of stranded migrant labourers during lockdowns has won a prestigious award from the Indian Catholic Press Association.

The national body of Catholic journalists on November 5 chose Sr Sujata Jena for the best reportage on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The Bhubaneswar-based member of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary was chosen for "authentically and consistently being the voice of people's rights, especially the poor Dalits who are more susceptible to exploitation and injustice," a statement from the association says.

The award is sponsored by the Office for Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes under the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India. It will be conferred on Dec 1, at the National Convention of Christian Journalists in Bandra, Mumbai.

Sr Jena contributes regularly to news portals such as *Matters India*, especially on Dalit issues. "Through the power of reporting and storytelling, (Sr Jena) amplifies the various aspects of Dalits and Tribals, women, children and the homeless, who have been side-



Sr Sujata Jena

lined by the elite, powerful, and societal structures," says the press release signed by ICPA president Ignatius Gonsalves and secretary Capuchin Fr Suresh Mathew.

The association also says Sr Jena's reports focus on voiceless people. "Her deep sincerity and perseverance in highlighting the rights of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes shows grit, courage and conviction. Her writings showcase hopes and resilience that the deprived people and communities show despite many challenges, deprivation, and exploitation. Her writings have shed light on issues that no secular journalist has ventured to report. It takes both courage and professional excellence to do so."



Sr Sujata Jena at a bus stand in Bhubaneswar, meeting some workers of Kalahandi, Odisha, in India, who returned from Tamil Nadu, some 2,000 kilometres (1,240 miles) away from Odisha. She shared some food packs with them as they didn't have money to buy food during their two-day journey. (Global Sisters Report photo)

Sr Sujata said she was not sure if she was worthy of such a prestigious award. Thanking the ICPA for the recognition, the 39-year-old nun said, "All I tried to do was to highlight the struggles and aspirations of my people."

She said she dedicates the award to "my brothers and sisters who are victims of structural injustice and every calamity, be it man made or the result of the fury of

the nature."

She also said that she was proud to be identified as a Dalit and Tribal journalist.

Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, Sister has been involved in the safe return of the migrants. She continues to work for their rights through advocacy and lobbying through networking with government administrations and civil so-

ciety groups.

She said she felt compelled to help migrant labourers as many fell prey to road accidents, sickness, starvation, and death.

Currently, she is working as the deputy director of the Excellent IAS Academy in Bhubaneswar, capital of the eastern Indian state of Odisha. She also coordinates her congregation's social projects. — **mattersindia.com**

My mother's keeper

The vicious hold that Parkinson's and Lewy Body Dementia has on my 76-year old mother has forced me to look at the Fifth Commandment 'Honour your father and your mother' in a wholly different light.

For many grown or older children, this Commandment is not something we often (if ever) confess to breaking when we unburden during the sacrament of reconciliation. After all, most of us over-forties are long past the stage where we sass Mum and try to push the limits of Dad's curfews.

And yet, the responsibility to this Commandment comes into stark reality when a grown child has to make decisions on their parents' behalf. My mother was a career woman all her life. A proverbial 'boomer', she worked her way from clerk to secretary to loans administration manager at a local bank until she took voluntary separation of service when she was 53.

After that, she dug in the garden and killed a lot of plants, and bought more to replace the deceased ones; became personal shopper for each of her four grandchildren (thankfully only one of those varmints were mine), and embarked on a long, dependable role as lector at Holy Rosary Church. She hosted rosary devotions, BEC gatherings, and dutifully went to every funeral in our neighbourhood, all the while retaining her reputation as one of the most stylish, put-together women in the community.

Things began to change when my medical school graduate husband urged me to take Mum for a checkup because he noticed her hands trembling occasionally. This coincided with what was to be my last ever trip with her, when we went to the funeral of my grandaunt in Singapore. That trip, when I shared a hotel room with her – the first time I had co-habited with her since I got married 15 years ago – I noticed her unsteady gait, the sudden unfocused demeanour of this hitherto eagle-eyed woman. The most unnerving thing, however, was how she incessantly went through her luggage and handbag, almost obsessively. Again and again, at weird times, even in the middle of the night.

A consultation with a geriatrician confirmed



Word in Progress

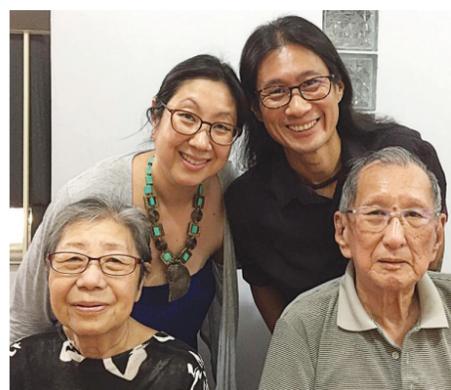
Karen Michaela Tan

Parkinson's. An MRI did not yet show the protein deposits in the brain which characterised Lewy Body, so her erratic, compulsive behaviour was labelled dementia. Because I had watched and had the part care of my maternal grandmother who was 'nyanyuk' (at that time all this medical information was not available to us), I was hell-bent that Mum would not go down that road. My grandmother had scared away all our hired help with her wild accusations. On more than one occasion, she had ordered our housekeeper to open her mouth because mama was positive Jaya had stolen her false teeth and was wearing them!

I launched into a flurry of research and got Mum into occupational and rehabilitation therapy three times a week. We saw our geriatrician monthly to fine tune medication and doses. Ditto with the neurologist. We knew there was no cure. Our only hope was to slow the impending situation, to maintain her level of physical ability and cognitive skills at a point where she could still be independent.

COVID and MCO killed all that. In the months that I could not cross over from Selangor to Kuala Lumpur, Mum deteriorated. Without forced physical exercise, her body atrophied and seized up. She went from being able to shower herself to not knowing what to do with the grab bars we installed in the bath stall where my father showered her.

I already saw the inevitable. Dad is reasonably fit, but he is 78. The 1.5 years of COVID had taken a toll on him as he was Mum's sole caregiver. Twenty-four hours with a person with limited mobility is already hard. But add the nonsensical behaviour of dementia, and life becomes a living hell. My mother accused Dad of wanting to marry the neighbour across the road, of having a Vietnamese mistress who apparently was living in the family house. She



The writer and her family in 2020 before the severe decline of her mother.

would go from lucid to completely off her rocker in the space of a sentence.

I lobbied to put Mum into a home. I told Dad time and time again that he would break down looking after her, but he told me that he had promised her that he would try to take care of her to the best of his 'better or worse' vows. Theirs wasn't a fair-weather Hollywood marriage, by any means. Six months ago, he told me to respect his decision and not bring up the subject of institutionalising Mum again. Out of respect for his wishes, I honoured my father and mother and dropped all searches for homes.

Late last month, on a Sunday evening, my father rang me. He never voice calls unless it is an emergency. His voice was strained and choked. "I can't do this anymore. I am exhausted. We have to put Mum in a home."

I pulled out all stops to get Mum settled comfortably in a wonderful place in the space of a week. I cannot lie that I felt more relieved than sad when we drove out of the care home without my mother. She is at the stage where when she is in her own house, she asks to "go home." While we spoke to her before her admission, I am not sure how much of it she understood.

I think latently she is cognizant that she has become a burden. And my stoic, independent mother would have hated to be that. In a way, her malleability was possibly resignation, and a kind-of understanding that Dad had reached the

end of his emotional and physical strength, arranging her stiff body in bed, lifting her leaden legs to dress and undress her; performing the most intimate of cleaning and hygiene duties.

I have had three years to mull over the Commandment that exhorts me to honour my father and mother. And the God-given intelligence that makes Man steward of creation tells me that in this situation, more care is needed for the still coherent, still living father, than the mother in this shadowy quasi-life. Like the airplane announcement that instructs adults to ensure they put on the emergency oxygen masks on themselves first before their children, I have chosen to deploy my resources to ensuring that my father recovers from the physical and emotional trauma of caring for someone with such a trying suite of illnesses.

I am not abandoning my mother, though. The intervention I staged was a stop-gap to allow space and time for clarity of thought. The plan, as it stands, is to let Dad recover while the family works at making their house more disabled-friendly, and preparing it for the possibility of a full-time care giver.

In all this, I am struck by the providence of God: the ability of a place in a well-run, Christian care home at such short notice, financial assistance from my eldest aunt who helped subsidise the care, the pastoral love of a parish priest who came to anoint both parents prior to Mum's leaving, and the help of friends who rallied to help me either hold the fort in my personal life or lend muscle to the clearing of the family house.

When all this happened, I remember committing my actions to God. I told Him that I did not need to know the destination, I only needed to know that the road I was on was the correct one. As psalm 119 says, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and light unto my path." Lamps do not illuminate the entire road. They cast enough light only for us not to stumble. I do not know where this road will lead, but I have to walk in confidence of a God who will not let my foot be bruised on a stone (paraphrasing psalm 91), and by whose guidance I will continue to honour my father and mother.

Accountability and effective consequences with some humility and grace



Purposeful Parenting

Christine Fernandez

What does it mean "to be accountable for my actions"? Matthew 12:36 says "but I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgement". Therefore, creating a "culture of accountability" in your home is vital for your child to know that, no matter who caused the problem or what happened in a situation, everyone is responsible for their actions.

Accountability is a high priority and we see this throughout scripture. The apostle Paul, for example, in Ephesians 6:4 says "do not be irritating your children" or "never drive them to resentment". This bible verse evidently speaks about the rough and hasty treatment towards children that repels and entices them to opposition and bitterness. Therefore, parents, it would be wiser not to be critical, and be more in harmony with the Bible by being more empathetic and discerning in a loving, consistent way. However, before you hold your child accountable, first hold yourself accountable. Forgive yourself for this parenting mistake and start afresh. I did.

As parents, we spend an enormous amount of time "lecturing" our kids about responsibility. Often to no avail. Despite the lectures, not

much ends up getting done anyway. To your child, this "lecturing" is actually "nagging", and for good reason. In reality, it is "nagging" and an ineffective parenting technique. Why? Well, the constant lecturing you do will get in the way of your child's ability to be emotionally separate from you and function in reaction to you, instead of being responsible for himself/herself. We all know raising children in these trying times is not easy. However, as parents, you are the solution and not the problem. You can teach your children the skills they need to take responsibility in their lives now. How?

Firstly, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). This implies that to be kind, compassionate and generous to others, we must all first be these things to ourselves. Secondly, try and stay in your "box" — the "parent box", maintain your boundaries and take responsibility for your actions, not your child's. As parents, the focus should be on clearly stating the rules and holding your children accountable, with effective consequences if the rules are not followed.

It is eloquently stated in Mark 10:13-16 "let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these". Therefore, teach your child right from wrong with calm words and actions, set limits and have clear boundaries and consistent rules that a child can follow. Boundaries limit destructive behaviour, and that is why both God and society have laws and consequences for those who overstep those laws (Romans 13:1-

4). Most of all give children the time of your day, your undivided attention and be prepared for trouble. Let us be clear about consequences. It is not punishment. There is a difference and you need to recognise that consequences are not meant to make your child feel humiliated, embarrassed or unloved. They are intended to teach or modify behaviour in a positive way as opposed to punishment which is retribution.

In fact, punishment "gets back" at someone for something said or done with the goal of hurting that person. Moreover, a power struggle with your child can be avoided with effective consequences. They are a gratifying tool to have under your belt because it motivates the child into good behaviour, teach them to problem-solve and gives them the skills needed to be successful adults. Therefore, what are constructive ways to reassert your parental authority?

Firstly, "know well the condition of your flocks and pay attention to your herds, and let them not stray" Proverbs 27-23, by giving them your positive attention at least 15 minutes a day. The more you invest in time-in with your child, the less time your child will spend in time-out. When you have to put your child on time out, make sure it is time specific. Just by saying "you are grounded until I say so", is not good enough. It is a vague end time and sends a signal that you are not serious and you may be making an empty threat in the heat of the moment. Whether it's finishing an assignment, cleaning up the room or even avoiding squabbles with siblings, make it clear exactly what needs to

happen for your child to earn back what was taken away. Always link the behaviour to the consequence, for example, by saying "you can earn it back" instead of "you can't have it back", when taking away a privilege like electronics or play time. This way your expectations are defined, behaviour expected is clarified and the situation will be neutral rather than hostile. Furthermore, it emphasises the connection between your child's behaviour and the consequence. The best consequences are always immediate so that your kids remember why they got into trouble in the first place.

Delay it and it will be forgotten. Trust me on this one as I have been there many times. I felt like I was between "a rock and a hard place". So, make consequences your teaching tool and make them logical to ensure the consequences fit with the misbehaviour. If your child rides the bike outside designated boundaries, take away the bike and not his electronics. Even better, let your child choose the consequence for stepping over the boundary. You may find that children are harder on themselves than you are. Furthermore, try and not use the same consequence too often as motivation to earn the privilege will be lost as well. Multiple time-outs will become less effective. Therefore, switch things up by using discipline tools such as reward systems, praise and active ignoring. Finally, "Arise! For this matter is your responsibility but we will be with you, be courageous and act" Ezra 10-4, with humility and grace. Until next time, God Bless and stay safe.

The notion of a vocation

I was raised in a generation that was taught that God gave each of us a vocation. In the religious ethos of that time, particularly in Roman Catholic spirituality, we believed we were put on this earth with a divine plan for us, that God gave us each a special vocation to live out. Moreover, this was not something we were free to choose for ourselves; it was God-given.

Our task was to discern that vocation and to give ourselves over to it, even at the price of having to renounce our own dreams. We remained free to accept or not, but at a peril. To be unfaithful to your vocation meant a misguided life.

There's an important truth in that notion, though it needs some critical nuances. First, in that spirituality, they thought of vocations in a very restrictive sense, essentially envisaging only four basic vocations: priesthood, religious life, marriage, and the single life. Further, they tended to put too much gravity on the choice, namely, if you chose wrong or if you resisted your God-given vocation, it might endanger your eternal salvation. There were some unhealthy fears

connected to the choice.

I saw that first-hand when I served as the provincial superior for our religious order for six years. One of my tasks was to apply to Rome for the laicisation of priests leaving the priesthood. I saw how many of those leaving the priesthood had chosen that vocation under undue pressure and false fear. Their choice had not been a free one.

That being said, the old notion of vocation is essentially still true and is too easily lost in a world and culture that generally puts personal freedom above all else. We need to learn again the importance of finding one's vocation and giving oneself over to it. Vocation needs to be defined more widely than choosing between priesthood, religious life, marriage, and the single life. Instead, it needs to be defined as an obedience to the inner dictates of our soul, our gifts, our talents, and the non-negotiable mandate inside us to put ourselves in service to others and the world.

James Hollis, a Jungian therapist writing from a purely secular viewpoint, highlights precisely this



Fr Ron Rolheiser

point. "Our real desires and our destiny are not chosen for us by our ego, but by our nature and 'the divinities'. ... Something within us knows what is right for us and its insistence on expression is what keeps us awake at night, nudges us from within during our busiest hours, or causes us to envy others. Vocation is a summons of the soul. It's as if we were sent to this land with a royal assignment, and if we have only dithered about and forgotten the task, then we have violated our reason for being here."

How true.

Columnist David Brooks, also speaking from a secular place, strongly agrees. A vocation, he writes, is an irrational factor where in you hear an inner voice that is so strong it becomes unthinkable to turn away and where you intuitively know you don't have a choice, but can only ask yourself, what is my responsibility here?

As well, the summons to a vocation is a holy thing, something mystical, a call from the deep. Thus, discerning your vocation is not a matter of asking what you expect from life but, rather, what life expects from you.

What would Jesus say? As we know, Jesus was fond of teaching in parables and his parable of talents (Matthew 25 and Luke 19) is ultimately about living out one's God-given vocation. In that parable, those who use their talents thrive and are given even more talents.

Conversely, those who hide their talents are punished. In essence, the message is this: If we use our God-given talents, we will find meaning and blessing in our lives; on the

other hand, if we don't use our talents, those very gifts will snakebite us, poison our happiness, and generally embitter our spirits. Show me a man who is bitter and envious, and most times you will see a gifted man who, consciously or unconsciously, is frustrated because he has not used his talents or has used them in a manner that doesn't serve others. Bitterness and envy are often the unhappy residue from being snake-bitten by our own unused or misused intelligence and gifts.

There's a voice inside us issuing forth from the depths of our souls that speaks for our talents, our temperament, our unique circumstances in life, our moral and religious sensitivities, and even for our wounds. This voice is gentle, but firm and unrelenting, as it tells us we are not free to do anything we want with our lives. We need to surrender them to something higher than ourselves.

There is peril in not listening, though what's at stake is not our eternal salvation, but our happiness and generativity on this side of eternity. — *By Fr Ron Rolheiser, all rights reserved*

WEDNESDAYS WITH POPE FRANCIS

There is just one Gospel

When it comes to the Gospel and the mission to evangelise, Paul is enthusiastic, he comes out of himself. He seems to see nothing other than this mission that the Lord has entrusted to him.

Everything in him is dedicated to this proclamation, and he has no interest other than the Gospel. It is Paul's love, Paul's interest, Paul's profession: to proclaim. He even goes so far as to say: 'Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the Gospel' (1 Cor 1:17). Paul interprets his whole existence as a call to evangelise, to make Christ's message known, to make the Gospel known: "Woe to me", he says, "if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16). And writing to the Christians of Rome, he presents himself simply as follows: "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, an apostle by calling, chosen to proclaim the Gospel of God" (Rom 1:1). This is his vocation. In short, he is aware that he has been "set apart" to bring the Gospel to all, and he cannot but devote himself with all his strength to this mission.

One can therefore understand the sadness, the disappointment, and even the bitter irony of the Apostle towards the Galatians who, in his eyes, are taking the wrong path which will lead to them to a point of no return: they have taken the wrong path. The pivot around which everything revolves is the Gospel. Paul does not think of the "four Gospels", as is natural for us. Indeed, while he is sending this Letter, none of the four Gospels had yet been written. For him, the Gospel is

what he preaches, what is called the *kerygma*, that is, the proclamation. And what proclamation? That of the death and resurrection of Jesus as the source of salvation.

A Gospel that is expressed in four verbs: "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and he appeared to the Cephas, then to the twelve" (1 Cor 15: 3-5). This is Paul's proclamation, the proclamation that gives life to all. This Gospel is the fulfilment of the promises and the salvation offered to all men. Whoever accepts it is reconciled to God, is welcomed as a true son, and receives the inheritance of eternal life.

Faced with such a great gift, the Apostle cannot explain why the Galatians might think of accepting another "gospel", perhaps more sophisticated, more intellectual, I don't know ... but another "gospel". It should be noted, however, that these Christians have not yet abandoned the Gospel announced by Paul. The Apostle knows that they still have time not to take a false step, but he warns them strongly, very strongly. His first argument points directly to the fact that the preaching carried out by the new missionaries - those who bring novelty, it cannot be the Gospel. On the contrary, it is a proclamation that distorts the true Gospel because it prevents them from attaining the freedom acquired by arriving at faith — this is the key word, isn't it? — it prevents them from reaching the freedom acquired

by coming to faith.

The Galatians are still "beginners", and their disorientation is understandable. They do not yet know the complexities of the Mosaic Law and their enthusiasm in embracing faith in Christ leads them to listen to these new preachers, deluding themselves that their message is complementary to Paul's. And it is not.

However, the Apostle cannot risk compromises on such decisive ground. The Gospel is only one and that is what he proclaimed; there can be no other. Beware! Paul does not say that the true Gospel is his because it was he who announced it - no! He does not say this. This would be presumptuous, boastful. Rather, he affirms that "his" Gospel, the same one that the other Apostles were proclaiming elsewhere, is the only authentic one, because it is that of Jesus Christ. He thus writes: "I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:11). We can understand why Paul uses very harsh terms. Twice he uses the expression "anathema", which indicates the need to keep far from the community that which threatens its foundations. And this new "gospel" threatens the foundations of the community.

In short, on this point the Apostle leaves no room for negotiation: one cannot negotiate. With the truth of the Gospel, one cannot negotiate. Either you receive the Gospel as it is, as it was announced, or you receive any other thing. But you can-



not negotiate with the Gospel. One cannot compromise. Faith in Jesus is not a bargaining chip: it is salvation, it is encounter, it is redemption. It cannot be sold off cheaply.

This situation described at the beginning of the Letter seems paradoxical, because all those involved seem to be animated by good feelings. The Galatians who listen to the new missionaries think that by circumcision they will be even more devoted to the will of God and thus be even more pleasing to Paul. Paul's enemies seem to be inspired by fidelity to the tradition received from the fathers and believe that genuine faith consists in observing the Law. In the face of this supreme fidelity, they even justify their insinuations and suspicions about Paul, who is considered unorthodox regarding tradition. The Apostle himself understands his mission is of a divine nature — it was revealed by Christ Himself, to him — and therefore he is moved by total enthusiasm for the novelty of the Gospel, which is a radical novelty, not a fleeting novelty: there are no "fashionable"

gospels, the Gospel is always new, it is newness. His pastoral anxiety leads him to be severe, because he sees the great risk facing young Christians. In short, in this labyrinth of good intentions, it is necessary to disentangle oneself to grasp the supreme truth that is most consistent with the Person and preaching of Jesus and His revelation of the Father's love.

This is important: knowing how to discern. Very often we have seen throughout history, and we even see this today, some movements that preach the Gospel in their own way, sometimes with real and genuine charisms; but then they take it too far and reduce all the Gospel to a "movement". And this is not Christ's Gospel: this is the Gospel of the founder and yes, it may help at the beginning, but in the end, it does not bear fruit with deep roots. For this reason, Paul's clear and decisive word was salutary for the Galatians and is salutary for us too. The Gospel is Christ's gift to us, He Himself revealed it to us. It is what gives us life.

Little Catholics' Corner

Hello boys and girls,

Today we celebrate Jesus as the Lord and King of Heaven and earth. This feast is known as the feast of Christ the King. It is also the last week in the Church's calendar.

When we say Jesus is King, we accept that He is in charge of our lives and we are ready to listen to Him at all times. He tells us to love God and each other always.

What can you do to show Jesus that he is king of your life?

Aunty Gwen

THE CROWN IS A SYMBOL OF JESUS KINGSHIP



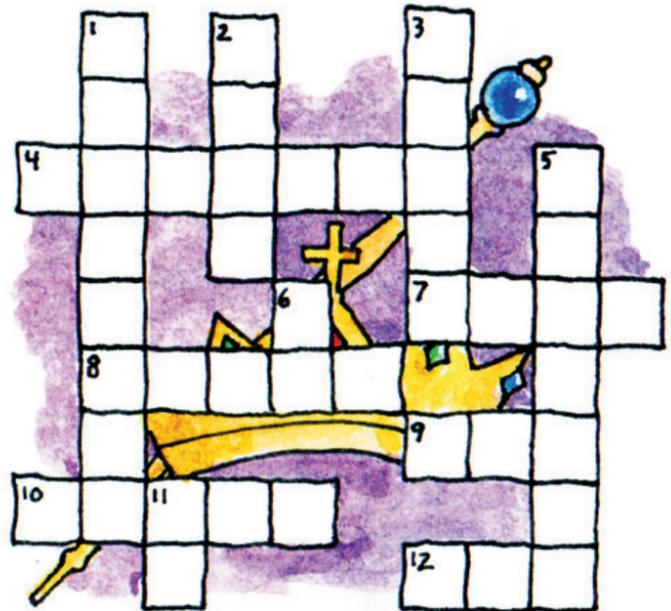
Christ the King Crossword

Revelation 1:5-7

Here is a part of today's second reading.

Use the words at the bottom to fill in the blanks and the puzzle.

D: down
A: across



Cross word text

(3D) _____ Christ is the (1D) _____ (4A) _____, the firstborn (11D) _____ the dead and ruler of the (2D) _____s of the earth. To (12A) _____ who loves us and has (8A) _____ us from our (7A) _____ by his blood, who has made us into a (5D) _____, priest for his (9A) _____ and Father, to him (6D) _____ (10A) _____ and power forever and ever. Amen.

OF
GLORY
BE
HIM
WITNESS
GOD
FAITHFUL
SINS
KING
FREED
KINGDOM
JESUS

Answers: Down: 1. Faithful; 2. King; 3. Jesus; 5. Kingdom; 6. beg; 11. of; Across: 4. witness; 7. sins; 8. freed; 9. God; 10. glory; 12. him

Circle the letter by the correct answer.

- What made Jesus Christ the King different from other kings?
 - He lived in a palace.
 - He did not wear a beautiful robe or a jewelled crown.
 - He had servants to wait on him.
- What else made Jesus Christ the King different from other kings?
 - He had soldiers to fight his battles.
 - He had a country to rule.
 - He had no coins engraved with his face or his name.
- Christ is not just any king. He is the...
 - King of Kings
 - King of Israel
 - King of Rome
- What did the first criminal being crucified with Christ say?
 - I do not deserve to be crucified!
 - I am not guilty! Why are you doing this to me?
 - If you are the Messiah, prove it. Save yourself and us, too.
- What did the second criminal being crucified with Christ say?
 - I do not deserve to be crucified!
 - Remember me when you come into your Kingdom.
 - Jesus, why don't you get us off these crosses?
- What did Jesus say to the second criminal?
 - Today, you will be with me in paradise.
 - You deserve to die! Don't ask for my help!
 - I'm sorry, but I cannot help you.

Word Search

- PUNISHED
- LEFT
- CRUCIFIED
- DIVIDED
- CLOTHES
- MOCKED
- PARADISE
- KING
- FATHER
- CHOSEN
- TRUTH
- SKULL
- SAVE
- CRIMINALS
- CHRIST
- FEAR
- SOLDIERS
- RIGHT
- FORGIVE
- REMEMBER

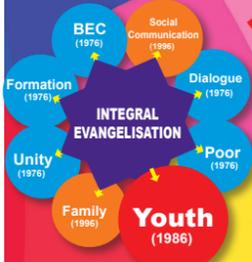


Children's Prayer:

Thank you Father God for sending Jesus to be our saviour and our friend. Thank you also that he is a King. Help us always to follow him, honour him, and serve him in his Kingdom. Thank you God that we are "kids of the kingdom." In Jesus Name, Amen.

YOUTH

November 21, 2021



Young people produce short films on HOPE

ROME: A new international film festival premiering this week features the winning submissions of young people from 116 countries.

Conceived in December 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the first annual Don Bosco Global Film Festival received 1,686 short film submissions on the theme *Moved by Hope*.

The best films, chosen by an international jury, will be streamed Nov 18-19, both online and at physical gatherings in 135 different countries.

Submissions were open until Oct 15 from filmmakers aged 15 to 30. The short films could be in any genre, with three major categories: live-action shorts under 10 minutes, animated shorts under five minutes, and music videos under five minutes.

The film festival was organised by the Salesians of Don Bosco who said on their website that they wanted to create "a world-class film festival platform to showcase ... young

creative filmmaking talents."

The festival "strives to embrace, encourage and empower every young person to become the voice of hope and solidarity," the website said.

Films will be awarded cash prizes in many different categories, including global bests, continental bests, and category bests such as narrative, screenplay, sound design and editing.

There will also be individual awards for best actor and best actress, best writer and best director.

"Young people always surprise us with their creativity ... I really think that today's world should believe much more in the value of young people," the Rector Major (worldwide head) of the Salesians said at a press conference last week.

"We have a proposal for you: for your mind and for your heart," Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime said in a video addressed to potential participants.

"You, young people, are the ar-

chitects of the future, signs of hope. And we have great hope in all of you. With you, we want to dream and build a better tomorrow," he said.

"With your creativity, you can truly help to change the world.

I invite you to come and participate in this festival of short films. This is your festival, come and let us move the world with hope."

The priest added that he was sure that St John Bosco, the founder of the Salesian religious congregation, would be very happy about the film festival.

The saint, commonly called Don Bosco, was an Italian priest who dedicated his life to helping disadvantaged youth through his oratory, where he gave spiritual and practical instruction based on love, rather than on punishment. — By Hannah Brockhaus, CNA



Don Bosco Global Youth Film Festival



"MOVED BY HOPE"

ARISE, BEAR WITNESS TO JESUS WITH YOUR LIVES

The Malaysian Catholic Youth Ministers Committee is organising the World Youth Day (WYD) celebration in the respective arch/dioceses on the Feast of Christ the King, which is also WYD. This year's theme *Arise! I make you a witness of what you have seen*, is inspired by Jesus' words to St Paul recorded in Acts 26:16.

In his message released on Sept 27, Pope Francis is inviting the youth to join a "spiritual pilgrimage leading to the celebration of the 2023 World Youth Day" in Lisbon, Portugal.

Young people! let us celebrate World Youth Day 2021 together with the nation and the world!

Graduation day for Montfort Youth Centre's students

MELAKA: It was a day to remember for Montfort Youth Centre (MYC) Batch 19 students on October 30. Looking smart and handsome in their suits, these 39 young men graduated after studying for two years in their various technical fields, passing their SKM Level 2 for Motor Mechanics students, SKM Level 3 for IT students and ILP Certificates for Single Phase Wiring and 3G SMAW (Welding) for General Maintenance students.

The ceremony was graced by Bro Robin Devasagayam sg, Director of Mont-

fort Boys Town and one of two founders of MYC.

MYC was founded on August 1, 2001, by the then young missionary Brothers of St Gabriel; Bro Robin and Bro Peter Kollandai Samy sg who is the current director of MYC.

In his speech, Bro Robin congratulated the students for their perseverance and achievements.

He also congratulated Bro Peter for the Phase One building which is near completion, consisting of a multi-purpose hall, student affairs and pastoral care building and kitchen.

He wished Bro Peter all the best for taking a big leap to open MYC to disabled youth, thus building the next Phase, a disa-



bled-friendly training workshop/classrooms and a disabled-friendly dormitory.

The auspicious ceremony was attended by MYC Board members, Brothers, Sisters, staff, parents/guardians, and current students, following strict SOPs.

Bro Peter thanked everyone, especially friends of Montfort and all donors, for making this day possible for the youth to have a better future, to earn a decent living and

to start contributing to their families and to society.

He urged the public to contribute generously for this worthy cause, as donations to MYC have dropped drastically due to the pandemic.

For further information on donations or admission of students, please call 06-351 0114/5 or visit us at our website www.montfortyouthcentre.org

'The Unseen Wound'

PENANG: The Penang Diocesan Youth Network conducted a Mental Health Awareness Talk on October 14 and 15 entitled *The Unseen Wound*, in conjunction with World Mental Health Day.

Below is a sharing from Juliana Teoh, one of the participants in the event.

"I am almost reaching my mid-twenties and I love to connect with people and life in general.

However, as a young adult going through life and navigating different learning periods simultaneously, it can be quite strenuous. How I wish I had been taught about the basics of mental and emotional health and their importance earlier on in life! I think that many people, especially in this modern era, are very stressed coping with life.

We are so afraid to be ourselves in the world. We worry about peoples' perceptions of us, we desire to be loved. It is that anxiety that stigmatises our mental and emotional well-being. As a result, each one of us develops *The Unseen Wound*. It is not seen on the outside but is deeply felt and can be devastating to our self-esteem.

Dr Christabel Esther and Mr Kenny Lim stressed this serious point, urging anyone facing seemingly insurmountable challenges in life to get help. To be able to spill the beans. You know what? It is okay to ask for help.

It is okay to not feel okay all the time. The only real damage that we can do to ourselves is to bottle up all our emotions. Therefore, in the first session of *The Unseen Wound*, Dr Christabel helped me understand who I am. As a person, each one of us comes from different backgrounds

with different parental upbringing that could shape the way we view ourselves and the way we experience life. What struck me most in the first session was actually an eye-opening question: How are you, yourself? Truth be told, this simple yet deep question has impacted the way I view my mental and emotional health.

It somehow made me realise that the little girl in me is still there, but she has been neglected. Quite silenced, actually, and so afraid of sharing her personal experiences. We all have this little person in us lost somewhere. To bring the inner person back to life is to learn the basics of mental and emotional health.

Sadly, many people in our society do not fully comprehend the meaning and importance of keeping our inner health and happiness. What we can do is to keep an open mind and learn from professionals or support groups. I was excited to finally attend such a talk because I knew that my perspectives about the unseen wound, in me and in those around me, was going to bring about an amazingly refreshing turnover.

Kenny Lim gave an example of how to help ourselves and others who are in the same boat. We were taught how to truly listen without judging, who or where we can turn to for help.

I am truly inspired by both speakers. To help others, to learn their stories and maybe to elevate their burdens gives me the joy and peace of serving Christ, for in His eyes, we are all His children.

We are called to be salt and light to the world, to be disciples of mercy.

How It Changed My Life

The Unseen Wound
14 - 15 October 2021

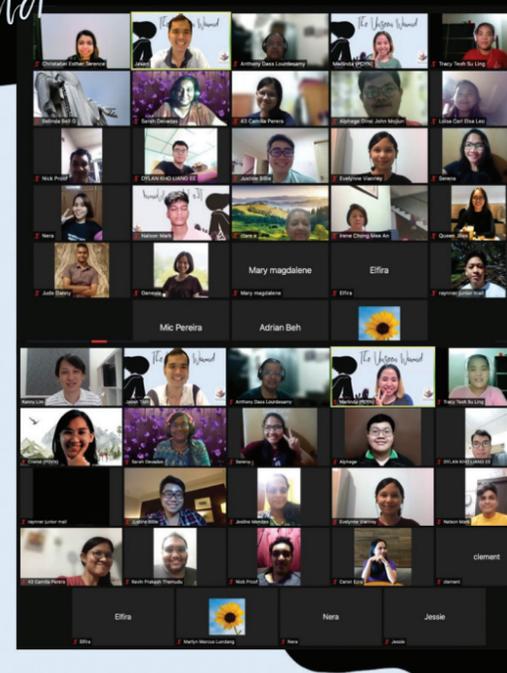


Dr. Christabel
Psychiatrist



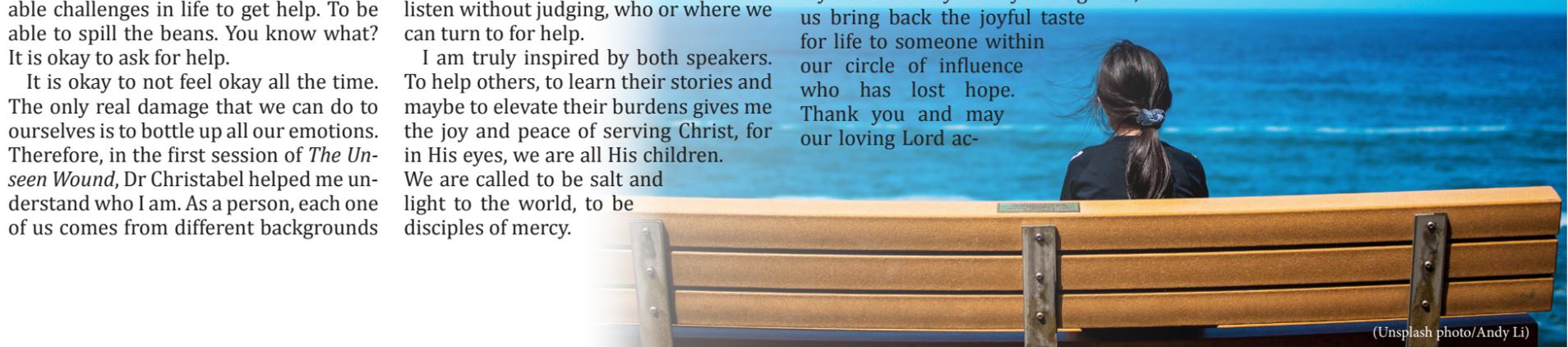
Kenny Lim
Befrienders KL

#YouAreNotAlone
#PDYN4U



I really hope that anyone who stumbles across this article may be inspired to be the change in your family and society because they need you. Together, let us bring back the joyful taste for life to someone within our circle of influence who has lost hope. Thank you and may our loving Lord ac-

company each and every one of you on your journey to discovering His plans for you. Amen."



Filipino prelate moves a step closer to sainthood

MANILA: The Congregation for the Causes of Saints has approved the “heroic virtues” of a former Philippine prelate, moving him a step closer to sainthood, according to the Cebu Archdiocese.

Archbishop Teofilo Camomot served as Cebu’s auxiliary bishop from 1955 to 1958, before his death in a road accident in 1988.

He was noted for his dedication to pastoral duties, prayer and charitable work.

On November 11, the Cebu Archdiocese announced that the Vatican congregation had voted unanimously to advance the process of examination of the prelate’s life.

“The Archdiocese of Cebu has been notified that the Theological Commission of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in the Vatican gave a unanimous affirmative vote [nine out of nine] to the heroic virtues of the servant of God, Archbishop Teofilo Camo-

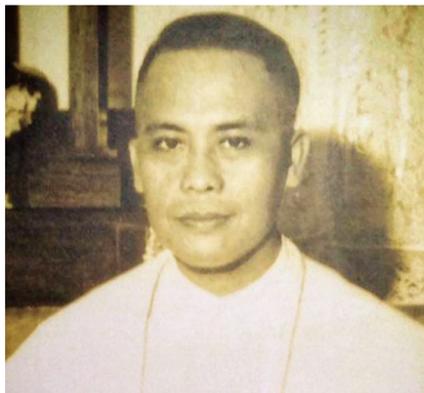
mot,” it said in a Facebook post.

“With this favourable outcome, the cause of beatification and canonisation of Bishop Camomot will be forwarded for further examination to the Commission of Bishops and Cardinals ... Upon completion of their study, the cause will be presented to the Holy Father for his approval. Then, Bishop Camomot will be considered ‘venerable.’”

“Venerable” is the title bestowed on a deceased person in the first of three stages leading to beatification with the title “Blessed” and canonisation with the title “Saint.”

Cebu Archbishop Jose Palma called on all Catholics in Cebu and the Philippines for prayers for the next stages of the sainthood process.

He reminded churchgoers not to invoke “for now” the name of the archbishop in their prayers as if he were already a saint or



Archbishop Teofilo Camomot. (UCA News Photo/Archdiocese of Cebu)

blessed of the Catholic Church.

Catholics in Cebu hope Archbishop Camomot will become the island’s second saint.

The first was St Pedro Calungsod, who embarked on a Spanish mission to the Marianas Islands in 1672 with Jesuit missionary Fr Diego Luis San Vitores.

They were martyred on Cebu for baptising natives and canonised by Pope Benedict XVI on Oct 21, 2012.

In October 2010, a group of religious sisters in Cebu formally petitioned for the opening of a cause for beatification and canonisation of Archbishop Camomot for living a life “full of virtue.”

The petition was supported by the late Filipino Cardinal Ricardo Vidal, then archbishop of Cebu. — **By Joseph Peter Calleja, ucanews.com**



A file photo of the public viewing of the remains of the late Archbishop Teofilo Camomot in Valladolid, Carcar City, Jan 4, 2018. (www.archbishopcamomot.ph)

MEMORIAM

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3rd Anniversary In Loving Memory of



**Rosalind
Fernandez**

**From the Lord:
4th June 1920**

**To the Lord:
22nd November 2018**

*Gone is the face we love so dear,
Silent is the dear voice we long to hear.
Too far away from sight and speech,
But not too far from loved one’s thoughts to reach.*

Dearly missed and forever remembered by
Children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren
relatives, friends and loved ones.

*“Let not your hearts be troubled.
Believe in God; believe also
in me. In my Father’s house are
many rooms. If it were not so,
would I have told you that
I go to prepare a place for you?
And if I go and prepare a place
for you, I will come again and
will take you to myself,
that where I am you may be also.
And you know the way
to where I am going.”*

John 14:1-4



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St Cecilia

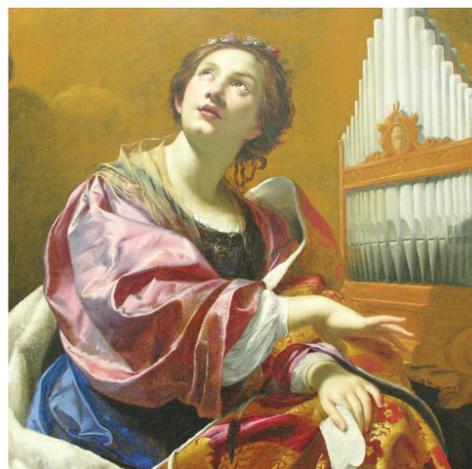
St Cecilia's family was one of the principle families of Rome. In line with to the cultural custom of the time, Cecilia's family betrothed her to a pagan nobleman named Valerian despite St Cecilia's consecration to God. On their wedding night, Cecilia told Valerian that she had sworn to remain a virgin before God and that an angel guarded her body, protecting her virginity from violation. She told Valerian that he would be able to see this angel if he went to the third milestone along the Via Appia and was baptised by Pope Urban I. Valerian went to the milestone as Cecilia had instructed, and there was baptised. She later converted his brother as well.

During that era, it was forbidden for anyone to bury the bodies of Christians, so newly-baptised Valerian and his brother dedicated themselves to burying the bodies of all the Christians they found. For this, they were arrested and brought before a judge who ordered them to worship the

Feast day: November 22
Patron Saint of: Musicians

Roman god Jupiter, and were martyred when they refused to deny their Christian faith. The police then came for Cecilia and strongly advised her to renounce her faith. In reply, she told them that she would prefer to die than to denounce the true faith. According to legend, upon hearing her response, they brought her to a large oven with the intention of suffocating her with the hot and toxic gasses it emitted. However, instead of choking, Cecilia began to sing. Infuriated, her persecutors attempted to behead her, but after three strokes of the sword, Cecilia was still alive and her head was not severed. The soldiers then left her covered in blood in her own home, where she remained for three days before she died.

The church Santa Cecilia in Trastevere was built on the site of the house where she lived. St



Cecilia is known for "singing in her heart to the Lord" upon her wedding day, despite her consecration to God. She is the patron Saint of musicians and poets because of this sentiment and her alleged singing within the oven during her martyrdom. Her fortitude may inspire the modern Catholic in the trials of life and inspire one to find God in music. — *CNA*

Daily Short Reading

Sunday, November 21
 (Ephesians 4:15-16)

If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow in all ways into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each separate part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has built itself up, in love.

Monday, November 22
 (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a gentle Father and the God of all consolation, who comforts us in all our sorrows, so that we can offer others, in their sorrows, the consolation that we have received from God ourselves. Indeed, as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so, through Christ, does our consolation overflow.

Tuesday, November 23
 (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5)

It is not as if you live in the dark, my brothers, for that Day to overtake you like a thief. No, you are all sons of light and sons of the day: we do not belong to the night or to darkness.

Wednesday, November 24
 (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a gentle Father and the God of all consolation, who comforts us in all our sorrows, so that we can offer others, in their sorrows, the consolation that we have received from God ourselves. Indeed, as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so, through Christ, does our consolation overflow.

Thursday, November 25
 (Rom 14: 17-19)

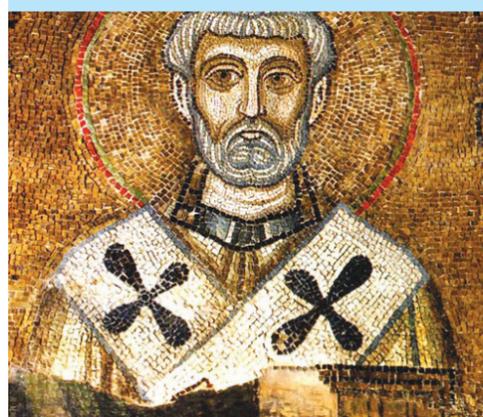
The kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up building.

Friday, November 26
 (Eph 2:13-16)

Now, in union with Christ Jesus, you who used to be far away have been brought near by the death of Christ. For Christ himself has brought us peace, by making the Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies. He abolished the Jewish Law, with its commandments and rules, in order to create out of the two races one new people in union with himself, in this way making peace. By his death on the cross Christ destroyed the enmity; by means of the cross he united both races into one body and brought them back to God

Saturday, November 27
 (Rom 12:14-16a)

Bless those who persecute you: bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.



St Clement I

Clement of Rome was the third successor of St Peter, reigning as Pope during the last decade of the first century. He's known as one of the Church's five "Apostolic Fathers," those who provided a direct link between the Apostles and later generations of Church Fathers.

Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians was preserved and widely read in the early Church. This letter from the bishop of Rome to the Church in Corinth concerns a split that

Feast day: November 23

Patron Saint of:
 Marble Workers
 Mariners
 Tanners

alienated a large number of the laity from the clergy. Deploring the unauthorised and unjustifiable division in the Corinthian community, Clement urged charity to heal the rift. — *Franciscan Media*

St Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions

Andrew Dung-Lac, a Catholic convert ordained to the priesthood, was one of 117 people martyred in Vietnam between 1820 and 1862. Members of the companions group gave their lives for Christ in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, and received beatification during four different occasions between 1900 and 1951. All were canonised during the papacy of St John Paul II.

Christianity came to Vietnam through the Portuguese. Jesuits opened the first permanent mission at Da Nang in 1615. They ministered to Japanese Catholics who had been driven from Japan.

Severe persecutions were launched at least three times in the 19th century. During the six decades after 1820, between 100,000 and 300,000 Catholics were killed or subjected to great hardship. Foreign missionaries martyred in the first wave included priests of the Paris Mission Society, and Spanish Dominican priests and tertiaries.

In 1832, Emperor Minh-Mang banned all foreign missionaries, and tried to make all Vietnamese deny their faith by trampling on a crucifix. Like the priest-holes in Ireland during English persecution, many hiding places were offered in homes of the faithful.



Feast day: November 24

Persecution broke out again in 1847, when the emperor suspected foreign missionaries and Vietnamese Christians of sympathising with a rebellion led by one of his sons.

The last of the martyrs were 17 laypersons, one of them a nine-year-old, executed in 1862. That year, a treaty with France guaranteed religious freedom to Catholics, but it did not stop all persecution.

By 1954, there were over a million Catholics — about seven per cent of the population — in the north. Buddhists represented about 60 per

cent. Persistent persecution forced some 670,000 Catholics to abandon lands, homes and possessions and flee to the south. In 1964, there were still 833,000 Catholics in the north, but many were in prison. In the south, Catholics were enjoying the first decade of religious freedom in centuries, their numbers swelled by refugees.

During the Vietnamese war, Catholics again suffered in the north, and again moved to the south in great numbers. Now reunited, the entire country is under Communist rule. — *Franciscan Media*



St Catherine of Alexandria

According to the Legend of St Catherine, this young woman converted to Christianity after receiving a vision. At the age of 18, she debated 50 pagan philosophers. Amazed at her wisdom and debating skills, they became Christian — as did about 200 soldiers and members of the emperor's family. All of them were martyred.

Sentenced to be executed on a spiked wheel, Catherine touched the wheel and it shattered. She was beheaded. Centuries later, angels are said to have carried the body of St Catherine to a monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

Feast day: November 25

Patron Saint of:
 Lawyers Teachers
 Librarians Philosophers
 Philosophers Students
 Students Teachers

Devotion to her spread as a result of the Crusades. Invoked as the patroness of students, teachers, librarians and lawyers, Catherine is one of the 14 Holy Helpers, venerated especially in Germany and Hungary. — *Franciscan Media*



Download the Click To Pray updates now.



Pope Francis' three tips for journalists today

VATICAN: Honouring two reporters who have covered the Vatican for more than 40 years, Pope Francis paid tribute to all journalists who work to explain what is going on in the world and "make it less obscure."

Addressing honorees Philip Pullella of *Reuters* and Valentina Alazraki of *Televisa* and their colleagues on November 13, Pope Francis said, "I also thank you for what you tell us about what is wrong in the Church, for helping us not to hide it under the carpet and for the voice you have given to the victims of abuse. Thank you for this."

During an audience in the Consistory Room of the Apostolic Palace, the Pope conferred on the two the grand cross of the Order of Pope Pius IX, the highest papal honour which can be bestowed on laypeople who are not heads of state.

In their more than 40 years of covering the Vatican, Pullella and Alazraki have each made well over 100 papal trips abroad. With their families present, but also dozens of other members and former members of the Vatican press corps and of the Vatican press office staff, Pope Francis said, "We are travel companions."

"Today I want in some way to pay homage to your entire working community," he said, and "to tell you that the Pope loves you, follows you, esteems you, considers you precious."

"Journalism is not so much a matter of choosing a profession but, rather, of embarking on a mission, a bit like a doctor who studies and works to cure evil in the world," the Pope said. "Your mission is to explain to the world, to make it less obscure, to make those who live in it less afraid and to look at others with greater awareness."

In a world where events are shared instantly and constantly, he said, it is important for jour-



Pope Francis flanked by Valentina Alazraki (L) and Philip Pullella (R). (Vatican Media)

nalists to pause, listen and "to study the contexts and precedents" of what is happening.

"The risk, as you well know, is to be overwhelmed by the news instead of being able to make sense of it," he told the journalists.

"**LISTEN, INVESTIGATE AND REPORT**" are the three verbs that characterise good journalism, the Pope told them.

Listening and seeing go together, he said. A good news report requires attention not just to what people say but how they say it — something that requires time and is authentic only "if the journalist has listened and seen for himself or herself."

Repeating part of his message for World Communications Day, Pope Francis said the world needs "journalists who are willing to 'wear out the soles of their shoes,' to get out of the newsroom, to walk around the city, to meet people, to assess the situations in which we live in our time."

Investigating, going deeper into an event and its context and implications, is a service needed especially when snippets of information are so readily available and shared on social media, he said.

"You know very well that, even when it comes to information about the Holy See, not everything said is always 'new' or 'revolutionary,'" the Pope said, noting that in an address to popular movements in October, he tried to explain how his pronouncements on poverty and migration and other issues are rooted in the long-developing social teaching of the Church.

"Tradition and the magisterium continue and develop by facing the ever-new demands of the times in which we live and enlightening them with the Gospel," he said.

To report or recount what has happened and why, the Pope said, journalists should not make themselves the star of the story or the judge of an event, but they do have to allow themselves "to be struck and sometimes wounded" by the stories they encounter.

"Today we are in great need of journalists and communicators who are passionate about reality, capable of finding the treasures often hidden in the folds of our society and recounting them, allowing us to be impressed, to learn, to broaden our minds, to grasp aspects that we did not know before," he said. — **Cindy Wooden** *CNS, America (americamagazine.org)*

Catholic charity announces RM23.76M to help Lebanon and Syria's Christians

ROME: As cathedrals and monuments around the world are illuminated in red this week to highlight the plight of persecuted Christians, the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need announced that it is donating five million euros (RM23.76 million) to help Christian communities in Lebanon and Syria.

The funds will help establish a project to support young newlywed couples in Syria, who are starting families after 10 years of war in the Middle Eastern country.

Regina Lynch, a project manager for the charity, said: "Many young people don't get married because they can't afford to set up home together. It is a situation that also worries the bishops, recognising that the faithful do not marry because they simply cannot afford it."

"We are working on a project in Aleppo, which will consist of giving couples enough money to cover basic needs for setting up home or to pay the rent of a flat for two years."



Christians in the Middle East have endured "an ecumenism of blood" through their shared suffering and witness to love for Christ in the face of persecution. (Vatican News photo)

Other projects in Syria funded by the relief package include a meal programme for the elderly, fuel for central heating in a students' residence, medical supplies, and academic scholarships.

The aid will support Christians from all communions, according to the charity, which said that some of the funding will go directly to Orthodox Churches such as the Greek Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, and the Armenian Apostolic Church in Aleppo.

Thomas Heine-Geldern, the international executive president of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), said he hoped that this would help to preserve "the rich tapestry of Christian traditions in Syria."

He highlighted Pope Francis' words that Christians in the Middle East have endured "an ecumenism of blood" through their shared suffering and witness to love for Christ in the face of persecution.

Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignatius Joseph III Younan expressed concern that the dire situation will further drive Christians to leave Lebanon and move out of the Middle East. — **CNA**

US Bishops affix feast day for St Teresa of Kolkata

WASHINGTON: The US Bishops have assigned a feast date to St Teresa of Kolkata.

The date would be September 5, the death date in 1997 for the founder of the Missionaries of Charity. It will be an optional memorial on the US calendar.

The vote was 213-0 with one abstention. Two-thirds of Latin-rite bishops' approval is needed, followed by a *confirmatio* by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

According to a report from Archbishop Leonard P Blair of Hartford, Connecticut, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Divine Worship, Minnesota dioceses petitioned the committee in October 2020 to "inscribe" St Teresa's name on the "proper" calendar.

"The committee voted unanimously to support this petition at its January 2021 meeting, noting the widespread devotion to St Teresa and the inspiring example of her life and ministry," Archbishop Blair said.

Committee policy, established in 1992, requires four conditions for the inscription of saints and blessed on the US calendar: They should have been inscribed on diocesan proper



St Teresa of Kolkata

calendars for at least five years; the "cultus" of the candidate "should exist in a significant number of dioceses, broader than the area or region of the country"; the candidate should have served in the United States; and a new inscription would ordinarily have the rank of an optional memorial.

Archbishop Blair noted that the Missionaries of Charity serve in about 30 US dioceses currently and that St Teresa's feast is ranked as

a solemnity in the Sisters' chapels. St Teresa has also been inscribed on the Archdiocese of New York's proper calendar for "a number of years," he said.

Liturgical texts have already been written in anticipation of the feast being declared. Archbishop Blair told the bishops on Nov 17 that the Missionaries of Charity are working to finalise a new text for the Office of Readings for such a feast, and the texts for the US edition of the Liturgy of the Hours would likely be presented sometime in 2023 for a future vote by the bishops.

He added that the Vatican has chosen to use the previous spelling of Calcutta, the saint's adopted home, for the feast. In response to a question posed by Bishop Earl A. Boyea Jr. of Lansing, Michigan, he said the US Bishops' practice is to add feasts on the national calendar as optional memorials.

"She is an incredible example of encounter," said Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wisconsin, who advocated for the feast. "Very powerful and effective in moving the heart ... I think we would be deeply served by including her on our calendar." — **CNS**