

## 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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For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people.

Hebr. 5:1-3



Opening Mass for the Synod of Bishops 2023

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# Pope calls for 'mission of compassion' spurred by pandemic

**VATICAN:** Pope Francis urged Catholics to engage in a "mission of compassion" to a world ravaged by the coronavirus crisis.

The Holy Father, in his World Mission Day 2021 message, warned Catholics not to succumb to the temptation of justifying indifference on the basis of COVID-19 restrictions.

"In these days of pandemic, when there is a temptation to disguise and justify indifference and apathy in the name of healthy social distancing, there is urgent need for the mission of compassion, which can make that necessary distancing an opportunity for encounter, care and promotion," he wrote in the message.

This year's theme is *We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard* (Acts 4:20). The Pope described the theme as "a summons to each of us to 'own' and to bring to others what we bear in our hearts."

In the message, he reflected on the missionary drive of the early Church, as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

"The first Christians, far from yielding to the temptation to become an elite group, were inspired by the Lord and his offer of new life to go out among the nations and to bear witness to what they had seen and heard: the Good News that the Kingdom of God is at hand," he wrote.

He encouraged readers to think of the missionaries who, in centuries past, risked their lives so that Catholics today could know the faith.

He said, "We know that the call to mission is not a thing of the past, or a romantic leftover from earlier times. Today, too, Jesus needs hearts capable of experiencing vocation as a true love story that urges them to go forth to the peripheries of our world as messengers and agents of compassion."

"He addresses this call to everyone, and in different ways. We can think of the peripheries all around us, in the heart of our cities or our own families. Universal openness to love has a dimension that is not geographical but existential."



Pope Francis warned Catholics not to succumb to the temptation of justifying indifference on the basis of COVID-19 restrictions. (Asianews file photo)

Quoting from his latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, he added: "Always, but especially in these times of pandemic, it is important to grow in our daily ability to widen our circle, to reach out to others who, albeit physically close to us, are not immediately part of our 'circle of interests.'"

"To be on mission is to be willing to think as Christ does, to believe with him that those around us are also my brothers and sisters. May his compassionate love touch our hearts and make us all true missionary disciples."

A worldwide collection is held each year on World Mission Day for the Pontifical Mission Societies, an umbrella group of Catholic missionary societies under the Pope's jurisdiction. They include the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Society of St Peter the Apostle, the Holy Childhood Association, and the Missionary Union of Priests and Religious.

The Pope said in his message that, like the first Apostles, Catholics today were living in difficult times.

"The pandemic has brought to the fore and amplified the pain, the solitude, the poverty and the injustices experienced by so many people," he wrote.

"It has unmasked our false sense of security and revealed the brokenness and polarisation quietly growing in our midst. Those who are most frail and vulnerable have come to feel even more so."

"We have experienced discouragement, disillusionment and fatigue; nor have we been immune from a growing negativity that stifles hope."

Nevertheless, he said, the resurrection of Jesus still proclaims a "powerful message of life."

"What we have seen and heard, the mercy we have experienced, can thus become a point of reference and a source of credibility, enabling us to recover a shared passion for building 'a community of belonging and solidarity worthy of our time, our energy and our resources,'" he said, referring again to *Fratelli Tutti*.

"The Lord's Word daily rescues and saves us from the excuses that can plunge us into the worst kind of scepticism: 'Nothing changes, everything stays the same.'"

Citing his 2013 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, he continued: "To those who wonder why they should give up their security, comforts and pleasures if they can see no important result, our answer will always remain the same: 'Jesus Christ has triumphed over sin and death and is now almighty. Jesus Christ is truly alive' and wants us to be alive, fraternal, and capable of cherishing and sharing this message of hope."

"In our present circumstances, there is an urgent need for missionaries of hope who, anointed by the Lord, can provide a prophetic reminder that no one is saved by himself."

The Pope concluded his message by invoking the Virgin Mary.

"May Mary, the first missionary disciple, increase in all the baptised the desire to be salt and light in our lands," he wrote. — CNA

## RUMINATIONS

# Being a missionary in my own backyard

We all have titles that we identify with. Some we've earned, some were given to us. These titles grow and evolve, just as we do, often charting the course of our lives and the choices that come with it.

For me, that title was Missionary. When exactly it started, I do not know. But deep down inside me I knew, I have always known, that life, especially for me was meant to be lived in service.

My younger, naïve self, assumed that it meant going away from everything I called home and living a life of complete service, a life where no other titles can co-exist and flourish.

But God, our perfect Father, has a way to prepare us for exactly who we are meant to be and desire to be. I was too young to understand this, as God once asked Jeremiah "what do you see" (Jer 1:11), a dear mentor said to me "what about right here in our own backyard?" As if waking up from a deep slumber, I began to "see". My eyes observed and soaked up everything I saw, carrying it all over to my heart. My heart held on tight to everything that it felt as I continued to observe, trying to make sense of everything that was happening all around me, right here, in the land I call home.

I began to see how some had nothing and yet were still being robbed of the nothing they had. I began to see how children were robbed of their right to a childhood and how



By  
**Sherril Netto-Vijayan**

the voiceless were treated as if they were not human at all.

But for years, in my everyday living, I struggled to focus on much beyond myself. I spent most of my corporate career in business development, working with some of the best minds in the industry while nurturing my own. I today know that time was no less crucial in ensuring that I gained the education and corporate experience I needed. A training ground that was used to sharpen and nurture skills that I would one day need to serve.

But through all that, I never stopped seeing. Little did I realise that it was a calling within itself. It builds up within you, as if pleading to be addressed and acknowledged, pleading to be lived out in everyday actions. For years, I pushed it away, believing that I needed to fix the brokenness and pain within my own life for me to begin.

Somehow, it eluded my memory that throughout the history of salvation, those that were called to serve were always called despite the brokenness and pain that they carried. Somehow their brokenness and pain often became the very vessel from which God's plan unfolded.

Slowly I began taking small steps to serve and to be of service exactly where I was. Very often that merely meant being a better friend. By taking one step at a time, what started off as just my desire and calling, soon involved likeminded individuals, aware of God's unfailing love for us and equally desiring a life lived so deeply in service. What started off as a blessing to each other grew to include reaching out to those in need within the community around us. Soon it became clear that we needed to set up formal structures and systems to sustainably support everything that was happening.

We never had any grand plans of our own. Truth is, we still don't. We merely focused on doing the best we possibly could for those who are most marginalised within our society.

I remember, as if it was just yesterday, receiving a call from one of my dearest friends telling me about her encounter with a refugee mother, what she saw and everything she felt. A conversation between two likeminded friends weighing out the options we had to address her plight and the resources needed in order to do it well.

That conversation happened a decade ago and ended in what eventually became the first school for refugee children in that region. A school which, over the decade, grew to slowly look into all the other needs a refugee child and their family might have — like nutrition, healthcare and shelter and,

when a global pandemic struck, to find a way to carefully address the most basic needs of these communities in order to help them survive this tumultuous time.

As you can probably tell by now, mine isn't a story of great leaps of faith, but rather one in which I questioned if every little step that I was taking was right and diligently analysed and considered the consequences of any potential mistakes. But in my questioning, there was always one clear constant, God. He was present in moments of inspiration and growth, just as He was ever present in moments that shattered our hearts.

By allowing us to see and feel the pain of another so strongly in our own hearts, He is constantly urging us to do more and to be more to the weakest and meekest of His children, just as He has, and always will be, to us.

Today, I bless and thank God every day for that ability to "see" and the strength to slowly but surely step out and do all I can to care for His beloved children, all while I carry the various titles that chart my life and tell me how incredible life is.

• *Sherril Netto-Vijayan is a Co-Founder of New Thessalonian Apostolate (NTA), a home-grown Catholic missionary organization that runs various humanitarian programmes focused on bringing relief and access to basic needs to non-central parts of Malaysia.*

## God hears our lamentations

Jesus was approaching Jerusalem. He was only 15 miles away from the Holy City. Our Gospel today places His location at the city of Jericho. It was also the time of the Passover, when many pilgrims would be heading to Jerusalem. William Barclay, a popular biblical commentator gives us a sort of visual description of the scene at Jericho. He says that since the main road to Jerusalem passed right through Jericho, at this time of the year it became busy with travellers and pilgrims making their way through it.

One can perhaps recognise how similar this scene is to our own little towns that become swarmed with travellers when festive seasons arrive in our country. Every Jew over the age of 12 who lived within 15 miles of Jerusalem had to attend the Passover. Those who were unable to do so would line the streets to bid Godspeed and a fair journey to the pilgrims who were passing by.

Jericho was probably also the place where many of the temple priests and Levites stayed during their time of service in the Temple. The huge complex that is the temple required staff and sacred ministers to perform the services for those who came there.

There were around 20,000 priests and as many Levites required for the many services the temple offered. This large number of Temple Priests and Levites was divided into 26 groups for better efficiency. The length and breadth of this is that these ministers served according to allotted lots (remember Zachariah's turn of temple duty) and, while not on duty, Jericho would have seemed a nice place to live, to be close to the Temple. But at Passover, they were all called to duty

and would be required back at the Temple.

These details are given to paint a picture of the view of Jericho that day. The pilgrims were commuting; the temple ministers were getting ready to go up. The city was busy catering to the passing pilgrims and the mood was festive. Into this crowded space was passing a young Rabbi who had won the admiration of His listeners wherever He taught. They had recognised the authority behind His teaching, the mercy of God that cut through the demands of Jewish law and the insistence on a changed life because the Kingdom of God was already here.

Jesus had not just won the fascination of His audience and disciples, but also the respect of the people for the way He pitted himself against Jewish Orthodoxy. News that He was passing by would have woken the town up, with people buzzing with excitement and the political analysts among them speculating on His intentions in going to Jerusalem.

Naturally then, as Jesus passed through Jericho, a crowd gathered, mingled with the pilgrims and ministers who were also going up. The noise of the passing crowd had attracted a blind beggar named Bartimaeus. Perhaps his first inquiries were unheeded, and the crowds did not take notice of an insignificant person such as him. But he was determined to catch the attention of Jesus. He probably realised that Jesus could do something for him. Sitting quietly all this time, being all ears, he could have caught news of the good things that Jesus had done for others round about. He shouts loud, above the noise of the passing crowd, to call

### Reflecting on our Sunday Readings with Fr Surain Durai Raj

Jesus to attention. When Jesus stops and addresses him, he is immediate in his request to see again. He had left his cloak and space behind him, now only focussed on Jesus. Jesus heals him and, regaining his sight, he follows Jesus along the way.

Notice the crowd in the Gospel today. When Bartimaeus screamed to catch the attention of Jesus, they told him to keep quiet. They resented the disturbance, and they did not want lamentations ringing through the streets because it was somebody else's pain, not theirs. So they told him to keep quiet. There was no permission to speak or to find a language for suffering.

The crowd represents the school of thought that is content to leave the afflicted to suffer in silence, no doubt believing that there is a perfectly good religious reason as to why the person is being permitted to suffer. But the cry of blind Bartimaeus was not just an uproar from the depths of life, but a prayer, "Son of David, have pity on me."

Fr Denis McBride, a regular homilist, says that without the capacity to communicate his suffering, the blind man would continue to inhabit his world of darkness. He knew that if there was going to be a change, he had to communicate his situation to Jesus. The crowd only responded when Jesus called him up. Until then, they were indifferent to his suffering. What fuels the crowd was

#### 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: *Jeremiah 31:7-9;*

*Hebrews 5:1-6;*

*Gospel: Mark 10:46-52*

euphoria, not compassion — classic mob behaviour.

The healing in the Gospel today takes place as a result of the prayer of lamentation. This prayer expressed the pain and faith of Bartimaeus. He believed that God would pay attention. Disregarding the crowd, he kept his attention on Jesus and was healed. So many people are in the shoes of Bartimaeus in trying to find a language for their sufferings.

A lamentation is not just uncontrolled sobbing but a cry from 'out of the depths' if others will hear them. Crying out to God is about breaking from passivity and silence in the faith that God will pay attention. Their language for suffering carries faith that is mingled with pain, despair, and helplessness, but also tinged with hope. God does hear them as Jesus did in the Gospel today. Will we do the same as Jesus did for others?

• *Fr Surain Durai Raj is a clergy of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. He is currently doing his post-graduate studies in Philosophy.*

**Penang Diocese  
Diary of Bishop  
Sebastian Francis  
Oct & Nov 2021**



**CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF MALAYSIA,  
SINGAPORE AND BRUNEI**

# MASSES for Christmas 2021 and the Feast of the Assumption 2022

- Oct 26** *Apostolic Nuncio, KL*
- Oct 26** *Catholic Welfare Services meeting*
- Nov 1** *Rededication of altar – Church of the Sacred Heart, Kampar*
- Nov 2** *All Souls's Day – Church of the Sacred Heart, Kampar*
- Nov 7** *Mass and Service Award – Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Butterworth*
- Nov 7** *Interreligious Harmony Talk – Melaka*
- Nov 9** *Diocesan Finance Committee Meeting*
- Nov 14** *Confirmation – Church of the Risen Christ, Air Itam*

Wishing you the Peace of our Lord Jesus. As you may be aware, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei (CBCMSB), at their Conference in August 2021, decided the following:

**Christmas 2021 celebration**

- Friday, Dec 24: Vigil Mass of the Nativity of the Lord
- Saturday, Dec 25: Mass of the Nativity of the Lord.

- Saturday, Dec 25: Sunset Mass: Mass of the Holy Family
- Sunday, Dec 26: Mass of the Holy Family

**Feast of Assumption, 2022**

- Sunday, Aug 15: Sunset Mass: Mass of the Assumption
  - Monday, Aug 16: Mass of the Assumption
- The above applies to all parishes and dioceses under the Conference.

*I remain, Yours in Christ*

*Sebastian Francis*

**+ Rt Rev Sebastian Francis DD  
President  
Catholic Bishops' Conference  
of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei  
(CBCMSB)**

*October 15, 2021*

## Mass for All Saints

Wishing you the Peace of our Lord Jesus.

Further to the Communication sent on October 15, 2021 on the two Masses of Christmas 2021 and Assumption 2022, we received enquiries on the solemnity of All Saints.

Applying the same principle as for the above Masses, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei (CBCMSB) adds the advisory on the forthcoming All Saints:

- Sunday, Oct 31, 2021:
- Mass of 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time.
  - Sunset Mass: Solemnity of All Saints

- Monday Nov 1: Mass of All Saints

On an additional question, whether attending two solemnities – the day of the Lord and All Saints (they are obligations) at one Mass satisfies one's obligation?

The Conference does not wish to impose further burden on those who live in remote areas or who are particularly challenged by the pandemic or natural calamities.

Therefore, we answer affirmatively that attending one Mass satisfies the obligation.

However, for those who desire and who have the means, we encourage your participation at Masses on both days.

The above applies to all parishes and dioceses under the Conference.

*I remain, Yours in Christ*

*Sebastian Francis*

**+ Rt Rev Sebastian Francis DD  
President  
Catholic Bishops' Conference  
of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei  
(CBCMSB)**

*Oct 21, 2021*



**DIOCESE OF  
MALACCA JOHORE**



## MJD News Update #61

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

*The Synodal Process has begun. Mission Sunday is here. Melaka and Johor National Recovery Plan Phase 3 & 4 are in effect. The crowds are out, unconcerned. The unvaccinated continue to present their case. The vulnerable are the elderly, the children and those with chronic ailments. Some doctors believe the efficacy of the vaccine wears out because of the heavy medications we are on. Be different. Don't be indifferent. Protect yourself. Protect others.*

**Time to Unite:** Unity government? Unite for the nation? Unite for survival? Marriage of convenience? These are the versions of unity we hear. I told a batch of first Holy Communicants that the Eucharistic host is a call to unity. What is UNITY? With large cards and four volunteers, they saw "U-N-I-TY (You and I tie). *That's what "unity" is all about. We tie, not tear.* The Synodal Process has begun. The One Spirit hovers over the world, flows in through open windows, makes us hear what outside voices are saying, the hard questions they ask that disturb the hierarchy and the Church leadership. Colossians 4:5 reminds us *of the seven ones: "there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all"*

Pope Francis calls us to **unity in diversity, by GOING BACK** to the Vatican Two, the Baptism, the Spirit, the Gospel, and to the Synodal Process of encounter, listening and discerning. It is time to "listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches. In unity and docility to the Spirit, let us discern **"a different Church, not another Church"** as appealed by Pope Francis.

**A Thought for the Week: Doubting Friends**

Fr Quixote, an aging parish priest in a little town in La Mancha, Spain, vacations with his best friend. Sancho is the retired ex-mayor of the town and a committed communist. Both characters are men of very different but deep

faith. But what ultimately binds them together are the ways in which they share doubt. At one point, Fr Quixote and Sancho had this conversation:

"I hope — friend — that you sometimes doubt too. *It's human to doubt.*"

"I try not to doubt," the mayor said.

"Oh, so do I. So do I. *In that we are certainly alike.*"

Something to think about: Graham Greene, the narrator, commented: it's odd how sharing a sense of doubt can bring men together perhaps even more than sharing a faith. *The believer will fight another believer over a shade of difference: the doubter fights only with himself.* They embrace *their doubts, and their doubts cause them to re-imagine their beliefs.*

Graham Greene added: As I see it, *doubt shows a person wrestling God.* What could be more important than that?

**Announcements for this Week:**

**1.** Melaka and Johor have moved into **NRP PHASE 4 and PHASE 3** respectively. There are guidelines for full capacity. Be cautious. Be prepared. Be understanding and be pastoral to the unvaccinated. There is no need for more division and judgements. Just count your blessings and try to be a blessing to one another.

**2.** *The first phase of the Synod Process has taken off at MJD level. The survey questions are to help us sense what the Spirit is saying to the Churches through the participation of the People of God. All are invited to share — church goers and non- churchgoers, the loud and the voiceless, the familiar and the forgotten; those at the centre and those at the peripheries.*

**3.** On Oct 23, 47 members of the **Kursus Evangelisasi Peribadi (KEP)** 2020-2021 batch will be commissioned to serve their parishes and ministries.

**4.** *Mission Sunday 2021* falls on Oct 24, with the theme *We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard.*

**5.** *All Souls' Day Masses* will be celebrated in the parishes. Only the blessings of cemeteries will take place outdoors. The programme will be out soon.

**6.** The parish of St Theresa Masai will be selling candles,

incense and refreshment on Oct 30, 31 and Nov 2 to raise **funds for their new church building.**

**This week's Question and Query**

**People say that there is a culture of despair. Is it true?**

The **CULTURE OF DESPAIR**, is where the strong are against the weak. These are the signs: Dignity means being in control: seeing vulnerability and weakness as liabilities.

Suffering and death are meaningless: suffering robs me of pleasure and autonomy.

I only matter if I'm productive: measuring myself by what I can do, produce and achieve.

But there is a **CULTURE OF HOPE**, where the strong help to carry the weak. The signs of this culture of hope:

Dignity is not control. Love is the most important thing in life, that I am made in the image and likeness of God.

Suffering and death have meaning. It can be a powerful encounter with God Himself, one which brings me closer to others, and allows me to be a grace for the world.

I am a GIFT not a burden. Humans are never to be used to achieve an end. We are His delight and are loved by Him. When we are weak, He is with us.

Thank you for reading. *Only a human person marvels, ponders, creates and adores. Only a human person can look upon the beauty of creation and worship God for what He has made.* Let us continue building His Kingdom together.

*Bernard*

**Bishop Bernard Paul  
October 15, 2021**

[Click here to watch the video](#)



## General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

# Synod not new to Malaysian Church

Pope Francis formally opened the Synod of Bishops on Sunday, October 10 with a solemn Mass in St Peter's Basilica.

On Oct 17, bishops from around the world celebrated the Eucharist for the opening of the synod in their own dioceses.

The theme of the upcoming 16th Synod of Bishops is *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission*. Synodality indicates walking together, listening to one another and, above all, listening to the Holy Spirit. To deepen this essential characteristic of the Church, the upcoming synod is unlike any previous one. It involves all the faithful at local Churches across the world, and promises to listen to all, especially to laypeople. That is why this Synod is a two-year process, starting from October 10, 2021 right up to October 2023.

On Pages 4 and 5, we highlight the celebrations held in Malaysia.

KUALA LUMPUR: Archbishop Julian Leow lit the Synod Candle at the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist on October 17, signifying the call of the Universal Church to walk in the light of the Holy Spirit as it journeys towards the 2023 Synod.

In his homily, Archbishop Julian explained that while this Synod may be a new process in some dioceses around the world, here in Malaysia, we were fortunate to have begun this process many years ago, beginning with the *Aggiornamento* in 1976 and continuing with the Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Conventions (PMPCs) which have been held every 10 years. We also have the Parish Pastoral Assemblies, the Diocesan Assemblies and the Peninsular Malaysia Assemblies.

In 2026, for the first time, all



Archbishop Julian Leow lights the Synod candle.

nine dioceses (including Sabah and Sarawak) will unite in this process of coming together to live in communion, achieve participation, and open ourselves to mission – which sums up perfectly the aim of a synodal Church – a Church that journeys together.

He explained that the aim is to consult parishes, ministries and individuals, listening to the voice of the people. He echoed the Holy Father's three essential ideas of synodality — encountering, listening, and discerning. He went on to explain that we are to reach out more to those on the margins of our parishes and society. The aim is not to stop at churchgoers only but to reach out to as many as possible, casting the net both far and wide. It is time for us to discern the pulse of the dioceses and parishes so that the Church can be relevant today.

He said that the Holy Father warns us of three risks that may impede this process of synodality – formalism, intellectualism and complacency. Formalism refers to a situation where priests or bishops think

they have all the answers and do not listen enough, creating a barrier that prevents dialogue between priests and laity. Intellectualism suggests a process whereby these efforts turn into a study group, losing itself in abstraction. It would consist of the usual people saying the usual things and ending up along a familiar and unfruitful ideology, one that is far removed from the reality of life in our community. Complacency refers to the risk of adopting an attitude of “we have always done it this way” and settling for using old solutions to address new problems.

The intent of this process is not to produce documents but to plant a dream – a dream of the type of Church that God intended. — *By Tianne Ramona Pereira*  
<https://archkl.org/>

## Listen to the Holy Spirit

JOHOR BAHRU: Bishop Bernard Paul launched the opening of the Diocesan Synod for the Diocese of Malacca Johore during the Eucharistic celebration at the Immaculate Conception Church on Saturday, October 16.

He echoed the call by Pope Francis “to become a Synodal Church: Fellowship, Participation and Mission.” Bishop Bernard said that to be this type of Church, in accordance with the Synod, is to be a Church that walks together through the ups and downs of life, in uncertainty, amidst scandals and crises.

He outlined three signs of such a Church.

The first sign of a synodal Church is building up structures to enable the faithful to walk together and be co-owners, rather than being divided and dysfunctional.

The second sign is becoming a listening Church. Listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit, and listening to each other's desires, crises, hopes and expressions.

The third sign is being a Church that offers healing. These signs can show we are becoming a synodal Church which allows the power of the Holy Spirit to work. The Church is called to return to its roots, i.e., to return to the Second Vatican Council, to return to the Sacrament of Baptism, to return to the Word of God, and to return to the synodal process itself.

Being a Synodal Church is a process of spiritual discernment that will help us experience renewal and change. The church is open to the voices within the diocese, those who are on the margins, so that they too are cared for and can

be heard. At the end of his homily, the bishop invited each parishioner to have the attitude of a servant of God who is ready to sacrifice, ready to drink from the cup of suffering, and finally ready to experience the power which comes from closeness in our relationship with God.

Prior to the launch, on Oct 7, a comprehensive briefing session was delivered by the Head of the Diocesan Synod Team, Fr Moses Rayappan. The following week, briefing sessions in the various languages were given by Fr Moses, Msgr Peter Ng and Sr Magdalena Kopong, FSIC.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Vpt3BKv\\_SYA7\\_CmnAKPs-FFp75hoiu3SKxAqn1EiS4gA/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Vpt3BKv_SYA7_CmnAKPs-FFp75hoiu3SKxAqn1EiS4gA/edit?usp=sharing)



Bishop Bernard Paul launches the opening of the Diocesan Synod.

## Don't sideline women and youth

MIRI: Bishop Richard Ng, in his homily, explained the meaning of ‘synod’ as well as casting light on the two-year process initiated by Pope Francis.

He then spoke in detail about the process for the diocese.

“In order to facilitate part one of the synod, which is of listening and consultation, each parish will conduct a survey among the different groups and ministries. Special care will be taken to include the perspec-

tives of women and youth, whose voices are often sidelined.

“This survey, in the form of a questionnaire, is to be conducted online or in person, depending on the local circumstances. The questions are basic, touching on walking together, communion, participation, and mission. I appeal to all of you to answer the questionnaire as best as you can so that your voice is heard. Your answers will be collated to form the working papers of the 2023 Synod.”



Bishop Richard Ng

## We are in it together

PENANG: The bishop of Penang Diocese officially launched the Synod of 2023 at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit on October 17.

In his homily, Bishop Sebastian Francis explained that the Catholic Church, under the leadership of Pope Francis, is on a mission to achieve unity in diversity, and continuity. The term synod means to journey together. This means that all baptised members of the Church, regardless of rank or status, are now ambassadors for Christ. He went on to say that at the first Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came as tongues of fire on the Apostles, anointing them to make disciples of the nations. But now, that same Spirit is anointing everyone to be the salt and light of the Earth.

As baptised Catholics, we have a unique opportunity to share the love of Christ with all, and we can do this by reflecting Christ-like attributes in our everyday life to everyone we meet. Representing Christ is no longer the sole responsibility of the bishops, priests and clergy. We are all in it together. This is the new way of evangelising.

“Our primary message is unity in diversity, unity in continuity, the primacy of love and truth, the primacy of grace and mystery. In one sentence, the primacy of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. And this precedes Pope Francis, Bishop Sebastian, and all of us in the diocese. This is the movement of the primacy of God. And we bow down to Him. This is the mission that we have inherited from the Apostles. As we participate in and undertake the mission as disciples of Christ, we ensure its continuity for future generations. The consequence of living the primacy of God in Christ Jesus is the primacy of repentance and conversion on our part of the universal Church and the Diocese of Penang,” the bishop was quoted



Bishop Sebastian Francis officiating the Synod 2023 in the diocese.

as saying.

For the opening, the bishop placed his hands on a digital globe which lit up with the words *Journeying Together Towards a Synodal Church 2021-2023*. Banners with the image of the Road to Emmaus were also unveiled to signify the two-year journey the Church is making towards the Synod in 2023.

There were also candles with prayers to the Holy Spirit to be given to each parish in a diocese. The candles serve as a reminder that, by virtue of our baptism, we are one body. The bishop proceeded to bless and light the candle meant for the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. The banners will also be distributed to each parish. A short video displaying the names and pictures of every parish in the Diocese of Penang was shown to end the launch. — *By Carmel Dominic*

### Simple questionnaire

<https://forms.gle/hHqNadwtYnavaZ9r8>

### Elaborated questionnaire

<https://forms.gle/yFJ7XNLgF-Sz8juvda>



## General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

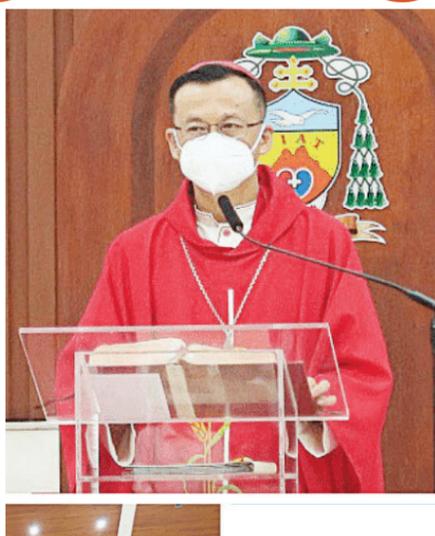
# Listening to the grassroots

KOTA KINABALU: Archbishop John Wong launched the Synodal Process for the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu during a special evening Mass of the Holy Spirit at Sacred Heart Cathedral on October 17. Archbishop John said that in this process, the local Church will involve “wider participation of the people of God, especially the lay people, at all levels, so they may listen, share and reflect on ways to renew faith and make it more accessible.”

The prelate also said that the process will involve consultations by the parishes with the people through answering a series of questions that focus on i) companions on the journey, ii) sharing responsibility for our common mission, iii) dialogue in Church and society and iv) forming ourselves in synodality.

The Synodal Process will also involve consultations with the nine Commissions, the religious Congregations, and the lay movements in the Archdiocese.

The summary of the consultations



Archbishop John Wong celebrates Mass of the Holy Spirit to launch the Synodal Process.

will be submitted and utilised in the Synod of Bishops which will be held in Rome in Oct 2023 with the theme *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participa-*

*tion and Mission.*

To leaders who will spearhead this process, the archbishop emphasised that they are to really listen to the people. He said that he hopes this same process of listening will continue, even after the consultations.

He encouraged them to go out and engage the people in groups, person-to-person and as widely as possible.

During the Sunday launch, the archbishop gave a short speech on the Synodal Process and its timeline towards the Synod of Bishops in Rome, followed by questions and answers by the parishes' representatives, which ended with the Mass of the Holy Spirit.

Present at the launch were all priests, Councils of Religious, Commissions and representatives of all parishes under the Kota Kinabalu Archdiocese.

Information on the Synodal Process will be shared amongst them through WhatsApp. — **By Linda Edward, Catholic Sabah**

## A community that walks together

KENINGAU: The phrase “walk together” is not unfamiliar to the people of the Diocese of Keningau. In fact, it has been used since its inception. Realising the importance of this, Keningau Diocese launched the Bishops' Synod 2021-2013 without delay on October 17.

The launch was officiated by Bishop Cornelius Piong after the Sunday Mass, which was attended by about 300 parishioners with permission from the local authority.

“Today is a special day as we launch the

process towards a Synodal Church with the theme *Community, Participation and Mission.* “Some may ask what is a Synodal Church? The synodal Church is a congregation that walks together,” commented Bishop Cornelius during the homily.

Elaborating further, Bishop Cornelius highlighted three important things necessary to achieve the purpose of this Synodal Church namely, living in community, actively participating, and church members who have a mission. He further said that living in a community means being aware

of the meaning of community. The simplest example is to look at the relationship of the Triune God Himself which, according to the bishop, is based on the spirit of true community. The prelate also hopes that starting from the family unit, the BECs, parishes and dioceses can live in community in a similar way.

Participation means engaging not only in church activities but also in other activities that require the congregation's involvement. “I remember, in the past, the same people were busy serving because of the lack of participation of others,” said Bishop Cornelius.

Living as church members means we have a mission. As baptised Catholics, our mission is to be “salt” to the world meaning, we must be a good influence on others, not the other way around, where we are influenced by negative things.

The launch began with a video clip about the meaning of the Synodal Church, followed by a speech by Bishop Cornelius and, finally, the handing over of banners to delegates from different zones of Keningau Parish.

During his speech, the prelate emphasised that “It is a concern when leaders, priests, catechists, religious and chairmen are the main obstacles to realising this synodal Church. Hopefully, this does not happen. I hope none of you will be obstacles.



Bishop Cornelius Piong hands banners to delegates of different zones.

## Celebrating diocesan anniversary with launch

SANDAKAN: The diocesan launch of the 16th Synod of Bishops took place on October 17, presided over by Bishop Julius Dusin Gitom. It also commemorated the 14th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Sandakan, which fell on Oct 15.

During Mass, Bishop Julius read the pastoral letter from the President of the Conference of Catholic Bishops in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei.

The listening phase for the Diocese of Sandakan will last until April 2022 and will be followed by the continental phase

from Sept 2022 to March 2023. In Oct 2023, the final phase will take place in the Vatican with the Synod of Bishops.

On Oct 27, a briefing session on the process will be held for all pastors, members of religious organisations, and representatives of the parish pastoral council. Throughout November 2021, questionnaires will be handed to all parishes for this synodal process. In December 2021, all findings and responses will be sent to the Diocesan Focus Team for compilation, analysis and reporting.



Bishop Julius Dusin Gitom reads the pastoral letter during the Synod Mass.

## Banns for Ordination (Transitional Deacons)



ARCHDIOCESE OF  
KUALA LUMPUR  
Chan/MC/25/2021

### Brother George Ho Chung Jen OCD



Upon the recommendation of Fr John Chua OCD, the General Delegate of the Taiwan-Singapore General Delegation of the Order of the Discalced Carmelite Friars (O.C.D.), and upon receipt of the dismissorial letter dated

April 7, 2021 issued to the candidate, His Grace Most Rev Julian Leow, DD, the Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, has agreed to ordain Friar George Ho Chung Jen OCD as a transitional deacon on Saturday, Nov 20, 2021, in the Oratory of the Carmelite Monastery of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan.

Friar George OCD hails from the Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Tawau, Sabah. He has completed his ecclesiastical studies in the following places:

- 2012-2013 Philosophy, St Francis Xavier Seminary, Singapore
- 2015 Theology, St Francis Xavier Seminary, Singapore
- 2016 Theology, Catholic Theological Institute of Singapore (CTIS)
- 2016-2019 Theology, Teresianum, Rome

Due to restrictions on limited seating capacity and social distancing, the above Mass will not be open to public.

Canon Law obliges Catholics to reveal any impediment or circumstances that would prevent the above candidate from receiving Sacred Orders and they should contact the Chancery or the Archbishop with such information as soon as possible.

You may contact the Chancery by emailing [chancery@archkl.org](mailto:chancery@archkl.org).

Let us offer our prayerful support for Friar George OCD as he prepares for diaconal ministry and service to the People of God in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.

**Fr Michael Chua**  
Chancellor  
Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur  
October 21, 2021

## Brother Bede Morti

KENINGAU: Upon the recommendation of the seminary formators and having consulted with the College of Consultors, Most Rev Cornelius Piong DD, Bishop of Keningau, has agreed to ordain Seminarian Bede Morti Lambutan on October



30, 2021 in Dewan Solidariti, Dataran Keuskupan, Katedral St Francis Xavier, Keningau at 10.00am.

Bishop Cornelius made the announcement on Oct 15.

A diocesan seminarian, Bro Bede hails from the Holy Spirit parish, Sook. He completed his ecclesiastical studies in philosophy at St Peter's College in Kuching from 2015-2016 and proceeded to complete his studies in the theology cycle from 2017-2020.

Bro Bede is currently doing his pastoral immersion at Katedral St Francis Xavier, Keningau.

Bro Bede has chosen Kasih seorang Sahabat (John 15:13) for his diaconate ordination theme.

In compliance with current SOPs, limited seating capacity and social distancing, the diaconate ordination Mass will be live streamed on Youtube Keuskupan Keningau and Diocese of Keningau Facebook.

# How the Church is working to safeguard children

KUCHING: Majlis Pembangunan Sosial Sarawak hosted a webinar on *Paedophile Crimes: Are our children protected? (Jenayah Pedofil: Selamatkan anak-anak kita pada hari ini?)* recently via FaceBook live.

The objective was to raise awareness and educate parents, caregivers, teachers and counsellors on understanding paedophile sexual criminal threats to children, and on steps to protect children faced with any form of sexual criminal threat.

The speakers included DSP Jennifer Atok of the Criminal Investigation Department (D11), PDRM IPK Sarawak; Dr Ng Boon Seng of the Psychiatry and Mental Health Department, Sarawak General Hospital; Rohana Binti Isnawi of the Child Protection Branch, Community Welfare Department (JKMS); and Gill Raja representing Sarawak Women for Women Society. Also on the panel was Archbishop of Kuching, Most Rev Dr Simon Poh, representing the Association of Churches in Sarawak (ACS).

"Mentioning the Catholic Church does raise some eyebrows, especially when media tends to highlight cases

of paedophiles in the Church," said Archbishop Simon.

"It is important to keep some perspective: the statistics indicate the issue involved two per cent of clergy worldwide. In any case, facing the reality of past abuses has enabled the Church today to respond positively with safeguarding principles and training in place."

In Matthew 19:14, it says, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them." We are also taught (in Exodus 20:12) that children should honour their parents and (in Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21) that parents are advised not to provoke their children to resentment. Therefore, it should be reciprocal, and parents should raise their children with the training and teachings of the Lord, said the archbishop.

"I just want to add to what the earlier panellists presented - that whenever an abuse takes place, and the abused child goes to tell his or her parents that someone known to the family has abused him or her ... our immediate reaction is not to believe the child. We might say: 'Don't tell lies' or 'You are talking nonsense'.

This is a very wrong adult response. The child may never speak up again about the abuse. Many survivors have said that the greatest hurt was not from the abuser but from their own parents, who didn't believe and thus rejected him/her when he/she came for help.

"Parents, adults, teachers, and religious leaders: please do not dismiss any child. We are to listen and seek help, refer them to counsellors and to the authorities," said the archbishop.

The paedophile has coached the child to never speak out, to keep it secret. So when an abused child comes to an adult for help and is not believed, it is a great tragedy. It is within this culture of silence that the paedophile continues to abuse more children. Case in point, hardly any complaints were heard from children abused by the most wanted paedophile in Lundu, Sarawak, who has now been arrested and sentenced.

"Please listen to any child who comes to you to tell you of his/her abuse. Listen and refer.

"As we now have a greater understanding of the crime of paedophilia and child abuse, we need an institutional and societal response to fight



Paedophile Crimes webinar by Majlis Pembangunan Sosial Sarawak.

this crime. While focusing on the family is important, we must remember children are not always in the family home - they are also entrusted to day care centres, nurseries, kindergartens, schools, tuition centres, orphanages and sport coaching centres. These children also go to houses of worship, for church activities and religious instruction. Churches see all children as a gift from God who need to be safeguarded and protected.

"For my part as archbishop, I have requested for the following in our churches, catechism, kindergartens, mission schools, institutions where children under 18 years attend.

"All who are working with children are to sign a declaration and pledge that they have never been convicted

of any crime of paedophilia and they are committed to safeguarding all children and vulnerable persons under their care, and to report any cases should it be known by them.

"By signing this declaration, the Church is sending a strong message to paedophiles that they are not welcome to work or volunteer in churches and schools. We aim to prevent the May 2016 incident involving UK national Richard Huckle, who targeted children while posing as a volunteer working with Christian communities in KL. This has positively begun a paradigm shift in the mindset to consciously ensure that churches and schools are safe environments for children," said Archbishop Simon. —

By Gwen Manickam

## CDM Penang celebrates eighth anniversary as a parish

PENANG: The Church of Divine Mercy (CDM) celebrated its eighth anniversary as a parish on September 29. It was to be a low-key event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Parish Priest Fr Michael Raymond OFM Cap was intent that it be celebrated in a creative manner, involving as many parishioners as possible, even in the midst of the pandemic.

The event was celebrated with music and dance. Adeline Sum, a choir leader, composed a song reflecting the ongoing outreach initiatives of believe, live and give in mercy at the parish. She collaborated with Sharon Chandra to write lyrics for the new song, reflecting the theme *One in Mercy*. It was to show the parish's desire of coming together as a united family in this mission of mercy, helping the less fortunate during these times.

A simple dance routine was choreographed by a group formed by Adeline to allow the freedom of

movement and variations reflecting the spirit of the song, which was uploaded on Facebook and the parish website. Parishioners were encouraged to send their own dance videos to the song, to be compiled for the celebration.

Announcements were made in the church bulletin and during Masses. Promotional videos were shown of the various dance techniques.

Espie Gonzales edited all the submissions. Among them were some by older BEC members and a Standard One catechism class (recorded via Zoom). The videos were sent from as far away as Ipoh and Canada, including one from the cathedral. Videos were made in homes, outdoors, in parks and gardens; by individuals, groups and families. A total of 69 submissions were received. The final version, with help from Michael Teoh and Adeline, can be viewed over Facebook at <https://m.facebook.com/cdmgarap>.



PPC Chairperson, Zackry Chan and Fr Michael Raymond OFM Cap cutting the anniversary cake.

During his homily at the anniversary Mass, Fr Michael expressed his honour to serve at CDM. He said that every moment of our lives has a story, event or experience and at CDM there have been many such occasions of baptism, marriage, anniversaries and even deaths. But it is important to remember such events as they remind

us to thank God and rekindle fond memories. He went on to say that in the last year, as he stepped into CDM, there have been only silent moments due to the closing of church doors, suspended or halted activities, and moments of loss, tears, and anxiety.

Now in this post-pandemic era, the church has gone online. We live in a time of zooming in and out, with the ability to mute what we don't want to hear or even switch over to another parish at the touch of a button. It is a period of meetings on Zoom and breakout groups with a shift away from fellowship gatherings and physical in-person meetings.

We are now in the digital world of connecting people and there is a need to find creative ways to get into that connection.

Eight hundred years ago, St Francis of Assisi was called in a vision to rebuild the Church of God. He went about physically doing so until, after rebuilding two churches, he realised

he was called to renew not just the physical buildings but also the people of God. Now Pope Francis calls us to do the same: to renew the Church by having a different perspective of opening the Church doors, in the way we educate children in the faith and engage in conversations over different platforms.

St Faustina, in her diary, exemplifies a guiding attitude of mercy to one's neighbour in three ways - namely through deeds, words and prayer (Diary entry 742).

Our little acts of mercy through the Wall of Mercy at CDM provides one avenue to be the face of mercy to one another. At CDM, Fr Michael emphasised that we can be beacons of hope, to be that Face of Mercy with the little things we do.

The celebration ended with the screening of the video compilation of *One in Mercy* and a cake cutting to commemorate the occasion. —

By Dr Ivan Filmer

## KK Carmelite community celebrates saints feast days

KOTA KINABALU: Despite the uncertainty of the pandemic situation, the Carmelite community celebrated the feast days of two Carmelite Saints: St Theresa of Lisieux on Oct 1 and St Teresa of Avila on Oct 15.

Both feast day Masses were celebrated by Archbishop John Wong and concelebrated with Chaplain Fr Mattheus Luta at the Carmelite Monastery Chapel.

In compliance with the current SOPs, only 40 people were allowed, with some sitting outside the chapel.

In his homily, the prelate briefly introduced the saints, who were both Carmelite nuns. Due to their spiritual writings, both were declared Doctors of the Church. Both offered their lives for the salvation of souls.



Archbishop John Wong with the president of OCDS, Datin Celestine Jinu and Carmelite chaplain Fr Mattheus Luta.

St Therese, who hailed from France, introduced the Little Way of the Child Jesus by words and deeds, and lived the virtues of humility, simplicity and confidence in God. The prelate urged the faithful

to emulate her faith in God, entrusting all worries and burdens of life to Him, as she believed firmly that God is love and allowed herself to be embraced like a little child by God Himself. Hence, she proclaimed that

her vocation was Love and doing little things with great Love. She is also the patron saint of the Carmelite Monastery and the universal Church in Mission.

St Teresa of Avila was known for her reformation of the Carmelite nuns and later of the friars. As she desired to have a share in the spiritual renewal of the Church of her time, she lived her religious life ardently, progressed greatly in the way of perfection, and was granted mystical revelations which she shared in her writings. The Spirit of the Lord guided St Teresa in writing her spiritual insights about prayer and growth in holiness. Hence, the prelate exhorted the Carmelites to take her as their mother after Mother Mary, to help

them in their growth in holiness, as well as becoming more aware of the presence of God in their life.

The OCDS members gave out blessed roses to all those present on St Therese of Lisieux's feast day as a symbol of the shower of roses (graces) promised by her.

On the feast day of St Teresa of Avila, bookmarks containing her famous quotes were given out to remind people of her teaching. The human-sized statue of St Teresa was displayed at the parlour inside the monastery for veneration by all.

After the Masses, cakes were cut to mark the feast days during the breakfast fellowship prepared by the community. —

By Catherine Wan, Catholic Sabah

## Bible, Quran apps removed from Apple app store for China



Screenshot of an Apple phone. (Unsplash Photo/William Hook)

DENVER: Under pressure from Chinese law, a digital Bible company has removed its app from Apple's app store offerings in China, while Apple itself has removed a Quran app from its China store at the request of Chinese officials.

"Olive Tree Bible Software was informed during the App Store review process that we are required to provide a permit demonstrating our authorisation to distribute an app with book or magazine content in mainland China," the company told BBC News.

"Since we did not have the permit

and needed to get our app update approved and out to customers, we removed our Bible app from China's App Store," it said.

Olive Tree Bible Software's work on digital versions of Bibles dates back decades. Its founder, Drew Haninger, developed Bible programmes for the Palm Pilot and other early mobile devices in the late 1990s. It provides various translations of the Bible as well. The Spokane-based company's website lists several English-language Catholic editions of the Bible, though it says some versions are not available for

purchase.

Similar app store difficulties afflicted a company that produces a digital version of the Quran.

Quran Majeed, produced by Pakistan Data Management Services, claims a total of 35 million users, one million of whom are in China. The company said that according to Apple, the app was removed from Apple's China app store "because it includes content that requires additional documentation from Chinese authorities." The company said it is working to contact the Cyberspace Administration of China and rel-

evant Chinese officials to resolve the matter.

Apple declined to comment to the BBC, noting its human rights statement: "We're required to comply with local laws, and at times, there are complex issues about which we may disagree with governments."

Religious organisations are strictly regulated under Chinese law and Christian clergy can face legal penalties if they do not register with the government or if they conduct unauthorised activities or act in ways that allegedly undermine national unity. — **By Kevin J. Jones, CNA**

## Researchers urge Asian Churches to promote peace

KOREA: Catholic academics and researchers have urged Church leaders in Asia to make better and more proactive efforts to promote peace and Christianity in the region.

The East Asia Evangelisation Center, based at Cheonjinam Shrine and known as the birthplace of Korean Catholicism, organised the 14th academic symposium at Yongin in Gyeonggi-do province on October 16, jointly with *Catholic Times*, the oldest *Korean Catholic* weekly.

*Catholic Times* reported that the symposium brought together Catholic scholars and researchers for

discussion and deliberation on the theme *Peace in East Asia and Promotion of Christianity*.

Professor Shim Hyung-ju, a senior researcher at the Institute of Life and Culture at Sogang University in the capital, Seoul, made a presentation on the topic *Exploring the role of the Catholic Church for the formation of a peaceful community in Asia: referring to the European Union model*.

He argued that Asian Christians need to be in solidarity, stating that the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC) should play a major role for the promotion of

peace and Christianity in the region.

He pointed to situations in Asian countries where human rights are frequently violated by authoritarian governments in the name of development and security.

"In order to build peace in Asia, it is necessary to pursue development based on equality and human rights in accordance with international justice. We need to work hard to implement human rights law," Shim said.

The researcher said that the FABC leadership should try to present the views of the Church to Asian governments on their "sense of human



Cheonjinam Shrine is known as the birthplace of Korean Catholicism. (UCA News photo)

rights and to pursue a common policy of peace."

"The Church should recognise that peace is a human rights issue, not just a national issue, and Church leaders

need to take the lead in laying the foundation for peace in Asia through the protection and promotion of human rights," he added. — **ucanews.com**

## Archbishop condemns Indian state's move to survey missionaries

KARNATAKA: Catholic leaders in India's Karnataka state have expressed anguish over a state government move to conduct a survey of Christian missionaries, calling it a dangerous move.

Archbishop Peter Machado of Bangalore (Bengaluru) was critical after the Backward Classes and Minorities Welfare Department reportedly agreed to order a survey of missionaries working in the southern state.

"We consider this exercise as futile and unnecessary," said Archbishop Machado in a statement on October 15.

"No good will come of it. In fact, with the background of the conversion bogey and anti-religious feelings that are being whipped up, it is dangerous to make such surveys. Our community places of worship, as well as pastors and sisters, will be identified and may be unfairly targeted. We are already hearing of such sporadic incidents in the north and Karnataka already."

The pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) runs the state government. Christian leaders complain that BJP-run state governments tacitly support a pro-Hindu agenda of making India a Hindu nation by targeting religious minorities such as Christians and Muslims.

"Why is the government interested in making a survey of the



Archbishop Peter Machado

religious personnel and places of worship only of the Christian community?" Archbishop Machado asked.

Christian leaders in Karnataka say their people have been witnessing targeted attacks on their personnel, institutions and even prayer meetings at houses, mostly from radical Hindu groups believed to have indirect support from the administration.

The survey "will put our people in danger," said Archbishop Machado.

"None of our personnel work underground. Everyone is working with the people for their welfare and the government is well aware of it. I don't understand the purpose of such religious profiling of only Christians and their

institutions," he said.

"Let the government count the educational institutions and health centres run by Christian missionaries. That will give a fair idea of the service rendered by the Christian community to nation building and how many people are converted in these places and institutions.

"If Christians are converting indiscriminately, as alleged by some, why is the percentage of Christians in the population shrinking when compared to others?"

Archbishop Machado also questioned the government's reported plan to bring in a law to check religious conversion in the state.

"Why do we need an anti-conversion law when there are enough safeguards enshrined in the constitution and the legal system of the country to punish the guilty?" he asked. "We need support and encouragement from the government."

Eight Indian states have anti-conversion laws criminalising religious conversion.

Christian leaders consider the profiling of missionaries and places of Christian worship to be an attempt to target a community which works among the poor and the needy.

Karnataka has 61 million people, of whom 84 per cent are Hindus, followed by Muslims at 13 per cent and Christians at two per cent. — **ucanews.com**

## Pakistan bans negative posts on social media

LAHORE: Journalists and human rights activists are warning of increasing online censorship as Pakistan's government unveils new regulations for social media companies.

Under the Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Online Content (Procedure, Oversight and Safeguards) Rules, 2021, notified last week, negative content related to any person will not be uploaded, while social media companies will have to abide by Pakistani laws and establish an office in the Islamic republic, and will be given 48 hours to remove or block access to online content.

Last year, tech companies had threatened to discontinue their services in Pakistan if the rules were not amended, saying the regulations would make it difficult for them to continue their operations.

The Digital Media Alliance of

Pakistan strongly condemned the amended social media rules.

"We believe that the government has done nothing to reassure the protesting journalists and has refused to consider the concerns repeatedly highlighted by media bodies. This uncompromising attitude of the government is a reflection of the mindset that refuses to allow fair criticism and is adamant to control the flow of information in a country already fighting against extremism, economic insecurity and the constant threat to democracy," it stated in a press release.

"Those really affected by the new draconian rules will be journalism platforms and media consumers whose legitimate interests in holding power bearers to account and supporting freedom of expression have been severely curtailed. — **By Kamran Chaudhry, ucanews.com**



Pakistani employees of online marketplace company Kaymu at work in Karachi. (UCA News photo)

# Vatican asks Indian bishops to curb priests violating canon law

TAMIL NADU: The papal representative in India has ordered Catholic bishops in the southern state of Tamil Nadu to stop priests engaging in activities that make them “financial and political power bases.”

Apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, asked the Tamil Nadu Bishops’ Council to address the trend of priests forming and managing trusts or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) independently of their dioceses, violating canon law.

Archbishop Girelli noted a tendency among clergy to establish independent trusts “habitually registered under the guise of a non-governmental organisation, ostensibly intended to provide assistance to those in need,” said the letter dated October 8.

“Even if the aim of such trusts

may appear to be praiseworthy, all too often these trusts become a political and financial power base for the priests involved.”

The Vatican official said these activities violate canon law and asked bishops to enforce the discipline of the law by closing down all private trusts that priests run.

Church laws ban priests and religious directly associating with any independent or standalone trusts or societies or companies unless their involvement has specifically been authorised by the local bishop, the letter clarified.

It also reminded the bishops that canon law prohibits clerics “from conducting business or trade personally or through others, whether for their own advantage or that of others, except with the permission of the legitimate ecclesiastical authority.”



Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli

Archbishop Girelli also told the bishops that Church laws authorise them to take action against erring priests. Clerics or religious who exercise a trade or business contrary to the prescripts of the canons are to be punished according to the gravity of the case, his letter said, quoting Canon 1392.

The nuncio’s letter asked the bishops to formulate clear guidelines to ensure that all trusts managed by priests come directly under the control of respective dioceses and that they are of genuine benefit to the mission of the diocese.

The dioceses are also asked to ensure that no trust is “under the sole control of a single member of the clergy,” the letter said.

The nuncio said his letter was being issued after visiting Kottar Diocese on the southernmost tip of India.

Kottar Diocese’s vicar general, Fr V. Hilarius, said the nuncio’s letter “has ... highlighted the provisions of the canon law. It was a reminder to all of us,” he said.

He said some priests establish NGOs to help the poor in cases where the diocese is not able to fund

all needed welfare schemes. But the death of the founder and other members can lead to confusion over leadership and succession, he said.

These NGOs seek and accept donations from India and outside for charitable work and, over a period of time, become independent entities capable of managing projects independently of the dioceses.

The financial and social influence of the priest in such cases creates power imbalances in the diocese. It occurs in dioceses across India but is particularly noticeable in southern states.

A senior priest who did not wish to be named said the nuncio was “boldly addressing a serious issue. This issue has been discussed many times in the past, but no one dared to deal with it with the required seriousness,” he said. — [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com)

## Indonesian religious turn up heat on climate change



Members of Indonesian interreligious communities protest outside St Theresa’s Church in Jakarta calling on people and the government to protect the environment on Oct 17, 2021. The left banner reads ‘Teach children to love the environment’ while the one on the right reads ‘Stop destroying nature which is the creation of God’. (UCA News photo/GreenFaith International-Asia)

JAKARTA: Interreligious groups in Indonesia have held a series of demonstrations outside churches and mosques in Jakarta, calling on the government to commit to addressing climate change at an upcoming international conference on global warming.

Continued reliance on fossil fuels, deforestation and increasing air pollution caused by fires, show a lack of sincerity by the government in dealing with an increasing number of ecological disasters, they said.

Protesters gathered outside about a dozen places of worship in the Indonesian capital, including Istiqlal Mosque, the largest mosque in Southeast Asia, and Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral Church on October 17 to press their message home.

It was part of a global campaign to put pressure on governments attending the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, from Oct 31 to Nov 12, to come up with concrete

solutions to prevent global warming.

“The government must realise that Indonesia is particularly at risk from rising sea levels, flooding and other disasters, and needs to act now,” the protesters said in a statement.

“Religious communities in Indonesia call on our government and world leaders attending COP26 to end the fossil fuel era, reverse deforestation and push a global green deal ensuring clean energy and a friendly environment.”

Hening Parlan, chairman of the environment division of Aisiyah, an Indonesian Islamic non-governmental organisation dedicated to female empowerment and founding partner of GreenFaith International-Asia, said people and governments have ignored religious values and, in so doing, have destroyed the environment.

“Protection and concern for the environment is a noble jihad,” Parlan said.

He said the interreligious groups were using places of worship to voice their concerns to warn the government and others that they have a religious duty to protect the environment.

Carmelite Fr Egidius Eko Aldilanto, executive secretary of the Indonesian bishops’ Justice and Peace Commission, said people should fear the damage that has been caused to the environment and the dire consequences this causes.

“Environmental issues cannot be ignored; that time has passed. The issues should be prioritised,” said Fr Aldilanto.

This needs to be backed by education, the priest said, adding that Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* can be a reference for all on protecting the environment.

“Ecological education in schools and instilling an ecological spirit to create awareness among youth to love the environment will help bring about change,” he said. — [By Konradus Epa, ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com)

## Indian Dalit Christians demand separate Catholic rite

TAMIL NADU: Dalit Christian organisations in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu have demanded a separate rite for Dalit Catholics as a solution to caste-based discrimination in the Indian Church.

Dalit Christians have long wanted an end to caste-based discrimination in the Church and have, in the past, urged Pope Francis to create a Catholic rite like the Kerala-based Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara churches.

The latest demand was raised at a seminar organised by the Dalit Christian Liberation Forum, which represents Dalit Christian priests and nuns in the state, at Acharapakkam in Chingleput Diocese of Tamil Nadu on October 15.

It was attended by more than 250 participants, including Dalit rights activists, journalists, teachers and youths from 27 organisations to discuss and reflect on the document titled *Towards an Indo-Dalit Individual Church and Rite* authored by a team of experts led by noted theologian Fr Felix Wilfred.

Copies of the document were sent to *Propaganda Fide*, Rome, as well as to the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI), the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), the Tamil Nadu Bishops’ Council (TNBC), and bishops across India.

“The seminar was the first to be

held after readying the detailed document or article on the formation of the Indian-Dalit Individual Church or rite. It was in continuation of the initial seminar held in August,” said Fr Z. Devasagaya Raj, former secretary to the CBCI office for Dalits and other oppressed classes.

Fr Raj, one of the organisers of the seminar, further revealed that “it is the first introductory state-level meeting where Dalit Catholics and other denominational churches came together to reflect on a separate Dalit rite under the Roman Catholic Church.”

The priest said Catholics of Dalit origin are different from the Latin, Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara churches. Their sociopolitical realities, culture, traditions, practices and way of life are different from those of Catholics belonging to dominant communities.

The CBCI’s policy for Dalit empowerment affirms that “the term ‘Dalit’ does not indicate a caste identity ... It is not only a matter of social and cultural category but a theological category as well.”

“We have faced discrimination and marginalisation within the Church, as well as in civil society for several decades. We want Dalit Christians to be treated as equals,” Fr Raj said. —

**By Bijay Kumar Minj, ucanews.com**



Dalit Christians display the document titled ‘Towards an Indo-Dalit Individual Church and Rite’ at a seminar held at Acharapakkam in Chingleput Diocese of Tamil Nadu on Oct 15, 2021. (UCA News photo)

# Cries of Haitians 'cannot go unheeded'

VATICAN: The world can no longer ignore the suffering of the people of Haiti, an island that has been exploited and pillaged by wealthier nations for centuries, said Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

In an op-ed written following his October 17-19 visit to the Caribbean nation, Archbishop Paglia said he hoped that countries, including those in Europe, can "return to walk together with this people, abandoning the terrible role of colonisers and assuming the friendly role of fellow travellers."

"The cry for help of a nation cannot go unheeded, especially by Europe which, over the centuries, divided, plundered and finally abandoned this wonderful island," he said.

Archbishop Paglia's visit to Haiti was the final leg of his visit to the Caribbean, which included visits to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic Oct 12-16.

The Oct 16 kidnapping of 17 Christian missionaries was the latest sign of the deteriorating circumstances in the country, following the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moise in July and a devastating mag-



Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life, meets residents of Port-au-Prince during his Oct 17-19, 2021 visit to Haiti. (Pontifical Academy for Life photo)

nitude 7.2 earthquake in August.

Archbishop Paglia said he was taken aback by "the spectacle of swarms of children and piles of garbage" while travelling by car along the streets of Port-au-Prince.

"Not even the harsh braking to avoid the countless potholes of the bumpy roads distracts me," he said. "At most, I am reminded

that we have to maintain a high speed and keep close to the lead car" due to the recent kidnappings.

He also lamented the fact that kidnapping and demanding ransom has become "one of the main sources of income for quite a few young people."

"There are virtually no job prospects; the

most prosperous one is kidnapping," the Italian archbishop wrote. "Haiti seems to have nothing to give to the 65 per cent of its population who are under 25. When it comes to women, their fate is even sadder and full of violence: surviving hunger is not always a harbinger of good news. The exploitation of girls and children is a daily habit."

Commenting on the political and cultural instability brought on by the assassination of President Moise, Archbishop Paglia said many Haitians have lost hope, even to the extent of feeling that the efforts of NGOs and foreign associations are "like a drop in the ocean, or rather, in the desert of life and hope."

"The cry for help of this young and tormented population resounds ever more powerfully in my head and in my heart," he wrote. "In this world that has become increasingly narrow, we can only save ourselves together: us, now advanced in years, and the very young people who stand noisily along the streets all day long, left to their fate. Only together will we be able to save ourselves." — **By Junno Arocho Esteves, CNS**

## We cannot close our eyes to sin in the Church

VATICAN: An adult survivor of abuse by a priest appealed to the world's seminarians to become good priests and to make sure the "bitter truth" always prevails, not silence about scandals and their cover-up.

"Please, do not sweep things under the carpet, because then they start to stink, putrefy, and the rug itself will rot away ... Let us realise that if we hide these facts, if we keep our mouths shut, we hide the filth and we thus become a collaborator," said the survivor in a letter sent to Pope Francis and addressed to all seminarians.

To live in the truth is to follow the example of Jesus Christ, who never closed His eyes to sin or the sinner, but who "lived the truth with love ... (who) indicated the sin and the sinner with bitter love," the letter said.

The letter, written in Italian, had been sent to Pope Francis, who then requested it be made public with the author's identity withheld, according to the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, which republished the text of the letter on its website October 18.

The commission's president, US Cardinal

Seán P. O'Malley, said: "During this time of renewal and pastoral conversion in which the Church is facing the scandal and wounds of sexual abuse inflicted everywhere upon so many children of God, our Holy Father received from a survivor, a courageous testimony offered to all seminarians."

By sharing this testimony publicly, "Pope Francis wants to welcome the voices of all wounded people and to show all priests who proclaim the Gospel, the path that leads to authentic service of God to the benefit of all vulnerable people," the cardinal wrote in an introduction to the letter.

The woman writing the letter explained how she was harmed for years as a girl by a priest, leaving her with many serious mental health issues including dissociative identity disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, insomnia, nightmares and a pervasive sense of fear — of others, of making mistakes, of being touched.

"I am afraid of priests, of being near them," she wrote, and she can no longer go to Mass because this "sacred space" that used to be her

second home, now only triggers pain and fear.

She said she is trying to "survive, to feel joy, but in reality, it is an incredibly difficult battle."

She told the Pope she was writing because she wanted that "the bitter truth prevail."

"I am here also in the name of other victims ... of children who have been deeply harmed, whose childhood, purity and respect have been stolen ... who were betrayed and whose boundless trust was taken advantage of ... of children whose hearts beat, who breathe, who live ... but they have been killed once, twice, many times. ... Their souls have been turned into tiny bloody pieces," she wrote.

Adults who experienced "this hypocrisy" as children can never be rid of it; they can try to forget or forgive, "but the scars remain in their souls and never disappear," she said.

This abuse also harms the Church, and "the Church is my mother, and it hurts so much when she is wounded, when she is soiled," the letter said.

"I want to ask you to protect the Church, the body of Christ," she wrote in her appeal

to seminarians.

The Church "is full of wounds and scars. Please do not let those wounds become deeper and new ones occur," she wrote, reminding the seminarians they have been called by God to be His instruments and to serve Him through others.

"You have a great responsibility! A responsibility that is not a burden, but a gift" that should be handled "with humility and love!" she wrote.

The survivor appealed to seminaries not to hide or be silent about scandal, saying, "If we want to live the truth, we cannot close our eyes!"

"Please, realise you have received an enormous gift" of being "an incarnation of Christ in the world," she wrote. "People, and especially children, don't see (just) a person in you, but (they see) Christ, Jesus, in whom they trust all the same without limits."

"It is something enormous and strong, but also very fragile and vulnerable. Please be a good priest," she wrote. — **By Carol Glatz, CNS**

## Vatican regulates the role of postulator in saints' causes

VATICAN: The Vatican has introduced formal regulations for postulators — those who help guide the process behind the declaration of a saint in the Catholic Church.

The norms are part of the reform of the administration of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, which began in 2016.

The regulations for postulators, set out in 86 points, are designed to clarify the tasks and procedures, and to prevent conflicts of interest.

Pope Francis approved the rules at the end of August, and the congregation's prefect, Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, signed the document on Oct 11.

In a recent interview with *Vatican News*, Semeraro said that "the figure of the postulator and the office he holds continue to be important and, at the same time, delicate."

"The new regulation just promulgated is a sign of this, the need for which has been felt for some time," he explained. "If they take their task seriously and with an ecclesial spirit, postulators can do much for the good of the causes and of the Church."

A postulator is the person who represents and guides a diocese or religious congrega-

tion through the beatification process, especially during its second phase, which happens in Rome.

The first phase in a cause happens in a diocese or religious congregation — usually in the place where the man or woman being considered for canonisation was born or lived for an extensive period.

Postulators can be clergy, religious men or women, or lay people. According to the norms, the role can be filled by "any faithful Catholic of proven integrity, who has adequate knowledge of theology, canon law and history, as well as the practice of the dicastery."

Other requisites are a diploma from the School of Higher Formation in the Causes of the Saints and being under the age of 80.

To prevent a conflict of interest, the regulations now state that cardinals and bishops who are members of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and other officials and consultants connected with the congregation, cannot also be postulators.

The norms also dictate that a postulator may have no more than 30 open cases at one time, though an exception is made for the



Banners with the official images of (from left) Sr Irmã Dulce Pontes, Mother Giuseppina Vannini, John Henry Newman, Mother Mariam Thresia and Marguerite Bays hang on the facade of St Peter's Basilica, Oct 10, 2019, three days before their canonisation. (CNA photo/Daniel Ibáñez)

postulator of a religious congregation.

The rules clarify that a postulator is not a salaried employee of the Vatican, but can receive a "just compensation" for his or her work. Some postulators, such as those of religious congregations, may also choose to fulfill the role without receiving payment.

Postulators cannot be treasurers or admin-

istrators of funds donated to sainthood causes, the regulations state.

The document also says that the information gathered about the sainthood cause under investigation, which is bound together into a book called the *positio*, will remain confidential until 50 years after the inquiry concludes. — **By Hannah Brockhaus, CNA**



## EDITOR'S COLUMN *Sustained by Grace*

### Inspiring others through our lived faith

In 2019, Pope Francis declared an extraordinary missionary month in October. With the words *Baptised and Sent* echoing in our ears, the clergy, religious and laity were invited to reflect on a deeper understanding of the Church's call to mission and to share in the missionary nature of the Church through Encounter, Testimony, Formation and Charity.

Missionary stars were distributed, formation sessions and talks organised, and various initiatives undertaken at parish and diocesan level amidst much hype and enthusiasm. Now, two years later, as with many new projects or campaigns which start with gusto, the euphoria of being *Baptised and Sent* has faded and the missionary stars are probably lying in some cabinet drawer gathering dust. Each year in October, we are reminded once again that it is Mission Sunday. We read the Pope's message, we listen to homilies on being missionaries, we set aside some money for the special collection, and then we settle back into our normal routines until Mission Sunday the following year.

How can we make a lasting commitment towards mission and being missionaries? How do we inspire others through our lived faith?

Pope St Paul VI said, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." In the words of St Francis of Assisi, "It is no use walking somewhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching." In other words, if we begin to live our lives according to Gospel values, that in itself is being missionary because we now bring the words of the Gospel to life.

Jesus integrated ministry and mission into daily life. Similarly, in the early Christian community, as described in the Acts of the Apostles (cf. Acts 2), what attracted people to the Apostles was not just their eloquent preaching and the miracles they performed but also, their lifestyle which made people curious to find out more and finally decide to be like them. In a nutshell, the early Church was an inspiration to the community because of the exemplary lifestyles of the Apostles and so, they were inevitably 'transforming humanity.'

If each of us can just do our ordinary everyday tasks with charity, then we can begin to do the impossible ... for 'where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found.' To do the impossible, one does not need to be a theologian or a trained missionary. All it takes is to allow others to see and experience Christ in us. When people look at our daily lives and see things like generosity in relative poverty, joy in the midst of pain, the way we forgive and show grace – to even the most difficult people in our lives – we are fulfilling our mission as followers of Jesus through our thoughts, words and deeds, and we are transforming humanity too. In fact, the simplest of deeds are often opportunities for mission – feeding street people, supporting migrants, working with children, caring for the elderly or the marginalised of society.

Whether we think that one aspect of following Jesus is more important than the other is very subjective, but perhaps the most important thing for us to remember as a Christian community is that we do not forget anyone – the widow, the orphan, the prisoner, the poor, the homeless, the hungry, the migrants.

George Bernard Shaw once said, "Life is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it over to future generations." And so too, with our sense of mission. World Mission Sunday challenges us to reflect on how we are living out our baptismal calling to witness to Christ in all situations, and inspires us to not give up. It invites us to deepen our love of Christ, to welcome the power of the Holy Spirit afresh into our lives, and to be living examples – wherever we are and whoever we are – of the Father's care for all of creation. Together, we are mission!

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# Preparing for mission in a post-pandemic Church

Pope Francis, in his message for Mission Sunday, calls every Catholic to a personal encounter with Jesus and our Heavenly Father's love. We are to "speak about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). Baptised and sent forth as missionary disciples, Jesus commands us to "go therefore to the highways and byways and invite everyone you find" (Mt 22:9). Our Lord desires that no one is excluded from the Father's compassionate love which is very much needed during this pandemic.

I invite all Catholics to prepare for a post-pandemic Malaysian Church, trusting that the Holy Spirit will inspire new ministries. Here are my reflection points. What is your concrete response? Is this a mission that the Lord is putting in your heart?

#### 1. Will we lose some of our Catholics after this pandemic? How do we reach out to them?

- Will Catholics come back to church for the Sacraments?
- Will parents still bring babies for Baptism?
- Will children be sent to catechism when churches are allowed to open?
- What about our young people? [Read *Christus Vivit*]

#### 2. Have we prepared for any successor? Who will carry on our work?

- Have we prepared new leaders from the younger generations?
- Is there a succession plan to equip and train new leaders?

#### 3. Socio-Political, Economic and Religious scenario.

- The pandemic has revealed the discrepancy in the distribution of wealth and especially of medical facilities between the more developed Peninsular and rural Borneo Sarawak and Sabah.
- Are we seeing a rise in religious intolerance?
- Are we experiencing more discrimination according to race and religion?
- Are we aware of change in institu-

**In conjunction with World Mission Sunday, Archbishop Simon Poh, Episcopal President for New Evangelisation and Pontifical Mission Societies of Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei, invites us to reflect on our call to be missionaries, particularly in a post-pandemic Malaysian Church.**



tional policies that is affecting the rakyat?

- What about students' conversion to other faiths through educational institutions and mixed marriages?

#### 4. Increasing the digital divide between the haves and the have nots, the urban and the rural.

- Rural communities lack adequate internet bandwidth.
- The poor cannot afford computers and mobile phones for on-line classes.
- Are we seeing a widening gap between the rich and the poor, those who can afford technology and those who are left out?
- This digital divide will be a reality when the current generation of children grow into adults. How can we empower poor and rural youth now?

#### 5. New poor among us.

- A category of NEW POOR — people who have recently lost employment and those who cannot sustain their businesses, etc.
- Are we helping the new poor in our midst?

#### 6. Mental Health Issues and Suicides. Call for new ministries ...

- Rise in mental health issues, loneliness and depression, especially among the isolated and housebound elderly. We note the increasing cases of suicide.
- Are we availing ourselves of outreach, pastoral care and counselling for these people?
- Is there a ministry to reach out by contacting and calling the elderly who live alone?

- Is there an initiative to just make a short phone call to ensure the elderly are coping and to offer a prayer to help them sustain themselves through the day?

- New realities call for new ministries that the Holy Spirit wants to raise up. Who will respond to take up these new ministries?

#### 7. Pastoral care for Families impacted by death during pandemic.

- Do we know which families have been affected by death during this pandemic?
- Are we offering pastoral care, emotional and spiritual support to bereaved families?

#### 8. Nation building starting with families as the domestic Church moves towards a truly Keluarga Malaysia.

- Christian families are the building blocks of the Church, society and nation.
- Now is the time to revisit and promote authentic values of family life to contribute to our nation's vision to become a truly *Keluarga Malaysia*. Let Christian family life be the very model foundation of our nation. [Read *Amoris Laetitia*].

#### 9. Care for ecology because of the Climate change crisis.

- Are we ready to make changes to our consumerist, materialistic and individualistic lifestyle?
- Buy only what is needed.
- Use less plastic, electricity, and water.
- Do not waste food. Eat less meat and dairy produce.
- Care for the environment. [Read *Laudato Si'*]

## Some guiding principles for our mission

#### 1. Be the Church that has been on the streets and smells of the Sheep.

To understand God's mission for us. Read *Evangelii Gaudium*.

#### 2. Always remember the Catholics who are unable to come and participate in church.

Eighty per cent of our Catholics are not directly benefiting from parish pastoral care.

Do we know who the Catholics are that are not in church on Sundays? This will be our mission and ministry. Go out to seek and minister to them.

#### 3. Never forget the poor who need our

#### help to survive.

As brothers and sisters of the same human family, created by our heavenly Father, never allow our pastoral planning, discussions, or meetings to lose sight of the poor of the Lord at our doorsteps. Read *Fratelli Tutti*.

#### 4. All of humanity will need to share resources to overcome the negative impact of this pandemic.

Catholics are called to interreligious dialogue of life and action with other Christians, other faiths, and NGOs. In a spirit of interreligious dialogue and ecumenical cooperation, let us collaborate on common humanitarian projects to alle-

viate suffering and provide food, shelter and basic needs to all in need. I exhort all spiritual and national leaders to put aside religious or political differences.

Let us witness our love and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ through actions inspired by our Catholic faith.

"In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. Do this with gentleness and respect." (1 Peter 3:15)

With my prayers and blessings  
**Archbishop Simon Poh**



## General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

# Catholic Church 'cannot be yellow or red or pink'

MANILA: The Catholic Church, which is undergoing a process of renewal, "cannot be yellow or red or pink," said Archbishop Socrates Villegas at the opening of the synodal process on Sunday, October 17.

The prelate of Lingayen-Dagupan in the northern Philippines said the different colours, which are being used by various candidates in next year's Philippine elections, "separate us."

The archbishop, a vocal critic of the spate of drug-related killings in the country in recent years, called on the faithful to pray that the synodal process will lead the Church to renewal.

"Let us pray that the two-year consultation in preparation for the Synod on Synodality will truly bring about a new Church," Archbishop Villegas said in his homily.

He said it means that the Church should always choose Christ over ideology and must emulate Christ's "all-embracing" and "all-sacrificing" leadership.

"The Church of Christ does not choose any colours [because] Christ should be the centre of decision making," he said.

Pope Francis officially launched the synodal process at the Vatican on October 9 to



Filipino Catholics participate at Mass in Manila on Ash Wednesday. (LiCas News photo/Basilio Sepe)

engage the entire Church in preparing for the Synod of Bishops' next ordinary assembly in 2023.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines earlier announced that "small circles" will gather in parishes, schools and ecclesial communities "to pray together" and discuss issues affecting the Church during the synodal process.

In Manila, Cardinal Jose Advincula called on the people to take part in the synodal process "no matter what your social, political, economic, intellectual, or spiritual affiliation is."

In his homily during the Mass for the synod's diocesan phase in the archdiocese, the cardinal said Pope Francis wanted the widest participation possible in the process of con-

sultation and discernment.

"Your perspective as well as your experience of God can be part of the Synodal journey of the whole archdiocese," Cardinal Advincula said.

"In God's family, you have a voice, and your voice counts," he said, adding that the consultations will involve not only the "church people" or those active in the church but "as many people as possible."

He said this includes women, children, the elderly, those in the business sector, government officials, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and ordinary workers, among others.

The cardinal said the archdiocese will also reach out to people in the peripheries and even to those who belong to other faith-based communities and those who have left the Church.

"No matter how far you feel you are from the Church and even from God, you have something to contribute," said Cardinal Advincula.

"We want to listen to you. We want to journey with you. We want to discern God's will with you," he added. — **By Jose Torres Jr, LiCAS.news (with reports from CBCP News)**

## Indian dioceses prepare for 2023 Rome synod

NEW DELHI: Cardinal Oswald Gracias, the head of the Catholic Church in India, launched the diocesan phase of the Synod 2021-2023.

The cardinal, who is the archbishop of Bombay and one of the top consulters of Pope Francis, on October 17 appealed to every Catholic to transform the Church in India to a Synodal Church.

"To transform the Church to a Synodal Church, we have to walk together on the same path, including everybody; we have to encounter Jesus through prayer and adoration and hear what the Spirit wants to say to the Church. The Church should listen to all," he said during the opening Mass at Mumbai's Holy Name Cathedral.

The cardinal quoted the Pope in reiterating that the synod is a process of spiritual and ecclesial discernment that unfolds in adoration, prayer and in dialogue with the Word of God.

He also released a handbook for the synod titled *For a Synodal Church*, published by the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India, the national body of Latin rite bishops.

Cardinal Gracias described the handbook as a useful tool for those involved in the two-year 'Synodal Journey,' which will unfold in three



Cardinal Oswald Gracias presents the Synod handbook at the Mass to launch the diocesan synodal process in Bombay, Oct 17, 2021. (Vatican News photo)

phases of consultation — at the diocesan, the continental and the universal levels, culminating in Oct 2023, in Rome.

In Mangaluru, southern India, Bishop Peter Paul Saldanha opened the synod's first phase

during the Mass at Our Lady Holy Rosary Cathedral.

After the Mass, the bishop unveiled the Synod's logo in the presence of gathered priests, religious brothers and sisters, and laity.

The theme of the Synod depicted on the logo read: *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission*. The Mangalore diocese will hold a study session to discuss the synodal process for priests, religious and lay leaders on Oct 21 at Urwa Church.

The day marks the 50th anniversary of Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Agartala diocese in the northeastern Indian state of Tripura inaugurated the Synod on Synodality at a public Mass concelebrated by some 30 priests at St Xavier's Cathedral Parish in the state capital.

Two finally professed Holy Cross seminarians were ordained as deacons during the Mass.

In Goa, Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferrao of Goa-Daman celebrated the inaugural Mass at Se Cathedral, Old Goa.

"Let us get involved in this synodal process," Archbishop Filipe urged the gathering, explaining the three phases of Synodal consultation.

Recalling the invitation of Pope Francis, he requested Catholics to "encounter one another with love and respect. Let us try to listen to one another with empathy. Let us all together listen to the Holy Spirit, what God is telling us as members of the Church, as members of the living body of Christ, which his Son Jesus started."

"What is important is not the product, but the process" said the prelate, who is the president of the Latin rite bishops' conference.

Archbishop Filipe also urged the people to seek ways to make the synodal journey relevant in the day-to-day life of the Church and to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit to grow genuinely in journeying together.

"We need to encounter one another, to listen to each other 'not just with our ears but with our hearts', and to discover together what God wants to say to us at this particular time, as well as the direction in which he wants to lead us, as a community of disciples of Jesus," he asserted.

Representatives of priests, nuns, and lay people, including the elderly, the youth, persons with disabilities, migrants and others, participated in the Mass — **mattersindia.com**

## Myanmar – A Church on the move

MANDALAY: The Catholic Church in Myanmar regards the Synod as a "fruitful opportunity to reconsider its character as a Church on the move, which is really missionary". This is what the Catholic Dioceses in Myanmar affirmed on the occasion of a solemn opening ceremony of the Synod of Bishops' path on the subject of Synodality.

In Mandalay, Archbishop Marco Tin Win emphasised the "deeply missionary dimension" of this synodal process and, after the opening ceremony, distributed burning candles to the participants as a sign of "being sent on mission". In doing so, he urged everyone to be "missionaries of the light of Christ in families,

cities and in society".

Fr Robert Kyaw Thu, a Burmese Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Yangon, stressed that "the Synod is the best way to look within, to penetrate into our reality and to open the door for the participation and expression of all members of the Church, to build and develop a real missionary community".

Paul Mung Jang, a Catholic layman, affirmed that "the Church is sometimes seen as a bureaucratic entity, far from the situation and the lives of the people in the many villages".

Joseph Win Hlaing Oo joyfully welcomed "the Synod of Bishops on Synodality", and stated that "it is an extraordinary opportunity

for us to reshape the image and life of the Catholic Church and to strengthen the sense of belonging among all baptised who are called to mission".

Another Catholic, Joseph Myat Soe Latt, noted that "in Myanmar, although the laity are enthusiastic about the mission, the clergy and those in charge are often content with celebrating the liturgies and having a conservative understanding of pastoral care: there is a real need to walk together, to go out into the world to bring the Good News of the Kingdom of God".

Celebrating and living a synod is an opportunity to strengthen the participation of the laity in the life of the Church and to involve



Archbishop Marco Tin Win

all the baptised in evangelisation, according to the representatives of the Burmese Church. — **Fides**

# Vietnamese nuns inspired by French missionary to serve others

HUE: Nuns in central Vietnam find inspiration to serve people in need in the late Fr Jean-Baptiste Etcharren, who spent all his life offering loving care to local people.

"I learned some valuable lessons about deep compassion for people around me from the beloved Father Etcharren, who devoted himself to serving people in Vietnam," Sr Anna Truong Thi Tuyet said.

The French missionary, who started his mission in Vietnam in 1959, died of old age on September 21 in Hue. The Paris Foreign Missions Society (MEP) member was 89.

Sr Tuyet said her family lived in Dong Ha Parish in Quang Tri province when she was a child. The parish was served by Fr Etcharren between 1966 and 1972.

She and her two siblings had to drop out of school as their mother could not afford to send them. Their father, a former South Vietnam soldier, went missing in action in Gio Linh district.

"One day, Fr Etcharren visited us and promised to help us pursue our studies although we were not Catholic then," Sr Tuyet said, adding that they were provided with food and money to buy uniforms and books for their studies.

They were admitted to a Catholic school run by Lovers of the Holy Cross of Hue Sisters. The priest regularly visited and offered sweets to students.

"We were excited by the priest and local Catholics' services and decided to convert to Catholicism. We were baptised by Fr Etcharren in 1967," she said.

The French missionary moved them and hundreds of other families to take refuge in a church in Da Nang to escape fierce fighting between US-backed South Vietnam forces and communist troops in 1972. The following year, they accompanied the priest to settle in what is now Binh Thuan province.

Sr Tuyet joined the Lovers of the Holy Cross of Hue congregation and provided pastoral care for parishes in Thua Thien Hue province.

The nun, who now works at the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Vang in Quang Tri province, did not meet the missionary who saved her family and local people from the war-stricken area again until 2018, when she attended the 60th anniversary of his ordination held in Hue.

"He still remembered me, asking about my work and my relatives in Dong Ha Parish. I was impressed



Fr Jean-Baptiste Etcharren (centre) celebrating his ordination anniversary with Vietnamese children at Phu Cam Cathedral, Hue in 2018. (UCA News photo)

by the legendary missionary who worked hard to help people during the war," she said.

The 67-year-old nun, who spent years working in her home province of Quang Tri, said she and other sisters looked for and cared for children with physical disabilities as their families could not afford to look after them.

The nuns set up a home for them in Dong Ha that now serves 34 disabled children. They also provide them with wheelchairs and walking

canes while creating jobs for them to earn a living.

"We follow Fr Etcharren's inspiring examples of evangelisation by trying our best to help people in need to live a happy life," Sr Tuyet said.

Fr Etcharren was forced to leave for France in 1975 after Vietnam was reunified under communist rule. He granted a significant number of scholarships to Vietnamese priests to study in France. He returned to live a retired life in Hue

in 2010 at the invitation of Emeritus Archbishop Etienne Nguyen Nhu The of Hue until his death.

St Paul de Chartres Sr Mary Nguyen Thi Lan, who worked with the late priest before 1975, said she learned honesty, punctuality and altruism from him while he taught at Hoa Thien Minor Seminary, where she served.

"He visited and gave us chocolate and cake in the seminary's kitchen on Thursday afternoons after his teaching," the nun said. "He was gentle and friendly, and spoke the local dialect with us."

Sr Lan, 79, who is at a home for elderly sisters, said that in 1963, she started to work at a tuberculosis hospital in Hue run by St Paul de Chartres Sisters. Fr Etcharren celebrated weekly Masses for sisters at the hospital, encouraging them to "give tender care to all people, regardless of their faith, as they were also God's children."

Sr Lan said she has followed Fr Etcharren's example all her life by serving parishes and seminaries, attending to elderly people and mental patients, and preparing meals for ethnic students at church-run hostels in Da Nang and Kon Tum. — [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com)

## From the Strip to the world – bearing witness to Christ

GAZA: From Gaza, an open-air prison, to the world to bring the Gospel, the testimony and the message of Christ "wherever it is needed" in a spirit of "obedience". Because being a Christian in the Strip is "a mission, a grace and, at the same time, a responsibility".

These are the simple words shared by 23-year-old Abdallah Jeldah, who made the vows of religious profession recently.

His vocation tells of a firm faith, formed in a strip of land in which four wars have been waged in less than 15 years.

Born into a Greek Orthodox family, his path matured over time, leading him to embrace Catholicism in 2019. On October 10, 2021, he made the initial vows of his religious profession and fulfilled the ceremony of vesting, the first local vocation in decades in a place without native priests or religious.

After completing the novitiate, Abdallah will join the Institute of the Incarnate Word (Ive), the same order to which the parish priest of the Church of the Holy Family in Gaza, Fr Gabriel Romanelli, an Argentine priest, belongs.

"My vocation was germinated by attending the Holy Family Church and through the influence of the then parish priest, Fr Don Mario da Silva, observing his pastoral activities and his experience with young people." The discovery of wanting



Abdallah Jeldah made his vows of religious profession.

to become a priest and a missionary "gave me great inner peace".

He recently professed the four vows: charity, chastity, obedience and consecration to Jesus through Our Lady.

From Gaza to Bethlehem, from Nazareth to Jerusalem "we are the descendants of the first Christians, and we want to live and bear witness to the faith, proclaiming the Gospel everywhere in the world, through works and prayer".

"I have lived through four wars, I even have almost a doctorate in conflicts — he adds — but I have always left room for hope, without forgetting evil. For peace we need firm, constant and permanent justice, and for this I want to spend my mission," he added.

Now Abdallah Jeldah is awaiting a visa to be able to enter the seminary of the congregation (founded

in Argentina in 1984 and present in 26 countries on five continents) in Montefiascone, in the province of Viterbo. From an open-air prison to the four corners of the world, to bring a light that shines in those who are a minority in their land and testify to the faith to Muslims by their lives.

"His vocation — underlines Fr Romanelli — is a grace and a joy for everyone, from the parish of Gaza to the Latin patriarchate of Jerusalem and for the other congregations, because it is a sign of hope. He, who has lived between wars, is not afraid to go where the Church will send him."

"A Christian from the Strip," concludes the parish priest, "knows how to be light and hope, sharing daily life with those who do not believe in Jesus." — **By Dario Salvi, AsiaNews**

## First Hmong priest ordained in Vietnam

HANOI: Catholics in a northern Vietnamese diocese expect a new Hmong ethnic priest to carry out evangelisation effectively among ethnic groups.

Bishop Peter Nguyen Van Vien, apostolic administrator of Hung Hoa, ordained Hmong man Joseph Ma A Ca and 10 others at Son Loc Cathedral in Son Tay town near Hanoi on October 13.

Local Catholics, including the new priests' family members, were not present at the ordination due to social distancing measures to contain COVID-19.

Dominican Sr Mary Cu Thi Quynh Hoa, the first nun from the Hmong ethnic group, said: "We are full of the joy of spring about his priestly ordination, and gratefully thank God for granting us the first Hmong priest since Catholicism was introduced to our ancestors over a century ago."

Sr Hoa, who is from Giang La Pan parish dominated by Hmong Catholics in Yen Bai province, said Fr Ca's ordination will boost evangelisation work among ethnic people and inspire youths to follow religious vocations to serve their communities.

Born in 1983 in a Hmong family with 11 siblings, Fr Ca, a native of Hau Thao parish in Lao Cai province, graduated from college before entering St Joseph Major Seminary in Hanoi in 2011. He was spiritually led by Fr Peter Pham Thanh Binh of Sa Pa.

"My top priority is to evangelise ethnic villagers, offer education to ethnic children and maintain their



Fr Joseph Ma A Ca

traditions, culture, language and costumes," he said after he was ordained a deacon in February 2020.

Fr Ca, who has served Dong Heo parish with 1,700 Hmong Catholics in Yen Bai since 2020, said 66 Hmong people embraced Catholicism last year.

Sr Hoa, who has worked with ethnic groups in Bac Kan province for years, said effective evangelisation comes from ethnic people working with one another as they know their own lifestyles and customs well.

The Hmong nun said she has inspired six ethnic women to join three indigenous congregations.

The first Hmong villagers in Sa Pa in Lao Cai province embraced Catholicism introduced by foreign missionaries during the 1850s. Later, Hmong Catholics moved to other north-western provinces and founded more mission stations. — [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com)

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY – OCTOBER 24

# Pontifical Mission Societies

Each year, the Pope designates the month of October as World Mission Month and the next-to-last Sunday in October as World Mission Sunday. On that Sunday, Catholics are united in celebration of our common vocation to mission, focusing on the Pope's missions around the world and the missionaries who dedicate themselves to their service.

Church draws together to support, in prayer and through financial help, the proclamation of the Gospel; vocations to the priesthood and religious life; the building of churches and chapels; and the efforts of priests, religious Sisters and Brothers, and lay pastoral leaders, as they help the poor, the hungry, and seek the spiritually abandoned.

entire month is devoted to learning more about the Pope's missions and supporting their success through prayer and donations.

There are four societies under the Pontifical Mission Societies.

They received the title "pontifical" in 1922 to indicate they are the official means by which the Holy Father and the Universal Roman Catholic Church reaches out with the Good News of Jesus to the Missions.

This year, World Mission Sunday is on Oct 24; however, the

**2021 WORLD MISSION SUNDAY**

**Building peace in Nigeria**

**'We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard'**

Acts 4:20

**GIVE ONLINE**  
[missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk)  
 Reg. Charity No. 1056651

## The four societies and its founders

### SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH (PSPF)

Founded in Lyons, France, in 1822 by Pauline Jaricot. Inspired by stories she heard about missionary work in China, she felt called by the Lord to help the Catholic Church's worldwide missionary work. Young dioceses in the United States were some of the first to benefit from Pauline's vision.



The Propagation of the Faith continues to seek prayer and sacrifice for the world's missions, now some 1,100 dioceses in Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands and remote regions of Latin America.

It offers support for pastoral and evangelising programmes, catechists and catechetical work, building new churches, healthcare, education, communication and transportation needs.

### SOCIETY OF ST PETER THE APOSTLE (PSSPA)

Founded in France in 1889 by mother and daughter, Stephanie and Jeanne Bigard, to support the education of seminarians and religious novices in the Missions.

Today, some 28,000



major seminarians, mostly in Asia and Africa, receive an average annual subsidy of \$700 (RM2911) per student; assistance is also provided for men and women religious novices.

### HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION (MCA)

French Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson founded Association in 1843. He was convinced that children, rich in faith and love, can play their part in the Church's mission.

Each year, MCA provides support for more than two million children who are enrolled in catechises and Christian formation programs, as well as more than 600,000 children in nursery



school through secondary school. Additional help is sent for more than 700,000 children benefiting from programs for "protection of life." This includes health care (basic, rehabilitation, children with disabilities and special needs), advocacy (orphaned children, street children, child soldiers, human trafficking), and outreach (food, water).

### MISSIONARY UNION of the Clergy, Religious and the Consecrated Laity (PMU)

Founded in 1916 by Fr Paolo Manna, PIME. Spiritual apostolate that "animates the animators".



## The Pontifical Mission Societies of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei

**EPISCOPAL PRESIDENT:**  
 Most Rev Simon Poh  
 (Archdiocese of Kuching)



**Regional Director:**  
 Fr Victor Louis  
 (Diocese of Penang)



### Arch/Diocesan Directors

- Fr Raymond Pereira & Fr Alan Pereira (Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur)
- Fr Thomas Koo Kwai Fong (Diocese of Malacca Johore)
- Fr Rayner Bisius (Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu)
- Fr Harry Dorisoh (Diocese of Keningau)
- Deacon Arthur John (Diocese of Sandakan)
- Fr Galvin Ngumbang (Archdiocese of Kuching)
- Fr Joe Sebastian (Diocese of Sibiu)
- Fr Robert Leong (Brunei Vicariate)
- Fr Peter Hwang (Diocese of Miri)
- Fr Terence Pereira (Archdiocese of Singapore)

## Carrying on God's mission



Greetings from Kapit Parish in Sibiu!

This year our parish activities for World Mission Sunday is limited because of COVID-19.

The situation is still critical, and cases are high across the state – even in the longhouses, which are more isolated. There are restrictions on our travel, making it difficult to reach people in the longhouses.

Although we cannot go about our mission work as usual, God has provided new ways for fulfilling this. We've reached out to people by sending them the daily Word of God and homilies through online chats and groups.

However, it's sad that many in the longhouses cannot access them as they don't have any network connection.

Despite these restrictions, we are

planning to create more awareness of Christ's mission, the mission in which the baptised are called to go forth and proclaim the Good News to all creation.

We'll do this however and wherever we can; through our homilies, by sending messages online, and by giving handouts where possible on Mission Sunday.

### New ways to speak of what we have seen and heard

There is no doubt the call to participate in mission is often given minimal attention or, worse, ignored. But God has made our missionary work fruitful. There are times when I have strongly felt the grace of God working through me and others, especially during difficult and challenging moments.

There is a saying that when the

doors are closed, windows are always opened. So, we make use of those small windows to carry on God's mission.

During the pandemic, we've become better at using social media to share Christ's message with the people.

We've encouraged more lay engagement in the mission in small Christian Communities.

That's where I feel the Risen Lord alive and active at work with us in our mission. Keeping trust and hope in Christ, we continue His mission in spite of the challenges we are facing in the world now. — [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk)

● *Fr Michael Mandagiri is a Mill Hill Missionary currently serving communities in the Diocese of Sibiu. He was previously in Cameroon.*

# Permission to be sad

**L**et the preacher say, you have permission to be sad! In the book, *When the Bartender Dims the Lights*, Ron Evans writes:

"There's a line I came upon in the musings of a preacher: On a Sunday morning many of the people sitting before you are the walking wounded, and you need to give them permission to be sad.

In a world obsessed with happiness, where being great is all that matters, let the preacher say, you have permission to be sad. In a world where old age becomes the golden years, where every problem can be fixed and every ailment cured, let the preacher say, you have permission to be sad.

In a world preoccupied with prolonging life, where death is a forbidden word, let the preacher say, you have permission to die. And let the preacher say, you have permission to live in memories of a lonesome kind."

Today neither our culture nor our churches give us sufficient permission to be sad. Occasionally, yes, when a loved one dies or some other tragedy befalls us, we are allowed to be sad, to be down, tearful, not upbeat. But there are

so many other occasions and circumstances in our lives where our souls are legitimately sad, and our culture, churches, and egos do not give us the permission we need to feel what we are in fact experiencing — sadness.

When that is the case, and it often is, we can either deny how we feel and go through the motions of being upbeat, or we can give way to our sadness, but only at the price of feeling there is something wrong with us, that we should not be feeling this way. Both are bad.

Sadness is an unavoidable part of life and not, in itself, a negative thing. In sadness, there is a cry to which we are often deaf. In sadness, our soul gets its chance to speak, and its voice is telling us that a certain frustration, loss, death, inadequacy, moral failure, or particular circumstance or season of our lives is real, bitter, and unalterable. Acceptance is our only choice and sadness is its price. When that voice is not listened to, our health and sanity feel a strain.

For example, in a particularly challenging book, *Suicide and the Soul*, the late James Hillman states that sometimes what hap-



Fr Ron Rolheiser

pens in a suicide is that the soul is so frustrated and wounded that it kills the body. For reasons too complex and many to know, that soul could not make itself heard and was never given permission to feel what it was in fact experiencing. At an extreme, this can kill the body.

We see this in a less-extreme (though also deadly) way in the phenomenon of anorexia among young women. There is an irresistible pressure from the culture (often coupled with actual bullying on social media) to have a perfect body. Unfortunately, na-

ture doesn't issue many of those. Thus, these young women need permission to accept the limitations of their own bodies and to be okay with the sadness that comes with that.

Unfortunately, this isn't happening, at least not nearly enough, and so instead of accepting the sadness of not having the body they want, these young women are forced (no matter the cost) to try to measure up. We see its sad effects.

Psychotherapists, who do dream work with clients, tell us that when we have bad dreams, the reason is often that our soul is angry with us. Since it cannot make itself heard during the day, it makes itself heard at night when we are helpless to drown it out.

There are many legitimate reasons for being sad. Some of us are born with "old souls", poets, over-sensitive to the pathos in life. Some of us suffer from bad physical health, others from fragile mental health. Some of us have never been sufficiently loved and honoured for who we are; others have had our hearts broken by infidelity and betrayal. Some of us have had our lives irrevocably

ripped apart by abuse, rape, and violence; others are simply hopeless, frustrated romantics with perpetually crushed dreams, agonising in nostalgia.

Moreover, all of us will have our own share of losing loved ones, of breakdowns of all sorts, and bad seasons that test the heart. There are a myriad of legitimate reasons to be sad.

This needs to be honoured in our Eucharists and in other church gatherings. Church is not just a place for upbeat celebration. It is also supposed to be a safe place where we can break down. Liturgy too must give us permission to be sad.

D.H. Lawrence once famously wrote:

*The feeling I don't have  
I don't have.*

*The feelings I don't have,  
I won't say I have.*

*The feeling you say you have,  
you don't have.*

*The feelings you would  
like us both to have,  
we neither of us have.*

We need to be true to our souls by being true to its feelings. —  
**By Fr Ron Rolheiser, all rights reserved**

## REFLECTING ON THE PSALMS

### The scandal of belief

**I**srael, a partner in the covenant with God, constantly reflected on the implications of this relationship in their everyday affairs. Being a theocratic state, nothing was purely secular for the people of Israel. The relationship with the God of the covenant permeated every aspect of their lives. Whether it was praising or thanking God or dealing with other members of this covenantal society, theological reflections found the way into the law, the prophets and the wisdom writings. Hence, it is not surprising that the psalms reflect the faith of the people.

The wise men continued further reflection on their belief and extended it to the new circumstances after the exile. One of the problems that always disturbed the Israelites was the problem of retribution. Why is it that the God of justice allows the wicked to prosper and the just to suffer? Coupled with this was the question of life after death since they believed that each person just sinks down into a Godless, forgotten place called Sheol. The problem was highlighted during the revolt of the Maccabees, and a solution came forth in the book of the prophet Daniel and finally in the book of Wisdom. Some psalms attempt to express in prayer this uncertainty as theological reflection was in progress.

**Prayer for Living Psalm 72**

(73) Week 4 Monday Office of Readings.

Verses 1-3: The psalmist begins with the firm conclusion of the Israelite faith that God is just. And yet this honest believer admits that he nearly stumbled in temptation because he saw how the wicked seem to be well off. In fact, he is struck with envy of these unfaithful people.

Verses 4-12: The wicked seem not to know pain, or troubles or suffering. They are even physically very healthy. This makes them proud, and they become violent as they plot and oppress the others since their minds and hearts are always planning evil. They are ready to speak whatever pleases them and do not hesitate to blaspheme. This makes the faithful people question the justice of their God and are tempted to follow these successful wicked people who seem to be amassing their wealth, quite untroubled in conscience.

Verses 13-20: The psalmist now meditates on his own status and sees the futility of being innocent as his life is toilsome day after day. His meditations remind us of the prophet Jeremiah and the questionings in the book of Job. However, he admits that if he were to imitate these unfaithful wicked, then he would be contradicting his own Yahwistic faith in the covenant. So, as he

ponders on this incongruity, he begins to get some insight into the mysterious ways of God. There in the sanctuary or divine counsels (as some commentators say) God's mystery is revealed to him. The fate of the wicked is clear now since they will plunge to their own destruction. Moreover, their downfall will come on suddenly when God, as if coming out of a dream, is aware of the situation and dismisses them without a trace.

Verses 21-26: The psalmist goes on to take a critical look at himself. He is said to be 'cut to the quick', that is, he becomes aware of his feelings and emotions, as he realises how stupid he has been. In fact, he considers

himself a beast, the actual word he uses is behemoth, a hippopotamus, a Nile-horse, a stupid animal. However, he protests that he was always in God's presence who guided him by his counsels to act righteously. Verse 24b "and so you will lead me to glory" is the climax. It may not necessarily mean eternal life with God after death, yet there is already some indication of being with God in glory. And that is why he can joyfully say that God is his possession for ever.

Verses 27-28: The psalmist reaffirms his faith in the justice of God who will see that those who are not faithful will meet their ruin. He himself will not abandon God, as it gives him great joy to

have God as his protector in all his actions. Consequently, he will go to proclaim God's marvellous works at the public square near the gates of Jerusalem.

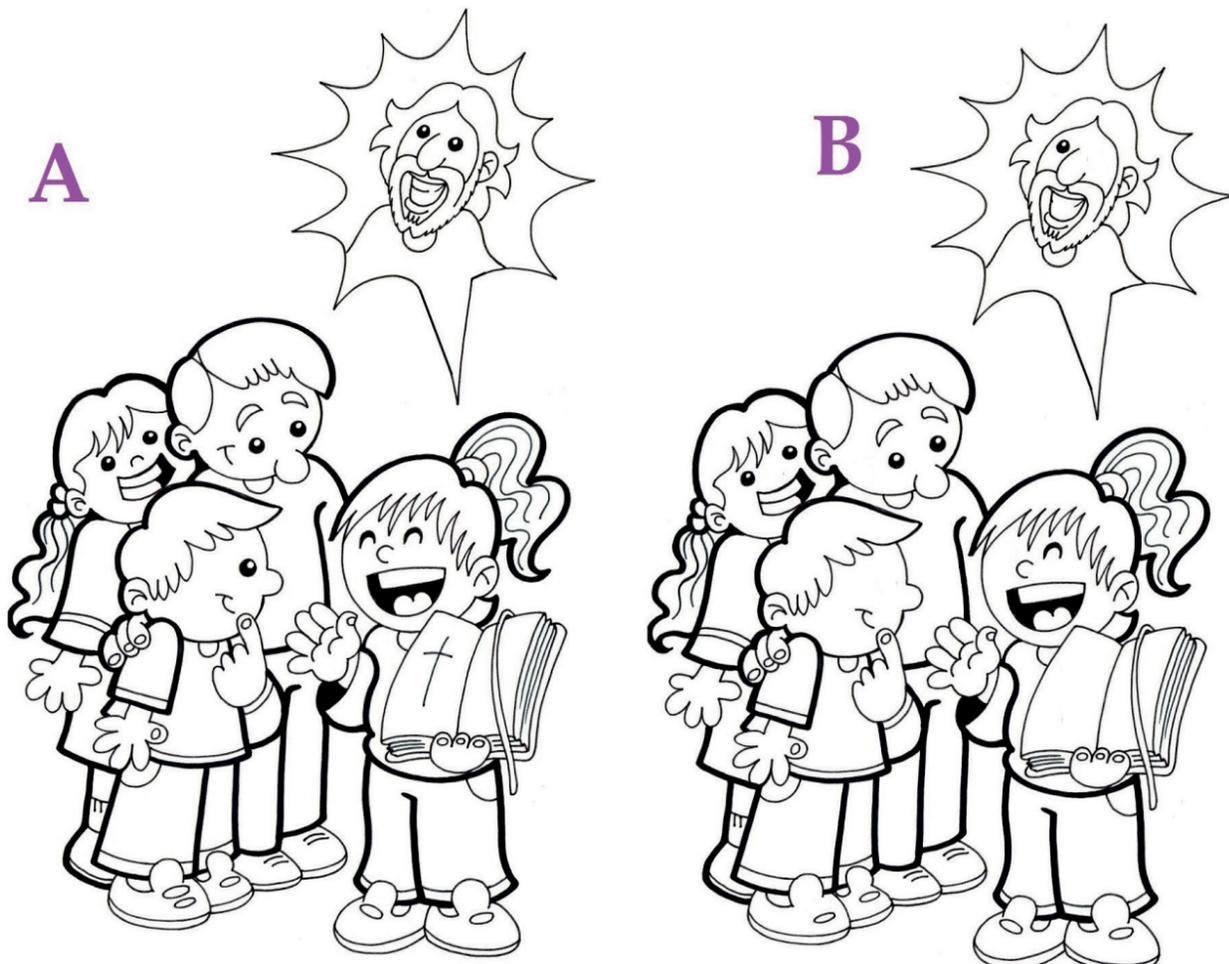
This psalm calls us to meditate on our own situation. We go through life experiencing many trials and suffering. We know that there are people who are godless who seem to prosper. There are faithful poor (the *anawim* Yahweh) who suffer from want of the necessities of life. While we work for the betterment of society, let us not lose hope in a God who sent his Son who died and entered into glory and who will raise our mortal bodies to be with him one day. — **By Msgr James Gnanapiragasam**



# Little Catholics' Corner

Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples. Baptise them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matthew 28: 18-19)

Can you spot EIGHT differences between the two pictures below?



Dear children,

October 24th is World Mission Sunday. It is celebrated in every Catholic community in the world.

It is a moment of grace to express solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ who are living in situations of poverty, violence and oppression.

All Christian children are invited to donate and pray for missionaries around the world.

Children, by merit of our Baptism into Christ, we are all missionaries. However, not everyone is called to leave home, family and all that is familiar to evangelise around the world.

By prayer and charitable donation towards this mission



work, we can all fulfil the call to be missionaries. The Christian community generously continues to support the work of missionaries around the world today, and to support young communities too poor to support themselves.

Let us take a few minutes each day to pray with children all over the world. Try the World Mission Rosary and pray a decade for each continent.

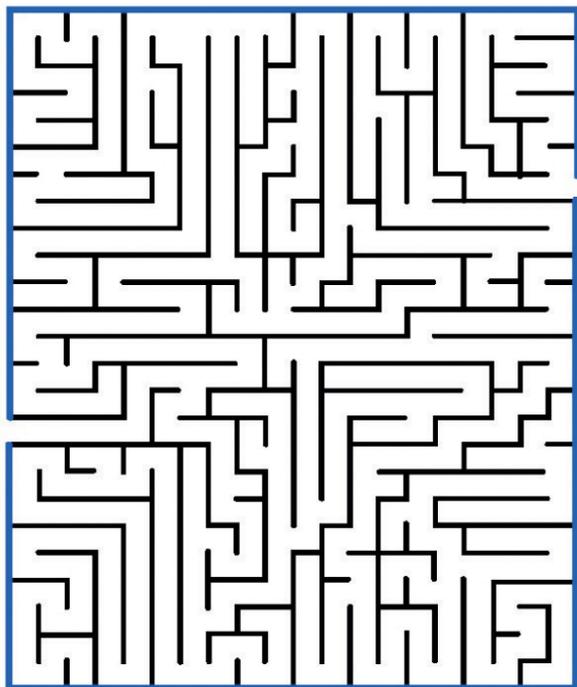
Let us also pray the Missionary Children's prayer together.

May all children  
In the world  
Share love  
Share friendship and live  
In the peace  
Of God's love  
Now and forever,  
Amen.

Aunty Eliz

## Jesus healed a royal officer's son

Help the royal official find his way through the maze to Jesus.



## Samuel Obeyed God Word Scramble

Unscramble each of the clue words. Take the letters that appear in the circle boxes and unscramble them to find the answers to the last phrase.



REHA

DROW

LIE

SNIOVI

HOPPERT



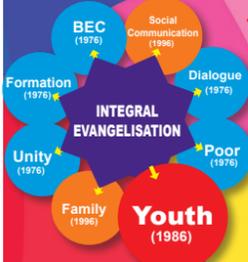
What did Samuel do when God spoke to him?

He .



# YOUTH

October 24, 2021



## TWO SISTERS BECOME NUNS AT THE SAME TIME



Lourdes and Gloria Salgado. (Aleteia/diocesisgetafe.es)

SPAIN: Lourdes and Gloria Salgado are from Ciempozuelos, Spain (near the city of Madrid). They're the youngest of a large family (seven siblings) and they're part of Generation Z, the generation born around the year 2000 who are considered digital natives.

These young women both discovered a call to religious life, and in just over a month, they'll both enter their respective orders. Although Lourdes and Gloria have a religious vocation, they're not on the same vocational path: Gloria — who is 18 years old — entered the novitiate of the Order of Our Lady on September 8, whereas Lourdes

will begin as a postulant, at the age of 20, at the Iesu Communio convent of La Aguilera in Burgos.

Lourdes says, "I cannot say anything but 'thank you.' I'm infinitely grateful to God and His Church. I don't deserve this life; it's only by His mercy that I can live my religious vocation. I want to live forever serving Him."

Her sister Gloria, who has just finished high school and reached legal adulthood, explains how her vocational process has been and what motivated her to become a religious. She declares that "the best part of my

life is for Jesus."

Both Gloria and Lourdes say that their family, the school where they studied, and the Neocatechumenal Way helped them discover their personal vocation.

Gloria adds that the decision they've made to give themselves totally to the Lord in religious life wouldn't have been possible without the help of Our Lady.

Gloria echoes Mary's 'yes' in a concrete way, quoting the late UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld: "I can only say: 'For all that has been, THANK YOU; for all that will be, YES.'" — **By Dolores Massot, Aleteia**

# Toxic Christianity – The reality and the truth

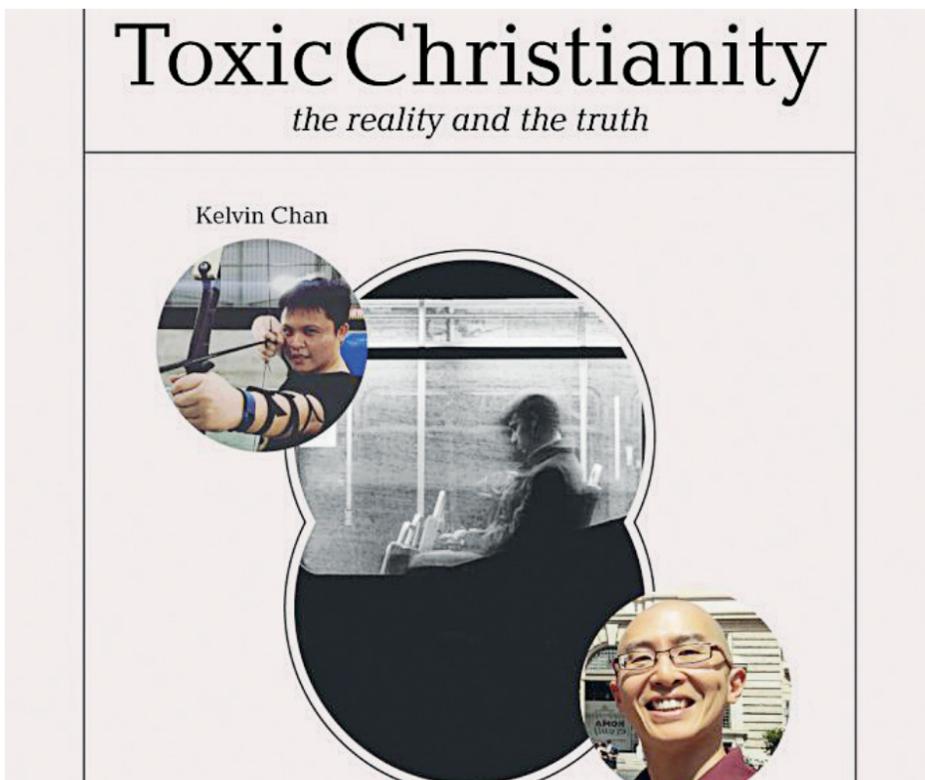
**KUCHING:** Toxic Christianity—a topic that is taboo and not openly spoken about. The combination of toxic and Christianity somehow gives a feel that they do not go together but it does exist. We have heard many comments or opinions regarding Christianity being toxic which has led to some people leaving the Church or the faith.

On September 3, *EMPOWERED* had a live session on Instagram with Fr Stanley Goh, SJ on this topic. The session was very engaging and touched on various areas both within the community and issues raised in the media affecting young people in the community. The discussion took place with the understanding of an open heart and there were plenty of questions from viewers to gain insight regarding their experience with toxic Christianity. Fr Stanley was very open and responded to the questions raised.

The session dealt largely on issues faced within the Catholic Church community, especially among the youth and young adults. Lately, it seems more people have been leaving the Church and the COVID-19 pandemic has further created a dilemma for people — to remain faithful and stay in the Church, or leave.

### Why some youths are leaving the Church

From a survey conducted among the local community, as well as some friends abroad, the responses were rather astounding. Among the reasons given were that they faced unpleasant experiences in the Church or community, and hypocrisy.



For example, some suggested that Church leaders should practice what they preach. When they notice a church leader making a mistake or behaving inappropriately, they feel justified in their thinking that the Church is no longer a good place. And so they choose to leave the Church, having concluded that there is no difference between the Church and the secular.

Another interesting point raised was the idea that church leaders may be inattentive to members when they need advice or a listening ear. For example, when seeking advice, members only received responses such as "I'll pray for

you", or "What would Jesus do?" Some were provided with a Bible verse to reflect on, which they appreciated, but they felt no time was invested to hear them out.

Are church leaders failing to invest time in members? Are they too busy with the administration of the Church or the 'bigger things' to the extent that the welfare of the church members is neglected? Are there some areas that need to be improved or repaired?

In addition, sometimes members feel judged by church leaders and other members. Due to the fear of feeling judged, they choose to leave

the Church. It is not uncommon to hear the phrase "the Church is so judgmental".

Other areas raised included the sexual harassment cases among priests, bishops or cardinals and there were queries as to what the Vatican is doing about it. News regarding such matters appears in the media often, which has raised questions such as "Why are the Church authorities or the Pope not taking action?" Are they are turning a blind eye or sweeping these cases under the rug? Unfortunately, some of these cases were not dealt with properly in the past which may have caused emotional trauma among the victims.

Other areas briefly touched on included LGBTQ, secularism and the WOKE culture in the media that has influenced young people in the community.

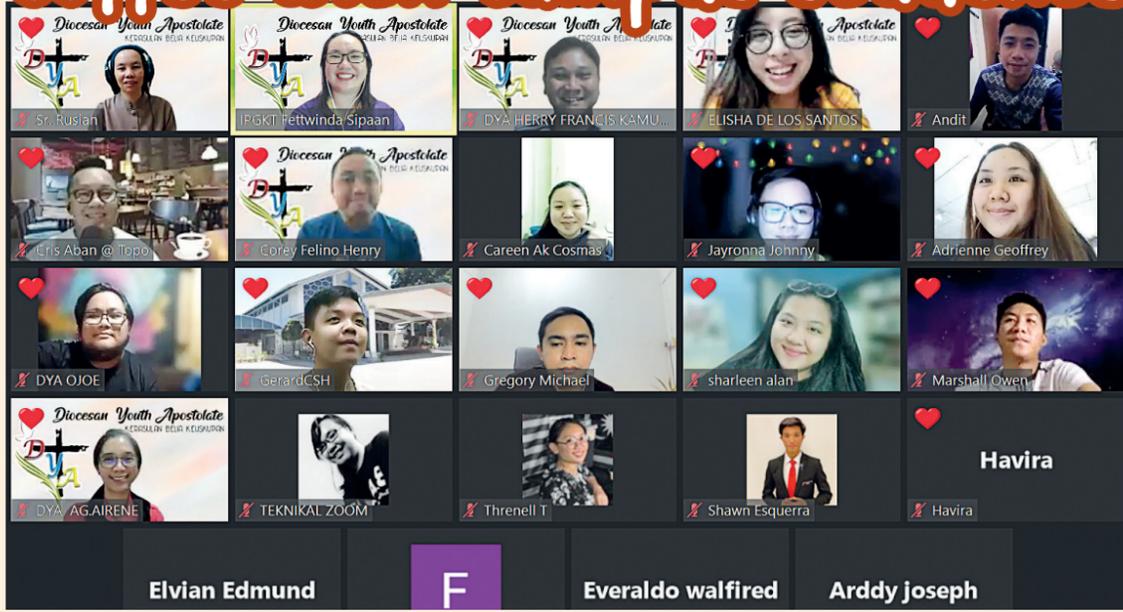


### Heart Speaks unto the Heart

Fr Stanley shared various insights to the issues raised and highlighted the need to speak with God, quoting from St John Henry Newman, to speak heart to heart. God pierces to the core, and we must nourish our relationship with God in a very loud world that is screaming at us and telling us what to do. We can try to connect with God in ways that are best suited for us, be it through music, meditation or nature, and listen to our hearts in order to better manage the challenges of the world. The world screams, God whispers.

For those who would like to tune in, visit IG: empoweredkch IGTV or [linktr.ee/empoweredkch](https://linktr.ee/empoweredkch). — **Empowered Ministry Kuching, Today's Catholic**

# Coffee with campus students



SANDAKAN: A virtual coffee session with campus students studying in Sandakan and those furthering their studies abroad was held recently. It was organised by the Sandakan Diocesan Youth Apostolate (SDYA) via Zoom.

The first session was by Fettwinda Sipaan, who shared about life on campus. She gave an overview of what students will experience while furthering their studies on campus.

Next, in the breakout room,

students shared on their life on campus.

After that, Elisha De Los spoke of her bittersweet experience as she furthered her studies overseas and how she coped with that.

The students gained from these sessions, especially those who are planning to further their studies abroad. It's not only to encourage them but also to provide them the space to know one another, so that they don't feel they are going through this alone. — *Dospo*

# SJIS wins at Queen's Commonwealth Essay 2021

KUCHING: Four students from St Joseph's International School earned medals in the *Queen's Commonwealth Essay Contest 2021*. Ong Rui Yu and Christabel Lau earned gold awards, while Lydia Ting earned silver and Irisa Chai secured bronze. The topic was the ongoing pandemic which, after almost two years, continues to dominate the news and our lives.

"The news came like a spring breeze amidst a period of stressful studying. My feelings were a gentle sort of happiness with flowers blooming and the world embraced in a bird song. I felt grateful that God has granted me this achievement," said Ong.

"I am honoured my essay even qualified for the final," stated Lau.

These are unexpected but outstanding achievements, as there were over 25,000 entries from around the world. Ong and Lau were two of the 171 gold finalists. The Principal of St Joseph's International school, Br Robert Teoh, congratulated the students on their outstanding achievements.

"I encourage all the students to participate in the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Contest and other contests too. They can broaden their horizons through them," he said.

"This essay competition gives a purpose to writing and places it within the world beyond the classroom. The students realise that writing is an ongoing process," explained their teacher, Ann Armstrong.

The pandemic, and ways in which the world stayed connected, was something that we all experienced. However, the four students went beyond the expected in creative but carefully structured



Clockwise from top left: Christabel Lau, Ong Rui Yu, Lydia Ting, Irisa Chai. (Today's Catholic photo/SJPS)

writing. "It was a challenge to gather my thoughts and feelings about an ongoing pandemic when all I wanted to do was escape from this world," said Ong. She continued that it took her about a month to complete the essay and she drew inspiration from long walks and her playlist.

Poetry, which featured in Ting's dramatic piece, left no doubts in the readers' minds about how the pandemic turned the entire world upside down. She moved from personal losses and experiences to our never-ending thankfulness to all frontliners.

Ong and Lau joined the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competi-

tion in 2020 and earned silver and bronze awards respectively.

"Joining this competition for the first time has really opened my eyes and motivated me to become a better version of myself. Thus, I look forward to writing again in the future," said Ting. Ong encouraged everyone to join and pointed out that writing is a process.

"Even now, I want to rewrite my submitted essay," explained Ong.

These award-winning essays on the ongoing pandemic that has affected us all profoundly can be read on the St Joseph's International School website. — **By Ann Armstrong, Today's Catholic**

# Twin brothers are beautifying yards, fighting climate change at same time

ALBANY, NY: Brendan and Patrick McNaughton are fighting climate change, one lawn at a time.

Last summer, the twin brothers started "Zero Carbon Lawn Care," a lawn-care business dedicated to cleaning and beautifying yards with no guilt over the environmental impact.

"It's a way to help others because they don't have to do it (their lawn) on their own, and most people use gas mowers," Brendan told *The Evangelist* newspaper of the Albany Diocese. "We're kind of doing our part and their part."

When they say zero carbon, they're not kidding. The 16-year-olds use push mowers, hand shears and brooms. Nothing that would account for carbon emission or gas consumption. None of their equipment is battery powered, it all runs on elbow grease and a lot of muscle.

Even getting to their customers' houses adds zero carbon waste.

The brothers, who are sophomores at La Salle Institute in Troy, New York, ride their bikes, towing their equipment in an attached trailer.

The idea to go "zero carbon" was kicked around by the brothers and their dad, Tom McNaughton, while putting the basics of the business together.

"We explained that ideas have to be meaningfully unique to set yourself apart from those around you," Tom said. "At La Salle, they were studying environmental science and in religion class they discussed 'community good.' We tried to tie the whole thing together, successfully I believe."

It's a climate-conscious business approach that's more prevalent now than ever.

After months of seeing scorching wildfires out west and drastic temperatures sweep across parts of the nation, the impacts of human action and carbon emissions are dominating the world today. — **By Emily Benson, CNS**



The brothers started an environmentally friendly lawn service business together called Zero Carbon Lawn Care. (CNS photo/Cindy Schultz, The Evangelist)

# Chinese bishop who braved Cultural Revolution dies at 99

HEBEI: Retired Catholic Bishop Stephen Xiangtai Yang of Handan Diocese in Hebei province in northern China, who was persecuted and forced to spend years in labour camps during the Cultural Revolution, has died at the age of 99.

He died of complications from old-age diseases on October 13, according to a notice from the state-controlled Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church in China (BCCCC).

The prelate was admitted to a local hospital after his condition deteriorated. He had respiratory problems and inflammatory swelling of the body, leaving him unable to eat and sleep for days.

"For 72 years, Msgr Yang demonstrated strong faithfulness to the Lord, kindness to all, a life of simplicity and relentless dedication to his flock. Now that he has completed his journey, we request clergy, religious and faithful to pray for the eternal rest of his departed soul," the statement read.

Bishop Yang's death brings an end to the life of an extraordinary churchman who stood firm and never gave up amid persecution from the communist regime.

Stephen Yang Xiangtai was born in Wu'an City in Hebei province on Nov 17, 1922.

He studied at the major seminary in Kaifeng in neighbouring Henan province and was ordained a priest on Aug 27, 1949. After serving as a parish priest



Bishop Emeritus Stefano Yang Xiangtai of Hebei

in Kaifeng for a year, he returned to his hometown and preached in Wu'an for 16 years.

Fr Yang was arrested in 1954. However, he was released following trial and returned to his ministry.

In 1966, during the Cultural Revolution, he was rearrested, faced a trial in 1970 and was sentenced to 15 years in prison. He was sent to labour camps in Quzhou city, Handan brick factory and Tangshan salt factory.

During the time of Deng Xiaoping, Fr Yang was released on March 15, 1980, and acquitted of all charges.

For the next 16 years, Fr Yang served

in various districts in Hebei including Handan, Shexian, Wu'an and Cixian, which later became part of the Diocese of Handan.

He became the rector of the diocesan seminary and chaplain of the Congregation of the Consolation of the Holy Spirit.

On Nov 30, 1996, he was ordained auxiliary bishop by his predecessor, Bishop Peter Chen Bolu, and appointed Bishop of Handan on Sept 17, 1999.

Bishop Yang didn't want to be tagged as an "underground bishop," though he was ordained with the Vatican's mandate, and he also refused to give in and join state-sanctioned church bodies despite oppression from the Chinese regime, Church sources say.

On June 21, 2011, he secretly ordained his successor, coadjutor Bishop Joseph Sun Jigen of Handan, with the Vatican's approval. In retaliation, the authorities arrested two priests and put Bishop Sun in custody but released him three days later.

Following his detention, Bishop Yang suffered a heart attack and was hospitalised for days.

Bishop Yang denounced cross demolitions by Chinese authorities in the name of so-called Sinicisation of religions and supported strong protests by priests against cross demolitions in Wenzhou in Zhejiang province in 2015.

— [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com)

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**Mr Arokiasamy  
s/o Gnanapragasam**

**From the Lord:  
17-08-1939**

**To the Lord:  
28-10-2009**

*Dad*

*You are the greatest gift that we ever had  
in our life that came from God.*

Deeply missed and forever remembered by:

Wife: Madam A. Mangalamary,  
Children, Grandchildren,  
Sons-in-law & daughters-in-law.

*Now they were bringing  
even infants to him that he might  
touch them. And when the disciples  
saw it, they rebuked them.*

*But Jesus called them to him,  
saying, "Let the children come to  
me, and do not hinder them, for to  
such belongs the kingdom of God.  
Truly, I say to you, whoever does not  
receive the kingdom of God like a  
child shall not enter it."*

Luke 18:15-17



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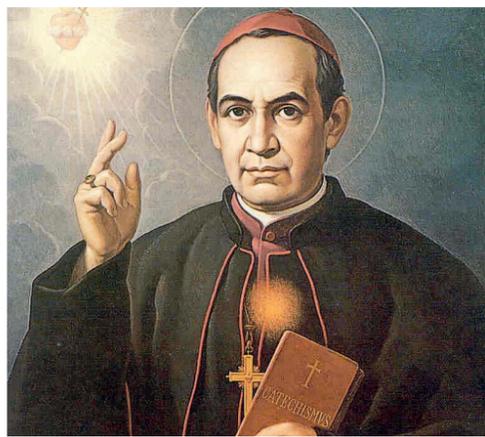
# St Anthony Mary Claret

The “spiritual father of Cuba” was a missionary, religious founder, social reformer, queen’s chaplain, writer, publisher, archbishop, and refugee. He was a Spaniard whose work took him to the Canary Islands, Cuba, Madrid, Paris, and the First Vatican Council.

In his spare time as weaver and designer in the textile mills of Barcelona, Anthony Mary Claret learned Latin and printing. The future priest and publisher was preparing. Ordained at 28, he was prevented by ill health from entering religious life as a Carthusian or as a Jesuit, but went on to become one of Spain’s most popular preachers.

Anthony spent 10 years giving popular missions and retreats, always placing great emphasis on the Eucharist and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It was said that his rosary was never out of his hand. At age 42, he founded a religious institute of missionaries, beginning with five young priests, known today as the Claretians.

Anthony was appointed to head the much-neglected archdiocese of Santiago in Cuba. He began its reform by almost ceaseless preaching and hearing confessions, and suffered bitter opposition mainly for opposing concubinage and giving instruction to black slaves. A hired assassin —



whose release from prison Anthony had obtained — slashed open his face and wrist. Anthony succeeded in getting the would-be assassin’s death sentence commuted to a prison term. His solution for the misery of Cubans was family-owned farms producing a variety of foods for the family’s own needs and for the market. This invited the enmity of the vested interests who wanted everyone to work on a single cash crop — sugar. Besides all his religious writings are two books he wrote in

**Feastday: October 24**

**Patron Saint of: Weavers**

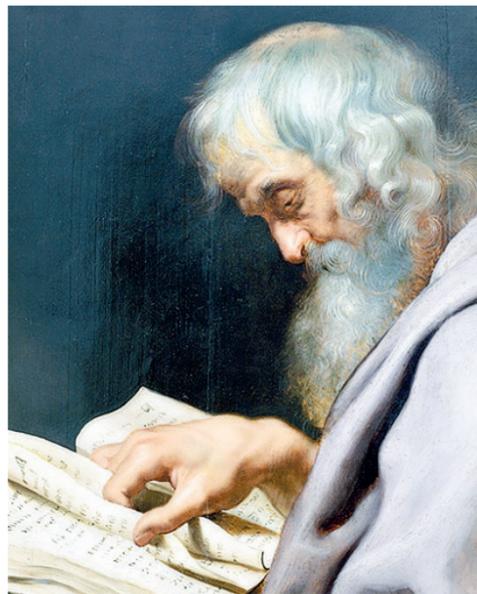
Cuba: *Reflections on Agriculture and Country Delights*.

He was recalled to Spain for a job he did not relish — being chaplain to the queen. Anthony went on three conditions: He would reside away from the palace; he would come only to hear the queen’s confession and instruct the children; and he would be exempt from court functions. In the revolution of 1868, he fled to Paris with the queen’s party, where he preached to the Spanish colony.

All his life Anthony was interested in the Catholic press. He founded the Religious Publishing House, a major Catholic publishing venture in Spain, and wrote or published 200 books and pamphlets.

At Vatican I, where he was a staunch defender of the doctrine of infallibility, Anthony won the admiration of his fellow bishops. Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore remarked of him, “There goes a true saint.” At the age of 63, he died in exile near the border of Spain. — *Franciscan Media*

**Feastday: October 28**



**St Simon the Zealot**

Little is known about the post-Pentecost life of St Simon, who had been called a Zealot. He is thought to have preached in Egypt and then to have joined St. Jude in Persia. Here, he was supposedly martyred by being cut in half with a saw, a tool he is often depicted with. However, the fourth-century St Basil the Great says he died in Edessa, peacefully. — *CNA*

## St Simon and St Jude

St Jude, known as Thaddaeus, was a brother of St James the Lesser, and a relative of Jesus. Ancient writers tell us that he preached the Gospel in Judea, Samaria, Idumaea, Syria, Mesopotamia and Lybia. According to Eusebius, he returned to Jerusalem in the year 62 and assisted at the election of his brother, St Simeon, as Bishop of Jerusalem.

He is the author of an epistle (letter) to the Churches of the East, in particular the Jewish converts, directed against the heresies of the Simonians, Nicolaites and Gnostics. This Apostle is said to have suffered martyrdom in Armenia, which was then subject to Persia. The final conversion of the Arme-

nian nation to Christianity did not take place until the third century AD.

St Jude was the one who asked Jesus at the Last Supper why He would not manifest Himself to the whole world after His resurrection. Little else is known of his life, but legend claims that he visited Beirut and Edessa.

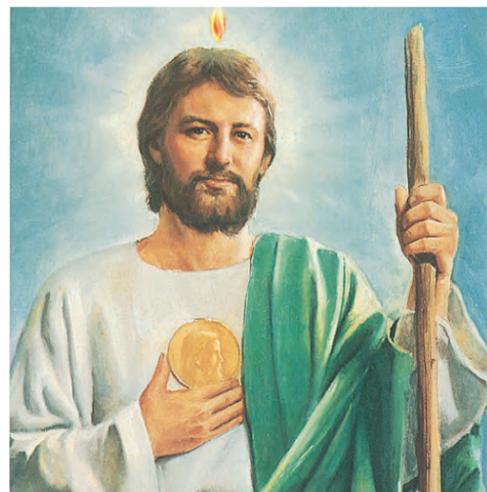
He was beaten to death with a club, then beheaded post-mortem in first century Persia. His relics reside at St Peter’s in Rome, at Rheims, and at Toulouse, France.

St Jude Thaddaeus is not the same person as Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Our Lord and despaired because of his great sin and lack of trust in God’s mercy.

St Jude is invoked in desperate situations because his New Testament letter stresses that the faithful should persevere in the environment of harsh, difficult circumstances, just as their forefathers had before them.

Therefore, he is the patron of desperate situations, forgotten causes, hospital workers, hospitals, impossible causes, lost causes, and the diocese of St Petersburg, Florida. He is represented as a bearded man holding an oar, a boat hook, a club, an axe, or a book. Nearly every image of him depicts him wearing a medallion with a profile of Jesus. He usually has a small flame above his head and he often carries a pen.

We remember him Oct 28 in the Roman Church, and June 19 in the Eastern Church.



## St Narcissus

St Narcissus was born towards the end of the first century, and he was nearly 80 years old when he was named as the 30th bishop of Jerusalem.

In 195, he and Theophilus, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, presided together over a council of the bishops of Palestine held at Caesarea around Easter. There it was decreed that the feast be kept always on a Sunday, and not continually with the Jewish Passover.

The bishop and historian Eusebius says the following miracle can be attributed to him: One year on Easter-eve, the deacons did not have any oil for the lamps in the church, which was necessary at the solemn divine office on that day. Narcissus ordered those who had care of the lamps to bring him some water from the neighbouring wells. This being done, he pronounced a devout prayer over the water. Then he bade them pour it into the lamps; which they did. The water was immediately converted into oil, to the great surprise of all the faithful. Some of this miraculous oil was kept there as a memorial at the time when Eusebius wrote his history.

The veneration of all good men for this holy bishop, however, could not shelter him from the malice of the wicked. Three incorrigible sinners, fearing his severity in the observance of ecclesiastical discipline,

accused him of a terrible act. The sinners swore that they were right, adding the following to their testimony: One wished that if he was being untruthful he might perish by fire, another, that he might be struck with leprosy, and the third, that he might lose his sight, if what they alleged was not the truth. Their accusations were false, however, and soon Divine Retribution was called upon them. The first was burnt in his house along with his whole family by an accidental fire in the night, the second was struck with leprosy, and the third, terrified by these examples, confessed the conspiracy and slander, and by the abundance of tears which he continually shed for his sins, lost his sight before his death.

Narcissus either could not stand the shock of the bold calumny, or perhaps he made it an excuse for leaving Jerusalem in order to spend some time in solitude, which had long been his wish. He spent several years undiscovered in his retreat, where he enjoyed all the happiness and advantage which a close conversation with God can bestow.

The neighbouring bishops appointed a new pastor for his church until Narcissus returned. Upon his return, the faithful rejoiced and convinced him to once again undertake the administration of the diocese, which he did.



As he reached extreme old age, he made St Alexander his co-adjutor. St Narcissus continued to serve his flock, and even other churches, by his assiduous prayers and his earnest exhortations to unity and concord, as St Alexander testifies in his letter to the Arsinoites in Egypt, where he says that Narcissus was at that time about 116 years old. The Roman Martyrology honours his memory on Oct 29. — *CNA*

## Daily Short Reading

**Sunday, October 24**  
(Ezekiel 36:25-27)

I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you, and make you keep my laws and sincerely respect my observances.

**Monday, October 25**  
(Jeremiah 15:16)

When your words came, I devoured them: your word was my delight and the joy of my heart; for I was called by your name, Lord, God of hosts.

**Tuesday, October 26**  
(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, October 27**  
(Isaiah 7:14-15)

Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of Him who loved us.

**Thursday, October 28**  
(Ephesians 2: 19-22)

You are no longer aliens in a foreign land, but fellow citizens with God’s people, members of God’s household. You are built upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus Himself is the foundation stone. In Him the whole building is bonded together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you too are being built with all the rest into a spiritual dwelling for God.

**Friday, October 29**  
(Ephesians 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, October 30**  
(Romans 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.

## When one million children pray the Rosary, the world will change

ROME: Children around the world prayed the Rosary on Monday, October 18, in an activity organised by the pontifical agency Aid to the Church in Need (ACN).

The *One million children praying the Rosary* prayer campaign is held annually on the feast of St Luke.

This year, the organisation provided meditations on the mysteries of the Rosary for children in 24 languages, along with printable colouring pages and a prayer to St Joseph.

Prior to the event, more than 100,000 children from 44 countries, including Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, the United States, Spain, Kenya, India, Colombia, Ghana, Zambia, Peru, South Sudan, Venezuela, Myanmar, Thailand and the Philippines registered to take part in the Rosary campaign.

ACN reported that emails and messages from dioceses, missions, and parishes from all over the world poured into its offices for several weeks before the event, raising hope that the official number of participants would be higher than last year.

This year's event was centred around Saint Joseph, with quotations from the Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde (With a Father's Heart)* written by Pope Francis to mark the Year of St Joseph.

Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, the president of ACN, said the 2021 Rosary campaign was aimed at encouraging children to pray "hand in hand with Our Lady and under the



Children praying the Rosary on Oct 18, 2021. (CNA photo/Aid to the Church in Need)

protection of St Joseph."

He said that St Joseph is "a great example for us of how God can turn all things to good through our prayer, our fidelity and our obedience to His Word."

The ACN Rosary initiative originated in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, in 2005. According to the official website of the event, children were praying the Rosary at a wayside shrine when "several of the women in attendance strongly felt the presence of the Virgin Mary."

"They immediately thought of St Padre Pio's promise: 'When one million children

pray the Rosary, the world will change,'" the website said.

St Padre Pio is known for his deep devotion to praying multiple rosaries daily. The Franciscan priest from Pietrelcina, Italy was often seen with a rosary wrapped around his hand and had other rosaries under his pillow and on his nightstand.

Two days before he died in 1968, Padre Pio encouraged his spiritual children to pray the rosary saying: "Love Our Lady and make her loved. Recite the Rosary and recite it always and as much as you can." — *CNA/Licas*

## Catholic healthcare must always choose patients over profits

VATICAN: A person's wealth, or lack thereof, should not be the determining factor when it comes to receiving healthcare, Pope Francis said.

Speaking to members of Rome's Biomedical University Foundation on October 18, the Pope said that health care facilities, especially those run by the Catholic Church, "are called to bear witness to the fact that there are no lives that are unworthy or that should be discarded because they do not fit the criterion of usefulness or the demands of profit."

"We are experiencing a true throwaway culture," he said. "This is a bit of the atmosphere around us, and we must react against this throwaway culture."

Established in 2015, the Biomedical University Foundation is a non-profit organisation that promotes scientific research and development at the Opus Dei-sponsored university and hospital.

Welcoming members of the foundation to the Vatican and expressing his gratitude for their work, Pope Francis insisted that "placing the patient before the disease is essential in every field of medicine."

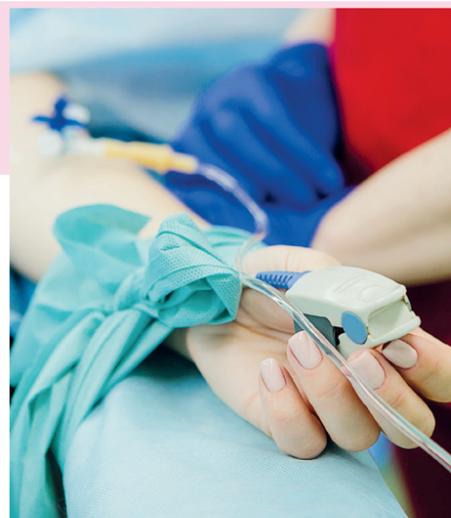
The centrality of the person, he said, strengthens a unified vision that "does not put ideas, techniques and plans in first place, but instead the concrete person, the patient being treated, by knowing their history and their experience, and establishing a friendly relationship that heals the heart."

"Love for the person, especially in his or her frail condition in which the image of Jesus Christ crucified shines through, is specific to the Christian reality and must never be lost," the Pope said.

Nevertheless, he continued, placing the care of the person first does not lessen the importance of science and research because "care without science is vain, just as science without care is sterile."

"The two things go together and only together do they make medicine an art, an art that involves head and heart, that combines knowledge and compassion, professionalism and pity, competence and empathy," the Pope said.

The current pandemic has shown the importance of "connecting, collaborating and addressing common problems together," he said, and it has shown that if scientific in-



Pope Francis said that a person's wealth, or lack thereof, should not be the determining factor when it comes to receiving healthcare. (Unsplash photo/Olga Kononenko)

novations such as vaccines are offered only to those have more, they will "remain band-aids that will only dress the wound but not cure it in-depth."

"It is urgent to help countries that have less, but it must be done with farsighted plans, not motivated only by the haste of wealthy nations to be safer," the Pope said. "Remedies must be distributed with dignity, not as pitiful handouts." — *By Junno Arocho Esteves, CNS*

## Call to prayer for the synod finds home online, in app



New app Click To Pray 2.0

The new version of Click To Pray is now available!



A new version of the Click to Pray 2.0 app, available for iOS and Android phones, encourages prayers for the Synod of Bishops. (Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network)

VATICAN: Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, said, in the process to create a more "synodal Church," one where every member contributes and all listen to each other, "we are touching something divine, and prayer is essential."

The synod office, the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network and the women's International Union of Superiors General have joined forces not only to encourage prayers, but to collect them, share them and build a global community of people praying for the synod and each other.

Their efforts are built on two main platforms: an updated version of Click to Pray, an app and website run by the prayer network, and [www.prayforthesynod.va](http://www.prayforthesynod.va). Both were unveiled on October 19 at a Vatican news conference.

The Superiors General are soliciting prayers for the synod and its preparation process from members of women's and men's monasteries and contemplative communities. Through Oct 31, those prayers will be posted on the website; beginning Nov 1, anyone can submit a prayer, said Patrizia Morgante, UISG communications officer. The prayers will also be posted on the Click to Pray 2.0 app and can be added to the websites of religious orders, parishes or dioceses with an RSS feed.

In addition to carrying prayers for the synod, especially during the preparatory phase that began in early Oct, the upgraded Click to Pray app has added features, including notifications so people can set it to remind them to pray at the time they choose each morning, midday and night. — *CNS*