INSIDE:

SUNDAY EXAMINER

INSIDE:

Catholic News of the Week

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Embracing peace and celebrating faith at Mission Sunday musical events

HONG KONG (SE): The Diocese of Hong Kong organised two Mission Sunday musical evangelisation events at MacPherson Stadium in Mongkok, themed, "Peace be with you" [John 20:26] with an aim to extend the message of Christ's peace to those navigating the pressures of modern life.

The first session, which took place on October 18, was specifically aimed at secondary and tertiary students, while the second session, held the following day, welcomed individuals from various parishes along with their non-believing friends.

The ceremony commenced with a rendition of the theme song for the Jubilee Year, "Pilgrims of Hope," performed by the Free-up band, followed by a welcome address from Deacon Gamaliel Cheng, who set a warm and inviting tone for the events.

Over the course of the two days, heartfelt life testimonies were then shared by different individuals, including young people, recovering patients, and the elderly, who recounted their experiences of how God had helped them emerge from their struggles.

On the first day, Kris Yuen took to the stage to recount his journey toward realising his dream of performing. He spoke of the opposition he faced from his parents, the hurdles in his studies, and the difficulties in securing work.

Despite these setbacks, he found strength in his faith. After several challenges, he ultimately received an opportunity to work as a programme host, realising that life's path is paved not just with triumphs, but also with lows that enrich our understanding.

Sushi Siu shared her deeply personal struggle with depression and the heart-wrenching loss of a dear friend to suicide. Brought to a parish by the mother of this friend, she experienced a spiritual awakening that led to her baptism in 2018. Through years of





inner turmoil and reflection, she discovered healing through love and faith. Today, she works for a non-governmental organisation, supporting individuals grappling

Ivon Ho recounted his own battle with colon cancer, reflecting on how the ordeal reshaped his relationships and faith. Following surgery and a challenging regimen of chemotherapy, he reconciled with his family and revived his spiritual connection, discovering strength through love and the unwavering support of his faith community.

with mental health issues.

Following these testimonies, Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J., shared his reflections on October 18. He expressed his deep empathy towards the recovering patients and the young dreamers striving amidst obstacles, sharing his own health struggles.

He recounted moments where epilepsy led him to question his vocation calling. Mentioning Ivon's story, he revealed his own status as a cancer survivor, having battled thyroid cancer himself in a four-hour surgery to remove a large tumour. Despite the grim prognosis, he shared that he presently enjoys stable health.

The cardinal admitted that the theme song moved him to tears, resonating with lyrics that encapsulate the loneliness of an orphan cherished by God, reflecting his own moments of isolation and helplessness. "But I am grateful," he stated, "for I am loved by God." He also noted that the

Above: The lively hymns presented by Free-Up Music and Deacon Cheng raised the audience's spirits.

Left: Cardinal Stephen shares his own testimony along with other participants.

song also serves as a reminder of late Pope Francis who designated the Jubilee Year, who he deeply misses.

The second day featured Gilbert Tsui and his wife, Amy, who recounted their reflective journey as caregivers amidst serious health challenges in their own lives

Expressing gratitude for the ability to care for their family members, they framed their experiences as part of God's plan. They emphasised how, through trials, caregivers can find hope and strength owing to divine guidance.

Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing imparted encouraging words to the speakers and attendees on the second day, reminding them of God's presence in their lives.

Deacon Cheng and Free-up

reinforced the theme of the gathering through music on the two days, urging non-believers to reflect on life's deeper meaning and sparking a zeal for evangelising among non-believers as they bear witness to their faith.

The events culminated with impactful moment, when priests and deacons imparted blessings upon the attendees, particularly focusing on those who did not yet believe, in the hope of extending God's love into their lives.

Vicar general, Father Paul Kam Po-wai, of the preparation team, expressed sincere gratitude to all those who brought friends to the event. He hoped that the blessings would mark a new beginning in their spiritual journey, bringing peace as they experience God's serenity.

The celebration on the first day attracted 1,000 attendees from over 50 Catholic schools and societies from tertiary institutions, while the second day saw an impressive turnout of 1,300 participants from various parishes.

Sister Marinei Pessanha Alves, supervisor of Pope Paul VI College, shared that the school brought three students and their family members, aiming to deepen their understanding of God. She believed the event would create lasting memories and encourage them to grow deeper into understanding the Catholic faith and values.

Additionally, nine student leaders from the Immaculate Heart of Mary College were motivated to attend. Vice principal, Sung Sze-chun, articulated the school's hope to involve non-Catholic student leaders to broaden participation in religious activities.

Student union chairperson, Hannah Wong, shared her passion for music and her belief that every religion imparts positive life lessons, while Tiffany Wong expressed her eagerness to learn from the life stories shared by others.

Mission Sunday in China: mission is for all

BEIJING (FIDES): Mission Sunday was celebrated by China's Catholic communities on October 19. Websites, blogs, and accounts dedicated to Church news dedicated entire pages to the initiatives launched by local communities

At the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Bishop Joseph Yang Yongqiang of Hangzhou administered Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation to 29 adults, recalling the sacramental source of all apostolic work.

"Every baptised person, recipient of the gift of faith is also a proclaimer of the Gospel of Christ," Bishop Yang said, "We are called to bear witness to Jesus with our lives, build bridges with charity, and become missionary apostles for society.'

The concert, called "Pilgrims of Hope" after the theme of the 2025 Jubilee, saw the participation of many parish choirs, who also performed songs to express their welcome to the newly baptised.

In Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province, parishioners listened to the history and purposes of Mission Sunday, recounted by Father Pang Rui, and contributed to raise generous donations for the mission.

The priest pointed out that involvement in the mission of proclaiming the gospel strengthens the bond of communion among all the sons and daughters of the Church.

In Wenzhou, the celebration began with a vigil on October 18.

"Mission is not a vocation reserved for a few, but rather the grace-filled response of every Christian to the Lord's call," said parish priest, Father Li Yi. Nineteen catechumens received the first Sacraments of Christian Initiation during Mass.

Meanwhile, Catholic communications workers from Zhejiang province reaffirmed their intention to remain faithful, "in our future creative projects, to our original aspirations, using our tools to bear witness to the faith and employing new media to spread the gospel.

The parish of Beilun in the Diocese of Nongbo also began with a vigil on October 18. Bishop Francis Xavier Jin Yangke and Father John Baptist Zhang, the animator of the ecclesial information portal *inde.org*, also participated.

Delegation from Assyrian Church of the East visits diocese of Hong Kong



Cardinal Stephen with Mar Awa III (centre), Mar Paulus Benjamin, (third from the left), and Elya, Bishop of Victoria and New Zealand (second from the left), and Father Joseph Chan, chairperson of the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission (fourth from right), with other members of the Assyrian Church delegation.



HONG KONG (SE): His Holiness Mar Awa III, catholicospatriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, paid a courtesy visit to Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J., bishop of Hong Kong on the afternoon of Sunday, 19 Octo-

The catholicos-patriarch visited Hong Kong this October, together with a delegation, at the invitation of the Divinity School of Chung Chi College, CUHK, and the Institute of Sino-Christian Studies, Tao Fong Shan, to commemorate the 1,700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed and the 400th anniversary of the dis-

ENGLISH LESSONS

Refer local friends to Paul Stables, Oxford grad, Zoom Video or face to face near North Point MTR, P5/6, F1-13, DSE, IELTS Tel/WhatsApp: 6012 3236 tutorialfield.com.hk covery of the Jingjiao Stele.

The delegation included Mar Paulus Benjamin, bishop of the Diocese of Eastern United States of America and Mar Benjamin Elya, bishop of Victoria and New Zealand.

Cardinal Stephen warmly welcomed the visit of this historically rich Christian community. During their meeting, they spoke on topics such as synodality, vocations, and the pastoral situation of the diocese.

Amendment:

In the front page story of the October edition of the *Sunday Examiner*, "Migrants encouraged to embrace hope in Jubilee Year Mass," the caption for the bottom right photo should read:

Sister Warioba, front, dancing with from left to right, Maryknoll Sisters aspirants, Anna Nduku, Anastela Evarister, Esther (Essie) Tuta, with Sister Armeline Sidoine



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A celebration of music and cultural ties with Vietnam



HONG KONG (SE): The Hymnos Festival, now in its fifth year, promises to be a vibrant celebration of music and cultural exchange, featuring collaborative performances between choirs from Hong Kong and Vietnam.

The festivities will occur both in Hong Kong and Vietnam, culminating with a concert at St. Joseph's Cathedral in Hanoi on October 31. In Hong Kong, the highlight will be a performance at the Concert Hall of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre on October 27.

The performers in Hong Kong will include music producer, Anthony Cheng; pianist, Colleen Lee; conductor, Professor Chan Wing-wah; as well as the St. Francis University Choir and others. They will collaborate with the Vietnamese performers, the Hanoi Voices Choir, Vietnam Suc Song Moi Bamboo Ensemble as well as its conductor, renowned musican, Dong Quang Vinh.

Programme director, Andrew Leung, told the *Sunday Examiner* that another highlight was the Festival Choir performance with over 200 participants from 36 'I can see that we have a common music and a common faith, and these two elements bring together people from different regions and backgrounds so that we can sing together...'

parishes from Hong Kong joining hands to foster cross-cultural understanding through shared music and faith.

"I can see that we have a common music and a common faith, and these two elements bring together people from different regions and backgrounds so that we can sing together with one voice," Leung said.

The festival's theme, "Music for the Soul," is reflected in its new key visual, incorporating symbolic elements from both cultures, such as a blue guitar and the iconic Vietnamese conical hat.

In addition to the main concert, the festival will feature four talks on Choral Vespers, bamboo instruments, the *Canticle of the Creatures* as well as Mozart's *Missa Brevis*, showcasing a diverse range of musical styles and traditions.

Winnie Lam, secretary general of the Hong Kong Business Association Vietnam, which supported the event, said that the non-profit organisation is happy to promote cultural heritage exchange to strengthen ties between the two regions.

The music lover believes that the bamboo ensemble featured in the concert will be interesting as some Vietnamese instruments resemble the Chinese ones but differ in name, appearance, and sound, and will offer a novel experience.

Lam said she feel touched to see that despite challenges like visa restrictions for performers, the organiser and the Vietnamese consulate has worked hard to facilitate this event.

Auxiliary bishop ordained for Shanghai

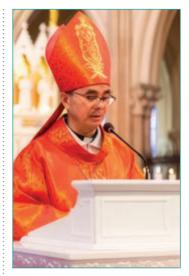
HONG KONG (SE): Reverend Ignatius Wu Jianlin was ordained as Auxiliary Bishop of Shanghai, China, on October 15, the Vatican Press Office announced.

He was appointed by Pope Leo XIV on August 11, and his candidacy approved within the framework of the Provisional Agreement on episcopal appointments between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China, Vatican News reported.

The ceremony took place at Shanghai Cathedral and was celebrated by Bishop Joseph Shen Bin of Shanghai, and concelebrated by Bishop Joseph Yang Yongqiang of Hangzhou, Bishop John Baptist Li Suguang of Nanchang, and Bishop Joseph Xu Honggen of Suzhou, according to *Fides*.

More than 600 people, including priests, religious sisters, and lay people, gathered in the for the celebration.

Bishop Wu was born on 27 January 1970. From 1991 to 1996, he studied philosophy and theology at Sheshan Seminary in Shanghai. He was ordained a



Bishop Wu. Photo: Fides

priest on 22 November 1997, and assigned as spiritual director of the seminary and assistant parish priest of Zhongshan Parish.

From 1999 to 2012, he was vice-chancellor of the diocese and parish priest of Qiujiawan.

From 2013 to 2023, he contributed to the administration of the diocese during the period of vacancy, and subsequently held the office of vicar general.

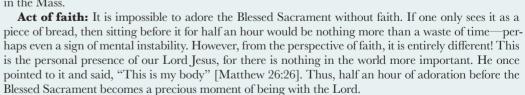
Reflections from the vicar general

By Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing OFM

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

he first thing I do every morning is to join the seminarians in adoring the Blessed Sacrament. In the small chapel, after we honour the Blessed Sacrament with a simple short hymn, we read the gospel for the day. Following this, the seminarians spend half an hour

in silence before the Blessed Sacrament, reflecting on the Word of God in preparation for participating in the Mass.



What to do: The first thing to do is to not do anything. In the chaos of our busy lives, we are burdened with numerous tasks and overwhelmed by work. Even for the seminarians, the schedule is packed. In this rare moment of tranquillity, the priority is to learn and practise emptying oneself.

Spiritual challenge: For many, the first challenge of settling down to adore the Blessed Sacrament is the inability to be quiet. Chaotic thoughts flood in from all directions, bombarding the mind and banging on the heart's door, sometimes whispering and at other times shouting: "Listen to me! Look at me! You can't miss this thought! This idea is great for you! ... Did you manage yesterday's tasks? Are you ready for tomorrow's? In short, the train of thought is always tooting its horn, while the waves of emotion power cease

Focusing on the goal: If we struggle to repel the various intrusive thoughts, it will be an unwinnable battle. In fact, the act of emptying oneself during adoration is not about remaining in an empty void; it is about creating space for the Lord and preparing to welcome him. Therefore, we should not focus our attention on distractions, but rather strive to concentrate on our Lord Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament, opening our hearts, and seeking to converse with him. Starting with verses of the gospel we've heard, we can gradually express all the thoughts and emotions in our hearts, listening to his teachings. Over time, distractions will naturally dissipate.

Regular practice: The principles of spirituality are straightforward, but the true spiritual battle lies in practice and perseverance. This is why regular practice is essential. To nurture future shepherds, the seminary rightly arranges for seminarians to adore the Blessed Sacrament daily. As Christians, we all long for oneness with the Lord. Therefore, should we not pursue this joy and peace of unity through the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament?

Celebrating century of vibrant faith at St. Margaret Mary's Church

garet Mary's Church in Happy Valley commemorated its centenary with a series of jubilant events, including a carnival, a musical, and an overseas pilgrimage. On October 11, a Mass was celebrated by Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J., bishop of Hong Kong, who expressed his gratitude for the church's centurylong testament to vitality and encouraged the parish to seek guidance from the Holy Spirit to inspire future services for the community.

Founded by priests from the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, the church's foundation stone laid by Father Pietro de Maria on 3 February 1923, with the building being consecrated on 25 January 1925. It holds the distinction of being the first church in Asia dedicated to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque.

The Mass was concelebrated by John Cardinal Tong Hon; parish priest, Korean Missionary Society Father Andrew Kim; diocesan chancellor Father Lawrence Lee; vicars general Father Peter Choy and Father Joseph Chan; along with over ten other priests, including former parish priests Father John Baptist Kwan Kit-tong and Guadalupe Father Gabriel Altamirano Ortega, and assistant parish priests, Father Joseph Everson, Father Edward Hsueh, and Father Ignatius Lo.

A family for many

During the Mass, Cardinal Stephen shared that he was honoured to celebrate the centenary of the church where he grew up and was nurtured.

In his homily, the cardinal celebrated the rich heritage of the parish, emphasising its vitality and creativity within the diocese. He encouraged the community to utilise their resources responsibly in fulfilling their mission, underscoring that abundance comes with greater expectations. Drawing from biblical wisdom, the cardinal made a distinction between divine wisdom and worldly knowledge, urging

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thank you St. Jude for your intercession.

May the Lord be praised now and forever.



Cardinal Stephen, alongside Cardinal Tong, Father Kim, and the concelebrating priests, during the Mass on October 11 commemorating the centenary of St. Margaret Mary's Church. Photo supplied

parishioners to seek guidance from the Holy Spirit through shared experiences and reflec-

Stressing that true faith requires a compassionate response to the marginalisedas emphasised in Pope Leo XIII's recent encyclical, Dilexi te [I have loved you]—the cardinal called on parishioners to join forces to support the needy, framing their collective efforts as a meaningful testament to their faith throughout the century, and inviting them to embody hope for those in despair.

The ceremony included the sprinkling of holy water onto the congregation of some seven hundred people, commemorating baptism and encouraging attendees to embody humility and love. Twelve volumes of a handwritten Bible, crafted collectively by more than 400 parishioners over the past two years, along with the Chinese translation of the autobiography of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque were offered as

At the conclusion of the Mass, Father Kim expressed his sincere gratitude to the cardinals, former parish priests, and all the concelebrants, conveying his joy over the ceremony. He considers the parish his home and the parishioners his family, affirming the parish's commitment to reaching out to the poor in response to Pope Leo's encyclical.

Challenges and missions

The centenary festivities featured a variety of events, such as a carnival, music concerts, and an overseas pilgrimage group. A highlight of the celebration was a musical held at City Hall in July, inspired by historical documents of the parish and collected oral stories from its members

The celebrations also provided an opportunity to reflect on the challenges the church has faced and its mission for the future. Father Joseph Yim, parish priest from 1998 to 2004, mentioned in an interview on the parish's YouTube channel that one difficulty was the high number of people signing up for baptism classes due to the parish's prestigious location, necessitating nearly daily catechism classes to accommodate different schedules. He recalled his efforts to recruit parishioners who had completed catechist training to teach, and the shortage of manpower was addressed by enlisting volunteers to assist with discussions alongside the catechists.

Father Kim shared with the Sunday Examiner that this centenary year has led to various events uniting the parish community. He emphasised the importance of hard work and collaboration in fulfilling his mission as a parish priest, noting that he felt called by God, despite his initial struggles with Cantonese when he was assigned to the parish in 2019.

The parish priest voiced his strong agreement with Cardinal Stephen's message, pointing out that the parish possesses many talents and abilities to reach out to those in need. He remarked that the parish has been providing charitable services as a manifestation of God's love, and these initiatives will be further bolstered following the centenary celebrations.

EDITORIAL

SUNDAY EXAMINER

26 OCTOBER 2025

A Church that loves - a faith that defends life at all stages

IN HIS FIRST apostolic exhortation, Dilexi Te [I have loved you], Pope Leo XIV sets the tone for his pontificate with a resounding affirmation: love for the poor is not optional. It is the unmistakable mark of a Church, faithful to the gospel. In a world where human life is often treated as disposable—commodified, politicised, or simply ignored—Pope Leo's message comes as a prophetic reminder that the Christian vocation begins with love made visible in justice and compassion.

Echoing the words and witness of Pope Francis, his predecessor, Pope Leo writes that the poor "are not a sociological category but the very flesh of Christ." To neglect them, he warns, is to turn our faith into abstraction. "No Christian can regard the poor simply as a societal problem; they are part of our family. They are one of us."

This insistence places Dilexi Te firmly within the Church's longstanding "option for the poor," while extending it into new and urgent contexts. For Pope Leo, the "dictatorship of an economy that kills" is the reality of today that prizes profit over people. He criticises ideologies that praise the market's invisible hand but avoid taking responsibility for the suffering it causes. In contrast, the pope advocates for a different kind of economy: one grounded in the gospel's principles of gift, solidarity, and respect for human dignity.

Pope Leo's reflection extends beyond the evil of poverty. His concern reaches into the political and social frameworks that sustain inequality, exploitation, and exclusion. His words on migration challenge the world and the Church. "Where the world sees threats," he writes, "the Church sees children; where walls are built, she builds bridges,"—words that hit hard on the perpetrators of an unjust society. In the faces of migrants and refugees, the Church encounters Christ himself, rejected and on the move.

The pope's appeal is clear: the Church must remain a living sign of God's love in a culture that too easily discards what is inconvenient or unprofitable. This includes not only the unborn and the aged, but also the unemployed, the migrant, the prisoner, the homeless, and all those deprived of dignity. Our worth "depends on the answers we give to these questions: Do the weak have the same dignity as ourselves? Are those born with fewer opportunities of lesser value as human beings?"

In Hong Kong and across Asia, where economic progress coexists with growing inequality, Dilexi Te invites reflection on how Christian discipleship translates into social conversion. It challenges us to move beyond charity into communion—to see service to the poor not as a work of generosity, but as an act of faith.

Pope Leo's first exhortation, like that of Pope Francis, is not a political manifesto but a Gospel summons. It is the Church's option for life—against the world's manipulation of it. To love the poor, the excluded, and the vulnerable is not merely to imitate Christ; it is to recognise Christ in them. jose, CMF

SUNDAY EXAMINER

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God grants justice to all, pope says during canonisation ceremony

VATICAN (CNS): "God grants justice to all, giving his life for all," Pope Leo XIV said in his homily during a canonisation Mass in St. Peter's Square on October 19, World Mission Sunday.

Canonising seven new saints, the pope said God is present wherever the innocent suffer, and his form of justice is forgiveness.

"Indeed, it is this faith that sustains our commitment to justice, precisely because we believe that God saves the world out of love, freeing us from fatalism," he said. "When we hear the cries of those in difficulty, let us ask ourselves, are we witnesses to the Father's love, as Christ was to all?"

Jesus "is the humble one who calls the arrogant to conversion, the just one who makes us just," he said.

During the second canonisation ceremony of his pontificate, Pope Leo declared the sainthood of seven men and women from the 19th to the 21st centuries, including Venezuela's first saints: St. Maria Rendiles Martínez and St. José Gregorio Hernández Cisneros.

St. Rendiles was the founder of the Congregation of the Servants of Jesus, who was born in Caracas in 1903 and died in 1977. St. Hernández was born in 1864 and became a Third Order Franciscan. A doctor, he became known as "the doctor of the poor," and he was killed in an accident in 1919 on his way to helping a patient.

The pope also canonised St. Ignatius Maloyan, the martyred Armenian Catholic archbishop of Mardin, which is in present-day Turkey; born in 1869, he was arrested, tortured and executed in Turkey in 1915. St. Peter To Rot, a martyred lay catechist, husband and father from Papua New Guinea. Born in 1912, he was arrested in 1945 during the Japanese occupation in World War II and was killed by lethal injection while in prison.

In addition he canonised St. Vincenza Maria Poloni, founder of the Sisters of Mercy of Verona, Italy; she lived from 1802-1855. St. Maria Troncatti, a Salesian sister born in Italy in 1883 who became a missionary in Ecuador in 1922. She died in a plane crash in 1969. St. Bartolo Longo, an Italian lawyer born in 1841. He had been a militant opponent of the church and involved in the occult, but converted, dedicating himself to charity and to building the Pontifical Shrine of the Blessed Vir-



Pope Leo gives his homily during Mass for the canonisation of seven new saints in St.

Peter's Square on October 19. Photo: CNS/Lola Gomez

gin of the Rosary of Pompei. He died in 1926.

Pope Leo called the new saints "faithful friends of Christ" who are "not heroes or champions of some ideal, but authentic men and women," who were martyrs for their faith, evangelisers, missionaries, charismatic founders and "benefactors of humanity."

Having faith on earth is what 'sustains the hope for heaven," the pope said in his homily.

In fact, Christ tells his disciples "to pray always" without becoming weary, he said. "Just as breathing sustains the life of the body, so prayer sustains the life of the soul: faith, in fact, is expressed in prayer, and authentic prayer lives on faith."

In his parable of the persistent widow in the day's gospel reading [Luke 18:1-8), Jesus asks his disciples if they believe God is a just judge toward everyone, and "if we believe that the Father always wants our good and the salvation of every person."

It is important to ask because two temptations test this belief, the pope said. The first temptation "draws strength from the scandal of evil, leading us to think that God does not hear the cries of the oppressed and has no pity for the innocent who suffer."

He went on to say, "The second temptation is the claim that God must act as we want him to: prayer then gives way to a command to God, to teach him how to be just and effective."

But Jesus "frees us from both temptations," especially with his

words during his passion, "Father, your will be done," Pope Leo said. "The cross of Christ reveals

"The cross of Christ reveals God's justice, and God's justice is forgiveness. He sees evil and redeems it by taking it upon himself," he said. "When we are 'crucified' by pain and violence, by hatred and war, Christ is already there, on the cross for us and with us."

The pope said, "There is no cry that God does not console; there is no tear that is far from his heart. The Lord listens to us, embraces us as we are, and transforms us as he is."

He stressed, "Those who reject God's mercy, however, remain incapable of mercy toward their neighbour. Those who do not welcome peace as a gift will not know 'Those who reject God's mercy, however, remain incapable of mercy toward their neighbour'

how to give peace."

Jesus invites the faithful "to hope and action," and he asks, 'When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith in God's providence?" the pope said.

After the Mass and before praying the Angelus, Pope Leo thanked the leaders and dignitaries from different countries who attended the canonisation Mass, including Italian president, Sergio Mattarella, and Lebanese president, Joseph Khalil Aoun.

He told some 70,000 people present that "today is World Mission Day."

While the entire Church is missionary, "today we pray especially for those men and women who have left everything behind to bring the gospel to those who do not know it," he said. "They are missionaries of hope among all peoples."

Chancery Notice

I. APPOINTMENTS

Cardinal Stephen CHOW, S.J., has approved the following appointments, effective 1 November 2025:

Rev. Albertus SURYADI, SCJ, is to be appointed Assistant Parish Priest in Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, Yuen Long, New Territories.

Rev. John WEN Liang, SCJ, is to be appointed Assistant Parish Priest in Annunciation Parish, Tsuen Wan, New Territories.

II. DIOCESAN COMMISSION FOR HOSPITAL PASTORAL CARE

Cardinal Stephen CHOW, S.J., has appointed/reappointed the following to be Commission members for a two-year term, effective 1 November 2025:

Mrs. Agnes WONG, Chairperson Ms. Cleresa WONG Pie-yue, Legal Adviser Prof. Rosie YOUNG, Adviser Sr. Agnes HO, FMM, Adviser Rev. Benedict LAM

Rev. Deacon Stephen KWOK

Rev. Deacon Victor LEE Rev. Deacon William LI

Sr. Nancy Margaret CHEUNG, SPC

Sr. Teresa KWAN, FDCC

Mr. Andrew CHENG Dr. KU Kwok-hung

Dr. Ambrose LEUNG

Mrs. Dorothea LI CHUI

Ms. Josephine LO

Ms. Gloria LUK

Dr. Michael SHAM

Dr. Kenneth TSANG

Dr. Kitty WU

Dr. Rebecca YEUNG



Given at the Chancery Office, 20 October 2025.



Lay movements in Bangkok renew commitment as 'missionaries of hope'



From left to right: A participant, a religious sister, George Varakorn Techamontrikul and Chutima Sevikul. Photo:
LICAS/CBEP

BANGKOK (LICAS NEWS): The Archdiocese of Bangkok, Thailand, marked World Mission Sunday with the observance of Laity Sunday to honour the vital role of laypeople in the Church's mission at St. Louis Church on October 19.

George Varakorn Techamontrikul, president of the Catholic Business Executives and Professionals [CBEP]—one of the country's leading Catholic lay organisations in the business sector—said that the laity is "called to participate in spreading the gospel through our daily lives, our talents, and our actions in the secular world, a mission rooted in our baptism and confirmation."

Techamontrikul urged the lay movements gathered "to respond to Pope Leo XIV's invitation for us to become Missionaries of Hope among all peoples" and "to reflect on our vocation as laypeople," which he said is "central to the Church's mission."

He emphasised that evangelisation is not limited to priests or missionaries but extends to all baptised Catholics. "We are called to act as everyday ministers of the faith—living out Christian principles in our workplaces, marketplaces, and families," he said

He noted that the Christ-like witness of laypeople in everyday life remains the most effective means of evangelisation, while emphasising the importance of supporting and praying for missionaries.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has reaffirmed the laity's essential contribution to the Church's mission. Laypeople bring the gospel into the world's daily realities—families, schools, offices, and communities—through their witness and service.

Chutima Sevikul, a longtime CBEP member has dedicated her communication skills to evangelisation. She hosts World and Life, a programme that has aired for over a decade and now reaches audiences on YouTube.

"I believe that even ordinary laypeople can help spread the

goodness of the Gospel to the public," Chutima said. "Gospel values, when shared, inspire people to live with goodness, kindness, and joy."

Her programme, featuring well-known guests who share their life experiences, may appear simple, but it conveys profound gospel values and practical wisdom. "It's another way of evangelisation," she said, noting the show's growing number of viewers over the years.

Another CBEP member, Dr. Virachai Techavijit, chairperson of Regent's International Schools and Colleges, voiced concern about the declining number of priests and aging clergy. "The shortage of priests highlights the need to form more committed laypeople who can share in the mission of evangelisation," he said

Techavijit stressed the importance of catechists, who play a vital role in transmitting faith. The heard from a senior priest that while the Church in Thailand can recruit catechists, it struggles to retain them. We need to support them better," he said.

He proposed that the Serra Council of Thailand, a lay organisation promoting vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, address this concern regularly.

"Being a catechist is a true vocation, especially in a society where family structures are changing and fewer young people are choosing to have children. If we can inspire more trained and capable people to serve as catechists, we can strengthen the Church's mission," he added.

One CBEP member reflected that the laity's journey must always be rooted in authentic Christian hope.

"We must be led by hope and faith—not a shallow optimism that fades in the face of trials, but the living hope we have in Jesus Christ," the member said. "It's the kind of hope and faith that moves the paralysed to rise and walk. It's time for us, the laity, to pick up our mats and walk forward in faith."



Bishop Mangalinao joins residents and advocates opposing the mining exploration in Dupax del Norte during a peaceful gathering at the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Capitol in Bayombong on October 20. Photo: Philippine Information Agency-Nueva Vizcaya

Officials in Nueva Vizcaya called to act on police violence and mining

BAYOMBONG (LICAS NEWS): Bishop Elmer Mangalinao of Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, the Philippines, urged the province's elected officials to speak out against police violence toward residents defending the environment in Bitnong village, Dupax del Sur.

"We need your voice now against the violence committed by the police against those defending the environment in Barangay Bitnong, Dupax del Sur." he said.

Bishop Mangalinao said the people need public officials who will stand for justice, for creation, and for the people.

The bishop's call comes as residents from five villages—Bitnong, Inaban, Munguia, Parai, and Oyao—continue to oppose the mining exploration by the Woggle Corporation.

The affected communities are within the 3,102-hectare area covered by Exploration Permit No. 00030-II, issued by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau on 4 August 2025.

Locals have been staging protests, citing a lack of proper consultation, threats to their farms and water sources, and potential damage to their ancestral lands.

"We are doing our best to stop the exploration because it will cause destruction to life, land, culture, and tradition of the villages," Bishop Mangalinao said.

He lamented that Philippine laws appear to favour mining corporations, noting that the com-

pany has long operated in their area and is now targeting another site within the Cagayan Valley watershed.

'We need your voice now against the violence committed by the police against those defending the environment'

The Order of Friars Minor in the Philippines [Franciscans] released a statement expressing 'fraternal solidarity" with the residents of Dupax del Norte who are defending their land and cultural heritage from "the harmful exploration activities of Woggle Corporation."

The Franciscans said, "Our presence in this local Church is not administrative, but pastoral and incarnational—we breathe the same air, walk the same soil, and share in the hopes and wounds of the people entrusted to our care. Because we live among them, we cannot be indifferent."

They affirmed the pastoral guidance of Bishop Mangalinao, saying his call "reminds us that the land is not merely territory but identity, memory, and covenant."

The statement added, "To harm this land is to harm the families we serve, the young peo-

ple we accompany, and the communities whose journey we share."

They said projects that "disregard human dignity and communal discernment are not only environmentally destructive" but "they are morally and spiritually unjust."

The friars said their mission in the diocese for calls them to go beyond prayer by accompanying the people in their struggles—listening, journeying with them, and standing in their defense when needed.

They stressed that they are not distant observers but members of the same community, sharing in its burdens and hopes. For them, the fight to protect the land is not separate from their ministry but a living expression of the gospel.

Nueva Vizcaya, known for its rich farmlands and mountain watersheds, has long been a flashpoint in the Philippines' struggle between mining interests and environmental protection.

For decades, indigenous and farming communities have fought to preserve their ancestral domains from extractive operations that threaten their way of life

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Father Chaiyadej. Photo: LiCAS News

Church in Thailand releases guidelines on digital culture

BANGKOK (LICAS NEWS): The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand [CBCT] released new Guidelines on Digital Culture on October 21, urging an ethical and faith-centered approach to the digital transformation reshaping modern life through artificial intelligence [AI] and technology.

The guidelines pose a central question: How can digital culture serve humanity without compromising our deepest values?

The bishops see technology not as a threat, but as a co-creative partnership with God—a tool that should uphold human dignity, protect the common good, and care for creation.

"Digital culture is profoundly transforming the human world, especially among the youth," said Father Joseph Anucha Chaiyadej, secretary general of the CBCT's Office of Social Communications.

"It has altered our experience of time and space. The Internet offers new opportunities for connection, but it also deepens loneliness, isolation, and marginalisation," Father Chaiyadej added

He warned that while social media can build communities, it is increasingly exploited for economic and political gain, fuelling ideological division and "verbal violence."

The Church, he stressed, must be ready to respond by shaping the digital world into a "space for evangelisation"—one that fosters justice, peace, and genuine human encounter.

"The Church must encourage and support digital missionaries," he said. "Local churches should train and accompany young people who are active online, helping them use their creativity for good and to witness the Gospel."

Father Chaiyadej urged Catholic communities to cultivate "relationships of shared ownership" online—connections grounded in solidarity and participation rather than isolation.

"The Internet," he said, "offers a new opportunity for the Church to move forward together, as a network of communion."

He acknowledged that artificial intelligence has brought significant benefits, easing many forms of human suffering.

'It has altered our experience of time and space. The Internet offers new opportunities for connection, but it also deepens loneliness, isolation, and marginalisation'

However, he cautioned that without ethical oversight, AI could also deepen discrimination, exploit vulnerable groups, and undermine the human autonomy that defines true personhood.

"AI may enhance human abilities, but it can never replace human creativity, freedom, or moral responsibility," the priest added.

The CBCT Guidelines on Digital Culture reaffirm the Church's mission to uphold human dignity in every digital interaction.

Thailand's bishops urged Catholics to use technology ethically and responsibly, promoting truth, compassion, and community rather than division and anxiety.

The Church leaders call on the faithful to engage online with discernment and integrity, transforming digital platforms into spaces of faith, hope, and authentic Christian witness.

"Technology must serve humanity—not the other way around," Father Chaiyadej said.

Church in Korea seeks better worker rights under new law



SEOUL (UCAN): Catholic officials in South Korea called on the country's government to ensure all workers are adequately protected and fairly treated under a recently amended labour law that signals a major shift in the nation's labor policy.

Father Alexander Lee Younghoon, secretary of the Labour Affairs office of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea, welcomed the reforms, which labor groups have advocated for decades.

"Nothing is more important than the happiness, well-being, and protection of the lives of workers and their families, so it is natural for the Church to stand on the side of workers," Lee said.

He noted that the absence of fair labor protections has left millions of Koreans vulnerable, citing a "deeply ingrained corporate culture" that allows workers to be laid off in the name of "cost reduction" and "efficiency."

Many workers also lack legal rights to strike for legitimate demands without risking their jobs.

Calling the issue "a chronic problem in Korean society," Lee said distorted social perceptions have contributed to the problem.

"The Church, too, sometimes misinterprets solidarity with labor as a political issue or casts a negative light on organizations like labor unions," he added.

South Korea's parliament passed the amended Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act, popularly known as the Yellow Envelope bill, on August 24.

Labour advocates and trade unions have hailed it as a land-mark victory after nearly two decades of advocacy. The law will take effect in March 2026 following a six-month grace period.

The legislation recognises workers' constitutional rights to organise, bargain collectively, and engage in a labour strike. According to labour experts, it aims not only to strengthen unions in large firms but also to address protections for workers in Korea's segmented labour market.

"This law is not mainly about empowering workers in large firms who already enjoy strong protections," Lee Byoung-hoon, professor emeritus of sociology at Chung-Ang University, told *The Korean Herald.*

Workers in the secondary labour market, including women and contract-based employees, have faced low pay, weak representation, arbitrary dismissals, and minimal legal protection.

"Many can be dismissed at will, often without formal layoff procedures," Lee said. "The Yellow Envelope bill is designed to protect these groups by ensuring they can demand negotiations with the entities that actually control

their working conditions."

The bill has its roots in the 1990s, when the administration of general-turned-president, Roh Tae-woo, allowed companies to sue striking workers, often with excessive damage claims.

Between 2009 and 2020, corporations and state institutions filed 151 damage suits against unions, totaling 275.2 billion won [approximately US\$198.3 million], according to *The Korean Herald*

John Park Young-ki, attorney and member of the Seoul Archdiocese Labor Ministry Committee, said the revised labour law also calls on the Church to update its own labor policies.

"When the Church speaks out on labor and social issues, many believers perceive it as a political stance," he said.

"The path of a Church that stands with the poor and the vulnerable, as Pope Francis has said, is not to follow secular logic, but to show concern for the vulnerable"

> This report is a translated and adapted version of a report published by Catholic Times of Korea on October 15.

General hotlines for Filipino migrant workers in Hong Kong

Philippine Consulate: 2823 8501
Consulate Hotline (after office hours): 9155 4023
Hong Kong Immigration Department: 2824 6111
Hong Kong Labour Department: 2157 9537
Legal Aid Department: 2537 7677
Hong Kong Police (report hotline): 2527 7177
Telephone number inquiries: 1081

Will the horrific genocidal war in Gaza really end?

here is a ceasefire finally in effect in the Gaza Strip, where Israel launched a horrific military campaign in response to attacks on the country's south on 7 October 2023. On that day, Hamas fighters and their fellow militants assaulted Israeli settlements and fortified military outposts.

They killed around 1,200 people, and over 251 others were taken hostage, brought to Gaza, and hidden in underground tunnels. About 300 of those killed were Israeli soldiers.

Hamas claims that the attacks were in retaliation for Israel's brutal and unjust occupation of Palestine. Gaza's boundaries were drawn up as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, when it was occupied by Egypt. Egyptian forces were driven out of Gaza in the 1967 Six-Day War and Gaza was occupied by Israel, which then built settlements and placed the enclave's Palestinian population under military rule.

The release of 20 Israeli hostages who are still alive and the return of about 20 dead is a key demand of Israel in the ceasefire agreement. Since Israeli forces launched its retaliatory campaign in October 2023, at least 887 Israeli soldiers have been killed as of July 2025. The number of dead or wounded Hamas fighters is unknown.

The first phase of the peace agreement includes a total end to the fighting; the release of all remaining Israeli hostages, living or dead; and the release of a large number of Palestinian prisoners in exchange. Also, there



Young displaced Palestinians wait to receive food cooked by a charity kitchen in Gaza City,
Gaza Strip. Photo: OSV News/Mahmoud Issa, Reuters

was a partial withdrawal of Israeli forces to an already agreedupon yellow line and more than 400 trucks of humanitarian aid a day began entering Gaza. An international group is supposed monitor the ceasefire. The second stage of the agreement is under negotiation.

The question now is can Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and his far-right ministers be trusted to maintain the ceasefire, or will they invent excuses or make impossible demands to break it, as they did in the previous truce after 33 hostages were released?

Their aim is to continue the war and destroy Gaza to make it uninhabitable and kill all Hamas

fighters, drive out the Palestinians, and make the territory a part of Israel.

Israel's nonstop bombing of Gaza has killed at least 67,000 Palestinians. That is one in every 33 people. But many more bodies—perhaps, a thousand or more—lie buried under the rubble of collapsed buildings that Israel destroyed.

Most of Gaza—about 41 kilometers by 10 kilometres wide, and located on the eastern Mediterranean Sea—is where 2.1 million people are on the edge of starvation, if not already starving. Most of territory has been destroyed by Israeli bombing.

The United Nations Satellite Centre identified 192,812 seriously damaged structures as of July 2025, which translates to 78 per cent of all buildings in Gaza at the time. Over 436,000 homes have been damaged or destroyed.

Internally displaced

It is estimated that as of this October, 1.9 million to 2.1 million Palestinians in Gaza—approximately 90 per cent to 95 per cent of the population—have been internally displaced several times since October 23. They have been driven to southern Gaza, where they live in makeshift tents without adequate food, water or medicine due to Israel's blockade on aid trucks. If the ceasefire holds, 400 aid trucks a day will flow into the enclave.

At least 20,000 children are among the dead. This translates to one child killed every hour for the past 24 months. It is estimated that about one in every 14 Palestinians—or 169,000 men, women and children—have suffered injuries and been left with lifelong disabilities. The UN Children's Fund has estimated that 3,000 to 4,000 children in Gaza have lost one or more limbs.

There are few medical facilities left for the injured. By October, between 94 per cent and 95 per cent of Gaza's 36 hospitals had been damaged or destroyed. There have been more than 400 attacks on health facilities, ambulances, doctors and health workers. As of August, over 1,700 health care workers had been killed. There are almost no medical supplies available, and amputations are done without anesthesia.

Israeli forces also attacked schools; 400 of these were hit. Some 95.2 per cent of schools were partially destroyed and rendered unusable. Some 518 out of 564 schools will need major repairs or total reconstruction. Over 60 university buildings have been completely destroyed. Palestinian students are highly educated, and these schools are a great loss.

The blockade on food entering Gaza has caused widespread hunger. The world's leading hunger monitoring agency, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC], has assessed that half a million Palestinians—a quarter of Gaza's population—are suffering from famine. An estimated 460 have already died from hunger.

A few months ago, Donald Trump, the US president, bullied Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, into apologising to Qatar for an attack against it. He said Israel was almost totally isolated and condemned worldwide, but he would help undo that. How he would do that is unclear; it's a daunting task.

The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry set up by the UN Human Rights Council issued a report in September saying Israel was guilty of committing genocide against Gazans by employing harsh conditions aimed at destroying the population. It claimed Netanyahu and former defense chief, Yoav Gallant, had incited genocide with their words and actions.

The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants against the two on 21 November 2024, for alleged crimes against humanity, such as murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts. They allegedly used starvation as a weapon and directed attacks against a civilian population.

Trump's 20-point peace plan, which is supported by many countries, offers the only hope for the Palestinians, and the first phase was reluctantly approved by Israel.

For the second phase, Israel is demanding the total surrender of Hamas fighters and the right to keep its forces in Gaza. This impossible demand is where Netanyahu hopes to stop the peace process and resume the war. We hope it will not be so.

Korean-language Masses in Baguio

MANILA (SE): The Diocese of Baguio launched regular Korean-language Masses as part of its pastoral efforts for the Korean Catholic community in the area, CBCP News reported.

Beginning November 2025, the Mass in Korean will be celebrated every Saturday at 5.00pm at the Holy Face Chapel of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Atonement.

In an October 20 letter, Bishop Rafael Cruz invited all Korean Catholics within the diocese to attend the liturgy in their native language.

Bishop Cruz said Korean priests have been assigned to regularly celebrate the Mass and administer the sacraments and sacramentals.



He added that arrangements for Holy Days of Obligation and solemnities may be made through the cathedral office or directly with the Korean priests.

"For fellowship purposes, a room at the Sangkabalayan building will be provided for your gatherings, either before or after the Mass," Bishop Cruz said in his letter.

The bishop said he hopes the initiative will provide "spiritual nourishment and strength" to the Korean Catholic community during their stay in the city.

On October 21, *The Seoul Times* reported that about 10,000 Koreans live in Baguio, with roughly 90 per cent being students learning English and the rest adults or missionaries.

Father Shay Cullen

Notice Board



How can we nurture hope in those with low confidence?

As missionaries of hope, it is essential that we embody the attitude of living in hope. Being a true witness to others is vital. Accompanying and listening to someone with low confidence can make a significant difference. A simple gesture of compassion and understanding can bring hope, and providing spiritual counsel when needed can boost their confidence and trust that he will never forsake them. This support helps them build confidence in themselves.



— Nelma Cabrera



To effectively motivate someone with low confidence, compassion, understanding, and consistent support are crucial. Offering a non-judgemental space allows them to share their feelings openly. Sometimes just being heard can help build trust and comfort. It's important to be a reliable presence in their life, showing that they are not alone and that support is always available. Praying with them or providing spiritual guidance can deepen their sense of hope rooted in faith,

reminding them that God alone suffices.

– Melanie B. Echaluce

We can motivate those with low confidence through our actions. It's about showing the love they need, the care they long for, and the encouragement they require during dark times. Through uplifting them, we convey the message: "You're not alone. God is with you, and so am I." Sharing spiritual advice rooted in Scripture and letting them know that we pray for them acts as a powerful expression of love that can bring hope.



– Melinda Esmalla



As missionaries of hope, we are called to reach out to those struggling with low confidence. Many feel unworthy or forgotten, but our mission is to remind them they are precious in the eyes of God. Motivating them through simple acts of kindness—listening, encouraging, and affirming their gifts—can ignite hope. When someone feels seen and valued, hope begins. Let us be instruments of God's love, bringing light to those in darkness and helping others recognise their worth in

his divine plan.

— Josie Faculnaga

Even the smallest acts of kindness can sow seeds of hope in the hearts of others. Through compassion, empathy, or encouragement, we can be instruments of God's love in a world yearning for light. I believe our testimonies and the real-life struggles we've overcome are the most effective ways to inspire and instil hope and confidence in others. Real experiences teach us and others; it's easier said than done unless we have truly been through it ourselves. — Roro Porpayas





It is crucial to help individuals understand their dignity as they were created in God's image and likeness. Accepting them for who they are aids in healing their feelings of worthlessness. We should provide encouragement and highlight their good qualities, avoiding judgement and instead being attentive listeners. Those with low confidence need our love and attention to help them feel valued.

- Ma. Shaine Tan

We can motivate others by sharing inspiring stories and personal experiences from our religious lives and group activities. Focusing on spiritual growth and service opportunities empowers people. By connecting folks to the cause through these stories, we invite them to participate and show gratitude for their efforts. We should be prayerful, seeking God's guidance to effectively share our message and always centre it on hope and salvation through Jesus Christ.



— Virginia M. Tayo

Finding God in the secular

any of us may find it easy to experience God in church, within a community of church friends, or when taking part in church activity. At least easier than in a secular setting such as at work or with people who may not share our spiritual beliefs.

At least that was what I thought till these past few years showed me that God works also through the secular, and perhaps just as powerfully.

Having been a fulltime Church worker in the media apostolate for more than 20 years, I have seen how God works through the written word for Church readers. When I decided to leave fulltime Church work in 2019, as I felt that God had other plans for me, it left me wondering: how do I bring God into the secular realm?

After a few months, I was offered a job as a pianist (I have a performer's diploma in music) at a private hospital, playing for special events. Later, I became the resident pianist playing for patients, their family members and visitors to the hospital.

My job was easy – playing soothing, calming and cheerful tunes that I have carefully chosen for the hospital environment, with a repertoire ranging from sentimental pop ballads, to oldies, Disney tunes, musicals, light jazz and familiar classics. However, it left me wondering: how do I bring God to my listeners, especially when the music I play has to be secular music?

I then decided to pray before each gig for the Holy Spirit to touch the people through the music.

When I did that, some amazing things happened. Parents started dancing and singing with their young children, people pushed their babies in prams right up to the piano, elderly people in wheelchairs requested songs.

One young lady even told me that the music helped to calm her before and after surgery.

Some patients started sharing with me about their illnesses and requested their favourite tunes. For several of them, I made it a point to learn the song they requested if it wasn't in my repertoire so I could play it for them the next time I saw them.

For those who told me they were suffering from serious illnesses like cancer, I assured them of my prayers, even if I wasn't sure if they were religious. Nevertheless, they all seemed grateful for that.

I've received thank-you cards, and gifts of flowers, snacks and drinks from happy listeners who said that they found the music healing. Many of their comments left me really humbled and awestruck – as I realised that it has to be God working through the music, because I had asked him to.

These episodes have shown me clearly that God can work powerfully in the secular realm. And even though I do not speak about religion directly, I am sure that God touches these people in a special way as, hopefully, they experience his love through the music.

I realise that all I can do, in this situation that God has put me in, is to just lift it up to him, and let him do the rest in his own way.

It has shown me that God can work anytime, anywhere, and using any means.

Christopher Khoo

(Singapore-based freelance musician, freelance journalist and educator)



A corner for you

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OCTOBER 26 -THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN **ORDINARY TIME.** Mass of

the Sunday (green), Gloria, Creed,

preface of the Sunday. Readings: Sirach 35:15b-17, 20-22a: 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14.

OCTOBER 27 - MONDAY: THIRTIETH WEEK IN **ORDINARY TIME.** Mass of

the day (green). Readings: Romans 8:12-17: Luke 13:10-17.

OCTOBER 28 - SS. SIMON **AND JUDE.** Mass of the feast, Gloria, Preface of the Apostles. (red).

Readings: Ephesians 2:19-22; Luke 6:12-19.

OCTOBER 29 -WEDNESDAY: THIRTIETH WEEK IN ORDINARY

TIME. Mass of the day (green). Readings: Romans 8:26-30; Luke 13:22-30.

OCTOBER 30 -THURSDAY: THIRTIETH WEEK IN ORDINARY

TIME. Mass of the day (green). Readings: Romans 8:31b-39; Luke 13:31-35.

OCTOBER 31 - FRIDAY: THIRTIETH WEEK IN **ORDINARY TIME.** Mass of

the day (green). Readings: Romans 9:1-5:: Luke 14:1-6.

NOVEMBER 1 – ALL **SAINTS.** Mass of the solemnity, Gloria, Creed, Preface of the Solemnity (white). Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14; Matthew 5:1-12a

> Apostleship of Prayer Themes for October 2025

For collaboration between different religious traditions

Let us pray that believers in different religious traditions might work together to defend and promote peace, justice, and human fraternity.

Thirtieth Sunday of the Year

■oday Iesus gives us a parable that cuts right to the heart: two men went up to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. Both stood before God, but they did not go home the same.

The Pharisee stood tall. His words sounded like prayer, but they were really addressed to himself. He listed his merits—his fasting, his tithing, his obedience to the law. He even compared himself to others, saying, "I am not like the rest of men." His attitude was not gratitude, but pride. He did not pray to God-he praised himself in God's

The tax collector, by contrast, stood at a distance. He would not even lift his eves. He beat his chest and said only this: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." He did not defend himself. He did not excuse himself. He placed his whole trust in God's mercy.

no ba ang pakikitungo o "attitude" mo kapag ikaw ay nananalangin?

Sa ating ebanghelyo sa Linggong ito, tavo av tinuturuan ni Hesus ng tamang pakikitungo kung tayo ay manalangin.

Una, ay dapat meron tayong pusong marunong magpakumbaba. Ang Pariseo sa ating Ebanghelyo ay masyadong mapagmalaki sa kanyang sarili. Sabi niya sa kanyang panalangin, "O Diyos, nagpapasalamat ako sa iyo pagkat hindi ako katulad ng iba-mga magnanakaw, mga magdarava, mga mangangalunya o kaya'y katulad ng publikanong ito. Makalawa akong nag-aayuno sa loob ng sanglinggo; nagbibigay ako ng ikapu ng lahat kung kinikita," (Lc. 18: 11-12). Maganda ang mga ginagawa ng Pariseo.

Humility above all else

And Jesus declares: it was the tax collector, not the Pharisee, who went home justified. What does this teach us about prayer?

First, no one who is proud can truly pray. The gate of heaven is too low for the proud to enter. Prayer is not an exercise in comparison, as if the question were, "Am I better than others?" The only question that matters is: "Am I standing before the holiness of God?" When we set our lives beside the life of Christ, all we can say is, "Lord, have mercy on me."

Second, no one who despises others can truly pray. True prayer unites us with all of humanitysuffering, sinning, hoping before the throne of God's mercy. To pray while looking down on others is to pray with a divided heart. God listens to the voice of the humble, not the voice of the proud.

Finally, true prayer comes from humility. The Pharisee's fasting and tithing may have been real, but his heart was closed. The tax collector's prayer was simple, but it opened heaven. When we strike our chest at Mass and say, "through my fault, through my most grievous fault," it is not empty ritual. It is the same prayer of the tax collector. It is the prayer of sinners who know that mercy is greater than sin.

There is an old image: a whitewashed cottage looks dazzling in the green fields. But when snow falls, pure and untouched, the cottage suddenly looks dull and grey. So too, when we compare ourselves

with others, we may feel righteous. But when we compare ourselves with the holiness of God, we see the truth. And that truth leads us not to despair but to mercy

Readings: 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14

Sirach 35:15b-17, 20-22a:

So let us learn from the tax collector. Let us make his prayer our own: "God, be merciful to me, the sinner." This prayer, spoken with humility, is always heard. And it is this prayer that leads us home justi-

Amen



• Father Josekutty **Matthew** CMF



Panalanging nagpakumbaba!

Dapat ganon ang buhay ng isang Kristiyano, sumunod sa batas ng Divos, at tapat sa gawaing relihiyoso. Pero bakit hindi natuwa si Hesus sa kanyang panalangin? Dahil hindi ang Diyos ang kanyang pinupurihan, kundi ang kanyang sarili. Sa kanyang panalangin ang bida ay ang kanyang sarili. Kung tayo ay manalangin dapat ang bida si Kristo, hindi tayo. Lahat ay galing sa Diyos. Sa ating panalangin tinuturuan tayo ng Diyos ng magpakumbaba. Kung merong tayong pusong nagpakumbaba si Kristo ang ating tinataas. At ito ang tunay na panalangin. Ang kanyang

panalangin ay ganito; "O Diyos, mahabag po kayo sa akin na isang makasalanan!"(Lc. 18:13). Tayo ay lumapit kay Hesus sa ating panalangin dahil alam natin tayo ay mahina at nagkakasala.

Si Hesus ang ating kalakasan. Si Hesus ang ating kaligtasan. Napansin nyo ba na tuwing tayo ay dadalo sa Banal na Misa, tayo ay humihingi muna ng tawad sa Diyos bago natin S'ya papurihan. Sanasabi o inawit natin ang, "Panginoon maawa ka, Kristo maawa ka, Panginoon maawa ka!" Sabi ni Hesus "Sapagkat ang sinumang nagpapakataas ay ibababa, at ang nagpapakababa ay

itataas."(Lc. 18:14). Walang tunay na panalangin kung hindi natin aminin ang ating kasalanan at ating kahinaan. Kilalanin natin na si Kristo ang ating kaligtasan.

Sa ating panalangin dapat nakapokus tayo sa Diyos. Iwasan mong tumingin sa ibang tao, o binabantayan mo ang mga kilos ng ibang tao, lalong lalo na pag dumalo ka ng Banal na Misa. May mga dumadalo ng Misa, nag titext pa, may nag-seselfie pa. Tandaan natin kung tayo ay nananalangin si Kristo ang bida, hindi tayo.

Nawa'y magbunga pakumbaba, pagmamahal at malasakit sa kapwa ang ating panalangin! nagpakumbaba na handang sumunod sa kalooban ng Diyos!

• Father Jay Flandez SVD

All Saints on November 1 and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls) on

November 2 may seem unusual within the liturgical calendar, **FAITH ALIVE** buried many martyrs beneath it, establishing May 13 as an yet they serve a profound purpose. All Saints' Day is a holy day of obligation, except when it falls on a Saturday or Monday in the United States, while All Souls' Day is typically observed on November 2, unless it coincides with a Sunday, in which case it is celebrated on November 3.

These early November observances create a spiritual connection between the living, referred to as the "church militant," and the faithful departed, known as the "church triumphant" for those in heaven and the "church suffering" for those in purgatory. All Saints' Day has historical roots dating back to the earliest Christians, who commemorated martyrs—those who died for their faith—by gathering at their tombs to pray and remember their sacrifices. This practice dates to the third century, where Christians celebrated the anniversary of a martyr's death, often referred to as their "birthday."

As the number of martyrs grew, particularly during severe persecution under Roman Emperor Diocletian, the Church recognised the need for a common feast day to honour all martyrs collectively. By the fifth century, locations like Antioch had begun to observe a specific day, set as the first Sunday following Pentecost, to commemorate these brave

The formal establishment of a feast dedicated to all martyrs took shape when Pope Boniface IV consecrated the Pantheon in Rome in

The back-to-back celebrations of the solemnity of History behind All Saints' and All Souls' Day



609, dedicating it to the Blessed Mother and all holy martyrs. This site had originally been a temple for pagan worship. Boniface IV removed pagan elements and

annual feast for all martyrs. However, in 735, Pope Gregory III dedicated an oratory in St. Peter's Basilica to honour saints and martyrs, pushing November 1 to the forefront as the feast of All Saints, eventually suppressing the earlier May observance.

Conversely, All Souls' Day emerged much later, between 998 and 1030, instigated by St. Odilo, the abbot of the

Benedictine monastery in Cluny, France. He encouraged his monks to pray for the souls of the departed, leading to a commemoration on the day following All Saints' Day. Over time, this observance gained traction in various communities, recognising the necessity of remembering and praying for those who have died, especially those in purgatory.

The belief in purgatory underscores the significance of All Souls' Day, as the Church collectively prays for departed souls, reflecting on the potential for these prayers to aid their journey towards heaven.

Throughout November, the faithful honour the deceased through acts of charity, reflection, and prayer, recognising the impact of these actions on the departed. This tradition encourages the living to lead virtuous lives while fostering a sense of continuity, where the memory of the faithful departed is both cherished and actively upheld within the community of believers.

> • Timothy Matovina Catholic News Service

Filipinos protest corruption by wearing white for Mass



Cardinal David, centre, holds his wooden crozier, as he joins anti-corruption protesters wearing white at the Trillion Peso March in Quezon City, Philippines, on September 21.

Photo: UCAN/Roy Lagarde/CBCP News

MANILA (UCAN): Catholics wore white clothing during Sunday Mass on October 12, following an appeal by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines [CBCP], as a symbolic gesture to call for renewal in the nation, which is grappling with corruption scandals.

In various parishes across the archipelago, Catholics donned white dresses as they flocked to Mass on following the bishops exhortation.

In an October 11 letter, Pablo Virgilio Cardinal David of Kalookan, the president of the CBCP, called upon Catholics to wear white every Sunday of October and November, and to display white ribbons in their homes, churches, and public places.

Cardinal David said the actions would be "a sign of our desire for transparency, accountability, and good governance."

He also appealed to Catholics for "a humble prayer" that our nation may be washed clean and renewed in God's mercy, and spared from further calamities.

Father Estaban Lo, rector of the Minor Basilica of St. Lorenzo Ruiz in Manila, said wearing white is "a symbolic gesture to make the people aware of their part in the fight against corruption," according to *Fides*.

The gestures are aimed at urging the faithful to start their fight against corruption from the "moral and spiritual levels," and to contribute to "good governance in society," Father Lo said.

He pointed out that the white

colour reminds the faithful of the baptismal garment and the responsibility of all baptised people

"We extend the invitation to the faithful and have placed white ribbons in front of the church," said Father Lo, who is also the national director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the Philippines.

'[it is]...a symbolic gesture to make the people aware of their part in the fight against corruption'

The bishops' letter also recalled the October 6 national call to prayer and public repentance, which urged the faithful to pray daily, recite the Rosary, perform acts of penance, and participate in the Eucharist, imploring God's mercy and the healing of the country.

On October 16, during Mass for the pontifical coronation of the original image of the Virgen sang Barangay at San Sebastian Cathedral, Baclolod, Archbishop Victor Bendico of Capiz said the nation is "lost amid corruption that continues to wound our institutions," CBCP News reported.

Archbishop Bendico lamented the "moral decay that poisons even our leaders" and a "culture of lies and indifference" that has dulled the Filipino people's sense of right and wrong. "There must be an eruption from within us, not of lava and destruction, but of grace and conversion—the eruption of conscience, of honesty, of mercy, of solidarity," the archbishop said.

The Philippines has been plagued by billion-dollar corruption scandals linked to climate change projects and natural disasters, including typhoons and earthquakes.

At least six people were killed when a 7.4-magnitude earth-quake hit southern Philippines on October 10, triggering a regional tsunami alert.

Earlier on September 30, at least 75 people were killed and another 1,271 were injured after a 6.9-magnitude earthquake struck central Philippines.

In 2024, three typhoons— Toraji [Nika], Usagi [Ofel], and Man-yi [Pepito]—swept across the archipelago, flooding vast

Over the past several months, protests have rocked the country after investigative reports revealed that more than US\$30 billion in funds allocated for climate projects since 2022 were been plundered through numerous "ghost projects."

Tens of thousands joined rallies in Manila and elsewhere in the country to vent their anger over the massive graft scandal.

Protesters clashed with police, leading to the arrest of about 216 mostly young protesters in Manila.

Rights groups slammed the arrests and called for the immediate release of the detainees.



Members of the parish choir perform during the 10th anniversary celebration of Yangjiabao Catholic Church in Shanxi Province. Photo: LiCAS News/Taiyuan Diocese via xinde.org

Music to celebrate 10th anniversary of Yangjiabao church, China

TAIYUAN (LICAS NEWS): The Diocese of Taiyuan in Shanxi Province, China, marked the 10th anniversary of the dedication of Yangjiabao Catholic Church with a sacred music exchange that brought together choirs from across the diocese to "honour tradition and celebrate faith through music."

The celebration featured performances, workshops, and a roundtable discussion focused on the renewal of sacred music and its integration with Chinese musical heritage.

After the performances, music instructors commended each choir for their dedication and growth, offering practical feedback

Honouring a legacy of faith and creativity

The morning concert paid tribute to the late Geng Hui, a well-known church musician and composer from Taiyuan who dedicated his life to blending sacred compositions with Jinqu, the traditional folk opera of Shanxi.

His works, rooted in Catholic spirituality and inspired by Chinese melodies, reflected what organisers called "a path of sinicisation that preserves heritage and embraces innovation."

The Sacred Sound Choir's rendition of the Gloria in the local dialect drew particular praise. Its "familiar tones carried deep affection and reverence," a participant said, as the audience was visibly moved.

The performance evoked, as one listener described, "a vision

of saints in heaven praising the glory of God," echoing the hymn's line: "Heaven and earth proclaim the Lord's glory, the blue sky reveals His wondrous

Strengthening sacred music ministry

After the performances, music instructors commended each choir for their dedication and growth, offering practical feedback on vocal technique, harmony, and liturgical form.

They also encouraged more men to join parish choirs to "bring greater richness and diversity to the ministry of sacred music."

In the afternoon, three veteran church musicians led sessions on Choral Rehearsal and Vocal Techniques, Choral Conducting, and Sacred Music and Liturgy.

The workshops combined technical instruction with spiritual reflection, emphasising that sacred music should be both "artistic expression and prayerful offering."

A subsequent roundtable discussion explored the balance between tradition and adaptation—including the role of local culture, the dynamics of choir leadership, and the future of sacred music in parish life.

Participants shared experiences and proposals to sustain what they described as the "living tradition of prayer through music."

'Singing is praying twice'

Organisers described sacred music as "the embodiment of prayer," expressing hope that the exchange would inspire a "qualitative renewal" of sacred music across the diocese.

"Through singing, we pray twice," they said in closing, calling on participants to carry the same spirit of unity and reverence into both their liturgical service and daily life.

World hunger is 'collective failure,' pope says on World Food Day

ROME (CNS): "Allowing millions of human beings to live—and die—as victims of hunger is a collective failure, an ethical aberration, a historical fault," Pope Leo XIV said on October 16, World Food Day.

The pope drove across Rome to address world leaders and government representatives at the headquarters of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation [FAO]. In addition to marking World Food Day, the delegates were celebrating the 80th anniversary of FAO's establishment.

In his speech, Pope Leo decried the fact that while humanity has made huge advances in technology, medicine, agriculture and transportation, 673 million people go to bed hungry each night, and 2.3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet.

The FAO statistics are not just numbers, he said; "behind each of these numbers is a broken life, a vulnerable community."

Pope Leo insisted, "This is not a coincidence, but the clear sign of a prevailing insensitivity, of a soulless economy, of a question-



Attendees stand and applaud Pope Leo XIV after his address during a ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Day at the agency's headquarters in Rome on October 16. Photo: CNS / Vatican Media

able model of development, and of an unjust and unsustainable system of resource distribution,"

Perhaps referring to the situation in Gaza, but also to other war zones, the pope said that "current conflict scenarios have brought back the use of food as a weapon of war."

A global conviction that

"deliberate starvation as well as the intentional obstruction of access to food for communities or entire peoples, constitutes a war crime" seems to be slipping away, he said.

The pope decried "cruel strategy" of using food as a weapon of war, the pope said, "condemns men, women and children to 'How can we explain the inequalities that allow a few to have everything, while so many have nothing'

hunger by denying them the most basic right: the right to life."

While governments have an obvious role in addressing hunger, Pope Leo said no one can consider the problem to be someone else's responsibility.

"Those who suffer from hunger are not strangers," he said. "They are my brothers and sisters, and I must help them without delay."

Hunger "is a cry rising to heaven, demanding a swift response from every nation, from every international body, from every regional, local or private entity," he said. "It is a battle that belongs to us all."

Pope Leo asked, "How can we explain the inequalities that allow a few to have everything, while so many have nothing?" The pope added, "How can we fail to remember all of those who are condemned to death and hardship in Ukraine, Gaza, Haiti, Afghanistan, Mali, the Central African Republic, Yemen and South Sudan, to name just a few places on the planet where poverty has become the daily bread of so many of our brothers and sisters?"

No individual or government can look the other way, the pope said. "We must make their suffering our own."

The pope said, "We cannot aspire to a more just social life if we are not willing to rid ourselves of the apathy that justifies hunger as if it were background music we have grown accustomed to."

Failure to act, even for individuals, he said, is to be "complicit in the promotion of injustice."

Pope Leo said, "We cannot hope for a better world, a bright and peaceful future, if we are not willing to share what we ourselves have received. Only then can we affirm—with truth and courage—that no one has been left behind."



(USB Card)

Rosary Branch: 125 Chatham Road South, Kow

(Calendar Card)

St. Teresa's Branch: 258 Prince Edward Road, Kowloon *Central main shop will be closed on 2-Nov due to Stock Check.

All while stock last. Campaign period: Nov 7 to 30, 2025

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