**INSIDE:**

Irish theologian brings synodal wisdom to diocese's 80th anniversary symposium .....P2
Pope Leo XIV's *Freedom Under Grace* released in English .....P4
Message of condolences from the Colloquium of Six Religious Leaders of Hong Kong on death of Tung Chee-hwa.....P5

SUNDAY
# EXAMINER
*Catholic News of the Week*

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**INSIDE:**

Pope Leo commemorates 9/11 attacks.....P5
Asian Catholic digital missionaries commissioned to build bridges online .....P6
Asian digital missionaries tapped to widen reach of World Youth Day 2027.....P7
Celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival..... P11

# Eighty years of grace: Diocese marks anniversary with symposium on hope

HONG KONG (SE): The Diocese of Hong Kong held a two-day symposium at Saint Francis University from September 11 to 12 to mark its 80th anniversary, bringing together clergy, scholars, and the faithful to reflect on the Church's history and discern what it means to be a "messenger of hope" in Hong Kong today.

Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J., opened the symposium with a welcoming address and prayers, stressing the importance of hope in times of social disillusionment and conflict. Recalling his early formation in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where he encountered hostility, the cardinal spoke of the power of cross-denominational reconciliation and praised keynote speaker Jesuit Father Gerry O'Hanlon, who had lived at the Presbyterian Chaplaincy of Queen's University during the sectarian conflict of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Cardinal Stephen urged the faithful to engage in deep listening, prayer, and synodal discernment suited to Hong Kong's particular social and political context.

Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing, chairperson of the preparatory committee, described the symposium as an occasion to honour past leaders, noting that history is a living record of God walking with his people — one that inspires the courage and imagination needed to face the future.

Over the two days, participants examined five thematic areas of contemporary concern: labour, family and caregiving, life and death, social reconciliation, and care for the environment.

*A participant, lower corner, extreme right, raises a question about our shared responsibility for creation on the second day of the symposium.*

**Ministry for labour**

Professor Mary Yuen Mee-yin of the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy said Catholic outreach unites spiritual mission with social justice, grounded in human dignity and Catholic social teaching. She traced the Church's historical support for industrial workers through bodies such as the Young Christian Workers and the Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs, noting that today the Church combines direct pastoral care with advocacy for policy reform to address precarious employment, the platform economy, and vulnerable workers including cleaners, security guards, and migrant domestic workers.

Professor Au Yeung Tat-chor of Lingnan University described a shift towards "liquefied labour", in which digital platforms break down traditional employment structures into fragmented tasks. This instability, along with shrinking benefit coverage, he said, has now reached middle-class professions as well. Turning to foreign domestic workers, he criticised Hong Kong's reliance on cheap migrant labour as a systemic failure in public care, calling for wage improvements and expanded public care services.

Both speakers agreed that, since most congregation members are ordinary workers, the Church must stay close to the community, listen to workers' lived experiences, and press for stronger systemic protections.

**Family and carers**

Professor Wong Yu-cheung of Saint Francis University noted that Hong Kong's elderly population is projected to reach 2.5 million by 2047, with as many as 500,000 people requiring long-term care. As traditional family support networks weaken, he said, seniors caring for other seniors now make up nearly 30 per cent of informal carers.

Sally Lo Ka-wing of Hong Kong Shue Yan University called for a broader understanding of who counts as a carer, extending beyond middle-aged women to anyone supporting a dependent. She said carers, though bound by strong emotional ties, often face burnout and need community support to take essential breaks.

Catholic initiatives already active in this field include Caritas-Hong Kong and the Diocesan Marriage and Family Commission. Participants proposed parish-based weekend mutual-aid networks and Sunday consultations with social workers to connect carers with professional resources.

**Life and death**

Father Dominic Lui Chi-man of the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy Bioethics Resource Centre called for building a "culture of life" in place of a "culture of death". Criticising Hong Kong's fast-paced society for prizing economic efficiency over human dignity, he urged a shift towards holistic care addressing body, mind, social, and spiritual needs.

Tracing the Catholic Church's pro-life work in Hong Kong—from early medical care by the Sisters of St. Paul and the Canossian Sisters to today's pastoral services—Father Lui pointed to initiatives such as the Angel Garden for the dignified burial of miscarried foetuses, the St. Goretti's Centre for protecting minors and other vulnerable groups, and the Church's 2001 letter to the Hospital Authority affirming medical staff's right to conscientious objection.

Doctor Derrick Au Kit-sing of the Centre for Bioethics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong called on Hong Kong to safeguard humanity in healthcare in the years ahead. He argued for genuine dignity in end-of-life care beyond purely technical decisions, raised concerns over youth mental health in the age of social media, and criticised assembly-line medical practices that erode patient dignity and drive healthcare worker burnout.

**Social reconciliation**

Professor Anselm Lam Wing-kwan of the Fu Jen Faculty of Theology of St. Bellarmine said biblical peace is not merely the absence of conflict but a dynamic, holistic transformation grounded in truth and justice. He outlined the pressures weighing on young people today—housing costs, limited social mobility, identity struggles, shrinking civic space, and anxieties over artificial intelligence—alongside declining youth trust in traditional authorities.

Professor Andrew Kwok Wai-luen of Hong Kong Baptist University said true peace demands truth, justice, mercy, and mutual connection. Rather than focusing only on conflicts themselves, he urged examination of the deeper social tensions behind them,

***Continued on page 3***

# Irish theologian brings synodal wisdom to diocese's 80th anniversary symposium

HONG KONG (SE): At the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong's 80th-anniversary symposium at Saint Francis University on September 11, Irish Jesuit theologian Father Gerry O'Hanlon outlined key perspectives for local Church renewal. He said communal discernment must pair honest dialogue and active listening with real-world data, Catholic social teaching, and the lived experiences of ordinary believers, as the Church moves towards a more inclusive, transparent, and co-responsible future.

Speaking on the theme "God's Grace of Love in History", Father O'Hanlon drew on decades of pastoral leadership, scholarly work, and peacebuilding experience. Throughout his career, he has held several prominent roles, including provincial superior of the Irish Jesuit Province from 1998 to 2004.

Having mentored Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J., during his early formation, Father O'Hanlon maintains long-standing personal ties to Hong Kong and currently plays an active role in the Irish synodal process.

**Pope Francis's synodal paradigm**

Father O'Hanlon grounded his call for Church renewal in Pope Francis's vision of synodality, which centres on a transformative encounter with Jesus Christ that propels the Church outward in mission. Drawing on Vatican II, this vision presents the Church as an "inverted pyramid" in which Baptism—not Holy Orders—confers equal dignity on all believers as the People of God journeying together. Genuine dialogue, he explained, rests on two postures: *parrhesia* [frank, honest speaking] and *hypomone* [generous, patient listening].

Moving beyond simple consultation, this model calls for "differentiated co-responsibility" in governance, guided by the canonical principle *Quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus tractare debet* [What affects all ought to be treated by all]. Through communal discernment — modelled on the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 — Church leaders must draw on the lived experience and *sensus fidei* [sense of faith] of ordinary parishioners. Ultimately, he said, decision-making requires institutional transparency and accountability, culminating in decisions received by the community in peace and joy.

**The place of data and study**

While Conversation in the Spirit remains the primary tool for spiritual discussion, Father O'Hanlon stressed that dialogue must stay grounded in real-world conditions through the framework of Catholic Social Teaching. Spiritual discernment, he cautioned, requires rigorous data, theological analysis, and intellectual effort alongside prayer—theology, he said, serves to "set the table" for fruitful engagement.

He outlined guiding principles for communal discernment, including human dignity, the common good, the universal destination of goods, subsidiarity, and solidarity, stressing that decision-making should be decentralised to local levels while remaining attentive to social justice and ecological care. He also pointed to Pope Francis's call for an "examen for the Church"—humbly acknowledging past systemic flaws and sins while giving thanks for divine guidance—and urged the Church to pair scholarly rigour with the lived experience of the faithful.

**Test case: women in the Church**

Applying this framework to a live issue, Father O'Hanlon addressed the role and participation of women in the Church. Acknowledging the alienation many women feel within current ecclesiastical structures, he welcomed recent reforms that decouple administrative governance from Holy Orders, opening senior leadership positions in the Roman Curia and local dioceses to laywomen.

On the question of ordination, he reaffirmed the Church's official position restricting the priesthood to men, while noting that Catholic doctrine has historically developed and been reformulated when informed by the lived faith of believers [*sensus fidelium*]. He called for continued regional discernment on pastoral opportunities, such as opening the permanent diaconate to women, citing paragraph 60 of the Synod's Final Document: "What comes from the Holy Spirit cannot be stopped."

Closing his address, Father O'Hanlon urged representatives preparing for Hong Kong's assembly in early 2027 to balance humble prayer with solid study and research, noting that spiritual discernment tends to advance by incremental steps rather than sudden change. He expressed hope that the local Church will continue reading the signs of the times, arriving at pastoral decisions received by the wider community in peace and joy.

**Lessons from the Irish experience**

Father O'Hanlon shared with the *Sunday Examiner* insights from Ireland's national synodal path, which involves all 26 dioceses working towards a national assembly in October 2026. Preparations have included identifying seven key priority areas, supported by a working document [*Instrumentum Laboris*], with representative working groups of bishops, clergy, religious, and laypeople using Conversation in the Spirit.

He also underlined the importance of outreach in preparing for a diocesan assembly: while regular churchgoers naturally take part, the greater challenge lies in reaching those on the margins or disillusioned with the Church.

**Hong Kong Catholic Church**

**Sunday Mass Schedule**

**You can obtain the Mass times and whereabouts of churches from the Hong Kong Catholic Church's website http://www.catholic.org.hk**

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*'Symposium'...continued from page 1*

advocating "multiple empowerment"—an approach in which marginalised individuals become active participants in transforming their communities rather than passive recipients of charity.

**Caring for our common home**

Professor Amos Tai Pui-kuen of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, a climate scientist, said that while science can define environmental problems, it is spiritual values and compassion that truly drive behavioural change. He challenged the misreading of biblical "dominion" as licence for exploitation, calling instead for "stewardship" in the image of God, and stressed that climate change is, at its core, a matter of justice.

Marky Ma Nok-yin of the Chinese University of Hong Kong outlined the Hong Kong Catholic Church's environmental mission, citing pioneers such as Father Anthony Chang, who founded the "Green Messengers" in 1989. With only six parishes currently running active environmental groups, Ma said, ecological care remains an essential—if still underdeveloped—dimension of faith, rooted in papal teaching such as *Laudato Si'*.

***Left to right: Father O'Hanlon, Cardinal Stephen and Bishop Ha join participants in a lively discussion during the open forum session.***

Alongside the formal presentations, parallel workshops under the theme "Word Made Flesh" showcased practical expressions of faith and charity, highlighting frontline initiatives such as MercyHK, the Angel Garden, the Light Up Fund, and parish-based environmental projects. The symposium closed with an open forum chaired by Professor Lam.

At Mass on the first evening, Bishop Ha reminded the faithful that all baptised Catholics are called to "become all things to all people" [1 Corinthians 9:22] through listening, prayer, and discernment of local needs.

Cardinal Stephen celebrated the closing Mass the following day, reflecting with gratitude on two days of rich dialogue. He noted that contributions from Protestant speakers had enriched the gathering, illustrating how the Church should welcome diversity in Christ, and reminded the assembly that it must not fear differing perspectives.

He sadi that creative tension is not inherently negative—the Church must learn the art of "holding the tension", resisting the urge to resolve differences too quickly and instead allowing time and patience to build deeper mutual understanding.

Comparing discernment to observing the fruit of a tree, Cardinal Stephen described it as an evolving, self-correcting process of learning from outcomes rather than a rigid pursuit of consequentialism.

He closed by cautioning against a "messianic mentality", urging the Church to engage in social care not with a saviour complex, but by walking alongside others, collaborating, and learning together in genuine humility.

# New archbishop for Chongqing

***Archbishop Ding on September 8.***
Photo: UCAN/www.chinacatholic.cn

CHONGQING (FIDES): Father Andrew Ding Yang was ordained as the new archbishop of the Archdiocese of Chongqing, Sichuan, China, on September 8 during a ceremony at St Joseph's Cathedral.

According to the Holy See Press Office, Archbishop Ding was appointed by Pope Leo XIV on July 18 under the framework of the Provisional Agreement between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China regarding the appointment of bishops.

He is the eighteenth Chinese bishop to be ordained under the agreement.

Bishop Joseph Li Shan of Beijing, was the consecrator, with Bishop He Zeqing of Wanzhou; Bishop Luo Xuegang of Yibin, Sichuan; Bishop Cui Qingqi of Wuhan, Hubei; Bishop Xiao Zejiang of Guizhou; and Coadjutor Bishop Matthew Shen Xuebin of the Diocese of Beijing as co-consecrators.

Around 350 priests, religious sisters, seminarians, and lay faithful attended the ceremony.

Archbishop Yang was born on 16 September 1981 in Hechuan District, Chongqing. He attended Beijing Seminary from 2000 to 2006 and, after a year of pastoral training at St. Joseph's Parish in Yuzhong [Chongqing], he was ordained a priest on 24 May 2007. He then served as assistant parish priest at the same parish.

From 2009 to 2011, he lived in Macau, where he studied theology at St. Joseph University. Between 2012 and 2014, he served as a formator at the National Theological Seminary in Beijing. In March 2014, he moved to Rome to study at the University of the Holy Cross, returning to China the following year. He later served as parish priest in Tongliang, Tongnan, Tongguanyi, and Jiulongpo, all within the Archdiocese of Chongqing.

Today, Chongqing has approximately 120,000 Catholics, served by about 30 priests, with 30 churches and 20 places of prayer. The archdiocese is also home to the Sisters of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who run a home for the elderly known as Ren Ai – Charity.

# Reflections from the vicar general

**By Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing OFM**

## Seminary open day

On October 1, the Holy Spirit Seminary will host its open day—the first in over a decade. Why hold an open day this year? Counting from the completion of the South China Regional Seminary in 1931, this year marks the 95th anniversary of the seminary's founding, the 55th anniversary of the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy, and the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the diocese. With so many milestone events to celebrate, this open day has been organised under the theme "Messengers of Hope." What are the highlights of the seminary open day?

Maximum openness: As it is an open day, we are opening as many areas as possible for public viewing. In addition to strolling around the seminary grounds, visitors can view the artefact room, which contains many precious items, and the seminarians' living quarters, which are usually off-limits. The Institute of Theology and Philosophy has also organised taster classes, giving the public a chance to attend lectures and experience a taste of studying theology and philosophy.

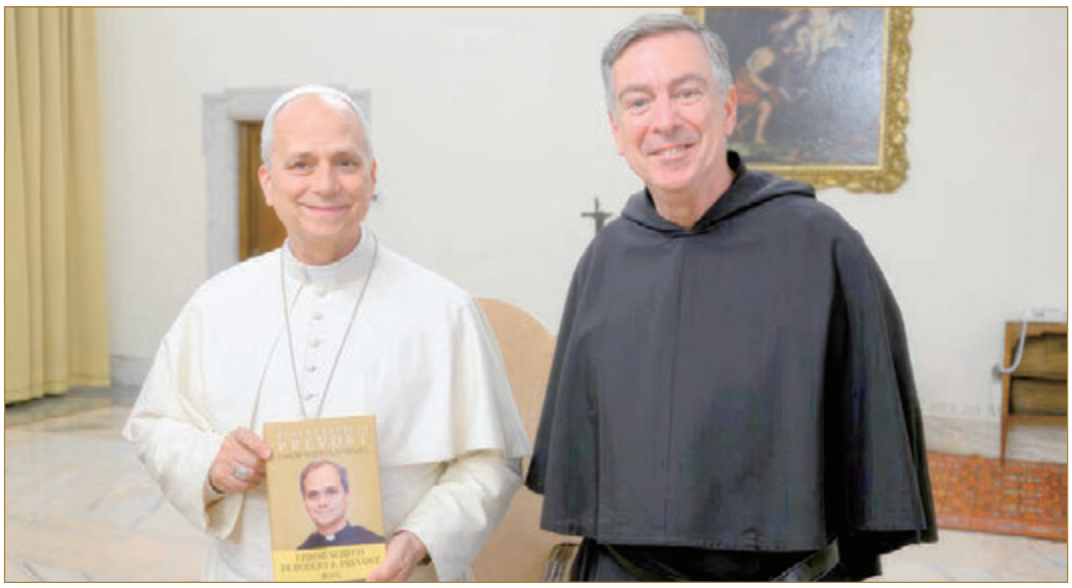
Promoting vocations: Both the seminary and the college are widely known as places for training clergy and lay leaders. Whether undergoing formation at the seminary or pursuing studies at the college, both paths answer a divine call to serve the Lord and the Church. As a result, promoting vocations is a major focus of the event. Two vocation-sharing sessions have been scheduled, featuring three generations of clergy—senior, middle-aged, and young.

Most of the game booths on site are run by parish youth groups, allowing them to engage more closely with the seminary and gain a better understanding of vocations. Many volunteers are alumni or current students of the college; speaking with them will give visitors insight into the institution's life, and perhaps inspire them to answer the call to serve the Church or pursue further studies here.

A collective effort: An open day of this scale naturally requires a substantial workforce. I am deeply grateful for the spirit of fraternity and shared responsibility demonstrated by the seminarians. Alumni and students of the college have also collaborated seamlessly. Other diocesan organisations within the seminary complex, including the Holy Spirit Study Centre and the Catholic Truth Society, will set up book stalls.

Additionally, closely affiliated organisations such as the Serra Club and the Diocesan Vocation Commission are fully involved, contributing their energy and hard work. The seminary's local parish, St. Peter's Church, alongside regional diocesan schools, is sending parishioners and students to perform in celebration. With lay volunteers acting as tour guides, Scouts managing crowd control, and St. John Ambulance providing first aid, we estimate that at least 200 to 300 volunteers will be assisting on the day. For this alone, we owe a heartfelt, "Thank God! Thank you, everyone!"

Does all this mean the open day will be flawless? Of course not! One major limitation is that, given the expected turnout of several thousand people, the seminary will not be able to offer parking. To avoid safety issues, drop-offs and pick-ups by car will also be strictly limited. As this may cause inconvenience, we feel it is necessary to clarify in advance. If there are other oversights, we kindly ask for your understanding and patience, and invite you to join us with an open heart to experience the open day. See you then!



***Father Joseph Farrell presents Pope Leo with an anthology of his pre-papal writings at the Vatican on May 4.*** Photo: Vatican Media

# Pope Leo XIV's *Freedom Under Grace* released in English

(RVA NEW): Pope Leo XIV's early writings on St. Augustine and the challenges facing the Church have been released in English, offering readers a collection of homilies, addresses, messages and letters from the years before he became pope.

*Freedom Under Grace: Reflections on the Spiritual Tradition That Formed Me* was released in English on September 15 in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and other Commonwealth countries.

The book was originally published in Italian in May by the Vatican Publishing House [LEV] under the title *Liberi sotto la grazia*. It brings together writings by Robert Francis Prevost from his years as prior general of the Order of St. Augustine from 2001 to 2013.

According to *Vatican News*, the collection offers a closer look at the spiritual formation and thought of Pope Leo before his election to the papacy.

The volume was edited by Augustinians Father Rocco Ronzani, Father Miguel Ángel Martín Juárez, and Father Michael Di Gregorio.

The writings address a range of issues, including the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, political developments, poverty, migration, peace, and the Church's engagement with contemporary society.

The book draws heavily on the thought of St. Augustine, whom Pope Leo has described as his spiritual father. Its title comes from the Rule of St. Augustine, which calls religious to live "as free men under grace."

At the presentation of the Italian edition in Rome in May, Pietro Cardinal Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, highlighted the book's attention to Christians' relationship with the poor and migrants, as well as its reflections on peace, evangelisation, and the life of the Church.

*Vatican News* reported that Cardinal Parolin also pointed to the frequent references to poverty and the poor in the collection, saying these reflected the central place given to people on the margins.

The book also includes a reflection delivered by then-Father Prevost in Manila in 2010 during the inauguration of an intermediate General Chapter of the Augustinian Province of Santo Niño de Cebu. In the reflection, he drew on the conversion of Andrés de Urdaneta and the spiritual tradition of St. Augustine.

The English edition is published in the United States by Image Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House Christian Publishing Group. In the United Kingdom and Australia, it is published by the Enlighten imprint of Penguin Random House UK.

The book is being translated into several languages and is expected to reach readers in many countries. Vatican News reported in May that translations were underway in 30 countries.

An audiobook edition has also been released, featuring selected homilies and addresses read by Emmy Award-winning comedian and Catholic, Stephen Colbert, while the main text is narrated by award-winning narrator and Grammy nominee, Scott Brick.

# Kazakhstan to host second Holy See colloquium on children's rights and dignity

(RVA NEWS): Kazakhstan will host the Second Kazakhstan, Holy See Joint Colloquium on the Protection of Children from October 2–3, bringing together government officials, religious leaders, international organisations and specialists to address the rights and dignity of vulnerable and incurably ill children.

The colloquium will take place at the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the capital, Astana. It is being organised by the International Centre for Interfaith and Interreligious Dialogue and the Holy See's Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue.

The meeting will be co-chaired by the head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and George Jacob Cardinal Koovakad, prefect of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue.

Discussions will focus on the dignity, rights, as well as moral and spiritual support for vulnerable and incurably ill children and their families.

Participants will also examine how religious communities can work together to protect children and promote interfaith solidarity alongside medical and scientific cooperation.

The ethical use of artificial intelligence in paediatrics will also be discussed, including questions about technology in health care and human dignity.

The programme will present the Charter on the Rights of Incurably Ill Children, emphasising the importance of protecting the dignity and rights of children with serious illnesses.

EDITORIAL

## SUNDAY EXAMINER

**20 SEPTEMBER 2026**

## The mental health of school children

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION for Suicide Prevention has designated September 10 as World Suicide Prevention Day, aiming to raise global awareness of suicide prevention. According to a report from the Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention at the University of Hong Kong [the Centre], Hong Kong recorded 976 suicide cases last year, down from 1,038 cases in 2024. However, the number of suicides among adolescents under 15 rose from 7 in 2024 to 15 last year.

On September 1 this year, hundreds of thousands of students across Hong Kong returned to school. Alarmingly, in the very first week of term, there were at least seven cases of student suicide or self-harm, with three resulting in death raising serious concerns about the well-being of young people.

Adolescence is often seen as a time for growth, friendship, and discovery, as students gain knowledge and experience community life. Yet, for many in Hong Kong, academic achievement has become synonymous with success.

Parents may unintentionally place pressure on their children, while young people often set high expectations for themselves. When these expectations are not met, some may struggle to cope. Data from the Centre reveals that 30 per cent of suicide victims under 15 attended Band 1 schools, indicating that academic peer pressure may be a significant factor.

Student suicides rarely result from a single cause. In addition to academic and social pressures, difficulties with problem-solving and seeking support can play a role. When in distress, young people may turn to parents, friends, social workers, or doctors for help, but increasingly, many are seeking support from artificial intelligence tools.

This reliance on technology can weaken young people's ability to form interpersonal relationships, making it harder for them to communicate face-to-face. As a result, some may become withdrawn or struggle to express their feelings, making it difficult for family members to spot warning signs.

To tackle the issue of student suicide, the Education Bureau introduced a school-based "Three-Tier Emergency Mechanism" in secondary schools last year. The first tier prioritises early identification and support for students at higher risk, providing prompt assistance and seeking professional counselling or treatment where necessary. The second tier sees the government organising an "Off-Campus Support Network" through cross-departmental and cross-sector collaboration to enhance short-term support for schools.

Social workers have received specialist training to better support students at higher risk, enabling them to offer targeted intervention. The third tier involves referring students at high risk to the Hospital Authority for specialist psychiatric outpatient care.

While expert support is essential for students experiencing mental distress, it is equally important to foster in young people an appreciation for the value of life. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [2280] reminds us: "Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it to him. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life... We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of." *SE*

**SUNDAY EXAMINER**

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*Views expressed on these pages are not necessarily those of the diocese of Hong Kong nor even of the editor of this paper.*
*Address all correspondence to the editor of the* Sunday Examiner.

# Pope Leo commemorates 9/11 attacks

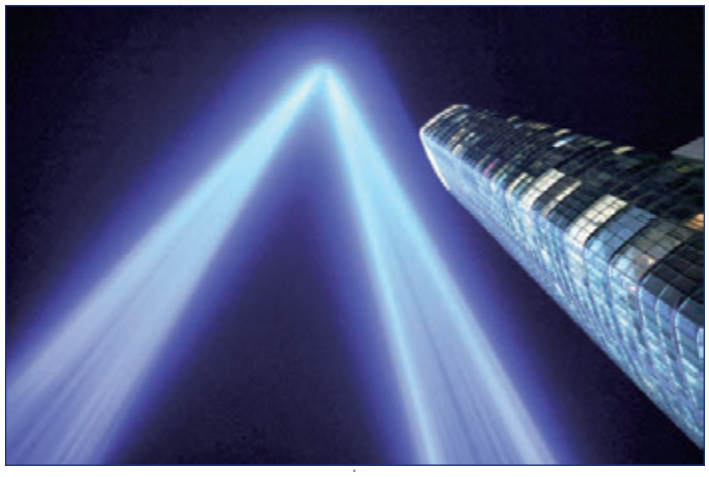
ROME (OSV NEWS): Pope Leo XIV commemorated the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, in his Sunday Angelus address, praying for "those who continue to bear the wounds of that tragic day."

Pope Leo said, "Two days ago marked the 25th anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States of America."

The pope said, "I renew my prayers for those who lost their lives and for those who continue to bear the wounds of that tragic day.,"

He said, "At a time when conflict and violence afflict so many of our brothers and sisters, I invite everyone to pray that the Lord will bestow his gift of peace upon the world."

The pope added that the memory of the tragic events of 9/11 "prompts us to renew our commitment to peace, first and foremost through prayer, which we entrust to the intercession of the Virgin Mary."



***The annual "Tribute in Light" is projected in New York City on September 11 marking the 25th anniversary of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre.*** Photo: OSV News/Heather Khalifa, Reuters

At the time, Pope Leo, then-Father Robert Prevost, was 45-years-old and in Rome taking part in the Augustinian Order's ordinary general chapter, on the date of the 9/11 attacks that left nearly 3,000 people dead that day, with thousands more dying of related illnesses in the aftermath. Just days later, on 14 September 2001, his 46th birthday, he was elected prior general of the worldwide order.

As the newly elected head of the Augustinian Order, Father Prevost reflected on "the tragic events that shook the United States on September 11" in his homily for the closing Mass of the order's meeting 21 September 2001.

"The violence that the world witnessed last week in the United States is a tragic expression of a series of problems that are becoming increasingly acute everywhere. Hatred and violence will continue to grow as long as so many people are forced to live in extreme poverty and are oppressed by so many forms of injustice," Father Prevost said in his homily in the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo, according to Vatican News.

"While many seek revenge," he said, "Augustinians must bear witness to the gospel and to its values of unity, dialogue, peace, and reconciliation."

# Message of condolences from the Colloquium of Six Religious Leaders of Hong Kong on death of Tung Chee-hwa

The Colloquium of Six Religious Leaders of Hong Kong are united in offering our deepest condolences on the passing of Mr. Tung Chee-Hwa who served as the first Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("HKSAR"), People's Republic of China from July 1997 to March 2005.

Mr. Tung loved China and Hong Kong patriotically and wholeheartedly. At the historical time when Hong Kong was returned to China under the One Country Two Systems, Hong Kong was facing the tumultuous time of financial crisis as well as the epidemic crisis. Mr. Tung's unrelenting love for Hong Kong and China helped Hong Kong to overcome the difficult situations. He promoted the idealism of 'Prosperity for both Hong Kong and China'. He advocated the importance of education and social harmony, respect for the Six Religions and the importance of virtue and prestige.

Today, we, the faithful of the Six Religions, jointly offer our prayers and condolences as according to our own beliefs as follows:

- Buddhism: May he return riding on your wishes all the way to the Pure Land
- Catholicism: May God bestow on him eternal rest and comfort to his family.
- Confucianism: May he practise benevolence and forgiveness. May his virtue be remembered forever.
- Islamism: May Allah recognize his good deeds and grant his family patience and fortitude.
- Christianity: May his noble virtues shine forever, and may the Lord comfort his family. May his soul rest in the bosom of the Lord, and may the Lord comfort his family.
- Taoism: May his soul return to the blessed realm and be received by the Supreme One.

Though Mr. Tung has passed away, his merits and deeds will forever stay. We, the Six Religious Leaders will continue to carry out his will of loving Hong Kong and guard Hong Kong's stability and our country's prosperity.

# Chancery Notice

**I. Catholics joining the Election Committee under the Hong Kong SAR New Deadline for Submission of Applications**

As instructed by Cardinal Stephen CHOW, S.J., it is hereby announced that the deadline for Catholics to submit applications to join the Election Committee for the coming five-year term under the Hong Kong SAR will be postponed from 19 September 2026, 12:00p.m. to 30 September 2026, 5:00 p.m.. (cf Chancery Notice dated 31 September 2026, ***"New Arrangements for Catholics to join the Election Committee under the Hong Kong SAR"***, available at the diocesan website, www.catholic.org.hk).

**II. DIOCESAN LITURGY COMMISSION**

*Ex Officio Members:* Rev. Francis Xavier WONG, *Chairperson*
Rev. Stephen CHAN, OFM
Rev. Peter CHOI

Cardinal Stephen CHOW, S.J., has appointed/reappointed the following as Advisers / Commission members for a two-year term, effective 1 October 2026:

Advisers: Bishop Joseph HA, OFM, VG
Rev. Thomas LAW
Rev. Domingos LEONG, SDB

Members:
Rev. Clement TSUI, S.J.
Rev. Deacon Anthony SIN
Ms. CHAN Yuen-ming
Ms. Angelina CHAN Yuk-kuen
Ms. Vera CHING
Ms. CHOI Man-yee
Ms. HO Cheuk-lam
Mr. HO Hay-long
Ms. Lucy LEE Yuk-mui
Mr. Ryan LIM
Mr. Anthony WAI Chung-sau
Ms. WONG Man-shan
Ms. Janny WONG Yuet-yee

**III. DIOCESAN SACRED MUSIC COMMISSION**

*Ex Officio Members:* Rev. Peter CHOI, *Chairperson*
Rev. Francis Xavier WONG

Cardinal Stephen CHOW, S.J., has appointed/reappointed the following as Commission members for a two-year term, effective 1 October 2026:

Dr. Allison SO, *Vice-chairperson*
Rev. Deacon Andrew AU
Sr. Ophelia LUI
Ms. Angela CHAN
Ms. Clare CHAN
Ms. Angela CHOY
Mr. Jackie FUNG
Ms. Carrie LO
Ms. Rebecca NG
Ms. Liza SZETO
Ms. Lucinda TONG
Ms. Mandy TSANG
Ms. Patty WANG
Mr. Eric WONG
Mr. Edward YEE

Given at the Chancery Office,
14 September 2026.

Rev. Lawrence LEE
Chancellor

# Asian Catholic digital missionaries commissioned to build bridges online

MANILA (SE): More than 100 Catholic digital communicators from across Asia were commissioned to make the digital world a place of listening, encounter, reconciliation and communion during a Mass on September 13, which concluded the first Asian Catholic Digital Missionary Assembly at the Good Shepherd Cathedral of the Diocese of Novaliches in Quezon City, Metro Manila, the Philippines.

Organised by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Office of Social Communication [FABC-OSC], in collaboration with Radio Veritas Asia [RVA], the September 10-13 assembly sought to reflect on the Church's digital presence and mission. It aimed to strengthen missionary formation, foster collaboration among Asian Churches, and encourage spreading the gospel in digital spaces.

Pablo Virgilio Cardinal David of Kalookan, vice president of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, presided over the Mass. He was joined by Bishop Marcelino Antonio Maralit Jr., chairperson of the FABC Office of Social Communication; Divine Word Father Felmar Fiel, general manager of RVA; Father John Mi Shen, programme director of RVA; Father Albert Delvo, rector of Good Shepherd Cathedral; and other clergy.

In his homily, Cardinal David described the digital world as a new culture where people meet, search, suffer, and sometimes seek God. "Go there as missionaries," he said, urging communicators to listen before reacting and to pay attention to voices often ignored—including the poor, wounded, lonely, angry, young, and those distanced from the Church.

He emphasised that digital mission should move beyond mere connection towards genuine human and spiritual communion by building relationships, creating spaces for encounter, and helping people journey together.

Concerning those with whom they disagreed, he said, "The person on the other side is not an enemy to defeat." He urged digital missionaries to respond to anger with courage, contempt with dignity, and to build bridges through forgiveness.

At the end of the Mass, the participants made a solemn pledge, led by Father Mi Shen, to serve as digital missionaries and to be "an authentic witness of faith in Asia." They committed to "walking the synodal way, listening deeply, collaborating across borders," and transforming digital presence "into a living encounter with Christ." They also pledged to share "the diverse stories, joys, and challenges of the Asian Church," bringing the light of the Gospel to "every screen and digital periphery."

Photo: FABC

In an earlier interview, Dr Natasha Govekar, director of the Theological-Pastoral Department within the Vatican Dicastery for Communication, stressed that evangelisation cannot be reduced to producing content or increasing online engagement, but must help build communion and relationships.

***'We bring Jesus, not by shouting over Asia, but by drawing close to Asia, listening to its people, walking with our people…'***

Govekar said the Church's presence in the digital world must lead people towards genuine human encounters and community, even as social media platforms can foster isolation, addiction, and polarisation. She noted rising concerns about social media algorithms driving addictive scrolling and polarisation.

"The Church is not outside of this danger," she said, noting that polarisation fuelled by digital platforms can also affect Christian communities. She said the challenge lay in developing a "different style" of presence that promotes genuine encounters, fostering community and facilitating communion.

Speaking of the Faith Communication in the Digital World programme, she stressed the need for discipleship and accompaniment as people grow in their mission. "It is not just about delivering content or reproducing a programme," she said. "It is about entering very profoundly an experience" that becomes easier when accompanied by someone who has already made a similar journey.

At the opening Mass on September 11 at the Pope John Paul II Auditorium on the campus of Radio Veritas Asia, Archbishop Gilbert Garcera, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, said, "We bring Jesus, not by shouting over Asia, but by drawing close to Asia, listening to its people, walking with our people, serving them, and gently making the love of Jesus heard and experienced."

Archbishop Garcera reminded participants they were more than content creators—they were witnesses with a moral responsibility. "Every headline, photograph, video, post, and story makes a choice," he said, urging communicators to consider whose voices are amplified or excluded. He warned against prioritising online popularity over truth, urging, "verify before you publish, listen before you judge, understand before you interpret, and give context before you condemn."

On the previous day, September 10, during the orientation, Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle addressed the digital missionaries via video message. He noted that every influencer is influenced by someone, and urged them to "allow Jesus, in the power of his Word and Spirit, to be a big influence in your life, in your outlook."

Cardinal Tagle remarked, "We influence others by what has influenced us," and encouraged the delegates to deepen their relationship with Jesus.

# Youth joyfully connect with God, peers and community

HONG KONG (SE): Twenty-three young people aged 14–20 attended a phone- and gadget-free Youth Encounter Weekend 6 at Breakthrough Youth Village in Shatin from the evening of September 11 to the afternoon of September 13.

The event, organised by the BLD-Hong Kong Covenant Community's Youth Ministry, invited participants to encounter Jesus more deeply through love and acceptance within a community setting.

The programme combined talks, peer sharing, meditation, games, worship, a reconciliation service, and a thanksgiving Mass. It helped the young attendees reconnect with their faith and reflect on their priorities and family relationships amid everyday struggles and anxieties.

Father Jhay Em Guilleno, rector and parish priest of the Diocesan Shrine of St Mary Magdalene and parish of San Lorenzo Ruiz–New Kalalake in Olongapo, Philippines, served as the weekend's spiritual director.

In a safe, reflective space, participants opened themselves to God and to one another. They reflected on being made in the image and likeness of God, the necessity of humility to give and receive feedback, the courage required to reveal their true selves, and finding strength in their relationship with God.

Young people from the BLD Youth Ministry served behind the scenes with logistics and planning, and in front as facilitators, musicians, and speakers, echoing Father Guilleno's call to "be a living blessing" and to share God's presence with the group.

Reminded that their power supply is the Lord and that they are called to worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and service, the participants concluded the weekend filled with joy.

They left knowing that God knows their hearts, loves them, and keeps them safe as they step forward on a new path, journeying with peers and others who share their faith and values and accept them as children of God.

# Asian digital missionaries tapped to widen reach of World Youth Day 2027

***Stephany Sun speaks about World Youth Day Seoul 2027 on September 12.*** Photo: FABC

MANILA (LICAS NEWS): "We're building a network of Catholic influencers and digital missionaries with a particular focus on Asia," said Stephany Sun, global communications manager of the Committee for Communications of the Archdiocese of Seoul, during the Asian Catholic Digital Missionary Assembly 2026 in Manila on September 12.

She noted that most young Catholics in Asia would remain in their home countries during World Youth Day 2027, regardless of how many pilgrims attend the gathering in August 2027.

Sun explained that digital missionaries could provide accompaniment in ways livestreams and official coverage cannot.

"A livestream can stream a holy Mass. It cannot sit with a struggling teenager late at night. It cannot answer them in their own language. You can," Sun said.

"That is the difference between reach and witness," she added, reminding the audience that an "influencer is followed" but a "witness is trusted."

Sun said the organisers of World Youth Day in Seoul want Asian digital missionaries involved in developing the strategy, rather than simply distributing materials prepared in Korea.

"We're not arriving from Korea with a finished strategy looking for someone to carry it out for us. We're asking you to help design it," she said.

The network could help organisers identify voices they might otherwise miss and gain insight into what works in different countries and communities across Asia. By sharing local-language content and identifying key digital voices, it can help shape how World Youth Day Seoul 2027 engages with communities far beyond those attending in person.

Sun said organisers hope to begin meeting online early next year.

The initiative follows recent efforts at major Church gatherings to give Catholic digital creators a role beyond conventional media coverage.

At World Youth Day in Lisbon in 2023, a Mass was celebrated specifically for Catholic influencers and digital missionaries, with time set aside for them to meet. The Jubilee of Catholic Influencers and Digital Missionaries in Rome later held its own programme and festival.

"This was no longer simply about a media role. The Church was recognising a mission," Sun said.

World Youth Day Seoul 2027 plans a dedicated gathering for digital missionaries and a festival during World Youth Day week, although Sun said organisers were still working on the date and venue.

The Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences [FABC] is also looking to World Youth Day as a concrete mission for the emerging network of Asian digital missionaries.

Father John Mi Shen, executive secretary of the FABC Office of Social Communication and programme director of Radio Veritas Asia, said there are plans to bring 40 digital influencers to the gathering.

He described them as "40 pairs of eyes" who would move beyond covering major Masses and formal events, documenting encounters in local communities, classrooms, gyms, streets, and homes hosting pilgrims.

Father Mi Shen said the digital missionaries could connect people in their own countries with the experiences of young people gathering in Korea.

He also described the participants as "40 pairs of windows" through which Catholics in Korea and elsewhere could encounter the realities of communities across Asia.

He linked the initiative to the FABC's emphasis on dialogue with cultures, religions, and people on the margins.

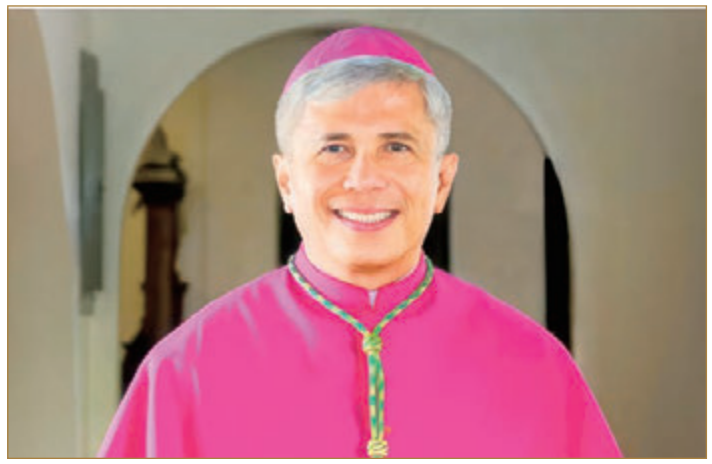
Registration for World Youth Day Seoul 2027 will open in October.

According to Sun, Seoul will also be the first World Youth Day hosted in a culture where Christianity has never been the majority. It has the theme,

"Take courage, I have overcome the world," from the Gospel of John.

Sun said the Church in Korea has drawn three forms of courage from the passage: seeking truth, practising love, and building peace.

Father Mi Shen said the work of Asian digital missionaries should begin well before pilgrims gather in Korea. "Mission does not really start next year during World Youth Day. Mission starts here and now," he said.



***Bishop Evangelista.*** Photo: RVA News

# Protect waterways, restore what gives life, urges bishop of Imus

MANILA (RVA NEWS): The Diocese of Imus, south of Metro Manila, Philippines, is calling on Catholics to move beyond prayers and reflection and take concrete action to protect the waterways that sustain communities, as it marks the 2026 Season of Creation.

In a September 7 pastoral letter titled "Wading in Life-Giving Water," Bishop Reynaldo Evangelista urged the faithful to see water not only as a resource but as a gift from God and a source of life.

The letter draws on the vision of the river in the Book of Ezekiel: "Wherever the river flows, everything will live."

Bishop Evangelista wrote, "Water is part of God's creation that gives life," pointing to the water people drink, the land that produces food, the seas that sustain marine life and the forests that nurture communities.

But the bishop warned that water can also become a source of destruction when waterways are neglected or polluted. Rivers, canals, estuaries and other water systems can become clogged with garbage or damaged by human activities, increasing the risks of flooding and other disasters.

The pastoral letter also highlights the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on vulnerable communities, including families living in flood-prone areas and fishing communities whose livelihoods depend on healthy waterways.

Bishop Evangelista called on Catholics to support responsible flood management, proper waste disposal, protection of rivers and waterways, and care for forests, watersheds and coastal areas. He also encouraged parishes and Catholic institutions to undertake concrete ecological initiatives and accompany communities affected by environmental destruction.

The bishop stressed that concern for creation cannot be separated from Christian faith.

"We cannot celebrate the Creator while remaining indifferent to the destruction of creation," he said, urging Catholics to recognise that caring for the environment is part of their Christian mission.

The diocese encouraged every parish, school, religious community, family and ministry to identify the "life-giving water" that can flow through their own communities. One parish could lead a river or waterway cleanup, while others could promote waste reduction, tree planting, environmental education or assistance to communities affected by flooding.

Bishop Evangelista said that ecological conversion begins with small but sustained acts that can eventually spread from individuals and families to entire communities.

"Let us enter and wade in the river," the bishop urged, turning the biblical image into a call for action.

He ended with the vision from Ezekiel that anchors the pastoral letter: "Wherever the river flows, everything will live."

**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

# The destruction of God's creation in Palawan

**Father Shay Cullen**
*www.preda.org*

On September 1, Pope Leo XIV opened the Season of Creation and warned that war and environmental degradation are driving a "vicious cycle" of ecological destruction, poverty, and further conflict in the world. War against the environment, against people, and against creation is destroying habitats and lives. We do well to heed Pope Leo's words: "War also leaves behind social and ecological destruction that endures for generations."

There is a long-running war in the Philippines, waged by three super-rich mining corporations in Palawan against the Filipino people and God's creation there.

The firms plan to cut down more than 188,765 primeval trees, with permits issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). This environmental impact appears to be proceeding without the approval from the country's president, Ferdinand Marcos Jr.; however, responsibility for addressing it ultimately lies with the administration.

Ongoing open-pit mining operations are being compared to environmental crime scenes, as mining companies, with DENR approval, plan to wreak further devastation. The nickel ore extracted from these operations provides little benefit to the Filipino people.

Some entities receive 90 per cent of the raw ore exports to manufacture stainless steel and batteries, which are then sold back to the Philippines. The remainder is exported to other Asian companies.

***Mangroves along a riverbank in Palawan.*** Photo: Robi Gallardo

The Filipino people receive no benefit because corrupt officials divert the funds earned when the mining companies pay taxes.

The destruction of Philippine rainforests deprives every Filipino and environmentalist of these magnificent natural wonders, their wildlife, and their protective climate cover.

The trees targeted by mining companies with DENR permits are not protected by the moratorium passed by the Palawan provincial government in March 2025.

Dennis Socrates, the governor, led the provincial government in declaring a 50-year moratorium on all new pending mining applications in Palawan under Provincial Ordinance 3646. This measure is designed to safeguard the rainforests' unique status as the only original old-growth rainforest in the country.

Palawan, which also boasts vast mangroves and coral reefs, is described as the "last ecological frontier". However, mining firms are expanding their open-pit or surface mining operations, cutting millions of trees in the process.

Bishop Broderick Pabillo of Taytay urged religious leaders to take a stand to protect the forests, speak out against environmental destruction, and called on the people to save Creation.

Palawan as a whole was designated a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Man and Biosphere Reserve in 1990 and is revered worldwide as a rare habitat for species found nowhere else on Earth.

Its forests are home to rare and unique species, such as the Palawan bearcat, the Palawan pangolin, and the majestic Manggis tree. These forests have an immense capacity to absorb carbon dioxide, slow climate change, and protect the nearby marine life in the Coral Triangle. Indigenous communities have lived in Palawan for millennia.

### Environmental villains

Several major business interests are now seeking to expand their operations, a move that environmental advocates warn will result in further deforestation and habitat loss. Environmental groups point out that massive swathes of primary forest and ancestral land have already been cut down and cleared.

In Berong, the DENR has authorised the cutting of an additional 26,617 trees in one instance. As with the flood-control corruption scandal, there are allegations of corruption. Bishop Pabillo said reforestation was "a big lie." Tree nurseries and seedlings cannot replace a thousand-year-old primaeval rainforest.

The Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corp. (RTNMC) and Ipilan Nickel Corp. are among the companies contributing to deforestation in Palawan. RTNMC is the oldest and largest subsidiary of Nickel Asia Corp., which holds a controlling 60 per cent equity stake in the company. They also own 65 per cent of Taganito, and 100 per cent of the Cagdianao, Hinatuan, and Dinapigue operations. Ipilan operates in Brooke's Point in southern Palawan and plans to cut down 60,359 trees. Berong Nickel Corp., operating in Aborlan in central Palawan, is planning to cut down 71,405 trees.

Some individuals working at these companies may be unaware of the long-term environmental and social consequences of these activities.

The destruction of the Philippines' rainforests, along with the loss of wildlife and rare species and damage to marine life, represents a significant environmental crisis for both nature and the Filipino people. These activities offer little benefit to the population and may leave behind a degraded landscape, with the loss of trees, flowers, animals, and people's natural heritage.

This environmental crime scene is made possible by the DENR, which has granted these companies special tree-cutting and earth-balling permits to make room for open-pit mining operations. These operations are supported by 25-year national mineral production sharing agreements handled by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

The mining companies are required to obtain an environmental compliance certificate to ensure adherence to ecological laws, free, prior, and informed consent from Indigenous communities if the mining area overlaps with ancestral domains, and local government unit endorsement from the host community.

These requirements have not been met, according to local Church groups and networks like the Save Palawan Movement and Alyansa Tigil Mina. These groups have bravely stood with Indigenous peoples and have launched major campaigns exposing corrupt government-approved permits. They are fighting to block the special tree-cutting and earth-balling permits that threaten to clear over another 218,000 trees across Brooke's Point, Bataraza, and Aborlan.

## Pope Leo ends Covid-era salary cuts for cardinals and senior Vatican officials

VATICAN (OSV NEWS): Pope Leo XIV has repealed provisions introduced by Pope Francis in March 2021 that reduced the salaries of cardinals and Vatican employees as a cost-saving measure during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Vatican published the papal decree, signed earlier in the month, on September 14, Pope Leo's birthday, a day on which the pope also issued a decree ordering the construction of a new building in Vatican City State to house the excess holdings of the library and the Vatican Apostolic Archive.

In the *motu proprio* [on his own initiative], Pope Leo XIV explained that his predecessor's "salary-containment measures" had been necessary in order to confront "the exceptional challenge of the pandemic."

The provisions had already been partially amended in 2025 through the repeal of Article 3 by a *Rescriptum ex Audientia* [rescript] dated June 16, 2025.

"Now they can be brought to an end, in the certainty that the institutions of the Holy See and Vatican City State will continue, through different means, their commitment to ensuring economic sustainability," Pope Leo wrote.

The pope said that "having heard the competent opinion of the Secretariat for the Economy" and "having carefully considered everything," he decided to repeal Pope Francis' 2021 decree, *A Sustainable Future.*

Pope Francis' measures had reduced the salaries of cardinals serving in the Curia by 10 per cent. Employees of the Holy See, the Vatican Governorate and other related institutions classified in salary grades C and C1—namely the heads and secretaries of dicasteries—received an eight per cent reduction.

A general reduction of three per cent was also applied to employees who were clergy or members of religious institutes.

The accompanying suspension of biennial seniority increases—the pay rises normally awarded every two years—affected all serving personnel.

In the case of lay employees, however, it applied only to those at level four and above, and therefore did not affect the lowest salaries.

# Notice Board

Community

## A warm goodbye to Sister Demetillo

*Above: Sister Demetillo, embracing her elder mentor, 92-year-old Sister Louise Kam, along with Mass celebrants and religious sisters joining the farewell party at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Filipinos on August 31. Right: Sister Demetillo and Sister Victorino.* Photos: supplied

On August 31, the Chaplaincy to Filipino Migrants and the Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Filipinos (DPCF) organised a farewell gathering for Good Shepherd Sister Corazon Demetillo, outgoing director of the DPCF.

The event commenced with a Thanksgiving Mass presided over by Filipino chaplain Father Jay Flandez SVD. Concelebrating clergy included spiritual director of Simbayanan-KAMMPI Father Jun Jacobe, Oblate missionaries Father Ronnie Gicalao and Father Stebin Thomas, Father Jerry Perocho SVD, Franciscan Father Roland Jablonski, and Father Louland Escabusa CICM.

In his homily, Father Jay emphasised that baptism calls all believers to carry out Christ's mission through prayer and active charity. Describing mission work as the true strength of the Church, he noted that Sister Demetillo's meaningful encounters with migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees would remain her greatest treasures as she steps into her next chapter.

The liturgy brought together members of the Diocesan Pastoral Sisters' Association, Philippine Consul General in Hong Kong Romulo Victor Manzano Israel Jr. and his family, consulate officials, representatives from Caritas, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Pastoral Care for Displaced People, alongside DPCF staff and friends. Afterward, attendees gathered for dinner, musical performances, and personal reflections.

In her message of gratitude, Sister Demetillo extended warm thanks to Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J., former bishops, the Diocesan Commission for Pastoral Services to Migrant Workers, the Philippine Consulate, partner NGOs, donors, staff, and friends, crediting their steadfast support for the centre's accomplishments.

*Priests and sisters delivering songs of well-wishes.*

Her successor, Sister Victoria Victorino PDDM, who would become the director of the centre starting from September 1, reflected on taking up the role, sharing that she has felt at home since joining in September 2025. She expressed gratitude for the retiring sister's foresight in offering early orientation to help her navigate the ministry's complex realities, adding that relying on daily trust in the Lord reminds her she does not work alone.

Father Jacobe concluded the program by praising Sister Demetillo's distinctly Good Shepherd charism and dedicated advocacy for the vulnerable.

Various community groups also hosted farewell gatherings for the sister on different dates. Mary Jean Pocas, former KAMMPI president, offered heartfelt thanks to the sister for guiding her growth as both a leader and an individual.

Sister Demetillo will leave Hong Kong for the Philippines on September 29 for a well-deserved break after nine years of work in Hong Kong. We extend our warmest wishes to her for good health and Holy Spirit guidance as she begins her next missionary assignment. *SE*

What to you reckon?

## Manage child tantrums

When my ward threw tantrums, I de-escalated the situation by speaking calmly, which helped him calm down too. It is important to find the root cause and address it from there. Patience is essential, and we can always pray for patience and the children's well-being.

— Fedelis Domanico

When caring for a child with severe tantrums, I first speak calmly. If they remain upset, I temporarily give them space and remove any dangerous objects. Once the child settles down, I offer a comforting hug, speak softly, and try to understand what triggered the outburst.

— Leonisa Milay

Managing aggressive behavior when parents do not intervene puts full responsibility on you. First, build a trusting relationship with the child and consider their environment. Stay calm and alert to ensure safety. Loving-care, soothing words, and discussing triggers will make them feel truly supported.

— Analyn P. Ordoño

Caring for a child with attention and self-control challenges is hard due to sudden mood swings. When triggers cause a tantrum, I first let him speak and express why he is crying or shouting. Afterward, I hug him to help him calm down and gently explain why the behavior was wrong.

— Jeanalyn Rillera

The key to handling aggressive tantrums is staying patient without worsening the situation. I allow the child to safely express their emotions while ensuring their safety. Once they calm down, I talk to them about their feelings and gently explain boundaries to help build their emotional growth.

— Anabelle Sibayan

Caring for a child with intense mood swings requires deep patience. I use checklists and timers rather than direct commands. When she throws tantrums, I let her cry and wait until she calms down, as talking makes her aggressive. We must remain patient, understanding, and supportive of their condition.

— Remilda Yong

***Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you***

— 1 Peter 5:7

# Twenty-fifth Sunday of the Year

**Readings:** Isaiah 55:6-9; Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a; Matthew 20:1-16a

## Called by grace not measured by comparison

Jesus describes a landowner who goes out into the marketplace all day, searching for workers. His question to the people in the marketplace is not, "Why are you lazy?" but, "Why do you stand here idle?" He sees people waiting and offers them purpose and belonging in his vineyard. Nobody is useless in his eyes.

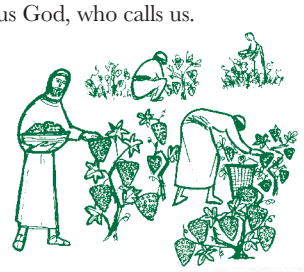
God wants to call everyone into his kingdom. No one is excluded; each person has something to contribute. Some encounter Christ early. Others hear his invitation after years of failure or exclusion. Yet the Lord never tires of going out. It is never too late for grace.

The equal payment surprises us because we measure worth through comparison. The first workers receive what was promised, yet the generosity shown to others makes them resentful. Instead of rejoicing that neighbours have found work, they calculate who deserves more. Envy prevents them from celebrating another's blessing.

The denarius is not payment for hours worked; it represents salvation, the gift Christ won through his death and Resurrection. God does not divide eternal life into portions or distribute love according to seniority. All receive fullness, not because everyone's labour is identical, but because the Master is good.

This parable prompts us to reflect on our communities. Do experienced members warmly welcome newcomers, or do they subtly remind them of the order of arrival? Do we create space for converts, faithful who return to the Church after years of wandering, young people, migrants, and individuals with different journeys? Ultimately, the vineyard is God's, not owned by those who have served the longest.

Today, let's reflect on whether we serve with gratitude or find ourselves comparing our sacrifices to others' rewards. May Christ bless us and heal any envy that might cloud our kindness. Let's approach the vineyard with joy, welcoming every new worker, and working together without rivalry. By the end of the day, we'll realise that the true reward isn't about being better than others, but about sharing a close, loving connection with our generous God, who calls us.



● **Father Josekutty Mathew** CMF

## Ang talinghaga ng mga manggagawa sa ubasan

Inilarawan ni Hesus ang isang may-ari ng lupain na lumalabas sa pamilihan sa buong maghapon upang maghanap ng mga manggagawa. Ang kaniyang tanong sa mga tao roon ay hindi, "Bakit kayo tamad?" kundi, "Bakit kayo nakatayo rito nang walang ginagawa?" Nakikita niya ang mga taong naghihintay at nag-aalok sa kanila ng layunin at kabilangang bahagi sa kaniyang ubasan. Walang sinumang walang silbi sa kaniyang mga mata.

Nais ng Diyos na tawagin ang lahat sa kaniyang kaharian. Walang sinumang ibinubukod; bawat tao ay may maiaalay na ambag. Ang iba ay maagang nakakatagpo si Kristo. Ang iba naman ay nakakarinig ng kaniyang paanyaya pagkatapos ng maraming taon ng kabiguan o pagkakait. Gayunpaman, hindi kailanman napapagod ang Panginoon sa paglabas. Hindi kailanman huli ang lahat para sa biyaya.

Nagugulat tayo sa pantay na pagbabayad dahil sinusukat natin ang halaga sa pamamagitan ng paghahambing. Natanggap ng mga naunang manggagawa ang kung ano ang ipinangako, ngunit ang pagkabukas-palad na ipinakita sa iba ay nagdulot sa kanila ng pagdaramdam. Sa halip na matuwa na ang kani-kanilang mga kapitbahay ay nakakita ng trabaho, kinukwenta nila kung sino ang mas karapat-dapat. Ang inggit ang humahadlang sa kanila upang ipagdiwang ang pagpapala ng iba.

Ang denaryo ay hindi kabayaran para sa mga oras ng ipinagtrabaho; kinakatawan nito ang kaligtasan, ang kaloob na napanalunan ni Kristo sa pamamagitan ng kaniyang kamatayan at Muling Pagkabuhay. Hindi hinahati ng Diyos ang buhay na walang hanggan sa mga bahagi o namimigay ng pagmamahal batay sa tagal ng paglilingkod. Lahat ay tumatanggap ng kabuuan, hindi dahil magkakapareho ang pagpapagal ng bawat isa, kundi dahil ang Panginoon ay mabuti.

Ang talinghagang ito ay nag-uudyok sa atin na pagnilayan ang ating mga pamayanan. Mainit bang tinatanggap ng mga may-karanasang kasapi ang mga baguhan, o patago nilang ipinaalala ang pagkakasunod-sunod ng pagdating? Gumagawa ba tayo ng puwang para sa mga bagong binyag, sa mga tapat na nagbabalik sa Simbahan matapos ang maraming taon ng paggala, sa mga kabataan, sa mga migrante, at sa mga indibidwal na may iba't ibang paglalakbay sa buhay? Sa huli, ang ubasan ay sa Diyos, at hindi pagmamay-ari ng mga pinakamatagal nang naglingkod.

Ngayon, pagnilayan natin kung naglilingkod ba tayo nang may utang na loob o nahuhuli ang ating sarili na inihahambing ang ating mga sakripisyo sa mga gantimpala ng iba. Pagpalain nawa tayo ni Kristo at pagalingin ang anumang inggit na maaaring magpalabo sa ating kagandahang-loob. Lumapit tayo sa ubasan nang may kagalakan, na tinatanggap ang bawat bagong manggagawa, at nagtutulungan nang walang paligsahan. Sa pagtatapos ng araw, mapagtatanto natin na ang tunay na gantimpala ay hindi ang pagiging mas mahusay kaysa sa iba, kundi ang pagbabahagi ng isang malapit at maibiging pakikipag-ugnayan sa ating mapagpalang Diyos na tumatawag sa atin.

● Claretian Publications

## Calling and conversion of St. Matthew

Lake Tiberias sparkled and, as usual, Matthew was there, sitting at the custom desk at Capernaum, to collect the taxes that the Jews had to pay to the Romans. He was a publican, despised by the people because he was considered in league with the oppressors. Probably, Matthew had become accustomed to it, but that day he heard a different voice. A man told him, "Follow me," and Matthew got up and followed the man ever after. That man was Jesus, and Matthew's life was no longer as before.

He organised a great banquet for Jesus, who went with his disciples, stirring up the scorn of scribes and Pharisees because there were in attendance publicans and sinners. Jesus' answer greatly touched Matthew. "They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick," said the Nazarene, adding, "For I came not to call the just, but sinners." Matthew, who was a sinner, left everything and followed Jesus, becoming one of the Twelve. He is also named a few times in the Acts of the Apostles. The proclamation of Christ would be his mission.

According to some sources, he would die of natural causes. Other traditions, considered untrustworthy, have it that his earthly life ended in Ethiopia. In the description of the four beings of the Apocalypse (eagle, ox, lion, man) Saint Matthew is associated with that of man. His relics are located in the crypt of the Cathedral of Salerno, where his feast day is marked with a solemn procession.

He is the author of the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, which was almost certainly written not in Greek but Aramaic. The Gospel of Matthew is written with an audience of Christians of Jewish origin in mind: the text emphasizes that Jesus is the Messiah who fulfills the promises of the Old Testament.

His figure is dear to iconography. Particularly known is the "Calling of St. Matthew" painted by Caravaggio between 1599 and 1600, kept in the Church of St. Louis of the French in Rome. An evocative painting in which light plays a fundamental role, a symbol of grace, which does not come from the window but from Jesus. A scene that draws the viewer into the dramatic action: Jesus' finger points to Matthew, who in turn indicates himself, to ask for confirmation of the call. The story of St. Matthew and the painting of Caravaggio marked the life of Pope Francis, who told of it in his interview with Father Antonio Spadaro, SJ, in La Civiltà Cattolica in 2013, in which, in relation to the figure of St. Matthew, the Holy Father defines himself as "a sinner to whom the Lord turned his eyes."

● *Vatican News*

## YOUR DAILY MASS GUIDE

**SEPTEMBER 20 – TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME.** Mass of the Sunday, *Gloria*, *Creed*, preface of the Sunday (green). Readings: Isaiah 55:6-9; Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a; Matthew 20:1-16a.

**SEPTEMBER 21 – ST. MATTHEW.** Mass of the feast, *Gloria*, Preface of the Apostles (red). Readings: Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13; Matthew 9:9-13.

**SEPTEMBER 22 – TUESDAY: TWENTY-FIFTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME.** Mass of the day (green). Readings: Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13; Luke 8:19-21.

**SEPTEMBER 23 – ST. PIUS OF PIETRELCINA.** Mass of the memorial (white). Readings: Proverbs 30:5-9; Luke 9:1-6.

**SEPTEMBER 24 – THURSDAY: TWENTY-FIFTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME.** Mass of the day (green). Readings: Ecclesiastes 1:2-11; Luke 9:7-9.

**SEPTEMBER 25 – FRIDAY: TWENTY-FIFTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME.** Mass of the day (green). Readings: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11; Luke 9:18-22.

**SEPTEMBER 26 – SATURDAY: TWENTY-FIFTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME.** Mass of the day (green). Readings: Ecclesiastes 11:9 —12:8; Luke 9:43b-45.

PRAY CONTINUALLY

### *Apostleship of Prayer*

### *Themes for September 2026*

**For the care of water**

Let us pray for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it.

CHINA BRIDGE

# Celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival

Photo: Elaine Kong on Unsplash

*While the roundness of the mooncake acts as a physical token of wholeness, Catholics remember that the Eucharist is the true feast of unity, binding believers together in Christ's Body…*

**Ambrose Mong**

Falling on September 24, the celebration of Mid-Autumn Festival offers Catholics a rich inculturation opportunity: to receive this cultural gift and reinterpret its symbols through the lens of Christian faith. As Catholics we can accept this festival as a gift of human culture, reinterpreting its traditional symbols, the harvest, the full moon, family reunions, and shared feasts, through the lens of Christian understanding.

In ancient times, the Mid-Autumn Festival centred around rituals honouring the moon deity Chang'e and seeking good fortune under the autumn sky. While Catholic teachings firmly reserves worship [*latria*] for the Trinity alone, it does not discard the act of looking up at the night sky. Instead, we can shift the focus from the celestial body to the God who made heaven and earth.

Drawing on the Psalms, which declare that "the heavens show forth the glory of God," Catholics gaze upon the full moon as a reminder of divine order and beauty. Beyond creation, the moon provides a vivid spiritual analogy:

Reflecting the Son: Like the moon which shines only by reflecting the sunlight, the Christian soul is called to reflect Christ, the true "light of the world" [John 8:12], so that the radiance illuminates darkness in our world.

Marian Devotion: This imagery also evokes a distinct Marian dimension. Because the festival often falls near the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary [September 8], Catholic tradition frequently compares Mary to the full moon—fair, serene, and perfectly reflecting the glory of her Son, the "Sun of Justice." Celebrating under the moonlight can thus become a Marian meditation, perhaps through praying the Rosary to reflect on her humility and purity.

At its core, Mid-Autumn is an autumn harvest celebration—a time when farming communities give thanks for the abundance of the earth. For us, this spirit of gratitude finds its ultimate fulfilment in the Holy Mass.

The word *Eucharist* itself derives from the Greek word for "thanksgiving." In the Mass, the priest offers bread and wine—specifically described in the liturgy as the "fruit of the earth and work of human hands"—which then become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The central cultural motif of Mid-Autumn is *tuányuán* [團圓 reunion], represented by the perfectly round shape of the full moon and mooncakes. In Catholic social teaching, the family is revered as the "domestic church"—the primary sanctuary where faith, love, and virtue are cultivated.

Mid-Autumn offers a sacred opportunity to gather with loved ones, honour elders, express filial piety, and heal familial estrangements. While the roundness of the mooncake acts as a physical token of wholeness, Catholics remember that the Eucharist is the true feast of unity, binding believers together in Christ's Body and foreshadowing their ultimate destination: the eternal communion of Heaven.

In practice, Catholic families observe Mid-Autumn by blending cherished social customs with intentional spiritual acts. Festive family dinners and the lighting of paper lanterns with children are paired with family prayer, giving thanks for living relatives and offering intercessions for deceased ancestors.

More importantly, the celebration also extends beyond the home. Recognising that the joy of the harvest must be shared, Catholic parishes and lay movements use the festival as a season for works of mercy. Mooncakes and care packages are actively distributed to low-income families, elderly individuals living alone, orphans, and hospital patients. In doing so, the cultural tradition of sharing food is transformed into an act of gospel charity, ensuring that the warmth of the festival reaches those on the margins of society.

We celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival joyfully by receiving it as a time of thanksgiving, family reunion, and appreciation of God's creation. Rather than treating the feast as a religious act in itself, we can see its best human meanings as gifts from God and turn them back to him in gratitude.

The festival's emphasis on reunion fits naturally with our Catholic faith. Family gatherings, shared food, and the desire to be together can become a moment to thank God for loved ones, to pray for unity in the family, and to remember that the Church is also a larger family gathered in Christ.

The moon and autumn night can also be appreciated as signs of creation's beauty, pointing beyond themselves to the Creator and, for Christians, to Christ as the true light.

At the same time, we should steer clear of practices that conflict with our faith, such as moon worship, ancestor rites, or superstitious customs that give religious honour to anything other than God. The key is not to dismiss the culture, but to discern what can be received and what must be set aside. In that way, believers can participate in the festival with a clear conscience and a Christian heart.

A simple Catholic way to celebrate would be to share a meal, pray before eating, enjoy mooncakes and lanterns as cultural symbols, and perhaps read a short Scripture passage or offer a blessing for the family. In this way, Mid-Autumn Festival becomes not just a cultural reunion, but also a moment of thanksgiving, peace, and witness to Christ.

## Sexual Violence Victims' Helplines

In an emergency dial 999 police response within 30 minutes
Rain Lily : 2375 5322 (will also come to meet you)
Bethune House Refuge 2522 8264 — Emergency 9488 9044
Christian Action : 2739 6193
St. John's Cathedral : 2522 8264
Helpers for Domestic Workers : 2523 4020
Equal Opportunities Commission : 2511 8211
Police Hotline : 2527 7177

花地瑪聖母堂
Our Lady of Fatima Church

# 聖十字架及花地瑪聖母敬禮遊行
# Procession in Honour of the Holy Cross and Our Lady of Fatima

## 鮑思高慈幼會-中華會省省會長
## 梁定國神父 主禮
## Provincial of Salesian China Province
## Very Rev. Domingos Leong, SDB Presiding

## 二零二六年十月十一日(主日)
## Sunday, 11 October 2026

下午十二時半至二時半
12:30 pm - 2:30 pm

誦唸玫瑰經二十端
Recitation of the Twenty Mysteries of the Holy Rosary

下午三時
3:00 pm

聖母像巡遊
Solemn Procession

聖體降福 巡遊後舉行
Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament following the Procession

歡迎各信友及朋友參加為中國教會祈禱
All faithful and friends are welcome to participate in union of prayer for the Church in China

花地瑪聖母堂 - 長洲東灣教堂路一號
Our Lady of Fatima Church - 1 Church Road, Tung Wan, Cheung Chau

查詢請電 Contact No : 2981 0031

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