

INSIDE:

Saint Francis University opens Centre for Applied Ethics in AI era.....P2
Asian Churches urged to prioritise mission for familiesP3
Interfaith peace march in Jerusalem counters rising violence and division.....P4

SUNDAY

EXAMINER

Catholic News of the Week

INSIDE:

Pope Leo XIV to publish encyclical on artificial intelligence on May 25P5
Pope approves creation of interdicasterial commission on AI.....P5
Thai bishops press lawmakers to pass Clean Air ActP6
Archbishop appeals for peace after deadly ambush in Manipur.....P7

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Educators urged to embrace the AI era with a human heart

HONG KONG (SE): Educators at Catholic schools in Hong Kong gathered on May 18 for the Catholic School Teachers' Day 2026, a triennial conference organised by the Catholic Education Office.

Held at AsiaWorld-Expo, the event brought together around 1,200 teachers from kindergartens, primary, and secondary schools across the Catholic system.

Coinciding with the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, the event also honoured nearly two centuries of educational heritage, while addressing the profound changes ushered in by artificial intelligence [AI].

Guided by the theme, "Messengers of Hope", the event opened with a video reviewing the history of Catholic schooling in the region, which began in the middle of the 19th century when early missionaries arrived in what was then a fishing village and laid the foundations of local education.

Christine Choi Yuk-lin, secretary for Education; Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J.; Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing; episcopal delegate for education, Joseph Kung Kwong-pui; and other educational leaders then took part in a launch ceremony.

They placed symbolic water droplets into a digital lake, creating an expanding ripple to represent a Catholic teacher's mandate to spread Catholic core values and support character formation.

School as a garden of encounter

In his address, Cardinal Stephen warned against an educational culture dominated by hyper-competition and utilitarian market needs. He urged Catholic schools to remain safe spaces where students are allowed to fail and explore.

The cardinal challenged schools to guide students on



Left: A dance performance illustrating the cold reality of spending our lives entirely behind screens.

Below left: During the opening ceremony, leaders add water droplets to a digital lake, symbolising how Catholic teachers ripple core values to their students.



space for deep, empathetic listening where genuine human connection can grow.

Addressing the impact of artificial intelligence, Cardinal Stephen reassured educators that AI is not destined to replace them. "Because we have our own human nature, which is just so special, noble, and full of vitality... our education must bring a culture of life and hope to our students. And what is the foundation of hope? Love," he concluded.

Drawing from Pope Francis' Jubilee bull of indiction, he emphasised that authentic hope is rooted in the tangible, lived experience of being loved, accepted, and valued.

Government's vision for digital education

Choi expressed her gratitude for Catholic schools educating with missions since 1843. Acknowledging different educational challenges, she maintained that technology is merely an instructional aid. "Knowledge transmission can rely on technology," she said, "but the cultivation of values and the shaping of character must be driven by a warm, living soul."

From a policy perspective, she announced the upcoming publication of a development blueprint for digital education in primary and secondary schools. This stra-

using AI ethically to benefit and uplift others, rather than simply using it to outperform peers.

He stressed that while AI offers immense benefits, students must be equipped with critical

thinking to navigate its inherent risks and complex ethical dilemmas.

Recognising that teachers often feel helpless facing these rapid shifts, Cardinal Stephen

called for collective solidarity. Drawing on the spirit of a synodal Church, he urged teachers, colleagues, and parents to walk together. He envisioned a school as a "garden of encounter"—a

Continued on page 2



Above: A drama depicting a girl trying to replace her hospitalised mother with technology, proving AI cannot replicate true parental love.

Right: Cardinal Stephen blesses educators as they pledge to return to schools not just as teachers, but as authentic messengers of hope.



Continued from page 1

tegic initiative aims to enhance AI training for teachers and systematically foster digital literacy among students.

To maintain high professional standards, Choi highlighted ongoing systematic trainings, including overseas study tours, teaching research rewards, and a planned review of the Education Ordinance to introduce periodic renewal mechanisms for teacher registration.

An ethical framework for AI literacy

Victor Lam Wai-qiu, the former Government Chief Information Officer, combined technical expertise with spiritual guidance to introduce a structured ethical framework for student digital literacy.

Drawing from *Antiqua et Nova*, the landmark 2025 Vatican document on AI ethics, Lam

stressed that human accountability must always remain central to technological advancement, advocating for human-machine collaboration rather than technological replacement.

“Wisdom is not about completing tasks faster; it is about combining knowledge with benevolence to lead us toward truth and goodness,” he said.

He put together a “RICHER” framework that guides ethical AI use through “Responsibility” for moral outcomes; “Integrity” in authentic work; “Critical thinking” to spot errors; “Honesty” against plagiarism and deception; “Empathy” to deepen real-world relationships with saved time; and “Respect” to protect intellectual property and foster positive digital communities.

The profound human cost of digital isolation was brought to life through a drama, “AI Mama.” The play depicted a lonely young schoolgirl who attempts to replace her hospital-

ised mother with an AI chat programme, exposing technology’s limitations as it cannot replicate the real love of a parent.

This performance was followed by a dance featuring nearly 60 students from multiple schools, illustrating the cold reality of a life lived entirely behind screens.

In his closing summary, Joseph Kung looked to the situation in the pioneering digital nation, Finland, which is actively scaling back tablet use in favour of physical books and face-to-face eye contact to combat declining attention spans and social skills.

“Technology is never a guarantee of quality education,” Kung concluded. “Excellent teachers are.”

The gathering concluded with a blessing and commissioning led by Cardinal Stephen as educators pledged to be committed to their divine calling and return to campuses not merely as instructors of data, but as authentic messengers of hope, ensuring that technology remains a tool to humanity, while keeping the authentic warmth of Christ’s love at the centre of every classroom.

ENGLISH LESSONS

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Saint Francis University opens Centre for Applied Ethics in AI era

HONG KONG (SE): Saint Francis University [SFU] has inaugurated its Centre for Applied Ethics [CAE], which is grounded in positive moral values and draws inspiration from both Chinese and religious humanistic traditions, according to a press release issued by the university’s Public Affairs Office on May 14.

The centre aims to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue to tackle pressing global challenges.

The CAE seeks to bridge ethical perspectives across cultures, concentrating on six principal areas: technological development and human dignity, business ethics, healthcare ethics, bioethics, social ethics, and environmental ethics.

“In an era of rapid globalisation and technological change, it is imperative that our new generation comes to realise and value the utmost importance of our Chinese culture, values and heritage. The CAE will create a unique platform for meaningful discussion, allowing students and the community to explore the common ground between ethical traditions of different cultures,” said Professor Stephen Cheung Yan-leung, president of SFU.

Guadalupe Father Arturo De la Torre, director of the centre, said, “Through fostering this dialogue, we equip our young people to engage with the complexities of the modern world by cultivating an international outlook, grounded in the rich heritage of Chinese and religious traditions, and guided by a firm moral foundation.”

This initiative aims to prepare students with the ethical discernment and moral standards essential for their future professions



Professor Cheung.

Photo: Public Affairs Office, Saint Francis University



Father dela Torre.

Photo: Public Affairs Office, Saint Francis University

A key strategic priority for the new centre is to raise academic rigour regarding professional conduct. The CAE intends to collaborate with university departments to review programme syllabi, ensuring professional ethics become a compulsory part of all courses. This initiative aims to prepare students with the ethical discernment and moral standards essential for their future professions.

SFU is additionally set to introduce a new Master of Arts in Ethics and Religion. This postgraduate degree will serve as a specialised academic extension of the centre’s core concepts, offering advanced study into the intersection of faith, culture, and moral philosophy to cultivate leaders with deep ethical insight.

For details, please visit: <http://www.sfu.edu.hk/>



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Asian Churches urged to prioritise mission for families

BANGKOK (UCAN): Churches in Asia should prioritise the mission to support Christian families to overcome various challenges with a long-term plan of action for better pastoral care for a more participatory and synodal Church, speakers said during the Synodal Assembly on Family organised by the Office for Laity and Family [OLF] of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences [FABC], held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Themed "The Mission and Future Roadmap of the Christian Family in Asia Today," the May 11-15 gathering drew 52 participants from 11 countries at Bangkok's Camillian Pastoral Centre. They included two cardinals, nine bishops, 16 priests, four nuns and laypeople.

The speakers said that Asian Churches cannot achieve synodality without addressing the existing challenges and developing future action plans for family ministries across various countries and bishops' conferences.

The seminar focused on the mission and responsibilities of the Christian family within the context of contemporary Asian society and the Church in line with Pope Francis' post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* [The Joy of Love], by addressing the pastoral care of families published in 2016.

FABC-OLF chairperson and Bishop Emmanuel Kanon Rozario from Bangladesh said during the inaugural programme that the core focus of the assembly is "to elevate the dignity and leadership of women in the Church and society."

He said the Church sees young people "not merely as the future of the Church, but its vibrant present." Hence, the Church must act as a companion through the complexities of their lives, he noted.

The bishop also called for shaping families as "a living home or nest for the Word of God," and emphasised finding the future path of the Church through active listening and spiritual discernment via conversation in the Spirit.

Bishop Rozario also noted that empowering families, including the laity, women, and youth, forms part of the Asian Churches' priorities set out in the "Bangkok Document"—a compilation of discussions held during the FABC general conference in October 2022.

Leading Asian theologian, Father Vimal Tirimanna from Sri Lanka, was a keynote speaker



A group discussion during the pan-Asian Synodal Assembly on Family, organised by the Office for Laity and Family of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in Bangkok, Thailand, from May 11-15. Photo UCAN/supplied

who presented insights on Pope Francis' *Amoris Laetitia* and Pope St. John Paul II's 1981 post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio* [On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World].

Father Tirimanna emphasised caring for mixed faith families.

...the Church sees young people 'not merely as the future of the Church, but its vibrant present'

In Asia's multi-religious society, Churches need to view mixed-faith families through the lens of *Amoris Laetitia* as "living bridges of social and religious harmony"—acting as Basic Human Communities [BHC], he said.

FABC vice president, Pablo Virgilio Cardinal David said evangelisation in Asia depends on understanding the Scriptures and providing strong pastoral care for families.

"The future of evangelisation in Asia depends much more on the regular reading of the Word of God and prayer within the family than on any grand institutional programmes," he said in his speech.

Cardinal David presented a three-phased spiritual and organisational synodal journey.

In the first phase, he said, the faithful or the People of God spontaneously express their opin-

ions and convictions of faith. In the second, Church leaders [bishops and clergy] reflect and discern those expressions under the light of the Holy Spirit.

The third phase is most crucial and challenging, Cardinal David said. "It's moving beyond mere words and reviews to actively transform and change our practical lifestyle and pastoral services."

During the gathering, the participants joined group discussions and presented synthesis reports for a roadmap for the future action plans for families in line with the Bangkok Document.

Reflections from the vicar general

By Father Paul Kam Po-wai

Simplicity, joy and mercy

The Taizé Community is made up of around 80 brothers from various Church backgrounds, including Catholic, Anglican and Protestant, representing nearly 30 countries. Its very existence is a "parable of communion"—a living symbol of reconciliation between divided Christians and divided peoples. Brother Roger, the founder of the community, created a simple rule for life: "Every day, let your work and rest be enlivened by the Word of God; keep inner silence in all things and you will dwell in Christ; be filled with the spirit of the beatitudes: joy, simplicity and mercy."

I first visited the Taizé Community in France during the summer holidays of 1992, staying for two weeks. My second visit was in the summer of 2006—a gap of 14 years. During those 14 years, the songs and prayers of Taizé constantly echoed in my heart and mind. I remember when I was a missionary in Africa [2003–2006], the chant "Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten..." kept me constant company. I even translated it into Swahili to share with the parishioners there.

After returning to Hong Kong from Africa in 2006, I began holding regular monthly prayer meetings with a group of Hong Kong young people who had spent three months experiencing life at Taizé. We met at Ss. Cosmas and Damian Church in Tsuen Wan and St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Tsing Yi. This continued until 2018, when I left Hong Kong for missionary work in Cambodia. During those 12 years, alongside the monthly Taizé prayer meetings, I also helped the diocese from 2007 onwards to select one or two young people each year to go and experience life with the Taizé Community for three months.

Starting in 2010, the monthly youth retreats organised by the Diocesan Youth Commission began adopting Taizé prayer. From 2011, I joined young people on numerous occasions to take part in European, Asian and African youth meetings hosted by the Taizé Community. Then, for three consecutive years, we collaborated with the Taizé brothers in Hong Kong to arrange five-day, four-night gatherings for young people in East Asia: in 2015 at Yim Tin Tsai [with 50 participants], in 2016 at Caritas Oi Fai Camp, Cheung Chau [300 participants], and in 2017 at Ng Wah Catholic Secondary School [270 participants]. We also actively promoted this prayer of communion to prepare for the Taizé Asian Youth Gathering held in Hong Kong in 2018.

During my three years in Cambodia, Taizé prayer was still very much a part of my life. Although it wasn't as frequent as in Hong Kong, we still held events occasionally in different parishes. After returning to Hong Kong in 2021, I came across the monthly Taizé prayer again at Holy Redeemer Church in Tuen Mun. Once I became vicar general, I arranged for Taizé prayer to be part of the Vocation Commission's monthly spiritual gatherings. It was also featured in the three-day, two-night "Gathering of the People of God" held at the cathedral in October 2023. In May last year, we worked with the Taizé brothers again at Wah Yan College Kowloon, St Ignatius Chapel and All Saints' Cathedral [Anglican], and did so again this May at St Benedict's Church in Sha Tin and Holy Spirit Church [Anglican], organising a Hong Kong Taizé Asian Youth Gathering for 300 people.

These experiences have had a profound impact on me. It is not just about the Taizé prayer itself, but the spirit lived out by the brothers: simplicity, joy and mercy—and especially their mission of unity and communion. Attending these large gatherings in different places and seeing brothers and sisters from various countries and Christian denominations come together in the Lord's name—leaving differences aside to learn from, listen to, and share with one another—moves me deeply every single time. Witnessing the transformation and growth in the faith lives of these young people never fails to touch my heart, making me praise the Lord's grace from the bottom of my soul.

In Hong Kong, several Catholic and Protestant groups hold monthly Taizé prayer meetings. However, it is worth asking ourselves: what do we experience, feel and gain from these gatherings? Have we ever thought about the shared purpose behind them all? They are an invitation for us to live out the spirit of simplicity, joy and mercy, and to embrace our mission of unity and communion.



Interfaith peace march in Jerusalem counters rising violence and division

JERUSALEM (OSV NEWS): On May 18, religious leaders united Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Druze in a peace march through Jerusalem, holding placards for “justice”, “trust”, and “peace”. The march followed recent clashes, where Israeli ultra-nationalists chanting racist slogans confronted Palestinian residents in the Old City during the annual Jerusalem Day Flag Parade.

Now in its fourth year, the interfaith event—organised by the Forum for Human Rights—offers a peaceful alternative to the increasingly violent Flag March, where young settlers, under heavy police presence, harass Palestinian residents who have not shuttered their shops or stayed at home.

There have also been attacks on journalists and Israeli left-wing activists supporting Palestinian residents.

Jerusalem Day marks the 1967 reunification, when East Jerusalem was brought under Israeli control, uniting it with the west of the city.

“We march this evening out of a deep commitment to the sanctity of life—of every human life—and to the ability to see an entire world within every woman, man, and child,” said Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie, co-chairperson of the Board of Rabbis for Human Rights, at the YMCA opening ceremony.

“Precisely in these days when it is so easy to become accustomed to pain, to fear and to the language that divides us, we seek to remind ourselves and those around us that life precedes every conflict, and that preserving our humanity is a spiritual, moral and courageous act.”

Nuns, priests, rabbis, young people, families, and ultra-



Religious sisters, priests, and rabbis and activists gathered on the grounds of the YMCA alongside young people with piercings, families and ultra-Orthodox Jews for the opening ceremony of the interfaith peace march of the Forum for Human Rights in Jerusalem on May 18.

Photo: OSV News/courtesy Jacob Lazarus

Orthodox Jews gathered at the YMCA, where Christian resident Nadeen Fanous sang a prayer for God’s mercy in Aramaic.

“Being here as part of a movement of love and friendship helps us leave behind hate and division. We must build a common vision,” Fanous said.

Sister Monica Dullmann, a German Sister of St. Joseph of the Apparition who has lived in Jerusalem for decades, said she was pleased to see so many marching for peace, friendship, and trust.

She said, “I believe in peace and justice, and it is nice to be together with others who feel the same way and together we will be stronger. I have always believed peace is possible and I still believe it.”

Lilach Friedland, 37, from Jerusalem, said the 14 May Flag Parade was “sad and racist”, but at the YMCA she found “buds of peace” and hope.

Avraham and Shlomit Kelman, Orthodox Jews, brought

their sons to show them that a shared life in Jerusalem is possible.

“We are all upset about what is happening in the country and all the violence that is happening, so we are here in solidarity with other people of different religions and nationalities. It is exciting to be in a place where we can publicly march together and show our solidarity,” said Avraham. “It is the contradiction of Jerusalem. There is so much love and hatred [at the same time], but it shows there can be another way that can bring people together and celebrate our differences.”

Nadia Attallah, 62, a Druze activist from northern Israel, joined the interfaith march to promote religious peace and draw attention to the 2025 massacre of Syrian Druze by Bedouin militia in Suwayda.

“Peace is the only way,” she said.

Israeli shopkeepers congratulated marchers, and cars honked in support as the group walked from the YMCA to Jaffa Gate.

Father Piotr Zelazko, a Polish priest and patriarchal vicar for Hebrew-speaking Catholics, said the march is part of his identity. He led his choir in “We Shall Overcome” at Jaffa Gate.

“If we stop praying for peace, there will be no peace,” he said. “When religions walk together, peace will walk with them. Some people say Middle Eastern religions cause the problems; I would rather seek the solution in loving God and loving each other. When you get to know other people—when you see the other—you are no longer strangers.”

He said, “We want to end this. This initiative is a little step to finish the conflict.”

Care for peace is care for life, pope says

VATICAN (SE): “In this Jubilee Year of Saint Francis of Assisi, let us remember his message of peace with God, with our brothers and sisters, and with all creatures,” Pope Leo XIV said as he prayed the Regina Caeli on May 10, *Vatican News* reported.

Recalling that *Laudato Si’* Week runs from May 17 to 24, Pope Leo encouraged the members of the *Laudato Si’* Movement and all those who work for an integral ecology to renew their commitment.

The annual event celebrates the anniversary of Pope Francis’ encyclical on care for our common home, inviting all people to move from hope to action.

“Sadly, in recent years, due to wars, progress in this direction has been greatly impeded, Pope Leo lamented, “Therefore, I encourage the members of the *Laudato Si’* Movement and all who promote an integral ecology to renew their commitment. Indeed, caring for peace is caring for life!”

EDITORIAL

SUNDAY EXAMINER

24 MAY 2026

Pentecost and conversation in the Spirit

THIS SUNDAY, MAY 24, is Pentecost, marking the conclusion of the sacred 50 days of the Church’s Easter season. On this day, we celebrate the birth of the Church, commemorating that profound moment when the faithful gathered as one and the Holy Spirit descended upon them in the form of tongues of fire.

Although those present originally spoke different native dialects, the grace of the Holy Spirit enabled everyone to understand one another across linguistic divides. This miraculous gathering became the very prototype of the ecclesial community, making Pentecost truly the birthday of the Church.

The sight of people from diverse regions and ethnicities instantly comprehending one another despite language barriers must have been deeply awe-inspiring. Effective communication begins with mutual listening. Yet, in modern life, genuine listening is an increasingly rare virtue.

When we participate in meetings, do we truly and attentively listen to others? Or do we merely attend in order to “hear” rather than genuinely “listen”? In a bustling metropolis like Hong Kong, where people are consumed by the relentless demands of study and work, many find themselves replying to managerial messages on WhatsApp long after office hours have ended. The virtue of “listening” is precisely what the general public lacks nowadays.

The second aspect of good communication is speaking. In a meeting, if only one party speaks and does not allow the other side to express themselves, it becomes merely a “one-man show”—issuing orders without any genuine exchange. Such situations are common in groups, corporations, and even at the international level among nations.

At the time of writing, Iran has imposed restrictions on commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, announcing that vessels must pay a transit fee to pass. Meanwhile, the United States has introduced blockade measures against Iranian ports, escalating the confrontation between the two sides into a state of “drawn swords and bent bows”. Despite appeals from many international leaders for both sides to lay aside their prejudices and return to the negotiation table, both Iran and the United States stubbornly hold to their own positions. Both nations remain entrenched, failing to prioritise the well-being of ordinary people, which is truly disappointing.

When we apply these crucial principles of listening and speaking to our faith community, we are immediately reminded of the vision of a synodal Church. A synodal Church places immense value on the mutual listening of all the People of God, engaging in conversation in the Spirit. It is a space where every individual’s voice is respected, free from immediate refutation or judgement.

By fostering this environment, a synodal Church enables the entire faithful to respond collectively to God’s call, manifesting the true communal nature of the Church as we walk together to fulfil our shared mission of evangelisation.

May the Holy Spirit, our Advocate and Guide, fill the hearts of the faithful and kindle within us the fire of divine love. *SE*

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Address all correspondence to the editor of the Sunday Examiner.

Pope Leo XIV to publish encyclical on artificial intelligence on May 25

VATICAN (OSV NEWS): Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, will be published on May 25, addressing artificial intelligence and the protection of human dignity, the Vatican announced on May 18.

The encyclical, the title of which is Latin for "Magnificent Humanity," was signed by the pope on May 15, the 135th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII's foundational 1891 social encyclical on labour and capital written during the first Industrial Revolution.

In an unprecedented first, Pope Leo will be present in person at the Vatican press conference to mark the publication of the social encyclical, along with a tech founder from one of the world's fastest growing AI companies.

Christopher Olah, co-founder of the artificial intelligence company Anthropic, which developed the AI large language model [LLM] named Claude, will speak on a panel presenting the document at the Vatican's Synod Hall on May 25.

Also joining the panel will be Anna Rowlands, a British theologian specialising in Catholic social teaching who helped organise the Synod on Synodality, and Léocadie Lushombo, a professor of theological ethics at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University. Victor Manuel Cardinal Fernández, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, and Michael Cardinal Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, will also take part in the press conference. Pope Leo and Pietro Cardinal Parolin, the Vatican Secretary of State, will give speeches at the end of the press conference.

The pope has expressed interest in the issue of artificial intelligence and the dignity of work since the first week of his pontificate, telling the College of Cardinals days after his election in May 2025 that he took his papal name partly in honour of Pope Leo



An artificial intelligence illustration.

Photo: OSV News/Dado Ruvic, Reuters

'The ability to access vast amounts of data and information should not be confused with the ability to derive meaning and value from it. The latter requires a willingness to confront the mystery and core questions of our existence'

XIII, whose landmark encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, has shaped the Church's social teaching for more than a century.

"In our own day, the Church offers to everyone the treasury of her social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice and labour," Pope Leo XIV said two days after his election.

The first American pope and a former mathematics major, Pope Leo has returned to the subject of AI again and again in speeches, messages and interviews in his first year, leading *Time* magazine

to include him on its 2025 list of the world's most influential people in artificial intelligence, with the magazine describing him as a spiritual counterweight to Silicon Valley.

The pope has addressed the issue of AI in venues ranging from a sports stadium packed with teenagers, whom he told to use AI "in such a way that

if it disappeared tomorrow, you would still know how to think," to a gathering of legislators from 68 countries, where he insisted that artificial intelligence is a tool meant to serve human beings, not replace them. The pope has also warned priests not to use chatbots to write their homilies and expressed concern for AI's potential effect on children's "intellectual and neurological development."

The pope's 2026 message for the 60th World Day of Social Communications, published in January, has been his most robust document on AI and protecting human dignity to date. In the papal message, he underlined that "our faces and voices are unique, distinctive features of every person" that reveal "a person's own unrepeatable identity" and that by "simulating human voices and faces, wisdom and knowledge, consciousness and responsibility, empathy and friendship," AI systems "encroach upon the deepest lev-

el of communication, that of human relationships."

Pope Leo also warned that AI systems "have increasingly taken control of the production of texts, music and videos," putting "much of the human creative industry at risk of being dismantled and replaced with the label 'Powered by AI,' turning people into passive consumers of unthought thoughts and anonymous products without ownership or love."

In a December speech to participants in an AI conference, the pope said, "The ability to access vast amounts of data and information should not be confused with the ability to derive meaning and value from it. The latter requires a willingness to confront the mystery and core questions of our existence."

He said, "It will therefore be essential to teach young people to use these tools with their own intelligence, ensuring that they open themselves to the search for truth."

Pope approves creation of interdicasterial commission on AI

VATICAN (OSV): Pope Leo XIV approved the creation of an Interdicasterial Commission on Artificial Intelligence in a rescript released on May 16 and signed by Michael Cardinal Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

The pope approved the establishment of the commission while considering "the development in recent decades of the phenomenon of Artificial Intelligence and the most recent accelerations in its widespread use; its potential effects on human beings and on humanity as a whole; the Church's concern for the dignity of every human person, especially in relation to their integral development," said the document, which was dated May 12.

Pope Leo approved the creation of the interdicasterial body following an audience with Cardinal Czerny on May 3. The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development will coordinate the work of the Commission for the first year.

The rescript explained that the commission is made up of representatives from seven Vatican bodies: the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the Dicastery for the

Doctrine of the Faith, the Dicastery for Culture and Education, the Dicastery for Communication, the Pontifical Academy for Life, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.

Each of these institutions will be in charge of coordinating the commission in turns for one-year terms, which can be renewed. The pope would then decide the next body that will lead the works of the commission.

The text explains that "it is the responsibility of the coordinating institution to facilitate collaboration and the exchange of information among group members regarding activities and projects related to Artificial Intelligence, including policies on its use within the Holy See, while promoting dialogue, communion, and participation."

Cardinal Czerny established the body according to Article 28 of the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*, under which the head of a dicastery may create a special interdicasterial commission to address matters that touch the responsibilities of several dicasteries and that require "mutual and frequent consultation."

This is not the first time dicasteries have come together to address this issue. In January 2025, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery for Culture and Education published the doctrinal note *Antiqua et Nova* [Old and New] on the relationship between artificial intelligence and human intelligence.

Additionally, the theme has been present throughout Pope Leo's pontificate, as he has often spoken about artificial intelligence and other technological advancements and the challenges they can pose to our society.

As early as 10 May 2025, only days after his election, in a meeting with the cardinals, the pope explained that his choice of papal name was inspired by Pope Leo XIII who addressed the issues brought about by the industrial revolution in his encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*.

He then highlighted that "in our own day, the Church offers to everyone the treasury of her social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice and labour."

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 Helpers for Domestic Workers : 2523 4020
 Equal Opportunities Commission : 2511 8211
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Philippine Church leaders condemn corruption, urge national renewal

MANILA (AGENCIES): “The righteous anger of our people is not born of hatred, but of betrayal,” said Bishop Ruperto Santos of the Diocese of Antipolo, the Philippines, as he called on Filipinos to pursue “truth, justice, and peace” amid mounting public frustration over corruption, unresolved national controversies, and economic hardships facing the country, *RVA News* reported.

In a pastoral message made public on May 18, Bishop Santos acknowledged what he described as the anger, exhaustion, and disappointment felt by many Filipinos amid political tensions and governance issues.

“Many Filipinos today are not



of integrity among leaders.

The message cited several issues confronting the country,

“These are not mere headlines; they are wounds in our national soul,” Bishop Santos said.

The bishop also warned against allowing political conflict and division to overshadow deeper social issues affecting ordinary Filipinos.

“Amid all this, political noise dominates the public square,” Bishop Santos said, adding, “Arguments, accusations, and divisions drown out the more urgent cries of our people.”

‘Amid all this, political noise dominates the public square. Arguments, accusations, and divisions drown out the more urgent cries of our people’

The bishop also emphasised moral accountability, saying that while some public officials may appear untouched by legal or political consequences, no person ultimately escapes divine judgment, according to *RVA News*.

“God is the ultimate judge of all things, and no one escapes his justice,” he said.

The message ended with a call for national renewal grounded in “conversion, responsibility, and renewed commitment to the common good.”

Alongside the statement was a prayer asking for healing, integrity among leaders, justice for the oppressed, and unity among Filipinos amid social and political tensions.

The prayer appealed for wisdom “amid anger, courage” amid frustration, and light “amid darkness,” while entrusting the nation to “Our Lady of Peace

Members of the Social Action Network of the Philippine Catholic Church.
Photo: LiCAS News/Caritas Philippines

and Good Voyage.”

Meanwhile, *LiCAS News* reported that Caritas Philippines and the Social Action Network together with at least 36 bishops, dozens of clergy, and diocesan social action directors from across the country, launched a nationwide “prayer and action” initiative calling on Catholics to support efforts to proceed with the impeachment trial of the country’s vice president, Sara Duterte, and uphold the rule of law.

In a May 17 statement they said, “We appeal to the members of the Senate to abide by what the Constitution directs: to proceed with the trial and . . . adhere to the rule of law and serve the common good in the pursuit of justice and truth.”

LiCAS News reported that the network cautioned senators against delaying the proceedings, saying, “To delay the trial is to delay justice for both the Filipino people and the vice president.”

The statement was signed by Bishop Gerardo Alminaza of San Carlos, president of Caritas Philippines, along with bishops from dioceses and archdioceses across the country.

Earlier, senator and former national police chief, Ronald “Bato” Dela Rosa, who had been in hiding for some seven months, reappeared in the Senate to briefly seek refuge after the ICC unsealed a warrant for his arrest for crimes against humanity tied to the brutal drug war of former president Rodrigo Duterte. *PhilStar* reported that he had fled the Senate compound early on May 14 and his whereabouts are unknown.

The Philippine government invoked the deaths of drug war victims and described Dela Rosa as a “fugitive from justice” in a Supreme Court filing seeking to clear the way for the enforcement of the ICC arrest warrant against the former police chief.

Thai bishops press lawmakers to pass Clean Air Act

Thailand’s Catholic bishops have urged the country’s parliament to immediately pass the Clean Air Management Act as hazardous smog continues to affect communities across the country.

On May 14, Archbishop Francis Xavier Vira Arpondratana, president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Thailand [CBCT], submitted a petition to the Speaker of the House calling for the approval of the measure now under parliamentary review.

The petition invoked Section 147 of the Thai Constitution and described clean air as a fundamental human right that must be protected by the state.

Drawing from Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si*, the bishops said care for the environment is inseparable from the protection of human life and dignity.

“Care for one another and care for our world is closely related to the changes in the air we breathe every day,” the archbishop said in the statement delivered at Parliament.

The appeal comes as northern Thailand continues to face dangerous levels of PM 2.5 pollution.

In late April, air quality readings reportedly reached 164.8 microgrammes per cubic metres in some areas, far exceeding accepted safety levels. More than 2,000 hotspots were also recorded nationwide by the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency [GISTDA].

The bishops described the pol-



Archbishop Francis Xavier Vira Arpondratana reads the Catholic bishops’ statement at the Thai Parliament before submitting a petition urging lawmakers to pass the proposed Clean Air Management Act. Photo: LiCAS News/CBCT

lution crisis as a “quietly creeping threat” fueled by human activity and weak environmental governance.

The statement also warned of growing “environmental injustice,” saying poor communities bear the heaviest burden of worsening air pollution.

While wealthier families can afford air purifiers and sealed indoor environments, farmers, children, ethnic communities, and low-income households remain heavily exposed to polluted air, the bishops pointed out.

The Church outlined several principles behind its support for the proposed law, including the protection of human dignity, stronger coordination across industrial and agricultural sectors, accountability for polluters, and long-term environmental rehabilitation funding.

The draft Clean Air Man-

agement Act received Cabinet approval in 2023 and seeks to establish a national pollution database and a regulatory body authorised to enforce emissions standards and penalties.

But the bill has faced delays in the Senate over legal and technical concerns.

The bishops warned that continued delays could amount to a neglect of public duty and linked the proposed legislation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on health and sustainable cities.

Archbishop Arpondratana said legal reforms alone would not solve the crisis and called for greater public responsibility and corporate accountability.

“Pursuing economic benefits at the expense of breath, health, and the lives of others is against a clear conscience and religious doctrine,” the archbishop said.

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Archbishop Neli of Imphal. File photo: UCAN

Archbishop appeals for peace after deadly ambush in Manipur

IMPHAL (RVA NEWS/UCAN): Archbishop Linus Neli of Imphal in Manipur, India, has made a heartfelt appeal for peace and calm following the tragic ambush on Protestant Church leaders of the Thadou Baptist Association [TBA] in the city's Kangpokpi district, on May 13, 2026, *RVA News* reported.

In a statement titled, "Appeal for Peace and Calm," Archbishop Neli expressed profound grief over the attack on two vehicles carrying church leaders between Kotzim and Kotlen villages. The ambush reportedly claimed innocent lives and left several others injured, deepening fear and uncertainty in the violence-hit state.

Condemning the violence as a "heinous act" against religious leaders who have remained symbols of hope during difficult times, the archbishop called on all communities to reject retaliation and embrace dialogue, forgiveness, reconciliation, restraint, and peaceful coexistence.

According to *RVA News* Archbishop Neli noted that Manipur continues to see sporadic violence, worsening the suffering of the people and threatening communal harmony. He emphasised the urgent need to uphold the sanctity of human life and renew commitments to peace and reconciliation.

"I therefore make a sincere and humble appeal to all concerned to refrain from every form of violence and retaliation," the archbishop said, urging authorities and institutions to act with wisdom, fairness, and sensitivity so that peace with justice may prevail and trust among communities may be restored.

Manipur, which borders Myanmar, has been gripped by ethnic violence between the predominantly Christian Kuki-Zo tribal communities and the

mainly Hindu Meitei community since May 2023. The conflict has left more than 260 people dead, hundreds injured and more than 60,000 displaced, *UCAN* reported.

Several organisations, including the United Baptist Churches Council and the Fellowship of Naga Baptist Associations, expressed shock and grief over the killings, saying the Church leaders had worked tirelessly to restore peace among the warring indigenous Christian communities in Manipur.

According to *UCAN*, relations between Kukis and Nagas turned violent on April 18 when two Naga men were killed in an ambush in Ukhrul district.

The Kukis denied responsibility, but tensions escalated and violence continued. At least 10 people from both communities have since been killed, and several villages have been burned down.

Expressing solidarity with the bereaved families, Archbishop Neli assured prayers for the victims and all those affected by the violence. He prayed that God would comfort the grieving, heal the wounded, and bless Manipur with reconciliation, understanding, and lasting peace.

Meanwhile *Fides* reported on May 15 that the two Salesians [SDB], Albert Panmei Aching and Peter Poji Kuvisie, were abducted at around 9.00pm on May 13 while travelling from the Don Bosco complex in Imphal, to the Salesian centre in Maram, about 20 kilometres away. They were released the next day.

The provincial of the Salesians of Dimapur, Father Joseph Pampackal expressed gratitude to all those who worked for the release of his confreres. He reiterated "the Salesians' commitment to peace-building, dialogue and service in the region."

The fire we have domesticated

by John Singarayar SVD

There is something almost embarrassing about the way Pentecost gets observed. Candles were lit, hymns were sung, and a brief homily about unity was given; the whole thing wrapped up before lunch. We have taken one of the most violent, disorienting moments in religious history—rushing wind, fire on human heads, and a crowd of frightened people losing control of their own tongues—and turned it into an anniversary.

Wildfire is easier to live with once it is framed and hung on a wall.

But the event was not designed for comfortable observance. It was designed to permanently disrupt the people it touched—and through them, every assumption their world had quietly agreed to protect.

The person nobody was translating for

The detail in Acts 2 I cannot stop returning to is this: the people most undone by Pentecost were not the insiders. They were the perpetual outsiders—Parthians, Elamites, visitors from places the Roman world considered peripheral—people who had spent entire lives arriving at important conversations slightly too late, slightly too foreign, and slightly too far from the centre to matter.

For once, nobody translated down to them. The message came first, in their own language, with their own rhythm; as if they were the ones the whole thing had been arranged for.

That inversion is the theological heart of Pentecost. And we have almost entirely ignored it.

Language is never just vocabulary. It is the architecture of belonging. It decides who walks into a courtroom with confidence and who drowns quietly inside it. Who leaves a hospital understanding their diagnosis, and who drives home holding paperwork they cannot read. Across the world, hundreds of millions of people carry this exhaustion—the particular weight of living inside systems built in someone else's language for someone else's convenience.

Pentecost does not spiritualise that exhaustion into patience. It names it as precisely the kind of wall the Spirit came to demolish.

What we preserved while preaching liberation

This is the part that should be

harder to write than it is.

Racial segregation did not infiltrate churches against their will. It was defended from pulpits, protected by theology, and in many places outlasted the explicit arguments for it by decades. The communities quickest to cite Pentecost as their founding moment were, in some cases, the slowest to extend its implications to the person sitting in the wrong pew, drinking from the wrong fountain, or burying their dead in the wrong corner of the churchyard.

Caste is noticeable in India, but no less real—class dressed in the language of merit, sorting people into worthy and disposable with a precision that overt discrimination could never achieve.



I am not writing this from outside that failure. I am writing from inside a tradition that has said the right things with remarkable consistency and done the harder things with remarkable reluctance. That gap is not a footnote. It is the central fact any honest Pentecost reflection has to reckon with.

The Spirit made no distinction between Jew and Gentile, enslaved and free, educated and ignored. Any community claiming that Spirit as its origin carries a permanent obligation to dismantle every structure that still makes those distinctions for us.

That obligation does not soften with time. It accumulates interest.

The God we shrank to fit our borders

Nationalism is an old temptation dressed in new clothes. The instinct to make God local—reliably sympathetic to one nation's anxieties, one culture's preferences, one region's definition of who counts as a neighbour—is as ancient as religion itself and as current as this morning.

Pentecost will not cooperate. The nations did not dissolve in Jerusalem. People kept their languages, their histories, their complexity. But the Spirit moved across every boundary that

human beings had declared permanent, authorised by no government, contained by no border, and fluent in every tongue that power had ever dismissed as peripheral.

Any theology that has God cheering reliably for one side has not met the God of Pentecost. It has built a more comfortable substitute and given it the same name.

The questions we keep postponing

Acts 2 does not close with a moved crowd dispersing back to their previous arrangements. It ends with a community that looks structurally different from everything around it—eating across old divisions, sharing across old boundaries, and growing precisely because it refused to reconstruct the hierarchies it had just been freed from.

That community is still the goal. Which means the questions Pentecost keeps asking are stubbornly specific.

Who is absent from your community, and when did you stop being troubled by that? Whose cultural assumptions quietly run the room while everyone pretends the room is neutral? Where does your stated theology and your actual practice diverge—and how long have you been too busy to notice the distance?

I have sat in enough rooms to know these questions do not get easier with familiarity. They get easier to avoid. That is not the same thing.

What the fire actually touches first

Here is what took me a long time to understand: Pentecost is not primarily a social programme. The barrier it breaks first is interior—the wall between a person and their own belovedness. The shame that convinces someone they are too peripheral to be addressed directly, in their own language, as if the whole thing were arranged for them.

That is where the fire lands first. The racial reconciliation, the caste dismantling, the border-crossing, the redistribution of whose voice fills the room—all of it flows from that original, personal disruption.

You cannot give away a freedom you have not yet received. And you cannot receive it while you are busy domesticating it.

The wind is still moving. The only question worth asking is whether we will finally stop holding the windows shut.

Forty-five years on: attempted assassination of St. John Paul II a turning point in history

WARSAW (OSV NEWS): Before he started his general audience, Pope Leo XIV stepped out of his popemobile on May 13 and walked over to pray beside a plaque marking the spot where Pope St. John Paul II was shot in an attempted assassination and history took a turn that shocked the world 45 years before on 13 May 1981.

“Today we remember the memorial of Our Lady of Fátima,” Pope Leo addressed English-speaking pilgrims during his audience. “On this day 45 years ago an attempt was made on the life of Pope John Paul II, and for these reasons I dedicated my catechesis today to the Blessed Virgin Mary,” he added.

On that fateful day right before lunch, John Paul II rode slowly through St. Peter’s Square in an open white jeep, and he bent down to bless a small girl in the crowd. Seconds later, gunshots rang out.

Turkish gunman, Mehmet Ali Agca, shot the pope at close range. John Paul II collapsed into the arms of his secretary, then-Father Stanislaw Dziwisz. Blood soaked his white cassock as he was immediately rushed to Gemelli Hospital, in what his personal secretary later recalled as a “fight with time” to get the pontiff to the operating theatre.

“One hand fired, and another guided the bullet,” John Paul II would later say, convinced that the Our Lady of Fátima had spared his life. The attack took place exactly on the anniversary of the first apparition of the Virgin Mary to three shepherd children in Fátima, Portugal, in 1917.

In 1982, the pope travelled to Fátima to thank the Blessed Mother for saving his life. The bullet removed from his body was later placed in the crown of the Fátima statue.

Italian journalist, Alberto Micheleni, who covered the pope for decades, said that for John Paul II the connection was never symbolic. “The Marian pope was saved thanks to the hand that diverted the deadly bullet—thanks to the hand of Mary,” Micheleni said. “It was a true miracle.”

Father Miroslaw Cichon, director of the John Paul II Pontificate Documentation Centre in Rome, said that the centre’s archives preserve moving testimonies of the worldwide prayers that followed the attack, including an image of Our Lady of Czestochowa placed on the empty papal chair in St. Peter’s Square after the wounded pope was tak-



Above: Pope John Paul II lies injured in his jeep in St. Peter’s Square on 13 May 1981, after being shot by Turkish gunman Mehmet Ali Agca. File photo: OSV News

Right: On May 13, Pope Leo XIV kneels in prayer at a plaque in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican marking the spot where St. John Paul II was shot. Photo: OSV News/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media



en to the hospital.

Micheleni linked the assassination attempt to the broader collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. “I covered the pope’s first trip to Poland,” he said. “From that extraordinary encounter with the crowds—something that worried the Kremlin greatly—we witnessed, within 10 years, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, the collapse of the Berlin Wall.”

For many historians, the geopolitical dimension of the attack can no longer be dismissed as speculation. Pawel Skibinski, Polish historian and former director of the Warsaw’s Museum of John Paul II and Primate [Stefan Cardinal] Wyszynski, said Soviet authorities viewed the Polish pope as a destabilising force almost immediately after his election in 1978.

“The pontificate of John Paul II was undoubtedly a factor changing the situation of believers in the Eastern bloc,” Skibinski, who is a professor of the University of Warsaw, said.

He said Soviet intelligence services closely monitored Vatican outreach to Catholics behind the Iron Curtain. “We do not have proof of a direct Politburo decision ordering the elimination of Karol Wojtyla,” Skibinski said,

mentioning the highest executive, policymaking body within the Soviet communist party. But the beginning of coordinated activity by Soviet and Bulgarian services around Agca is a historical fact.

Skibinski pointed to findings from investigations conducted by Poland’s Institute of National Remembrance indicating that Agca—after escaping from a Turkish prison—underwent training linked to Soviet intelligence networks in Tehran, Iran.

“The so-called Bulgarian trail is not speculation anymore,” Skibinski said. “From a historical point of view, there is no doubt.”

Yet the pope’s survival may have ultimately strengthened his authority rather than weakened it.

“The fact that he paid with his own blood for the truths he proclaimed increased his credibility,” Skibinski said. The attack transformed John Paul II into a global moral figure during one of the most fragile phases of the Cold War.

“It is a very important date in the pontificate,” Michal Senk, director of the Warsaw-based Centre for the Thought of John Paul II, observed that the assassi-

nation attempt intensified themes already present in Cardinal Wojtyla’s spirituality. “It was not a radical change of direction,” he said. “But after the attack he devoted even more attention to suffering, penance and forgiveness.”

Two years after the assassination attempt, on 27 December 1983, the pope visited Agca at Rome’s Rebibbia prison and publicly forgave him—a gesture that became one of the defining images of his pontificate.

Micheleni said the pope’s embrace of Agca became stronger than any speech about forgiveness. “Karol Wojtyla was a man of gestures,” he said. “His ability to speak to the world even without words transformed him into one of the most extraordinary natural leaders of our era.”

Still, Senk cautioned against romanticising Agca or describing the prison meeting as reconciliation. “Agca never asked for forgiveness,” he said. “John Paul II forgave him without being asked. That is something radically evangelical.”

Senk described the Turkish gunman as “a professional killer” and “a compulsive liar,” insisting the burden of forgiveness rested entirely on the pope, who asked Italy to grant an official pardon to his assassin in 1999—eventually granted to Agca in the Jubilee Year 2000 by the Italian president.

Father Miroslaw Cichon remarked that the assassination attempt left a lasting mark on John Paul II’s teaching, especially in his 1984 apostolic letter, *Salvifici Doloris* [On the meaning of human suffering], written in 1984

“He linked his own fate and the fate of the world even more closely to Mary and the message of Fátima,” Father Cichon

said. “The pope’s physical suffering became an integral part of his teaching,” he added.

“That suffering deepened his relationship with US president, Ronald Reagan,” Skibinski said, “who had survived an assassination attempt just weeks earlier.” The two men did not form a kind of secret alliance, Skibinski said, but they did share a common commitment to defending religious freedom and human dignity in Eastern Europe.

Senk noted that even after recovering, John Paul II never fully regained the robust health of his early years. “From that point, he became a man who suffered more often and more visibly,” Senk said. Yet he did not retreat. Security, however, changed forever. The open vehicle in St. Peter’s Square gave way to the glass-enclosed popemobile.

On 25 March 1984, John Paul II consecrated the world—including Russia—although not named specifically in the consecration text—to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, fulfilling a request tied to the Fátima apparitions.

Weeks later, on May 13, a massive explosion at a Soviet naval base in Severomorsk destroyed a large portion of the Northern Fleet’s missile stockpile. Soviet officials blamed a cigarette; no Western government claimed responsibility.

Senk cited the episode as an example of symbolic links many Catholics drew between Fátima and the weakening of Soviet power.

“The coincidence of dates is striking,” Skibinski noted. He and others noted that John Paul II viewed history through a spiritual lens, where grace and geopolitics were intertwined. Father Cichon added that in his 2005 book, *Memory and Identity*, the pope interpreted the assassination attempt “above all in theological terms.”

By the end of the 1980s, the Berlin Wall had fallen and communist regimes across Eastern Europe had collapsed. Two years later, the Soviet Union dissolved.

Iconic Italian television journalist, Micheleni said: “Perhaps the full truth about the assassination will never emerge, but it was clear that the Slavic pope had become a destabilising force for the last empire.”

Father Cichon added that the assassination attempt marked a turning point—a “threshold moment,” giving John Paul II’s ministry a more “distinctly martyr-like and mystical” dimension.

Notice Board



Blessings I am most thankful for

I am most thankful for the ability to provide for my family. Being a breadwinner is difficult, but I feel happiest when I can help them. Seeing their smiles and feeling their relief reminds me of my purpose. I know I can succeed with God's help; nothing compares to having him by my side.

— Dolores G. Balayong

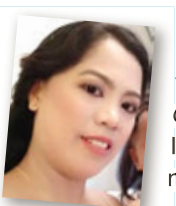
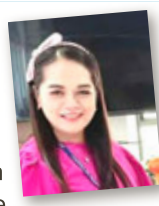


I am thankful to be alive and to serve as a mother and as God's apostle. Motherhood is challenging, but it is also the most fulfilling role I have ever held.

— Rosario G. Balayong

When I face difficulties, I am most thankful for God's presence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I surrender everything to God and pray for his Spirit to lead me; his presence comforts and strengthens me in my struggles. I am also thankful for his forgiveness, which reminds me that I am not alone and that he heals me. Most of all, I am grateful for God's love and purpose—his love brings hope, and his plan works for my good even when I don't understand. I focus on the Lord's promise in Matthew 28:20: that he will be with me until the end of the age.

— Teofila Dote Kudemus

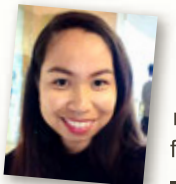
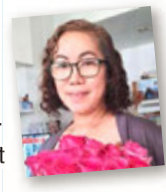


My pregnancy during the pandemic was both a blessing and a difficult trial. My husband could only come home every three months, so I often felt alone. On my due date, I started bleeding, and the hospital almost didn't admit us. Thankfully, I gave birth normally to a healthy baby. When I held my child, I felt God's comfort—after every trial, my baby became my greatest reward.

— Laureen Labiscase

As an OFW, I am thankful for the opportunity to keep learning despite my challenges. Not everyone is blessed with a kind and supportive employer. Even when I feel stressed or overwhelmed, I remind myself that these struggles help me become stronger, more disciplined, and more determined to do good. I am also grateful for the support system around me that motivates me to keep serving the Lord. God is good all the time.

— Edith Ringor



As I journey each day as an OFW, positivity and prayer help me stay strong. The road can be bumpy and the struggles can feel heavy, especially with my family so far away. However, I am thankful for the gift of resilience God has given me. Even with internal scars, I continue to stand firm and grow braver every day for my children back home.

— Haidee Dumaboc-Testado

Waking up each day—with the ability to move, breathe, and appreciate the beauty of life and the people around me—is my greatest blessing, even when I face difficulties. I believe that when I trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, the impossible becomes possible.

— Genelita Tomanog



*God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble. — Psalm 46:1*

Responding to God's Love for me

What does God require of us? Simply that we love as he loves! God is love and everything he does flows from his love for us. God loved us first, and our love for him is a response to his exceeding grace and kindness towards us. The love of God comes first, and the love of neighbor is firmly grounded in the love of God. The more we know of God's love and truth, the more we love what he loves and reject what is hateful and contrary to his will.

I realized I can only love God with all of my being because he has loved me first and has poured his love into my heart. It is therefore the love of God in me that overflows and makes me respond with love to God and to my neighbor... on my own, I can't do it.

Because of God's love, I have come to love serving God and my brethren.

Truly, it is the power of God's love that impelled me to love as he loves.

I realised too that the love I give away will just come right back to me. God will multiply whatever we give away with love... and I can say "wow oh wow." Great is the love of God.

Hence, I will do and speak with the love of God, meaning to do everything with love.

Dear God,

How great is your love for us that you would send to us your Beloved Son,

How great is your love for me that you have called me your beloved child,

How great is your love for me that you have poured out unto me your love,

So that I can love as you love.

Truly, how great is my God.

— Mila Apuy



A rosary across the miles

Across the miles, beneath a foreign sky,
I swallow tears and watch the days go by.
The work is hard, the distance breaks my heart,
So far from those who tear my world apart.

Yet in the quiet of a lonely room,
Your mercy, Lord, dispels the heavy gloom.
I pray for strength to let all anger go,
To wash away the bitterness and woe.
For missteps made, for words that caused them pain,
I seek Your grace to make us whole again.

My faith becomes my solid ground,
Where healing peace and fortitude are found.
Though oceans part me from my children's smiles,
Your love sustains me through the weary miles.

I light a candle, place my trust in you,
And find the grace to start my day anew.
With Rosary in hand, I stand secure,
A faithful servant, steadfast and pure.
For by your cross, I learn to lift my load,
And walk with hope along this lonely road.

— Gloria Ruiz





YOUR DAILY MASS GUIDE

MAY 24 – PENTECOST SUNDAY.

Mass of the Solemnity, *Gloria*, sequence, *Creed*, preface for Pentecost (red).

Readings: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23.

MAY 25 – BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH.

Mass of the memorial (white).

Readings: Genesis 3:9-15, 20; John 19:25-34.

MAY 26 – SS. PHILIP NERI.

Mass of the memorial (white).

Readings: 1 Peter 1:10-16; Mark 10:28-31.

MAY 27 – WEDNESDAY: EIGHTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME.

Mass of the day (green).

Readings: 1 Peter 1:18-25; Mark 10:32-45.

MAY 28 – THURSDAY: EIGHTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME.

Mass of the day (green).

Readings: 1 Peter 2:2-5, 9-12; Mark 10:46-52.

MAY 29 – FRIDAY: EIGHTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME.

Mass of the day (green).

Readings: 1 Peter 4:7-13; Mark 11:11-25.

MAY 30 – SATURDAY: EIGHTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME.

Mass of the day (green).

Readings: Judith 17:20b-25; Mark 11:27-33.



Apostleship of Prayer

Themes for May 2026

THAT EVERYONE MIGHT HAVE FOOD

Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

Pentecost Sunday

Jesus promised his disciples that he would not leave them alone and that he would send the Spirit. Today we celebrate the feast of this gift of the Risen One.

While John places the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Easter to show that the Spirit is the gift of the Risen One, Luke places it with the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Pentecost is an ancient Jewish holiday, celebrated 50 days after the Feast of the Passover. It was to commemorate the arrival of the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, where the tablets of the law were given to them. Luke wants to teach that the Spirit has replaced the old law of Moses with the new law of love.

Here's what the law of the Spirit is: it is the new heart; it is God's life. When it enters into a person, it transforms them and from a bram-

ble to a fruitful tree, able to spontaneously produce the works of God.

When a person is filled with the Spirit, something unheard of happens in them. They love with the love of God himself. From that moment "he does not need someone to teach him" (1 John 2:27); he won't require another law.

And the thunder, the wind, the fire? In the book of Exodus these phenomena accompanied the gift of the old law. "All the people witnessed the thunder and lightning and heard the blast of the trumpet and saw the mountain smoking" (Exodus 20:18).

The rabbis said that on the day

The Spirit — hope for a new world

of Pentecost at Sinai, when God gave the Law, his words took the form of 70 tongues of fire, indicating that the Torah was destined for all peoples (thought to be exactly 70 at that time).

Luke uses the same imagery during the gift of the Spirit—the new law. If he wanted to be understood he had to use the same images.

And the many languages spoken by the apostles? Probably Luke refers to a common phenomenon in the early Church. After receiving the Spirit, the believers began to praise God in a state of exaltation. As if in ecstasy, they uttered strange words in other languages.

Acts 2:1-11;
Readings: 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13;
John 20:19-23

Luke has used this phenomenon in a symbolic sense to teach about the universality of the Church. The Spirit is a gift meant for every person and every people.

Faced with this gift of God, all barriers of language, race and tribe collapse. On the day of Pentecost, the opposite of what happened at Babel occurred (Genesis 11:1-9).

Whoever lets themselves be guided by the Gospel and by the Spirit speaks a language that everyone understands and everyone joins in: the language of love.

It is the Spirit who transforms humankind into one family where all understand and love each other.

● Father Fernando Armellini

SCJ

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Sa unang pagbasa mula sa aklat ng mga Gawa ng mga Apostoles (2:1-11) nasasalaysay ang pagdating ng Banal na Espiritu noong Pentekostes. Sa pagdapo sa kanila ng Espiritu, ipinagkaloob sa mga alagad ang di pangkaraniwang kakayahang makapagsalita sa iba't-ibang wika. Nagkaroon sila ng lakas, tapang, at katalinuhan na mangaral sa mga taong galing sa iba't-ibang bansa. Sa kapangyarihang bigay ng Espiritu Santo marami silang naakit para kay Kristo at marami din ang tumanggap ng binyag.

Sa Ebanghelyo ni (Jn. 20:19-23) sinabi ni Hesus sa kanyang mga alagad, "Kung paanong sinugo ako ng Ama, gayon din naman, sinusugo ko kayo." Pagkatapos, sila'y hiningahan niya at sinabi, "Tanggapin ninyo ang Espiritu Santo."

Ang dalawang magkahiwalay na pagbibigay ng Espiritu Santo sa mga alagad ay hindi magkasalungat. Hindi ibig sabihin na sa Pentekostes lamang dumating ang Espiritu Santo. Sa katunayan magkapareho ang

layunin ng pagbibigay ng Espiritu sa dalawang pagbasa, at ito ay upang isugo at palakasin ang mga apostoles sa kanilang misyon—ang mga Kristiyano ay sinusugo ni Kristo upang ipangaral ang Mabuting Balita, gawing tagasunod ni Kristo ang lahat ng bansa, at binyagan sila sa ngalan ng Banal na Santatlo.

Ang Pentekostes ang pagsisimula o inauguration ng Misyon ng Simbahan. Bilang kaluluwa ng Simbahan, ang Espiritu Santo ay siya ring lakas at kapangyarihan sa likod ng bawat pagmimisyon ng Simbahan. Paano natin maipaliliwanag ang mga bunga ng misyon kung wala dito ang impluwensya at tulong ng Espiritu Santo? Ito'y paalala sa atin na sa mga gawang Simbahan, huwag tayong umasa lamang sa sariling talino at kakayahan. Ang Espiritu ang siyang tagapaggabay ng ating misyon, at

tayo ay mapalad nang gamiting mga kasangkapan niya.

Ang bisa at kapangyarihan ng Espiritu Santo ay makikita natin sa pagbabagong nagaganap sa buhay ng sino mang tumanggap ng Espiritu. Malinaw ito sa tapang at katalinuhang ipinamalas ng mga Apostoles matapos ang Pentekostes. Nagagawa na nila ang mga gawa ng Diyos kagaya ng pagpapagaling ng maysakit. Hindi na sila takot sa banta ng pag-uusig, pagkakakulong, at kahit kamatayan pa.

Kung paanong nabago ang buhay at layunin ng mga alagad ganoon din sana mabago ng Espiritu ang ating buhay at pagkatao.

Oo nga't dapat tayong humayo—'reach-out' ika nga —upang maibahagi natin ang ating pananampalataya at ang iba ay makatanggap ng kaligayahan at

kaligtasang handog ni Kristo. Ngunit bilang mga misyonero ng ebanghelyo, ang una at mas dakila nating magagawa ay bigyang pagkakataon ang Espiritu na baguhin tayo sa pag-iisip, pananalita, sa puso't damdamin, sa pagkilos at paggawa. Sa ganitong paraan magiging saksi tayo ni Kristo, kalarawan ni Hesus, mga galamay ng Espiritu, at tagapagdala ng pagpapala at pagmamahal ng Diyos sa ating kapwa.

Isang munting panalangin na pwede mong ulit-ulitin: Holy Spirit, you who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue, want to thank you for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from you no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with you and my loved ones in your perpetual glory. Amen.

● Chaplaincy for Filipinos

Are you saved?"— That's a question often heard from well-meaning Christians who want to help others know Jesus Christ. As Catholics whose faith is centred in him, we can appreciate their good intentions and admire their willingness to talk about God.

Even so, we may have trouble understanding what their question is really all about. What exactly do people mean when they talk of being already "saved"?

Most often, Christians asking this question view salvation as a past event that took place when they made a confession of faith in Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour. This act of faith, they believe, now guarantees them a place in heaven, no matter what they may do for the rest of their lives. They will never have to face the punishment of hell for their sins.

The teaching of the Catholic Church helps us understand that this is actually a mistaken notion of salvation. Jesus Christ came to give us much more than a kind of eternal "fire insurance policy." Salvation in the fullest sense is an ongoing process that won't be complete until after we die. In the meantime, it's still possible to turn away again from God.

When someone asks us, then, whether we're "saved," perhaps the best short answer is this: "Well, I'm doing what the Apostle Paul tells us

Can salvation be guaranteed?

FAITH ALIVE!



in Jesus Christ, that we recognise him as our Savior and Lord, and that our goal is to be counted one day among the saints in heaven. But why end the discussion there? If you want to take it a step further, try this approach. Say, "Now I have a question for you: We both know that Jesus saves us from sin. But what are we saved for?"

This query shifts the focus of the conversation. Exploring the answer together can help the other person grasp more fully and accurately what it actually means to be saved.

We make choices every day that draw us closer to God or lead us farther away from him. That's why simply believing in Jesus isn't enough. Friendship with God, like friendship of any kind, is more than just getting acquainted. It involves making a series of choices to love, over the long term, so that a committed relationship grows.

Faith is useless, then, without good works. God must have our active cooperation, because both our minds and our wills — the full likeness of God — must be renewed if we're to be saved in the end.

● Paul Thigpen
OSV News



CHINA BRIDGE

The bridge of May Day St. Joseph the Worker

Ambrose Mong

International Workers' Day on May 1 has become a global symbol of workers' solidarity and rights. It serves as a reminder of the exploitation of workers in the past and the ongoing struggle for fair wages, safe working conditions, and social justice. The day is officially recognized as a public holiday in many parts of the world, including Hong Kong and mainland China.

China's labour

In China, Workers' Day—locally known as Labour Day [劳动节], carries significant historical, political, and social meaning. Officially, the day is celebrated with ceremonies honouring "National Model Workers" [全国劳动模范], where factory workers, farmers, administrative staff, and scientists are recognized and receive awards for their contributions to national development. This tradition underscores the Chinese Communist Party's ideological commitment to the working class.

The Workers' Day serves as a reminder of the dignity of labour. The slogan "Labour is the Most Glorious" [劳动最光荣] aligns with socialist values, affirming that all workers—including intellectuals—form the foundation of China's economic progress and social development, as well as the realization of the "Chinese Dream."

In recent years, the Chinese government has leveraged the long weekend holiday to boost domestic consumption, a phenomenon known as "spending holidays" [假期消费]. Citizens are encouraged to travel and shop, reflecting China's transition from an industry-driven economy to a consumer-driven one.

From a Marxist perspective, International Workers' Day symbolizes proletarian solidar-



St. Joseph holds a carpenter's square in a stained-glass window in the chapel of St. Joseph's College in Patchogue, New York. Photo: CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz

ity against exploitation, uniting Chinese workers with their global counterparts under the famous call from the Communist Manifesto [1848]: "Workers of the world, unite!"

In summary, International Workers' Day in China honours the working class as the backbone of the country's economic progress, reinforces socialist values, and promotes domestic consumption—all under the stewardship of the Chinese Communist Party.

Church's teaching

From a Catholic perspective, International Workers' Day [May 1] offers an opportunity to reflect on the dignity of work, the rights of workers, and the social

teaching of the Church. On May 1, we celebrate St. Joseph the Worker, a feast instituted by Pope Pius XII in 1955, which offers a Christian understanding of labour as a path to holiness and a way to glorify God.

The dignity of human labour lies in its participation in God's creative work. Through work, we exercise our God-given talents, provide for our families, and contribute to the common good. This vision is reflected in the Book of Genesis, where Adam is called to "till and keep" the garden [Genesis 2:15].

In his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* [1891], Pope Leo XIII teaches that the economy must serve the human person. Its core ideas include the dignity of

labour, the right to private property, a just wage, the right of workers to organize, and the duty of the state to protect the poor and vulnerable.

Pope John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens* [1981] focuses on the dignity of human work and the priority of the person over economic systems. He teaches that work is for the person, not the other way around; that labour has moral and spiritual value, not merely economic value; and that it takes precedence over capital, people matter more than profit.

Having a spiritual dimension, work participates in God's creative action. Workers have rights, including fair conditions, just treatment, and the right to form unions

Having a spiritual dimension, work participates in God's creative action. Workers have rights, including fair conditions, just treatment, and the right to form unions.

The Church is critical of both Marxism and capitalism when they reduce workers to commodities.

Workers' Day also calls for solidarity with the poor and exploited, and for economic structures shaped by subsidiarity, so that decisions affecting workers involve them as much as possible rather than being imposed from above.

While rejecting Marxist class struggle, Catholic teaching condemns exploitative capitalism, unjust working conditions, and the idolatry of the market. Unions that advocate justice for workers are in harmony with the Church's prophetic mission.

Pope Francis speaks of "bad work" that denies human dignity, especially employment that leads to exploitation and social disruption. He calls for dialogue and solidarity to address unemployment, inequality, and labour insecurity.

In this way, Francis continues Catholic social teaching, applying it to a post-industrial and globalised economy. In *Fratelli Tutti*, he connects labour to fraterni-

ty by emphasising that a truly humane society must secure dignified work for all.

He treats work not merely as an economic issue, but as a test of whether society upholds solidarity, inclusion, and social friendship. For him, labour is intrinsically tied to fraternity. The poor need more than charity; therefore, society must change its structures to ensure that people can find work and sustain themselves¹.

Pope Leo XIV has made the dignity of work and the moral implications of artificial intelligence central themes of the opening phase of his papacy.

He deliberately adopted the name "Leo" as a tribute to Pope Leo XIII, who authored the landmark 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*—the document that laid the foundation for contemporary Catholic social doctrine on labour rights amid the First Industrial Revolution

By placing Workers' Day under the patronage of St. Joseph, a humble carpenter and foster father of Jesus Christ, the Church elevates labour, showing that holiness is attainable through ordinary work.

From a Catholic perspective, International Workers' Day becomes a time to pray for workers, honour their contributions, and remember Christ himself, who lived as a worker and servant.

May Day as dialogue

International Workers' Day, whether seen through the Church's social teaching or China's socialist tradition, affirms the centrality of human labour in shaping society and humanity.

China emphasises work as the foundation of national progress, while the Church elevates it as participation in God's creative action. By honouring workers, we are reminded that true progress depends on valuing people above profit.

¹ See "Pope Francis: Encounter with World of Work," <https://opusdei.org/en/article/pope-francis-encounter-with-the-world-of-work/> and "Pope sends message for Social Week on the dignity of work," <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2017-10/pope-sends-message-for-social-week-on-the-dignity-of-work.html>.

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Growing together in unity and mission: Church leaders reflect on the journey of Anglican-Catholic friendship in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (SE): In a city often marked by division and polarisation, the visible friendship and collaboration between the Catholic and Anglican communities offers a quiet yet powerful witness to the prayer of Jesus “that they may all be one” [John 17:21].

In an interview conducted during Holy Week on April 1 at the Bishop’s House of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui in Central, Cardinal Stephen Chow, S.J., bishop of Hong Kong, and Bishop Matthias Clement Der Tze-wo of the Hong Kong Island Diocese of Sheng Kung Hui, reflected on the work of the International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission [IARCCUM] and the meaning of ecumenical friendship for the faithful in Hong Kong.

What is IARCCUM?

Bishop Der began by outlining the origins of IARCCUM. The commission traces its roots to the historic 1966 meeting between Archbishop Michael Ramsey of Canterbury and Pope Paul VI in Rome, which initiated formal theological dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.

For the first three decades, this dialogue focused primarily on doctrinal issues. In 2001, IARCCUM was established to move beyond theological discussion towards lived communion, translating the substantial agreements already achieved into practical cooperation and shared mission at the local level.

Key milestones in this journey include the first IARCCUM bishops’ summit in 2016, which gathered bishops from 19 regions in Canterbury and Rome. The second summit, held in January 2024 under the theme “Growing Together,” brought together 27 pairs of Anglican and Catholic bishops. The programme began in Rome and continued in Canterbury.

Both Cardinal Stephen and Bishop Der participated, describing the encounters as deeply moving experiences of prayer, dialogue and fraternity. Cardinal Stephen also preached at the Sunday Choral Eucharist in Canterbury Cathedral on 28 January 2024, marking a historic pulpit exchange.

Gift for the people of Hong Kong

Reflecting on what Anglican-Catholic unity and common



Bishop Matthias Clement Der (right) and Cardinal Stephen gathering at the Bishop’s House of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui on April 1.

mission mean for ordinary believers in Hong Kong, Bishop Der emphasised the importance of mutual recognition and appreciation.

“Each Church carries unique gifts,” he said. “When we appreciate and learn from one another, we can build a spirituality rooted in shared love and offer a more credible witness to the Christian faith in our community.”

Cardinal Stephen echoed this perspective, stressing that Christians are called to live the unity for which Christ prayed.

“The Christian faith is not an ideology,” he said. “Jesus came to reveal the love of God. It is in that love that we unite and bring to the world the true meaning of the gospel.”

He further emphasised that unity does not imply uniformity. Acknowledging the historical differences that have shaped various traditions, he described them as expressions of legitimate pluralism.

“We must learn to appreciate these differences. What matters most is recognising what we share—our common calling and mission,” he said.

Concrete steps: learning to walk together

In recent years, IARCCUM Hong Kong has organised a range of joint initiatives, includ-

ing clergy gatherings, youth programmes, pulpit exchanges, Passover [Seder] meals, retreats and seminars.

Two initiatives were highlighted as particularly fruitful. The joint Passover meal, held for the third time this year, has been hosted alternately by Anglican and Catholic communities at Caritas Hall and the Holy Trinity Cathedral, bringing together 120 Anglicans and 120 Catholics.

Participants were intentionally seated in mixed groups, encouraging interaction and dialogue. Lay faithful took an active role, and the evening provided space for conversation and shared experiences. Many participants noted how much they had in common and found the encounter enriching.

As Bishop Der recalled with a smile, photographs were taken freely, with participants unconcerned about denominational distinctions.

Another significant initiative was a one-day retreat for Anglican and Catholic clergy. Participants shared the joys, struggles and hopes of ordained ministry. A particularly moving moment occurred at the conclusion, when Anglican priests approached Catholic bishops for blessings, and Catholic priests did the same with Anglican bishops. “That is a very powerful witness,” Bishop

Der remarked.

These events demonstrate that ecumenism is both possible and spiritually enriching. Cardinal Stephen also pointed to broader collaborative efforts, particularly in outreach. He noted that his visits to 31 Catholic parishes often included encouraging them to engage with nearby Anglican communities. During the Covid-19 pandemic, both Churches opened their facilities to support the homeless migrant workers and the displaced, offering a tangible expression of Christian charity.

Bishop Der highlighted a youth ecological retreat that fostered meaningful exchange, as well as growing cooperation between specific parishes, including of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui St. Paul’s Church and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Central, alongside other communities in Causeway Bay and West Kowloon.

Cardinal Stephen expressed hope that, one day, theological differences might be overcome to allow shared Eucharistic communion.

A message of hope and love

In their concluding remarks, both leaders offered words of encouragement to the faithful.

Bishop Der invited all Christians to begin with Christ’s commandment: “Love one another.” “By loving one another within the Christian family, we begin to see Christ in others—and Christ within ourselves,” he said.

Cardinal Stephen reflected on the widespread sense of despair in today’s world. “We are called to be messengers of hope,” he said. “Our hope is grounded in the truth that we are loved—loved by the same God. It is this love that gives us the courage to hope.”

He added that this shared faith enables Christians to become “witnesses to God’s unifying love in the world.”

Becoming instruments of fraternity

The encounter with Cardinal Stephen and Bishop Matthias Der serves as a reminder that ecumenism is not merely a concern for specialists, but a concrete expression of the gospel in contemporary Hong Kong—a society in need of reconciliation and hope.

The faithful are encouraged to take simple yet meaningful steps: visiting a neighbouring Anglican church, praying for unity, or extending gestures of friendship. In doing so, they become, as the interview suggests, “instruments of fraternity and collective witness” to the love of Christ.