



Duc In Altum

Put out into the deep (Lk 5:4)

Pope praises Cardinal for 'generous service'



Cardinal Cornelius Sim, the first cardinal of Brunei Darussalam, passed away in Taiwan on Saturday, May 29.

Pope Francis sent his condolences to all the faithful of the Church in Brunei later that same day.

"With gratitude for Cardinal Sim's faithful witness to the Gospel, his generous service to the Church in Brunei and to the Holy See, I willingly join the faithful in praying for his eternal rest," said the Pope.

He extended his Apostolic Blessing upon all who mourn the late Cardinal, "as a pledge of consolation and peace in Jesus, the firstborn of the dead."

Suffering from poor health

Fr Robert Leong, the Vicar General of the Apostolic Vicariate of Brunei Darussalam, announced Cardinal Sim's death in a statement on Saturday, May 29.

The 69-year-old Bruneian passed away at around 8.28am in Chang Gung Memorial Hospital (CGMH), Taoyuan City, Taiwan. After his arrival at the hospital on May 8, the cardinal had to undergo a regulation quarantine before undergoing cell therapy treatment.

"They attended to his health condition every day but unfortunately nothing they did seemed to be very effective. He gradually became weaker and lost most of his vitality. Sadly, he passed away this morning," Fr Leong said. The funeral will be announced at a later date, he said, urging all to pray for his soul and for

the Vicariate.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, also announced his death, saying he passed away "due to cardiac arrest".

The Catholic weekly newspaper, *Herald Malaysia*, said he died while undergoing treatment for cancer.

Engineer turned pastor

Cardinal Sim was born in Seria on September 16, 1951, the eldest in a family of six children. The qualified electrical engineer gained a diploma in electrical engineering from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1971, after which he obtained a B.Sc. degree in electrical engineering from Dundee University, UK, in 1978.

After a successful career of 10 years with the British-Dutch multinational oil and gas company Shell in Brunei and in Europe, he made a major decision to study for the priesthood, much against his mother's wish. He obtained a master's degree in theology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, in 1988.

After returning to Brunei in 1988 he served as administrator at St John's Church in Kuala Belait until his ordination as deacon on May 28, 1989.

Brunei's first native clergyman

At his priestly ordination on November 26, 1989, Fr Cornelius Sim became the first native priest of Brunei.

In 1995 he was appointed the Vicar General of what was then Miri-Brunei Diocese, and when Pope St John Paul II separated Brunei from the Diocese of Miri-Brunei and established the Apostolic Prefecture of Brunei in 1998, he appointed Fr Sim its prefect. When Brunei became a Vicariate Apostolic on Oc-



tober 20, 2004, he became its Vicar Apostolic.

At his consecration on January 21, 2005, he became the first native bishop of Brunei. On November 28, 2020, he was among 13 candidates whom Pope Francis made cardinals at the consistory.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and health reasons, he could not attend the consistory in Rome. The Pope sent the cardinal's red hat and ring to him in Brunei.

On December 16, 2020, he was named a member of the Congregation for the Clergy. Cardinal Sim was cardinal for exactly six months.

Shepherd of expatriate Catholic community Assisted by three priests, Cardinal Sim headed the tiny Catholic community of Brunei, which is mainly made up of some 20,000 expatriate workers.

The wealthy oil and gas-rich nation has a population of some 500,000 people, more than 70 per cent of whom are Muslim.

In an interview with *Vatican News*, the late cardinal had said that the main task of the Bruneian Church is to "provide a home away from home" for the largely migrant Catholic community.

Hence, the Church tries its best to support them, especially in times of trouble such as illness or death. It also helps them financially and with food assistance programmes.

Following the death of Cardinal Sim, the number of cardinals worldwide now stands at 222, from 87 countries. Of these, 125 are below 80 years of age and, therefore, are eligible to vote for a new pope in case of a conclave. The rest 97 are non-electors. — **By Robin Gomes, Vatican News/Agencies**

Coat of Arms



There is no particular historical news about the titular see of Putia in Numidia but the fact that northern Africa (the actual Algeria) was where St Augustine (Bishop of Hippo) was primate and from his see, it is known, he used to give advices to the bishops of Numidia.

In the upper part of the shield there is a golden embattled fess to represent the desert of Numidia with the dunes and an over standing sun, with the monogram of Christ (IHS), rising in the red sky of the desert dawn. In heraldry the sun symbolises Providence and the monogram represents the Christocentric concept of the Providence.

In the lower part of the shield there are many symbols. The silver and blue wavy bars represent the sea. Bishop Sim was born in Seria, a sea city; the sea and the boat appear also in the logo of the Apostolic Prefecture (today Apostolic Vicariate) of Brunei.

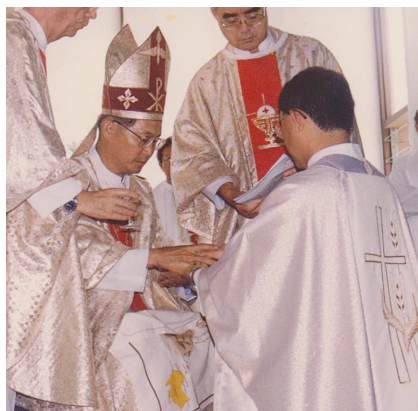
St Augustine and his mother, St Monica (which is also the name of Bishop Sim's mother) left their country by boat to reach Italy. St Monica died in Ostia, close to Rome (where she is buried) and in a stained-glass window of a Roman church, she is painted with a boat close to her.

The silver star is one of the many ways to represent the Virgin Mary (Stella Matutina, Stella Maris, etc.) and reminds the Church of the Immaculate Conception where Msgr Sim was ordained priest. In addition, the star appears in the logo of the Vicariate too.

From a priest, to a bishop, to a cardinal



Priestly Ordination, November 26, 1989.



Episcopal Ordination, January 21, 2005.



His mother bringing the offertory during his priestly ordination.



Motto: *Duc in Altum*

The phrase means "put out into the deep" based on Jesus' encounter with Peter, James, John and Andrew. We have to have a new paradigm, a new vision, and we need to move on and do things in a new way, when things are not working. "Non nova sed novae", which means not new things but in a new way. If we do this, we have a greater chance of spreading the Good News more effectively.



Cardinal Sim with his siblings from L-R: Fred, Bridgit, Charles and Felix.

The composition of Catholics in Brunei

Fr Arin Sugit, the bishop's assistant at Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral in the nation's capital of Bandar Seri Begawan, explained that the majority of Catholics are migrants.

Some 70 per cent of the diocese's Catholics are migrant workers from the Philippines. Another 20 per cent are from other countries such as Indonesia, India and Malaysia. Only some 10 per cent are indigenous Bruneians, he said.

"We're fortunate to have a substantial Filipino congregation, which makes our Church very lively," reflected Bishop Sim. "They bring their faith, with popular pious devotions, and they enrich us and our faith very much."

Fr Sugit was ordained in 2008. The apostolic vicariate's two other priests are Fr Paul Shie, ordained in 1999, and Fr Robert Leong, ordained in 2003.

Catholics are free to practise their faith within the church com-

pounds and at home, but public displays of the faith are restrained.

For example, Fr Sugit said that some 5,000 to 6,000 people attend Mass at Our Lady of the Assumption each Sunday.

Franciscan missionaries brought the Catholic faith to Brunei in 1587. Brunei became a separate apostolic vicariate, an ecclesiastical division, before becoming a diocese in 2004.

Before that, Brunei was part of the Diocese of Miri in Malaysia.

Bishop Sim has also ordained a priest for Miri in 1989.

As a first step to separating Brunei as a diocese, Pope John Paul II made it an apostolic prefecture in 1997 and appointed Father Sim as its prefect apostolic.

His Church, Bishop Sim said, had "a humble beginning, and we have to move on to enrich our faith-based communities."

Bishop Sim, 69, became the first cardinal from Borneo Island. — ucanews.com

He baptised me

"The best place to start about my encounter with His Eminence is back in 1993 when I joined the RCIA programme in St John's Church. Fr Cornelius Sim welcomed me into the church so warmly, like a father. I always enjoyed being with him for he had many stories to share on the faith.

"I was then working with Brunei Shell company and he was an ex-Shell person, so the connection was already there. He encouraged me to join the various groups in the church even before my baptism. So, I joined the choir, was a lector, the St Vincent de Paul and the English Prayer group.

"Fr Sim and I had another thing in common. He loved to

tinker with computers and we matched perfectly for that was my job in Shell. Helping him to assemble a computer from parts and working with floppy discs then meant spending a lot of time in church with him. Never did I feel so happy as when in church and so getting involved and doing anything for the church was never an issue but a priority. I fit right in from the beginning because of him mentoring and guiding me.

"The happiest moment was my baptism by him during the Easter Vigil on April 2, 1994. I have always known him as a caring person, very down to earth. He was part of my journey in faith to the end.

"He will be deeply missed." — **Fr Robert Leong**



The only priest ministering in Brunei

"I first met the late Cardinal Sim in 1989 when he was just a priest. I especially admired him when he was the only priest in Brunei ministering to the three parishes from 1991 to 1993. It was only in 1993 that it was decided that Fr Ivan Fang MHM would return to Brunei to help the then Fr Sim.

"He was a great supporter of the Chinese-speaking group though he was unable to speak the language. Under his encouragement, the group was formed in 1995 and continues to thrive until today. After his episcopal ordination in 2005, Bishop Sim was a frequent traveller, either participating in or giving sessions at international conferences.

"In the past three years, he had been focusing on the young adults, as he was hoping for new vocations to the priesthood. It was only in 2019 when he was diagnosed with cancer that he reduced his travelling.



The COVID-19 pandemic also put a stop to this.

"When everything was arranged for him to go to Taiwan to try some alternative treatment, he shared that he found the 14 days of quarantine one of the most painful processes — being isolated and alone in a small space.

"Upon hearing the news of his passing, the three parishes are praying a nine-day novena. His death is a great loss to the community in Brunei." — **Luke Lau**

He delighted in being with the people

Cardinal Cornelius Sim, a faithful servant of the Catholic Church, served for many years as President of the Regional Episcopal Commission for Social Communications (RCSC) of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei.

For instance, at the annual general meeting of the Commission held online using Google Meet on Oct 29, 2020, and attended by about 15 communicators from across the region, he gave his opinion on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cornelius Sim advised Catholic communicators that during this

time of uncertainty, they should not wait for certainty but enter into a time of creativity and search for opportunities.

He suggested they use the image of a fisherman which might be appropriate for the current situation. For a fisherman is far out on the open sea faced with violent storms, afraid, and without familiar landmarks to navigate by.

"It is during these challenging times, while many simply wait around to see familiar fixed points re-emerge, that communicators are called to be resourceful and imagi-

native and to identify new directions," he said.

Describing the state of fear that people are facing whilst forced to stay indoors for safety during the pandemic, he said that, while keeping their doors shut, they should make sure that as Christians, they do not shut Jesus Christ out of their homes and hearts.

"It's also a time to reflect and to pray fervently, examine the state of our faith, and let the energy of the Spirit lead us out into a new day," he told Catholic social communicators. — **By Joe Leong**



An advocate for mission and communication

"His Eminence was a strong advocate of the importance of Social Communications of the Catholic Church. He was well known for his simplicity, good sense of humour and being tech-savvy, keeping himself up-to-date with the latest communication technologies that could be useful to promote social communications in the community in Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia," said Karen Arukesamy, President, SIGNIS Malaysia in a press release on May 30.

"His passing is a great loss, not just to the clergy but for the laity, whom he often empowered to lead the social communication works in their respective localities. 'His Eminence had always supported the works of SIGNIS Malaysia and had, on many occasions, shared his expertise in our works and outreach."

"SIGNIS Malaysia extends its

heartfelt condolences to family, clergy and fellow community of Brunei on the passing of our dear friend Cardinal Sim," she added.

"I had the privilege of working with him, and having frank discussions on the mission of the Church and Social Communications. He was very supportive of SIGNIS working with the Church," said Lawrence John, SIGNIS VP in a press release on May 30.

"Very significantly, in his pastoral plans and programmes, Cardinal Sim took the side of 'mission' when many of his peers would have opted for 'maintenance,'" added Lawrence, who was the former director of Cahayasuara (Social Communication Centre, Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur).

"We will miss him dearly and always remember how we have been touched by him."

Friendly to those in the media

"CATHOLICS in this region of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei are filled with sadness to receive news of the passing of His Eminence Cornelius Sim of the Apostolic Vicariate of Brunei Darussalam, in Taiwan on May 29.

"As a writer, I have had the opportunity to meet and interview Bishop Cornelius on many occasions. He was truly a good friend of the media, having full understanding of our need as journalists.

Bishop Cornelius was very savvy with the media and always made it a point to respond to our requests for his opinion on current events and issues related to the Catholic Church in this region.

"No matter how busy he was, he never failed to find time for the media. From my personal experience, the views he expressed reflected his wisdom and intellect. His opinions depicted the deep knowledge and understanding of the topics under discussion. He

had a very creative mind and expressed thoughts from outside 'the box'. This quality is a delight to any journalist, for the views he offered each time became solid substance for a good news story.

"The Catholic Church in this region has truly lost the service and leadership of a good shepherd." — **Joe Leong in his capacity as Chairman, Social Communications Commission (SOCCOM), the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu**



Cornelius Sim (seated centre) with delegates attending the AGM of the Regional Commission of Social Communications (RCSC) at the APC, in Kuala Lumpur, June 20-23, 2016. (photo/Joe Leong)

An inspiration in humility and patience

"Cardinal Sim was like a father figure to me. Because I've always been interested in the media, I started out serving in the church by helping to take pictures for youth events. Then, over time, the Cardinal asked me to take pictures for other church events too.

"Eventually I started a youth media team where we did media related projects for the youth. Cardinal was very supportive of us and encouraged us to do projects and gave us ideas like starting a podcast. He would even provide some equipment for us when we needed it for our projects.

"When COVID-19 hit Brunei in March 2020, Cardinal asked for my help to start livestreaming the Masses in our church. From there I worked with him almost every day and got close to him. I had not known how tech savvy he was until he told me his life stories, from building his own PC to collecting cameras to take pictures as his hobby. In a way, we shared some common interests and it was always easy for me to communicate with him regarding media-related projects.

"One of my fondest memories was when I had made some

mistakes during a livestreaming event and I was so upset about it. He did not get upset with me, instead he hugged and comforted me.

"He has always been very comforting and gentle, always thinking of others before himself.

"For me, our Cardinal greatly reflected the love and kindness of God. He was, and will continue to be, an inspiration for me to be humble and patient with others, especially when serving in the Church." — **Faustina, Brunei Darussalam**



Regional Bishops during the Ad Limina visit in February 2018

The Cardinal, Arch/Bishops from Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei made their *ad limina* visit to Rome Feb 4-9, 2018.

The *Ad Limina* visit is formally called '*ad limina apostolorum*,' which means 'to the thresholds of the apostles' Peter and Paul, who were martyred in Rome.



Bishop Cornelius Sim was the main celebrant at a Eucharistic Celebration during the Catholics Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei's Ad Limina visit in Rome from Feb 4-9, 2018.

Bloom where you are planted

“Cardinal Sim administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to my youngest daughter. It was the last Mass at which I heard him speak. His homilies spoke directly to the heart if I am honest. You spoke the Good News and you reminded us not to follow the ways of the world. You had the courage to say what needed to be said to save our souls.

“Long ago, he blessed my engagement and wedding. He baptised and confirmed my children. He visited us in Singapore. All happy memories!

“Twice he persuaded me to stay on to lead a Catholic school even though I wanted to move on. He helped the school to its fullest extent. I will always remember that commitment he had towards us in the school community.

“Before he left for Rome, he told me that he would ask the Pope for apostolic blessings for my family. And he did. The certificate still hangs on our altar wall



as a remembrance.

“His example will live on in my heart. He was faithful to God till the end. He truly was a man of God.

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8). — **Vincent Andrew**

“I knew our shepherd when he was still just Fr Cornelius Sim. I started to know him better when I was a member of the Vicariate Young Adults formation group back in 2008 and also during the WYD 2016 in Poland.

“From 2018 onwards, when he gave me the opportunity to be a Catechist for the confirmation, and in 2019 and 2021 for the post confirmation class, my relationship with him grew. On every step of the way, not once did he turn me away, especially when I needed help and advice with my problems, careers and vocation.

“During the periods when I was

doubting my service in Church, I always remembered the message in one of his homilies – ‘Bloom where you are planted. Bloom where you are planted no matter where you are.’ Till today, it has helped me stay anchored to my faith in the catechetical ministry.

“When it came to the youth, you had to mention Bishop Sim. This is because he was so close to the youth and there was no one that had the heart and dedication for the youth like him. Bishop gave so much of his time and resources to the youth ministry, and he was a father figure to many people, including me. I can’t count how many times he sacrificed

his time for youth — to spend time with them, to hear their confessions, and more importantly to be present with the youths wherever he could.

He may have looked like a stern person but he had a soft heart, a heart that cared and a heart that sought a standard of spiritual maturity. During the last day when my post confirmands met him, we gave him a present and greeting cards. He gave us this message – stay together.

There is so much more that I want to say but I know that this space will not be enough.

We will miss you Cardinal. You will always be in our hearts and prayers. — **Basil Woo**

Called to be joyful

“The late His Eminence, God bless his soul, have always impressed with his calm demeanor, never angry, always soft spoken no matter the situation, clear and succinct in his teachings and had strongly encouraged his ‘sheep’ to always Be Joyful. He will be deeply missed.” — **Francis Teo**

Grateful for knowing him



“The passing of our intercessor, adviser, fellow pilgrim, partner in mission, and spiritual father Cardinal Sim is a personal loss for us. One that we know is echoed by many whose lives he touched in various ways. We are forever grateful for the blessing to know, love, and serve God with him throughout all of our years as youth

coordinators in and for the Vicariate. And with deep sorrow but profound hope, we are one with the multitude in praying for his eternal repose as he finally hears the words from the Master, “Well done, good and faithful servant ...” — **Jen and Aubrey Liew (Jen was the former Parish Youth Coordinator and Aubrey was a Youth Leader and Catechist)**



Picture taken after the Easter Vigil Mass 2021.

A priest of faith and prayer

“When my daughter Samantha was 8 or 9 years old, way back in the late 90s, she was admitted to hospital and diagnosed with appendicitis and was scheduled for operation.

“I informed Fr Sim, our Parish Priest in Seria requesting prayers and being who he is, a loving and caring pastor, he came to our home to pray over her before her surgery planned for that noon.

“After the prayer session, we brought Sam back to hospital.

“At around 1.00pm, the surgeon came around to have a final check before surgery. He asked her to lift her knee to her chest which should have given her pain confirming his earlier appendix diagnosis. To his utter disbelief Sam experienced no pain. The surgeon was not happy about it and he even went to the point to comment that Sam maybe lying so as not to be operated upon.

“However, we knew that God had used the hands of Cardinal to heal her.

“Cardinal Sim has been our humble shepherd all these years and we will miss him greatly. We pray that he receives the promised reward of Eternal life in Heaven.

“To God be the Glory.” — **Samantha, Maria and Shen Ward**

Building communities wherever he went

“I remember Cardinal in his first few years as a newly ordained priest in St John's Church, Kuala Belait as our first local parish priest but still under Miri Diocese.

“We admired a youth who would forgo his high salary in Shell to heed the calling of God to the priesthood so that Brunei would have at least ONE priest instead of being served by laity on weekdays with no Mass but Service only!

“We were so proud of him to stand up as the ‘Robinhood’. He used to tell us stories of his young gallant days, which involved standing up for the helpless bullied ones, not robbing anyone!

“His Eminence, did not speak or read Chinese but he loved the small Chinese Prayer Group. He mingled a lot with us. Some of our English illiterate members spoke to him in Hokkien.

“He went on home visits, hospital visits, etc with some of us and did hours of personal counselling, too, to find out the root of our problem in sinning!

“He formed the first Chinese RCIA with our group and had the Chinese New Year Mass compiled



by us and translated into Mandarin for the sake of the Chinese community in this parish. HE loved to listen to our laughter and exciting sharings.

“He also formed the first home based Prenuptial Instructions by sending me with an English booklet to translate and instruct the couples. He also started the first Wedding Mass for those Chinese elderly couples who did not have a chance to get married in church during WWII or those Chinese youth couples who were mixed-married outside the church.

“He started a number of firsts with these projects to cater for his church community and were very successful.

“Thus he was very dearly loved by all the language groups in this parish. He had an excellent, magnetic singing voice and loved to sing. He regretted never having been to a Chinese school thus could not join us in our Chinese hymns during Mass.

Due to close friendship with his parishioners, a Ladies’ Group was formed which was a hit in the parish! Their excellent cooking and

baking attracted even the town’s people to buy food at the church Breakfast Sale!

“The children had a Children’s Vanguard too, run by the ladies and youth. They had a great time enjoying those interesting moments.

“The working youth were very, very generous with their money and time and passed on their talents to the schooling youth by teaching them! The large group of youth were the most impressive (all my three children served as guitarists or organist for choir during the Sunday Masses). Recalling how one Easter Midnight Mass, all were so high in the Spirit after being brought to a crescendo by the beautiful songs and singing!

“We have many happy and sweet memories of Cardinal Sim as a young priest. Cardinal Sim was a very caring, loving, thoughtful, observant and sentimental priest who took great care of us and walked into our hearts by being what he was! He left footprints in the hearts of many. Till we meet again, dear Cardinal Sim.” — **Adeline Wong**

A father figure to the youth

His Eminence Cornelius Cardinal Sim, to me, was not only a shepherd, he was a teacher who taught me how to love and serve God and how to be a witness to Christ in the life you lead. He was also my inspiration,

especially in the way he loved and cared for the youth in the Vicariate. He loved being close to the youth.

"I remember that during the World Youth Days and Asian Youth Days that I was blessed

enough to be able to attend with Cardinal Sim, he truly enjoyed interacting with and meeting youth from all over the world, who always found him to be very approachable, warm and welcoming." — *Angie*



Bishop was my father figure. The one who kept me rooted in the faith. He was there for me during the many times I'd fallen in life. I will forever remember the day we had that heart-to-heart talk, when he tended to me and assured me that I still had a place to go to. He gave me the words of love and made me feel like I belonged. He saved me from a disastrous future, as he told me that he loves me.

"Bishop Sin was a lovely father to all the youths and we will miss him so much. He always told us, 'I will always support the youth for as long as I'm still able to' and those words we will always keep in our hearts. Rest in peace always." — *Cassandra*

He was supportive and caring

Cardinal Sim to me was a very supportive and caring father who welcomed everyone with open arms. He was like a safe haven and refuge for many people including myself. Throughout the years as I grew up, I found a home with him.

"Cardinal Sim was extremely supportive of whatever the youth did in terms of charity and showcasing our own talents in contributing to serving the Lord and in Church. He often encouraged us and motivated us throughout the process. He helped us feel loved, and accepted and gave us a sense of belonging in Church with his unconditional love and his endearing smile." — *Frencis*

He was a blessing to me

For me, the best way to describe Cornelius Cardinal Sim is that he was a blessing. He blessed my life in so many ways, from the words of advice he gave me throughout the years to the support he showed for the youth ministry I was in.

"Since childhood and up to now, Cardinal was a constant presence in my life. He was always someone I truly respected for his wisdom and intelligence, someone I admired for his tireless service and humility, and most of all, someone I loved because he was always like a father to me. Cardinal Sim was someone I could

Bishop Sim was more like a father figure to me. Whenever I felt down or did not know how to decide on certain matters, it was easy for me to express it to him. He understood me very well. Whenever I looked at our Bishop, he really brought God's image to me and to many of the young people who encountered him.

"He loved the young people very much. Every time he was with young people, he made them feel welcome always. His heart was always for the young people and he always gave his best to guide them. He always tried to bring the young people from the three

parishes together for events. He even created an activity where he could bring the Good News to the young people and always counselled them on the importance of life, family, etc.

"Every time people needed comfort, he always gave them his time and sometimes, this included hugging them. For him, the hugs were to give the person a sense of belonging and love.

"He wanted to share the love of God with the young people and show them that they were not alone in their struggles, that he was one with them". — *Karel*

He was open and interactive

He was a father figure to me in every way possible. He was a part of my family, not blood-related but faith-related in Christ. I admire the way he spread the Good News through his homilies and also through his actions and continuous support for the community. It still feels unreal that he has left us but I will always remember Cardinal and all his sufferings for us all.

"He was very open and interactive with all youths around him.

Wherever he went, it seemed as if he could always bring out the best in everyone and make them feel worthy even when they were at their lowest point. The thing about Cardinal is that he was always supportive to the youth and helped bring up the youth ministry behind the scenes.

"With that said, I can't thank Cardinal enough for all his years of support and for just being there for us all." — *Alexander*

He radiated Christ

Cardinal Sim was a very simple, humble but passionate man who took his vocation to the priesthood seriously. He was a role model and took the command of Christ to take up his cross and follow Him. That is what attracted many people to him.

"He was someone who always took time to listen to and journey with people. Nothing was too small for him. He was one who preached what he taught and taught what he preached.

"When you saw him, you saw Christ - radiating Christ's love, mercy and joy." — *Alister*

Inspired me to never give up

Cardinal Cornelius Sim baptised and confirmed me. "He was a very humble bishop. I still remember when I would just randomly go into his office and chat with him, and surprisingly,

he would be fine with it.

"I still remember when he was there with us VYA (Vicariate Young Adults) when we had movie nights, formation nights, fellowship, Christmas parties and on many other occasions.

"He was a father figure to many, not just me. His messages could sometimes be direct, but that's actually what we young people/parishioners needed to hear.

"He also asked us youths to stay together.

"There have been many times when I felt like quitting, but looking back, Bishop Sim never gave up till the end of his life.

"He has inspired me to be a better person and to never give up easily and not retire early." — *Andy Chia*



Bishop Cornelius Sim with the Asian Youth Day delegates in 2017.

He saved me

For me, Bishop Sim was like a father figure. I was distant from my dad since young and never really experienced fatherly love. Bishop Sim was always there when I had no one to talk to. When I was in trouble, he helped me. When my faith was failing, he pulled me closer to God. He always sacrificed his energy trying to help the youths get closer to God, to experience

God's love, and he supported us in any and every way he could. He showed me the way to be closer to God.

"I've always had a hard time opening myself up to someone but he was there. He listened and helped me. If it wasn't for him, I don't think I would even be here on this earth anymore, because of him, I am still here, alive." — *Jennifer*

He was my inspiration

I always called him Bishop because I was used to that. I looked up to him because he was so wise and open minded, he helped my mother with her operation fees. "He gave me a computer when

he found out that I got 5As on my PSR and at that time, he did not even know me. If you ask me who I look up to or who I want to be like when I grow up, I definitely want to be like Bishop." — *Thomas*

A moment of rejoicing for the little Churches in the region



Bishop Cornelius Sim, 69, became the first Catholic bishop from the small state of Brunei to be named a Cardinal by Pope Francis. It is not only an honour for the young Church but also for the state of Brunei. He is among the 13 new cardinals named on Sunday in Rome.

“By deciding to elevate Bishop Cornelius Sim to cardinal, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, is expressing his solidarity with the Church in the peripheries,” said Msgr Marco Sprizzi, the charge d’affaires at the Vatican embassy in Kuala Lumpur. This echoes one of the Pope’s famous quotes, “I see the Church as a field hospital,” to be close to the poor and suffering, to heal wounds and to warm the hearts.

Bishop Sim was born in Seria,

Brunei, and is of Chinese and Dusun descent. By profession, he is an engineering graduate from Scotland, and worked in Brunei for several years before starting his priestly studies. He was ordained to the Catholic priesthood in 1989, and appointed as apostolic vicar of Brunei by the late Pope John Paul II in 2004. The state of Brunei has about 21,000 Catholics.

“Aiyo, I don’t know why I have been chosen. It’s a real surprise”, these were the first words of Bishop Sim, when contacted by phone on Sunday night, just minutes after it was announced in Rome. He took it in his stride saying “I accept this new responsibility for the good of the Church and the peoples in the region.” The college of Cardinals, of which Bishop Sim will be a member,

not only votes on who becomes the next Pope, but are also seen as the closest collaborators of the Pope. The college, with its current 128 members from all continents, makes real and visible the universal face of the Church.

Meanwhile, Bishop Sebastian Francis of Penang, President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei (CBCMSB), offered his felicitations and fraternal accolades from all the bishops and churches in the region. “This is truly an auspicious moment for us. It is a moment of rejoicing for all the little Churches in the region. Even the small and little has great significance.” The gesture of Pope Francis is seen as affirming the vision for the Church to be present to all the peripheries of the world and

to be a ferment of dialogue and hope.

Pope Francis is also a great promoter of human fraternity and ecology. In February 2019, the Pope and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb, signed a Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, during a Global Conference on the topic in Abu Dhabi. The call to fraternity and social friendships has been further emphasised with the release of the new encyclical or letter of Pope Francis on October 3, 2020, *Fratelli Tutti*. It calls for a “culture of encounter” and action towards “inclusive and constructive dialogue among all cultural components of society,” calling upon all people of good will to build more human fraternity and solidarity, and a plea to reject wars. — **CBCMSB**

The Gospel joy which enlivens the community of disciples is a missionary joy. The seventy-two disciples felt it as they returned from their mission (cf. Lk 10:17). Jesus felt it when he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and praised the Father for revealing himself to the poor and the little ones (cf. Lk 10:21). The bishop must always foster this missionary communion in his diocesan Church, following the ideal of the first Christian communities, in which the believers were of one heart and one soul (cf. Acts 4:32). To do so, he will sometimes go before his people, pointing the way and keeping their hope vibrant. (EG 21, 31)

New Brunei cardinal runs diocese with only three priests

BRUNEI: The new cardinal from Brunei administers arguably the world’s smallest diocese in terms of its priests — just three.

The three priests and Bishop Cornelius Sim, the apostolic vicar of Brunei, take care of Catholics in one of the few absolute Muslim monarchies left in the world.

“We are one of the smallest dioceses in Asia,” said Bishop Sim, days before Pope Francis named him one of 13 new cardinals on Oct 25.

“We hope to have vocations to

the priesthood and religious life” as part of the diocese’s growth, which has some 21,000 Catholics, mostly migrants.

Many in the Catholic Church see the selection of Bishop Sim to the College of Cardinals as part of Pope Francis’ thrust to “go to the peripheries” to recognise that all communities, however small, are important in the life of the Church.

One of the richest nations in the world, Brunei also has one of the smallest populations in Asia — just

429,000 people. Malay is the official language but English and Chinese are both widely spoken.

Some two-thirds of Brunei’s people are Muslims, ruled by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah. The country follows *Syariah* law that is applicable only to Muslims.

Some 10 per cent of the people are atheists, 13 per cent are Buddhist and a small number have indigenous beliefs. Christians form some 10 per cent of the population, and half of them are Catholics. — **ucanews.com**



Bishop Cornelius Sim with Fr Arin Sugit, Fr Robert Leong and Fr Paul Shie. (photo/Luke Lau)

Holiness is a way of life for all Catholics, not just for saints

“Holiness is a way of life for all Catholics, not just for saints,” said Cardinal Cornelius Sim during the ninth session of the CHARIS Malaysia Life in the Spirit Seminar (LSS).

At one of his last sessions, March 24, 2021, Cardinal Sim spoke on the true meaning of transformation of our hearts and minds in Christ, in line with the theme of the LSS session.

“Ask and beg the Holy Spirit to give you a hunger and thirst for righteousness and holiness. Seek ways to deepen your relationship with the Lord. In particular, [strive] against anything that blocks our access to God and His plan for us,” said the late Vicariate of Brunei Darussalam.



Cardinal Sim speaks at the 9th session of CHARIS Malaysia Life in the Spirit Seminar.

The Cardinal explained that sin is often portrayed as something “fun”. However, he stressed, sin should not

be looked at lightly, as it damages our relationship with God.

“Sin is not a laughing matter. Sin kills the soul,” he said.

To combat the effects of sin, Cardinal Sim encouraged Catholics to perform a daily examination of conscience — to review the day’s actions during nightly prayer time, as well as to attend regular Confessions for spiritual health.

He also highlighted the role of the LSS in helping us discover our place in the supernatural world.

“The LSS reintroduces us to the supernatural world, helping us to discover our place in that world. We see our material world in a new light as part of God’s design, drawing us to Him rather than away from Him,” he said.

“We must find a new way, and a new balance for our thinking and acting,” he adds.

He further explained that as we grow and transform, we must expect to encounter trials and difficulties and that these experiences help us to deepen our faith with God.

“Be prepared to undergo trials and testing of your faith when you choose to follow Jesus in a serious way,” he said, adding that many will experience opposition from close friends, family and even colleagues.

“Trials bring us to deeper maturity and resilience in our walk with God,” he adds.

The Cardinal also shared details of his own journey with God, his experience with LSS and, eventually the priesthood, adding that Christ

did not promise us an easy life.

However, he stressed that God gives us the grace and strength that we need to continue to strive on our path towards holiness and to be disciples of Jesus in modern times.

“Living holy lives with commitment ... in the face of trials cannot be achieved with human effort and ingenuity alone. Only God’s power will be sufficient,” he said.

Cardinal Cornelius Sim was the first Bruneian to be ordained as a priest and was appointed Cardinal of Brunei November 2020 by Pope Francis. — **By Anette Appaduray**

Click the link below for the video: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GNtwWc0id3UHUSljRG3HTDc0dnFHXhvZ>

A brother to all



**Most Rev Simon Poh,
Archbishop of Kuching**

I am indeed saddened by the news of the passing of our Cardinal. We had been in communication for arrangements with Archbishop Thomas Chung of Taipei for his stay during treatment there. Cardinal Cornelius and I were planning to meet up in Brunei after his treatment whenever the Brunei-Sarawak border reopened.

In terms of ordination dates, we were ordained a year apart. I recall that his ordination in 1989 was a great celebration for the Bruneian Church as he was the first local diocesan priest of Brunei.

On a personal level, our friendship deepened when I assisted him for Masses whenever I visited my relatives in Brunei. Being newly ordained then, we supported and encouraged each other in the ministry. At World Youth Days and Asian Youth Days, we would be togeth-



er. Cardinal Cornelius was a well-like youth minister. With his humble heart, approachable personality and as a simple down to earth person, I am sure that the young people, Bishops and priests will greatly miss him.

To a beloved brother, Cornelius, may our Master receive you into eternal joy.

"Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." (Matthew 25:23).



**Most Rev John Wong,
Archbishop of Kota Kinabalu**

"I am deeply saddened to learn of the death of Cardinal Cornelius Sim of the Apostolic Vicariate of Brunei Darussalam, May 29, 2021 in Taiwan. On behalf of the clergy, religious and laity of Kota Kinabalu, I wish to express our condolences and our union in prayer with the College of Bishops, the family and friends, and the faithful of the Vicariate of

Brunei Darussalam, as well as those who mourn him.

"Cardinal Sim left an unforgettable mark in his untiring and devoted service to the Church, and for his constant advocacy of dialogue and peace for all people in Brunei.

"May the Lord welcome His servant into His peace and joy!"



**Rt Rev Cornelius Piong,
Bishop of Keningau**

"It was with great sadness that we received the news of the passing of Cardinal Cornelius Sim, a man of prayer and an outstanding Church leader.

"We thank God for His Eminence Cardinal Cornelius Sim's untiring and devoted service to the Church.

"The people of the Diocese of Keningau and I take this opportunity to convey our sincere condolences to the members of the bereaved family and the Church of the Apostolic Vicariate of Brunei Darussalam.

"May his soul rest in peace and his memory be eternal."



**Bishop Julius Dusin Gitom
Diocese of Sandakan**

"Greetings of peace in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour!

"I am deeply saddened to hear that His Eminence Cardinal Cornelius Sim was called to the Lord on Saturday May 29, 2021. Cardinal Cornelius has been very dear to us all, and especially to the faithful of the Cathedral of St Mary, Sandakan. For many years he conducted a joint-retreat programmes for the English-speaking candidates preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation from Brunei Darussalam and St Mary's Cathedral Sandakan.

"Thus, I willingly join the priests and the lay faithful to thank God for his life and the generous services rendered to the Apostolic Vicariate of Brunei Darussalam. We pray for God's peace and comfort at



Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei's Ad Limina visit in Rome from Feb 4 - 9, 2018.



**Most Rev Julian Leow,
Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur**

"I got to know Cardinal Sim better, up close and personal, when we first met at our Bishops Conferences

seven years ago. He was a man of few words, reflective and profound, and had an easy-going attitude to life.

"Even after he was diagnosed with cancer, he took things in his stride, with the same approach he took in life, making the best out of the current circumstances.

"In spite of his own cross and pain, he never failed to enquire about Cardinal Soter Fernandez's deteriorating health in 2020. He also assured me of his prayers for the Archdiocese and myself, even as he was undergoing suffering.

"Brunei has lost one of her illustrious sons, the Bishops' Conference, a dear brother and the Church, a prince.

"May you now rest in eternal peace, dear Cardinal Sim."



**Rt Rev Sebastian Francis,
Bishop of Penang**

"We, the bishops of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei are going to miss him dearly. He was such a people-centred person. One of my last memories of him was when we at CHARIS asked him to give a session for our Life in the Spirit Seminar. It was the ninth topic – *Transformation*. He agreed but instead suggested that the topic be changed to *Transformation in Christ*.

"This shows how clear he was in his understanding of the Gospel and he shared in the vision and mission of Christ. This was the very essence of Cardinal Cornelius Sim.

"The talk that he gave lasted an hour and was very inspiring. In spite of his illness, he was able to speak with such clarity and focus. He will be deeply missed."



**Rt Rev Richard Ng,
Diocese of Miri**

"The passing of Cardinal Cornelius Sim feels like we have lost a member of our family, a brother and a dear friend.

"This is because the Church in Brunei was part of the Diocese of Miri for many years, until it became a Vicariate Apostolic in 2004.

"I will miss his brotherly presence and remember him for his sense of humour and ever smiling face.

"My condolences to the members of his family and to the Church in Brunei."



this very sad time.

"On behalf of the Sandakan Diocese, I sincerely express my deep condolences to the faithful in the Vicariate of Brunei Darussalam for the loss of a loving, generous and faithful servant of God. May his soul rest in peace and may God grant eternal rest to him and console the bereaved faithful.

"Fraternally yours in Christ."



**Rt Rev Bernard Paul,
Bishop of Malacca Johore**

"To the Catholics of Brunei, the Diocese of Malacca Johore extends our prayers and condolences on the demise of His Eminence Cardinal Cornelius Sim. May the peace of the Risen Lord, who said 'I will be with you till end of time' be your consolation and strength. Always remembered as the perfect gentleman."



**Rt Rev Joseph Hii,
Bishop of Sibiu**

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful one" Psalm 116:15

"May the Lord console all the faithful of the Apostolic Vicariate in Brunei Darussalam as they remember the demise of their first Bishop, then

Cardinal, and grant them soon a new good shepherd after the Lord's own heart.

"Always remembered by Bishop Joseph Hii Teck Kwong, Bishop Emeritus Dominic Su Haw Chiew and All God's people in the Diocese of Sibiu."

Evangelii Gaudium (Joy of the Gospel)



“Don’t be a spectator in Church, be someone who contributes”

Cardinal Cornelius Sim’s last words to his flock

“Thank you very much for your presence here. Tomorrow, I will be going away for awhile. Some people told me ‘I heard you are going on holiday for seven months. So lucky, even the Pope did not get this.’ Well, I am not sure it’s going to be much of a holiday but, nevertheless its something which I feel I need to do. God has opened the door and so when He opens doors it is best to walk through them. I still need your prayers and remarks. God listens to prayers especially the prayers of his children, and so I am counting on your prayers.

“I woke up today really shattered. I did not have much strength to face the day. That is how some days begin for me because of the severity of all these drugs I am taking. Some days I manage and some days I don’t manage at all, but I was able to somehow recover my strength this afternoon and so I managed to come and share with you this wonderful Eucharist.

“I am going to Taiwan, as you know. This is a very strange but also a wonderful action of God. When I was appointed Cardinal in November last year, the Trade Attache of Taiwan wrote a very nice letter but

I wasn’t able to reply to it because I didn’t have the energy to do that at that time. Months passed, then, in February, I saw his picture in one of the newspapers and it struck me that I should call him and thank him for the letter he wrote three months ago. I did call him and he told me, ‘yah... I know about your case,’ he said, ‘some of your friends from Shell told me.’ And he said to me, ‘are you interested to look for an alternative treatment?’ I was not, because at that time I was pursuing treatment in Japan. But the treatment in Japan never worked out.

“So, in the meantime, Mr Andrew Lee went on and contacted hospitals in Taiwan, and one of the best hospital came up with the treatment place and shared it with my oncologist. It was considered a good alternative because they have run out of options here. The doctors in Brunei have done a fantastic job but they

were not able to offer more. So we pursued this matter and about the same time the Taiwanese Government also opened its borders for medical visitors.

“So, we spent about two months trying to figure out how to get the paperwork done and finally it is done.

“I reflected on this, I asked God at one point why I was made a cardinal? So one of the reasons I think seems to be that I should get a letter from Mr Lee, I should see his picture in the papers three months later, I should call him and he did some detective work and he opened the door. At that time also I said to the Lord, ‘if you open any doors, I will walk through it.’ This is one door that opened and a couple of days after I prayed that prayer.

“So, this is my sharing with you. When I go there, the Diocese of Hsinchu will house me, my brother

and another helper. The bishop there happens to be a good friend of mine, so I think in many ways God is good, He has really been gracious.

“Let’s pray that going to Taiwan will consolidate the healing that we all pray for I believe God has begun the work but everything needs to be sustainable, to be stabilised and strengthened. Thank God for His goodness.

“I thank you, the community that has supported me. I would like to ask you to offer the same support to Fr Arin Sugit, Fr Robert Leong, and Fr Paul Shie, whichever community you belong to, in the six months which is planned for me to be away.

“I pray that the Church will become stronger and your contribution will become something much more tangible. Don’t be a spectator in the Church, be someone who contributes – gives time, talent and treasure.”



Apostolic Vicariate in Brunei Darussalam
No. 11, Jalan Kumbang Pasang
Bandar Seri Begawan,
Brunei Darussalam

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

It is with a heavy heart that I announce the passing of His Eminence, Cornelius Cardinal Sim, Cardinal of the Apostolic Vicariate in Brunei Darussalam, on Saturday, May 29, 2021 at around 8:28am in Chang Gung Memorial Hospital (CGMH), Taoyuan City, Taiwan.

Since arriving in Taiwan on 8th May 2021, His Eminence was quarantined in CHMH to wait for his cell therapy treatment. They attended to his health condition every day but, unfortunately, nothing they did seemed to be very effective. He gradually became weaker and lost most of his vitality. Sadly, he passed away this morning.

His Eminence was born on September 16, 1951. He was the eldest child of six. He was ordained a priest in 1989 and then appointed a bishop in 2004. Last year, he was elevated to the College of Cardinals on November 28.

The funeral for His Eminence will be announced at a later date. Let us all pray for his soul and for the Vicariate. May his soul rest in peace.

Msgr Robert Leong
Vicar General

May 29, 2021



Catholic Bishops' Conference
of Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei

The passing of HE Cardinal Cornelius Sim

We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of His Eminence Cardinal Cornelius Sim, DD of the Apostolic Vicariate of Brunei Darussalam, early this morning in Taiwan, due to a cardiac arrest.

We invite you to pray for him in your Masses and prayers. Let us be in communion with his family members, clergy, religious and all the faithful of Brunei in this moment of loss and bereavement.

Details of his funeral will be made available later.
Peace to all.

+ **Bishop Sebastian Francis**
President Catholic Bishops' Conference of
Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei
Bishop of Penang Diocese
May 29, 2021

He was a priest on a mission to bring Christ to all

“This was perhaps the very thing that endeared him to many: he was the same person everywhere and to everyone. Hence, there is nothing much we can say about the Cardinal Cornelius Sim, whom we knew in our private moments, that those who knew his public persona do not already know.

“He had no ambitions for himself and no greater desire than to bring the goodness of God to people he encountered along his journey of faith. Instead of trying to fit in with episcopal social conventions, he simply lived his life as a disciple of Jesus who happened to also be a bishop.

“Usually referring to himself as ‘Father’, the Cardinal never revelled in his lofty position on the ecclesiastical hierarchy. He saw himself as nothing more than a child of the Church and a prodigal son, quite often recounting the years he had spent away from the Church during his younger days. Now that he had returned, he was not content with a superficial practice of the faith, much less with ecclesiastical careerism. He was a priest on a mission, constantly challenging himself and others to put out into the deep and not be content



with the most basic elements of the Catholic faith that he said were “necessary but not sufficient”.

“Our community’s friendship with the Cardinal was a rather serendipitous one, as were (according to him) many of the pleasant experiences that characterised his life. The Splendour Project, as a community of friends on mission — focused on faith formation, evangelisation, and discipleship — could not have had a better role model as our spiritual father. His way of being subtly but deeply affected the spirit and tone of our mission, and this impact will be permanent.

“The final leg of the Cardinal’s journey was a passion experience. During a telephone conversation, he told me that he was particularly

grateful for all the pilgrimage trips that he had made with us in these past several years, as those were the treasured memories that sustained him throughout this prolonged desolation. I told him that we were afraid to lose him, to which he replied that we needed to trust in the Lord because He knew best.

“His departure is both a loss and a gain; a loss because we will miss his physical presence, a gain because we will benefit from his intercessions for all his friends, the entire Church, and the world. His unassuming legacy must not be forgotten, because it is one that constantly challenges us to imitate his life in the same way that he imitated Christ.” — **Deacon Sherman Kuek OFS, Convenor, Splendour Project**

