

17th Anniversary of the Apostolic Vicariate in Brunei Darussalam

Message from the Diocesan Administrator

This is the first time we celebrate the anniversary of the vicariate on this day. Seventeen years ago I just began my priesthood, ordained only a year earlier on August 10th in 2003.

On October 20th 2004, Pope John Paul II unexpectedly announced the establishment of the Apostolic Vicariate and appointed the then Monsignor Cornelius Sim as its first bishop. This started a flurry of plans for Catholics in Brunei Darussalam to celebrate this wonderful news and appointment of our first local shepherd.

The vicariate celebrated its establishment together with the episcopal ordination of Bishop Cornelius Sim on January 21st in 2005, which continued to be our practice until his sad passing as His Eminence Cornelius Cardinal Sim.

Moving forward, it seems right to celebrate our anniversary on the actual day, also in honour of Mary our Patroness.

The last two years has been very challenging for the vicariate due to Covid-19 pandemic and without the leadership of a bishop. It is the fervent prayer of our flock that the Holy Father will soon appoint a new shepherd for the vicariate.

On the other hand, we have much to be thankful to the Lord. Our sole seminarian has returned to his formation, albeit in a different seminary, after being held back for over a year due to pandemic travel restrictions. Similarly, one of our young adults is finally able to join the novitiate of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Sabah.

The vicariate is definitely in need of everyone's prayers for more vocations. Our last ordination was in 2008! Pray therefore the Lord will keep calling our young men and women to answer the call to the priesthood and religious life. Having embarked on the universal synod on synodality, I pray that we will all play our part, no matter how small, to build up the Body of Christ, the Church, in this vicariate. We all know what need to be done and how urgent it is, if we are to grow and be a sign of Christ in this nation and beyond.



The world is changing rapidly and the church also needs to move with times, to find new ways to live and walk together. We cannot just continue focusing on our own survival without thinking of and bringing those outside our ecclesial communion along with us on our spiritual

journey. In Brunei Darussalam, this Abode of Peace, the Lord has given us peace, not to be kept to ourselves but to be shared to others around us, especially from the margins of life.

All of us long for peace and harmony. No one should be our enemy except Satan. We need to do everything we can to stop him from destroying peace, humanity and the world that God lovingly created. Remember Jesus taught us how to be peacemakers, to be salt and light, to proclaim and live as witnesses to His Word of peace and love.

In the coming days, months, and years, let us think and take action on of what we can do individually, what our families can do and what the church can do to bring peace happen in this world. No effort is too small!

Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Hebrews 12:14



Reverend Fr Robert Leong Apostolic Vicariate in Brunei Darussalam

20 October 2022

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PHOTOS







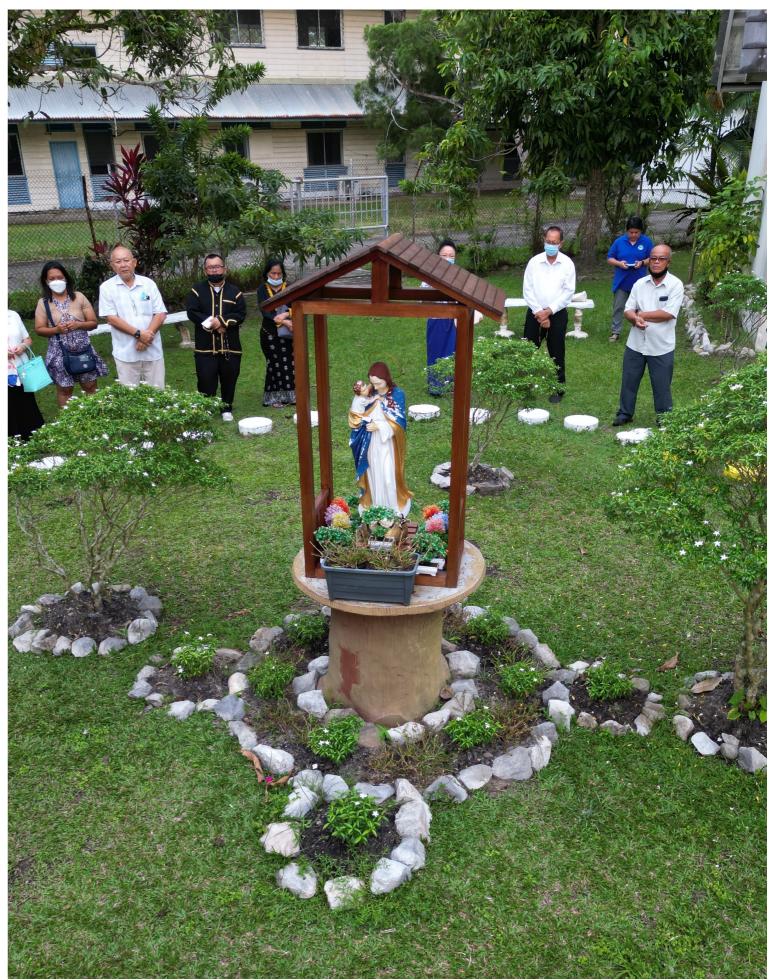


ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PHOTOS









PATRONESS, MOTHER & QUEEN

Mary, Star of Our Souls

On the occasion of the 17th Anniversary of the Apostolic Vicariate in Brunei Darussalam, our faith community is adopting Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth as the Patroness Saint of the Vicariate, with the feast day to be celebrated annually with our anniversary on 20th October.

By consecrating ourselves anew to the Blessed Mother, we pray for her intercession and protection over all of us, the advocate for our souls both on earth and in the afterlife.

More importantly, we commit and entrust our lives, like Mary, in obedience to her Son's Divine Mercy and mission.



Mary, Our Family Protector & Intercessor

"Our Lady is our most powerful intercessor to the Lord. In this month of Mary, our whole family honors her and recite the Rosary to continue to ask for Our Lady's help to continue to intercede for us."

Jeff and Jan Wong

"The first part of 'Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with thee' reminds me to learn from Mama Mary and live a life of obedience."

Canice Wong

"We pray to Mother Mary for her mantle of protection on our family. We appreciate the Fatima prayer after each decade as we can intercede for all the souls in need, including our forefathers."

Jenson Wong









Mary, Leading Me to Her Son

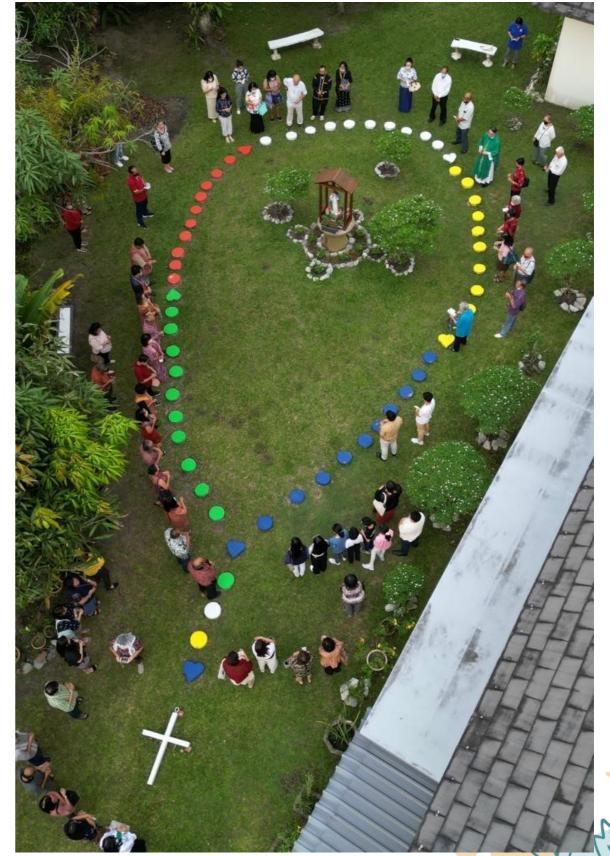
Definitely my miraculous aid of all time.

I am ever blessed to have Mama Mary in my life and I am ever grateful to my late eldest sister (*Rest in Peace*), the first family member who embraced the Catholic Faith, and who taught me to recite the Holy Rosary. Obediently, I mastered the prayers even without discovering who Mama Mary is...

Reminiscing my faith's memory lane, back in my school days, I recalled reciting the rosary many days before attending both the Junior Certification Education & General Certification Education "Ordinary" level... Out of fear and anxiety, I persevered with the rosary devotions, unaware of the powerful prayer and intercessions contained within; my exam results had me awed and amazed! I eventually joined RCIA and professed my faith to our Lord Jesus 13 years ago today (18 October).

From then, Jesus and his Mother continued to take me through trials and turbulences unharmed, paved my rocky road, cushioned my falls, healed my hidden wounds and got me upright from my brokenness ...

Reciting the rosary on a daily basis, got me from zero to where I am today, converted to the faith, continuing to believe and do the best I can. There is nothing more I want but to serve the Lord and be devoted to His Mother, Mama Mary.



Rosary Garden at Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, Seria

SJC 50TH ANNIVERSARY













Know Ourselves

iving in the computer age, we know how important it is to know passwords in order to get into programmes where the most personal and valuable information is stored. But spiritual life, too, has its "passwords": there are words that touch our heart because they make reference to what we are most sensitive to.

The tempter, that is, the devil, knows these key words well, and it is important that we know them too, so as not to find ourselves where we do not want to be. Temptation does not necessarily suggest bad things, but often everyday things, presented with excessive importance. In this way it hypnotizes us with the attraction that these things stir in us, things that are beautiful but illusory, that cannot deliver what they promise, and therefore leave us in the end with a sense of emptiness and sadness.

That sense of emptiness and sadness is a sign that we have embarked on paths that were not right, that disoriented us. They can be, for example, degrees, careers, relationships, all things that are in themselves praiseworthy, but towards which, if we are not free, we risk harbouring unreal expectations, such as confirmation of our worth. For example, when you think of a study you are undertaking, do you think only of promoting yourself, of your own interests, or also to serve the community? There, one can see the intentionality of each one of us.

This is why, dear brothers and sisters, it is important to know ourselves, to know the passwords of our heart, what we are most sensitive to, in order to recognize what is truly important for us, distinguishing it from current fads or flashy, superficial slogans.

An aid in this is an examination of conscience, but I am not talking about the examination of conscience that we all do when we go to confession. A general examination of conscience ... what happened in my heart during this day? To see: what passed by today? What happened? What made me react? What made me sad? What made me joyful? What was bad, and did I harm others? It is about seeing the path our feelings took, the attractions in my heart during the day....What traces did they leave in my heart? Carrying out an examination of conscience, that is, the good habit of calmly rereading what happened during our day, learning to note in our evaluations and choices what we give most importance to, what we are looking for and why, and what we eventually find.

Above all, learning to recognize what satisfies my heart? For only the Lord can give us confirmation of what we are worth. He tells us this every day from the cross: he died for us, to show us how precious we are in his eyes.

Pope Francis, General Audience 5 October 2022 (Feast Day of St Faustina Kowalska)



Called to Mission



et us reflect on the three key phrases that synthesize the three foundations of the life and mission of every disciple:

"You shall be my witnesses"

Each baptized person is called to mission, in the Church and by the mandate of the Church: consequently, mission is carried out together, not individually, in communion with the ecclesial community, and not on one's own initiative. Even in cases where an individual

in some very particular situation carries out the evangelizing mission alone, he must always do so in communion with the Church which commissioned him.

Hence, in carrying out the mission, the presence of a community, regardless of its size, is of fundamental importance.

The testimony of an authentic Christian life is fundamental for the transmission of the faith. On the other hand, the task of proclaiming Christ's

person and the message is equally necessary. In evangelization, then, the example of a Christian life and the proclamation of Christ are inseparable. One is at the service of the other. They are the two lungs with which any community must breathe, if it is to be missionary.

This kind of complete, consistent and joyful witness to Christ will surely be a force of attraction also for the growth of the Church in the third millennium.

"To the ends of the earth"

The disciples are sent not to proselytize, but to proclaim; the Christian does not proselytize.

The words "to the ends of the earth" should challenge the disciples of Jesus in every age and impel them to press beyond familiar places in bearing witness to him.

Christ's Church will continue to "go forth" towards new geographical, social and existential horizons, towards "borderline" places and human situations, in order to bear witness to Christ and his love to men and women of every people, culture and social status.

"You shall receive power of the Holy Spirit"

According to the account in Acts, it was precisely following the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples that the first act of witnessing to the crucified and risen Christ took place. That kerygmatic proclamation – Saint Peter's "missionary" address to the inhabitants of Jerusalem – inaugurated an era in which the disciples of Jesus evangelized the world.

Whereas they had previously been weak, fearful and closed in on themselves, the Holy Spirit gave them the strength, courage and wisdom to bear witness to Christ before all.

Just as "no one can say 'Jesus is Lord', except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3), so no Christian is able to bear full and genuine witness to Christ the Lord without the Spirit's inspiration and assistance. It is he who gives us the right word, at the right time, and in the right way.

Mary, Queen of the Missions, pray for us!

Pope Francis' Message World Mission Day 2022



First Holy Communion Retreat 8th & 9th Oct 2022

































FABC Online Visit to COOL



n conjunction with the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), a special gathering of Cardinals, Bishops, Religious and Lay Representatives across Asia, known as FABC 50 General Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand, at the Baan Phu Waan Pastoral Centre from 12th to 30th of October 2022.

As part of the General Conference, leaders and delegates made online pastoral visits to selected parishes. The Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception (COOL) parish in Seria was honoured to be one of the recipients of this virtual visit on 23 October 2022.

The FABC visitors, led by His Eminence Anthony Cardinal Poola of Hyderabad, India and a number of Bishops from Vietnam, Philippines, India, Pakistan and Laos, shared their concerns, queries and advice for the Catholic flock in Brunei. The visit started off with a video presentation by COOL, followed by dialogue with the Parish Priest Reverend Fr Robert Leong, Parish Pastoral Council Chairperson Jennifer Nyanggau, Women Representative Dorothy Jamai and Youth Representative Owen Denis Tawan.

Topics highlighted were Vocation Promotion, Catechists Formation, Youth Concerns, Women Participation in Church, Care for Creation and Interfaith Dialogue. The visitors also suggested for





Brunei Catholics to engage with FABC Women and Youth Desks, Women Ministry at the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, Saint Pedro Calungsod Community for Professional Catechists, Catechists Formation Houses and Youth Communities in India and the Philippines.

In closing, His Eminence Cardinal Poola and The Most Reverend Bishop Roberto Mallari of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, Philippines expressed their solidarity and prayers with the faithful in Brunei. The Vietnamese Bishop also conveyed appreciation to COOL parish for the pastoral care of Vietnamese migrants working in Seria, Brunei.



