



# THE TITULAR ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF PENANG DIOCESE OF PENANG

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*Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Guardian of the Universal Church*

Dear Clergy, Religious Brothers and Sisters, Lay Faithful and People of God,

## **RE: PASTORAL DIRECTIVE ON THE ACCOMPANIMENT PROCESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF THE SYNOD**

I received a Letter on the Accompaniment Process of the Implementation Phase of the Synod “*For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*” from Vatican on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2025. This letter has prompted me to write to all the faithful of the Diocese of Penang, especially those in leadership roles among the clergy, religious and laity in parishes, diocesan ministries, and religious communities. Please do not be anxious with the challenges coming from the Universal Church and the Local Church because we must believe that the Holy Spirit is moving all of us forward in a Synodal Church under the leadership of Pope Francis.

The Diocese of Penang will participate in this journey that will lead the whole Church to the celebration of the Ecclesial Assembly in the Vatican in October 2028, as outlined in the letter, which I am sharing in its entirety with you. [CLICK HERE](#) It begins in March 2025 with the announcement of the accompaniment and evaluation process, and ends in October 2028 with the celebration of the Ecclesial Assembly in the Vatican. This, together with all the initiatives that are already planned, as listed below, is our follow up to the Synod 2023-2024. I also urge you to enter into this process of accompaniment and implementation of the Synod in your respective diocesan ministries, parishes and communities.

I wish to share some highlights of this singular journey integrating important events that have already been planned by the Universal Church and the Malaysian Church in the coming years. These milestone initiatives from Jubilee Year of Hope 2025 will be harmoniously integrated leading to October 2028. Following is the list of these significant “redeeming” events. Please pray, fast, and intercede for all of them.

1. The entire clergy of the Diocese of Penang which includes me, all the priests and permanent deacons who are in active ministry together with some retired priests, will be participating in a **Conversion Experience Retreat (CER) for Clergy** conducted by His Eminence Cardinal William SC Goh, Archbishop of Singapore and his team from the Catholic Spirituality Centre (CSC), Singapore from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 (Sunday) to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (Friday).
2. In preparation for the young people to participate in the Malaysian Pastoral Convention in 2026, more than 1,000 young people will be participating at the **Malaysian Catholic Youth Day (MCYD)** in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah from 31<sup>st</sup> March – 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025. Penang Diocese will be sending a contingent of 125 young people for this event.
3. During the above event, the **Perjalanan Salib** will be launched together with the 9 Bishops of Malaysia gathered at the Malaysian Catholic Youth Day (MCYD) on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Kota Kinabalu. Representing the 9 dioceses of Malaysia: Sabah (3), Sarawak (3) and Semenanjung (3), each cross will journey to each diocese of Malaysia from April 2025 to September 2026. Please be ready to welcome the Salib in your various communities of the diocese. These 9 crosses from each diocese will then be assembled into ONE CROSS at the Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026).

4. The Clergy of the Diocese of Penang will participate in a study of the Final Document of the Synod "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission" with Rev. Fr. Clarence Devadass at the Clergy Monthly Recollection on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025.
5. United as one in celebrating Ecumenism, we will gather for a **Christian Ecumenical Service** together with all Christian leaders and their communities as we commemorate and celebrate the 1700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea 325 in this Jubilee Year of Hope 2025. All are welcome to join in this celebration held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 10.00am at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Penang. Significantly, all Christian Churches will celebrate Easter Sunday on a common date which falls on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2025 this year.
6. The College General Regional Major Seminary, Penang will be celebrating 360 years of its establishment in Asia. The **360<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of College General Regional Major Seminary, Penang** with the theme "CG 360: Remembering with Gratitude, Fidelity and Hope", welcomes all alumni including former seminarians and formators for this celebration from 28<sup>th</sup> September 2025 (arrival) to 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025 (departure).
7. The Diocese of Penang will host the **Second Asian Mission Congress – The Great Pilgrimage of Hope** with a participation of approximately 1,000 Catholic leaders from all over Asia from 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025. This Congress themed "Journeying together as peoples of Asia... and they went a different way" (Mt 2:12) is organized by the Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conference – Office of Evangelization (FABC-OE) under the Federation of the Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) in collaboration with the Dicastery of Evangelization, Vatican and the Pontifical Mission Societies, Vatican. An estimate of 40 leaders from the Diocese of Penang will participate and assist in this Congress.
8. **All initiatives and efforts to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025** throughout the Diocese of Penang which began on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and culminates on 28<sup>th</sup> December 2025.
9. The **First Malaysia Pastoral Convention 2026 (MPC2026)**, bringing the 9 Malaysian dioceses together for the first time. This gathering will be held from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> September 2026 at MAJODI, Plentong, Johor.
10. The **World Youth Day 2027** in Seoul, South Korea.
11. Celebration of the **Ecclesial Assembly in October 2028** in Vatican.

I invite you to pray, fast and intercede with me that all of us will undertake a Pilgrimage of Conversion to prepare ourselves personally and as a Church to respond to the call of the Holy Spirit in the obedience of faith. Stay healthy for the mission ahead. "Hope Does Not Disappoint." (Romans 5:5)

*"Be Disciples of Hope"*

Sincerely in Christ,

*Sebastian Francis*

**Cardinal Sebastian Francis**  
**Bishop of Penang**

