

PENINSULAR MALAYSIA PASTORAL TEAM

Dear Arch/Bishop, Rev Fr., Rev. Deacon, and Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

2021 Themes for the Church in Peninsular Malaysia

Greetings in the Name of Jesus.

There is no doubt that the Covid-19 pandemic continues to cause anxiety, confusion and fear all over the world, including in our country, Malaysia. The normal way of life, as we know it at the national, ecclesial and personal levels has been ‘disrupted’ to a large extent. We are challenged to adapt to the “new normal” in many areas of our lives. Even the way we celebrate the Eucharist and other sacraments is ordered by SOPs and other procedures. Our involvement in certain areas of Church life, such as faith formation and pastoral work are being reviewed and where necessary, transformed to meet the current situation.

In the light of these circumstances, the team working on the overall theme and monthly themes for 2021 decided to choose a theme that would help Catholics find meaning for their own lives, and give meaning to others as they journey through 2021. In our discussion, “hope” was the key word that emerged repeatedly. Hope is what is most needed these days, and in the days to come; we have to find and give hope; hope is one of the three theological virtues, the others being faith and charity, virtues related to one’s belief in God and love for neighbour.

In view of this, the working team have proposed the theme “Hope: Believe, Live and Give” for 2021. Its aim is to prompt and direct a person to look into his or her relationship with God, self and neighbour and to respond accordingly in the light of the signs of the time. The proposed theme contains also within it the essence of the elements found in the theme “Sent with Joy to Heal”. It is believing in the God of hope that will help me live in hope and give hope to my neighbour, and in doing so, bring healing to myself and others.

Besides the virtue of hope, another essential idea that was raised during the discussion is the Rukun negara, the Malaysian declaration of national philosophy instituted in 1970. The five core principles of the declaration serve as the formula towards national harmony and peace at all levels. These days, there has been much discussion on the Rukun negara, and therefore, the team felt that elements of the five principles should also be reflected in the overall and monthly themes for 2021.

In addition, the key focus events for each month and the related themes and scripture verses were chosen to reflect and address some of the major issues confronting the world, nation and the Church community.

Thank you.

Regards,

Rev. Fr. Jude Miranda
Chairperson,
Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Team