One Church, One Social Mission, One Malaysia

A Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia on Caritas Malaysia

Dear People of God,

We write to you today at a pivotal moment in our nation's history. Malaysia is undergoing rapid transformation, bringing with it both new opportunities and profound vulnerabilities. As the economy grows and technology reshapes our lives, we are called, as Church, to be the conscience and the heart of this progress.

As Pope Leo XIV reminds us in his recent encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas*, the Church's social mission is not an optional extra; it is central to our vocation. He challenges us, *"Where are we going? Toward what goal do we wish to orient ourselves? What direction should we choose as a people and as a human community?"* MH6

Called to Unity in Diversity

The Apostle Paul reminds us, *"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ"* (1 Corinthians 12:12).

Our nine dioceses, from the bustling cities of Semenanjung (Peninsular) to the vibrant communities of Sabah and Sarawak (East Malaysia), are a beautiful tapestry of cultures, languages, and experiences. Yet, we recognize that the challenges facing our nation – the digital divide, the struggles of gig workers, the plight of migrants, and the uncertainty facing our youth – do not stop at diocesan boundaries.

While each diocese has served with excellence, we have functioned as a mosaic of isolated efforts when it comes to our social mission in Malaysia. Today, we chose a different path. We are moving from working in silos to acting as one body. We are updating the status of Caritas Malaysia as our unified national social mission arm, not to replace the local efforts that define our diocesan life, but to amplify them, coordinate them, and provide a single, credible voice for the Church in the national conversation.

Above all, we invite the people of God to become volunteers as a national movement on a social mission to bring the face of Christ's love to all. We call on renewed action with

creativity and vigour to realise projects of encounter so that people are loved and embraced through our social mission projects, in other ways to bring about a movement of mutual love in our cities and villages.

The Challenges Facing Our Nation

We must look honestly at the *signs of the times*. While Malaysia attracted over RM87.4 billion in digital investment in 2025 and saw GDP growth of more than 5%, this prosperity has not been felt equally.

- **The Gig Economy:** More than 1.6 million Malaysians participate in the gig economy, often managed by algorithms that do not know their names or struggles. The law may protect their contracts, but the Church can insist on protecting their God-given dignity.
- **The Marginalised:** Our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters – over three million people – are the essential hands that built our infrastructure, yet they remain on the margins of the digital safety nets.
- **Our Youth:** Nearly 35% of graduates are working outside their fields of study, and many face the risk of being permanently excluded by an AI-driven economy.

These are not merely statistics; they are our brothers and sisters. As Pope Leo XIV teaches us, when the economy turns against the person, the Church must make her voice heard – not to dominate, but to promote communion.

Recognising Your Dedication

We wish to pause and offer our deepest gratitude to the thousands of Malaysian Catholics who have tirelessly served in our social mission. From the volunteers in soup kitchens to advocates for migrant rights and youth leaders empowering the next generation, your dedication is a testament to the words of St. Peter: *"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms"* (1 Peter 4:10).

You are the "Civilisation of Love" in action. Your commitment is the foundation upon which this new chapter of Caritas Malaysia is being built.

A Mission for All Malaysians

Our social mission is not for Catholics alone. True to our Lord's teaching to love our neighbour as ourselves, our vision for Caritas Malaysia is profoundly outward-looking. We are called to serve the *common good* in service of all Malaysians.

The Path Forward

As we embark on this journey toward a national, unified Caritas, we do so with humility and hope. We are choosing to be a Church that is present, proactive, and united. We ask you to pray for this mission and to lend your time, talents, and voices to this effort.

Together, let us build a nation where the dignity of every person is upheld, and where the love of God is not just a message we preach, but a reality we live for every Malaysian.

With heartfelt gratitude and blessing,



✠ Archbishop Dato' Dr. Simon Poh
President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia (CBCM)
15th November 2026 on the World Day of the Poor