



SCRIPTURE of the DAY

Isaiah 22: 19-23
Psalm 137: 1-3, 6, 8
Romans 11: 33-36
Matthew 16: 13-20



**"The best we could
give of ourselves as
hierarchy, religious
or laity is formation.
We want lay
leaders to be
formators too."**

Cardinal Soter Fernandez

Faith formation must help people encounter Christ through prayer, Scripture, the sacraments, catechesis, and daily living. Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) continue to be vital places of belonging, support, evangelisation, and shared faith.

Taken together, these insights point towards a common pastoral direction for the Church in Malaysia. More than strengthening structures or programmes, participants are calling for a Church that is increasingly missionary.

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis reminds us that every Christian and every community is called to move beyond their comfort zone and reach those on the peripheries with the light of the Gospel (EG 20). He also speaks of a "missionary option" that transforms the Church's customs, structures, schedules, language, and ways of doing things so that they serve evangelisation rather than self-preservation (EG 27).

This vision gives concrete meaning to a merciful Church. Mercy is not limited to caring for those already present. It also means reaching out to those who are absent, hurting, unheard, or waiting for someone to take the first step. As Pope Francis writes, the Church that goes forth is a community of missionary disciples who take the initiative, accompany others, bear fruit, and rejoice (EG 24).

Formation, therefore, must extend beyond classrooms and parish ministries. It should shape missionary disciples who witness to Christ in their families, BECs, workplaces, schools, neighbourhoods, and society. Faith formation begins with an encounter with Christ and naturally leads us to serve others.

Pope Francis also reminds us that the parish remains relevant when it stays close to the lives of its people and becomes a centre of constant missionary outreach (EG 28).

MPC 2026 invites the Church in Malaysia to ask a fundamental question: Are we organised for maintenance, or are we becoming a Church shaped by mission? We are called to become a Church that welcomes, listens, forms missionary disciples, reaches out with compassion, and lives the mercy of Christ in the heart of society.✠

NEWBEC

NEW WAY OF BEING CHURCH | 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time | 23 August 2026

WALKING TOGETHER TOWARDS A SYNODAL AND PROPHETIC CHURCH

A People for Missionary Discipleship

MONTHLY FOCUS: SOCIETY: Unity In Diversity

MPC 2026: Pastoral Thrust of Church

One clear concern emerging from previous assemblies is the need for the Church to become a place of genuine belonging, marked by mercy, hospitality, listening, empathy, and inclusion. This is especially important for those who feel distant, overlooked, or on the margins of Church life.

Another consistent call is for greater collaboration. The Church cannot depend solely on the priest. Clergy, religious, laity, youth, families, ministries, and local communities all share responsibility for the Church's mission. The life of the Church is strengthened when participation is active and responsibility is shared.

