



Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia (CBCM)
Pastoral Letter for Malaysia Day
Selamat Hari Malaysia 16th September 2025

"Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards, responsible for all these varied graces of God, put it at the service of others" (1 Peter 4:10).

To Catholics, Christians and all people of goodwill in Malaysia

Peace be with you. **Selamat Hari Malaysia 2025**. On 16th September 1963, a new political entity called Malaysia was formed, from a union of four sovereign independent nations, namely, Federation of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore (which left in 1965).

I was born in 1963 in Sarawak, a few months before the birth of Malaysia. During my school days, whenever National Day 31st August was celebrated, our classmates would end up debating on the two different years. For example, the newspaper in 1982 would print as the 25th National Day (since *Merdeka* was in 1957) while we only counted it as the 19th Anniversary of Sarawak in Malaysia.

This discrepancy was finally resolved in 2010 when the Malaysian Government officially declared **Malaysia Day**, commemorating **16th September 1963** as the formation date of Malaysia.

Celebrating Together as One Malaysian Nation

Malaysia Day celebrates the coming together of diverse entities of Sabah, Sarawak and Semenanjung as a unified nation - with the aim of fostering an inclusive national identity as Malaysians. This rightfully celebrates the rich diversity and unity of Malaysia's various races, religions, cultures, faith and communities, throughout our *tanahair*, including the unique sounds and cultures of Borneo.

Role of Religious Leaders in Nation Building

On 28th August 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia hosted the Second Summit of World Religious Leaders with the theme "The Role of Religious Leaders in Conflict Resolution". This was organised by the Prime Minister's Office, together with the Muslim World League, and participated by 400 prominent world religious leaders from all faiths.

Vatican's Cardinal George Koovakad, Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski, Vatican's Ambassador to Malaysia in KL, together with delegates from the Christian Federation of Malaysia and Association of Churches in Sarawak were present. Arch/bishops, priests, pastors and church leaders represented the Christian community as part of multi-religious Malaysia.

Mutual Respect and Acceptance

Coming from different backgrounds, with mutual acceptance and respect, we welcome one another as brothers or sisters of one human family. Let us be bridge-builders, engaging in respectful dialogue and working for the common good of all. As we celebrate Malaysia Day, let us move beyond slogans and words, and translate the theme '**Malaysia MADANI: Rakyat Disantuni**' into concrete actions.

Say 'NO' to All Forms of VIOLENCE

I humbly appeal to all fellow Malaysians not to allow prejudice, mistrust and violence to divide us. Let us stand together to denounce all forms of violence - bullying in our schools, child abuse, harassment in the workplace, domestic violence in families, cyber-bullying, extremism and fundamentalism in society.

As part of nation-building, let us work tirelessly to foster better understanding and to strengthen the bonds of unity across Sarawak, Sabah and Semenanjung.

Pray for our Leaders and Rakyat

Let us pray for our King, for our civil, political and religious leaders (1 Timothy 2:2), that they may lead with wisdom, justice and integrity, guided by the principles of the *Rukun Negara*. We also pray that the fundamental liberties and rights of the *rakyat* will be safeguarded by our Federal Constitution.

Celebrate our Unity in Diversity

On this Malaysia Day, let us commit ourselves to live in harmony as we celebrate our unity in diversity and strive for a future where everyone is respected, protected and cared for. True harmony begins with building friendship in our neighbourhoods, classrooms and work places.

May God bless our beloved country, Malaysia, with peace, progress and harmony.

Selamat Hari Malaysia!



Most Rev. Dato Dr. Simon Poh
Catholic Archbishop of Kuching
President,
Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia
31st August 2025

