



**THE DIOCESE OF SINGAPORE
26th SESSION OF SYNOD (2nd MEETING)
11th NOVEMBER 2023**

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
ROOTED IN LOVE, UNITED IN SPIRIT, LIGHT TO THE WORLD**

Brothers and sisters-in-Christ, the peace of the Lord be with you.

Welcome to the 2nd meeting of the 26th Session of Synod. It is certainly a joy to see the whole Synod, especially our clergy and Synod Representatives from the deaneries, present to discuss matters pertaining to our Diocese which comprises of 7 countries: Singapore, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam.

We want to rejoice with Revd Calvin Tan, Revd Moses Ng and Revd Wu Wenbin, who will be ordained to priesthood tomorrow at St Andrew's Cathedral. Later this month, on 26th November 2023, 12 deacons from the Deanery of Indonesia will be priested in Bali, at the newly renovated Anglican Theological College Indonesia. The theological college is built for the purpose of training Anglican workers who will be sent out throughout all Indonesia, and it will be consecrated to the Glory of God on the same day. Praise be to God!

Indeed, we give thanks that while the harvest is plentiful and labourers are few, our Lord continues to raise up workers in our midst so that we are able to fulfil the Great Commission by bringing the Gospel to the end of the world.

In September, with sadness, we bade farewell to Revd Gilbert Wong, who resigned from serving as the chaplain to our social service due to personal reasons. Next month, we will also see Revd Michael Lim retire on 22nd December. Thank you, Michael, for your dedication and service unto the Lord.

Holding Fast

We rejoice with St Andrew's Mission Hospital (SAMH) as they, in June, celebrated the Centenary Homecoming of the first St Andrew's Mission Hospital building at Erskine Road. This occasion highlighted SAMH's legacy of care to our society and I am glad that they are growing from strength to strength in their services to the residents in Singapore.

Recently, SAMH launched two new centres, St Andrew's Senior Care Bedok-North and St Andrew's Senior Care Bedok-South. They target to set up another 3 new services by the first half of 2024. Let us continue to uphold the work of SAMH in prayer, that they will continue to be a blessing to our society.

On 5th Aug 2023, Lat Krabang Anglican Church from the Deanery of Thailand celebrated her 10th anniversary of her first Sunday Service. We rejoice to see many faces there that would not have received the good news of Jesus if not for the planting of this church. Next year, Lat Krabang Church will undergo the next phase of her church building project to include additional worship and ministry space, a kindergarten for 120 students and space to house headquarter operations for the deanery. We continue to pray for the staff and members in the Deanery of Thailand, that they will advance in mission with one heart and mind.

Back in Singapore, I am heartened to hear positive reports of developments and initiatives amongst our 7 Area Groups. The inaugural St Andrew's Village (SAV) Family Day on 7th October by Area Group 5, the Amazing Race on 29th June by Area Group 6, are just some examples of wonderful initiatives by the area groups that allow members and leaders from the various parishes to interact with one another. Area Group 7 also had the Vicars exchanging pulpits with one another to preach at the other parish.

At the May Synod this year, we heard about the launch of the Parish of the Week (POTW). Having been personally involved in some of the POTW activities, I am truly excited yet humbled to see the Lord's hand upon us through this campaign. I have received so many good comments from all across the Diocese, including our deaneries! Many expressed how they are moved when they see other parishes being featured, how they are reminded we are one Diocese, many parishes. The history of each parish featured encouraged many when they see how God has so faithfully brought the parish to where she is today. Others are moved by the Lord to reach out to the parish to help, whether it is finance, prayer or time.

As the DCA team labour on with the other parishes for Season 2 of POTW next year, let us continue to pray and trust in our God to bring about His beautiful plan to unite the Diocese together as one – forging strong and stable relationships at various levels – between parishes, within the Area Group, within the parish, between parish leadership and clergy and so on.

Forging Ahead

Indeed, relationships, which incidentally was the focus of my May Synod Address, are the glue that holds the church together. And authentic and strong relationships are not built overnight – they need time to be developed, tested, refined.

For the Body to be united, we have to develop authentic relationships across all facets within the church. Just as a net, made up of countless strings, is strengthened when more and more strings are woven and knotted close together, so will we, as a Diocese, grow stronger as we build stronger and more authentic relationships around us. And with the Lord leading, we will grow stronger - within our parishes, area groups, Diocese, and the Province.

Jesus Christ is the perfect example of one who builds authentic relationships. Through the special work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus built relationships centred on love. Certainly, we cannot talk about authentic relationships without talking about love, in particular, the type of love that is articulated in the New Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40). Jesus calls us to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves, so what is expected of us all (both clergymen and lay) is not to provide lip-service, but to actually live out the love of God that we have received through our

salvation in Jesus Christ. We need to walk the talk, we cannot bury the one talent in the ground (Matthew 25:18), because the love of God is the foundation of our relationships in church.

In less than 23 days' time, we will enter the season of Advent. Let us remember that we are living between the first and second coming of Jesus Christ. All of us have a mission, a mission that is getting increasingly urgent – to fulfil The Great Commission, making disciples of all nations. As we work toward strengthening our relationships within the church, let us not neglect the people outside the church. People who have not heard about the gift that God has given through Christ, nor experience the hope and love freely given by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Word of God encourages us to be generous and care for those in need, to remember that they are also loved by God. We show love to all around us, even when we may not have the same views or beliefs. And loving them does not mean we agree with their choices, especially if those choices are in direct conflict with God's Word.

In order to discern between right and wrong choices, we have to first know Jesus. By loving and knowing Him through His Word, we know His heart and that forms the compass to direct the choices we should make. In the same way when we disciple with the knowledge of God's Word, we can be guided by God's principles and truth. It is important to understand that knowing God and loving God, similarly, knowing the Word of God and the love of God, are inseparable, as much as law and grace are inseparable.

As we obey the New Commandment and carry out the Great Commission, may it be done not with human strength but by the mysterious and powerful works of the Holy Spirit, so that the love and knowledge come forth from within us, bearing the testimony of the greatness of God.

Brothers and Sisters-in-Christ, we are living in tumultuous times, unprecedented with many unknowns. What happened recently in the Gaza Strip, without question, is indeed very painful and tragic, likewise the Russian-Ukraine war. We are reminded of what our Lord has said in Matthew 24:7-8 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains".

Trials and tribulations are signs of the end times and the 2nd coming of Christ. Trials and tribulations are also meant to test and teach us (James 1), that we may find out if we are easily disturbed and worried by the things of the world and forget the most important twin-teaching of Jesus, which is the core of our faith, and what it means to be a Christian and a believer.

May I encourage us to continue to keep one another in prayer so that all of us will be steadfast in loving God and will go beyond the walls of the church to where God has called us to serve.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Titus Chung" with a flourish underneath.

The Rt Revd Dr Titus Chung
The Bishop of Singapore