

## ***Bishop's Office***

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*Diocese of Penang*

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### **“Be of good cheer for I have overcome the world” (John 16:33)**

Dear People of God and Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

Pope John Paul II said, “There is no peace without justice and there is no justice without forgiveness.”

In the light of the incidents of various churches in Penang Island and Butterworth and especially at the Church of the Assumption, I send all of you greetings of Peace, Justice and Forgiveness. I thank all people of God of all races and religions together with political leaders, the media and all people of goodwill from Malaysia and elsewhere who have expressed genuine concern in various ways.

I reiterate that the Diocese of Penang is co-responsible for the official statements made by the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST), the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) and the Malaysian Bishops' Conference which includes 3 Archdioceses and 6 Dioceses in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak. I join all groups from all sectors who have expressed disapproval for the actions of those responsible for the latest incidents of putting up provoking banners in public areas and the throwing of molotov cocktails into the Church compound. I expect and believe with all Malaysians that the police will take their responsibilities seriously and act in a fair and just way. We will continue to pray that we will not use this incident as a diversion from all real issues affecting us as Malaysians.

Together with all fair-minded Malaysians we will join in prayer to invoke God's peace, justice and forgiveness on our nation. Thank you for your work for peace, justice and reconciliation. Wishing all Malaysians who celebrate together the Lunar New Year of the Horse, a truly Malaysian Celebration. Last but not least, I invite people of all faiths and the Church to stand firm and endure in times of trials that has been our tradition.

God bless you all.

*Sebastian Francis*

Rt. Rev. Sebastian Francis  
Bishop of Penang