Message for Malaysia Day 16th September 2024
From President - Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia

Selamat Hari Malaysia!

Malaysia held our Sukan Malaysia SUKMA XXV a few weeks ago. The SUKMA opening and closing ceremonies reflected our unity in diversity, celebrating the coming together of various cultures and ethnicity, for sports in Malaysia. RTM live-broadcasted the games and ceremonies (using the innovative 5G-Advanced digital technology), allowing the whole nation to celebrate the talents and achievements of our young generation of Malaysians.

SUKMA ceremonies highlighted the contrast with the July Paris Olympics Opening ceremony which political and religious leaders criticised as disrespectful and offensive. This distasteful portrayal of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper has indeed betrayed the spirit of excellence, respect and friendship of the Olympics, which primarily seeks to promote sport, culture and education for building a better world for all humanity.

Many Malaysians praised the SUKMA ceremonies, with many spectators and netizens echoing: "*Hebat Sarawak. SUKMA opening ceremony lebih hebat daripada olimpik Paris,*" "Paris should learn from this," etc. I believe that what captured the hearts of Malaysians is that our SUKMA celebrated our unity and friendship, giving due respect to various cultural traditions and honour to the young athletes.

This is the true spirit of being Malaysians - from Sabah, Sarawak and Semenanjung – who celebrate Malaysia Day on 16th September. Let the theme: "Malaysia Madani: Jiwa Merdeka", become a reality, symbolising the integration of Malaysians from various cultures and ethnicities. This is as envisioned in the acronym M.A.D.A.N.I. – with each Letter representing a Core Value to be practised in our daily way of life in Malaysia.

M	ke**M**ampanan	Sustainability
A	kesej**A**hteraan	Prosperity
D	**D**aya cipta	Innovation
A	horm**A**t	Respect
N	keyaki**N**an	Trust
I	**I**hsan	Compassion

For the last two months of July and August, Sarawak, Sabah and Semenanjung have celebrated their own respective dates of self-governance and independence. For Malaysia Day, as Malaysian citizens, beyond slogans and words, let us sincerely join hands and work for nation building, to be truly the one people of Malaysia, celebrating our unity and diversity, mutual acceptance and respect for all religions, races and cultures.

May "petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." (1 Tim2:1-2). Happy 61st Malaysia Day.

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