

Celebrating the sixth anniversary of Pope Francis' pontificate

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By Vincent D'Silva

A dinner reception to mark the sixth anniversary of His Holiness Pope Francis was held at the Vatican Nunciature (Vatican Embassy), March 13.

Representing the Malaysian government was the Honourable Sim Tze Tzin, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry of Malaysia who proposed a toast to His Holiness Pope Francis, followed by the playing of the Pontifical Anthem.

Archbishop Marino then invited everyone to join him in a toast for the good health and wellbeing of His Majesty the Yang Di Pertuan Agong, the success and prosperity of the government and the people of Malaysia. This was followed by the Negaraku.

In his welcome address, Archbishop Marino thanked the audience who despite their busy schedules, took time to come to the reception to commemorate the sixth anniversary of Pope Francis' pontificate.

He said the reception was taking place for the first time in the permanent Embassy of the Holy See here in Malaysia, after its official inauguration about a year and a half ago.

The Nuncio said Pope Francis, when he met with the nuncios on September 17, 2016, said: "The Apostolic Nunciature must truly be the House of the Pope, not only for the traditional annual reception but also a permanent place where all sectors of the Church feel welcomed and come to receive counsel and support."

The Pope continued, "At the same time, it is a place where public authorities and diplomats can find a point of reference, not only for diplomatic functions, but also for what is specific to the diplomacy of the Pope."

He said, this is to bring to all without exception, his care for the good of humanity, the promotion of harmony and the creation of a spirit of fraternity among peoples of faith and among the members of the family of nations.

Archbishop Marino said ever since he was given the job to open the first Vatican Embassy here in Malaysia, one of his priorities was to assure that it would be a building that would be environmentally friendly and so he was introduced to the Green Building Index (GBI) which is unique to this country.

He said, "This building of the Embassy coincided with the publication of an important document on the environment by Pope Francis, Laudato Si, in which he encouraged all to make every effort in caring for our 'common home', the earth."

The Vatican Ambassador said the Pope stressed that humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home, adding that, "I want to recognise, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share."

Archbishop Marino said that in one of his audiences with the Pope, he told him that he was trying to make his Embassy in Malaysia green, and when he did, Pope Francis gave the Nuncio a "thumbs up."

Mr Chen Thiam Leong, the Green Building Index (GBI) accreditation panel chairman, presented the GBI Platinum Rated Certificate to Archbishop Marino witnessed by Deputy Minister Sim Tze Tzin, Arch/bishops, diplomats, government officials and other guests.

"Now I look forward to reporting to him that much has been achieved in this regard, and that this major goal has been achieved," Archbishop Marino added.