

Chief Minister joins cathedral parishioners for Good Friday service

PENANG: Parishioners of the filled-to-capacity Cathedral of the Holy Spirit were pleasantly surprised and pleased to find the one-week old YAB Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng in their midst for the noon-day Good Friday Service. He received a quiet welcome at the door by the parish priest, Fr Francis Anthony, and the PPC chairman, Gregory Warrior.

The only slight stir, if any, was caused by the presence of newsmen who got a whiff of his intended attendance. Mr Lim stayed for the Way of the Cross through to the Liturgy of the Word. He left after the homily. He was seen nodding in assent whenever Fr Fabian emphasised certain points during the homily.

Through the pointed use of a popular story with the core message of "charge" (cost) and "no charge" (no cost), Fr Fabian effectively conveyed Christ's "model of ransom." It was a ransom like no other, paid out in full — in testimony of Christ's total and unconditional surrender of his life out of his immense love for

us. We may not feel comfortable with such a model, but we would do well to absorb traits of this model into "our system."

Fr Fabian reminded us of Isaiah's call "Come to the water Buy corn without money, and eat, and, at no cost, wine and milk" (Is 55:1). Fr Fabian asked, "He saved us. How do we respond to make the world a better place, at no charge?" He asserted that our response in faith should in turn reflect that we value love, freedom, equality, justice, peace and harmony in society. Because of what Christ has done for us, we need to change, for the better. These sentiments, no doubt, were shared by YAB Mr Lim, to have him nodding his approval. Later he told the PPC chairman to convey to Fr Fabian that it was a good and interesting homily.

A day earlier, on Thursday, a holy day for both Muslims and Christians, Mr Lim along with two DAP exco members, attended the state-level Maulidur Rasul celebrations at the Seberang Jaya expo

site after seeking advice and consent from Deputy CM I Fairus Khairuddin, State Mufti Datuk Hassan Ahmad, PAS and PKR leaders.

Unlike most politicians who are only too pleased to seize every opportunity for political gain, Mr Lim offered no such comments when approached in church by the media. All he said was, "I am here alone. I just wanted to join the ceremony and, out of respect to the ceremony, I will not comment or talk on any issue here. I will attend all kinds of religious ceremonies and accept all blessings because I honour all the different faiths and religions in the country." (*Star*, Mar 22).

A similar report in the *NST* has him adding, "We are aware and will continue to encourage the freedom of religion." He reiterated that the state government would honour and respect all religions practiced by the people in the state (*NST*, Mar 22).

He who honours others will be honoured in return, we are sure. We wish him well.

— *By Lucille Dass*



YAB Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng with Gregory Warrior, the Parish Pastoral Council Chairperson of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Penang during the Good Friday service at the cathedral.