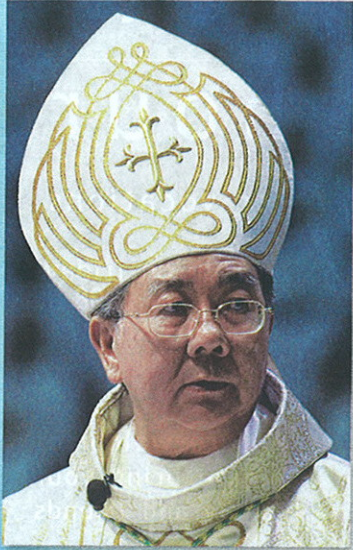


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Archbishop Chia urges Catholic families with maids to practise justice and love



SINGAPORE – There are more than 170,000 foreign domestic helpers working in Singapore. This means that one out of every six families employs a foreign domestic helper – one of the world's highest ratios, says Archbishop Nicholas Chia in a message published in a booklet for the World Day for Migrants and Refugees, celebrated in Singapore on Sunday Sep 28.

The booklet is published by the Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and the Caritas Singapore Community Council (CSCC). It was distributed at all parishes last weekend. Archbishop Chia urged each family that employs a foreign domestic helper to read this guide.

“May our Catholic families be a light to others in practising justice and love,” he said.

The archbishop noted that most of these foreign domestic helpers come from poor

backgrounds. Often, alone and vulnerable in a foreign land, they are in need of our love, he said. There have been many reported and unreported stories of foreign domestic helpers being abused and exploited by employment agencies and also by their employers, he added.

“But beyond what some of us would consider obvious exploitation and abuse, there is the more fundamental question as to whether employers treat their foreign domestic helpers with the kind of basic dignity and love that should be accorded to a fellow human being,” he said.

“Jesus commands us to love one another as he has loved us. There is no exception to those we should love, be it our family, our friends and others we may not know so well.

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Archbishop addresses Singapore Catholic families with maids

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In fact, Jesus emphasizes loving and helping the poor, the weak and the marginalised of society.

“Jesus also emphasizes the importance of serving. He came into our midst to serve, and he asks us to consider “Who is greater, the one who is seated at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is seated at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.” (Luke 22:27)”

Archbishop Chia said that over the years, the church has evolved a set of social teachings on how these gospel values apply to our daily life. The social teaching of the church has received greater prominence in our

archdiocese with the formation and role of the Caritas Singapore Community Council, he said. □

