



APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE
MALAYSIA

Kuala Lumpur, 19 October 2013

It is a pleasure for me to greet Dr. Edwin G. Hurley, Senior Pastor, and all the members of South Highland Presbyterian Church in Birmingham on the occasion of your 125th Anniversary to be celebrated on 27 October 2013.

A celebration of this kind certainly moves us to recall the many years of the existence of this church, which has stood so proudly on Birmingham's Southside, as a reminder of the presence of faith in our community and society. Not only, we also recall the countless people who have found inspiration by simply passing by this stately structure, who have encountered the love and warmth of a Christian community when entering into it and who have been received hope upon the hearing the message of the Gospel when participating in its prayerful services of worship.

In fact, the church building is inseparable from the Christian community formed into God's family through Baptism. The author of the First Letter of Peter teaches us that "as living stones", we come together to build "the spiritual temple, where we serve as holy priests to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2: 5).

With these analogies of the Christian community as temple, stones and building, we have from the earliest of times, applied the word, church, also to the building where this community gathers to be nourished spiritually and to be strengthened in our faith, which as Pope Francis writes in his encyclical, "The light of faith", is "unique, since it is capable of illuminating every aspect of human existence" (number 4).

In conclusion, I wish to assure the entire community of South Highland Presbyterian Church of my prayer, asking the Good Lord to bestow upon each and everyone of you an abundance of spiritual blessings so that in all that you do, you will do it through your faith in Jesus Christ, who is forever the Lord of all.

+ Joseph Marino

+Joseph Marino
Apostolic Nuncio to Malaysia
and Timor Leste