



The Catholic Reporter

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Pope at Epiphany Mass: Imitate the Magi to approach the Christ Child

-Deborah Castellano Lubov

Pope Francis gave this encouragement during Holy Mass on Saturday morning, on the Solemnity of the Epiphany

Addressing the faithful gathered in St Peter's Basilica, the Holy Father began by recalling that the Magi set out to seek the newborn King.

"For now, in the flesh of the Babe of Bethlehem," the Holy Father rejoiced, "the glory of the Lord has been revealed to all the nations" and "all shall see the salvation of God."

Closer look at the Magi: The Pope invited the faithful to take a closer look at these wise men from the East and consider three aspects of their journey: their eyes raised to the heavens; their feet journeying on the earth; and their hearts bowed in adoration.

Reflecting on their eyes raised to the heavens, the Pope recalled that the Wise Men longed for the infinite, and therefore could gaze at the stars of the evening sky. "They do not pass their lives staring at their feet, self-absorbed, confined by earthly horizons, plodding ahead in resignation or lamentation. They lift their heads high and await the light that can illumine the meaning of their lives."

Here we see the key to discovering the real meaning of our lives: if we remain closed in the narrow confines of earthly things, if we waste away, heads bowed, hostages of our failures and our regrets; if we thirst for wealth and worldly comforts rather than becoming seekers of life and love, our life slowly loses its light.

The Magi, who are still foreigners and have not yet encountered Jesus, teach us to fix our sight on high, to lift our eyes to the heavens, to the hills, from which our help will come, for our help is from the Lord.

"We need to let ourselves walk in friendship with the Lord, we need his love to sustain us, and the light of his word to guide us, like a star in the night."

The Pope urged the faithful to fearlessly set out on this journey, as "passionate seekers of the Lord's face" and witnesses to His Gospel.

Journeying on the Earth: The Magi, the Pope went on to note, also had "feet journeying on the earth."

The star shining in the heavens sends them forth to travel the roads of the world.

The light that illumines our life, the Lord Jesus, was given to us not to warm our nights, but to let rays of light break through the dark shadows that envelop so many situations in our societies.

The Magi set out to seek God, and they found a child of flesh and bone, and teach us that an encounter with God opens us up to a greater reality, which makes us change our way of life and transform our world.

"In the words of Pope Benedict XVI," Pope Francis quoted, "When true hope is lacking, happiness is sought in drunkenness, in the superfluous, in excesses, and we ruin ourselves and the world... For this reason, we need people who nourish great hope and thus have great courage: the courage of the Magi, who made a long journey following a star, and were able to kneel before a Child and offer Him their precious gifts"

Hearts bowed in adoration: Finally, the Pope observed that the Magi have "hearts bowed in adoration."

They came to Bethlehem, and when they saw the Child, "they knelt down and paid Him homage," the Pope said, recalling that Child was in fact "the King who came to serve us, a God who became man, who has mercy on us, suffers with us and dies for us."

Before this mystery, Pope Francis insisted, we likewise are called to "bow our heart" and "bend our knee" in worship, "to worship the God Who comes in littleness and dwells in our homes."

"In the frail flesh of a newborn child, wrapped in swaddling clothes, the Pope recalled, he was worshiped by the Magi and caused fear in the wicked."

"The Pope invited the faithful to rediscover authentic adoration. "Let us acknowledge Jesus as our God and Lord, and offer Him," he said, "whatever gifts we possess, but above all the gift that we are: our very selves."

"Pope Francis concluded urging faithful to ask for the grace to never lose courage needed to seek God with hope, in order to "bring to all the illuminating light of the Christ Child."



Pope Francis with the Christ Child.
(Picture Courtesy: ©Vatican Media/Dicastery for Communication)

Meet your Bishop: Bp Donald Lippert OFM Cap (Bishop of Mendi Diocese)

- Ahisha Mangot



Coming from the fifth most populous state in the United States: Pennsylvania, the city of Pittsburgh is home to the kind Bishop of Mendi diocese, Most Reverend Bishop Donald Lippert OFM Cap.

Bishop Lippert was born on June 12, 1957, made his perpetual vows on August 20 1983 and was ordained priest on June 8 1985, a priest of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin short (OFM). Twenty six years later he was appointed as the Bishop of Mendi in 2011 and ordained as Bishop of Mendi diocese on February 4, 2012.

Bishop Donald comes from a very strong Catholic Family, he is the eldest in the family with two brothers. He also expressed his appreciation to his parents for having born into the Catholic faith. His God-fearing upbringing has a huge impact on what he is today when he looked back.

Bishop Donald described his family as a middle-class family. "My parents worked so hard so that we

can attend Catholic schools, me and my two younger brothers" said Bishop Donald.

When asked about his home city, Bishop Donald said that Pittsburgh was known for many years as the steel city because a lot of steel was produced there.

"My father worked for a steel company all his life to keep our family going," he expressed with admiration.

Bishop Donald also recalled some of the people who are influential in his life. "We lived in an apartment and above is an old lady who is 105 years of age who lived for so many years and the Religious sisters of his school (St Catherine school) brought so much positivity and Gods love, they influenced him positively."

Coming from one of the United States' Industrial center for coal, steel and rail road's, one can only imagine the adjustment Bishop Donald went through here in Papua New Guinea, especially the status of the church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

When asked about challenges he is facing in Mendi diocese he said "We will need a whole hour or two for that".

However, Bishop Donald only stated a few. The common challenges he faced in his diocese and just

like other dioceses would be the constant struggle to move towards self-reliance so that the church is not too dependent on resources from the mission overseas.

"It's a challenge to our people to be a true church. Meaning people need to stand on their own two feet instead of waiting for resources from overseas. The church came 60 plus years ago in the highland's region, the mission just gave everything and people get spoilt and the people want the mission to keep giving everything, but the mission can't continue to do that anymore even if they could they shouldn't now after some good years. The people should be responsible for their own church this is the church of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, this is not the church of Switzerland, Germany or United States, this is our church."

Bishop Donald urged the Catholic Faithful of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands to start taking responsibility of their church

He also added that St Francis of Assisi is his inspiration to keep going despite the many challenges he is facing in the diocese, especially the struggle to self-reliance and social problems like SARV etc.

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Couples in irregular situations and same-sex couples

- Fr. Giorgio Licini, PIME, CBC General Secretary



A bit of Latin helps in approaching the recent Declaration (18 Dec 2023) of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Fiducia Supplicans* (With Confident Trust) on the “Pastoral Meaning of Blessings” approved by Pope Francis.

To bless in Latin is *benedicere*. It is composed of two root words: *bonum* (good) and *dicere* (to say). It means to say something good; or more properly to ask or wish for something good of whatever sort. In the history of the Church blessings (*benedictiones*) have been applied to a variety of personal conditions and natural situations. Children are frequently blessed, and the same are the elderly, the homes, anniversaries, deceased people and graves, water, oil, fields and good harvest, lectors and catechists. All of us receive a blessing when we attend Mass on Sunday. It allows us to feel how much God loves us, is close to us and we need Him. We share the Eucharistic celebration with a variety of people and fellow sinners who have in common a strong need and desire for conversion.

Quite incorrectly, we also tend to use the expression “blessing of marriage”. We apply it either to people who never lived together and intend to only do so after the “blessing” by the priest; or more frequently to those who have already lived together but intend, as we say, “to regularize their position” or

“to solemnize their marriage” or “to celebrate their religious marriage”. It is wrong language. You may have the couple blessed on the anniversary of the marriage or at any other moment in life. But the day they seal their union by their free will, with no canonical impediment and in front of the minister of the Church, they rather “celebrate” their marriage. It’s different and more than a blessing. The Sacrament is direct and salvific God’s intervention in one’s life. A blessing is a request and a wish of good things and freedom from evil in particular circumstances. While for the effects of the Sacrament there is a need to share in God’s grace, a blessing is like the rain. It falls on the good and the bad. The ground accepts it. The stones reject it. At Sunday Mass not all partake in the Sacrament of communion, but all receive a blessing regardless of their status. It would be unadvisable for an unrepentant murderer, a thief, a corrupt administrator, an active homosexual, an unfaithful spouse to receive communion. But all are entitled to ask and receive a blessing that may help them in their sincere efforts back to the right path and eventually to the merciful God.

This is basically what Pope Francis and the Holy See wanted to make clear with the Declaration of 18 December 2023 on the “Pastoral Meaning of Blessings” including the thorny issue of couples in irregular situations and same-sex couples. *Fiducia Supplicans* states that there will be no formal, official

and codified formula of blessing in these cases, like we may have for the blessing of religious objects, water, vehicles, homes, children, people in general and events in life... Nothing also (prayers, vestments, invitations, etc.) should resemble the celebration of a Sacrament, such as the Sacrament of marriage, to avoid confusion and safeguard the proper difference in meaning and effect between a Sacrament and a blessing. There will be no blessing of couples in irregular situations or same-sex couples “in concurrence with the ceremonies of a civil union, and not even in connection with them” (*Fiducia Supplicans*, #39).

A further clarification. In colloquial English “asking and receiving a blessing” normally means asking and receiving an approval or an endorsement (e.g.: Our program of activities for the patronal feast should have the “blessing” of the parish priest). In correct language and for the Church, a blessing is an offer or a request for help flowing from “the supplicating trust (*fiducia supplicans*) of the faithful People of God” (*Fiducia Supplicans*, #1).

A blessing is never an outright endorsement of what exists. It is rather an acknowledgement and an imploration for better things, assistance, protection and change. The Declaration *Fiducia Supplicans* will also help in preventing misuse in the practice and meaning of blessings and confusion with Sacraments.

The Gospels: The Gospel of John

- Fr. Tomás Ravaioli IVE
Liturgical Catechetical Institute Director



We already wrote about its authorship in March, and about its date and place of composition in April. Let’s see some of its characteristics.

1) John omits many things that the other Gospels include. The Fourth Gospel has no account of the birth of Jesus, of his baptism, of his temptations; it tells us nothing of the institution of the Eucharist during Last Supper, nothing of the agony of Gethsemane, and nothing of the Ascension. It has no word of the healing of any people possessed by devils and evil spirits. And, perhaps most surprising of all, it has none of the parable stories Jesus told which are so priceless a part of the other three

Gospels. But in the Fourth Gospel the speeches of Jesus are often a whole chapter long. Also the account of the facts of the life and ministry of Jesus is often different from the other three. Anyway we must say that there is no contradiction at all between John’s and the other Gospels.

2) John includes many things that the other Gospels omit. John alone tells of the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee (Jn 2:1-11); of the coming of Nicodemus to Jesus (Jn 3:1-15); of the woman of Samaria (Jn 4); the adulterous woman (Jon 8:1-11); of the raising of Lazarus (Jn 11); of the way in which Jesus washed his disciples’ feet (Jn 13:1-17); of Jesus’ wonderful teaching about the Holy Spirit, the Comforter (chapters 14 to 17). It is only in John that some of the disciples really “come alive.” It is in

John alone that Thomas speaks (Jn 11:16; Jn 14:5; Jn 20:24-29); that Andrew becomes a real personality (Jn 1:40-41; Jn 6:8-9; Jn 12:22); that we get a glimpse of the character of Philip (Jn 6:5-7; Jn 14:8-9); that we hear the carping protest of Judas at the anointing at Bethany (Jn 12:4-5).

3) John includes long discourses after the miracles. The feeding of the five thousand is followed by the long discourse on the bread of life (Jn 6); the healing of the blind man springs from the saying that Jesus is the light of the world (Jn 9); the raising of Lazarus leads up to the saying that Jesus is the resurrection and the life (Jn 11). To John a miracle was never an isolated act; it was always a window into the reality of what Jesus always was and always is and always did and always does.

We need a renewal in the Catholic Church: Why do Catholics leave the Catholic Church?

- Fr. Victor Roche SVD
Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies



Dear Reader,

We continue to reflect on the question, “Why do Catholics leave the Catholic Church?”.

Here are some of the excerpts from the conversations I had with those Catholics who left the Catholic Church and joined other Denominations:

1. “I did not experience Jesus in the Catholic Church. I joined a Pentecostal Church and I am born again. I do experience Jesus as my Friend and Savior”

2. “I was in the Hospital for many months suffering from a serious illness. The Pastor laid his hands and prayed over me. I am healed now. I have joined his church.”

3. “I used to spend half of my fortnight salary on alcohol. I used to beat my wife and children. I joined a Protestant church and now I do not drink; I do not beat my wife and children; I am regular to the Sunday church service”

4. “When I was a Catholic, I did not know the Bible. In the Church I have joined, the Pastor preaches the Bible very well. Now I read the Bible and I know the Bible”.

5. “As a Catholic, I chewed betelnut; smoked cigarettes; drank alcohol. Though I had a very good job, I did not save much money. I joined another church and now I have a good house, a car and a good family. I am a believer”.

6. “I was a baptized Catholic. As a young boy I was always attracted to a young man who was preaching the Bible in the Market. Eventually, I joined his church. I now preach the Bible in the market”.

7. “My marriage was blessed in the Catholic Church. But I and my husband were separated because of some misunderstanding. Catholic Church would not give me communion as I have a new Partner. I joined another church.

8. “I became a single mother when I was in Grade 11. I left the school and worked in a store for my livelihood. Now I am married to a business man

as his second wife. I was embarrassed by the gossips by the people in the Catholic Church. I joined a Pentecostal Church”.

There are many such reasons why some Catholics have left the Catholic Church and joined other Churches. When they experienced problems in their life or in their faith, they could not find help. So, they joined other churches.

In PNG today, there is a battle for souls. The churches are competing to add members to their congregation. The traditional mainline churches are losing members to the SDAs and Pentecostal churches. Catholic Church is reluctant to join the ‘battle for souls’. Now, it is not the Faith or spiritual values that matter but salesmanship. It is in the effectiveness of presenting your church persuasively.

a) In the recently held 16th ‘Synod of Bishops’ (4-29 Oct 2023) the participants issued a Synthesis Report. In the Synodal Church, WE, ALL have a mission: “As members of the faithful People of God, all the baptised are co-responsible for mission, each according to his or her vocation, competence and experience. Therefore, all contribute to imagining and discerning steps to reform Christian communities and the Church as a whole. In this way, the Church experiences “the sweet and comforting joy of evangelising.”” (18.Structures for Participation-Convergences- c).

b) Evangelizing mission is not the responsibility of the Bishops, Priests, Religious and the Catechists alone. The Lay people have to play an active and important role. The Synthesis Report of the Synod of Bishops stresses the need of reorganizing the structures of the church: “Pastoral structures need to be re-organized so they can readily recognise, call forth and animate lay charisms and ministries, inserting them into the missionary dynamism of the synodal Church. Under the guidance of their pastors, the communities will be able to send people as well as sustain those they have sent on mission. In this way, these structures will primarily be at the service of the mission that the faithful carry out within society, in the family, and in work life, rather than focusing exclusively on internal matters or organisational concerns”. (XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS-First Session (4-29 October 2023)-*Synthesis Report: A SYNODAL CHURCH IN MISSION* (8. Church is Mission. L.Matters for consideration).

Safe use of the application Tiktok for children



Recently, families have flocked to the app while with their kids, yet many parents have been left to wonder how safe the platform really is. **Jo Langford**, a Therapist, Sex and Tech Educator for tweens & parents, in his website <https://www.beheroes.net> helps us get to the down-low of this app to learn more about this hot social media trend.

What is TikTok?

TikTok is a video social media platform which allows you to upload and edit pre-recorded videos, or go live. Langford, who reviews apps on his podcast **APProprate**, thinks that TikTok is an awesome creative outlet for kids who are artistically inclined, or who long to perform and edit videos and photos. In family pairing mode, you can control what gets posted and as your child shows responsibility, you can start giving them more freedom.

Langford says, "As a whole, TikTok is a great way for kids to connect with friends and have fun."

The Cons of TikTok

While scrolling through TikTok and making videos can be fun for adults and children, there are a few cons to this app. The privacy, or lack thereof, around location tracking are a concern, as TikTok can see your latitude and longitude of where the video is being made. Efforts are being made to

improve that within the app, but it's not fully implemented yet. Langford also adds that, "Kids can also get access to music that is not age-appropriate and watching them sing adult lyrics that may contain profanity can be upsetting to parents."

"External validation is also a common theme in TikTok, given that abilities and appearances are praised on the platform. The compliments kids receive can make them vulnerable to predators. Those compliments light their brains up and can feel really good, especially in primary school."

In the US, Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) states that any platform that is targeted at children can have at least one active predator on the app at any given moment, so it's important for parents to take precautions.

Here are some tips to keep your kids safe on TikTok.

1. Adjust your child's privacy settings. For kids under 16, I recommend setting their account to private. With a private account, only users you approve can follow you and view your videos. Let them interact with only people they know in real life (and celebrities you approve of).

2. Manage comments. Tell your kids never to read the comments or disable them entirely. This is one way to manage that external validation piece and to protect them from online bullying and predators.

3. Set time limits. Set time limits for your kids on tiktok, boundaries are good to keep a healthy balance.

4. Communicate. Communication is so important, keep talking to your kids so they know they can come to you if they have a problem.

5. Check followers. Keep an eye on who is following your kids if you let them go on the app without you.

5. Scroll together. Predators have been known to manipulate their content so it lands on kids'. Consider keeping the app on your phone instead and enjoy videos together as a family.

Evangelization on Tiktok

To conclude, I share links (in bold) for priests who evangelize on Tiktok, they give catechesis to everything on faith formation. As parents, you can guide your children to these wonderful priests who give great example online especially on Tiktok. To search go to the Tiktok app and type the bold letters and you are able to see their profiles.

1. @fatherdavidmichael – Father David Michael, an American priest who is active in all social media sites doing social media evangelization.

2. @lifestartshere_fire – Father Frankie Cicero, an Italian priest who makes basic Catholic faith alive in his creativity online.

3. @fr_james_a – an African priest who shares the faith online.

Religious and Laity celebrate life and service of His Excellency Archbishop Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez

- Jessica Oata

Boroko, Port Moresby: The Laity and the Religious from different congregations gathered at the Mary Help of Christians Shrine in Don Bosco Technological Institute on Friday December 15, 2023 to celebrate the thanksgiving mass to thank God for the life and service of His Excellency Archbishop Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez during his term as the Apostolic Nuncio to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

The thanksgiving mass had His Excellency Archbishop Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez as the principal celebrant with His Grace Archbishop John Cardinal Ribat MSC from the Archdiocese of Port Moresby, Bishop Otto Separy from Bereina Diocese and Bishop Rolando Santos CM from the Alotau-Sideia Diocese as con-celebrants.

Parishioners from St Peter Chanel, Erima animated the mass with an angelic choir and colorful processions.

In his homily, His Excellency Archbishop Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez shared his experience in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

"When I was appointed as the Nuncio to PNG and Solomon Islands, I was very happy when I heard the name of the countries because it came to my mind the beautiful memories of my first time in this beautiful country when I served as the Secretary to the Nuncio and today is a day to give thanks to God for all the things he has given me"

He added that he views Mission as Passion and thanked the Priests, Religious and Lay Faithful for being living testimonies of life in their respective vocations.

His Excellency concluded by saying that it has been a privilege to serve as the Secretary to the Apostolic Nuncio and an even greater blessing to return and serve as the Apostolic Nuncio.

Before the final blessing, Archbishop of Port Moresby Sir John Cardinal Ribat MSC gave his farewell remarks thanking His Excellency Archbishop Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez for his service to PNG and Solomon Islands for the last two and a half years since his appointment in 2021.

"It has been wonderful having you as part of our big and loving Christian family in Papua New

Guinea and Solomon Islands. You have gone to our dioceses and visited our people and for that, we are grateful for the time you have given to the church in PNGSI. We will continue to pray for you as you depart for Bolivia that the Lord will continue to bless and guide you"

His Excellency Archbishop Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez departed Port Moresby on December 26, 2023.



Group picture of His Excellency Archbishop Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez with priests present during his farewell mass at Mary Help of Christians Shrine, Don Bosco Technological Institute, Boroko.

CBC NCES takes part in drafting new 50 years vision for the PNG Education System

- Donovan Pintol

Port Moresby: With the Grand-chief's 50 years education vision (1975- 2025) nearing the end, the Marape Government and his Education Minister, Hon. Jimmy Uguro has now commenced with the Frame-work and skeleton building of a new transformative 50 years vision and plan for the education system of the country.

As per the plan, the vision will cover several core-areas of importance that were identified over the years by various key figures and stakeholders. And they are by which:

- Curriculum
- School System Structure
- TTD (Teachers' Education, Training, and Development)
- Digitization.
- Infrastructure & Learner Friendly Environments.
- Governance, Leadership, And Management
- Education services delivery
- Informal/ Illiteracy Education.

Apart from that, the working team under the supervision and direction of Education Secretary Dr Uke Kombra has planned to make the vision and framework of this yet to be endorsed education system a 'cultural oriented' one with the aim of improving lifestyles and developing more 'structured human beings' in the society.

Behind the framework and structure building of the vision are various stakeholders of the PNG education system. With which the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands (CBC PNGSI) being responsible for various top performing schools in the country, was given the privilege to help with the framework.

Representing the CBC PNGSI National Catholic Education Commission in the first draft presentation of the 50-year vision to the Minister for Education by the working team was former Deputy Secretary Mr Victor Piniau who has been vocal on issues affecting the education system in the country over the past years.

Piniau had the opportunity to give several on-hands experiences that he has encountered during visits to several schools in the country in the recent years. One such example was in a remote school in East New Britain where he discovered that students were suffering from the absence of teachers.

With the Catholic Church being the leading church in providing education services in the country in partnership with the Education Department, the CBC PNGSI National Catholic Education Commission looks forward to more collaborative efforts with the Department of Education in the coming years.

Meanwhile, Catholic Bishops Conference National Catholic Education Secretary Fr Lawrence Arockiaraj said that Education is something that should begin at home and parents also have an important role to play and strongly suggests that the Vision 2075 should address this.

"The two key principles of life "Moral and Knowledge" are first taught at home to the children because that is where education begins, therefore, children should not be blamed for misbehaving as parents must take on the first-hand responsibility of shaping children", he said.



CBC PNGSI National Catholic Education Secretary Fr Lawrence Arockiaraj.

WaSH Facility opened at West Papua Refugee Camp during International Migrants Day

- Donovan Pintol

Rainbow, Port Moresby: With the talks of Human rights and Freedom being one of the main discussed topics that is looming several media platforms, the Migrants and Refugees Desk of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands celebrated International Migrants Day at the Rainbow West Papuan Camp on Monday December 18, 2023.

Attending the small yet hope-filled celebration were guests from the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, St. Paul's Clinic (Gerehu), Media Personal, Representatives from the different Commissions of CBCPNG&SI, West Papuan Community Leaders, and the West Papua Community of Rainbow.

The celebration had as its theme: *"Honoring the Contribution of Migrants and Respecting their Rights"*. The event also coincided with the opening of two new septic toilets that were built under the CBC Migrants and Refugees Desk WaSH project. The toilets were erected by the refugees themselves to replace an old makeshift pit toilet that was built with cardboards and other materials. The facility, which is also kitted with lighting would now provide a clean and secure access for everyone in the camp, particularly, the old and women and girls

during the night. The facility is now accessible to more than 59 refugee families living there.

The Director of the CBC Refugee and Migrants Desk, in his address highlighted the unspoken reality of what migrants and refugees bring to the table, including recognizing their rights to basic needs.

"When migrants move, they bring new skills and knowledge, resources, culture, and lifestyle to their new country. When they use their skills, others learn from them; when they use their resources to establish business, they create employment; when they share their culture, they embrace diversity."

Mr. Siwat's statement was supported by the West Papuan representative and Rainbow Camp Leader Samuel Ingamer, who said that some of the migrants have become prominent figures with the society with the skills and talents they possess, and they surely do deserve recognition.

"A migrant or refugee also brings skills and knowledge apart from being a person in need in a society. One could never deny the fact that they have also helped contributed in one way or the other to the development of this nation over the years."

Apart from the celebration, the residents of the West Papuan Camp in Rainbow were also

privileged to have opened their two new septic toilets under CBC Migrants and Refugees' Desk WASH Project. The project was funded by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC). The International Catholic Migration Commission is an international organization that serves and protects uprooted people, including migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people, regardless of faith, race, ethnicity, or nationality.

The event is one of the many for the Migrants and Refugees Desk that aims to support displaced people or otherwise known as people on the move. This includes migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, among others.



West Papuan Rainbow Community Representatives cutting the ribbon to officially open the WaSH facilities.

Young people challenged to be Light

- Shirley Gahekave - Numbos

Port Moresby: Close to a hundred children and youths from Sabama, Gabutu and Sere Kone came together on Friday the 5th and Saturday the 6th of January 2024 at Don Bosco Technical School, Gabutu to participate in a two-day catechetical and value-based program.

The participants were divided into two groups: 8 to 12 years and 13 to 20 years. They were able to nurture their personal relationship with God and learn from sharing and interacting with their companions. They were challenged to be a light as they live and bear witness to Christ in their lives.

A variety of topics were taught and discussed throughout the two-day period. The children were taught the importance of the bible and helped to understand the different liturgical elements. They were challenged to read the bible and discover the secrets and promises of God. The young people were helped to discover God's Love for them, the dignity and sacredness of life, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the Sacrament of Marriage.

The program was accompanied with visual aids, materials, dance, and action songs. The Missionaries of Charity sisters were inspiring, and the sessions were well-received by the participants. It allowed the participants to enjoy God's presence, listen to God's Word, pray, and reflect on the beauty of creation and God's abiding love for each of them.

The participants expressed their happiness in these or similar words: "I was able to understand the great love that God has for each one of us", commented Pamela Wambon; While Gideon Doa said, "I realize that the sacraments nourish my life".

At the end of each day, the participants were given a snack and cool beverage before they left for home. They look forward to more programs in the future.

The program was conducted by the Missionaries of Charity, Sr. Joachina MC, Sr. Johnila MC, Sr. Joy MC and Sr. Arul Cecil MC. Sr. Kanchan of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC), catechists from the parishes, animators and parents accompanied and assisted the children. The program was coordinated by Fr Ambrose Pereira SDB, parish priest of Mary Help of Christians parish, Sabama, together with Fr Pedro Sachitula SDB, Br Philip Hwang SDB, Fr Angel Fazzini SDB and Br Conrad Vimalit SDB.



Children in the 8-12 years category taking part in an activity.

DMI and FMA congregations celebrate Faith and Commitment - Leotina Akwai

Honiara: Amidst global celebrations of the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Archdiocese of Honiara bore witness to profound moments as two religious congregations welcomed sisters, marking significant milestones and dedications.

On a spirit-filled day; four devoted novices of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI) congregation - Sr. Pricilla, Sr. Bernadette, Sr. Madalena and Sr Christy embraced their spiritual journey, making their first solemn religious vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.

Later that day, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA), known as the Salesian Sisters, joyfully celebrated the Feast of the Immaculate Conception at the Don Bosco Chapel in Henderson. Sr Joan Levi FMA marked a special milestone with her Final Profession during the ceremony.

In both celebrations, His Grace Archbishop Christopher Cardone OP presided over the ceremony, con-celebrated by brother priests.

In his homily, Archbishop Cardone shared a brief history of the religious congregations in the Solomon Islands, acknowledging the contributions of the Marist Missionaries in spreading the Gospel and the Holy Name of Mary.

Archbishop Cardone expressed his heartfelt thanks to the sisters for embracing their vocation, paralleling the Blessed Mother's acceptance of the call to be the mother of Jesus. He encouraged young girls and boys to pray for vocations, emphasizing the importance of answering the call to serve.

The ceremony, witnessed by a diverse audience: friends, relatives and well wishers, continued with a spirit of joy, feasting and presentation of gifts from the sisters' relatives.

The celebration culminated with lively entertainment, reflecting the communal spirit of faith and commitment.



Archbishop Christopher Cardone OP with the DMI sisters.

Heralds of Good News Superiors visit PNG

- Bp Donald Lippert OFM Cap

Mendi: The Diocese of Mendi was honoured to receive a visit from Fr Selvan Lazar, Provincial Superior of the St Paul's Province (Kerala) of the Heralds of Good News together with Fr Saji, the Vice-Provincial who came to Papua New Guinea for their official visitation to their members serving in the country.

The Diocese of Mendi is home to two priests belonging to the Heralds of Good News who serve in the parishes in Hela Province. .

Fr Shijo serves as the parish priest of St John's in Irawi, while Fr Johnson serves as the parish priest of Komo.

The Superiors were presented with a few traditional woven baskets and in return, a beautiful plaque and an exquisite shawl was presented as a customary show of honour and respect in India.

The Diocese of Mendi is grateful for the life and ministry of the Heralds of Good News giving their life and serving the people.



Bishop Donald Lippert OFM Cap shows the Shawl and the plaque presented to him.

The Catholic Reporter Team

You are invited to send in your articles, photograph and reflections on events and happenings in your parish, community, institution and diocese. Please send in your material to: socom@catholic.org.pg on or before **20th of the Month, 2024.**

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