



A Catholic Church Family Magazine for Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands
Year of the Laity | Volume 2 | Issue 4 | October to December 2020

CHURCH *Alive*



Christmas Blessings
amidst COVID-19



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Church Alive Cover



Rahab Gideon, Sharleen Nanguromo and Ancillah Philip are from the Milne Bay province. Their dress is made of coconut leaves and pandanus leaves. It is worn at special festivities. The face painting indicates value and identity in society. Seen in the picture is a Kundu drum. The dancers were part of a dance group that performed at the Silver Jubilee celebration of Caritas Technical Secondary School, Boroko, Port Moresby.

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Church Alive Invitation

The Catholic Bishops Conference of PNGSI in this Year of Laity 2020 has as its theme:
Holy and Formed for Mission.

As **COVID-19** rages on and amidst the many difficulties we are happy to bring you this issue of Church Alive with stories and articles that will inspire you. Thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue of Church Alive.

Reflections, inspirational stories and news items for the entire church are welcome.

All material are to be sent to:
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on or before **15th November, 2020.**

Our gratitude to MISSIO for their ongoing support without which the publication of this magazine would not be possible. Trust you will enjoy reading this issue.

With gratitude. God bless.
Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb, Editor

2020 the New Normal year



The virus has taught us to value the persons that we sometimes take for granted. Our greatest asset in life is not our bank balance, but our parents, our family and our loved ones.

The Global COVID-19 pandemic has affected people of all walks of life having far reaching effects amidst the different spheres of society. Our beautiful country, Papua New Guinea that was not affected for several months has not been spared. We have touched 488 cases and 5 deaths.

Our people have found it very difficult to cope with the restrictions of the pandemic and adjust to the 'New Normal'. Health professionals and workers are struggling amidst the lack of equipment and the police are finding it difficult to enforce the protocols, while educators are frustrated as their instructions seem to go unheeded. The majority of our people, both young and old do not follow the protocols.

As we go to press, COVID-19 has crossed 27 million cases with 867 thousand deaths worldwide. The numbers are still rising and scientists, medical professionals and leaders in authority are racing the clock to find a vaccine to overpower this deadly virus and control the down slide it has caused the world over. The present health crisis has turned into a humanitarian crisis. Papua New Guinea as other countries is now facing an economic crisis while people at all levels are grappling with an emotional crisis.

At the end of 2020, we pause to reflect on what this year has meant to each one of us. These few lines sum up our experience of the year.

COVID-19 has proved that everything around us is so temporary. Our lives revolved around church, school, work, games and entertainment. All these

have now gone as we gradually are learning to live without them. The virus has taught us to value the persons that we sometimes take for granted. Our greatest asset in life is not our bank balance, but our parents, our family and our loved ones.

As we come to the end of 2020, we need to ask ourselves a few questions.

1. Have I come closer to the members of our parents, our family, our loved ones and our friends?
2. Have I done my part and followed the protocols so essential to contain the virus?
3. Has this present crisis taught me something more about myself?

One truth that has emerged for each one of us is that we need to be emotionally strong. Through any crisis, people who are emotionally strong, come up stronger. Persons who are emotionally weak are persons who fight, distort the facts, and finally fall apart.

Christmas 2020 will be a unique celebration. Mary, Joseph and the little baby Jesus teach us that loved ones, family and parents need to be treasured, respected and cherished.

May you enjoy reading this issue of Church Alive that deals with the different issues that we face today. May it inspire you to make radical changes to your attitude, behaviour and actions. May 2021 be a year of living the 'New Normal.'

Happy Christmas and a love filled New year 2021! 🇵🇬

Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb
Editor Church Alive
7th September, 2020



Laudato Si

An ecological approach

A social approach

Archbishop Kurian Mathew Vayalunkal is the Apostolic Nuncio to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. He is passionate about the issues of the countries. He shares with us his insights on the environment, culled from '*Laudato Si*'.

'Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home, the landmark ecological encyclical of Pope Francis dated 24th May 2015, and officially published at noon on 18th June 2015, is being lauded as a point of reference for the humanity as a whole. Christians and non-Christians, governments and politicians, International Organizations, and environmental groups have read and discussed this extraordinary document worldwide. It has had a sustained and growing impact both within and outside the Catholic Church. There is no doubt that this impact will be felt for many years to come and will change drastically the ecological consciences of the world in general.

A genuine and pragmatic reflection on this document will certainly help us to better understand our present Covid-19 pandemic experience, which is a clear sign that humanity is fully interdependent and interconnected. This extraordinary experience, which the whole world is facing, can be an opportunity to renew our commitment to protect the mother earth and to build a world together. As the Holy Father already envisioned 'only by radically reshaping

our relationship with God, with our neighbours and with the natural world' we could tackle the threats facing our planet today.

One basic question that resonates throughout this historic document is, "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?". Each and every human being is obliged to answer this question in his own way. The Pope's answers to this question suggest a call for profound changes to political, economic, cultural, and social systems, as well as to our individual lifestyles. Extra care in favor of nature means a better life for the future generation. In order to assure this, we have to move beyond our old patterns of living and behaviour, both individually and collectively. A conversion of heart and a change of life style is essential to save the planet from further devastation. All are invited to "...cooperate as instruments of God for the care for Creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents" and to restore the eco-system to build up solidarity among ourselves.



“a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor,”
Laudato Si 49

This prophetic document invites people from every culture and creed to enter into an ecological dialogue and an immediate call to action. For us, this is an SOS call from Pope Francis to live into a new paradigm of Integral Ecology in the Melanesian setting in general, but concretely in the context of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. The voice of Pope Francis, “a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor,” must become the yardstick for our ecological consciousness of the Church and of the Government. As explained well in chapter 4 of the document, “the analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work-related and urban contexts”, because the creation was entrusted to human stewardship and ‘the natural world is not just a resource to be exploited but also a reality to be respected and even revered as a gift and trust from God. It is the task of human beings to care for, preserve and cultivate the treasures of creation.’

It is obligatory that a common plan of action should be developed, both by the Church and Government, to stress the need for honest and open debate on the protection of nature so that particular interests or ideologies will not prejudice the common good. Of course, no one presumes that the Church could settle scientific questions or replace politics. Still, it can promote dialogue on global and local governance, transparent decision-making, sustainable use of natural resources.

The Holy Father’s invitation to celebrate the “Year of Laudato Si” must be an occasion to stock-take and assess the extent of the application of this document in our own particular context. A lot has been done already, but there is still a long way to go. Our beautiful and beloved land has not escaped the ravages of human exploitation. ‘The natural resources of our Nation should be protected against the harmful policies of some industrialized nations and increasingly powerful transnational corporations which can lead to deforestation, despoliation of the land, pollution of rivers by mining, over-fishing of profitable species, or fouling the fishing-grounds with industrial and nuclear waste.’ As we are the most affected party in this game, it is imperative that we take a more proactive role in the implementation of the noble ideas envisioned and highlighted by the Holy Father. If we shy away from this responsibility, the future generation will judge us, and we will be accountable for the inevitable tragedies to which they will be exposed. Therefore, we have to urge everyone to reshape habits and behavior and to overcome our individualism.

In order to escape the spiral of self-destruction that currently engulfs us in many ways, we must be attuned to the desperate cry of the earth, which in turn must provoke us to concrete action at every level. There is no way to overcome the global problem of climate change without heeding both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Therefore, as it is evident, the post-Covid-19 era will be very crucial for humanity, and the future of this world depends on our responsible

response to the ecological crisis that we experience on a daily bases.🌱



Photo left:
Participants at the Social Communications Seminar in early 2020 on the theme “Keep it clean. Go Green!”



A Voice for the Voiceless

Sister Lorena Jenal, FSDP and Bp Donald Lippert, Diocese of Mendi

On August 10, 2012 a defenceless mother fought for her life. The woman, Christina by name, is surrounded by hundreds of villagers. Several men tie her up and light a pyre. The incident is like 'scenes of 500 years ago'.

Amidst the shouting and the chanting there is a woman who boldly stands up to the evil and the hideous crowd. "Stop the madness. Release the woman", shouts the nun, Sr Lorena who hurries to the village square. The torturers beat the Swiss born missionary, Sr Lorena Jenal, who has lived and served as a missionary in Papua New Guinea for decades. "Get out, otherwise we'll burn you as a witch too", they scream back.

Sister Lorena Jenal is a Franciscan Sister of Divine Providence of Baldegg, Switzerland. She has served as a missionary in Papua New Guinea for three decades. On 10 December 2018, Sr Lorena received the International Weimar Award for Human Rights for her courageous work in advocating against sorcery accusation violence and rescuing scores of women who are victims of this terrible crime.

The flare-up of human rights violations occurs in the 21st century all across the globe. In times of war, disease and disaster, people often look for scapegoats. The United Nations is watching this with great concern. Sadly, across over 30 countries of the world, sorcery related violence and witchcraft is at its peak.

Innocent Christina is made a scapegoat and tortured with glowing irons. In her desperation she comes up with a trick. She grabs a stone and simulates a witch's birth. The stone smeared with mud and blood is considered by men to be evil in her. They finally let her go. Sr Lorena takes her to hospital and tends to her emotional wounds.

For Sr Lorena, the fight against these violations of human rights has become her great mission. She has saved the lives of dozens of people and, with the support of *missio*, has set up an aid project. The perpetrators of August 10, 2012 are still at large. Christina continues to fear for her life. "I want to live in peace and I want justice, otherwise I will never find peace," she says.

Eight years down the line, and sorcery related accusations and the related violence seems to be on the rise.

On Easter Sunday in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea, three innocent women were burned and tortured while local Catholics were at Mass for the Resurrection of the Lord. "One cannot ignore the diabolical irony of this," wrote Sr. Lorena Jenal. The women, Magdalena, Rika, and Cindrela, were victims of what is known as sorcery accusation-related violence (SAV). They had been accused during Holy Week of causing, through witchcraft, the death of an elderly man with asthma and kidney failure.

Bishop Donald Lippert, OFM, Cap., Diocese of Mendi in the Southern Highlands province, told CNA that this kind of violence was ‘an ongoing problem. “The Catholic Church, and our Catholic faith, is the answer to this darkness. And bringing people into relationship with Jesus and teaching the dignity of the human person are the best ways of changing people’s attitudes and changing their behaviour as well,” he said.

“In Pangia two women were tortured and killed in the month of June. A new case came in from Kirene. I went to Kip with the victim I took care of for almost two weeks and was not received well”, said Sr Lorena.

In the middle of July, a school student died unexpectedly. Six women in a village of the Upper Karinj Pastoral Area were accused of Sanguma. Immediately a team from the Diocese of Mendi, consisting of Fr Alex Remba (parish priest of the pastoral area), Fr Robert Gigmai (pastoral vicar), Sr Lorena Jenal, FSDP (Peace & Justice coordinator), Winnie William (Diocesan Health Manager), Roderick Irepo (Diocesan Development Coordinator), Daniel Beli (Catholic Education Secretary). This team went to the village and found the people gathering and that they had already prepared the metal plates that were being heated up and on which they were going to burn the six women who had been accused.

The people were surprised to see the presence of such an important team from the Diocese of Mendi to oppose what was about to take place. “In these situations, there are often three groups of people. The leaders who sanction what is happening and remain somewhat in the background. The group who actually carry out the torture and the murder - who are usually younger men and often involved with the abuse of marijuana. Finally, the people are there as spectators who by their presence give their tacit support to what is happening - sometimes out of fear. Our team members did not hesitate to

confront those who appeared to be conducting this spectacle. The younger men spoke threatening words to the members of the team who showed no fear and answered all of these objections from the perspective of our Catholic faith”, said Bp Donald Lippert, Bishop of Mendi. At one point one of them said that this was a 'spiritual' problem. Fr Robert spoke up and said that spiritual problems are to be handled in the church. He made them understand that what they were planning to do was the work of the devil! After a long, heated argument the leaders backed down, and the attitude of the leaders began to shift from belligerence to shame. The women were saved. Some of the team members have been following up to make sure that the women will be safe for the long term.

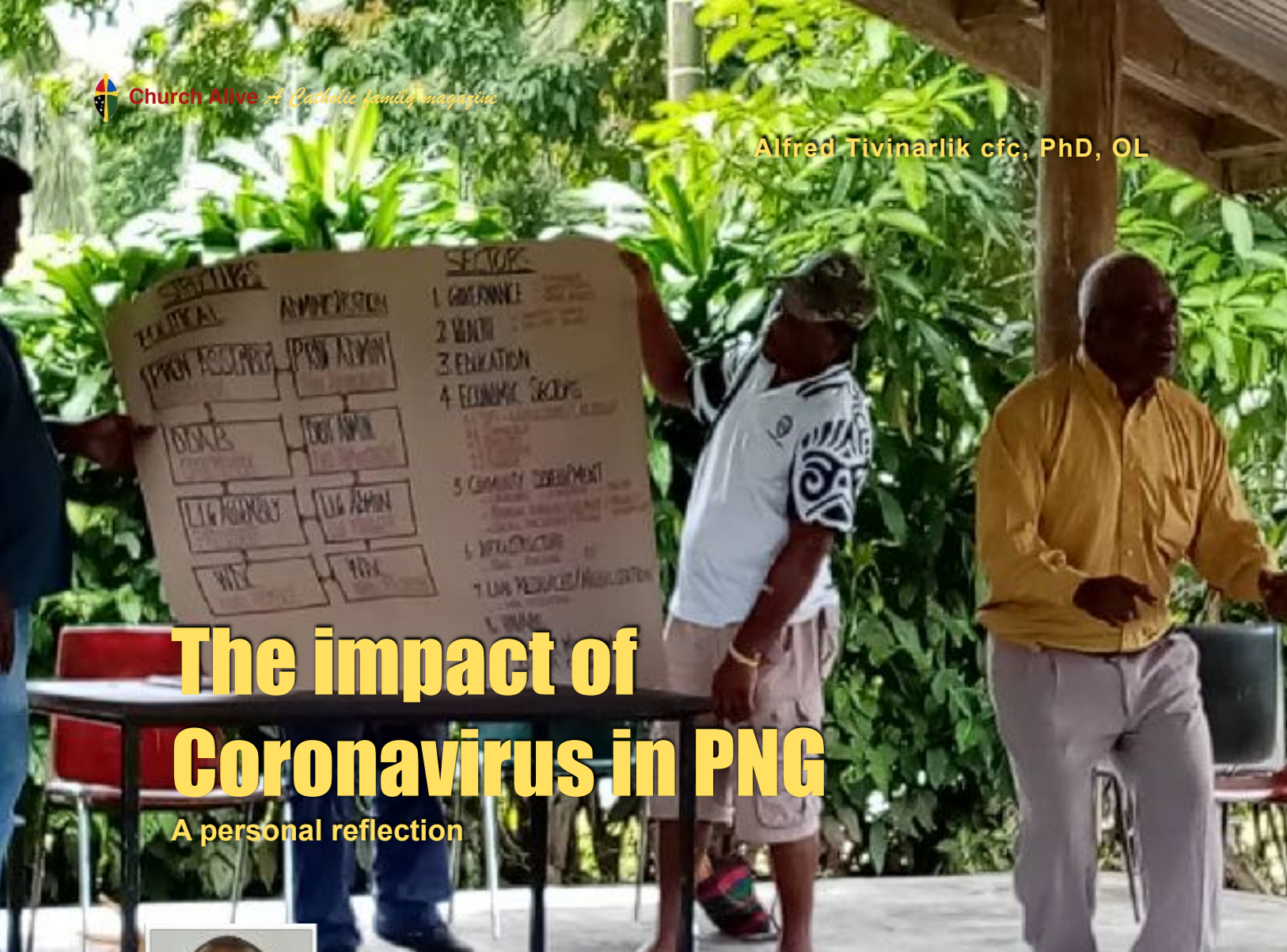
The issue of Sorcery Accusation Violence is happening all the time and it is something that the Church, working with people of good will, must confront and root out from Papua New Guinea once and for all.

Bishop Donald Lippert, Archbishop Anton Bal, Bishop Arnold Orawae, and the other bishops have been very much involved in this issue of Sorcery Accusation Violence (SAV). Anton Lutz, a Lutheran lay-missionary, as well as the group *Senism Pasin* are also very active in the cause.

10 August 2020 is the 1st International Day against Sorcery Accusation Violence (SAV). It is announced by *missio*, the mission outreach agency of the German Catholic bishops. “This International Day draws attention to a new wave of human rights violations in more than 30 countries. For too long, people have overlooked and kept silent about the fact that misanthropic superstition is used to blame women, children and men as scapegoats for social problems”, said Pastor Dirk Bingener, President *missio* Aachen, Germany. 🇩🇪



Photo:
Christina with
Sr Lorena Jenal



The impact of Coronavirus in PNG

A personal reflection



Br Alfred Tivinarlik cfc, PhD, OL hails from New Hanover Island in the New Ireland Province. He is a member of the Congregation of the Christian Brothers. He is currently the Principal of St Peter Chanel Catholic Secondary Teachers' College in Kokopo, ENBP.

The race is on across the globe to develop vaccine for coronavirus – a glimpse of hope for humanity. A fundamental question is “what is a post COVID-19 normalcy going to be like?” However, it is not my place to predict, but I am only going to offer a personal reflection on its impact from experiences within and around ENBP.

Earlier on as news was broadcast on the virus' spread, I recall saying to a Brother going to Peru for our congregational chapter that it may impact on that gathering. The prediction eventuated and after its second week, the meeting was postponed for an indefinite period. Suddenly, the momentum and hype surrounding COVID-19 escalated and grew every day. At that time, I hoped it would not happen in PNG,..... but

yet I felt subliminal feelings of the dangers as the days passed.

When we got word of PNG's first case in late January of the man traveling to Lae, I felt a deep anxiety which frightened me. There were a lot of deaths reported on TV. I began to ask, how will I fare if I got the virus? Our students, particularly the men, became hysterical about the whole thing. At this stage, I shifted gear and focused on what we would do for the 600 or so people under my jurisdiction?

All hell broke loose when we had our first case in Raluana Village, Kokopo. That heightened my fear and anxiety. A second case was reported some weeks later of a man living in Kinabot, Kokopo, not very far from where I reside. I could not contain the anxiety in me and longed for

**What is post
Covid-19
normalcy
going to be
like?**



Face Masks

Are we behaving rightly to lift our fellow human beings and care more for our “common home”?

Below:
Tippy tap set up demonstration,
Takekel Village awareness,
near St Mary's Vuvu,
Secondary School



some direction from our local government authorities.

The calm ...

A calm settled the turmoil in me when I attended a meeting of leaders to make us aware of the virus and guidance on

how to live with it. Dr Maha, Deputy Chief Physician and head of the medical advisors for the SOE in the province, explained that while we had two cases, the virus did not spread the way it was predicted. He explained that in our medical history, predictions were made of diseases which would eradicate the country's population like SARS, but these predictions did not materialize. He explained that the pattern of spread found in other countries did not happen in Kokopo or PNG for that matter.

Our response

For now, I can say that I have moved on in the way I see coronavirus. While there was imminent fear and anxiety, we have to live with it. Our authorities have adopted a response similar to that of overseas countries that experienced the worst of the virus ... and yet, it is not our experience. Are our decision-makers looking at our context to decide on how we live and work?

Reactions from rural areas ...

I felt disquieted when Archbishop Francesco Panfilo SDB gave me a copy of a letter written by Fr Bartolomeu Advent about what happened in his Parish, Marunga which well away from Kokopo. Fr Bartolomeu complained about the “chaotic domino negative impact” the unnecessary lock-down had on the children in his parish where they were forcibly closed without any cases of the virus. He wrote “May the

shalom Easter gift of the Risen Christ penetrate the minds and hearts of our confused Catholics, especially the learned teachers who will continue to get full pay, though they won't be committed to the education of the children.” Should we have closed our schools?

In a Diocesan Education Board meeting, a head teacher complained, “We do not have any water now. The children were frequenting the only tank to wash their hands and now there is no water.” Another head teacher explained that in his school, he did not have money to have a sink installed for children to wash their hands.

Given where we are now, what are we to learn from COVID-19?

We need to look closely at how we live our lives. Are we behaving to lift our fellow human beings and care more for our “common home”? The pandemic brought out the best in us, as well as our worst. Over the news, we see health-care workers doing their utter best to save lives. And yet in the same turn of events, we see the pain and tears of loved ones not being able to bid farewell and bury their loved ones. Dr Maha admitted that when the Prime Minister announced that we already had a case in Nonga, some of our health workers ran away. They were fearful because of what they saw on television. For the health workers that braved it, they experienced stigmatization.

So, what has COVID-19 done for me and all of us?

It has got us to reassess how we live and how we relate to each other and to the environment in which we live and move. Perhaps it is a call for us to take drastic action to be prudent and to share in what we have. It has taught us all to work together and I will be bold enough to assert that it is God's call for us to be accountable to the creation provided to us and not to take things for granted. May that grace be on us to assume that responsibility. 🙏



Pastoral Ministry amidst COVID-19

Where is Kiunga? It is in the North Fly District of Western Province in Papua New Guinea. Our Diocese covers the whole of the Western Province.

The province has the border with West Papua, so there are many villages along the border. These have interactions with the villages on the other side. Kiunga itself is some distance from the border.

In Kiunga, we are isolated from the rest of the world with access mostly by plane. One can also come here by boat but it takes several days before you arrive. We have a couple of roads but these are all to towns and villages within our province. They do not link the other places. Our surrounding is basically jungle and swamps.

When we heard the news that there was a virus spreading around the planet, it was the topic of conversation among the people. Initially it was curiosity but as the spread increased the reality of its consequences became real. The central government followed the steps of most countries around the world – lockdown, social distancing, hand washing, etc.

Education needs to feature high, to communicate the message far and wide. Fortunately this isolation in Kiunga breeds an incredible communication system because somehow everyone will know the news in a couple of days once it is released. Even the most remote of villages somehow get the message.

Would isolation limit the spread of the virus? Would it be easy for us? Yes. Because isolation

from the outside world would not be difficult, but isolation within our villages and towns would be a lot more difficult.

Custom is that contact with people is central to the wantok system. Closeness to family are all important. So the concept of social distancing has been a real challenge for the people. As the word spread around for the need to be careful, the feedback was the people were feeling scared and afraid. Facts needed to be carefully presented together with the message that fear was not necessary, but the need to exercise care for your health and that of others. Maintaining social distance was always going to be a problem as people are at close quarters with each other, especially if family or from the same village. Your private space was also their space.

A positive outcome has been that the people have taken diligently to washing hands more frequently during the day. Like most parts of the world it has now necessitated the installing of washing facilities at the entrance way to a public building before entering them.



At this time the Government has deployed about 400 soldiers along the border with West Papua where they have cases of Covid-19. They also give awareness and most importantly stop people from crossing the border at this time of the pandemic.

The 'Good News' is that, there are no positive cases of Covid-19 in the Western Province. About 900 tests taken proved to be negative, which is so encouraging because our health system doesn't have the capacity to deal with many acute cases of the virus.

One difficult thing about the lock down was that we could not have our masses and other religious celebrations at the church with many people. In early May this has changed a bit. The

new directives allow us to have our religious service but with the following conditions: keep distance of 1.5m between the participants and the washing of the hands before entering the church. In all our parishes this has obliged us to have more masses than usual. For instance at the Cathedral in Kiunga we had three morning masses instead of one and people from different zones were marked to attend one of these masses. The surge in cases in July have encouraged us to be more careful.

Our poor people have been good in their efforts to deal with the situation. Many of them are struggling because they cannot make use of their little markets as usual. But in many families they are gathering together on Sunday for the family prayer with the help of a guide prepared by their parish teams. 🙏



On the 23rd of April I celebrated the 25th anniversary of my ordination as a bishop. The people were planning a very big celebration but this was not to take place because of the Covid-19 pandemic. There were only 9 of us at the small chapel of the Men's House for the early morning mass. Here are a few thoughts as I celebrate this anniversary.

I thanked God for all the blessings he showered upon me and my people during these long years. I did not thank God because I was ordained a bishop as that was a very big cross to carry during the last 25 years, but I was blessed to carry it with my people. And these blessings enabled me to keep on moving forward on our Journey of Faith despite the failures, the untimely deaths of some priests and missionaries, the difficulties for transport, the poor delivery of services from the Government, the loss of good benefactors, etc.

I was blessed because Bishop Gerard Deschamps, our first bishop in the diocese, a very good pastor established the diocesan Church on a very solid foundation.

I was ordained bishop at a time when the diocese was planning to start the pastoral program for the renewal of the diocese. The main idea was to build up a Church of the Second Vatican Council, a Church of

Unity in Diversity

Personal Reflection of **Bp Gilles Côté** as he celebrates his Silver Jubilee as the Bishop of the Diocese of Daru-Kiunga

participation and communion. This had an impact on the choice of my motto as a bishop. Finally after discernment and prayer I chose TO BUILD UNITY IN DIVERSITY as my motto. And that is what I have been working on for the last 25 years.

I thanked the Lord for all the graces given to us. A few of these are:

- The four years of preparation and writing of our Diocesan Pastoral Plan with the active participation of all the people (1996-1999).
- The Diocesan Assembly of November 1999 when the Diocesan Pastoral Plan was unanimously accepted by the 95 participants.
- The Diocesan Assemblies we had in 2003, 2007, 2012 and 2016, each time approving as a people the moving forward on our Journey of Faith.
- The diocesan structure of participation with key teams for the running of the Diocese and the implementation of our Diocesan Pastoral Plan
- The Golden Jubilee of some Parishes (Daru, Bosset, Matkomnai, Kungim, Bolivip) uniting the people together, all of them proclaiming that the Word of God has brought them from darkness into the light.
- The commitment of the priests and the good fraternity among themselves.
- The good brotherhood and sisterhood among all the religious in the Diocese
- A solid Financial Administration Team looking well after the money and the properties of the Diocese.
- The integration of the West Papuan Refugees into the life of the Parish where they are located.
- The fact that we were the first Diocese to have its own Policy for Child Protection.

Together with my priests, religious and people I give thanks to God for the building unity in diversity, and together we express their gratitude to God. 🙏



Blessed Petro ToRot Answers God's call to be a catechist - Part 1



- Dominic ToMar

Blessed Peter To Rot was born in 1912. He lived between two world wars, the first from 1914 to 1918, and the second world war from 1942 to 1945. In 1937 there was a volcanic eruption.

His life was impacted by these events and the disaster and suffering they caused. He died a martyr amidst the chaos and destruction of the second world war. His ordinary life was lived extraordinarily for a mere 33 years.

To Rot grew up in Rakunai village as an ordinary child except that he was a son of the chief of Rakunai village, Angelo To Puia. As we all know, he became his father's favourite child. His general disposition and character endeared him to his father. Chief Angelo To Puia did not hide his intention for To Rot to succeed him as the chief of Rakunai. Apart from the strict discipline he enforced on his children, he also began to prepare To Rot for his future role as chief of the village. As an obedient child, To Rot followed all his father's instructions and learned all about the Tolai culture. However, his knowledge of his culture did not distract him from attending school and performing his religious exercises such as attending daily mass, receiving daily communion, going for regular confession and his deep prayer life. He left his future in the hands of his father.

The priest in charge of Rakunai Catholic Mission, Fr Carl Laufer MSC also noticed To Rot's character and was very impressed with him. He also formed his own ideas about the future for the young boy. To him To Rot would be an ideal candidate for the priesthood. For the propagation of the faith and for the church to take root among the people in the mission, there should be priests, brothers and sisters from among the local people. The missionaries had come to preach the gospel and establish the church including promotion of vocations to the

priesthood and the religious life. Archbishop Coupe MSC of the Vicariate Apostolic of New Britain had already taken steps to do this by founding a Congregation of local nuns, the NMI (Natui Maria Immaculata or Daughters of Mary Immaculate) now known as FMI in 1912. St Peter Chanel Minor Seminary for the training of priests in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea and other Pacific Islands was opened at Ulapia outside Vunapope, East New Britain in 1955.

Fr Carl Laufer waited for an opportunity to raise his ideas about To Rot with Chief Angelo To Puia. Sure enough, the opportunity came one day when Fr Laufer met To Puia. In the course of their conversation Fr Carl Laufer MSC made know his ideas for To Rot. He said that, To Rot would be a suitable candidate for the priesthood. Fr Laufer's suggestion may have or not taken To Puia by surprise. However, he politely told Fr Laufer that he did not think the time had come for someone to train for the priesthood. In his view as in the minds of the people of that time, priesthood was too high a calling. A calling to the priesthood from among the second-generation of Catholics at the time would have been unthinkable and way beyond their dreams let alone their understanding. Becoming a priest would have brought about a complete change in a person's life. For Priesthood was connected to the European culture and lifestyle. A candidate to the priesthood would be separated from his family, detached from his culture and adopt a European way of life. These were common views among the people even until the 1960s. So, although To Puia did not support the suggestion about To Rot, he did not rule out the possibility that one of his grand or great grandchildren

would train as a priest sometime in the future. A prophetic statement indeed! For now, however, he would be quite satisfied if his son To Rot would train to be a catechist-teacher. The future for To Rot was decided there and then.

Interestingly the training of the first candidates for the priesthood from New Britain and Bougainville was disrupted by the second world war. It continued after the war with the first two local priests from Rabaul, Fr Herman To Paivu, who later became the second Archbishop of Port Moresby and Bishop George To Bata, who later became the Auxiliary Bishop of Rabaul. They were ordained in 1953. Two priests from Bougainville were also ordained around the same time. However, the very first Papua New Guinean to be ordained priest and also first PNG bishop was Bishop Louis Vangeke MSC of Yule Island Mission now the Diocese of Bereina. He studied for the priesthood in Madagascar.

The conversation between Fr Laufer and To Puia marked an important and significant moment in the life of To Rot. Although To Puia did not support Fr Laufer's idea, God may used Fr Laufer's suggestion to plant the seed of ToRot's vocation to be a catechist and by virtue of that his ministry which ended in his heroic death as a martyr. The conversation also disrupted To Puia's plans for To Rot to succeed him as the chief of Rakunai village. Despite his own plans for To Rot, To Puia readily offered his beloved son to the church to train as a catechist thereby foregoing his own plans for To Rot. This was a momentous decision for any father to make. Someone else would have to take over from him as the chief of Rakunai. His beloved son would not become a future village chief but a 'chief' all the same in the church. The direction for To Rot's future life and work was decided. 🇩🇪

To be continued in the next issue

Gratitude to Bl Peter ToRot

As the lockdown commenced in March, I read a short passage about Bl Peter ToRot. It was the first time I heard about him. I was touched by his life. At my request Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb sent me the life of this unique person. I started invoking the precious name of Bl. Peter ToRot right through the lockdown and I felt him interceding for me as I was facing a **personal lockdown**.

After 24 May 2020, I was even more in travail, not knowing what awaited me. I spent time in prayer and contemplation, going through immense pain and suffering. The Word of God was my shield and the power of the Holy Spirit was my strength. Today, I am at peace to continue being the Animator of my community. I



Sr Caroline D'Souza fma (left), together with her mother, community members, girls and instructors

am deeply grateful to Bl Peter ToRot, Our Blessed Mother and St Joseph, who have stood by me in my trials and testing times.

Sr Caroline D'Souza fma

Oros, Kudal, India,
oasisofpeace04@gmail.com



Prayer To Blessed Petro ToRot

Blessed Petro ToRot,
God called you to serve Him
among your own people,
as a catechist.

You loved your work and
you were faithful to the Divine call.

Your heroic witness to serve your creator
strengthened them in the faith.

We rejoice and thank God,
for exalting you to be the
first Beatified Martyr of our country.

Pray for us,
that we may remain faithful
to our vocations and stand firmly committed
to God and his people,
especially in times of trials and difficulties.

Amen.

Please send us your favours, graces and miracles received through the intercession of Bl Petro ToRot, together with photographs and documents that you may possess. These will support the cause of his canonisation.

Theckla Aknonero

SACRIFICE Strengthens a Marriage

Theckla and Anton Aknonero celebrate 35 years of happy married life. She has been the Principal of the Sacred Heart Teachers College, Bomana for eight years. We congratulate her and the family on this milestone. She shares with us insights of her married life. May it inspire us.

The blessings of the Lord at the Sacrament of Marriage are important. They sustain us as a Christian family.

I got married when I was twenty-two years old. In my third year of teaching at a primary school in Western Highlands province, I met my husband who was a primary school teacher.

Sacrament of Marriage:

My husband, Anton Aknonero and myself celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage on 19th September 1985. Then began the journey of our marriage life that continues to unfold every day. The blessings of the Lord at the Sacrament of Marriage are essential. They sustain us as a Catholic family. The challenges of any marriage are many. Spouses struggle to find themselves as they try to deal with building a secure home and a loving family.

Anton is a very good father and loved and cared for our children. He treated them as little princes and princesses from the time they were born up to

Grade 12. He displayed a warmth and care for all our visitors and guests. His tangible love brought tears to my eyes with every new addition to the family. There were times when we would yell at each other but never once did my husband slap, hit or punch me.

Submissive and obedience

In our second year of marriage we were blessed with our first child. I then began to experience the pressure of being a mother and a teacher. Managing my time between preparing my class and making sure my child was safe in the house with the babysitter was a worry.

As a young mother, I was reminded by my husband to check on our baby during the breaks from my teaching duties. I also began to realise that deciding to do certain things like buying new clothes, cooking utensils, sending money home was no more a

Our family prayer is our helpline and our faith in God helps us understand our trails and misfortunes in life. The Holy Rosary, an easy daily prayer, has kept our children firm in their faith.

decision I had to make on my own. I could not do the things I would want to do when I was unmarried. He would also remind me of how I should speak and behave in public. I was an extrovert and he was the opposite. I began to feel as if my husband wanted me to be a 'mother' first and then a 'teacher'. I had to give up on sports, visiting family and friends and socializing. I even had to give up on advancing my career and my qualification by not attending in-service professional training.

The change from being a single person to a married woman was a challenge for me. Matters were sometimes not discussed openly and I had to suffer in silence. We faced difficulties in our marriage but I wanted our marriage to stand the test of time. Personally, in the silence of my heart I prayed to the Lord and offered Him my hurts, as I experienced a lot of 'don'ts' from my husband.

Prayer

As young children, we participated in the liturgical calendar and Sunday worship in our own home parish. We joined other Catholics in pastoral services and church activities. We helped out playing musical instruments during mass on Sundays or at funeral services. We prayed the rosary from house to house during the month of May, decorated the church and were fully involved in parish activities. As children we were influenced by our parents to experience God's presence through good times and fortune, pain and sufferings, struggles and difficulties that we encountered in life.

children's education and profession are also attributed to our prayer. Our family prayer life is an essential part of our life of comfort and healing.

I have come to believe that misfortunes are an occasion for us to experience God's divine love and providence. In his mercy, God answers our prayers, but He has his own timing.

Offering our pains in silence through prayer for a good cause is not easy. There were times when I experienced the feeling of emptiness and pain and I felt that I could not pray anymore. However, as a woman, I believe that marriage is holy and filled with the presence of God. I am therefore ready to make sacrifices to keep my family happy and together.

Gods gifts, our children

It has been a wonderful experience of caring for our five children. I believe that children love their biological parents rather than living with step parents or brothers and sisters. We now have the joy of a loving marriage and the delightful experience of seeing our children grow and mature as God fearing men and women.

Young people choose properly and do not be afraid to always consult someone you trust. Slow down when your heart beats fast and you are head over heels with a person you have just met. Once you have reflected and consulted enough, speak to your parents about the love of your life. Know that they understand you better than you even understand yourself. Once you feel that this special person is the one you are going to spend the rest of your life with, have your marriage blessed. Celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage and receive God's blessings upon you, your beloved and the family God will give you. Do not forget to make prayer the central part of your life.

Anton, my husband has resigned from his teaching profession and lives at home. We thank God for each other and above all the wonderful fruits of our marriage, our children. 🇵🇬

An altar at the Aknonero home



Our family prayer is our helpline and our faith in God helps us understand our trails and misfortunes in life. The Holy Rosary, an easy daily prayer, has kept our children firm in their faith. We confidently believe that the Holy Rosary is the basis of our family togetherness and peace. The blessings of our



"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord". Luke 2:10 & 11

Christmas is a worldwide cultural, commercial and religious phenomenon. It is that time of the year when we gather together as a family and share experiences, recall events and celebrate successes. It's that very special time of the year when Christians stop to celebrate the humble birth of Christ the Saviour in an obscure stable at Bethlehem. It's time of the year when all across the globe people of all faiths join their Christian friends in the celebration of the God made man.

The situation of the COVID-19 pandemic at Christmas

Several think that it won't be until 2021 that we will have a vaccine to protect us from the virus. COVID-19 has impacted our entire globe. Papua New Guinea has 460 cases at the start of September. "Wearing a face mask, frequent hand washing with hand sanitiser, soap and water, physical distancing by 1.5 meters from the next person in a crowd, bank, shop or buildings, could be a life saving measure for you and your family", states Mr David Manning,

Controller of the National Pandemic Response on a constant basis. "COVID-19 has impacted the entire globe. In PNG there are indications that it will not go away anytime soon. Hence the need to adhere to the health protocols and to religiously and vigorously improve our personal hygiene levels", he constantly says.

The past year, 2020 has been difficult for all of us. Life has dramatically changed during the Coronavirus pandemic. Weddings, birthdays, family events are cancelled or postponed. Many have missed out on Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day and the other family celebrations and now the coronavirus impacts the biggest family feast of the year – Christmas.

Survey analysis's across different countries stated that over 50% of people do not expect to spend their Christmas holidays with their family this year. It would be irresponsible of us, given our current pandemic situation to celebrate Christmas as we did in the past. While we are hopeful that by Christmas, the lockdown will be



a thing of the past, many of the restrictions including isolation and quarantine will still be in place and many will be

without their loved ones this year. Coronavirus has claimed the lives of elderly people and those with underlining health conditions and issues and even the young and the healthy. Medical staff have also lost several on the front lines while trying to put an end to COVID-19 once and for all. I am sure that all of us in the interest of everyone's safety as well as ourselves will be prudent and celebrate the birth of Christ our Saviour following the protocols and keeping in mind the interest of everyone's safety.

Celebrating Christmas amidst the COVID-19 pandemic

Hugs, kisses and loving embraces have suddenly become weapons. Nobody wants to endanger their own health or compromise the health or parents and loved ones. Visiting parents, relatives and friends during the Christmas Season will not be on our priority list this year. With young people being asymptomatic, it will be a noble task, rather an act of love, to stay away from grandparents, relatives and those we love and want to visit and wish during this important celebration of the family.

International and domestic travel restrictions are in place. All passengers will have their temperature checked and hands sanitised. International travellers will be quarantined as per the origin and the destination of their travel. Travel by road will also be restricted and checks imposed and fines collected where infringement occurs.

Organisers of different celebrations have put a hold on events for Christmas. Carol singing, lights and decorations will not be bigger and better than the past years, in fact they will be reduced to the very minimum. Yet we want to do something that will

contribute to the joyful spirit, bring in the festive cheer and above all celebrate Christ at Christmas.

It will be a virtual Christmas

Most will greet their loved ones via a phone call. Others with greater connectivity will connect with parents and family via ZOOM, Google, WhatsApp or other social media apps. The service that has grown exponentially over the past few months. It's been heart-warming to see so many people getting together using digital technology.

Parishes will organise digital broadcasts and stream their Liturgical celebrations online. Cardinal John Ribat, Archdiocese of Port Moresby has been regularly celebrating the Sunday Masses on NBC TV while the Diocese of Lae has been streaming their celebrations online. Several more will organise their Christmas liturgical preparations and celebrations in the virtual medium. There seems no other way to accommodate the number of parishioners for this special celebration. The Christ child born in a little stable at Bethlehem will enter our homes and our families, our domestic churches via our digital devices as we strive to connect and network with the larger parish community.

COVID-19 has made us grateful for little things

On the dark side, we may be facing a Christmas without parents and family members and those we love. On the bright side, we could possibly be celebrating Christmas with the lockdown rules finally lifted. However, one thing is sure that COVID-19 has made us appreciate the little things: some of them are our moments of connection and our time with our family be it virtual or otherwise. These will be more precious than usual.

Come December and we will all be very health conscious. We will be very careful of ourselves and will care for our vulnerable loved ones. In many ways we will be drawing closer to 'care for the earth and care for the poor'. *Laudato Si* 49.

May the Christ Child bless you and your family. May you have a Christ-filled Christmas! 🇵🇬

One thing is sure that the COVID-19 has made us appreciate the little things: some of them are: our moments of connection and our time with our family be it virtual or otherwise. These from now on will be more precious than usual.





Eucharistic celebration: Fr. Brian Nonde and Bp Rozario Menezes

Going digital in COVID-19

Communications Team
Diocese of Lae

During the Holy Week, Papua New Guinea went into a state of emergency (SOE) that prohibited Church gatherings in order to curb the spread of CoronaVirus. The Catholic Diocese of Lae was no exception to observe the restrictive regulations of the state of emergency. Holy Week is the most solemn moment of Christian celebrations and many Catholics were affected. "I have never missed mass during Holy Week," said Fabian Stan, a 64-year-old parishioner of St. Steven's parish, Lae.

Following the State of Emergency, Bishop Rozario Menezes SMM issued circulars encouraging the faithful to continue praying and reminding them to take precautions against the pandemic virus. The letters communicated that church programs in the diocese; Priest's seminars, recollections, day of prayer, and the annual traditional way of the cross were cancelled, deferred or adjusted. In the third letter the bishop wrote: "Now is the time to turn our homes into miniature Churches and parents become catechists for their children. Tune in Catholic FM 103.7 so that all can be in spiritual communion".

The communication team of the Diocese of Lae adhering to the call of the bishop started broadcasting Masses online via Facebook Page and YouTube. Followers on Facebook increased from 4,000 to 10,000. These followers were Catholics from within the diocese, the country and from outside of Papua New Guinea. The Covid-19 pandemic and state of emergency has been a positive turn for Catholic FM 103.7 as it saw this increase of followers online.

Catholic FM radio Director Fr Brian Nonde CMM said, "The faithful needed encouragement, prayers and guidance. The radio at the time of the crisis was facing technical problems so the idea of going digital and streaming masses came when a young talented parishioner of Christ the King parish, William Snyder came over to see me." William Snyder has since then continued to

offer services as a photographer and videographer at Catholic FM 103.7 FM radio in Lae. Many young people of the Diocese of Lae have since then continued to offer skillful help at the radio.

The communication team of the Diocese of Lae learnt about the advantages and disadvantages of live streaming masses from feedback received from those who follow the services online. "We realized that people were tuning in and watching the Bishop's Mass at different times" said Fr. Brian. There is an advantage as the faithful can revisit the Live Mass Playlist and once again reflect on messages and learn more about the liturgy. Online Masses can also reach believers at different locations.

The Communication Team has also learned that accompanying the live streaming with live radio broadcast can easily attract more listeners and even visitors to listen to the radio. The team has realized that most people want a visual experience of what or whom they listen to. Catholic FM radio social media platforms will thus continue improving its positive influence through both visual and audio messages.

Some of the disadvantages of Online Masses that the communication team have realized include the following:

1. Financial cost for both viewers and the Diocese,
2. Online Masses are not suitable for all generations and social statuses, the old timers found that it lacked a spiritual flavor.
3. People in remote villages and far flung areas have no internet access and are left out;
4. Online Masses can promote individualism and break up the family and community ties.
5. Lack of concentration as the gadgets used by viewers have multiple purposes. 📱



Laudato si'

Praise be to you my Lord

The encyclical of Pope Francis – ***Laudato si'*** was released on the 18th June, 2015. The document is rich in content and has been applauded by environmentalists, scientists, religious and all who are concerned about the future of the earth and the building up of society. The document is enlightening, inspiring and challenging. As we celebrate its 5th anniversary, we are more aware of its stark relevance to our COVID-19 pandemic. Many have read the document in its entirety, but for those who have been unable to do so, we offer you a summary of the document and a few challenges for us to reflect on and put into practice. We deal with the introduction in this issue. Six chapters follow the introduction of this very insightful document. We will discuss successive chapters in future issues.

Laudato si': Introduction

St. Francis of Assisi, the 13th century saint, reminds us that all of us live in relationship with God and creation. The title: "*Laudato si', mi' Signore*" – "Praise be to you, my Lord" are from a poem and prayer entitled, 'Canticle of the Sun', in which God is praised for creation and the different creatures of our wonderful home, 'our earth'.

Pope Francis outlines his vision due to the environmental degradation of our planet earth. He invites us to dwell on a spirituality of care in *Laudato si'*: On the Care for Our Common Home. The more we are able to understand, reflect and put into practice the different aspects of the document, and invite others to do so, the greater will be our response to protect the earth for generations to come.

The Holy Father is obviously concerned of how we are shaping the future of our common home. Like St Francis, we are called to relate with the

world around us as a 'brother' and 'sister' with affection, wonder and praise. The saint clearly shows us the inseparable bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace. Pope Francis is reminding us to care for the vulnerable, feel united with the marginalised, love the outcasts, engage with the lonely and as we do so we reflect on the interconnectedness amongst all creatures in the hope that we can shift from being masters, rulers, consumers and exploiters to one that exudes care, love, sobriety and joy (10).

The Holy Father is delighted with young people who demand and work towards change. He reminds us that God will never abandon us or regret that he has created us. He appreciates all those who tirelessly resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation, especially where the lives of people are concerned (13). He invites all people into the conversation that the talent and the cooperation of all will alleviate the crisis and build a better future.

The focus of the document is undogmatic and the Holy Father invites all people into an honest dialogue and open debate that a 'new life style' will supersede the 'throwaway culture' and the common good will be reached.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. List the areas in Papua New Guinea where you have seen or heard of destruction inflicted to our motherland?
2. St Francis of Assisi is the patron saint of the environment. What aspect of his life has struck you. In what way can you put it into practice in your life, your situation and your environment.
3. Why is dialogue, discussion and open debate an important aspect of all of us who live on this earth? 🌍



United against PNG's 'Sanguma'

- Nigel Akuani



Port Moresby: A detailed and thought-provoking discussion on Sorcery, Witchcraft, and 'Sanguma', was recently held in light of the rampant crimes stemming from Sorcery Accusation Related Violence.

On 18th August at 10am, via online video communication platform, Zoom, around 60 participants joined in from around and outside of the country. Participants included three Bishops, Catholic Priests,

Religious, professionals from the Social, Health, Environmental and Legal sectors, and media personnel.

While several contributed, the panellists were: Archbishop Anton Bal, Archbishop of Madang; Bishop Donald Lippert, Bishop of Mendi; Fr Philip Gibbs, Deputy President of Divine Word University; Michelle Taumpson, Director Policy Planning and Development; Marcia Kalinoe, National Coordinator for the Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee of the CIMC; and Dr Uma Ambi, a pioneer in mental health. There were several others who addressed different points on the agenda and added to the richness of the discussion.

The requests of the participants were to have a platform to highlight the issue and a roadmap to assist the victims as well as those engaged in the practice. The discussion was hosted by the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNGSI.

Catholic Health facilities receive PPE's

- Caritas Correspondent

Port Moresby: Catholic Health facilities across the country have finally began receiving the much-needed Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) from Caritas Australia and the Catholic Health Service Secretariat (CHSS).

The supply is a part of the Catholic Church's COVID-19 Joint Response Plan funded by the Church Partnership Program.

The Catholic Health Services Secretariat oversees 233 health facilities ranging from District Hospitals to Aid Posts throughout PNG, making up a significant portion of the country's total health facilities. As part of the church's response to COVID-19, K500,000 worth of PPEs were purchased from a reputed supplier to distribute to the facilities and help boost their preparedness against the deadly virus. These PPE's were distributed on 12th August.

The COVID-19 Joint Response Plan is shared between the Catholic Bishops Conference, Caritas PNG and Caritas Australia. It came into effect in April



The staff of the health services in the Diocese of Lae received their PPEs from Caritas Australia and CHSS

and has seen the implementation of activities such as the distribution of hygiene kits to vulnerable groups, risk communication training for key diocese staff in priority provinces, and the training of Catholic students to produce awareness materials through a series of media seminars.



Boroko, Port Moresby: The 19th of June 2020 marked the beginning of the Caritas Secondary School's 25th anniversary celebrations with the theme, "Dream, Believe and Achieve: Celebrating 25 Years of Excellence".

Dream, Believe and Achieve

- Rosene Apurado

The school started the celebration with a Jubilee mass which coincided with the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. CTSS was privileged to have His Excellency Apostolic Nuncio Kurian Mathew Vayalunkal to officiate the mass together with Salesian priests namely, Fr. Ambrose, Fr. Alex, Fr. Roger, Fr. Dominic and Fr. Simal. In his homily, His Excellency stressed on the love of God, His care and compassion for all of us.

To commemorate the school's silver anniversary, CTSS organized minor activities such as the Sports Intramurals, Debate, Bible Quiz Bee, Musical Drama, and Cheer dance competition.

First International Day against Sorcery

- Ben Moses



March at Momei Oval on 10th August.

Mendi, Southern Highlands: The Catholic community in the Diocese of Mendi with members from other Churches joined in the First International Day against Witchcraft and Sorcery Accusation advocacy awareness on 10th August 2020 at Momei Oval.

The peaceful march and awareness had over 3000 participants that involved students and staff from Kumin Primary School, local community health workers, youth groups, women groups and public servants. They marched and chanted with placards, "Do not kill innocent mothers, fathers and young women. Respect the dignity of person, especially our mothers and sisters."

Among the invited guests present were Vicar General of the Diocese of Mendi, Fr Pius Hal; Bishop of United Church, Rev. Stanley Buka; Sargent Jimmy Suaip, Family and Sexual Violence; Ms. Jenny Kareng, Public Solicitor; Pastoral Vicar Fr Robert Gigmai; UN Women represent Mr. Steven Gari; and Mr. Leo Supiri, Advisor for Village Court Law and Order.

The awareness concluded with a drama and dance performance from members of the Strongim Bilip Team of the Diocese of Mendi.

Religious women network for greater service

- Sr John Mary FIHM, Diocese of Wabag

Wabag, Enga Province: Eight different women congregations from the Catholic Diocese of Wabag Women Religious (CDWWR) are rendering their service to the people in the Diocese of Wabag.

To network for a greater service, the sisters all gathered on August 8th for a picnic at the Sirungi Lake. The women religious from around the diocese come together quarterly for their recollection, confession, Holy Mass and business meetings.

Until this year 2020, it was decided that the gathering occurs twice a year. Their first meet this year was on 23rd May, in Sikiro and had as its theme: "Love of Christ in the Spirit of Generosity".

"The religious gathering has provided the invaluable experience of recollection, sharing of joy, faith and problems. It is an opportunity to share spiritual growth and strengthen the bond of friendship amongst the different religious congregations" said Sr John Mary FIHM. It fosters sharing responsibilities and insight, supporting and praying for each other in the different ministries.



The different women congregations from the Diocese of Wabag Women Religious (CDWWR)

CDWWR was officially formed on 17th November 2018, in Sangurap FIHM convent in Wabag Diocese of Wabag campus. It has as its vision, reaching the needy in remote places. Vocations are gradually increasing in the congregations. It hopes to increase its different services such as pastoral work, faith proclamation, holistic health, quality education, by working among different age groups to improve their capacity and other services.



Madang: Eighteen students of the Communication Arts Department of Divine Word University have raised awareness on COVID-19 and the environment through short films and jingles.

The students from the second, third and fourth year were a part of a three-day Media Education Seminar held from 15th to 17th July 2020.

SOCOM Seminar on Environmental Issues - Abigail Seta

The seminar was facilitated by representatives from the Social Communications Commission of the Catholic Bishops Conference in partnership with Caritas Australia and Radio Maria. All throughout the seminar there were moments of personal and group prayer. The students realized the importance of reflection and the need to have a clean mind and heart to ensure that the productions were for the common good of all.

The three-day program concluded with a presentation of the 10 short films and 6 jingles on Friday, 17th July. Following the screening, the students were given certificates of participation. The seminar was hosted by CBC SOCOM together with the Divine Word University, SIGNIS International, MISSIO, Caritas Australia and Radio Maria.



Taro: Bp Luciano Capelli, Bishop of the Diocese of Gizo witnessed the handing over of the newly erected parish to the new 'caretaker,' Rev Fr Fred Guadalupe, on 5th July, 2020.

The official handover was done through two simple signs: the handing over the key of the Tabernacle and of the Stole. Fr Kobakina who will take some time to recover expressed his gratitude to the people and encouraged them to be generous in their support of Fr

Handing over of new parish

Fred, who has expressed his availability to offer his service to the community.

The Taro church has great potential and we look forward to its Catholic witness in Taro. Meanwhile, the Gizo St Peter's Kindergarten Teachers visited Sacred Heart Parish Kindergarten in Waghina. The Kindy has about 100 children who attend class daily.

The Kindy teachers have had no formal training but have taken part in a number of seminars offered by diocesan personnel.

At the seminars they were given topics to be developed, materials on the topics and inputs on how to use the materials.

The teachers are thus confident in their teaching and hope soon to pursue further formal studies in the near future.

DMI Sisters open two skill centres for women

The Daughters of Mary Immaculate Sisters (DMI) have been positively influencing the lives of women and children in the settlements of Port Moresby.

One of those ways of influence is through enhancing the skill of women. According to Sr Catherine, Country Program Coordinator of the DMI Sisters, they have opened two Vocational Skill Centre's in Kogeva and Sabama Settlement together with Help Humanity International (HHI).

The centre is for women and youth to learn basic stitching, cutting and embroidery courses. These courses will run for three months.

On 22nd June, the centre in Kogeva was opened with village leaders and women members. In Sabama, it was opened on 23rd June and had Rev. Fr. Pedro SDB the Parish Priest of Mary Help of Christians Parish, Rev. Fr. Angelo SDB, Mrs. Josephine, Project manager, We Care Foundation; Sr. Catherine, Country Program Coordinator of DMI as special guests for the event.

Rev. Fr. Angelo began with prayer and Fr. Pedro blessed the centre. Mrs Josephine and Sr. Catherine



opened up the centre by cutting the ribbon. The women honoured the guests with a shawl and a gift. Following the blessings, the first session began on basic stitching with 20 students.

In both centres there are 60 participants who are currently taking part in the course which will conclude with a graduation on 25th September.

With the support of WeCare Foundation, 20 sewing machines were bought with other materials needed for the program.

May the miracle of Christmas fill your heart with peace and joy.
May the love of Christ warm your hearts and enable you reach out to the poor.
May the New Year 2021 fill you and your family with gratitude for all Gods gifts.

Happy Christmas
and may the New year
fill you with Gods blessings.





Miranda Wells (Katie Holmes) is a hardworking young widow who is struggling to raise three children on her own. A powerful storm soon brings a devastating challenge and a mysterious man, Bray Johnson (Josh Lucas) into her life. In just a few short days, Bray's presence reignites the family's spirit. He carries a secret in an envelope that could change everything.

Bray Johnson shows up out of nowhere with an envelope for Miranda. He misses her at home but as fate would have it, she literally runs into him on the road after bumping his vehicle. Maybe he could demand compensation for the damaged vehicle, but this did not eventuate with Bray, he remains calm, cool and collected.

Single mom Miranda Wells, a widow raising three children in a nice but decaying home just outside of New Orleans. Her van is run down, bill collectors call frequently, and her overbearing stepmother Bobby (Celia Weston) is constantly critiquing her parenting skills.



Bray bonds with Miranda's kids, throws plenty of positive vibes their way and offers to patch a hole in Miranda's roof after a storm knocks a branch through it. His kindness raises the suspicions of nosy Bobby and Miranda's boss Tucker (Jerry O'Connell), who owns a seafood restaurant in the French Quarter. Tucker has feelings for Miranda but hasn't acted upon them because she is still grieving her husband, an unsuccessful inventor who died in a plane crash.

Director Andy Tennant, paired up with the self-help author Rhonda Byrne, whose book "The Secret: Dare to dream" has sold more than 30 million copies worldwide. The entire film, written by Tennant with Bekah Brunstetter and Rick Parks. It is based around the secret that Bray holds in the envelope for Miranda. He doesn't give it to her at first and when he finally places it in her mailbox, the storm blows it away and into a lake.

The film is predictable and reflects great values. Plus, it's complicated; Bray seems to be married, and Tucker wants to marry Miranda. And there's that mysterious envelope.

A perfect film for these stressful COVID-19 times where relationships are essential, families are founded, quickly broken without much hope left for mending. This film will definitely recruit dreamers... 🌈

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. Share an incident of your struggle to accept the things you cannot change.
2. How can one remain positive despite life's challenges?
3. Can we forgive the ones who wrong us? How will forgiveness benefit us?



PRAYER FOR CREATION

Pope Francis

Extracted from *Laudato Si'*

Laudato Si prayer - English

Bp Rolando Santos, Bishop of Alotau

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

Teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love.

Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live.

We ask you this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Laudato Si prayer - Pidgin

Abp Douglas Young svd, Archdiocese of Mt Hagen

Bikpela God Papa, yu stap long olgeta hap bilong heaven na graun.
Na yu stap tu wantaim olgeta samting yu bin wokim.

Lainim mipela long bihainim pasin bilong yu, Dispela pasin bilong lukautim gut ol samting yu bin wokim.

Strongim mipela long laikpasin bilong yu, Bai mipela tu I ken soim dispela wankain pasin bilong laikim yu, ol narapela na ol samting yu bin wokim.

Papa bilong marimari, helpim mipela long save gut long olgeta samting yu bin wokim,

Bai mipela I ken lainim ol narapela tu long bihainim dispela wankain pasin.

Senisim tingting bilong ol lain i gat moni na pawa,

Bai ol I ken abrusim pasin bilong bagarapim arapela na graun tu.

Lainim ol long gutpela rot na pasin bilong helpim na lukautim narapela, Na bai ol tu I ken lukautimgut dispela graun yu bin givim long mipela.

Mipela i askim dispela olgeta samting long nem bilong Krais, Em i Bikpela bilong mipela, Amen.

MISSIO



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MISSIO and the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG-SI