**News Compilation for Catholic Church News**

**Broadcast date: 22/04/2020- Radio Maria**

**Welcome to another weekly Catholic Church news on Radio Maria. I am Nigel Akuani, and I am Rosemary Yambune with the news.**

**Our stories for the week:**

1. **Pope on Divine Mercy Sunday: Let us rise with Thomas**
2. **RedZone Celebrates Easter**
3. **Caritas Donates to Stranded Family**
4. **Jingles reinforce ‘Stay at Home’**
5. **2020 Academic Year faces Suspension**
6. **NCEC Supports Broadcasting of Education Lessons**

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**News Item 1** – **Pope on Divine Mercy Sunday: Let us rise with Thomas**

Divine Mercy Sunday was celebrated on 19th April, 2020. The Holy Father, Pope Francis celebrated the liturgy of the Holy Spirit at Saxony, about 200 meters from St Peter’s Square. The mass was celebrated without the presence of the faithful.

In his homily the Holy Father told of how Thomas touched Jesus’ wounds, and believed not only in the resurrection, but in God’s boundless love. “When Thomas’s “wounded humanity enters into” Jesus’s wounds, he rises from the dead. The simple and disarming love of Jesus revived Thomas’ heart,” he said.

“It is Jesus’ mercy that saves and builds the world; may we too accept his mercy and show that mercy to the most vulnerable,” he said, urging everyone to welcome the current crisis as an opportunity to prepare and help in the recovery effort for our collective future.

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**News item 2 – RedZone Celebrates Easter**

Following the COVID-19 precautionary measures, parishes under the Daru-Kiunga Diocese celebrated Easter with controlled participation from the faithful.

After the government’s declaration of Western Province as a high-risk zone for COVID-19 due to its international borders within, Bishop of the Diocese of Daru-Kiunga, Bp Gilles Cote circulated a letter to all parishes in response to the State Orders, urging Priests to celebrate the Holy Thursday by themselves and bless the Easter Candle and water for the baptismal font.

“This is the first time in my life to celebrate the Easter Vigil when the door of the Church has to be closed not only here but also around the world” said the Bishop. Easter Vigil celebration in Kiunga congregated 21 people most of whom were working class, religious men and women.

The SOE orders were much tighter in parishes that shared a direct border with Australia. Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday celebration in Daru allowed 10 faithfuls to attend. Fr Robert Perianayagam, said they were mainly nuns who attended. Bosset, an area close to the Indonesia Border, had priests celebrate the mass before empty church seats.

In the mining town of Western Province, Tabubil, only two nuns attended the masses in Easter. Fr Francis Prashant said the highways were blocked off and demanded special permit even to priests wishing to visit parishioners in their communities.

The Easter liturgy was celebrated in a similar manner in other dioceses.

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**News Item 3 – Caritas Donates to Stranded Family**

Caritas PNG has donated five cartons of clothes to a family from New Ireland stranded in Port Moresby, due to the State of Emergency order that restricted domestic travels.

The donations were made on April 16th, through Sr Emma Lapun OLSH, who currently is housing the family at the OLSH Sister’s convent in Morata.

The family’s ordeal began three-weeks ago soon after their return from Lihir in New Ireland province to Yule Island in Central province, to witness the Profession of Faith by one of their family members; the same time when the government declared the State of Emergency lockdown period in an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

Sr Emma said they were very happy and thanked CARITAS for the donations. She also extended her gratitude to local member of parliament, Mr Walter Schnaubelt, for arranging the family’s emergency travel out from Port Moresby.

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**News Item 4 – Jingles reinforce ‘Stay at Home’**

Putting rhyme and rhythm together for short jingles is an interesting way to get young people reflect on the presence situation, ponder on the messages received and communicate the same to others. This was the focus of aspirants from Savio Haus, Bomana during a session on 14th April, and another on 18th April with residents of Mary Our Help Hostel and Don Bosco Technological Institute, Boroko.

The sessions were an opportunity to reflect on what they hear, reinforce it for themselves and share it through the jingles they produced. Several small groups reinforced the ‘Stay at home’ and ‘social distancing’ messages. Others shared their thoughts of what they understood of the corona virus. The jingles also highlighted the care for the planet and the need to keep our environment clean.

“Record your tunes using your iPhone or smartphone. Share it with your friends on social media. It is a simple way to get the very important message across to other young people”, said Fr Ambrose Pereira, Social Communications Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNGSI, as he brought the session to a close.

The recorded tracks will be sent to Radio Maria and NBC to be edited for use.

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**News item 5 – 2020 Academic Year Faces Suspension**

The 2020 academic year faces a possible suspension if further cases of COVID-19 are detected. This was revealed by Mr Michael Ova, National Catholic Education Secretary, on Monday 20th April.

Mr Ova cautioned that if COVID-19 cases continued to be identified till the month of June, the 2020 Academic Year would be suspended. He said the government’s approval to resume classes on 27th April, during the State of Emergency Period was a hasty decision that posed a serious threat especially to children in primary schools.

Before allowing students to return to classes, he said the government needed to ensure the prevention of unexpected cases. He suggested for more focus of government efforts and time to identify, isolate and quarantine ‘Persons of Interest’.

Mr Ova explained of how the pandemic was a first of its kind in the country, and urged for better preventive measures to be taken with close monitoring of positive cases as the implications were severe. He said that as much as education was essential for the younger generation, human life was irreplaceable and more precious that required safeguarding at all costs.

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**News item 6 – NCEC Supports Broadcasting of Education Lessons**

The National Catholic Education Commission has expressed its full support in the initiative undergone by the Department of Education to have education lessons broadcasted through radio, TV and online.

According to NCEC Secretary, Mr Michael Ova, the Commission is working closely with the Department of Education to have live broadcasting of lessons for students during the State of Emergency Period. It is an effective method of educating and to make up for lost time.

He admitted having access to the broadcast posed as a serious challenge particularly for students living in rural areas and settlements. He said this was mainly due to their inability to afford a radio and the geographical landscape blocking radio signals from entering.

Mr Ova stated that K10M had been donated by UNICEF for improvement of education in the country, and that a funding proposal had already been submitted to DOE. He assured that upon confirmation of funding, all necessary equipment and measures would be taken to assist students.

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**Recapping our headlines for this week:**

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**This ends the Catholic Church news for this week, join us next week for more.**

**From all of us at Catholic Communications we wish you all an enjoyable week.**