**News Compilation for Catholic Church News aired on Radio Maria**

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**Welcome to another week of Catholic Church News on Radio Maria. I am Nigel Akuani, and I am Isabella Saleu with the news.**

**Our stories for the week:**

**1. Pope: Find Jesus in those who are close to you everyday**

**2. Cardinal receives booster vaccine**

**3. Archbishop urges Staff to Serve with Respect**

**4. Churches Unite for COVID-19 Awareness**

**5. Walk for Peace held in Mendi**

**6. Budget cut for church schools**

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**News Item 1 – Pope: Find Jesus in those who are close to you everyday**

Pope Francis reflected on the Gospel reading of Sunday 30th January 2022 and invited believers to be humble and willing and never to reject the ways of the Lord.

Reflecting on the passage from the Gospel of Luke that tells of how Jesus was met with incomprehension and hostility when he gave his first sermon in his home town, Nazareth, Pope Francis invited Christians to believe in good, even when faced with closures and rejection.

The Holy Father explained that Jesus is asking us to accept him in the daily reality that we live in, in those who are close to us every day and those we encounter.

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**News item 2 – Cardinal receives booster vaccine**

His Eminence Cardinal Sir John Ribat MSC has received the COVID-19 booster vaccine and is encouraging persons who have been fully vaccinated to receive the booster shot.

The Cardinal together with Rev. Roger Joseph, General Secretary of the PNG Council of Churches and the PNGCC staff received the booster vaccination on Tuesday 25th January, in Mendi during the Southern Highlands Church leader’s annual convention.

In an interview on Friday 28th January, the Cardinal said that they did not feel any side effects after the boost and encourage those who have received the second vaccine to go ahead receiving theirs.

At the annual convention, the PNG Council of Churches Team spoke to 1000 Church Leaders representing the Mainline Churches and BOC Churches within the Southern Highlands on the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine and to dispel fears and suspicion.

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**News item 3 – Archbishop urges Staff to Serve with Respect**

Archbishop of Rabaul, Rochus Tatamai MSC, has urged public servants in East New Britain to be honest and committed to their work.

Abp Rochus made the call during the dedication and blessing of the province’s public servants at the Bitavavar United Church in Kokopo on Friday 21st January.

He described how Jesus Christ lived as the perfect role model of love, respect, fairness and good will. He urged for everyone to look up to Jesus in order to transform and bring change to the lives of the people.

Provincial Administrator, Wilson Matava, said that as public servants it was their duty to serve with purpose, dignity and pride. He called on those serving in the public sector to always be reminded of the ways of the Christian living.

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**News Item 4 – Churches Unite for COVID-19 Awareness**

The Bougainville Church Council Association leaders united with the PNG Council of Churches to raise awareness on COVID-19 and Vaccination issues from the churches’ perspective.

Facilitated by the PNG Council of Churches, the intense one-day program was held on Tuesday 18th January, at the Fr. Begg Conference Centre at Hahela. It had as its theme “I am my brother’s/sister’s keeper.”

The PNG Council of Churches delegates included his eminence Cardinal Sir John Ribat representing the Catholic Church, General Secretary Reverend Roger Joseph, Bishop Hitolo Aura from the United Church and Pastor Kewai Kero from the Evangelical Alliance.

The program had open discussions and moments of reflection were centred around how the Covid-19 pandemic affected the spirituality of their congregations. Almost 180 clergy and church leaders made up of the Catholic Church, United Church, Pentecostal and Seventh Day Adventist Churches were present.

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**News item 5 – Walk for Peace held in Mendi**

A nine-day Walk for Peace that had more than 300 participants was recently held in the Diocese of Mendi.

The walk that began on Tuesday 18th January, ended on Wednesday 26th January, in the Irawi area after going through 9 different deaneries of the diocese.

Local Priest and Facilitator of the Walk Fr Isaiah Timba, described how it was a great experience that showed unity among the many different people.

He said the walk gave an opportunity to personally meet tribal warlords, walk and pray through areas that saw much conflict and bloodshed. However, Fr Isaiah reaffirmed that the walk already began the needed foundation to pave the way forward for reconciliation and restoration of peace in the diocese.

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**News item 6 – Budget cut for church schools**

The recent budget cuts for church schools nationwide are posing challenges, said Michael Ova, Chairman of the National Churches Education Council.

Mr Ova made this known in a published statement released on Monday 31st January. According to Mr Ova, many rural schools need help but we cannot help them all due to limited funding.

Admitting timely funding being a constant problem, Mr Ova said much of the funding came from the Australian government through Caritas Australia, where they were able to supply schools with water tanks and other resources.

He said slight changes had been made recently with the council reporting to the Catholic Bishops Conference PNGSI, for the funding allocations.

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**Recapping our headlines for this week:**

1. **Pope: Find Jesus in those who are close to you everyday**
2. **Cardinal receives booster vaccine**
3. **Archbishop urges Staff to Serve with Respect**
4. **Churches Unite for COVID-19 Awareness**
5. **Walk for Peace held in Mendi**
6. **Budget cut for church schools**

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

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