



A Catholic Church Family Magazine for Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands
2020 Year of the Laity | Volume 2 | Issue 1

CHURCH *Alive*

2020
Our Catholic Laity:
Holy and Formed for Mission

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Thanks to those who have sent in their articles, reflections and photographs for this issue of **Church Alive 2020**.
God bless you all. - Editor

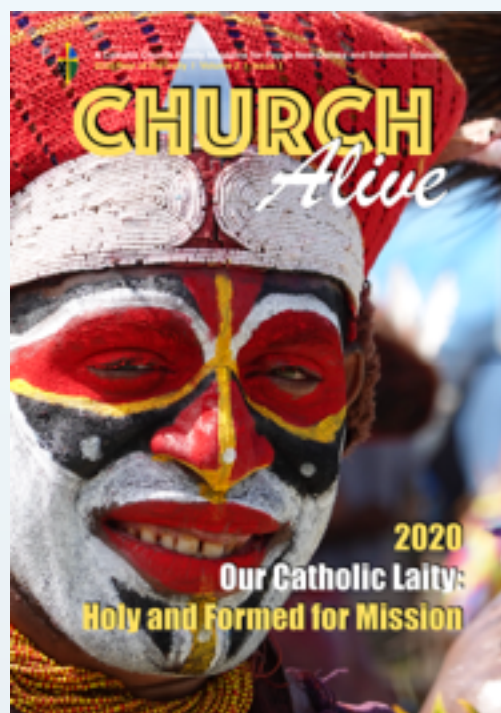
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Cover



Jayson Jim Embia, a Technical Instructor of Don Bosco Technical School, Gabutu, Port Moresby is dressed in traditional face painting from Tumbul in Western Highlands Province. Tumbul traditional "bilas" (body ornament) includes elaborate and impressive head dresses painted in bright colours and decorated with bird feathers, their faces are painted in red and yellow stripes giving the men a very fearful and warlike expression.

Church Alive Invitation

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

We are happy to bring you this issue of Church Alive with stories and articles that will inform and inspire you. Thanks to all who have contributed to this issue for our people of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Articles on the lives of priests, religious and more especially the laity who have over the years led committed lives and inspired many can be sent for publication together with photographs. Reflections, inspirational stories and news items for the entire church are also welcome.

All material are to be sent to:

socom@catholic.org.pg on or before
10th March, 2020.

Trust you will enjoy reading this issue.

Your suggestions, comments and views are most welcome. God bless.

Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb, Editor
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I see Spring

Addressing his group of students at the start of the New Year, the professor requested his students to reflect on what the New Year has in store for them. He then posed this question to them, "What happens when ice on the mountainside melts?" Several hands shot up all eager to answer the question and receive the approval of the professor. "Water flows", said one. "Temperature rises", said another and so on. "I do not want the obvious answer. Reflect and give me your answer," reiterated the professor. After a pause, one young man raised his hand. When permitted to speak, he said, "I see spring. I see a new life. I see a new beginning." "Well done", said the professor. "You have been able to go beyond the obvious to understand the reality of something deeper. I am sure you will have a wonderful life ahead", he continued.



Dear friends,
The New Year 2020 with amazing possibilities has just unfolded before us. What are the new avenues for creative and constructive work in 2020?

The Catholic Bishops Conference has its theme for 2020 - **Catholic Laity: Holy and Formed for Mission**. Perhaps each one of us can try to understand our Catholic Faith, what the Sacraments mean to us and how they can be translated into life and living. A possibility will be Scripture Sharing and Bible reflection. Getting people together to share on scripture so that 'God's Word' comes alive in our lives.

The United Nations has declared 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). The objective of the IYPH is to raise awareness of the importance and impacts of plant health in addressing global issues, including hunger, poverty, threats to the environment and economic development. **Keep it clean! Go Green** is our theme for the Media Education Seminars and the International Film Festival. We need to look at ways to protect our planet for generations to come.

It is in giving that we will receive. Reaching out to the marginalised, the poor, those in prisons, the refugees, the drug addicts and the street kids. It can be a year when we sensitise the eyes of our hearts to look not at ourselves, or want others to look at us, but we look at the ones who need us most, reach out to them, experience the joy of interaction as we bring a smile to their faces.

Abuse and male domination are high in Papua New Guinea. Every young man can promise never to raise a hand, entertain any thought of violence or any form of abuse. Women on the other hand can bring in spirituality into their homes and ensure that they command and demand respect by all they interact with.

It is only then that we can say, that the ice has melted and spring is at hand.
God bless all of you! Happy New Year 2020! 🇩🇪

- Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb, Editor and SOCOM Secretary



Formed for MISSION

John Cardinal Ribat was born on the 9th February, 1957 at Volavolo. He was ordained a priest on 1 December 1985. On 30 October 2000, Pope John Paul II named him auxiliary bishop of Bereina. He was consecrated bishop on 11 February 2001 and named Bishop of Bereina on 12 February 2002. Pope Benedict XVI named him Coadjutor Archbishop of Port Moresby on 16 April 2007 and he succeeded to that office on 26 March 2008. On 9 October 2016, Pope Francis announced that he planned to raise Ribat to the rank of cardinal at a consistory scheduled for 19 November 2016. He was made a Cardinal Priest on that day and assigned to the titular church of San Giovanni Battista de Rossi. He is the first cardinal from Papua New Guinea.

To know our God well, we read the Bible, we listen to talks given on spiritual life, and on special topics chosen to help form Christians to live their lives more joyfully and fruitfully.

As we welcome the New Year 2020, we have dreams to pursue. Hence, I would like to invite each and every one of you to take a moment to discern what is happening for each one of us in our relationship with God and with those around us.

Let us focus on our spiritual life as it is an important part of our life. It helps us in our relationship with God, with our families, our neighbours and with our friends. To know our God well, we read the Bible, we listen to talks given on spiritual life, and on special topics chosen to help form Christians to live their lives more joyfully and fruitfully.

While growing up in my village, I used to see our Parish Priest visiting our village communities on Watom Island. We had two Catholic village communities on the Island. St. Michael's Community, where I grew up

and St. John's, the other village. What struck me about the parish priest was his life and his joy to visit the sick, the elderly and those with disabilities. Families also visited him with gifts and my family did so too. My father usually marked a time for my family to visit the parish priest and I never missed the chance to visit him. Just to shake his hands and smile was enough to give me the joy of meeting him. This was already a formation by my parents to have a connection, a relationship with our parish priest. This simple gesture had a great impact on my upbringing.

I attended a government high school, Malabunga. The Christian brothers were our religious teachers. They helped us to read the Bible and reflect on the readings. One text in the Gospel spoke deeply to my heart. It was a text from the Gospel of John 15:16, it says; "*You did not choose*

Photo left:
Cardinal Ribat in prayer during the pilgrimage to the sites of Bl. Petro ToRot together with young people at the National Youth Convention in 2018

*me, it was I
who chose you
and sent you to
go and bear
fruit, fruit that
will last...."*

These lines
were very
much alive in
me and I made
known my
intention to join
the

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) of Jesus. I was accepted and ordained a priest 1st December 1985. My first appointment as a priest was to St. Paul's parish Veifaá, in the Diocese of Bereina in Central Province. I was given five villages to take care of namely: Rarai, Inauaoni, Imounga, Eoi and Maipa. They were the interior villages of the parish. The two first villages could be easily reached by road, but to reach the other three you need to walk. It would take about two weeks to complete the visit to the villages. In one of the visits, I had planned to celebrate baptism and first Holy Communion. However, on that day there was heavy rain, flood and strong wind blowing. There was a big storm and I was unable to go for the visit. Two days later the people came to tell me, "We were waiting for you". I explained that it was due to the storm that I did not come. Their only words were, "We were all waiting for you". I realised that they wanted to encourage me to be a strong and caring priest. From that time, I never missed the planned visits despite the weather etc. I also recognised how the people were so caring and supportive when I was present among them during the visits. These people have contributed to the formation of my priestly life in my first year as a priest. It is the people who have formed me to be who I am today.

I have also met those who have been working in government or private enterprises. As their time comes to conclude their service as public servants or workers in companies,

they would say, "I would like to spend my time in the work of the church". I see in their life the formation that took place at home, at school and in their place of work. These had a great impact in their lives.

Every one of us come from good homes and families. We know how our parents cared for us and formed us in the faith, while they shared with us knowledge that the elders in our villagers imparted to them and shared with us the traditional values about life.

We have been guided and formed knowing our traditional values. These help us to live our Christian faith confidently. Our faith is always the greatest strength converting all lay people, religious, priests and youths to allow Christ into our lives and to make decisions that we are joyful and happy about. And the decisions we make are not only for a short time, but carry us into the future.

As Christians our mission gets its meaning in Christ and can only be understood through Him. And therefore, living our life today we see it as the will of God for us. We are connected to him, leading us to the path of holiness. But what is holiness? Holiness does not make us less human, because it is really an encounter between our weakness and the power of God's grace. It is really to live charity to the full. Christ showed us this in his life. He was so charitable until the end of his life. We are invited to do the same. 🇬🇦



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Mi wantaim yu i sios i stap laip oltaim

The Archdiocese of Madang rejoiced as they celebrated the installation of the sixth Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Madang. Archbishop Bal replaced Archbishop Stephen Joseph Reichert who served the province for eight years.

Over 2500 people were present at the Holy Spirit Cathedral, Madang on 31st October 2019 to join in the celebration of the Eucharistic in thanksgiving to God for the new Archbishop. His Excellency Most Rev. Anton Bal formerly served the Diocese of Kundiawa, before the Vatican Embassy announced his appointment to the Archdiocese of Madang, in July this year.

The newly installed Archbishop began his homily in the Eucharistic mass by reminding the parishioners that everyone needs Christ for support and that they should live a Christ-like lifestyle. He further added that as their new archbishop, he needs the help and the communion of the parishioners. Speaking in *Tok Pisin* he said, “*Mi wantaim you i sios i stap lip oltaim.*”

Apostolic Nuncio to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, Archbishop Kurian Mathew Vayalunkal, Emeritus Archbishop Stephen Joseph Reichert and

Emeritus Archbishop William Joseph Kurtz were joined by eleven other bishops and eighty-eight priests. Religious sisters and brothers and lay faithful from the different parishes and well-wishers were part of the celebration.

Among the VIPs present were Mr. Markus Kachau, Acting Provincial Administrator of Madang Province, Mr. Peter To Rot, recently retired Assistant Provincial Administrator of Madang Province, Mr. Patrick Silata, the Momase Region School Inspector and Mr. Joseph Ouyoub, Regional Teachers Services Commissioner Momase Region.

Archbishop Reichert thanked the Lord and Our Blessed Mother for his eight years as Archbishop of Madang. Several had tears in their eyes as he appreciated and thanked his priests, religious, diocesan secretaries and laity for working together to build the faith of families and the Catholic people of Madang. He joyfully welcomed Archbishop Bal as the

sixth Archbishop of Madang.

Archbishop Vayalunkal highlighted the relationship between Christ and

Photo left:
Bishops together with the newly installed Archbishop Anton Bal



his disciples (Jn 15:1-17) and stressed the need to be close to Jesus. "As you faithfully attend the pastoral needs of the local Church, may you be guided by the Virgin Mother, to show to all, the merciful face and goodness of her Son, Jesus Christ," he said. He reminded the archbishop of the invitation of Pope Francis to become the 'Sacrament of Closeness' – Close to God in prayer, close to the people of God entrusted to him and close to his priests.

Several said that they look forward to working with Archbishop Anton Bal to continue the work of Archbishop Reichert. The celebration concluded with a feast organized by the Simbu and Madang parishioners.

The Parish choir at the Eucharistic celebration was coordinated by Mr. Tony Tapalia. Dancers in their local 'bilas' added to the solemnity of the event. The singing group from Panutibun island led the

procession at the start of the Eucharistic celebration. The bible procession was done by the Franciscan Friends and the offertory procession by the Chimbu delegates.

The entire celebration was coordinated by Fr Joseph Durero, svd. Assisting him was the Catholic Mama Group from the Cathedral headed by Bernadette Yena and Ruth Dedmai. Panutibun community and Simon and Angela Bilas and family for the Madang Traditional singing group and Bogen decors. The decors were led by Mrs Vivian Buai.

Archbishop Anton Bal received his episcopal consecration on 12th January 2009 and was appointed as the Bishop of Kundiawa. He is the vice president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG and the Solomon Islands. He is also the Chairman of the committee for Integral Human Development and Deputy Bishop for National Family Life Commission. 🇩🇪

The coat of arms of His Excellency Archbishop Anton Bal

The coat of arms of the Archdiocese of Madang is displayed in two quarters of the Archbishop's coat of arms. Two other fields contain his simplified personal coat of arms.

The Bible symbolizes the leadership, speeches and oracles of the Church and of the tradition. The pig symbolizes the traditions of the local population. It is a very important animal in local culture. The piece of bamboo and a piece of rope represent the service and sacrifices of a simple worker.

The symbols put together simply means servant and leadership. Behind the shield is a golden Processional double cross, under the shield is a pallium (the symbol of a Metropolitan Archbishop) and on the silver ribbon is the motto "MI WANTAIM YU I SIOS I STAP LAIP LONG KRAIS" (In English: You and me, together as Church, Alive in Christ) which means that we all actively participate and contribute in the life of the Church. The green hat with 10 fringes on the cords on each side belongs to the Archbishop.



VOX POP



We will do our best to work together with our new Bishop.
- *Theresa Naguwean, Saint Philomena's group, Holy Spirit Cathedral Parish, Madang*

Archbishop Stephen Reichert has done a lot of work for the Legion here as well as in the outstations.
- *Theresa Arek, Legion of Mary, Madang*



New people, new environment and new challenges. We will journey as priests, religious and lay people together with the Archbishop - *Sr. Uloma Akpa, SSsP*

"I am so excited and happy to have witnessed the Installation mass" - *Cathy Banavi, Holy Spirit Cathedral Parishioner.*



A lot of work has been done with the laity and youth groups. I am happy to support the new Archbishop in any way I can. - *Anthony Samo, East Sepik – Legion of Mary*



I am happy and proud to have a bishop from the highlands. - *Clement Kapior, Hamamas Mission*

Archbishop Stephen has done a lot of work in the outstations of Madang. I am happy to have witnessed this handover.
- *Cornelius Lidol, Megiar NCR, Madang*



I have no doubt that Archbishop Anton Bal will be a Good Shepherd. We look forward to working under his leadership
- *Victor Tade, Rabaul, East New Britain*





"The soul of man is immortal but the soul of the righteous man is both divine and immortal." - Socrates

The 1st New Irelander Bishop

KIAPSENI

(1945 - 2019)

Bishop Ambrose Kiapseni MSC, Bishop Emeritus of Kavieng, the longest serving Papua New Guinean Roman Catholic bishop was laid to rest on Saturday 28th December 2019. His motto was Justice, Mercy and Humility. The Eulogy was prepared by Fr Gerard Savian MSC. Here are extracts of the same.

Childhood and Village Life

1945 was the end of the Second World War. For **Raphael Zikisamo** and **Apolonia Nakul**, it was the birth of their first-born child **Ambrose Kiapseni**. He was born on the **16th of October 1945** at Ton Village, Masahet Island, in the Lihir Group of Islands, New Ireland Province. He was **baptized a year later on the 14th of November 1946**, by Rev. Fr. Joseph Weigl, parish priest of St. Clement Parish, Lihir Group of Islands. Five more children, three boys and two girls, were added to their family. His parents were subsistence farmers. His father Raphael Zikisamo died ten years later in 1954 leaving the task of looking after and raising their family to his mum Apolonia Nakul till she remarried Francis Sorang.

Primary, Secondary and Seminary Education

Ambrose began his primary education in Lakaziz on Masahet Island in 1952 and ended his primary education in Palie Catholic Mission on the Lihir mainland in 1963. He wanted to be a priest, hence continued his studies at St. Jude Mongop High School in 1964 and then on to St. Peter Chanel College Minor Seminary, Ulapia, in 1969. At St. Peter Chanel Minor Seminary, his intention to study for the priesthood became strong and confirmed and he expressed his desire to join the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Frs. Louis Gramaund, Benard Lahn and Bishop Desmond Moore accepted his request. On the **1st of January 1970**, he entered the Sacred Heart Novitiate at Vunapau, East New Britain for two years, 1970 and 1971. An extract from his report for First Profession by Fr. Joseph Muller, novice master dated 12th February 1971 reads:

*'I think Ambrose is among the most mature young Melanesians I have met to date. God willing, he should make a fine hard-working priest. His academic record shows notable success. Not that Ambrose is brilliant, but he is persevering and determined. He has a good mind, and learns readily, but his drive carries him to success more than quick apprehension. I'm certain you will find him very satisfactory as a student'. After his First Profession on the **11th of February 1971** he moved to De Boismenu College, Bomana for religious formation and seminary education at the Holy Spirit Regional Seminary for six years (1971 to 1976). He made his Perpetual Profession on the **22nd of November 1975** at De Boismenu College and was ordained deacon by Bishop Emeritus Desmond Moore MSC, of the Diocese of Sideia on the **23rd of November 1975**.*

Priesthood and Ministry

Fr Ambrose Kiapseni was ordained a priest on the **9th of January 1977** in Kavieng by Bishop Alfred Stemper MSC. He was appointed to Bundralis Catholic Mission, Manus Province, as Assistant Parish Priest to Fr. Henry Einhaus MSC in 1978 and to Lorengau Catholic Mission as Assistant Parish Priest to Fr. Earl Henley MSC. The following year 1979 he was appointed as Parish Priest to Milmila Catholic Mission, Duke of Yoke Islands, East New Britain and worked there for two years till 1980. In 1981, he was appointed Assistant Novice Master to the Novice Master, the late Fr. Fred Mordaunt MSC at the Sacred Heart Novitiate, Vunapau. Midway through 1981, he was sent to Saidi Formation Centre in the Philippines for Formation Studies for one year,

returning back mid-year 1982. In 1983 he was appointed by the then Pacific Islands Pro-Vine as the Novice Master at the Sacred Heart Novitiate, Vunapau till 1988. That year on the 14th of September 1988, Papua New Guinea became a Province. In 1989, he was appointed Parish Priest to Mapua Parish, Tabar Group of Islands.

Episcopal Election, Ordination and Ministry

On the 18th of September 1990, he was appointed the Administrator of the OLSH Cathedral, Kavieng at the request of the then outgoing bishop and new Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Rabaul His Grace Most Rev. Archbishop Emeritus Karl Hesse MSC, at the same time acting Parish Priest of both Lovangai and Puas Parishes, Diocese of Kavieng till his Episcopal Election by His Holiness, the Late Pope John Paul II on the 16th of March 1991. His Grace, Very Rev. Late Bishop Emeritus Ambrose Kiapseni MSC was ordained the third Bishop of the Catholic OLSH Diocese of Kavieng on the 12th of May 1991 at the OLSH Cathedral, Kavieng.

His Grace Very Rev. Late Bishop Emeritus Ambrose Kiapseni was bishop of the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Diocese of Kavieng for twenty-eight (28) years, two (2) months and fourteen (14) days at his official retirement on the

14th of August 2018. He had been a priest for thirteen (13) years. He was 74 years of age at his passing on the 20th of December 2019 at 09.30 AM at the MSC Center, Kopkop.

In 1966, Bishop Alfred Matthew Stemper, MSC established the Diocese of Kavieng. Bishop Karl Hesse MSC developed the Diocese. However, credit goes to Bishop Ambrose Kiapenski MSC for having localised the diocese. He emphasised strong collaboration and ownership of the church to promote the work of Evangelization. His challenge to his flock was to take responsibility and care for their priests. To this day the parishioners provide for their priests and support them in every way possible.

Over the years Bishop Ambrose has established parishes to cater to the growing Catholic population. Schools and health centres have increased with several pastoral and social initiatives. He has also been invested with the award for the companion of St. Michael and St. George.

FAREWELL Your Grace, Very Rev. late Bishop Emeritus Ambrose Kiapseni MSC. Thank you for sharing your life and gifts with us. 🇹🇷

Population increased under his reign

- Civic: 275,860
- Catholic: From 156,700 to **195,678**

Parishes

- From 18 to 21 Parishes
- 3 new established Parishes

Priest' Ordained

- 13 Diocesan
- 2 Deacons
- 8 Religious

Education

- Community Elementary Schools: 105 to **125**
- Primary Schools: 80 to **116**
- High Schools: 1 to **2**
- Secondary Schools: 1 to **2**
- Vocational Centres: 4 to **5**
- Callan Special Education Resource Centre: **2**

Health Centres

- Hospitals :1
- Health Centres:9
- VCCT:1

Diocesan Institution

- Minor Seminary: 1

Catechists

- Missio Catechists :88
- Helper Catechists: 110

Basic Christian Communities :125

Educational Developments:

- Proposed Polytech at Fissoa

Pastoral Achievements

- Proposed Manus Diocese
- Regia for Legion at Fissioa
- 2016 endorsement for the visitation of Our Lady of Fatima
- 2008 sent 40 Youth delegations to Australia
- Introduced Inculturation Program
- Emphasis on Diocesan Pastoral Plan

Civil Achievements

- Invested with the award for the companion of St. Michael and St. George

At the funeral of Bp Ambrose Kiapseni MSC





Ms. Carmencita Rojas



The Formation of Laity in the WORD

The Laity workshop entitled, '**Our Catholic Laity: Holy and Formed for Mission**' was held in November 2019 and had nineteen participants from seventeen dioceses in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Two external facilitators from the East Asia Pastoral Institute in Philippines, Miss Carmencita Rojas, Consecrated Lay person and Theology Professor Dr Dennis Gonzales animated the group. Ms Carmencita shares with extracts from her talk given in the Philippines.

The Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful

"What specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature." Lumen Gentium # 31

The Second Vatican Council let in a most welcome "fresh air" in the self-understanding of the Church and its mission in the world. For us, lay people the Council has affirmed our identity, dignity, vocation and rights and responsibilities as full members, and not just receivers of spiritual goods. The documents have specifically cited that the laity's distinctive character is secular. But this is not to be taken negatively, as if the lay people are not spiritual at all. In the light of the ecclesiology of communion of all the members, this description has a positive meaning related to the laity's itinerary for life and mission.

Over these fifty years, Church pastors and lay leaders have continually tried to let the lay people catch this renewed vision of the Church, where the clergy, religious men and women and the laity though differing in their roles and gifts, stand side by side in communion with one another as one people of God. The Church teachings in the Vatican II *Lumen*

Gentium, Apostolicam Actuositatem and *Gaudium et Spes* have been helping the laity explore their charge and appreciate their charisms.

There has been some significant progress in awakening the "sleeping giant" that the lay people are. It cannot be denied that the Holy Spirit has clearly let the winds of change blow world-wide and created a momentum for lay participation through the birth of many forms of lay renewal movements within the Catholic Church. Some of the best signs of the Spirit's renewing works among the laity are personal conversion, growing desire for spiritual growth, hunger for the Word of God, interest in community life, and eagerness to proclaim the Good News by sharing their faith - life with others, and initiatives to participate in. Yet, after fifty years of grounding and promoting the vision of the renewed laity, it seems that there is still much work to be done. In these Years of the Laity, the Church hopes to renew our fervor for God and our zeal for mission. We are being called to move up, and get into the next level of growth – to become mature lay disciples, and faithful and effective transmitters of the Gospel of Joy.

Photo right:
Laity in conversation

Let us begin with our particular context as the laity. Who are we? For what are we? Where are we in our spiritual journey? Where are we headed?

It is my hope that by reading these texts, we may personally reaffirm our lay vocation and mission and get a vision of what the Lord wants of us during this particular stage of our journey as PNGSI laity.

We are the laity, also called as the lay faithful. We are members of the one People of God. Our calling is to seek God's Kingdom by living in the world and to exercise our Christian witness. The secular world is the particular territory that God has given us to influence by the spirit of the Gospel, to be sanctified and transformed from within. We are leaven. The Spirit of God has given us many gifts to use both to build up the internal life of the Church and to serve human society.

We specialize in the "cargo of temporal affairs – the family, professions, education, business, the arts, culture, politics, science and all other aspects or activities in this domain. These ordinary places and situations are the venues where the ever-present God meets us and trains us every day to live holy lives. Many times, we experience conflict of interests and temptations. We realize that we always need to make a conscious effort to have unity of life - as faithful members of the Church and as dutiful citizens of our land. We are called to evangelize. We bring Christ to others through the witness of our life - our stories of faith, hope and love that reflects the values of the Kingdom. We are light.

As lay members of Christ's faithful people, we are intimately "engrafted" into his life and mission. We belong to the Lord and to the Church. Together with the clergy and the rest of Christ's faithful people, we are the Church. Gifted and graced we respond as Christ's faithful. Though not ordained like clergy or consecrated religious, we too, are dedicated to Christ, anointed by the Holy Spirit and sharers in his threefold mission as priest, prophet-teacher and king. We thank God for this precious gift!



As laity we are only a part and not the whole. We live in unity with all the sectors, especially with our pastors. We are co-responsible in building - up this communion, take initiative for our personal growth, and are available to support the life and mission of the Church - by our faithful presence, active participation and generous use of our gifts and resources. We are needed.

We take joy in living in this epoch of great technological advancements. Some are very useful for transmission of the Good News. Yet, it is obvious that we are in a time of a profound crisis - of faith and fidelity which has affected so many people today (PF, 2). It is not uncommon anymore in our society to compromise faith in God, fidelity to the truth and faithfulness to one's vocation. We experience this reality even in our own lives, families, school communities, work places, parishes and country.

We are the salt of the earth. Yes. But when the salt loses its flavor, how shall we season it? Tasteless salt is worthless. In the same manner, if we will not fulfill God's purpose for us in human society, how different are we from those who do not believe in God? How can we make a difference, if our lifestyle and values are no different from theirs'.

Highlighted in the Pastoral letter are the prevalent values and practices in our society that run counter to our Christian commitment. We are being challenged to take on a more radical path that befits Catholic disciples of the Lord. Silent witnessing doesn't seem to be the need of the hour. Our leaders dare us to be

courageous enough to be different and stand up for Christ – be it in our religious activities, in private or in public settings. We realize now, more than ever, that lay people in our country need a more intensified and well- thought of formation, based on our different faith - levels, different life - settings (EG, # 14-15) and different spiritual needs. We all need a renewed integral formation. 🇹🇵

Photo: Group photo of participants at the Seminar





Blessed Petro ToRot

An ordinary man doing extra-ordinary things



Blessed Petro ToRot was a simple Catechist. He was an ordinary man doing extra-ordinary things. Growing up in his village of Rakunai in East New Britain Province, he attended Mass regularly. From a very early age, Blessed Petro ToRot developed a very strong love for the Holy Eucharist. He was an altar server and received Holy Communion. He was always very obedient to his parents and village elders.

Because of his love for the Holy Eucharist, the Parish Priest Fr Carl Laufer asked his father Angelo ToPuia, who was the village chief, if he would agree for young Petro ToRot to enter the seminary to study to be a priest. Angelo ToPuia said the timing was not right. However he agreed for Petro ToRot to be enrolled at Taliligap Catechist School where ToRot studied to be a Catechist.

In 1942, Petro ToRot was already a Catechist and served his people of Rakunai as well as the neighbouring villages. When the Japanese forces invaded Rabaul, they arrested all the missionaries, including his Parish Priest Fr Carl Laufer and placed them at Ramale Camp near Kokopo.

The burden was now upon Petro ToRot to take care of the spiritual welfare of his people. Without fear or favour, Petro ToRot rose to the occasion. He administered the Holy Eucharist, led prayer meetings, baptised children, buried the dead, visited the sick, mediated at disputes and prepared young couples for marriage. He staunchly defended the Virtues of Holy Matrimony.

As the war progressed in the Pacific, the Japanese Commanders felt they were losing the war in Rabaul and blamed it on Petro ToRot because of "*too much Christo*". They forbade him from holding any more prayer meetings and issued a law allowing men to take more than one wife. Petro ToRot defied the Japanese orders and continued to attend to the spiritual needs of his people. He also conducted many wedding ceremonies to ensure all the young girls were safely married so they could not be taken as second wives by men.

In 1945, the Japanese knew they had lost the war in Rabaul and in the Pacific. For Petro ToRot, he knew the end for him was near and he was going to die for being faithful to God, his people and most importantly the Holy Eucharist. He prepared himself well for his final journey. Early one morning, the Japanese doctors injected poison into him and he died a violent death. He was 33 years of age when he died.

"No greater love hath man, than him who laid down his life for his friends".

1. **We can emulate Blessed Petro ToRot in the following areas:**
2. **His great love for the Holy Eucharist;**
3. **Servitude – Servant Leadership, like Christ Himself;**
4. **Obedience to his parents, teachers and those in authority;**
5. **A family man who loved his wife and children dearly;**
6. **A great defender of the sanctity of marriage;**
7. **A person who provides wise counsel to others.**

I cried for Joy



Mr Michael Varapik, his wife and grand daughters



Michael Varapik

TESTIMONY

On Monday 21 October 2019 I was admitted to Port Moresby General Hospital with a swollen toe resulting from a blister that got infected. Upon initial observation, the doctor advised me that the toe did not look good and that it may have to come off. Given that I am diabetic and also an amputee on my left leg, I was extremely worried about losing my toe or even my right leg. So, I turned to God in prayer.

My family and I prayed the Holy Rosary daily, including the Divine Mercy Prayer and mounted a 9 Day Novena to Blessed Petro ToRot. We also offered daily devotions to Archangels St Michael and St Raphael, the medicine of God. The Communion Ministers brought the Holy Eucharist to me at home before I was admitted. Our Parish Priest Fr Francis visited me in hospital and administered the Sacrament of Anointing to me. The whole parish was praying for me.

One night whilst I was fast asleep on my hospital bed, my wife Betty was massaging my leg and she noticed that somebody else was massaging my leg with her. There was muscle movement on other parts of my leg.

On Friday 25 October 2019, the doctor and his team came around to review my leg and to advise me on the process to be taken. They were there to prepare me for the operation. But as the nurse took off the bandage covering the wound, the doctor noticed that the toe had improved tremendously. He looked at me and said, "*I will discharge you today*". I just cried for joy. I knew my faith has healed me.

I attributed my healing to the love and mercy of the greatest healer who ever walked the earth, Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and to Our Lady of Fatima and Blessed Petro ToRot, both of whom worked over-time on my leg. 🇯🇲



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.



Do we prefer **ORDER over JUSTICE?**

Rebecca Lim is a Brisbane-based migration and community engagement practitioner. She has been regularly visiting Manus Island, Papua New Guinea since 2014, and has witnessed the deteriorating physical and psychological health of the ex-Manus refugees and asylum seekers who now remain stranded in Port Moresby.



**“It was
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- Pope Francis.

“It was injustice that forced many migrants to leave their lands, and to suffer abuse and torture in detention camps. It is injustice that rejects them and causes them to die at sea”, said Pope Francis as he addressed those gathered in the Belvedere Courtyard in the Vatican in December 2019.

Brisbane based migration and community practitioner Rebecca Lim reflects on our preference of order over justice. She writes:

With Manus Island ‘closed’, all except less than five men were relocated to Port Moresby. They are scattered throughout a number of hotels and lodges, funded by the Australian taxpayer. Some men have been relocated to alternative accommodation. It is not an ideal situation.

The number of men who remain in PNG is approximately 200+ and it is always difficult to verify or provide accurate data as there is a shroud of secrecy by Australia about policies related to offshore detention. The current Government policy is not about offshore processing. It is about mandatory and indefinite detention of people who have not committed any crime in seeking asylum in Australia by sea and who are in need of protection.

Mandatory and indefinite detention is destructive and merciless, whether it is in Australia or in Australian-funded detention centres in other countries. I wrote about the plight of the men in 2017 and 2018.¹ Unfortunately, many remain stranded in PNG. The ‘Medevac’ legislation in 2019 has enabled the transfer of men and women from Nauru and Papua New Guinea to Australia for life-saving medical treatment. This has now been repealed.

What will become of those who need life-saving treatment?

What is the current state of play in Papua New Guinea? As of 30 September 2019, 632 people from Nauru and PNG departed for the United States.² We believe there are some 50+ men with refugee status still waiting to go. We remain unclear how many more will be accepted and the timeliness of resettlement as some men are waiting for the primary decision or an outcome on their review application.

Another group of men with refugee status have been denied for resettlement to the United States for unknown reasons. They need a durable solution which is a pathway for a third country resettlement. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and many Papua New Guineans themselves say that PNG is not a resettlement country. There are always challenges for the host community.

It is public knowledge, under 40 men are subject to indefinite and arbitrary detention in the Australian-funded Bomana immigration detention centre in Port Moresby. This group of men had their asylum applications refused or did not fully engage in the assessment process. Regardless of the circumstances, it is becoming increasingly difficult for these men who remain imprisoned with no access.

On 16 October, 2019 the Australian Home Affairs Minister stated in Question Time that the cost of the offshore regimes in PNG and Nauru has now reached \$16 Billion dollars. SIXTEEN BILLION DOLLARS! \$5 million for each person sent offshore. Australian taxes that could have been allocated for infrastructure,



Photo:
 Mavis Tito, Director of Caritas Papua New Guinea
 Paul Power, CEO Refugee Council of Australia,
 Phil Glendenning, President Refugee Council of Australia
 Sahar Okhovat, Senior Police Officer Refugee Council of
 Australia, a refugee, Fr Giorgio Licini, CBC General Secretary and
 the Rebecca Lim, author

**There is no
 call for
 sentencing
 people to
 destruction.
 You may
 send people
 to life in
 prison but for
 a good
 reason, of
 course,
 proven by
 the courts ...
 but no court,
 no state,
 no executive
 can sentence
 people
 to mental
 destruction or
 health
 destruction.**

aged care, disability support, public housing, health care, education and other services that are the responsibility of the government.

David Marr, a respected journalist said on an Insiders program, *"There are 500 people left in detention. They have committed no crime. They are now there for over six years. They are going crazy and they deserve to be released....at some point the cruelty of this country to those people has to stop. ...lies fed by the government. [that they are] all potential terrorists so using any means is justified³."*

Those of us who have been engaging with the men in PNG over a period of time recognise the 'humanitarian crisis is intensifying'. A PNG-based senior Catholic priest interviewed by the Catholic Leader when he recently visited Brisbane passionately stated,⁴

"Don't put up a policy that destroys persons, (and) sacrifices 100, 200, 1000 people in order to avoid the coming of 10,000 or 20,000. It's not moral, and they do not deserve it. Why should they be the victims? You cannot keep people in those conditions indefinitely ... You destroy them, and who allows you to destroy people?" he said. "There is no call for sentencing people to destruction. You may send people to life in prison but for a good reason, of course, proven by the courts ... but no court, no state, no executive can sentence people to mental destruction or health destruction ..."

"We are not in war; nobody declared war on Australia ..."

Collective punishment is brutal and repressive. The rhetoric and demonising of people seeking asylum by sea is scandalous and merciless giving rise to anti-immigration sentiment and a tighter migration regime. Do we break down walls or build a higher one? Do we prefer order over justice⁵? For those of us who respect human rights, regardless of our faith or spirituality, Jesus was about justice and not order.⁶ Justice delayed is justice denied.

Let us deliver our policies with compassion and kindness. Kindness begets kindness. The Australian government has sacrificed the lives of a few hundred people stranded in PNG claiming the policy 'saves lives'. It is a slogan. The policy has damaged many lives, some irreparable, and others have taken their own lives offshore⁷ and onshore⁸. There are many men who are broken. Yet there are many who will thrive when they receive effective medical care and appropriate third country resettlement or to Australia as quickly as possible to rebuild their lives. Home is a place that keeps you moving.

It is time to end the suffering of the men and to find a humanitarian solution urgently. A web of uncertainty and hopelessness exacerbates stress and declining mental health. 🙏

10 December 2019, Human Rights Day

Notes:

1. https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Publications/National/The_Record/The_Record_Summer_2017/ & Salesian Bulletin January to April 2018
2. Refugee Council of Australia, 27 October 2019 Offshore processing statistics - <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/operation-sovereign-borders-offshore-detention-statistics/>
3. David Marr, ABC Insiders 17 November 2019
4. <https://catholicleader.com.au/news/papua-new-guinea-senior-priest-fr-giorgio-licini-says-countrys-humanitarian-crisis-is-intensifying?fbclid=IwAR3NESJGYtmo-oBi3xxojnQDYWYsbbWy3mbTMLHizEhRQRxguUaB4nV7Sjs>
5. Rev Rod Bower, Australian Anglican priest and social activist, Rector of Gosford (speaking in Brisbane on 6 September 2019) – 'order over justice'
6. ibid
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/ng-interactive/2018/jun/20/deaths-in-offshore-detention-the-faces-of-the-people-who-have-died-in-australias-care>
8. Dr Mirwais Rohani - <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/oct/17/afghan-man-dies-in-brisbane-two-years-after-medical-transfer-from-manus-island> -



Giving young people a voice

Chat Room: Marianville students - Refugees and Migrants

Chatroom a novel youth radio program is broadcast live on NBC Tribe FM 92.0 every Wednesday. It is also recorded and telecast on NBC TV.

'Chatroom' has engaged young people from their perspective, and not from the ideals of the politician. It has challenged the dominant Melanesian cultural standards that render young people's voices silent toward the 'big man' and the elderly.

Port Moresby: Chatroom a novel youth radio program is broadcast live on NBC Tribe FM 92.0 every Wednesday. It is also recorded and telecast on NBC TV.

Chatroom has given young people an opportunity to reflect and express themselves on issues that they face as they make sense of the dominant and top-heavy world around them. Issues ranging from Health, Education, Gender Equality, Leadership, Climate Change, Safety and Child Protection, Technology, Migrants and Refugees, Sexual Abuse and many other issues that are of importance to young people in society.

It made its debut on Wednesday 13th March 2019. The following sessions engaged about 200 students from various schools, institutes, universities, church and youth groups.

Papua New Guinea steeped in its Melanesian culture has its people embedded in cultural and customary values. Young people are seldom given an opportunity to speak and even if they do are seldom listened to. Thus, many young people today engage in illicit activities and land in prison. Perhaps what is most fascinating is the fact that 'Chatroom' has engaged young people from their perspective, and not from the ideals of the politician. It has challenged the dominant Melanesian cultural standards that render young people's voices silent toward the 'big man' and the elderly.

Going live on air gave listeners an opportunity to dial in, send a text message or comment on Facebook. The program has given young people a voice and they have achieved self-confidence and are ready to speak out. Young women in a special way have been able to express themselves on topics such as abuse and safety. Issues of committed leadership, care for the environment, the need to live pure, safety in the city are a clear indication that young people are not content with the present situation and want a radical change. There has been a sense of honesty and innocence as they went beyond fear to speak about the truth.



Photo left:
Young people from St Josephs after their Chat Room program entitled 'Live Pure'



First-Year student studying the Bachelor of Arts at the University of PNG, Anjabertha Kapapal, described Chatroom as an essential tool for youth empowerment toward nation building.

"This platform gives youths the power to talk without fear or favour because we feel entitled to our opinion. It allows us to speak on matters we would not normally speak off at home," she said.

"It is important to have youth programs like this so we can share with young people Christian values and to remind them that God is always beside them," said Timbalu Elijah, Don Bosco Technical School, Grade 11.

"I am happy with this program because it allows young people to share their thoughts with a wider audience, and engage with that audience," said Ms Agnes Harihi, Youth Coordinator of St Cecilia.

"It is a platform where young people can open up. It has the power to make young people use the freedom of expression rightly," said Wo Kaitie, Tribe FM listener.

The program was made possible through working in partnership with TribeFM 92.0 and the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC). The TribeFM team consisted of: Matilda Gaveva, Manager; Vinna Wingur, Raymond Polon and Hazel Parpa Station Producers while Cedric Samuga did the filming for NBC TV. The CBC Social Communications team consisted of: Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb, SOCOM and Youth Secretary and Media officers Nigel Akuani and Abigail Seta.

Institutions and youth groups who have been part of Chat Room 2019:

Don Bosco Technical School, Gabutu
Marianville Secondary School, Bomana
Limana Vocational School, Gordons
Don Bosco Technological Institute, Boroko
De La Salle Secondary School, Bomana
University of Papua New Guinea, Waigani
Jubilee Catholic Secondary School, Hohola
St Charles Lwanga, Gerehu
St Joseph's Youth Group, Boroko
St Joseph's International School, Boroko
La Salle Technical School, Hohola
Catholic Bishops Conference, Waigani
St Cecilia youth, Gerehu
Erima youth, Erima
Caritas Technical School, Boroko
Catholic Theological Institute, Bomana





Committed to Love and Serve

The Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI) Sisters are committed women who have dedicated their lives to serve the poor and the underprivileged unconditionally. Through their service, the DMIs want to create a world where love, peace, equality, justice and brotherhood are ensured for all. They were founded in 1984 by Rev. Fr. J. E. Arul Raj OMI, at Pandravedu, a remote village in Tamil Nadu, India.

Since December 2018, the DMI sisters having been working with men, women and children living in the settlements of Port Moresby with the objective to strengthen their faith.

In this short period, the Sisters have developed Self-Help Groups (SHG) for women in the Korobosea, Kougera, Kogeva, Sabama and Joyce Bay areas. There were 58 SHG's that were formed. These groups are involved in community development activities.

The DMI Sisters have conducted leadership trainings, capacity building training, community activity program, training on health & hygiene, community awareness in these different areas during the year 2019.

According to the program coordinator, Sr. Lilly Pushpam: "The women were very happy about the leadership training which they have received. They could identify themselves and their responsibilities in the family and the group. This training encouraged the women to take up leadership roles."

Sr Lilly said that SHG members have now been involved in the Community development activities like helping children, women in distress, taking up social issues, and creating awareness in the community.

She added that DMI sisters work involves: to love and serve unconditionally the poor and the marginalised. They help them to organise themselves and realise their dreams, potentials and needs. Currently, there are four DMI sisters in Papua New Guinea. 🇵🇬

About the DMI SISTERS

Vision Statement: "Loving God in serving the poor to be Fully Human and Fully Alive."

Mission Statement: "Committed to Love and Serve the poor and marginalized unconditionally, especially women and children to enable them to get their legitimate rights and share in Education, Health, Security and Livelihood."

Objectives:

- To empower women as a group, Federations and movement to support them to face the emerging socio-economic and political challenges.
- To reduce household poverty by promoting more women entrepreneurs among marginalized sections of the population.
- To promote, protect and uphold the dignity of children.
- To promote rights of those suffering from every form of disability.
- To enhance knowledge and skills of sisters involved in the mission.
- To expand the boundaries of development mission through collaboration.

- To establish a Research and Development Training Centre.

Target Group:

- Poor Women and children.
- Victims of social evils.
- Victims of socio economic discrimination.
- Persons with disabilities.

Strategic Programmes:

1. Promotion of women's movement.
2. Social Development Programme.
3. Economic Development Programme.
4. Community Development Programme.
5. Community Based Rehabilitation programme.
6. Children Development Programme.
7. Social Campaigns.
8. Days and Events



I will miss Papua New Guinea



Photo above:
Sr Mechthild, Dr Catherine,
Sr Raymond, Sr. Totoua,
Sr Bernadette and Sr Susan
Photo insert:
Sr Raymond Von Tils

Sr Raymond Von Tils has spent 51 years in Papua New Guinea, the majority of which was spent in Rabaul. She left Papua New Guinea to return home on 16th December 2019.

"I will miss Papua New Guinea," said Sr Raymond Von Tils, MSC as she prepared to board her flight to return back to her native country, Germany.

Christened Anna Elisabeth Katarina Vontils, she was born on 9th April 1940 at Steden Jetzt Holste in a small village in North Germany. She is the eldest of ten children in her family. She completed her schooling and qualified herself in dentistry. While in school, she heard about the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She was inspired by their work in faraway mission lands in Oceania.

At the age of 21 in 1961, she joined the congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was in 1968 that she was appointed to Papua New Guinea as a Dental Technician was needed in the Dentistry in Vunapope Hospital, East New Britain Province.

Sr. Raymond spent 12 years in the dentistry working with the young women in the hospital known as Nursing Aids as they did not have any training at the time. According to Sr Raymond, it was the start of training of professional Nursing Aids which has now developed in the Community Health Worker Training Centre that is based in Lemakot, New Ireland Province.

She then went on to handle the finances of the MSC Sisters in the province. Having no experience in the field, she managed to do some studies by correspondence through Australia.

"This would not mean a job behind a desk in the office with paperwork," said Sr Raymond. She added that part of her responsibility and duty was attending to

the needs of the Sisters and staff in the outstations.

For 10 years, she worked in the office in Rabaul then 3 years in Gerehu, Port Moresby and went on to spend another 6 years in Vunapope. With all her experience in the different fields, Sr Raymond was then asked to start a new community station in Gerehu in 1978 as the community leader. Joining her at that time were three PNG sisters. Then in 1986, she was appointed to start a new station in Lorengau, Manus Province. Unfortunately, the work in Manus lasted for only a year.

"My time and ministry work here in Papua New Guinea was interesting and challenging. I enjoyed working with the young ladies and interacting with them. I developed a close relationship with businesses, friends and people I met. I return home thanking God for the years of ministry, the enjoyable experience I have had and the many people I have interacted with in Papua New Guinea," said Sr. Raymond.

Sr Raymond and Sr Mechthild Schnieder MSC, Provincial of the German province left Port Moresby on the 16th December carrying with them their *bilums* filled with fond memories of the wonderful years in Papua New Guinea. 🇩🇪

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said
Sr. Raymond.**





Bp Ambrose Kiapseni laid to rest

Photo: The casket of Bp Ambrose Kiapseni MSC being carried by Archbishop Francesco Panfilo sdb, Archbishop of Rabaul, Bishop Rochus Josef Tatamai MSC, Bishop of Kavieng and Cardinal Sir John Ribat MSC, Archbishop of Port Moresby together with others.

Bishop Ambrose Kiapseni MSC, Bishop Emeritus of Kavieng, the longest serving Papua New Guinean Roman Catholic bishop was laid to rest on Saturday 28th December 2019.

Cardinal Sir John Ribat MSC, Archbishop of Port Moresby presided at the Requiem mass. Archbishop Francesco Panfilo sdb of the Archdiocese of Rabaul and Bishop Rochus Josef Tatamai MSC, Bishop of Kavieng Diocese were concelebrants together with Fr Siby Peedikayil HGN and Fr Gianni OFM, Vicar Generals of Vanimo and Aitape Dioceses and several other priests from the three deaneries of Manus, Kavieng and Namatanai.

Hon Sir Julius Chan, Governor of New Ireland Province, a long-time friend and colleague in the leadership of Bp Ambrose represented the Government together with several others. Mr Robin Brown, First Secretary delivered the Governor's condolence message marking their long years and terms of collaboration throughout the State Church Partnership program in New Ireland Province. Despite the rain on the previous day, the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Cathedral, Kavieng was packed to capacity.

Bp Rochus Josef Tatamai MSC delivered the homily and conducted the burial rites at Kopkop the MSC centre cemetery. "Fr Andrew Pong MSC was the first local priest and Fr Ambrose belonged to the second

group of priests. Both hailed from the Lihir Gold mine area and are true gold bars", said Bishop Rochus. Abp Francesco Panfilo SDB did the final commendation at the cathedral. Fr Clement Taulam, Dean of Manus delivered the Eulogy that was prepared by Fr Gerard Savian MSC. The Vicar General Fr Vincent Takin delivered the condolences messages from Cardinal Pietro Parolin on behalf of His Holiness Pope Francis and from Archbishop Kurian Mathew Vayalunkal, Apostolic Nuncio PNGSI as well as the message of condolence from Fernando Cardinal Filoni Prefect of the Congregation of the Evangelisation of Peoples.

The Diocesan Choir led the solemn liturgy and sang Bishop Ambrose Kiapseni's favourite Latin Mass, liturgical and eucharistic hymns. The entire eucharistic celebration captured the joyful Christmas as well as the Easter joy that Christ has Risen and lives forever. For us Christians, life is changed, not ended but transformed into Christ's Risen and Glorified body.

Bishop Ambrose Kiapseni MSC was born on 16th October 1945. He was ordained a priest of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on 7th January 1975. On 12th May 1991, he was ordained Bishop of Kavieng and resigned on 22nd June 2018, making him the longest National serving Papua New Guinean Roman Catholic bishop. He passed away on 20th December 2019. 🙏

YEAR OF THE LAITY

2019 - Called to Holiness - 2021 - Sent to Serve

2020:

Holy and Formed for Mission

Making Commitments, Celebrating Love, Living Faith

Young people look forward to the day they will walk down the aisle and pronounce their vows, 'For better or worse... till death do us part'. The commitment of Cecilia and Victor to commence their life of love with the Sacrament of Marriage is an example to teachers and students.



Photos above:
Victor and Cecilia
Exchange of Rings

Photos below:
Victor and his relatives
Cecilia and her family

The Sacrament of Marriage is a lasting commitment of a man and a woman to a lifelong partnership, established for the good of each other and for the procreation of marriage. It is a unique moment for a couple to commence their life of togetherness with the blessings of the Lord.

Cecilia Amala and Victor So-on, a young couple, celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage on 28th December 2019 at the chapel of Don Bosco, Gabutu. Fr Roger Miranda sdb was the main celebrant while Fr Shoji Mathew sdb and Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb concelebrated at the Eucharistic celebration.

"You stand as a witness of God's love to other young people", said Fr Roger in the homily.

"There are no perfect husbands, wives or families, but only a perfect God, under whose guidance and

blessings may you strive to build a happy Catholic family", he said.

Cecilia is the third of nine children. A hardworking and dedicated person, she graduated from Don Bosco Technological Institute, Boroko in 2014. She has been a teacher at Don Bosco Technical School, Gabutu for the past four years sharing her talents and skills with the student, was part of the pastoral team, is passionate about singing and is always willing to assist in extracurricular activities.

Victor is soft-spoken and has a pleasing personality. He is reliable, concerned and a sensible person. As teacher at Jubilee Catholic Secondary School he has been held in high esteem by students and staff.

"We are delighted to receive the Sacrament of Marriage" said a smiling Cecilia.

"God is a necessary partner in our lives as we go through the ups and downs and the challenges of life", said Victor. The celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage for this young God-fearing couple is a very special event. 🇬🇭



Warm hearts reach out at Christmas

- Sr Mary McCarthy, PBVM

Port Moresby: Warm hearts around the city responded to a call from the Port Moresby General Hospital Voluntary Chaplains to host a

on the Christmas Story. They listened as the story told of Mary and Joseph and the unborn Child rejected over and over again. There was no room in the inn. Later, they listened to the story of the shepherds visited by a heavenly chorus singing: Glory to God in the highest heaven.

"The hospital is big, and the Chaplains are few! But, with the strong backing of many churches the impossible was achieved," stated Sr Mary McCarthy PBVM, Volunteer Chaplain.

Christmas Lunch for patients and their Guardians on Christmas Eve.

The PMGH Christmas celebration for the mothers and babies began with a sharing of the story of the birth of Jesus. Christmas carols which beautifully filled everyone present with wonder and awe. Communities from the churches brought much joy with their singing and action songs. Mothers from the Special Care Nursery, after morning feeds, left their sleeping infants in the care of nurses and came out of the ward to sit on the grass outside. They were invited to join in the singing and reflections

To celebrate God's Gift, we give gifts at Christmas time. The name of each mother whose baby was in the Special Care Nursery was called forward to receive her gift. When each mother had received her gift, the visitors from the Churches and Port Moresby Religious Sisters, candidates, and friends visited the Post-natal ward to share the joy of the many mothers in the ward rejoicing in the birth of their babies.

Launching of CPS Diocesan Chapter

- Simon Alberic

Alotau: The Catholic Professionals Society (CPS) launched the Alotau-Sideia Diocesan Chapter on 8th December 2019 during a Eucharistic celebration at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral, Alotau.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Most Rev. Bishop Rolando Santos, CM, Bishop of the Diocese of Alotau-Sideia and concelebrated by Fr. Thomas Losema, Parish Priest of Alotau, and Fr. Ambrose Pereira sdb, Social Communication Secretary of CBC and Spiritual Director of CPS.

The Bishop welcomed the establishment of the chapter in his diocese and challenged the members to carry their 'Cross of Courage' and be the light of Christ and voice of the Catholic Faith. "You are to live and witness to your Catholic faith and be the voice of the voiceless for those who cannot speak for themselves", he said. He referred to the parable of the talents

saying, "At the final judgement, each one will account for what one has done with his or her talents". He

highlighted the many social issues of injustices, human rights abuses, HIV and AIDS, corruption, and violence facing the province and the country and challenged the Catholic Professionals to take courage in facing those issues.

The Alotau-Sideia Diocesan Chapter is the first Diocesan Chapter to be established under the Constitution of the CPS. There were twelve members commissioned as the first members of the Chapter.



New pastoral buildings for the Diocese of Mendi

- Moses Ben

Mendi: The Diocese of Mendi celebrated the blessing and opening of several pastoral buildings that had been destroyed in the 2018 earthquake disaster.

The newly renovated and expanded

church together with four other structures were rebuilt at Saint Martin De Porres Parish, Pomberel, Southern Highlands Province. The event was celebrated on Sunday, 9th November with the Bishop of Mendi, Bp Donald Lippert, OFM Cap, as the

main celebrant. Several priests joined him at the Eucharistic concelebration. In his homily the bishop told the people that their newly renovated church was a sign that God is very close to the people with love, protection, mercy and strength. He also reminded the joyful assembly that all baptised people have the dignity of being temples of the Holy Spirit and together constitute the church and are therefore called to share the Good News with everyone.

Present also were religious Brothers and Sisters, catechists, local leaders, invited guests and lay faithful with over thousands of people from the parish and its outstations as well as from different Christian denominations came together to celebrate and witness the joyful occasion.



Youth Alive!

Spiritual insights by and for young people
Sharing on the Sunday Gospel

One-minute:
Personal experience,
Reference to the Gospel
and an Invitation to Change.






AN INITIATIVE BY:

**CBC Social Communication
and PGS Communications**




Five Feet Apart

Five Feet Apart is a 2019 American romantic drama film directed by Justin Baldoni (in his directorial debut) and written by Mikki Daughtry and Tobias Iaconis. The film was inspired by real life couple Dalton and Katie Prager, who both suffered from cystic fibrosis. Haley Lu Richardson and Cole Sprouse play two young patients with cystic fibrosis, who try to have a relationship despite always being forced to stay a certain distance away from each other. It was released in the United States on March 15, 2019, by CBS Films.



Stella Grant is a cystic fibrosis patient who actively uses social media to cope with her illness and tries to live a normal life. She meets another CF patient, Will Newman, who is at the hospital for a medication trial, in an attempt to get rid of the bacterial infection (*B. cepacia*) he has in his lungs.

CF patients are strictly kept six feet apart to reduce the risk of cross-infection, as contracting bacterial infections from other CF patients can be dangerous, even life-threatening. Stella is determined to follow the rules, and initially dislikes Will, who likes to break the rules and take dangerous risks sometimes. Stella notices that Will isn't strictly following his treatment regimen and eventually gets him to agree to do so.

Will and Stella begin to fall for each other and secretly go on their first date, eventually ending up at the hospital pool, where they strip to reveal scars from their past surgeries. The next day is Will's birthday and Stella throws him a surprise dinner party with the help of Poe, Stella's best friend and a fellow CF patient.

Sometime thereafter, Poe dies and Stella laments that she never got to hug him. Heartbroken, Stella decides that she is living her life too strictly and convinces Will to leave the hospital with her in order to view the lights from the city. As they walk, Stella suddenly grabs Will's hand, scaring Will however Stella justifies that she has gloves on. They come across a pond and slide around on the frozen surface. Meanwhile, the hospital is notified that a lung transplant is available for Stella, who ignores alerts about it in order to spend more time out with Will.

When Will discovers this, he pleads with Stella to take the transplant. Stella refuses, before falling through the ice. Will is able to pull her out of the water, but Stella is unresponsive. Despite the risk of infection, Will performs CPR and Stella wakes up. They are then brought back to the hospital by ambulance. Though hesitant at first, Stella agrees to do the transplant after Will convinces her to do it for him. The transplant is successful, and Will learns that Stella did not contract his infection.

When Stella wakes up from her surgery, she sees Will through the glass of her room. He has setup a display of lights outside of her room, saying that his only regret was that she did not get to see the lights so he brought them to her. He tells her that his drug trial isn't working, and he doesn't want her to have to deal with his eventual death. Confessing his love for her, Will makes her close her eyes, because he says he won't be able to leave if she is looking at him. Stella closes her eyes and Will walks away.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. Why do they have to be five feet apart?
2. Who dies in five feet apart?
3. How did Stella die in five feet apart?
4. What have you learnt from the film?



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