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

**Air Date: 1/ 4 / 2020**

**Our stories for the week:**

1. **Pope Francis: Urbi et Orbi blessing: God turns everything to our good’**
2. **Liturgical Instructions in light of COVID-19**
3. **New Parish erected in Gizo, Solomon Islands**
4. **FSM sisters receives new members**
5. **CARITAS coordinates meeting in the wake of COVID-19**

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**News item 1** – **Pope Francis: Urbi et Orbi blessing: God turns everything to our good’**

Pope Francis delivered an extraordinary blessing to the city and to the world on the steps of St. Peter’s Basilica on Saturday the 28th of March around 3am local time.

He prayed for an end to the Coronavirus pandemic. In his meditation, the Pope reflected on Jesus’ words to His disciples: “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”

Pope Francis held the special Urbi et Orbi , keeping with the gravity of the current global situation, as more than half of the world’s population is confined to their homes to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Pope Francis spoke to the world through via Facebook, YouTube, TV, and radio.

The Holy Father prayed for the world at this critical juncture in the presence of two iconic images: the ancient icon of Mary *Salus Populi Romani* and the miraculous crucifix kept in the church of San Marcello on the city’s Via del Corso.

After the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament the Holy Father imparted his Apostolic Blessing, inviting everyone to receive the plenary indulgence.

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**News item 2 – Liturgical Instructions in the light of COVID-19**

The Central Committee of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands issued liturgical instructions since March 22nd. Bishops from the different dioceses have sent out circulars to their faithful to guide them during this time of crisis.

These instructions follow the need to keep people safe in dioceses, parishes, schools and other gatherings.

Some of the highlights are: -

Everyone to wash hands regularly, hand sanitizers must be available at entrances and around our churches. Shared church or office surfaces and equipment, including microphones and vessels are kept clean with use of disinfectant.

Temporarily empty Holy Water containers at church doors.

Avoid physical contact at the Sign of Peace for the time being, offer a smile, wave, nod or bow instead.

Cease distribution by Chalice for the time being in order to avoid transfer of saliva.

Ensure that all ministers of Holy Communion properly wash their hands or clean them with hand sanitizers after distributing Holy Communion, and avoid all skin to skin contact.

At the Good Friday Liturgy, on 10th April, there will be no kissing of the crucifix. A blessing with the cross will suffice.

The traditional Way of the Cross on Good Friday will be held at parish and/or community level. No massive Way of the Cross for this year.

Confessions may be heard with some form of barrier, such as an open door, between the penitent and the priest, without any surfaces which might be touched by the penitent’s hands.

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**News item 3 – Diocese of Gizo welcomes new Parish**

The Diocese of Gizo in Solomon Islands established the St John Bosco Parish, at the provincial capital of Choiseul province, Taro.

St John Bosco parish now adds to a total of 8 parishes of the diocese of Gizo alone. The newly announced St John Bosco parish joins the parishes in Moli, Sirovanga, VoruVoru, and Waghina, all within Choiseul province. Three other parishes are in Noro, Gizo and Nila under the Western Province.

Bp of Gizo Diocese, Western Province, Bp Luciano Capelli, sdb said that 16 priests and three congregation of religious sisters serving the people.

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**News item 4 – FSM Sisters receives new members**

Four Franciscan Sisters of Mary pronounced their religious profession at the mother of Divine Shepherd Cathedral Parish, Kumin, in Enga province, recently.

Sr Benedette Lucas and Sr Grace Nakan from Enga province made their perpetual profession while Sr Regina Paul from the Archdiocese of Mt Hagen and Sr Theresea Napao of Wabag diocese made their simple profession.

“God calls every one of us to serve him not only the Priests, Religious brothers and sisters,” said Bishop Donald Francis Lippert during the Eucharistic celebration.

Family members, relatives, friends, priest, religious brothers and sisters and lay faithful especially from the dioceses of these sisters were present as the four sisters recited their vows commiting themselves to a life of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.

The sisters later signed the profession document to become members of the F.S.M family.

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**News item 5 – CARITAS coordinates meeting in the wake of COVID-19**

CARITAS PNG brought together the different Secretaries of Catholic Bishops Conference for a meeting at Waigani, yesterday.

The meeting invited each commissions under CBC to look at possibilities that will assist in dealing with the crisis in the immediate and long-term duration. CARITAS PNG will be coordinating the possibilities.

Present were the General Secretary of CBC Fr Giorgio Licini, Director for Caritas PNG, Ms Mavis Tito, Sr. Jadwiga Faliszek, Michael Ova and Fiona Wenama.

Bp Rochus Tatamai and Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb were able to be part of the meeting online despite the difficulty in connections via the internet,

The issues that were discussed were:

The awareness of the COVID-19 situation, through our educational institutions, young people and lay faithful.

Providing basic care and protection packages for our health workers and frontline workers.

Getting masks and gloves prepared locally with materials available locally.

And the circulation and distribution of information via church media outlets using the possibilities of social media available.

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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.**