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Cardinal Joseph Zen solemnizes Peter ToRot Anniversary in Rabaul

...Japan's Bishops apologize on behalf of their country

By Abp. Francesco Panfilo, SDB – Rabaul

CARDINAL Joseph Zen SDB of Hong Kong, Papal Envoy to the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Blessed Peter ToRot, arrived at Rabaul airport from Port Moresby on Friday 6 July, together with the Papal Nuncio to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, Archbishop Santo Gangemi, and his Secretary, Fr. Emmanuel Fadeyi. They were welcomed by an official delegation from the archdiocese and the provincial government.

On Saturday, 7 July, feast of Blessed Peter To Rot, Card. Zen presided the solemn celebration at ToRot's village of Rakunai, assisted by the Papal Nuncio with Archbishop Francesco Panfilo SDB of Rabaul, retired Archbishop Karl Hesse MSC, the Archbishop of Port Moresby and President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, John Ribat MSC, and Bishop Rochus Tatamai of Bereina a member of the family of Peter ToRot. Over 40 priests concelebrated the solemn liturgy. Present were also the Deputy Governor for East New Britain, Hon. Boniface Setavo, and former Governor General, Sir Paulias Matane with his wife.

In his homily Card. Zen stressed the theme of the family and Christian marriage. He pointed at Peter ToRot as a model of faithfulness to the



ANNIVERSERY MASS: Celebration of the 100th anniversary of Blessed Peter ToRot at the Rakunai Cathedral East New Britain Province.

Gospel. He mentioned the fact that this year 2012 is of particular importance for Rabaul and East New Britain: 130 years ago (1882) the first Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) landed at Matupit Island, while 100 years ago (1912) the local congregation of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI) was founded at Rabaul.

Before the end of the Mass, the Archbishop of Rabaul read a letter from the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan dated 22 June 2012: "On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Blessed Peter ToRot, - wrote Bishop Leo

Jun Ikenaga SJ - I would like to convey a message of apology to all of you in Papua New Guinea from Japan, which is responsible for his death"; and after recalling the ministry and the martyrdom of Peter ToRot, he concluded: "Japan is not a Christian country now and then. Catholics and Protestants in total account for only 0.09% of its population. Therefore the views on humanity and human life are totally different from those of Christian nations. The Japanese military during World War II did not share the Christian view on marriage at all. Putting aside the differences in religions

and ideologies, it is true that Japan inflicted enormous damage from a humanitarian perspective on many nations including Papua New Guinea. Japan deprived Peter ToRot of his precious life by wielding inhumane power at will. I convey my heartfelt apology for such conducts on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the life of Blessed Peter ToRot. As a Japanese bishop, I would like to offer a Mass and prayers on the anniversary day."

A sincere and sustained applause by the clergy and the people gathered at the Rakunai basilica of Peter ToRot greeted the message

of bishop Ikenaga.

After the Mass, fifty seven catechists, who have exercised their ministry for over twenty five years in the Archdiocese of Rabaul, were recognized with a beautiful certificate of the Apostolic Blessing from Benedict XVI and a Rosary offered by the Pope. Forty catechists were at hand to receive their award, the rest will receive it in their own parishes.

In the afternoon the youth of the Kokopo parishes staged the life and the death of the Blessed martyr, while pilgrims continued to flock to the Shrine of Peter ToRot.

New Papal rep vows to work closely with Bishops and Catholics in PNG

By Veronica Hatutasi

THE NEW Papal representative to PNG and Solomon Islands (PNG&SI) has vowed to present the Pope's message, and to continue working with the bishops of the two countries during his term of office. In order to do this and to work effectively, he will get to know the situation of the Church and the people prior to preparing his work plans. Nuncio Archbishop Santo Rocco Gangemi said this on July 16th at the official welcome meeting with employees of the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC) of PNG & SI as well as employees from other Catholic organizations such as Caritas PNG, Catholic HIV&AIDS and CBC Education Office. The Archbishop of Port Moresby, John Ribat, in his capacity as President of the CBC, along with General Secretary Fr Victor Roche, were also present at the gathering which started off with a Holy Mass.

When interviewed briefly by *The Catholic Reporter*, Nuncio Gangemi had this to say:

■ To page 3



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Campaign gifts: kaikai o pekpek?

By Fr. Frank Arnold

BY chance I was in Vanimo during election time and I could observe how the campaign was conducted by candidates and their supporters. I was expecting more rallies and more noise in town; but, in public, it looked like a low-key campaign. Apart, in fact, of the big rallies for Michael Somare and Belden Namah, life in town was apparently quiet and subdued.

But it was a false impression. In fact a lot of activities were going on in the numerous *haus sel* erected for different candidates along the main roads. Entertainment was provided in the night together with food, drink, speeches and planning. A lot of money was also dished out both to individuals and to groups by the campaign managers of the most affluent candidates. Land cruisers and motorboats were also donated and money to individuals was handed out up to the very day of the polling.

Some people I interviewed told me that they had received money in exchange of the promise to vote for certain candidates and that their names were written down by those who gave the money.

As a pastor I was curious to know how those people consider those "campaign gifts" which for me were clearly a form of bribe. But that was not the word used by the majority of people I spoke to. Here are some of their answers: It is money to support the campaign done by the candidate's campaign managers and supporters; it is part of the money the members receive to be spent in their electorate; it is our money; it is money received from the sale of our trees to Malaysian companies; it is a small refund for the taxes that I paid to the government; it is a donation to poor families....

When I insisted and asked whether those who gave the "campaign gifts" expected the receivers to vote for certain can-

didates, everybody agreed that that was exactly what was expected, but the receivers could also vote for another candidate or simply invent an excuse and avoid voting. They said that there was a sort of proverb in *Tok Pisin* whispered among the people: *Mipela i kaikai long hap, tasol bihain mipelail pekpek long peles bilong mipela.*

Other people, however, mentioned the fact that according to the Melanesian way, if one receives something from somebody, one feels obliged to reciprocate somehow that gift. In the case of election, one could at least give a second or third preference vote to the donor candidate.

I continued to ask myself. Is it really possible that our people don't see those donations as bribes, after all the warnings of not to sell their votes, given on TV, in the newspapers, and even from the church pulpits? Is it really possible that the conscience of our people has been so corrupted by politicians that

they consider donation what is in reality bribery?

That question was still in my mind when I went to hear confession in one village church. As usual I was not expecting to hear anybody confessing of having received a bribe but I was wrong. Two women came to confession and accused themselves of having received money in exchange of their vote. I thanked them for that admission which, in my opinion, shows that some of our people still feel that it is evil to collude with something that is evil like buying votes.

But then I asked myself whether we pastors have been vocal enough in condemning as sinful both the giving and the accepting of bribes, no matter the disguise in which they are coated. It is even more sinful to accept bribes and vote for a candidate who, by giving out bribes, has already tarnished his reputation as a good leader.

Family and Youth special focus of SVD General Chapter

By Fr. John Mc Carthy, SVD – PNG Provincial Superior

THE 17th General Chapter of the Divine Word missionaries (SVD) took place in Nemi village, just south of Rome between 17th June – 15th July. 140 SVD missionaries from all over the world gathered together with a three-fold purpose: to evaluate the work of the Divine Word missionaries; to elect a new Superior General and General Council; and to set the congregational directions for the coming 6 years. The Chapter theme was, 'Sharing Intercultural Life and Mission', based on a verse from the book of Revelation: "From every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9).

The first two weeks of the Chapter meeting involved a lot of reporting and sharing on the experiences of the Divine Word missionaries. This was done on zonal level, because of the development of four zones among the Divine Word missionaries: the Africa-Madagascar zone; the Europe zone; the Asia-Pacific zone; and the American zone. There were frequent meetings of

the different zones during the General Chapter. During the second week, the Leadership team of the Holy Spirit Sisters and the Adoration Sisters of the Holy Spirit gave some input and encouragement to the SVD delegates. This was much appreciated since our three missionary congregations share a common founder in St. Arnold Janssen and a common vocation to participate in the missionary task of the Church. During these two weeks, the delegates also discussed the proposed 'congregational directions' for the coming six years.

The third week of the Chapter began with a day of recollection and prayer in preparation for the election of our new Superior General and General Council. Fr. Heinz Kulueke, SVD, a German confrere who has worked as a missionary for many years in the Philippines, was elected as the new Superior General for the coming six years. His General Council was also elected: Fr. Robert Kisala – Vice-General Superior. He is from the USA and has worked for many years as a missionary in Japan; Fr.

Gregory Pinto, from India, is the new Admonitor; Bro. Guy Mazola is from Congo/Africa; Fr. Jose da Silva from Portugal; and Fr. Arlindo Dias, from Brazil.

The fourth week of the Chapter began with great excitement, because on Monday, 9th of July the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, made a private visit to the SVD Centre to greet all the Chapter delegates. He thanked the Divine Word missionaries for their contribution to the missionary task of the Church all over the world. This was followed by the delegates receiving input from representatives of lay groups associated with the SVD missionary work. Also the congregational directions for the coming six years were approved. These pointed to evangelization as the main focus for all our missionary activity, but they also included ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, education and research, promoting a culture of life, reconciliation and peace building, social justice issues, with a special focus on family and youth. These directions also emphasized the necessity for self-reliance in terms

of finance and personnel. Formation of local members to continue the mission of Christ as Divine Word missionaries was also emphasized, and each Province is encouraged to explore new approaches and strategies for vocation promotion.

The General Chapter closed on Sunday, 15th July, with a closing Eucharist, led by Fr. Tony Pernia, the out-going SVD Superior General. He praised the positive, joyful atmosphere of the Chapter meeting. There were three confreres representing Papua New Guinea at the General Chapter: Fr. John Mc Carthy, Provincial Superior; Fr. Elias Aiyako – delegate; parish priest of the Holy Spirit Cathedral in Madang; and Bro. Martin Tnines – delegate; from the *Melanesian Institute* in Goroka. There are about 120 SVD priests and lay missionaries in Papua New Guinea. All in all, the General Chapter gave new encouragement to the Divine Word missionaries to continue their missionary work as joyful witnesses of the Gospel throughout the world.

FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

Divine Word University students in Madang honor Peter ToRot

East New Britain and New Guinea Islands students at Divine Word University in Madang animated a solemn Mass on Sunday, 8 July in connection with the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Blessed Peter ToRot. It was preceded by a novena and choir practice for one week, which involved also other students and staff. Fr. Harry Gahare, from the diocese of Goroka and lecturer on Christian ethics at the University, was the main celebrant. The theme selected for the celebration and inspired by Peter ToRot witness was, "Strong in Faith". The initiative of the East New Britain students challenged their Milne Bay colleagues to set things in motion for the upcoming celebration in September of the Feast of Blessed John Mazzucconi, PIME martyred in their province (Woodlark Is.) in 1855. (*Augustine Malana*)

Teaching Religious Education in Elementary schools

Religious Education for Elementary school children was the topic of a meeting of Elementary teachers on 11 July 2012 at the Catholic Bishops' Conference headquarters in Port Moresby. Nine schools or learning centers were represented along with two lecturers from Sacred Heart Teachers' College. Teaching little children gives great joy to Elementary teachers and it was on this note that the meeting began. Programs for Religious Education were shared and Teachers' Guides discussed. Many supported the idea of recording songs/hymns to assist teachers with lesson preparation. Most Catholic Elementary school teachers reported that they begin each day with Religious Education for about 15 minutes following the *Our Catholic Faith Series*. Teachers spoke loudly of their need to have such meetings to share their successes and their challenges and to learn from one another. (*Sr Mary McCarthy pbvm*)

OLSH Sisters reenact first arrival at Yule Island 125 years ago

Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH Sisters) Liguori, Clare, Madeline and Martha arrived at Yule Island on August 1, 1887. To highlight the 125th anniversary celebrations, a delegation accompanied by some former PNG Missionaries from overseas and local visitors, took a day trip to the same spot on July 18, 2012. After a two hour drive from Port Moresby, they were welcomed by the children and community near the beach at Poukama before crossing on the decorated dinghies to Yule Island. On arrival at St Patrick's Beach, they were also welcomed with even more dancing and singing by local children, parents and religious. After the reception the delegation circumnavigated the island. Finally the convoy approached Port Leon, the port of arrival for the first MSC priest Henry Verius on 1 July 1885. On landing novices did a re-enactment of the first arrival of the Sisters, dressed in their original colours and ancient religious outfit. Fr Dominique Pradiers MSC, parish priest at Yule Island did the welcome and all walked uphill in procession to the Precious Blood Memorial Hill where Henry Verius celebrated the first Mass on 4 July 1885. Bp. Rochus Tatamai of Bereina welcomed the visitors, on behalf of the clergy, Religious men and women, and all the nine tribes of the Bereina diocese. The celebration ended with a procession to the Mission Cemetery where the graves of the first OLSH Sisters lie along with those of many missionaries who now rest in peace after lives of generosity, self-sacrifice, commitment to the Lord and his mission. (*Bp. Rochus Tatamai*)

DWU students in Madang reflect on 2012 theme "The power or positive vision"

To achieve vision, one must embrace the present positively with youthful energy and not dwell too much on the past or future. Fr Victor Roche, SVD, said these words while facilitating the final retreat of the Divine Word University Arts Faculty from the 27th to 28th of July. He said that the past has gone and the future is unknown, but what is important is to enjoy and take each day at a time. Fr Victor told the students that as enthusiastic young people, many distractions will come their way but what is important is to focus on their objectives and get their priorities right. He said that it is important to choose the right relationships in life as bad relationships with others may interfere in achieving future visions. When doing something, it must be done well and it is important for students to be themselves and not to pretend to be somebody else just to please others: "Be the original, be yourself". Fr Victor encouraged the students to have faith and to pray and read the Bible always. The University retreats this year were fun filled and enjoyable, with the students sharing their experiences through reflection, creative dances, singing, watching videos and participating in games. It started with Business and Informatics Faculty on the 13th-14th July and Health Science Faculty from 20th-21th with Fr Silvestre 'Dong' Saladaga, PIME as the main facilitator. DWU lecturers Otto Tukavai and Roselyn Efi co-facilitated the three retreats (*Bradley Gregory and Yvonne Kambibel - DWU Journalism Students*)



SVD New General Superior - Fr Heinz Kulueke



Fr John Mc Carthy, PNG SVD Provincial Superior, meeting the Pope

OLSH nuns in PNG challenged for mission

By Veronica Hatutasi

"THE Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) in PNG have to be prepared for evangelization work not only in PNG, but also in other parts of the world...", Sister Mary Fyfe, Superior General of the OLSH sisters, said at a Mass held at St. Joseph's - Boroko on 15th July. This was to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the first arrival of the OLSH missionaries at Yule

Island on 1st August 1887.

"I am very impressed by the enthusiasm of the young PNG Sisters who are full of spirit and charisma in carrying out their good work," Sister Mary further stated. The areas where the OLSH congregation focus their work include, education at all levels, health, pastoral work, parish ministries, outreach programs and care for the poor, deprived and oppressed with love and

compassion. Sr. Mary is not new to PNG as she taught at the Minor Seminary in Ulapia, East New Britain Province for a year in 1977.

The St Joseph's church and the school grounds, where the Mass and activities to commemorate the occasion took place, were full to capacity on Sunday 15 July with Catholics from the various parishes in Port Moresby who were taught in schools by the OLSH nuns, in Yule Island, Milne

Bay, Manus, East New Britain and Port Moresby. It was a very joyous occasion for the 20 nuns who had previously worked in PNG and now came from Australia, Kiribati, Japan, Rome, Philippines, Indonesia and Holland to celebrate and meet up with their former students here, some of whom now hold high positions in the government, public and private sectors as well as the Church.



GATHERED FOR THE 125th ANNIVERSARY: OLSH nuns including the overseas visitors gathered at St Joseph's Boroko Parish and had a joyful celebration with the Catholic congregation from various parishes in the Port Moresby Archdiocese. Photo: OLSH Boroko Sisters

Wheelchair for Joyce, and hope for many!

By Fr John Glynn
WeCare! Foundation -
Port Moresby.

Fr. John Glynn, a long time Irish missionary in Papua New Guinea and currently based at Jubilee Secondary School in Port Moresby, speaks on his latest Newsletter of the difference a wheelchair makes in the life of disabled and impoverished children and youth in the outskirts of the capital city.

Wheelchairs at last! After almost a year of waiting promised donations we decided to wait no longer but to buy the chairs we needed. There was a long wait before we could do this too - the chairs have to be imported. At last we have been able to buy four wheelchairs - one large for a young man in his twenties, and three smaller ones for children. They cost us over \$3,000. The money is from a donation we received last Christmas from the Shepherd family - Greg Shepherd is a prominent lawyer here in Port Moresby. Then in early August we will take delivery of four more wheelchairs

being donated to us by a friend of WeCARE! in Australia. And thanks to a kind donation from MN in Ireland more great things shall be done!

In the settlement where Lovely lives we have ten young people who are seriously disabled. They are looked after by their poverty stricken families, and by a Care Group that is supported by WeCARE! Already one of the Carers we support has trained in simple physiotherapy techniques, and we are arranging for the same training for a woman from Lovely's Care Group. She will work under the supervision of a trained physio from Cheshire Disability Services, a long established voluntary organisation here in Port Moresby.

In my last Newsletter I told you about Joyce - a very badly disabled young woman kept locked away in total darkness in a little hut while her parents are at the market each day. Well, it seems that our visit to Joyce - smashing the lock on the door of her hut to get her out, and filming our meeting with her - has had

a profound effect on the father. He does not lock Joyce in anymore; he doesn't want us to pay for the lock, and he allows Joyce's mum to stay home and look after her. One of the wheelchairs we are getting from Australia is for Joyce. It will enable her to be wheeled down the street to a Care Group every day, where she will be looked after, fed, washed, given nice clothing, get a bit of schooling, and enjoy the company of the children and young people at the Care Group. The Care Mother of the Group has already done a course in looking after disabled children at Cheshire Disability Services.

The Work that We Do in WeCARE! is enormously rewarding. It has the effect of inspiring the communities in which there is a Care Group. These are people who virtually never see any services from Government agencies, who for many reasons cannot put their children into school, for whom there is no support for their physically or mentally disabled children and rel-

atives. When a little Care Group starts up in someone's back yard, and soon there is a small pre-school operating, and hungry children are getting fed - people take notice. The visits to the Care Groups by our Care Group Coordinator - Sandra - are always appreciated, because she arranges for training programmes for Carers and their assistants, and opens the door to all sorts of other possibilities. WeCARE! acts as a catalyst - because of us things happen; other NGOs become involved, like Cheshire visiting the disabled, and World Vision has become involved with a couple of our Groups. And as the little pre-schools grow and attract the support of the community the Digicel Foundation comes into the picture with Community Learning Centres and other infrastructure.

The only ultimate solution to the problems of poverty is the empowerment of the poor, and I like to think that We-CARE! is playing an important role in doing this.

Commentary

By Fr. Victor Roche,
SVD



Year of Faith proclaimed

Dear Friends,

THE Holy Father, Benedict XVI, with his Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei* (The door of faith) has announced the 'Year of Faith' which is to begin on October 11, 2012, on the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and will come to a conclusion on the Solemnity of Christ the King, November 24, 2013.

He declared the year of faith in response to the crisis of faith in the world today. In the Western countries, many Catholic churches are being closed down; there are few vocations to the priesthood and religious life. In some countries the number of Catholics is decreasing year by year. The Pope stressed the "need to rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed ever clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ".

The main ecclesial event at the beginning of the Year of Faith will be the XIII General

Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome with the theme: 'The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith'.

The coordinators of the Year of Faith have sent papers with suggestions that can be carried out at different levels: the Conference of Bishops, dioceses, parishes, communities, different movements, families and each individual Catholic.

It is good that we recognize the importance of 'The Year of Faith' in order to rediscover our journey of faith in our relationship with Christ.

New Papal rep vows to work closely with Bishops and Catholics in PNG

■ From page 1

"I want to get to know the people and Church in PNG and after this, I will prepare my work plans... From my first impression, I feel that PNG is a Christian and religious nation, and during my course of work, I will continue to improve and present the Pope's messages to the Church and its people here. I will continue to work closely with the bishops... I see that the Church is very alive, committed and active. I liked the participation and presentations of the Church members during the liturgy," Nuncio Gangemi said.

During the official welcome, Fr Roche said that the CBC and Church as a whole in PNG are happy to have him as the Papal representative in this country and will work with him in the next 5 years. While reiterating the same sentiments, Archbishop Ribat stated that he was looking forward to working with him and "we want you to feel at home and be part of us. Welcome and be part of us".

Nuncio Gangemi is 51 years old and he hails from Messina in Italy. He was ordained to the priesthood in June 1986 and in March this year he was made an Archbishop, prior to his appointment as the Papal representative to PNG&SI. He arrived in PNG on June 29th. PNG is the first English speaking country he has been posted to and he hopes to learn more and improve his English language while here. Countries which he has previously served include Egypt, Cuba, Chile, France, Spain, Romania and Morocco.



WHEELCHAIR MAKES A DIFFERENCE: Little Joyce on her new wheelchair flanked by her many friends.

Worrying life conditions for the youth in Sepik

By Fr. Shanthi Puthussery PIME

Fr. Shanthi Puthussery PIME, National Catholic Youth Coordinator, recently gave a leadership training course to the parish youth coordinators of the dioceses of Aitape and Wewak. He kindly accepted to answer a few questions for 'Catholic Reporter':

What did transpire as a main concern of the Church youth leaders in regard to their peers?

East and West Sepik are a bit isolated and more remote compared to other provinces of Papua New Guinea. The interaction with other areas and people is limited, thus the communities are more backward in terms of human and social growth. Albert Tapan, from Angoram parish, said that virtually everybody in the village makes a sort of alcoholic jungle juice from the coconut fruit which mainly affects the youth. He also added that the attitude of Sepik people is that they know 'everything', therefore they do not listen and do not care. According to Eduards Lamman, from Wewak Hill parish, marijuana is available everywhere at

Aitape and Wewak and boys start using it as soon as they are Grade 3.

How did you find the youth ministry in the two dioceses of Sepik?

At Aitape there is no full time youth coordinator, and youth ministry is not really organized. According to the participants, the leadership training we had will be a real boost to organize the youth ministry in the diocese. Aitape has three deaneries - Aitape, Nuku and Lumi. At Nuku, after the killing of the Headmaster of St. Francis High School on 12 March this year, the tension is still high and the police continue their investigation. The school has closed for this year affecting the Church and youth activities since people cannot move around freely. At Wewak, Mr. James Taku has been the diocesan youth coordinator for ten years now. He has been organizing youth rallies at deanery level once a year. The diocese has three deaneries: Wewak, Maprik and Sepik river (for a total of 46 parishes, the largest number in PNG). During the welcome and farewell speech he mentioned that he and the youth of the diocese

are very happy with the learning materials we are using for the youth ministry - *Doing by Learning and Learning by Doing 2012*. He already conducted workshops in twelve parishes based on this booklet and he is now trying to reach out to the other parishes as well.

What is the situation of the family in this predominantly Catholic area?

As in all other provinces, Sepik is experiencing the same issues in the families: lack of parental care, separations and divorces, single mothers, domestic violence, etc. Victor Yegiwale, from Boikin parish, said that in Sepik the parents are becoming careless due to their poor income and means of living. **How does the situation of the family reflect on the younger generations?** As usual parents do not worry much about their children's future. A number of the participants of the leadership workshop said that the parents did not care about their education after Grade 9. Some of them even said that they were told to leave the house and go elsewhere. Things need to change for the youth in Sepik! (G.L.)

Missionaries of Charity in Wewak pray for young people

By Sr. M Antonia M. C.

ON 6th July we had a solemn celebration of the Eucharist, honoring St. Maria Goretti at 6.30 am at the Missionaries of Charity Sisters Convent Chapel, Wewak.

During the homily Fr. Shanthi Puthussery PIME quoted from Pope Pius XII's homily at the canonization of St. Maria Goretti on 24 June, 1950, - "Not all of us are expected to die a martyr's death, but we are all called to the pursuit of Christian virtue. This demands strength of character though it may not match that of this innocent girl. Still, a constant, persistent and relentless effort is asked

of us right up to the moment of our death."

After the Eucharistic celebration, each sister venerated the relic of St. Maria Goretti praying for each diocese of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands particularly remembering the bishop of the diocese, the diocesan youth coordinator and all youth of the diocese.

Since there were 22 sisters attending a week long workshop with Fr. Shanthi on *Discipleship: Journey of Religious Life*, for each sister it was a privilege to pray for the different dioceses they are assigned to.

Sr. Marie Clare, Sr. Carmeline Haia, Sr. M Celestine strongly felt

that it was an appropriate opportunity to pray for the young people of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands through the intercession of St. Maria Goretti on her feast day.

Sr. M Antonia said referring to the young people, "we are proud of you, we want and pray that you must shine as bright lights and nobody and nothing separate you from Christ and His Teachings." Sr. M Clemente, Sr. M Kishori, Sr. M Anastasia and others wanted "youth to be faithful to God and keep try to be good until one settles down properly in **l i f e**".

On the same day in the evening there was

an hour of Adoration to specifically pray for each diocese of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

All of us were happy to accompany every young person, diocesan youth coordinators and the bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in our special holy hour.

It has been an uplifting and enriching time of solidarity with the young people of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

At the end of the workshop we made 22 hibiscus flowers that will remain in the chapel representing the 22 dioceses and reminding us to continue to pray for the youth.

St. Maria Goretti in the dioceses of PNG

THE feast of St. Maria Goretti, the patron saint of young people, was solemnly celebrated by several dioceses in PNG this year. Bp. Rochus Tatamai of Bereina, who had just come back from Australia after heart surgery and was at **RABAU** for the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the birth of Blessed Peter ToRot said, "In the early morning of Saturday, 7 July I welcomed the youth from Kokopo and Rabaul deaneries at Rakunai.

They came as pilgrims from two different locations and con-

verged at the shrine of Blessed Peter ToRot.

I reflected with them on the Feast of St. Maria Goretti as well as that of the Bl. Peter ToRot.

I also shared my experience in the hospital in Sydney and thanked them all for the prayers and kind thoughts. It was a very moving encounter".

At **BEREINA** Fr. Ray Caigoe had two days of gathering with the youth leaders and gave a reflection on the martyrdom of St. Maria Goretti followed by a solemn Mass. The youth also watched a video of Maria

Goretti.

At **VANIMO** Fr. Bijish Joseph, the diocesan youth coordinator, organized a celebration at Dasi parish with the youth.

At **WEWAK** almost all the parishes had three days of parish youth convention culminated with the celebration of the feast of Sta. Maria Goretti.

In **BOUGAINVILLE** the youth leaders gathered together and had two days celebration with Fr. Dominic Kiaku. The youth of **KUNDIAWA** celebrated St. Maria Goretti at Don Bosco Technical School. (S.P.)

WHO IS ST. MARIA GORETTI

Patron saint of the youth in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

In 2006 the youth representatives from the dioceses of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands gathered in Goroka and after carefully considering several options chose Maria Goretti as their patron saint. Later on the Bishops endorsed and approved this decision.

Who is Maria Goretti? She was born on October 16, 1890 in Corinaldo, in the Province of Ancona, in Italy, to Luigi Goretti and Assunta Carlini. She was the third out of six children. On July 5, 1902, finding eleven-year-old Maria sewing alone, Alessandro Serenelli came in and threatened her with death if she did not do as he said; he was intending to rape her. She would not submit, however, protesting that what he wanted to do was a mortal sin and warning Alessandro that he would go to hell. She desperately fought to stop Alessandro, a 19-year-old farmhand, from abusing her.

She kept screaming, "No! It is a sin! God does not want it!" Alessandro first choked Maria, but when she insisted she would rather die than submit to him, he stabbed her eleven times. The injured Maria tried to reach for the door, but Alessandro stopped her by stabbing her three more times before running away. Maria's little sister Teresa awoke with the noise and started crying, and when Alessandro's father and Maria's mother came to check on the little girl, they found the

bleeding Maria and took her to the nearest hospital in Nettuno. She underwent surgery without anesthesia, but her injuries were beyond the doctors' help. The following day, twenty hours after the attack, having expressed forgiveness for her murderer and stating that she wanted to have him in Heaven with her, Maria died of her injuries, while looking at a very beautiful picture of the Blessed Mother, and clutching a cross to her chest. Alessandro Serenelli was captured shortly after Maria's death. Originally, he was going to be sentenced to life, but since he was a minor at that time the sentence was commuted to 30 years in prison. After his release, Alessandro Serenelli visited Maria's still-living mother, Assunta, and begged her for forgiveness. She forgave him, saying that if Maria had forgiven him on her deathbed then she could not do less, and they attended Mass together the next day, receiving Holy Communion side by side. Alessandro reportedly prayed every day to Maria

Goretti and referred to her as "my little saint." Alessandro later became a lay brother of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, living in a monastery and working as its receptionist and gardener until his peaceful death in 1970. On the evening of the beatification ceremonies in the Saint Peter's Basilica, April 27, 1947, Pope Pius XII walked over to Assunta, the mother of Maria. She almost fainted. "When I saw the Pope coming, I prayed, Madonna, please help me. He put his hand on my head and said, blessed mother, happy mother, mother of a Blessed!" They both had eyes wet with tears.

Three years later, on June 24, 1950, Pius XII canonized Maria as a saint. Assunta was again present at the ceremony, along with her four remaining sons and daughters. Some sources assert she was the first mother ever to attend the canonization ceremony of her child. Alessandro Serenelli who stabbed Maria was also present at the canonization. (S.P.)



ST MARIA GORETTI: Patron Saint of the youth in PNG & Solomon Islands



SEPIK YOUTHS: Pictured here are some of the Sepik Youths