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Catholic priests discouraged from entering politics

...Maintains universal church's stand

By Veronica Hatutasi

CATHOLIC priests intending to enter politics are discouraged from contesting in the upcoming national elections, or face suspension.

Archbishop Douglas Young SVD, of the Mt Hagen Diocese said the Catholic Church in PNG and Solomon Islands maintained the stand of the universal church that priests had taken vows for priestly ministries and not for public office.

His comment follows reports in the media of Fr Robert Nolye, a priest from the newly established Jiwaka province, being given a year's leave off his priestly duties, to contest in this year's national election which will officially kick off soon in April.

Archbishop Young states that the media report makes it look as if he supports Fr Nolie's moves to contest, which in fact, he says he doesn't.

"These are the facts concerning Fr Robert Nolie," says Archbishop Young.

"Fr Robert Nolie requested leave of absence of one year for personal reasons. He was encouraged to find an alternative to this step but felt it was necessary, so the bishop agreed.

"A replacement parish priest was found and a date for the commencement of the leave and the installation of the new parish priest was agreed. In the meantime Fr Nolie announced his intention to be a candidate in the upcoming elections.

"At that point, apart from the leave of absence, Fr Nolie was suspended from priestly ministry for two years.

"The bishop and Fr Nolie's fellow priests urged him to reconsider this course of action but he persisted in this decision. The already agreed installation of the new parish priest (handover/takeover) took place, and Fr Nolie's leave of absence

and suspension began the next day.

"During the ceremony, the bishop pointed out that Fr Nolie was leaving his ministry and the parish for personal reasons, but also because he was undertaking a path which was not compatible with the work of a priest.

"The Archdiocese has consistently maintained the position of the universal Catholic Church and of the CBC PNGSI, that the exercise of civil power, especially political office, is not compatible with the unifying ministry of a priest.

"Any priest tempted to seek political office is discouraged, reminded of their ordination promises, warned of the subsequent penalties, and suspended from priestly ministry once they declare their intention to stand for public office.

"The Archdiocese regrets the decision of Fr Nolie and does not endorse his bid for political office in any way," Archbishop Young says.

Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI

For the celebration of the World Day of Peace-1 January 2012

Educating young people in Justice and Peace

THE beginning of a new year, God's gift to humanity, prompts me to extend to all, with great confidence and affection, my heartfelt good wishes that this time now before us may be marked concretely by justice and peace.

With what attitude should we look to the New Year? We find a very beautiful image in Psalm 130. The Psalmist says that people of faith wait for the Lord "more than those who watch for the morning" (v. 6); they wait for him with firm hope because they know that he will bring light, mercy and salvation. This waiting was born of the experience of the Chosen People, who realized that God taught them to look at the world in its truth and not to be overwhelmed by tribulation.

I invite you to look to 2012 with this attitude of confident trust. It is true that the year now ending has been marked by a rising sense of frustration at the crisis looming over society, the world of labour and the economy, a crisis whose roots are primarily cultural and anthropological. It seems as if a shadow has fallen over our time, preventing us from clearly seeing the light of day.

In this shadow, however, human hearts continue to wait for the dawn of which the Psalmist speaks. Because this expectation is

particularly powerful and evident in young people, my thoughts turn to them and to the contribution which they can and must make to society. I would like therefore to devote this message for the XLV World Day of Peace to the theme of education: "Educating Young People in Justice and Peace", in the conviction that the young, with their enthusiasm and idealism, can offer new hope to the world.

My message is also addressed to parents, families and all those involved in the area of education and formation, as well as to leaders in the various spheres of religious, social, political, economic and cultural life and in the media. Attentiveness to young people and their concerns, the ability to listen to them and appreciate them, is not merely something expedient; it represents a primary duty for society as a whole, for the sake of building a future of justice and peace.

It is a matter of communicating to young people an appreciation for the positive value of life and of awakening in them a desire to spend their lives in the service of the Good. This is a task which engages each of us personally.

The concerns expressed in recent times by many young people around the world demonstrate that they desire to look to the future with solid hope. At the present time, they

are experiencing apprehension about many things: they want to receive an education which prepares them more fully to deal with the real world, they see how difficult it is to form a family and to find stable employment; they wonder if they can really contribute to political, cultural and economic life in order to build a society with a more human and fraternal face.

It is important that this unease and its underlying idealism receive due attention at every level of society. The Church looks to young people with hope and confidence; she encourages them to seek truth, to defend the common good, to be open to the world around them and willing to see "new things" (Is 42:9; 48:6).

Educators

2. Education is the most interesting and difficult adventure in life. Educating – from the Latin *educere* – means leading young people to move beyond themselves, and introducing them to reality, towards a fullness that leads to growth. This process is fostered by the encounter of two freedoms, that of adults and that of the young. It calls for responsibility on the part of the learners, who must be open to being led to the knowledge of reality, and on the part of educators, who must be ready to give of themselves.

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MESSAGE OF PEACE:

His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, extends a handshake of peace to a young person, paving the way to educating young people in Justice & Peace.
Photo: Zenit, Vatican



If you have any news items which you would like to contribute, call Terence Aisi Victor on Telephone Number : 3259577 or Fax: 3232551 at the Catholic Bishops Conference Office or email: aisiterence603@gmail.com or Postal Address: Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG/SI, P O Box 398, Waigani, NCD, Port Moresby- PNG.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Sacraments in the Catholic Church

THIS year 2012, I will drive your questions into answers by taking you for a Sacramental trip into coming to really grasp the whole meaning as to why, when, what, where and how in the world the Catholic Church has accepted and valued the seven sacraments for 2000 years now since the Church was established. It is always best to begin with knowing the true nature and the necessity in the Sacraments that enables the

- The necessity and the nature of the sacramental system;
- The nature of the sacraments of the new law;
- The origin (cause) of the sacraments;
- The number of the sacraments;
- The effects of the sacraments;
- The minister of the sacraments;
- The recipient of the sacraments.

Church to see visibly the sacramental values in her existence.

Without delaying we will be going through together into knowing the nature and the necessity of Sacraments.

Necessity and nature

In what sense necessary

Almighty God can and does give grace to men in answer to their internal aspirations and prayers without the use of any external sign or ceremony. This will always be possible, because God, grace, and the soul are spiritual beings. God is not restricted to the use of material, visible symbols in dealing with men; the sacraments are not necessary in the sense that they could not have been dispensed with. But, if it is known that God has appointed external, visible ceremonies as the means by which certain graces are to be conferred on humans, then in order to obtain those graces it will be necessary for us to make use of those Divinely appointed means. This truth theologians express by saying that the sacraments are necessary, not

absolutely but only hypothetically, i.e., in the supposition that if we wish to obtain a certain supernatural end we must use the supernatural means appointed for obtaining that end. In this sense the Council of Trent (Sess. VII, can. 4) declared heretical those who assert that the sacraments of the New Law are superfluous and not necessary, although all are not necessary for each individual. It is the teaching of the Catholic Church and of Christians in general that, whilst God was nowise bound to make use of external ceremonies as symbols of things spiritual and sacred, it has pleased Him to do so, and this is the ordinary and most suitable manner of dealing with humans. Writers on the sacraments refer to this as the *necessitas convenientiae*, the necessity of suitability. It is not really a necessity, but the most appropriate manner of dealing with creatures that are at the same time spiritual and corporeal. In this assertion all Christians are united: it is only when we come to consider the nature of the

sacramental signs that Protestants (except some Anglicans) differ from Catholics. "To sacraments considered merely as outward forms, pictorial representations or symbolic acts, there is generally no objection", wrote Dr. Morgan Dix ("The sacramental system", New York, 1902, p. 16). "Of sacramental doctrine this may be said, that it is co-extensive with historic Christianity. Of this there is no reasonable doubt, as regards the very ancient days, of which St. Chrysostom's treatise on the priesthood and St. Cyril's catechetical lectures may be taken as characteristic documents. Nor was it otherwise with the more conservative of the reformed bodies of the sixteenth century. Martin Luther's Catechism, the Augsburg, and later the Westminster, Confessions are strongly sacramental in their tone, putting to shame the degenerate followers of those who compiled them" (ibid., p. 7, 8)

To be continued next month

The Church and Media: Exploring a New Continent

Book Looks at Opportunities in 'God's Gift to Humanity'

From Zenit News Agency

THE Internet is undoubtedly the largest, most influential source of information in the world today.

Yet, in some quarters, there is still suspicion of the Web and its content. There are those suspicious that these "young people's gadgets" — Facebook, Twitter, YouTube — are mere time wasters. But to a growing number, including both Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI, the Internet is a way to guide people to God and a vital tool for today's evangelization.

In his book "The Church and New Media: Blogging Converts, Online Activists and Bishops Who Tweet," author Brandon Vogt addresses the new media and the benefits these tools have in bringing people closer to God and the Church.

As a recent convert to Catholicism, Vogt says it was his own experience in learning about the Church through such tools as blogs and YouTube that helped him gain a new perspective on Catholicism. "I was born and raised

in the evangelical church and just three years ago I entered the Catholic Church," he said, explaining how the Internet played a major role in his step: It was the immediate and personalized responses he received to his questions and the interactive nature of the Internet that fueled his need to know more, to discover the truth and combat the stereotypes he had grown up with as a Protestant.

"In college, I was involved with an evangelical college ministry and was really embedded in the Protestant culture," he said. "And I was exploring Catholicism, but I really had no one to turn to. I had all these questions about the Catholic Church, but I didn't know any Catholics. So, where did I turn? If it wasn't for the Internet, probably no one."

Vogt shared how he would read the posts of Catholic bloggers or visit Catholic Web sites and could comment on or ask questions about various topics of discussion. He appreciated the direct and timely answers he received from the bloggers or other readers. "That's the op-

timal way for the media to spark conversion: invite people to ask questions and very carefully, very charitably, to slowly walk through a lot of their difficulties and struggles."

Vogt suggested that the interactive and conversational nature of the Internet will draw converts to the Church, as well as bring young people into a more active role. He proposes that those groups or institutions using new media to broadcast their message, much like a newspaper or radio, where the communication is one-way, are not using the Internet to its full potential.

"New media is all about conversation," the author stated. "People, especially young people, who use these new media tools, don't just want to be fed information, they want to dialogue, critique, converse, wrestle with, answer and respond to anything that's posted on-line."

In the process of writing "The Church and New Media," Vogt says he reached out to many on-line friends that he both admired and looked to for guidance when he was undergo-

ing his own conversion. "I purposefully wanted the book not to be something that I just wrote myself; not to be a perspective from one person, one view of this new media revolution.

So I gathered some of these on-line friends, each contributed a chapter of their expertise, so it's really multivalent and presents a vast and diverse view of how new media can be used to serve the Church."

Vogt explained that the contributors to the book represent a broad spectrum of those involved in using new media: from those with leadership roles in the Church to lay professionals and stay-at-home moms. "We have a spread of every different take we could find on this new media revolution to show how vast, how diverse it really is."

Among the 12 writers who contributed to the book are Cardinal Sean O'Malley, archbishop of Boston, who wrote the "Forward"; Father Robert Barron, noted Catholic speaker, author, and founder of Word on Fire; Jennifer Fulwiler, Catholic columnist, and frequent guest on Catholic radio and television, who con-

verted to Catholicism after being raised an atheist; Shawn Carney, co-founder of "40 Days for Life," and Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York, who contributed the "Afterward."

Vogt says that, as he was planning the organization of the book, he approached some of the bloggers and Facebook friends he had been following for the last few years. "I targeted experts who I thought might be [willing] to write a chapter on the subject and, thankfully, every single person I asked gave me an enthusiastic yes," he reported. "It was a thrilling experience for me because this is kind of a dream heroes. ... It was a phenomenal opportunity to write a book with so many people that I admire."

Just landed Along with the opportunities new media bring to the Church, there is also an increased awareness that we still have a lot to learn about this medium. Vogt explained that the Catholic Church as a whole, and particularly the institutional arm, has been relatively slow in employing these tools.

News Snippets from the CBC Desk with Fr Victor Roche SVD

Political News update: *Sunday Chronicle* reported that Police have been ordered to arrest Somare-appointed Acting Police Commissioner Fred Yakasa and his lawyer for alleged bribery. So, the two-Police Commissioners saga is still not solved.

- **Falcon Jet Issue:** Last week, Mr. Belden Namah, the Deputy Prime Minister had asked Mr. Peter O'Neil, the Prime Minister to step down in the media over the Falcon Jet issue. On Nov 29 last year the Falcon Jet which was carrying Mr. Namah and few other ministers was being tracked by two Indonesian air force combat aircrafts. He came to know about it last week and so he had given 48 hours for the Indonesian Embassy to give an explanation. But Prime Minister Peter O'Neil had assured the Indonesian government he had no intention of expelling the Indonesian Ambassador or closing the Embassy. But now the issue has been amicably solved, partly. So it looks!

Parliament Session on 17th January will be very crucial for many issues. The question of who is the Prime Minister and the Police Commissioner will be taken up.

- **Bishop-elect Don Lippert's Ordination:** Fr. Don Lippert's Ordination as Bishop of Mendi will take place at 10 am in the Cathedral on Sat. 4th Feb. in Mendi. Cardinal Sean O'Malley OFM (Cap) of Boston will ordain him. Those who like to enquire about accommodation please check with Fr. Eki, the present Administrator of the diocese at: 72638371 (Cell phone). The land lines do not work.

Important dates for the CBC in 2012:

The Central Committee meeting is postponed from February 6-7 to 7-8, because of the Ordination of Bp. Don Lippert.

- Annual General Meeting of the CBC-PNG/SI (AGM): April 16-24 in Vunapope, Rabaul, ENBP.

Ad Limina Visit to Rome of the Bishops of PNG/SI: May 31– June 9th.

Fr. Sebastian Tiae transferred to Kimbe

By Fr. Victor Roche

CATHOLICS of Oro Province will be without a priest for sometime, until a priest has been appointed for the small Catholic congregation there.

This follows the transfer of Fr. Sebastian Tiae to Kimbe, after being the parish priest for the Popengetta Parish, the only Catholic Parish which has a following of about 500 members in an Anglican dominated province.

In the absence of a priest, the parish will be administered by the lay leaders and visiting priests.

Fr. Sebastian Tiae of Kimbe diocese was given on loan to the Archdiocese of Port Moresby to look after the Catholics of Popengetta, and the substitution of Kokoda. He has been a parish priest for

the last 5 years and he has been liked by the people.

He has been a good shepherd for them. He has a good team of lay leaders who help him in running the parish. He also started an elementary school in Popengetta town and it has about 400 students. This is the biggest elementary school in the whole province.

Bishop Bill Fey, the Bishop of Kimbe, has requested Archbishop John Ribat to transfer Fr. Sebastian back to Kimbe.

Archbishop Ribat has agreed to that request with hesitation. Fr. Sebastian will go and the Catholics of Popengetta will be without a parish priest until another priest is appointed.

We wish Fr. Sebastian God's blessings in his new appointment in Kimbe Diocese.

Concerns for LNG project landowners

By Veronica Hatutasi

THERE is a growing concern regarding lawlessness, disrespect for human, religious and cultural values in the PNG LNG development areas, and that monies to landowners are not being used to benefit the people.

Archbishop John Ribat of the Port Moresby Archdiocese said this recently, as part of his Christmas message to Catholics and the public at large throughout PNG.

He said that landowners of the PNG LNG project areas need proper guidance and awareness to use their benefits to positively build their lives by respecting each other and the environment they live in.

He said that at the national level, the national economy is looking brighter with much benefit for the country from the initiation of the PNG LNG project.

But he said that, while the project promises greater benefits for all, the people who will directly benefit will need a lot of help to guide them to live their lives meaningfully.

"They will need proper guidance and awareness to use their benefits to positively build their lives by respecting each other and the environment they live in."

"The question that people continue to ask is that, 'is the PNG LNG project a blessing or a curse?'" This is a question that will be



Archbishop John Ribat

frequently asked for a long while.

"There is a growing concern that we are witnessing sad and very serious effects of the problems in our concerned villages and towns.

"Where village land owners and educated ones received a lot of money for land use by the PNG LNG project, there is a serious break down of cultural and religious values.

"There is family breakdown, there is lack of respect for life and for one another, lack of respect for village leaders/authority, law and order problem escalates and people resort to killing, to solve problems.

"Teachers, nurses and other workers leaving their normal jobs to join PNG LNG project leaving a huge

space behind where it is not easy to find qualified people to replace them. This is a big challenge to the work force in Government to try to keep the work force intact for effective delivery of services," Archbishop Ribat said.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Ribat has urged all Catholic and Christian to stand united, and continue to make an important appeal to our leaders to come to a round table and enter into dialogue, and agree on a possible solution to end the political impasse which is still current in this country.

Archbishop Ribat said that this political impasse has got the whole nation concerned and united in prayer for divine help.

He said that God came as light for the world, and

may his light illumine the darkness of human minds, and may his wisdom be the peace and joy of our hearts.

"We are witnessing a very serious constitutional crisis developing in the government of our day. There are two prime ministers and two police commissioners, etc which is causing confusion among our people. This trend stands as a threat to our democratic government system.

"This development is calling on our leaders to be more law abiding, responsible and committed to uphold the constitution of our nation at all cost.

"Therefore, all Catholic and Christian leaders must stand united to continue to make an important appeal to our leaders to come to a round table, and enter into dialogue, and agree on a possible solution to end this crisis.

"This development has got the whole nation concerned and united in prayer for divine help in this political impasse," Archbishop Ribat said.

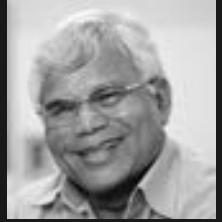
He also focused on the importance of families and reminded parents of the task which God placed on them as teachers and guides to their children.

"Our families are important places where parents and children call a home.

"It is a place where you can rest, a place where you can relax, a place where you can find peace, serenity, and importantly, a place where we all say, 'That is where I belong',

Commentary

By Fr. Victor Roche,
SVD



A FEW days ago, I met a young woman called Magdalene from Oro Province. She is doing a research among the young people of the province as part of her doctoral studies. She is doing her Ph.D at the University of Queensland. She has great ambitions and goals in life. It is good to see such young women of PNG excelling in the field of Education. Hope she returns to PNG and renders her service to the people of PNG.

Importance of Education: It is the beginning of the year and it is time for the students to go back to school. Basic Education is very important for the individual, family and country. There are many families in the interior villages of PNG who do not send their children to school. There may be many reasons: no schools nearby, parents cannot afford the school fees or they do not feel the need of education. The last reason is more serious and dangerous.

Family and Community Values: In the traditional culture of PNG, there were 'educational institutions' such as 'HausBoi', 'HausMeri' etc. Elderly women and men taught the youngsters the necessary things in life. They also taught family and community values. Now in the present western educational system, they learn English, Science, Social Studies etc. but less of family and community values. Furthermore, the children of today learn their values through TV, videos, internet, peers etc.

We have many people like Magdalene who are well educated and they have learnt their values in their families and schools. But we also have an increasing number of 'rascals' in the country because they are 'drop-outs from school' and do not have opportunities to learn family and community values like Magdalene.

Suggestions to Parents:

1. Send your children to schools and help them to at least complete up to Grade 10 level. That's your fundamental responsibility as parents.

2. What your children learn in school is not enough. You are their 'teachers' in the house to teach them family and community values.

3. Help at least one of your children to go for higher education and get a good job.

that is where I am. We identify ourselves with our families. This is something we can never easily give up or forget, and that is our families.

"Love and respect for our families must remain. This is a demand God placed on the shoulders of the parents, the Mothers and Fathers of the families, the relatives and communities," Archbishop Ribat said.

He said that looking back at the events of the year gone by, many

things have happened in our nation and in our community and society, both good events and developments, and also there are areas of lives that continue to call for our attention and the need for improvement.

"Many developments are taking place in the districts and provinces. Our people must learn to appreciate and take good care of these developments that are happening for their own good.

Protect children from abuse and sugar daddies

By Veronica Hatutasi

CHILD sexual abuse and sugar daddies is a cause of great concern, adding to the increasing cases of children infections to HIV/AIDS, something which children must be protected from, Archbishop John Ribat, of the Port Moresby Archdiocese said.

He said that persons entrusted with care to children and sugar daddies lure girls as young as 12 year olds are involved in child sexual activities, thus he is urging parents, relatives, friends and communities to protect and support children against the evils which are destroying the social, cultural and economic fabrics of our society. "There is also a new trend

of development that is a cause of great concern for our society, regarding the increasing cases of children infected by the HIV/AIDS virus.

"In this new and alarming cases, the children are not infected through mother to child transmission, but through child sexual abuse.

"Added to this is the 'sugar daddies' that is on the rise, where young girls as young as 12 years are involved in sexual activities.

"Children are important and have a distinctly unique and rightful place in our society.

"As children, they are unable to protect themselves from the evils in our society. Therefore, they put their trust and faith in their parents, relatives and friends. This trust

and faith should never be broken and must be protected at all times.

"Parents – you have an important responsibility to make sure that your child is protected and safe at all times. And for this to effectively happen your relationship as husband and wife must be strong and alive, enriched in love, and the commitment and respect for one another must be nurtured and allowed to continue to grow.

"Relatives, friends and community – you are also culturally and in your Christian commitment entrusted to give the same protection, recognition, and support to the child. Let us all be loving, caring and be concerned about the welfare of our children and give them the re-

spect and protection they need and deserve," Archbishop Ribat said.

He said that people must take the awareness and information seriously about the threat HIV/AIDS is posing on our nation.

"According to statistics, the infection is growing. It is predicted that by 2012, more than 208,000 will be living with HIV/AIDS.

"Those who are infected with this deadly virus are our friends, relatives and family members. We have to accept the fact that they are here to stay, and they still have the same rights that we have. Let us learn to live with them, love them and show that we care for them.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Ribat said there is a good working relationship among

Christian Churches in a bid to address HIV/AIDS in this country.

He said a new body called the "PNG Christian Leaders Alliance" (PNGCLA) has been formed to encourage the different denominations and congregations to work in unity in their approach in addressing HIV/AIDS.

"The Christian Leaders in PNG recognize the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a very special cross to be carried in our time.

"The HIV epidemic affects all aspects of our living – our cultural norms and practices – socio-economic conditions, economic development, human responsibility, relationships between women and men, sexuality and morality, marriage and family life.

"PNG is seen as a Christian country. If we are to be, and to be seen as genuine, then our response to the HIV epidemic must be that of the 'Good Samaritan', a spirit of Christian love and sacrifice. That way, we become true neighbours to one another," Archbishop Ribat said.

He also added that there are also many incidents we read about and see in the news which need attention and addressing.

"There is a great amount of dissatisfaction in our society, be it in the lives among our grass-roots, and even among our leaders.

"There are groups of people who are taking the law into their own hands and are causing terrible sufferings and destructions to human life and properties.

Message of his holiness

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For this reason, today more than ever we need authentic witnesses, and not simply people who parcel out rules and facts; we need witnesses capable of seeing farther than others because their life is so much broader. A witness is someone who first lives the life that he proposes to others.

Where does true education in peace and justice take place? First of all, in the family, since parents are the first educators. The family is the primary cell of society; "it is in the family that children learn the human and Christian values which enable them to have a constructive and peaceful coexistence. It is in the family that they learn solidarity between the generations, respect for rules, forgiveness and how to welcome others." (1) The family is the first school in which we are trained in justice and peace.

We are living in a world where families, and life itself, are constantly threatened and not infrequently fragmented. Working conditions which are often incompatible with family responsibilities, worries about the future, the frenetic pace of life, the need to move frequently to ensure an adequate livelihood, to say nothing of mere survival – all this makes it hard to ensure that children receive one of the most precious of treasures: the presence of their parents. This presence makes it possible to share more deeply in the journey of life and thus to pass on experiences and convictions gained with the passing of the years, experiences and convictions which can only be communicated by spending time together. I would urge parents not to grow disheartened! May they encourage children by the example of their lives to put their hope before all else in God, the one source of authentic justice and peace.

I would also like to address a word to those in charge of educational institutions: with a great sense of responsibility may they ensure that the dignity of each person is always respected and appreciated. Let them be concerned that every young person be able to discover his or her own vocation and be helped to develop his or her God-given gifts. May they reassure families that their children

can receive an education that does not conflict with their consciences and their religious principles.

Every educational setting can be a place of openness to the transcendent and to others; a place of dialogue, cohesiveness and attentive listening, where young people feel appreciated for their personal abilities and inner riches, and can learn to esteem their brothers and sisters. May young people be taught to savour the joy which comes from the daily exercise of charity and compassion towards others and from taking an active part in the building of a more humane and fraternal society.

I ask political leaders to offer concrete assistance to families and educational institutions in the exercise of their right and duty to educate. Adequate support should never be lacking to parents in their task. Let them ensure that no one is ever denied access to education and that families are able freely to choose the educational structures they consider most suitable for their children. Let them be committed to reuniting families separated by the need to earn a living. Let them give young people a transparent image of politics as a genuine service to the good of all.

I cannot fail also to appeal to the world of the media to offer its own contribution to education. In today's society the mass media have a particular role: they not only inform but also form the minds of their audiences, and so they can make a significant contribution to the education of young people. It is important never to forget that the connection between education and communication is extremely close: education takes place through communication, which influences, for better or worse, the formation of the person.

Young people too need to have the courage to live by the same high standards that they set for others. Theirs is a great responsibility: may they find the strength to make good and wise use of their freedom. They too are responsible for their education, including their education in justice and peace!

Educating in truth and freedom

3. Saint Augustine once asked: "Quid enim

fortius desiderat anima quam veritatem? –

What does man desire more deeply than truth?"(2) The human face of a society depends very much on the contribution of education to keep this irrepressible question alive. Education, indeed, is concerned with the integral formation of the person, including the moral and spiritual dimension, focused upon man's final end and the good of the society to which he belongs. Therefore, in order to educate in truth, it is necessary first and foremost to know who the human person is, to know human nature. Contemplating the world around him, the Psalmist reflects:

"When I see the heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you arranged, what is man that you should keep him in mind, mortal man that you care for him?" (Ps 8:4-5). This is the fundamental question that must be asked: *who is man?* Man is a being who bears within his heart a thirst for the infinite, a thirst for truth – a truth which is not partial but capable of explaining life's meaning – since he was created in the image and likeness of God. The grateful recognition that life is an inestimable gift, then, leads to the discovery of one's own profound dignity and the inviolability of every single person. Hence the first step in education is learning to recognize the Creator's image in man, and consequently learning to have a profound respect for every human being and helping others to live a life consonant with this supreme dignity. We must never forget that "authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension"(3), including the transcendent dimension, and that the person cannot be sacrificed for the sake of attaining a particular good, whether this be economic or social, individual or collective.

Only in relation to God does man come to understand also the meaning of human freedom. It is the task of education to form people in authentic freedom. This is not the absence of constraint or the supremacy of free will, it is not the absolutism of the self. When man believes himself to be absolute, to depend on nothing and no one, to be able to do anything

Workshop helps young nuns understanding

By Sr Catherine Horimbari SSpS

A FOUR day workshop was held recently at Alexishafen in Madang to give a better understanding to young nuns about their womanhood in the context of society and religious life.

Facilitated by Dr. Anastasia Sai of the Divine Word University, and Fr Phil Gibbs SVD, 13 young Holy Spirit Sisters gathered together in

their convent at Alexishafen, from January 3 - 6, to discover more about their womanhood in the context of society and religious life.

Dr. Sai explained the concepts of sex and gender, what it means to live a religious life as a woman, what makes a woman a woman is not only her body (sex), but also what society expects from her and what she thinks about herself (gender).

Fr. Phil Gibbs SVD discussed the differences between male and female sexuality.

While men react sexually more on their physical level, women experience their sexuality more on the emotional level.

Sr. Davida SSpS, helped the young sisters to see their sexuality in its spiritual dimension. Healthy relationships and friendships with the opposite sex require

emotional maturity and good knowledge of oneself.

The young sisters expressed that the course was helpful for them.

In their workplaces, they work together with men, and must therefore know how to communicate and relate with them adequately.

It is important that they understand who they are as women, and how to deal with their own emotions.



IN DISCUSSION: A group of nuns during a discussion session.

he wants, he ends up contradicting the truth of his own being and forfeiting his freedom. On the contrary, man is a relational being, who lives in relationship with others and especially with God. Authentic freedom can never be attained independently of God.

Freedom is a precious value, but a fragile one; it can be misunderstood and misused. "Today, a particularly insidious obstacle to the task of educating is the massive presence in our society and culture of that relativism which, recognizing nothing as definitive, leaves as the ultimate criterion only the self with its desires. And under the semblance of freedom it becomes a prison for each one, for it separates people from one another, locking each person into his or her own self. With such a relativistic horizon, therefore, real education is not possible without the light of the truth; sooner or later, every person is in fact condemned to doubting the goodness of his or her own life and the relationships of which it

consists, the validity of his or her commitment to build with others something in common"(4).

In order to exercise his freedom, then, man must move beyond the relativistic horizon and come to know the truth about himself and the truth about good and evil. Deep within his conscience, man discovers a law that he did not lay upon himself, but which he must obey. Its voice calls him to love and to do what is good, to avoid evil and to take responsibility for the good he does and the evil he commits(5). Thus, the exercise of freedom is intimately linked to the natural moral law, which is universal in character, expresses the dignity of every person and forms the basis of fundamental human rights and duties: consequently, in the final analysis, it forms the basis for just and peaceful coexistence.

The right use of freedom, then, is central to the promotion of justice and peace, which require respect for oneself and others, including

those whose way of being and living differs greatly from one's own. This attitude engenders the elements without which peace and justice remain merely words without content: mutual trust, the capacity to hold constructive dialogue, the possibility of forgiveness, which one constantly wishes to receive but finds hard to bestow, mutual charity, compassion towards the weakest, as well as readiness to make sacrifices.

Educating in justice
4. In this world of ours, in which, despite the profession of good intentions, the value of the person, of human dignity and human rights is seriously threatened by the widespread tendency to have recourse exclusively to the criteria of utility, profit and material possessions, it is important not to detach the concept of justice from its transcendent roots. Justice, indeed, is not simply a human convention, since what is just is ultimately determined not by positive law, but by the profound identity of the human being. It is the integral vision of man that saves us from falling

into a contractual conception of justice and enables us to locate justice within the horizon of solidarity and love(6).

We cannot ignore the fact that some currents of modern culture, built upon rationalist and individualist economic principles, have cut off the concept of justice from its transcendent roots, detaching it from charity and solidarity: "The 'earthly city' is promoted not merely by relationships of rights and duties, but to an even greater and more fundamental extent by relationships of gratuitousness, mercy and communion. Charity always manifests God's love in human relationships as well, it gives theological and salvific value to all commitment for justice in the world"(7).

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Mt 5:6). They shall be satisfied because they hunger and thirst for right relations with God, with themselves, with their brothers and sisters, and with the whole of creation.