



# The Catholic Reporter

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## PNG and Solomon Islands Bishops in Rome for the Ad Limina Visit

By Fr. Victor Roche, SVD  
CBC General Secretary

THE Catholic Bishops of every country or region go to visit Rome once in five years and this visit is called *Ad Limina Apostolorum*. It literally means "at the thresholds of the Apostles" (Sts. Peter and Paul). The Bishops meet the Pope, the Successor of Peter, to give an account of the state of their dioceses and to make a pilgrimage to the tombs of the apostles. They also meet the different heads of departments in the Vatican (Health Care, Christian Unity, Laity, Interreligious Dialogue, Social Communications, Apostolic Penitentiary, Doctrine of Faith, Divine Worship, Missions, etc.).

The Ad Limina visit for the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (CBC) took place from 31st May – 9th June this year. A total of 21 Bishops took part in it (only Bishop Rochus Tatamai, MSC of Berena and Bp. Ambrose Kiapseni, MSC of Kavieng were absent due to health reasons) along with myself as CBC General Secretary and Bp. Peter Ramsden of the Anglican Church of Port Moresby, since there is a good relationship between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church in Papua New Guinea.

There are nineteen Catholic dioceses in PNG and three in the Solomon Islands. All the bishops had already sent in their "Five-Year" reports to the "Congregation for the Evange-



Arch. John Ribat of Port Moresby Archdiocese offering a gift to the Pope. Photo: Fr Victor Roche, SVD

lization of Peoples", which takes care of the issues regarding the mission countries. These reports were studied and taken up by the relevant commissions for follow up. Some important matters were also addressed by the Pope when he met the bishops in two smaller groups at the end of the visit.

On 1<sup>st</sup> June in the evening we were all invited to the Anglican Centre in Rome where Canon David Richardson and his wife Maggie were the main hosts.

Bp. Peter Ramsden, who travelled with us, also became a 'co-host'. As we entered the hall, which is also the library, Fr. Richardson started explaining the famous picture that is hanging on the wall at the entrance. It is a picture of Pope Paul VI meeting Archbishop Ramsey of Canterbury in Rome on 24 March 1966. In that meeting, the Pope removed the ring he previously wore as the Archbishop of Milan and put it on the finger of Abp. Ramsey as a sign of re-

spect and communion. Tears came down in the eyes of Abp. Ramsey and Fr. Richardson too was emotional as he recalled that historic event.

On Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> of June in the afternoon we had a gathering of all the bishops of PNG/SI with the students, priests and religious who are studying or staying in Rome or who were working in PNG/SI before. *Mipela i amamas tru!*

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## Youth, students and vocations priorities for the Church in PNG

Vatican City - "THE main focus of the Church in Papua New Guinea is the new evangelization." This is what His Exc. **Mgr. Stephen Joseph Reichert, OFM Cap, Archbishop of Madang** says in an interview with *Fides*, at the conclusion of the ad limina visit of the Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. "Many of the Dioceses of Papua have been gifted with an old evangelization: the Christian population has grown and has received an excellent education. Today, in the new social and cultural context, opportunities to transmit the faith have decreased and new roads and new ways to bring the Gospel to children, youth and families are needed," explains the Archbishop. Mgr. Reichert notes "a great change across our country at an economic, social, cultural, religious level, which is especially noticeable in the younger population." In this phase of change, "There is much to be done, the Church is involved in many challenges, especially in relation to young people." One of the key areas, notes the Archbishop is education: "The Church is very committed and, with our schools, we are the main protagonists of the work of education, alongside the government. This is heavy work and also expensive, but we consider it crucial in order to be able to talk and keep a close contact with new generations."

To pursue her mission, he continues, "the Church needs new vocations: Today we still need missionaries who brought the seed of faith in Papua. We must focus on the formation of the existing clergy and on the promotion of vocations to priesthood and religious life. Today, because of the context in which we live, for a young man who hears the call of God, it is hard to take care of that inner voice of the spirit, make it grow, make the necessary discernment so that the path will end happily." From the ad limina visit, the Archbishop concludes, "We have received encouragement, support from all the Vatican departments and by the Holy Father: we express our profound thanks." (PA) (*Fides Agency, 11/6/2012*)



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URBAN YOUTHS: Youths such as these deserve more pastoral care.

## Youth neglected, Madang clergy and pastoral workers say

By Fr Giorgio Licini PIME  
CBC Communications.

MADANG priests and pastoral workers stressed in a meeting on Tuesday, 19 June that youth deserve more attention and pastoral care.

"Some are members of organized parish groups and ministries – said Fr. Joseph Durero SVD, parish priest at Yomba just outside Madang – but the majority of them are out of school and totally on their own, ready to become enemies of society if nobody does anything for them.

No one should be left out".

"They don't ask for much, they just need to feel that we, their priests, care for them", added Fr. Czeslaw Brzezicki SVD, Vicar General of the Archdiocese and parish priest of Alexishafen.

On his hand Fr. Casimir Yakawa, Utu parish priest, acknowledged not being gifted with particular skills for the youth ministry but he is happy that, "I love them and they love me". Fr. Samuel Kabaya, parish priest of Megiar, instead, appealed to the Catholic Bishops' Conference to expand the service of the National Youth Coordinator, Fr Shanthi Puthussery PIME.

He praised the outcome of the leadership training program offered by Fr Shanthi to the parish youth coordinators in Madang on May 20-27 this year, but he said that these opportunities should be opened up to a "larger number of youth who are just waiting for a word of encouragement and guidance".

The gathering also expressed grave concern about the imminent plan of the government to ship boxes of condoms to all schools in the country as a means for HIV/AIDS control.

Mrs. Josephine Ilave, diocesan HIV/AIDS awareness coor-

ordinator, reported an increase in the number of primary school children seeking HIV test in the diocesan sponsored centers. But the Madang pastoral workers believe parents awareness and guidance is key to children proper sexual behavior and HIV prevention, not indiscriminate distribution of condoms to students and staff.

A signature campaign among citizens and parents of school children has been proposed by diocesan Education Secretary Mr. Bruno Tulemanil, to support the recent stand of the Catholic Bishops Conference against government condom distribution policies in schools.

## DWU representatives meeting prospective students in the provinces.

PROSPECTIVE students wishing to study at Divine Word University (DWU) are getting a chance to meet representatives from the University and hear about the programs since they started visiting the provinces in June.

The first stop for the DWU road show team was in the Eastern Highlands where the team was at the Education and Career Exposition of the Faculty of Education at the University of Goroka on 8th June.

The next province was Milne Bay where the team stayed at the Cameron Secondary School in Alotau.

From 14th to 15th July, the DWU team will be in East New Britain at Kokopo Secondary School and will cover 10 secondary schools there. The DWU's amalgamated colleges in ENB, St Mary's School of Nursing in Vunapope and OLSH Kabaleo Teachers College will also take part in the expo.

On 14th and 15th August, the DWU road show team will attend the Enga Education and Careers Expo at the Wabag Secondary School and on 16th and on 17th August, the team will be at the neighbouring Western Highlands

and Jiwaka in Mount Hagen for the expo organized by Western Highlands Careers Association.

Dates for the exposition of DWU in Port Moresby for National Capital District and Central Province is yet to be set as this normally done through the TVET division of the Department of Education around July and August.

DWU's road show team leader and executive officer of student affairs, Ted Alau said the university's popular Faculty of Flexible Learning (FFL) will join the expo team for the first time this year.

The FFL which offers studies by the flexible mode to people in the workforce has given opportunity for study and university qualification to many people since its inception over 11 years ago.

Alau said the target groups for FFL are government workers, business community and NGO workers who need additional qualification to up skill themselves and to build capacities in their respective organizations. Alau said schools in provinces not covered in the 2012 road show will be provided with promotional pamphlets. (dw.ac.pg)

## Spreading devotion to the Divine Mercy in Mt. Hagen

By Paul Dobbyn

ABOUT 19 years ago Crescentia Anderson, then living in her native Papua New Guinea, had the spark of an idea to start an apostolate to the Divine Mercy.

The inspiration came from a little leaflet on the devotion she picked up in St Monica's Cathedral in Cairns.

Today the awesome Shrine of Divine Mercy Chapel, taking shape in PNG's Mt Hagen district, can be traced to that initial response.

Meeting Crescentia, a force of nature, is an experience in itself, and an inspirational one.

"Brother Paul, God is great," she says, before taking me back to that day in January 1994 when she invited three other women to start devotions in honour of the Divine Mercy at St Mary's Cathedral, Port Moresby.

"The Spirit moved me and 'bang' that was it - I realised if I didn't do it, who would.

"I handpicked each of them; I didn't really know them but was somehow led to them.

"Each immediately said 'yes', starting with a very helpful lady who worked in a chemist in Port Moresby where I sometimes got cough mixture."

It wasn't until later, Crescentia realised how fortuitous her choice had been.

"One day in 1998, a young man in the Divine Mercy prayer group said to me: 'Aunty did you realise four of you represent the four regions of PNG (the Highlands, the New Guinea islands, the PNG mainland and the southern region)?"

"I said: 'Son, you're right; this is truly the work of God'."

Crescentia was initially led in a dream to devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Full of enthusiasm, she led a pilgrimage group from PNG to South Korea's Our Lady of Naju shrine in October 1993.

"We brought back two litres each of holy water from Mother Mary's well there as well as two small statues each," she said.

"But, I believe the Mother ultimately led me to the Son."

On her return to Port Moresby, she approached St Joseph's parish priest Fr Paul Guy about forming a Divine Mercy prayer group at St Mary's Cathedral.

"Fr Paul had not been enthusiastic about the pilgrimage to South Korea and was not keen on the prayer group either," she said.

"He said he'd seen others who had tried to start similar prayer groups and

had failed.

"I said: don't compare me with other people, pray for me and if it's God's will it will happen; if it's not, I will have done my best."

The prayer meeting, to be held each Sunday, had a 1.45pm arrival for a 2pm start.

Prayer and hymns were held for an hour, concluding with the Divine Mercy 3pm prayer.

The apparently miraculous healing of Mt Hagen's Rose Ume - who suffered from a chronic back problem - at this first prayer meeting would ultimately lead to the start of the Shrine of Divine Mercy Chapel.

At this first meeting, Crescentia challenged the other three women to each bring someone along next time.

"Next Sunday numbers had increased to seven, then they went to nine, then to 12, then to 17," she said enthusiastically. "We lost count after that - and by June 1995, we had two other Divine Mercy prayer groups formed in other parishes and soon these had up to 100 attending."

In December 1995, another significant event occurred when two members of the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy visited Australia to promote the Feast of the Divine Mercy.

It had been one of their congregation, St Maria Faustina Kowalska, who had laid the foundations for what became proclaimed by Pope John Paul II as Divine Mercy Sunday on April 30, 2000.

The pope made the proclamation in his homily at the Polish saint's canonisation.

The Sisters were speaking in some southern states and going as far north as Cairns.

For the ever-enthusiastic Crescentia, the chance to divert these spokeswomen for the Divine Mercy cause was too good to miss.

"Through fundraising around Port Moresby, we managed to find enough money to pay their fares to PNG," she said.

"St Mary's Cathedral was packed to overflowing to hear the Sisters' message, as were other churches they visited."

Another significant link in the chain of events to start the Mt Hagen chapel came in October 2005 when Crescentia and two other members of the St Mary's Cathedral group went to Cracow in Poland to attend the Second International Congress on the Divine Mercy message and devotion.

(The Catholic Leader/Cathnews.com - 17

# Arch. Francesco Panfilo SDB of Rabaul receives pallium from Pope in Rome

ON the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, 29 June every year, the Pope bestows the pallium on new archbishops from all over the world. Papua New Guinea has four Catholic archbishops, in Port Moresby, Madang, Mt. Hagen, and Rabaul. Arch. Francesco Panfilo SDB succeeded Arch. Karl Hesse MSC in Rabaul on 15 August 2011. Therefore he was scheduled to receive the pallium on 29 June this year, while the other three PNG Archbishops already received it previously.

The pallium is a portion of the Archbishop's garment, worn on the shoulders during liturgical ceremonies, and, like all the garments of the clergy, it has symbolic significance. Here is how Pope Benedict XVI at the 2011 celebration explained the meaning of the pallium and its importance as a symbol of the unity of the Archbishops with the Successor of St. Peter: "The metropolitan archbishops appointed since the feast of Saints Peter and Paul last year are now going to receive the pallium. What does this mean?"

**CHRIST'S YOKE.** "It may remind us in the first instance of Christ's easy yoke that is laid upon us (cf. Mt 11:29f.). Christ's yoke is identical with his friendship. It is a yoke of friendship and therefore "a sweet yoke", but as such it is also a demanding yoke, one that forms us. It is the yoke of his

will, which is a will of truth and love. For us, then, it is first and foremost the yoke of leading others to friendship with Christ and being available to others, caring for them as shepherds.

**THE SHEPHERD AND THE LAMBS.** "This brings us to a further meaning of the pallium: it is woven from the wool of lambs blessed on the feast of Saint Agnes (21 January). Thus it reminds us of the Shepherd who himself became a lamb, out of love for us. It reminds us of Christ, who set out through the mountains and the deserts, in which his lamb, humanity, had strayed. It reminds us of him who took the lamb – humanity – me – upon his shoulders, in order to carry me home. It thus reminds us that we too, as shepherds in his service, are to carry others with us, taking them as it were upon our shoulders and bringing them to Christ. It reminds us that we are called to be shepherds of his flock, which always remains his and does not become ours.

**COMMUNION.** "Finally the pallium also means quite concretely the communion of the shepherds of the Church with Peter and with his successors – it means that we must be shepherds for unity and in unity, and that it is only in the unity represented by Peter that we truly lead people to Christ." (Fr Giorgio Licini PIME)



Abp. Francesco Panfilo SDB of Rabaul with the the Pope in Rome.

## Remembering Fr. Geoffrey Lee

28 October 1950 – 27 July 2011

IT IS one year since Fr. Geoffrey Lee passed away.

He was only 60 and Vicar General of the Diocese of Lae, Director of Catholic Radio Lae, editor of this Catholic Reporter and Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands Catholic Secretary for Communications

Geoffrey Lee was born on 28 October 1950 in Gore, New Zealand. After completing his studies, he felt the call for religious life. He joined the Franciscan Friars, got a degree in communications, and was in charge of publications mainly in the Solomon Islands.

In 1991, after fifteen year as a religious with the Anglican Franciscan friars, Br. Geoffrey made the decision to become a Catholic priest and was ordained by the Bishop of Lae, Bishop Henry van Lieshout.

The Bishop assigned Fr. Geoffrey to St. Michael's parish, Eriku where he will be pastor for the next seventeen years. It is there that he was able to care for street kids, provide them a shelter as well as opportunities for education.

His competence in Social Communication was recognized by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Fr. Geoffrey was appointed National Secretary of the Commission for Social Communications. For many years he also was the editor of the

*Catholic Reporter.*

Always in search for better ways of evangelization, Fr. Geoffrey put Catholic Radio FM 103.7 Lae on the air and served as its Director. In November 2009 Fr. Geoffrey was appointed Vicar General of the Diocese of Lae, a responsibility he accepted in a spirit of service for the diocese.

In October 2010, Fr. Geoffrey was due for a rest. He scheduled his home leave in order to be at home and celebrate his birthday with his family on 28th October. He left Lae on 10th October never thinking that he won't come back in Papua New Guinea. But a medical test revealed he was affected by a colon cancer. Radiotherapy didn't get the expected results, and the cancer got his way to vital organs. Fr. Geoff had the consolation to be nursed in Christchurch nor far from his family. Unfortunately the big earthquake of February 2011 forced him and thousands other patients to be relocated to other nursing homes in the country.

Fr. Geoffrey Lee passed away on 27 July 2011.

The Bishop of Lae, Mgr Christian Blouin CMM, paid tribute to Fr. Geoffrey in those words: "The diocese of Lae is very grateful for the gift of Fr. Geoffrey Lee. His name will be with us forever. May is Soul Rest in the Peace of God!" ([www.signis.net](http://www.signis.net))

## Opim bilong nupela klasrum na komputa leblong Kumdi Pramereri Skul

Maria Girma i raitim

LONG de namba wan bilong mun Jun, Kumdi Pramereri Skul (Westen Hailans Provins) i opim nupela klasrum na kompyuta lab.

Ol papamama na ol skul sumatin i amamas na selebretim dispela de wantaim ol kainkain danis, pilai na moa yet, ol papamama tu i amamas wantaim ol pikinini bilong ol.

Edukesen em wanpela ki samting long laip bikos skul i stat insait long klasrum.

Het masta bilong skul i tok pikinini nau i mas gat laibreri na kompyuta long wanem, nau yumi lukim olsem planti tenis i kamap.

Ol sumatin i mas ritim planti buk na lainim kompyuta bipo long ol i go long ol narapela bikpela skul.

Dispela em wanpela bikpela divelopmen insait long komyuniti na em faundesen bilong ol pikinini long kisim save na divelopim kantri bilong yumi.

## Commentary

By Fr. Victor Roche,  
SVD



## Lights and shadows of National Elections 2012

AS I type these lines in my computer, the National Parliamentary Elections are going on throughout Papua New Guinea and it is the 8<sup>th</sup> day. There are 4.6 million people registered to vote out of a population of about 7 million. 3428 candidates are vying for just 109 seats in Parliament. Polling started on June 23<sup>rd</sup> and the media is filled with stories about elections.

**Negative stories about the elections in the two national newspapers and other media include:**

- Some are frustrated that they could not find their names in the electoral list
- Some supporters in police uniforms tried to hijack ballot boxes and were arrested by police
- One man was killed over a dispute over the location of the polling venue
- Ballot boxes did not arrive in time
- Some people have tried to vote a second time
- In some voting booths there were instances of bribing the voters with money or things
- Some staff members of the Electoral Commission have reported that they have not been paid.

People have blamed Mr. Andrew Trawen and the staff of Electoral Commission for the above problems in the elections. But I have seen the advertisements of election awareness for many months in the media. I also saw a centre-page lift out with information about the electoral officers, places of voting, time of voting etc. They have tried their best in making this election to run smoothly.

**Some of the positive aspects of the election as I see:**

- Many people went to vote with great enthusiasm and some of them were still voting around 8 pm. People are serious about exercising their privilege of voting.
- The Electoral Commission is trying to rectify the errors the best way possible.
- The security forces are doing a good job in making the election secure and safe.
- The news reports from the Islands' Region give a better picture of the Elections.
- There are many NGOs in the country to help and monitor the elections.
- The candidates and the people have shown a great interest in the democracy.

Those who criticize the elections should not forget that PNG is a young democracy. This election will not be perfect and errors are bound to happen. After a few more Parliamentary Elections PNG may become a better democracy. We should not forget that there were uncertainties about the dates of the elections due to political impasse. The Electoral Commission should try to rectify the errors as soon as possible. The people and the candidates should refrain from malpractices and cooperate with the election authorities during the voting and counting.

The polling ends on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> July and the writs are to be returned by Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> of July. There will be 109 winning candidates and I hope there are some women MPs this time. I am sure there will be many disappointed candidates who will be challenging the results and thus asking for recounting of the votes. There may be also much violence and deaths after the declaration of results. But I hope and pray that PNG will continue to be a **democratic and a vibrant country** in the Pacific.

## PNG and SI bishops in Rome for the Ad Limina visit

■ From page 1

On Tuesday 5th June at 7:15 am we had Mass near the tomb of St. Peter the Apostle, under the Basilica of St. Peter, the biggest Catholic Church in the world, presided by Abp. John Ribat MSC of Port Moresby, the President of the CBC.

The last two days of the Ad Limina were reserved for the visit of the bishops to the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI. The 22 bishops of PNG/SI were divided into two groups of 11 each. The first group went on Friday, 8th June.

When the Pope entered the hall the bishops were asked to come one by one to meet him and to talk to him. Anglican Bishop Peter Ramsden also met the Pope and had a good chat with him.

Then the bishops were seated in front of the Pope and they were asked to share their views of the situation in their respective dioceses and the two countries. The Pope listened to them with keen interest. The session lasted about 45 minutes.

On the next day, the second group of bishops met the Pope. Again after a session of 45 minutes, he met all the 22 bishops of PNG/SI as a group. Archbishop John Ribat addressed the Pope on behalf of all bishops. Then the Pope addressed the bishops in turn.

# Cardinal Joseph Zen of Hong Kong in Rabaul on 7 July

By Card. Joseph Zen  
– Hong Kong

**SALESIAN** Cardinal Joseph Zen, Archbishop emeritus of Hong Kong, China, will be in Rabaul on 7 July for the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Blessed Peter ToRot, Catechist and Martyr. He accepted to answer a few questions for *Catholic Reporter* ahead of his visit:

**Card. Zen, what are your feelings as you travel to Papua New Guinea as Papal envoy for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Blessed Peter ToRot?**

I feel very honored in receiving from the Holy Father the pleasant mission to bring His Blessing to this important celebration.

**The Archdiocese of Rabaul is betting everything on family life as they celebrate the first Melanesian Blessed man, possibly a saint one day. How do you see the current situation of**

the family worldwide?

The Family is a basic constituent in the Divine plan for human happiness, but in the present moment is being threatened from many parts. In His speech to the Bishops of Papua New Guinea during their visit “ad limina” last month the Holy Father emphasized precisely this point.

**China and the islands of South Pacific are probably two different worlds. But there are now a number of Chinese people working and trading here...**

The Chinese are everywhere. This can create difficulties as well as opportunities. I hope with the good will and some planning you will be able to turn to good this phenomenon brought by the globalization.

**We know that the Catholic Church in mainland China is divided and heavily controlled by the political power. How can we help in our little way?**

I appreciate your concern for the situation of the Church in China. It is

causing much sorrow and many worries to the Holy Father. I realize that there is not much exact information around, I hope to bring some to you during my short stay, so that you may be more strongly motivated in your prayers, which is undoubtedly the most useful thing you can do for those your far away brothers.

**What will your message be to the youth of Papua New Guinea when you arrive this week?**

As a son of Don Bosco I look forward to meeting the young people during this visit. Since this moment I want to tell them: You are the hope of your nation, you are the hope of the Church. Listen to the voice of your young and sincere heart, listen to the voice of Jesus, open your heart to Him. He is not going to take away anything, but is going to fill your heart with true happiness. (Fr. Giorgio Licini PIME – CBC Communications)

## In honour of Blessed Peter ToRot Catechist and Martyr (1912-1945)

*BISHOP Rochus Tatamai of Bereina, a member of the family, pays tribute to Blessed Peter ToRot on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, as the Archdiocese of Rabaul solemnly celebrates on 7 July the Feast of the Blessed catechist killed by Japanese occupying forces in April 1945.*

By Bishop Rochus Josef Tatamai – Bereina

**Grandson of Peter ToRot's brother**

Angelo ToPuia and Maria IaTumul were from Rakunai village located on the plateau about 40 minutes drive from the old Rabaul town. They had four children, Theresia IaVarpilak, Josef Tatamai, Peter ToRot and Gabriel Telo. Josef Tatamai the elder brother of Peter ToRot was the father of my dad Rochus Tirupia. When I was born in 1962 I was baptized Rochus Josef Tatamai combining the names of my dad and granddad. So my dad was the nephew of Peter ToRot. Thus Peter ToRot is my great grand uncle two generations over. In PNG terms I would refer directly to Peter ToRot as my grandfather since he was the younger brother of my grandfather.

It was in 1969 when I was about to enroll for prep at St. Augustine Primary School at Rakunai when our Parish Priest Fr Josef Theler MSC was trying to identify who I was. He asked the other children who my parents were and when they called my parents names, he immediately confirmed saying “the grandson of Peter ToRot ... while the children protested saying, “No! his grandfather is Josef Tatamai.” Later that day I checked with mum and dad who Peter ToRot was and they told me that he was the younger brother of my grandfather Josef Tatamai. Those were the initial days of my growing awareness of who Peter ToRot was in relation to me and my father, my grandfather and family. After that I began to hear more stories of the Second World War in Rabaul and how Peter ToRot worked among our people as a teacher and catechist and that he was killed by the Japanese because of his witness to Christ and his teaching.

From my earlier recollections I observed my grandfather Josef Tatamai was a devote Catholic who attended daily Masses and received Holy Communion daily. Then my parents encouraged me to be an altar boy even before I went to school. I observed that every day we attended Mass and prayed at home and even before and after meals, practically any activities mum and dad would lead us in prayer. We went regularly to the parish cemetery where Peter ToRot was buried and prayed there as well as regularly put flowers. We also collected the soil and dust from the top of his grave and used it at home for any

pains and aches and apparently we experience ease and healing. There was a growing devotion in the family to Peter ToRot as well as the whole parish community with living witness who began to share about their experiences during World War II and how Peter ToRot worked among them as a catechist and teacher.

I was conscious that my parents had a great devotion to Peter ToRot because my dad was Peter ToRot's favorite nephew. Dad recalled many times his personal experience when Peter ToRot was killed in 1945. Dad was only 5 years old then and he was very sick. They were living in one of the tunnels near where Peter ToRot was keeping the Blessed Sacrament. In the night dad was having visions of Peter ToRot coming to visit him and wanted dad to go with him. He would be screaming and crying at the sight of Peter ToRot but his mum and dad and the whole family did not see a thing. Traditionally they used lime and ginger to dismiss any future appearances of Peter ToRot to dad. At least that is what they believe.

I discovered that being in the family of Peter ToRot was a great challenge and sometimes a scandal because not all the relatives were committed and devoted to our Catholic faith and Christian practices. Like all others in the villages we had our family arguments and disputes, disagreements yet the knowledge that Peter ToRot was a great catechist and his life was a model for Christian families, his example was always a challenge before us.

**Discovering Peter ToRot**

Well I must admit that I did not really think seriously about Peter ToRot during my primary and high school days. I was just like every other young boy growing up with the challenges of teenagers and peer pressures, but all the time I was back at home there was the strong Catholic influence of mum and dad. So when I decided to apply to the Minor Seminary at St. Peter Chanel College, Ulapia my Parish Priest took a personal interest in my decision and began to remind me of the great work of my grandfather.

I supposed all the influences of who Peter ToRot meant in my life and formation was highlighted on the day of my ordination to the Priesthood and especially during my first Mass

of thanksgiving in my home Parish in 1989. During the speeches, the elders of our parish repeatedly made reference to a passing conversation between Fr. Karl Laufer MSC, the then Parish Priest at Rakunai and a good friend of Angelo ToPuia the father of Peter ToRot. In this encounter Fr. Karl Laufer proposed to Angelo ToPuia that his son Peter ToRot could go for formation to the priesthood. Angelo ToPuia was reluctant and claimed that “their generation was not yet ready” for such a step, adding that “*maybe one day a grandson of mine or his (Peter TOROT) will rise up to that calling. However, if you insisted on Peter ToRot, then as his father I will allow him to do some training to become your helper.*” Hence Peter ToRot went to St. Paul's Training College at Taliliga and graduated as a Teacher Catechist. For a lot of folks at home my day of ordination was the fulfillment of that wish or dream while some prefer to claim it was a prophesy by Angelo ToPuia.

When I was part of the TV documentary research team with Fr Zdzislaw Mlak SVD and Robin Brown of EMTV, end of 1994 to the beginning of 1995, I began to discover more about this exciting story of Peter ToRot and really enjoyed putting together the sequence of his life. This research was like meeting Peter ToRot through the experiences of the living witnesses and to the extent that Peter ToRot became truly alive and present as we interviewed his students, fellow catechists and fellow prisoners, religious and missionaries, and the people in general in the parish. This entire exercise was like fitting pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together. It was a spiritual journey which made a deep impression in my life to the extent that I was challenged to re-discover and appreciate the beautiful vocation of the laity, the role of men in the community, as a husband and father of a family, the protector and promotion of the servant leadership of one who is ready to lay down his life for his people.

**Beatification of Peter ToRot**

At the time of the Beatification of Blessed Peter ToRot in January 1995, and without any training or background in Journalism or Media work, however, with the encouragement and support of Fr Mlak SVD I assisted him to complete the research, hence to

discover and present Peter ToRot to the world through the eyes of the Media. We successfully completed this classical documentary “PETRO TOROT” and it was screened the evening before the day of his beatification. We were fortunately lucky to interview many significant personalities and “live-witnesses” who knew Peter ToRot first hand on a personal and during daily encounters. This documentary did the greatest service to the general public including the local and overseas media and everyone throughout PNG and the region who were constantly asking the basic question: “*The Holy Father is coming to PNG for the beatification, but who is this main character by the name of Peter ToRot?*” So that documentary presentation attempted to answer those very basic questions and after that its now all history.

On the actual day of the beatification I joined John Eggins the renowned EMTV commentator for the running TV commentary on the ceremony with the Mass with some additional comments and information on the life and work of Peter ToRot. Fortunately I had some background and inside stories about his pastoral work as a catechist, his resistance to the Japanese authorities during the war as well as his concern and pastoral care for the widows, orphans, children, women and strangers as well as organizing food supplies for the missionaries in the concentration Camp at Ramale.

After the beatification celebrations, I was privileged to present to Pope John Paul II, Rufina IaMama, the surviving daughter of Peter ToRot, together with my dad Rochus Tirupia and John ToKeleto the son of Peter ToRot's elder sister. We had a couple of pleasant exchanges with the Holy Father when he asked me about Rufina IaMama, “*Is she a good aunt?*” I promptly replied “*Yes; Your Holiness, she is a good aunt.*” The Holy Father was grateful to see the blood relatives of “Blessed Peter ToRot: Catechist and Martyr”.

At the end of the day we realize that we do not inherit sainthood in the blood but rather each one has to strive daily in order to grow towards sainthood and holiness as this is God's universal call and grace, an invitation open to all and available for all through Jesus Christ and in communion with the Holy Spirit.



**MARTYRDOM:** Illustration of the martyrdom of Blessed Peter ToRot by a Japanese Soldier.