



# The Catholic Reporter

Catholic Bishops' Conference of PNG & SI - Commission on Social Communications, P.O. Box 398, Waigani, NCD Tel.: 325 9577 - Fax: 323 2551

APRIL 2013

ISSUE: 92

# POPE FRANCIS

By Deacon Christian Sieland – Rome

AT exactly 8:12pm (Rome time) last 13th of March, the Proto-deacon of the Cardinals, Frenchman Jean-Louis Tauran announced with the traditional Latin formula "Habemus Papam" (We have a Pope) the 266th successor of St. Peter as Bishop of Rome and, therefore, pastor of the universal Church. It was a sensation, a historic moment. The Conclave elected Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio (76), the Bishop of Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina as the new Bishop of Rome. For the first time since Gregory III from Syria in the 8th century, the Catholic Church had a non-European Pope. He is not only the first Pope from the Latin America; he is also the first Jesuit Pope and the first one to have chosen the name Francis.

## FROM THE END OF THE WORLD

Shortly after the announcement, he appeared on the veranda of St. Peter's Basilica in simple white vestments and greeted the people with a simple "buona sera" (good evening). That simple form of greeting was enough to capture the hearts of everyone present. He then joked with the people by saying that his fellow brother cardinals went almost to the end of the world to choose the new Bishop of Rome. The former Bishop of Buenos Aires thanked the crowd for the great welcome given to him. One could see that the newly elected Pope was a bit nervous. His Italian had a strong Spanish accent. One of his first acts as the new Pontiff was to pray for his predecessor, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. Before giving the traditional Papal blessing



"Urbi et Orbi" (To the City and to the World), he asked the people "to walk together with him" and to pray for him in silence for the blessing of their new Pope. There was a great silence for a couple of minute. The new Pope united in prayer with his people. His first appearance as the new Pope left a deep impression in all of us who were present on the square. Everyone agreed that this Pope was in many ways different from his predecessors.

To many it was a surprise that the new Pope was elected after only five rounds of votes: a sign that the cardinals must have fixed eyes rather quickly on Bergoglio. As one of his friends recounted, he met Cardinal Bergoglio some days before the Conclave on the Piazza Navona in Rome, and there the Cardinal asked his friend to pray for him because he told him that he was afraid. Bergoglio probably al-

ready perceived the imminent direction of events.

Bergoglio has Italian roots. His parents migrated from the Italian region of Piedmont to Argentina. Born in 1936 he was ordained a priest in 1969. Shortly after his ordination, doctors removed one of his lungs. Since then he lives with only one lung. In 1992 he was made a Bishop and in 2001 created a Cardinal by Blessed Pope John Paul II. It is said that Bergoglio was

runner-up in the 2005 Conclave which saw Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger elected to the Petrine chair.

## ADVOCATE OF THE POOR

During his time as the spiritual head of the Catholic Church in Argentina Pope Francis is said to have lived a humble and simple life style. He stayed in a small apartment near the Cathedral, used the public transport system (bus, underground, taxi) to travel in the city and cooked for himself. Known as the advocate of the poor in his city, he avoided too much contact with the local media and was not the best friend of the Argentinean President Christina Kirchner, because he was one of her toughest critics. As a true Argentinean, he loves soccer and tango.

What are the traits or characteristics that can be pointed out after the first 3-4 weeks of his Pontificate? Well, the first thing that most people can confirm is this: strong in faith, simple and humble in his words and actions. It was evident since the first moment of his election as Bishop of Rome, that he has been faithful to his simple and humble way of life. Recently a newspaper's headline stated: "The small great signs of Pope Francis that have conquered the world."

These are some of the signs and anecdotes from the first days of his pontificate. The first sign is the choice of his name. No Pope before him ever called himself Francis. His choice for that name is programmatic. It refers to his own life and mission as Bishop of Buenos Aires and in a special way it reflects the Franciscan ideals of simplicity, poverty and peace.

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# DON'T LEAVE THE MEN BEHIND!

By Bishop Gilles Cote'  
SMM - Daru-Kiunga

IN 2006 with the help of father Philip Gibbs SVD, I started to work closely with the men of the diocese in order to help them think about the many rapid changes that are taking place and how this is affecting their lives as Melanesians and Catholics. The focus was on how they can give justice to their fatherhood today and fully play their unique role as providers, protectors and leaders.

We held four seminars four successive years (2006-2009) with three participants from each parish. That was a real success and at the occasion of our Golden Jubilee in June 2009 we had the official launching of their Movement with the theme, 'Men building hope for the future'.

During the last two years the task was to hold a five day seminar in each parish. Ten parishes out of thirteen had their seminar from early 2011 until July 2012 when the diocesan coordinator for the Diocesan Men Move-

ment resigned. Then everything came to a halt.

At the beginning of this year, when doing my annual planning and programming I decided that I would team up with Mr. Watson Awaken who had been assistant to the coordinator to facilitate the three remaining seminars.

And that is why on the 6th of March I landed on early morning at Bolivip village by helicopter, in the Star Mountains, north-east of Kiunga, and in the afternoon we began the seminar for men for the parish. Thirty five men attended the first session. Most of them were from Bolivip village itself, but ten came from far away villages. Two of them had to walk two and three days the mountainous jungle to reach Bolivip.

It was the first time that a seminar was organized for the men of the parish and they were very excited and pleased with that initiative. Over the years in fact many workshops were organized for the women and the youth but never for the men. During the five days they kept coming back for the ses-

sions.

The men seem to be the most suffering group in our society at this time. They feel the women are slowly having more power than them and don't know how to deal with that. They also struggle with passing on values and standards to their sons as they don't have the traditional initiation ceremonies anymore.

There was a good variety of men attending the seminar: elders, middle aged men and younger men. During the group-work all were taking an active part in the sharing. We talked about becoming a man, the responsibilities of fatherhood, how is man a provider and a protector, how to pass on good traditional and Christian values, gender based violence, sexuality and equality of men and women, how to take decisions, relationships between men and women, husbands and wives.

For most of them it was the first time to receive such knowledge and think about it. They said in their evaluation that the experience was so interesting, heart break-

ing and challenging.

The men see that they are struggling to play well their roles in the family, the community and in the Church. They could see that such seminars can help them to find the right way forward. They do not want to be only the victims of the rapid changes affecting them but see the urgent need for them, as men, to take charge of their lives as families and communities.

During the final mass, after the Gospel reading, we made a circle around the altar. On the table in the middle we opened a Bible at the passage in Genesis telling the story of the creation of man by God, how he created him to his image and likeness. That is the source of our fatherhood.

We read a prayer on fatherhood and then in turn each man stood in front of the bible and slowly put his hand on it with great reverence. We were committing ourselves to play our roles as fathers, leaders, providers and protectors and to keep on the Movement of Men alive in the parish.

## DIOCESE OF ALOTAU REJECTS GOVERNMENT POLICY ON CONDOM

### Church stand on human love outlined

The Catholic Church in Milne Bay province is being asked to sign a memorandum of agreement with the Milne Bay Provincial Health Authority and the National Department of Health. One of the provisions says that the Milne Bay Provincial Health Authority is required to distribute condoms to all health facilities. The Catholic diocese is expected in the agreement to be responsible for the education and awareness of condom use at facility level. This prompted Bishop Rolando Santos CM of Alotau to draw up a diocesan policy on the condom that was then approved and endorsed by the Council of Priests last 14 March.

#### Policies and Guidelines of the Catholic Diocese of Alotau-Sideia on the Use of Condom

1. The Catholic Church regards the use of the condom as going against human dignity. Condoms change the beautiful act of love into a selfish search for pleasure – while rejecting responsibility. Condoms violate the plan of God with regards the essential purpose of the conjugal act, and pose a serious risk to marriage and family life. Moreover, condoms do not guarantee protection against HIV/AIDS. Condoms may even be one of the main reasons for the spread of HIV/AIDS. Apart from the possibility of condoms being faulty or wrongly used, they contribute to the breaking down of self-control and mutual respect.

2. Catholic health and education agencies in Milne Bay Province cannot in conscience participate in the promotion and giving of instructions to the public on the use of condom, which the Church considers as intrinsically evil.

#### 3. Policies and Guidelines:

a. Catholic schools and health facilities are to promote and give formation to their students, clients and staff in authentic human and Christian sexual values consistent with the teachings of the Church. They will actively promote

premarital chastity and fidelity to spouse, which are the only effective way to curb the spread of AIDS. The best and foolproof way of preventing HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases is to promote abstinence until marriage and for married partners to maintain a monogamous relationship where they remain faithful to each other.

b. Catholic schools and health facilities shall reject government and non-government printed or video materials which promote the use of condom. The presence of such materials compromises the stance of the Church and gives the impression that she is condoning practices which are immoral.

c. The condom business is a multi-million dollar industry that heavily targets the adolescent market, at the expense of morality and family life. Posters which advertise the condom are to be banned in all Catholic schools and health facilities, as well as condom advertisements in television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and public places, as they desensitize the youth's delicate conscience and weaken their moral fibers as future parents.

d. Catholic schools and health facilities are to warn the public on the possible adverse effects of the use of condoms. Condoms may fail to protect from AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

e. The Catholic Diocese of Alotau asks the Milne Bay Provincial Health Authority and the National Department of Health to use their resources not to promote condoms but rather to fight diseases that afflict millions in our country each year, as well as to provide food, medicines, education and work to our people.

#### 4. Guiding Principles:

a. The conjugal act has two inseparable purposes: true mutual love (unitive) and its orientation toward man's exalted vocation to parenthood (procreative). These are found in Natural

Law, the Words of Scriptures, and the constant teaching of the Church. "Every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible is intrinsically evil." (Pope Paul VI. *Humanae Vitae* ["Of Human Life"] (1968), 14).

b. The innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality. ... (Pope John Paul II. *Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio* ["On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World"] (1981), 32).

c. Periodic continence, that is, the methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods, is in conformity with the objective criteria of morality. These methods respect the bodies of the spouses, encourage tenderness between them, and favor the education of an authentic freedom. The regulation of births represents one of the aspects of responsible fatherhood and motherhood.

d. Legitimate intentions on the part of the spouses do not justify recourse to morally unacceptable means, like direct sterilization or contraception. (CCC, 2399)

e. Based on abundant scientific researches, the condom does not prevent pregnancy. It actually increases the risk of HIV, which leads to AIDS and dozens of other sexually-transmitted diseases. Given its high failure rate, the Church cannot promote the condom which only creates a false sense of security, leads to promiscuity, the possible spread of AIDS and the breakdown of marriage and family life.

+ Rolando C. Santos, C.M.  
Bishop of Alotau-Sideia - 11 March

# Pope Francis

From page 1...

These ideals since then have reappeared in various ways in his homilies and reflections. The Pope also refused to wear certain things, which traditionally have been closely associated with the Popes and had been worn by all of his predecessors. The first thing he refused to wear was the so-called mozzetta, a short elbow-length cape that covers the shoulders and is buttoned over the breast. He also refused to wear the golden pectoral cross for the Pope. His explanation to the chief master of ceremony: "This one you can have it. I will keep mine which I received when I became a Bishop, a cross made of iron." He not only refused to wear the golden pectoral cross but also the golden Fisherman's ring with the image of St. Peter and the keys. Instead, he opted to put on a silver ring which had been made for Paul VI but which he never liked to wear. Furthermore, Bergoglio refused to wear even the trademark red shoes of the Popes. Another element with which he broke with tradition was his refusal to greet the Cardinals in the Sixtine chapel after his elections while seated on the Papal throne. In the same way he greeted the head of states after his inauguration mass. Standing in front of the main altar in the Basilica of St. Peter's, he greeted each head of state for over an hour. The day after his election Pope Francis went to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore with only two cars, without any official police escort, to pray and thank the Madonna. He told the guards to leave the doors of the Basilica open, so that the faithful may enter the Basilica as well to pray. From there he went to the 'Casa del Clero', a guest house for the clergy, where he stayed before the Conclave, to pick up some personal belongings and personally pay his bill.

#### CLOSE TO EVERYBODY

Within the first few days of his pontificate Pope Francis has broken so many 'rules' and protocols of safety that he must have really given a lot of headache to the security men around him. For instance he went towards the people, greeting them, shaking hands, chatting with them, kissing children and sick people etc. On the day of his first Angelus, he got off from his Papa mobile, went towards a group of Argentinean pilgrims, talked to them, embraced them and blessed them. The guards could not stop him.

These are only some of the anecdotes that have happened during the first days of his pontificate. And I am sure, that he Pope Francis has more surprises to offer to the world. For his inauguration Mass, even the Patriarch of the Constantinople and head of the Orthodox Church was present. Since the great schism of 1054 no Patriarch of Constantinople has ever attended the inauguration Mass of a new Pontiff; so that was really a significant and historic moment for the whole Church. The presence of the Patriarch has been interpreted as new sign of hope and openness towards dialogue and unity between the two sister Churches. Recently the Church in South Korea revealed that many non-Christians have come forward, requesting and showing interest to join the Catholic Church, only because they have been touched by the new style of Pope Francis.

It seems that the new Pope, who prefers to be identified as Bishop of Rome, has become a sign of hope for the Church in general. His gestures and signs of authentic humility and simplicity, his message to go out into the peripheries of the world to spread the love and mercy of God to the neglected and the poor, has captured the attention not only of Christians, but also followers of other religions.

#### LOVE FOR THE CHURCH

I have been really privileged to have witnessed and experienced those historic events in the life of the Church. This experience has strengthened my faith and deepened my love for the Catholic Church. Of course, there are still too many delicate issues which the Church has to tackle and solve but the Lord himself made the promise that he would always be with his Church until the end of time. And that promise has been manifested in the events of the past weeks. Having followed everything with great interest from the very beginning, from Pope Benedict's announcement of retirement on 11th February, through the pre-conclave days, the days of the conclave with the presentation of Pope Francis and now the first weeks of his pontificate we have seen how the Spirit of God works, that God has his own ways and plans for mankind. So far, he has always provided for his Church. In the last decades, the world has seen great personalities guiding the Church of Christ. Some people have already described Blessed Pope John Paul II as the Pope of Hope, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI as the Pope of Faith and Pope Francis as the Pope of Love.

We should all pray for our new Pope, that with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and sustained by the prayers of all the faithful, he may be a Good Shepherd who guides the Church with love and wisdom and brings new life and spirit into the body of the Church.



# The Teaching of the Second Vatican Council ATTITUDE TO PERSONS

By Fr Roger Purcell MSC  
National Director, Commu-  
nity Animation Service

**IN our world today we see individual persons and groups oppressed, persecuted and ignored by the big institutions of government, corporations and the military. There is injustice in poor wages and working conditions, violence and rape, denial of rights and compensation. In the Church too we have the ongoing scandal of sexual abuse and the cover up by authorities.**

The Church in its teaching sees persons as central and the first concern of our attention. Institution and law are not ends in themselves, but to serve persons. The first principle of all our structures and law is that of charity, love of God

and each other.

■ "For the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is, and must be, the human person, which for its part and by its very nature, stands completely in need of social life." [GS25]

■ "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts." [GS1]

"The Church is that part of humanity that accepts the life and love of God and enters

into communion with God, and therefore, into a new relationship of communion among ourselves. It is communion in the Spirit which makes the Church the Body of Christ, temple of the Spirit."

"As a visible reality, the Church has absolute need of structures that express the communion that is its heart and soul, and the values this communion implies. So its structures, its organization and law, must both express and serve communion." [J B Cappellaro: Local Church: Communion and structures]

The Church is a big organization, and as with any such organization, people can be lost to the concerns of the structures and operations. We are called to continually renew our commitment to persons and communities to bring them the Good News, to promote

justice, peace and a better life.

Scripture: Acts 17; 24 "(God) does not make his home in shrines made by human hands ...28... it is in him that we live, and move, and exist." Jn 8: 3-11... "who is guiltless throw the first stone." Mk 2: 23-27 "Sabbath made for man ..."

## Reflection and discussion

Our people and communities are many and varied, some people can be demanding and unreasonable, communities can have conflict and division.

■ In these varied situations, how would you rate our concern for individual persons?

■ How are we challenged to promote life and dignity?

Commentary  
by  
Fr. Victor Roche,  
SVD



## Catholic Bishops prepare Church General Assembly

*A very Happy Easter Time to all of you!*

Every year the bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands gather together for their Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Second Monday after Easter. This year, the AGM will be held in the Conference Centre in Alexishafen, Madang from 8th to 17th April, 2013.

There are 19 bishops from the 19 dioceses of PNG and 4 bishops from the 3 dioceses of Solomon Islands; Archdiocese of Honiara has an Archbishop and an Auxiliary Bishop. There are 23 bishops altogether in this Catholic Bishops Conference, which consists of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands: CBC-PNG/SI.

The AGM is the highest decision making body in the CBC-PNG/SI. The bishops discuss many issues that affect the life and faith of the people of both the countries. They speak up on Social, Moral and Spiritual issues. They issue pastoral letters to the Catholics or a statement on a current National issue. Their prophetic role is admired and respected by most people.

Throughout the world, the Catholic Church celebrates the Year of Faith and New Evangelization from 11 October 2012- 24 November 2013. This year, the theme of the AGM-PNG/SI is: "Year of the Assembly of Faith". The Bishops will discuss issues about the Faith and New Evangelization in PNG/SI. The Assembly of the Catholic Church of PNG/SI will be held from 6th to 11th November, 2013 in Divine Word University, Madang.

The Catholic Bishops of PNG/SI invite all the Catholic Faithful of both the countries to actively participate in "the Year of the Assembly of Faith" and the Conference Pastoral Plan of PNG/SI through their respective representatives.

## Adult literacy in the parish? Why not!

By Andrew Mexie

St. John the Apostle Literacy School in Tokarara, NCD opened its doors to help people, who cannot speak, read or write English and operate basic mathematics in 2006. The school was first sponsored by Caritas Australia through the Catholic Women Association of the Archdiocese of Port Moresby.

Adult Literacy teacher Margaret Frank says that, when the school began, there were 36 students having classes under the trees, inside the church or at the old parish priest house. The first batch of students graduated in 2008 and most of them went out seeking employment and worked in small companies.

With the subsequent overhaul of the parish infrastructures, since 2009 the school is hosted in the new Parish Pastoral Centre with proper classrooms, chairs, tables and blackboards. Over the years the school accepted more and more students, including non-Catholics, from all over the National Capital District. There are presently 22 students with three volunteer teachers supported by the students themselves according to their financial capability.

Young people may take inspiration from Apo Jeffry. A very poor teenager from Goroka and a settler of the June Valley suburb in Port Moresby, he graduated in 2008 from the literacy school. He was then accepted for Grade 7 and 8 at nearby St. John's Primary School, completed his Grade 9 and 10 through FODE in 2012, and is now attending Grade 11 at nothing less than Jubilee Catholic Secondary School in Hohola, NCD

"The school is open to anyone, both young and old throughout Port Moresby,

who is keen to learn literacy and numeracy", says teacher Margaret Frank, a resilient and tireless cancer survivor, who has put all her remaining time and energies at the service of adult education.

Margaret Frank with adult literacy students at St. John's – Tokarara, NCD  
(Photo Andrew Mexie)



# CHILD NEGLECT. SHAME ON THE ADULTS!

By Bishop Rolando Santos CM  
- Alotau

Bishop Rolando Santos CM of Alotau gave the key note address to a Symposium on Child Protection for Church and government Milne Bay social operators on 4 March 2013. Catholic Reporter interviewed him on the main highlights of his presentation.

### Bishop Santos, what is the situation of children in Milne Bay province?

BISHOP SANTOS. About 40% of the population in Milne Bay are children, or below 18 years old. They are not the scourge of Milne Bay or Papua New Guinea, but the strength and hope of the Church and society. They will provide the man-power needed to run our Church, country, government, business, factories ... However, many of these children are in danger and suffer harm due to parental neglect and the neglect of society, and suffer from maltreatment due to widespread abuse whether physical, psychological, emotional or sexual. Other problems are child mortality (now reduced but still high), malnutrition, incest and abnormality due to overcrowded houses where there is no privacy and no separate rooms for sleeping. A number of parents and teachers do not know how to properly discipline children: they use physical and verbal violence. Parental and school neglect is also there: recently a girl dismissed from school during a storm, crossed a stream and was swept away by the current into the sea. Good that there is now a free school tuition fee policy. But there are still many children unable to go to school, because of lack of facilities, teachers, and transportation.

### You seem to point at the parents' lack of skills and dedication in educating children...

BISHOP SANTOS. Our young people, in the process of maturing and finding their way, are in need of support and guidance but in fact they often experience a lack of understanding from parents and eld-



ers. To that, you add peer pressure, mass media influence, and experimentation with alcohol, drugs, and sex, possibly a broken family background, lack of education, etc. Our young people also tend to form their own anti-authority sub culture expressed through vandalism, graffiti, and various other forms of gang behavior. Our youth often have high ideals but they are frustrated by not having a suitable outlet to express their enthusiasm and initiative. It is a stable Christian marriage, where couples are faithful to each other, that provides the best protection for the child. Having a child outside marriage and then entering a second or third relationship only increases the risk for neglect, insufficient love and care, and even abuse of children.

### What do Catholics believe about child protection?

BISHOP SANTOS. Child protection is not something new to the Church. If the Church or the diocese involves itself in child protection, it is not just because AUSAID

or the UN or the PNG government says so, or because of the funding we want to get from those entities. The Church protects the child because of her faith, the long-standing teaching of the Scriptures and the Church tradition. The 2004 National Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands has children as one of its target priorities. It has a section entitled, 'Children: Loved and Cared for'. This is what it says: "We want to ensure that all our children, schooled and unschooled, boys and girls, experience love and care, especially by receiving an education that will enable them to lead a fulfilled and happy life. This means that we must, in partnership with government, provide them with a holistic education covering physical, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. Parents have the primary role in this, followed by committed and effective formal and non-formal teachers who can provide an excellent education especially in the faith."

### What about the unborn child...

BISHOP SANTOS. The child we are talking about is anyone below 18 years of age, and includes the unborn child in the womb of the mother, whose life starts from conception. It is the constant teaching of the Church that human life begins at conception, and any intervention to prevent that life from taking its natural course to grow and to flourish is a sin and a crime, a violation of the right of the unborn to life. Abortion, at any stage of human life, from the time of conception, is a serious sin and a crime against the right to life of the unborn child.

### What about contraception?

BISHOP SANTOS. Openness to life and fecundity is a gift, a purpose of marriage, for conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. So the Church, which is on the side of life, teaches that it is necessary that each and every marriage act remains ordered per se to the procreation of human life. This is the reason why the Church cannot be involved in teaching children about the condom and contraceptives. It might give the wrong signal that the Church is supporting such measures which she considers intrinsically evil for separating the two essential purposes of the conjugal act: the unitive (mutual love) and procreative (bearing of children). To counteract HIV-AIDS and over-population what is needed is not condom but abstinence, premarital chastity, fidelity to one's spouse, and responsible parenthood.

### The government thinks otherwise...

BISHOP SANTOS. The State has a responsibility for its citizens' well-being. In this capacity it is legitimate for it to intervene to orient the demography of the population. This can be done by means of objective and respectful information, but certainly not by authoritarian, coercive measures.

The State may not legitimately usurp the initiative of spouses, who

have the primary responsibility for the procreation and education of their children. In this area, it is not authorized to employ means contrary to the moral law. Parents have primary responsibility to educate their children.

Called to give life, spouses share in the creative power and fatherhood of God.

Married couples should regard it as their proper mission to transmit human life, and to educate their children; and also to choose the school for their children according to their faith. The policy of 'zoning' is a violation of this right. Parents also need to be educated so as to be able to educate properly and serve as role models to their children.

### What are the Catholic Church's own policies and guidelines on child protection?

BISHOP SANTOS. First of all we uphold the stand by which every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and protected from any kind of harm, neglect or abuse, whether physical, psychological, emotional or sexual. Every child is to be given a comprehensive care and protection: a stable and happy family composed of a father and a mother (not gay couples), food, medicines, health, education, shelter, security, community, family, love and affection. For the above reason, the Church in Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands has also come up with Measures of Prevention (appendix 3), and Protocol One for Right Relationships in Ministry to protect the child from sexual abuse in its own institutions.

The tragedy of sexual abuse of minor perpetrated by Christians, especially when done so by members of the clergy, is a source of great shame and enormous scandal.

When incidents of sexual abuse arise, the Church must be able to respond in a way that shows the compassion, reconciliation, forgiveness and justice of Jesus himself, both towards the victim, the communities affected, and the offender. (G.L.)

## UNAIDS congratulates newly elected Pope Francis

UNAIDS looks forward to continued partnership with the Catholic Church in responding to HIV.

GENEVA, 14 March 2013—The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) congratulates His Holiness Pope Francis on his election as the new Pope of the Catholic Church. "I give my warm wishes to Pope Francis as he assumes the papacy. His unwavering commitment to serve people most in need is an inspiration to us all," said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. "I look forward to working with His Holiness so that the Catholic Church can advance the AIDS response and ensure the dignity of people most affected by HIV." UNAIDS works closely with faith based organisations including the Catholic Church, which provides support to millions of people living with HIV around the world. Statistics from the Vatican in 2012 indicate that Catholic Church-related organizations provide approximately a quarter of all HIV treatment, care, and support throughout the world and run more than 5000 hospitals, 18000 dispensaries and 9000 orphanages, many involved in AIDS-related activities. UNAIDS values its close working relationship with the Catholic Church and the Holy See, particularly on critical issues such as the elimination of new HIV infections in children and keeping their mothers alive, as well as increasing access to antiretroviral medication. In 2009, UNAIDS established a strategic framework to strengthen partnerships between UNAIDS and faith based organisations. The framework outlines the need for global and national religious leaders to take supportive public action in the AIDS response. "The aids response is not just about science, but also social transformation which cannot be achieved without engaging religious leaders and faith based organisations," added Mr Sidibé.

