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DEATH PENALTY RUSHED

By Fr. Giorgio Licini PIME
Catholic Reporter

The people of Papua New Guinea and expatriates living in the country have recently rebelled against the increasing level of crime. High profile cases of murder, rape, sorcery killing, government corruption, police brutality, jail break, mismanagement of educational institutions, child sexual abuse by family members have caused shock and disbelief. Women and students have taken to the streets and shouted to the country that enough is enough!

The suffering and loss of victims of these crimes is immeasurable and will remain untold. Loved ones will never have their dead back. Abused children will never recover their peace of mind, let alone their physical integrity. People bashed up by fellow citizens or men in uniform will forever contemplate their scars and feel bad. Money stolen from health, education and infrastructure projects

has already tragically deprived individuals and communities of their future.

It is commendable that on the 28th of May the government with overwhelming support of parliament has repealed the Sorcery Act of 1971, which was somehow condoning the crimes committed by those killing people suspected of witchcraft. Now any killing will be called murder as it should be. It is also good that the parliament has amended the Criminal Code Act to approve longer jail term sentences for any form of stealing. Perhaps they should try to make the effects of the amendment retroactive and then see how many Members of the House find themselves sleeping at the new high security prison also being planned for hard core criminals at Manus Island or some other remote place of the country.

Yes! The problem so far has not been the lack of laws, though it is good news that they have been toughened, but the poor implementation of the laws, and the systematic breaking of them by people including lead-

ers. As a suspicious proof of it, people and media frequently mention large real estate properties in Cairns and elsewhere in Australia owned by PNG citizens who never had other business in life other than politics. How do they explain? They never do.

There is some disquiet though in the fact that, along with tougher penalties, on 28th May the PNG Parliament has also expanded the application of the death penalty to some of the crimes mentioned above and vowed to actually carry it out (the last time was in 1954) by all means, including hanging or firing squad. The vote in parliament has come without the general public consultation that many sectors of society were asking for.

Beside all the moral, religious and social considerations the move actually has the possibility of defeating its purpose. It will give the government an opportunity "to do something" and achieve nothing. By the implementation of the death penalty, the citizens will have the superficial impression that the government is serious about fighting crime;

but by achieving that goal the government will not feel under pressure to tackle the root causes of it.

The implementation of death penalty, however, will have at least one advantage. It will attract external attention. Amnesty International has already condemned the move. When the first convict will be executed in this so-called "Christian country" the eyes of the world will all be on PNG. The Pope and other world religious leaders will appeal for mercy; the United Nations too; then the Red Cross and Red Crescent; Australia and the other countries in the Pacific...

The advantage is that other things will also come under scrutiny: police brutality, corruption, sorcery beliefs and practices, neglect of the rural areas and the urban poor... It will be at the cost of the reputation of PNG, for sure! But is it true that the only way forward for the country is to be shamed in front of the world?

If the answer is "Yes", then implement the death penalty!

Late Bishop Patrick Taval, MSC - Catholic Diocese of Kerema

Former East New Britain Governor and now PNG Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Leo Dion paid tribute to late Bishop Patrick Taval MSC of Kerema by recalling the work done with him for the resettlement of the population in the years following the volcanic eruption of Mt. Tavurvur in Rabaul in 1994.

Bishop Taval became Auxiliary Bishop there in 1999 after serving in pastoral work for about 12 years and as Novice Master of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) for four years.

He was transferred to Kerema, where he became the third bishop of the diocese on 13 March 2010.

In his eulogy MSC Provincial Superior Fr. George Kami sum-



Late Bishop Patrick Taval, MSC.

marized the life of the late Bishop as that of "a faithful Missionary of the Sacred Heart, a diligent parish priest, a methodical novice master, a great friend and a humble and committed person". Bishop Taval was farewelled by a dozen of Bishops and hundreds of priests, religious and lay people at St. Joseph parish in Port Moresby on Friday, 3 May.

He had died of complications in the early morning of Monday 29 April, at the Pacific International Hospital in the capital city after being admitted for a few days.

The remains of Bishop Patrick Taval now rest at the small cemetery of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Bomana.

DWU students travelling to Rome

Fourteen students and two staff members (the Chaplain and an Assistant Dean) from Divine Word University (DWU) in Madang will be travelling on a pilgrimage to Rome on 13-23 June this year for the Year of Faith.

They hope to pray with the Pope at his usual morning Mass at Casa Santa Marta at the Vatican. A request in this sense has been forwarded through the Apostolic Nunciature channels in May.

"We hope the Pope and his staff will consider the distance we come from and this once in a life time opportunity we have to be at the heart of the Church", DWU Chaplain Fr. Giorgio Licini PIME says on behalf of the students.

The group from Arts, Health and Business faculties will visit Vatican City, Rome, Assisi, and Nettuno to pray at the tomb of St. Maria Goretti, who is patron of the youth in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

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“Give me something to drink”

Towards the Catholic Church General Assembly
Madang, 5-11 Nov. 2013

By Fr. Roger Purcell MSC
General Assembly Coordinator

At this time the Church presents to us two great events which will give us direction in the coming years: the Year of Faith (11 Oct. 2012 - 24 Nov. 2013) and the New Evangelization.

In the Year of Faith we remember, celebrate and renew ourselves in the spirit and teaching of the Second Vatican Council (1962-'65). This is also our preparation for the New Evangelization which will take us into the future.

The recent Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands for the Year of Faith speaks of this: “For the Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands the international Year of Faith is a special time for a national Assembly of Faith when the two events can overlap and mutually enrich each other. The Assembly is an opportunity to look again at the goals of the current PNG National Pastoral Plan and to discern what have been the major achievements, and where the gaps are.”

The Assembly of Faith, the Journey of Faith

In the coming months as we journey together towards the General Assembly in Madang in November, we will prepare ourselves for this event in which a few delegates from each diocese will represent all our people.

In his letter, *Porta Fidei* (The Door of Faith), Pope Benedict emphasized the “rediscovery of faith”, and that “the whole Church could reappropriate “exact knowledge of the faith, so as to reinvigorate it, purify it, confirm it, and confess it”; he urges us to “deepen” and “intensify” our faith.”

In both *Porta Fidei* and the Message from the Synod of Bishops on New Evangelization (Oct. 2012) the story of the Samaritan woman at the well is a key reference, and which is rich in meaning and message [Jn 4:5-42]. So

we take as our theme Jesus’ words, “Give me something to drink”.

Our Assembly then will be like the well where, with Jesus we say, “Give me something to drink”. Together in our preparation in the coming months and as we assemble we seek to drink from the bucket of faith, to deepen and intensify, so that we can launch out to evangelize the world around us in a new way.

It is important also that we carry with this the underlying theology and spirituality of communion and evangelization which will take us on mission into the future. Let us drink first to gain strength and depth of faith, and then to launch out to others in the Church and the world.

New Evangelization

Our General Assembly will be the preparation to take up the task of New Evangelization. In the 1990s Pope John Paul II announced the beginning of a “new era of evangelization” for the Church. In a changing world it is vital to our life and mission as Church to renew our thinking and strategy in bringing the Gospel to the world.

The Oct. 2012 Synod of Bishops meeting in Rome said:

“The Bishops of the whole world gathered by the invitation of the Bishop of Rome, Pope Benedict XVI, to reflect on “the new evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith”, wish to address all of you spread throughout the world in order to sustain and direct the preaching and teaching of the Gospel in the diverse contexts in which the Church finds herself today to give witness.”

We live in a critical time in the world, and therefore a critical time for the Church. We have the message the world seeks, we have the mission; we need to renew our efforts and strategies to meet the challenge. We are called to do this together as the People of God.

HEALING THE BODY BY HEALING THE SOUL

By Bishop Rolando Santos CM - Alotau

Reflection given on the second day of the Milne Bay Provincial Health Review Program Meeting (29 April – 3 May) based on the healing of the paralyzed man (Mk 2:1-12) at the presence of more than one hundred provincial government health authorities, health secretaries of different Churches, nurses, doctors, and health care workers.

Health is a precious gift of God which needs to be promoted, preserved and protected. All the necessary means, resources and energy should be dedicated to this so that more and more people may benefit from it.

Unfortunately today many of the world’s population, including here in Milne Bay Province, have no access to the resources they need to satisfy their basic need for health care. This continues to remain a big problem.

It is necessary that we all work together with greater commitment at all levels to ensure that the right to health is rendered effective by furthering access to basic health care (Benedict XVI, Message to Health Care Workers, 2010).

Jesus’ healing of the paralytic (Mk 2:1-12) reveals to us four things which can help us provide adequate health care for everyone.

1. Collaboration and partnership. Just like the four men who carried the paralytic to Jesus for healing, we need to work together and partner with all people with good will so as to bring health care service to everyone, especially the poorest and most neglected of the sick.

However, we also need to know who we are partnering with. There are NGOs which openly promote “safe abortion”. Whether safe or unsafe, abortion is always the killing of a human being. This has no place in a Christian country like PNG where abortion is illegal. We need to work together to guarantee protection and health care to every human person from the time of its conception to its natural end.

2. Creativity and imagination. Just like what the four men did, making a hole on the roof, and lowering down the paralytic to the place where Jesus was, we should exercise creativity and imagination to bring health care to the remotest and seemingly most impossible situations.

Let us remember that every person, no matter what his condition, color, religion or status in life,

has a right to basic health care. We should so plan and organize things so that medicines and health care services reach the remotest villages in the province.

3. Faith. Jesus took notice of the faith of the men who carried the paralytic. What is faith? Faith is a new way of looking at things from the eyes of God. One who has faith looks at the sick and sees the image of God, of Christ, or at the very least, recognizes in that sick person a brother, a sister, a mother, your own child. It is this faith that helps the health worker to serve the sick with great dedication, compassion and love. Without faith and love, there can be no effective delivery of health care services to the sick, especially those in the remotest places.

4. Sin. After Jesus saw the faith of the four men, he said to the paralytic “your sins are forgiven”. Sin is the root cause of suffering, sickness and death. One of the more common reasons for the spread of HIV-AIDS is not the lack of condoms, but rather ignorance of proper human and Christian values, and lack of self-discipline, especially of the heart. If only there were more responsible parents, less broken families, less corruption in government and more education and employment opportunities, just wages, proper housing, generous and dedicated doctors and nurses – in other words, LESS SIN, there would be less sickness and death.

Let us pray that God will help us to be more faithful servants, and that at the end we would hear these consoling words of our Lord: Come blessed of my father. Enter into the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat. ... I was sick and you visited me. ... For as long as you did it to one of the least of my brothers or sisters, you did it to me. (Mt 25:31-40)

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, help us to realize that health is your precious gift to us ... a basic right of each and every individual person. Help us to be responsible stewards to our neighbors, especially the poor sick, to serve them with unselfish love and commitment as your Son, Jesus Christ, did. Bless all of our partners in the health care service, and help us to collaborate with them humbly, trustingly, and respectfully. Give us the creativity, imagination and generosity we need to serve the sick with love and joy. We ask you this through Christ, Our Lord.



DWU vice president student affairs, Br. Andrew Simpson (left) handing over the award to Live & Learn representatives, Siwa Kupe Matawe and Marlene Delis.

Children’s rights advocate wins DWU-UNESCO media award

A non-government organisation advocating the rights of children has won the 2013 Communication and Development Award jointly sponsored by Divine Word University (DWU) and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Kimbe-based *Live & Learn* received the award from the Communication Arts Department of DWU during the World Media Freedom Day commemoration at the Madang campus on Friday, 3rd May, 2013. The presentation of the annual award was the highlight of the day marked by the University led by its Faculty of Arts.

Communication Arts lecturer, Br. Michael McManus spoke of the im-

portance of children knowing the rights to participate in development.

He said children are keen to exercise their rights and participate actively in development when they know their rights. “Children’s knowledge of their own rights, according to the articles of the United Nations Constitution on the Rights of Children, gives them a sense of urgency to participate in their own development as well as the development of families, schools and communities,” Br McManus said. He commended *Live & Learn* for using communication to advocate for children’s rights.

The Kimbe-based organisation was recognized for their efforts in

using media to address children’s rights and issues. Br McManus described the work of *Live & Learn* as something unique and one that has changed lives.

Live & Learn Training and Capacity Building Officer, Marlene Delis said the organisation is proud but humbled to receive the award.

“The award is a bonus for children in PNG, and we are encouraged to invite children to use media positively,” Ms Delis said. She thanked UNESCO and DWU for recognising the efforts of *Live & Learn* in empowering children. (dwu.ac.pg)

A Poem and prayer for all women and men killed in the name of sorcery

By LAPIEH LANDU
DWU PNG Studies graduate

Dear Lord,

They have come
I hear them from a distance
Not their voices
Not their rage
But the clanging of their machetes

They have come
I feel them from within my concealment
Their wrath
Their verdict
The exuberance of destruction

They have come
Not to hear my defence
Not my plea
Nor my appeal

But to pass judgment

They are here
They circle my haven
I am afraid
I waver
Do I die today Lord?

They are here
They chant deception
Word so cruel
Lyrics of abhor
Devouring my soul

They are here
Shelter me Lord
Wrap me with your tenderness
Murder my angst
Pardon my transgression O Lord

They are here
The smell of smoke
Seeping through these hatches
Is this my fate dear Lord?
To burn to dust

They've taken me
Everything is but a blur
I see face to face with the earth
Battered by the soil
Dragged to death's pit. Oh God!

They've taken me
Stripping my garments
Stripping my dignity
Bruised; defeated
Do I die as you did, Lord?

They've taken me
My eyes blood stained
My flesh broken

No aid, no humanity
Did you create them too, Lord?

They've triumphed
My back against this stake
Stones, sticks and words
Pitched, shoved, cursed
Make me numb, oh Lord!

They've triumphed
As blood seeps from this flesh
And tears from my soul
I long for this to end
I crave for a voice, dear Lord!

They've triumphed
Take me now Lord
For I wish not to endure
For I feel no more
I am no warlock, dear God

Submitted as an entry for the Crocodile Prize Literary Competition
2013 – PNG Attitude

Remote West parishioners now grow rice

By Fr. Yohanes Werang CM

Children, young people, elderly, pioneers and some missionaries gathered to celebrate St. John's Parish Golden Jubilee in Matkomnai, Daru-Kiunga Diocese on 12th May 2013. Parish priest Fr. Andreas Medi Wijaya, CM said during the Mass that "fifty years ago, when the first missionaries came to our land, they brought the light to us and to the Awin tribe. We have now schools and health centers; and leaders have been trained for the

communities".

Laurance Duang, the coordinator of the Golden Jubilee committee, echoed the same words and added that, "recently we were even taught by our parish priest how to grow rice. Now we harvest a lot of rice". Fr. Andreas revealed that fifteen Small Christian Communities now plant rice in their land.

The celebration was preceded by a three day spiritual crusade with dramatizations on how the early missionaries brought the light to Matkomnai, which is about fifty kilometers north of Kiunga in the West-

ern province. Young people played ground dances and gestured how their ancestors welcomed the Bible as the Word of God, carried the candle as the light of Christ, and the Cross.

Diocesan Bishop Gilles Cote', SMM acknowledged the sacrifices of the early missionaries and praised the people who invited and allowed them to establish the Catholic Church in Matkomnai. He said that "this golden jubilee is a celebration of faith and life, a journey from darkness to light".



The Golden Jubilee celebration at Matkomnai, Western province on 12 May 2013.

Pope Francis@Pontifex - May 2013 Tweets



29 May: The Church is born from the supreme act of love on the Cross, from Jesus' open side. The Church is a family where we love and are loved.

28: Dear young people, the Church expects great things of you and your generosity. Don't be afraid to aim high.

26: Every time we give in to selfishness and say "No" to God, we spoil his loving plan for us.

24: We all have in our hearts some areas of unbelief. Let us say to the Lord: I believe! Help my unbelief.

24: Miracles happen. But prayer is needed! Prayer that is courageous, struggling and persevering, not prayer that is a mere formality.

23: On the feast of Mary Help of Christians I join the Catholics in China who trust in the protection of Our Lady of Sheshan and I pray for them.

23: Do I take the Gospel message of reconciliation and love into the places where I live and work?

22: To live according to the Gospel is to fight against selfishness. The Gospel is forgiveness and peace; it is love that comes from God.

21: I am close to the families of all who died in the Oklahoma tornado, especially those who lost young

children. Join me in praying for them.

19: The Holy Spirit transforms and renews us, creates harmony and unity, and gives us courage and joy for mission.

18: We must learn from Mary, and we must imitate her unconditional readiness to receive Christ in her life.

17: Are our lives truly filled with the presence of God? How many things take the place of God in my life each day?

16: We cannot be part-time Christians! We should seek to live our faith at every moment of every day.

15: It is God who gives life. Let us respect and love human life, especially vulnerable life in a mother's womb.

13: Am I faithful to Christ in my daily life? Am I able to "show" my faith with respect but also with courage?

12: Let us pray for the many Christians in the world who still suffer persecution and violence. May God grant them the courage of fidelity.

10: The Holy Spirit helps us to view others with fresh eyes, seeing them always as brothers and sisters in Jesus, to be respected and loved.

9: The Holy Spirit brings to our hearts a most precious gift: pro-

found trust in God's love and mercy.

8: I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance, says Jesus. This is where true wealth is found, not in material things!

7: Do not be content to live a mediocre Christian life: walk with determination along the path of holiness.

6: Let us ask our Lord to help us bear shining witness to his mercy and his love in every area of our Christian lives.

5: Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she bears witness to God's love. Be missionaries of God's tenderness!

4: Let us ask Our Lady to teach us how to live out our faith in our daily lives and to make more room for the Lord.

3: It would be a good idea, during May, for families to say the Rosary together. Prayer strengthens family life.

2: My thoughts turn to all who are unemployed, often as a result of a self-centered mindset bent on profit at any cost.

1: Dear young friends, learn from Saint Joseph. He went through difficult times, but he always trusted, and he knew how to overcome adversity.

Catholic education on a new path of creativity and cooperation

By Sr. Helen Warman OLSH

The Annual Catholic Education Secretaries (CESs) and Christian Education Coordinators' (CECs) Conference was held from the 22nd – 26th April at the DBTI Emmaus Centre in Port Moresby. The theme for this year Conference followed that of the Principals' Conference, "Strengthening our Catholic Faith through partnership".

Thirty six of the forty one CESs and CECs nationwide were present. Tribute was paid to those members who, since the last Conference, have retired or resigned. Special mention was made of Mr.

Sylvester Ganisi, the former National Catholic Education Secretary, who after eight years of service has moved onto other activities associated with the Catholic Bishops Conference Secretariat.

The week long programme began with an opening Eucharistic celebration led by Fr. Victor Roche SVD, Secretary General of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands.

Speakers came from both the Catholic section of Education as well as the government Department of Education. Such topics as Catholic Identity, the Year of Faith, Child Protection and Leadership

were the topics covered by Church representatives.

The Department, after an opening talk by Mr. John Joseph, for the Acting Secretary, Mr Luke Taita, covered: Special Education, Tuition Free Education and Curriculum – exit OBE.

Wednesday afternoon excursion centres were St. Therese Primary School at Badili and Fincorp Haus for those with employment issues to address. The visitors to Badili were greatly impressed by the discipline and order of the school and the behaviour of staff and students alike.

On Thursday afternoon the CESs and CECs broke into their

own groups and worked on their own issues. While the CESs had more from departmental representatives; the CECs looked again at Thomas Groom and his Praxis Approach to the teaching of Religious Education.

An effort was made to discover how true it is, in our situation, that his principle of imagination is not used enough in religion classes. Through drama, examples of using imagination in a gospel setting were shown. A sample of Grade 5-8 Dare to Love Pupil's Book was also looked at.

Each evening the different Regions took turns in giving Diocesan reports. These and the sharing

and discussion showed the different character and situation of the many Dioceses in which the CESs and CECs work.

Fr John Willio, MSC celebrated the closing Mass for the group after which speeches of thanks and appreciation were given.

All agreed that this year's Conference, with its mixture of new and old, as so clearly seen in the newly appointed Mr. Joseph Direkoro as National Catholic Education Secretary and the reappearance of Sr. Helen Warman, OLSH as acting National Christian Education Coordinator, had a special flavour and spirit of peace, joy and enthusiasm.

Solomon Islands youth excited by practical learning

By Fr. Stephen Te'e Gizo Cathedral Parish

A parish youth leadership training program was organized and held at St. Peter's Technical Center, Gizo, Solomon Islands from April 28th to May 5th 2013. Thirty-four young people from all parishes of Gizo diocese participated in it.

Eight novices and a priest from the Dominican Fathers, three Novices and two sisters from the Dominican Sisters of the Rosary and a pastoral year seminarian of Gizo diocese also participated in the training. It was designed and run by Fr. Shanthi Chacko Puthussery PIME, the Secretary of the Commission for Youth and Laity of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

During the training stages of life and areas of formation were explained with the learning materials, Doing by Learning and Learning by Doing – 2012 and 2013. These were prepared for the youth of the twenty-two Catholic Dioceses of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands by Fr. Shanthi himself. As a Secretary for the Commission for Youth and Laity he has already run the same workshops in 11 dioceses of Papua New Guinea and now in Gizo, Solomon Islands.

"It was a very special workshop - Charlie Tapia from Gizo cathedral parish said, - because more than an intellectual exercise it was a practical training and learning of skills such as every day morning meditation, celebration of the Eucharist, Sacrament of



Gizo youth on session with Fr. Shanthi (June 2013).

Reconciliation, Rosary procession, practicing 'bamboo dance', 'clapping dance', drama, making charts and flowers and finally presenting everything to the students of Gizo Secondary

School as an outreach program". The Dominican novices felt that "it was a blessing to have such training in Gizo for the young people"; and they wish it could be held in every

parish of the Solomon Islands to positively motivate all youth.

All the participants were very much challenged by the training and they sincerely thanked Fr. Shanthi

for his availability. Diocesan Bishop Luciano Capelli, SDB also thanked Fr. Shanthi and Fr. Stephen Te'e, the youth chaplain for the diocese of Gizo, through email from his holidays in Italy.

Caritas Australia slams PNG death penalty

CARITAS Australia, the international aid and development organisation of the Catholic Church, has condemned recent actions in the parliament in Papua New Guinea (PNG) that could revive the use of the death penalty.

Caritas has more than dozen programs in PNG aimed at helping the most marginalised, focusing on a range of issues such as; health, education and HIV/AIDS.

Caritas Australia CEO Jack de Groot said the death penalty would equate to state-sponsored violence

in PNG. "This move is a backward step and is only going to send a message that the state of PNG is tolerant of violence," Mr de Groot said. "Human life is sacred and every life is precious. This is not going to change anything, because we know there is no point in using violence as a means of preventing violence."

Mr de Groot said PNG's struggle with violent crime was a reality that needed to be confronted.

"There is an urgent need to address PNG's struggle with violent

crime and agencies like ours are working toward that end on the ground, but there's no evidence that state-sponsored homicide in the form of the death penalty will act as a deterrent." Mr de Groot added that the death penalty in other countries was usually carried out against the poor, illiterate and those without access to legal counsel.

"The poor and marginalised should always be protected and allowed to be architects of their own development. This will not allow

that to happen, instead it will put the most marginalised in PNG in situations where they will suffer and their lives will become more difficult," Mr de Groot said.

Mr de Groot said PNG was an emerging economy and an important player within the Pacific region, but many challenges remain such as poverty and unemployment, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, high child and maternal mortality rates, law and order issues and low rates of children accessing education.

"The work of the church is to

bring peace, reconciliation and accountability through important development initiatives and working with communities in PNG is holistic and effective." "Given Australia's historical connection with PNG and the fact that it's one of the largest recipients of our foreign aid money, we need to make sure the voices of the poorest are heard loud and clear on this issue."

Caritas Australia works in partnership with local communities in over 35 countries throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America, Indigenous Australia and the Pacific.