



# 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

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## The Revolution of Social Networks

5 May 2013 - 47th World Communications Day

By Fr. Giorgio Licini PIME  
CBC Communications

**THE Annual General Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (CBC) took place this year in Alexishafen, Madang on 8-17 April.**

At the very beginning of their activities the Bishops wanted to spend one day (11 April) to learn about New Evangelization and Media. CBC Secretary for Social Communications, Fr. Giorgio Licini PIME and CBC Secretary for Social Concerns, Fr. Phil Gibbs SVD, introduced the topic referring in a particular way to the 2013 World Communications Day Message by Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI, "Social Networks: Portals of Truth and Faith: New Spaces for Evangelization". The World Communications Day is being celebrated on Sunday, 5 May in PNG and Solomon Islands, one week ahead of the regular schedule, since our two countries will be celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on 12-19 May.

While everybody is familiar with traditional media (newspapers, radio, TV, etc.), the theme of Social Networks may look premature and distant for Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. The Social Networks are not autonomous objects such as a newspaper or radio station; rather they reside on the

World Wide Web also known as the Internet. This is a digital connection which extends all around the world with a number of computers and mobile devices as connecting tools. Social Networks, therefore, appear mostly on the screen of a computer or mobile phone. They connect people with the unique possibility of simultaneous and widespread interaction. On the Social Networks you don't only "say" something as you would do on radio or TV, but you converse, chat, discuss, gather people, friends and groups...

The most popular Social Network is Facebook. It was brought about less than ten years ago by an American university student.

Now about one billion people around the world are on Facebook sharing life experiences with their friends, selling products, advocating freedom and political change, promoting and spreading religious values and messages... Countless dioceses, parishes, religious congregations, youth Christian groups... have a space on Facebook. The Vatican and the recent Popes have pages on Facebook. Pope Francis got five million 'followers' on Twitter, another very popular network, in the first four weeks after his election.

While most of PNG remains rural and poorly connected to the Internet, in the cities and among professionals and students the presence on Social

Networks, especially Facebook, is widespread and growing. For them being online is just one of the daily activities, such as going to school, applying for a job, shopping, or going to the parish for prayer or gatherings...

That's why Emeritus Pope Benedict said in the message he released on 24 January 2013 that the Social Networks are good (Portals of Truth and Faith) unless 'we' corrupt them with damaging contents; not only, but they are also places where we are called to witness the Good News (New Spaces for Evangelization).

Those who care for people need to be on the Social Networks; because people are there as they are in the schools, hospitals, churches, offices, street and slums.... Words of inspiration and encouragement can be extended through the Social Networks; catechetical pages can be developed; Bible sharing groups are already mushrooming around the Sunday readings or other contents of the Scripture... Sharp Talk, The PNG News Page and other similar groups constantly debate social, political and religious issue regarding Papua New Guinea on Facebook.

What a chance to convey ideas and information otherwise precluded to many, and reach out to people otherwise impossible to meet!

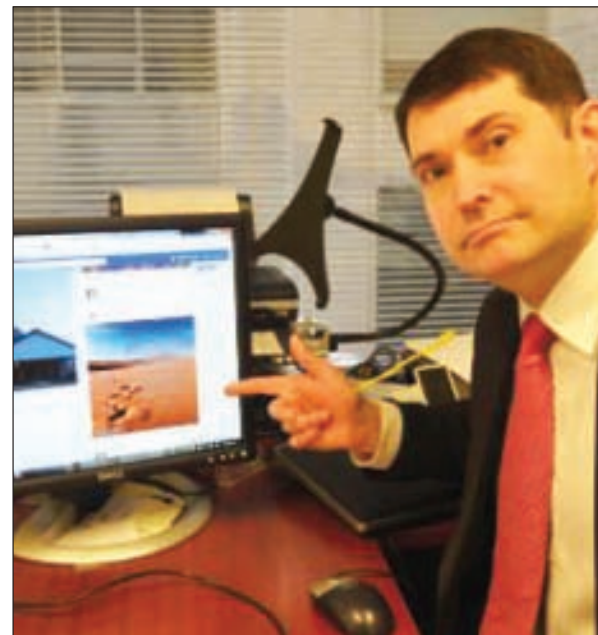
## Privacy on Social Media? Impossible!

*Only good behaviour!*

ONLINE platforms are an extension of our own personalities so the advice would be to consider anything posted online, whether it be a photo, comment or story, as something you'd be willing to share with your friends, your mom, your parish priest or pastor. Faith, charity and love should be in the forefront of anything we post.

But even before one considers whether or not to make a particular post, you must first determine why your online presence exists. In other words, before considering the tone of your online voice you should establish who your audience is. For some, it's to promote a business or product, for others it's a corporate page that highlights their work day-to-day and for others it's more of a network of friends. Depending on the profile the content will be impacted accordingly.

Expressions of gratitude or appreciation towards others for acts of kindness, praising leadership and sharing professional articles or photos that help tell a compelling story in an interesting way are examples of safe posts, regardless of the intention of the profile. Things to avoid include everything that can be conveyed as belittling, destructive or malicious comments which do not engage intelligent conversation.



You should also consider the impact a personal profile can have when job hunting in the future.

Everything you post online is recorded, this is called a "digital footprint". Your digital footprint can be traced for many years to come, and it can help or hinder your career. You'd be surprised at how much you can learn about someone before they even walk into a job interview. Employers using material from social networking sites is a common practice. Given current business models and habits, it is exceedingly difficult in practice for individuals to maintain privacy or effective control over the access to and distribution of personal information.

Even material that's been removed from your profile may still appear in Google. While the mentality that online is forever may be a slight misconception, it isn't completely far fetched.

Once information is posted to a social networking site, it is very difficult to delete it and assure that it is gone.

The simple solution is for individuals to be more careful when deciding what material to attach to their personal online profile by remaining mindful of the potential audience. You need to treat every post that goes out there in cyberspace as the potential for a headline on the front page of a newspaper. (*catholicregister.org* - 22 Feb 2013)



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### Depression

THE April edition of the Canadian Journal of Psychiatry carries the results of a research: Incidence of clinical depression was 22% lower among those who attended religious services at least monthly, compared with those who never attended. Interestingly, those who attended frequently had the least depression, while those who attended occasionally were in the mid-range; those who never attended had the highest incidence; those who identified themselves as spiritual but not religious did not experience any health benefit.

# WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

## ASCENSION – PENTECOST

12 – 19 MAY 2013

*‘What does God require of us?’  
(cf. Micah 6:6-8)*

**SINCE 1968 churches round the world have used a common theme and Scripture readings for a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity that has become an important part of the ecumenical movement. It has helped Christians from different churches to pray together and, in that way, to come together more closely in faith. In many countries this is done during the week before the feast of the conversion of St. Paul on January 25th. In Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands as well as in Australia and other countries in the southern hemisphere it is done between Ascension and Pentecost. But the search for unity is not limited to one week. We must pray always for the full unity that Jesus wanted.**

This year the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has been prepared by an ecumenical group in South India where those who belong to the Dalit tribe are at the bottom of the caste system and the poorest of the poor. A search for Christian unity must include an effort to remove this injustice. Because of the caste system, the Dalit people are left out of society, put down by others, ignored by politicians and treated unfairly by people in power.

The ecumenical group in South India invites us to reflect on what it means to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). It used the picture of walking because, for the Dalit people, walking toward freedom and walking toward unity go together. St. Paul once asked the Corinthians: “is Christ divided?” (1 Corinthians 1:13). He is not divided and therefore it is wrong for Christians to be divided. Christians in India are called to reject the caste system. All Christians are called to break down the unjust walls that divide us.

The Scripture readings for the eight days lead us to reflect on different ways of walking as disciples of Christ on the road that leads to life (Proverbs 12:28a). We are to speak and listen to each other as we walk (day 1), to support those who are broken along the way (day 2), to walk toward a greater freedom (day 3) as children of this earth (day 4), together as friends (day 5) to reach beyond the walls that separate us (day 6) and to walk with those who struggle for justice (day 7) with hope in ultimate victory over injustice and every division (day 8).

### DAY 1 (12 May) Walking in Conversation

*Genesis 11: 1-9 (the story of Babel)  
Acts 2: 1-12 (the gifts of Pentecost)  
Luke 24: 13-25 (talking with the risen Jesus on the road)*

Lord, forgive us for we like to talk but are slow to listen. Help us to listen to words that challenge us and to speak the truth in love. Make our hearts burn within us. God of life, lead us to justice and peace. Amen

### DAY 2 (13 May) Walking with the Broken Body of Christ

*Ezekiel 37:1-14 (dry bones come alive)  
Hebrews 13: 12-16 (go to Jesus)  
Luke 22: 14-23 (Jesus breaks the bread)*

O Jesus, through your broken body on the cross you healed our sinful and broken hearts. We crucify you again when we treat unfairly those who are different from us. Walk with us until we can together share in the one bread and one cup. God of life, lead us to justice and peace. Amen

### DAY 3 (14 May) Walking towards Freedom

*Exodus 1: 15-22 (the Hebrew midwives obey God’s law)  
2 Corinthians 3: 17-18 (the freedom of God’s children)  
John 4: 4-26 (the Samaritan woman)*

Merciful Father, you raise up those who are cast down and set free those who are burdened and bound. Thank you for sending your Son to show us the way to perfect freedom. Send us your Spirit to make us all that you want us to be. God of life, lead us to justice and peace. Amen.

DAY 4 (15 May)  
**Walking as Children of the Earth**  
*Leviticus 25: 8-17 (the land is for the common good)  
Romans 8: 18-25 (all creation groans)  
John 9: 1-11 (Jesus used mud to heal)*

Creator God, we thank you for the earth and for all your creatures. Forgive us for the times we have used them in selfish and destructive ways. Teach us to see how they reflect your beauty and goodness. Help us to share the fruits of the earth. God of life, lead us to justice and peace. Amen

DAY 5 (16 May)  
**Walking as the Friends of Jesus**  
*Song of Solomon 1:5-8 (a love song)  
3 John 2-8 (love one another)  
John 15:12-17 (I call you friends)*

Lord Jesus, from our birth you have offered each one of us your friendship. Your love reaches out especially to people who are rejected because of their caste, race or colour. Help us to recognize the dignity of each person who is made in your image. God of life, lead us to justice and peace. Amen

DAY 6 (17 May)  
**Walking Beyond Barriers**  
*Ruth 4.13-18 (Ruth and Boaz)  
Ephesians 2.13-16 (Christ has broken down the wall between us)  
Matthew 15.21-28 (Canaanite woman)*

Lord our God, forgive us for the times we have built walls to separate us from those who are different. Forgive us for looking down on those who we think are less important than ourselves. God of life, lead us to justice and peace. Amen

DAY 7 (18 May)  
**Walking in Solidarity**  
*Numbers 27:1-11 (a right to inherit)  
Acts 2.43-47 (all things in common)  
Luke 10.25-37 (the Good Samaritan)*

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are three Divine Persons in a perfect unity of love. Teach us to share the pain and the hope of people who are oppressed. Let their endurance inspire us to persevere in following you. God of life, lead us to justice and peace. Amen.

Day 8 (19 May)  
**Walking in Celebration**  
*Habakkuk 3:17-19 (joy in hardship)  
Philippians 4:4-9 (rejoice always)  
Luke 1:46-55 (the song of Mary)*

Faithful God, teach us to always rejoice in your love for us. Thank you for the unity we already share. Help us to hope that the Spirit will lead us to the complete unity that you want for us. God of life, lead us to justice and peace. Amen.

# WIK BILONG PRE BILONG KRISTEN YUNITI

## ASENSIO – PENTIKOS

12 – 19 ME 2013

*“God i laik bai yumi mekim wanem samting?”  
(Lukim Maika 6:6-8)*

**Long yia 1968 i kam inap nau ol Kristen sios long olgeta hap bilong graun i bihainim wanpela tingting na yusim wanpela rit bilong Buk Baibel long “Wik bilong Pre bilong Kristen Yuniti.” Dispela wik bilong prea i bikpela samting insait long wok bilong painim rot bai “olgeta Kristen manmeri i ken kamap wan wantaim ol arapela.” Dispela pre i ken helpim ol Kristen manmeri bilong kain kain sios i kam moa klostu long bilip. Planti kantri i wokim dispela pre long wik bipo long pestode bilong Santu Pol i Tanim Bel (25 Januari). Long Papua Niugini, Solomon Ailans, Australia na ol arapela kantri long hap bilong saut, ol manmeri i save mekim dispela wik bilong pre namel long pestode bilong Asensio na Pentikos. Tasol wanpela wik bilong pre em i no inap. Yumi mas pre olgeta taim bai yumi ken kamap wanlain tru olsem Jisas i laikim.**

Long dispela yia 2013 ol Kristen manmeri bilong Saut India i redim “Wik bilong Pre.” Long Saut India, ol manmeri blong lain Dalit i stap daun-bilo tru. Long pasin kast bilong India ol dispela lain i manmeri nating. Ol i no gat nem. Ol i stap tarangu tru. Taim yumi ol Kristen manmeri i wok long kamap wan, yumi mas wok long pinisim dispela pasin nogut i no stret. Dispela lain Dalit i stap ausait long komuniti, ol arapela manmeri i save daunim nem bilong ol, ol man bilong gavman i lusim tingting long ol na ol bikman i mekim long ol.

Ol Kristen manmeri bilong Saut India i laik bai yumi tingting long mining bilong pasin bilong mekim stretpela wok na pasin bilong laikim tru ol manmeri na pasin bilong wokabaut wantaim God long daunpasin (Maika 6:8). Ol i yusim piksa bilong wokabaut bikos ol lain Dalit i ting olsem: wokabaut long kamap wan na wokabaut long pinisim dispela pasin i no stret, tupela pasin i wankain. Santu Pol i bin askim ol lain Korin: Olsem wanem? Ating Kraisi i bruk hap hap, a? (1 Korin 1:13). Nogat. Na nogut ol Kristen manmeri i bruk hap hap. Ol Kristen manmeri bilong India i mas wok long pinisim dispela pasin kast pasin. Na yumi olgeta Kristen manmeri i mas wok long daunim ol banis nogut i stap namel long yumi na i mekim yumi stap tupela lain.

Ol rit bilong Buk Baibel long dispela 8-pela de bilong pre i tok long kain kain we long wokabaut olsem disaipel bilong Kraisi long rot i bringim yumi long laip (Proverb 12:28a). Yumi mas autim tok na harim tok bilong arapela taim yumi wokabaut long rot bilong laip (de 1); yumi mas helpim ol bratasusa i laik pundaun long rot (de 2), na wokabaut i go i go inap yumi kamap fri (de 3). Yumi stap pikinini bilong dispela graun (de 4) na yumi stap olsem pren bilong Jisas (de 5), olsem na yumi mas wok long winim ol samting i banisim yumi (de 6) na wokabaut wantaim ol manmeri i wok long painim pasin i stret (de 7) na hop bai yumi win na bai stretpela pasin na wanbel pasin i kamap (de 8).

DE 1 (12 Me)  
**Wokabaut na Toktok**  
*Stat 11:1-9 (stori bilong Babel)  
Aposel 2:1-12 (ol presen bilong Pentikos)  
Luk 24:13-25 (Jisas i bungim tupela disaipel long rot bihain long taim em i kirap)*

Bikpela, pogivim mipela bikos mipela laik autim tok tasol. Mipela i no laik harim tok. Helpim mipela bai mipela inap harim strongpela tok ol arapela i mekim na helpim mipela long tok tru tasol. Mekim bel bilong mipela i kirap tru taim yu autim tok long mipela. God bilong laip, stiaim mipela long rot i go long stretpela pasin na pasin bel isi. Amen.

DE 2 (13 Me)  
**Helpim Ol Bratasusa i Laik Pundaun long Rot**  
*Ezekiel 37:1-19 (ol bun i drai, ol i stap laip gen)  
Hibru 13:12-16 (go long Jisas)  
Luk 22:14-23 (Jisas i brukim bret)*

O Jisas, bodi bilong yu i bruk taim yu hangamap long diwai kros na long dispela pasin yu pogivim mipela na oraitim bel bilong mipela. Tasol mipela i save hangamapim yu gen long diwai kros taim mipela mekim rong long ol manmeri i no wankain olsem mipela. Wokabaut wantaim mipela inap long taim mipela laikai wanpela bret na dring long wanpela kap. God bilong laip, stiaim mipela long rot i go long stretpela pasin na pasin bel isi. Amen.

DE 3 (14 Me)  
**Wokabaut i go i go Inap Mipela i Stap Fri**

*Kisim Bek 1:15-22 (ol meri Isip i helpim ol meri Hibru long karim pikinini)  
2 Korin 3:17-18 (ol pikinini bilong God i stap fri)  
Jon 4:4-2 (meri bilong Samaria)*

Papa bilong marimari, yu save litimapim ol manmeri i pundaun na yu lusim ol manmeri i stap long kalabus. Mipela tok tenkyu bikos yu salim Pikinini bilong yu na em i skulim mipela long we bilong wokabaut bai mipela i kamap fri. Salim Spirit bilong yu long mipela bai mipela i save mekim pasin yu laik. God bilong laip, stiaim mipela long rot i go long stretpela pasin na pasin bel isi. Amen.

DE 4 (15 Me)  
**Wokabaut olsem Pikinini bilong Dispela Graun**  
*Levitikas 25:8-17 (graun em i bilong olgeta manmeri)  
Rom 8:18-25 (ol samting bilong graun i save wet long kirap)  
Jon 9:1-11 (Jisas i putim graun malumalum long ai bilong man na oraitim em)*

God husat i mekim kamap olgeta samting, mipela i tok tenkyu bikos yu givim ol gutpela samting bilong graun long mipela. Pogivim mipela taim mipela i bagarapim ol dispela samting na yusim long lukautim mipela tasol. Skulim mipela bai mipela luksave ol dispela samting i gutpela tru wankain olsem yu gutpela. Helpim mipela long serim ol samting bilong dispela graun wantaim ol bratasusa bilong mipela. God bilong laip, stiaim mipela long rot i go long stretpela pasin na pasin bel isi. Amen.

DE 5 (16 Me)  
**Yumi Stap olsem Pren bilong Jisas**  
*Song bilong Solomon 1:5-8 (song bilong laikim tru arapela)  
3 Jon 2-8 (laikim wanpela arapela)  
Jon 15:12-17 (mi kolim yupela pren)*

Bikpela Jisas, stat taim mipela i stap yet insait long bel bilong mama, yu laikim mipela tumas na kolim mipela pren. Yu save laikim moa yet ol manmeri i no gat nem bikos ol i stap insait long lain kast i daunbilo tru o bikos pasin o kala bilong skin bilong ol i narakain. Helpim mipela long save olgeta manmeri i gutpela tru bikos ol i stap olsem piksa bilong yu yet. God bilong laip, stiaim mipela long rot i go long stretpela pasin na pasin bel isi. Amen.

DE 6 (17 Me)  
**Wokabaut i Go Pas long ol Samting i Banisim Yumi**  
*Rut 4:13-18 (Rut na Boaz)  
Efesus 2:13-16 (Kraisi i daunim banis i mekim mipela i stap tupela lain)  
Matyu 15:21-28 (meri bilong Kenan)*

Bikpela God bilong mipela, pogivim mipela long taim mipela i putim banis namel long mipela na ol manmeri i no wankain olsem mipela. Pogivim mipela taim mipela i daunim nem bilong ol arapela manmeri mipela i ting ol i stap aninit long mipela. God bilong laip, stiaim mipela long rot i go long stretpela pasin na pasin bel isi. Amen.

DE 7 (18 Me)  
**Wokabaut Wantaim ol Tarangu Manmeri**  
*Namba 27:1-11 (rait long kisim ol samting bilong papa taim em i dai)  
Aposel 2:43-47 (olgeta manmeri i serim olgeta samting)  
Luk 1:25-37 (gutpela man bilong Samaria)*

God Triwan, yu stap Papa, Pikinini na Holi Spirit; na wanpela i laikim arapela na yupela stap wan tru. Skulim mipela long pilim pen bilong ol tarangu na hop wantaim ol. Ol i winim ol hevi bilong ol. Taim mipela lukim dispela samting, helpim mipela long bihainim pasin bilong ol bai mipela i no ken givap. God bilong laip, stiaim mipela long rot i go long stretpela pasin na pasin bel isi. Amen.

DE 8 (19 Me)  
**Wokabaut na Amamas**  
*Habakuk 3:17-19 (amamas long taim bilong train)  
Filipai 4:4-9 (amamas oltaim)  
Luk 1:46-55 (song bilong Maria)*

God Papa, mipela i amamas oltaim bikos yu laikim mipela tumas. Tenkyu bikos mipela i stap wanbilip liklik. Mipela i hop bai Spirit i stiaim mipela inap mipela i kamap wanlain tru tru olsem yu laikim. God bilong laip, stiaim mipela long rot i go long stretpela pasin na pasin bel isi. Amen.

# On the Joint Statement on Marriage between PNG Lutherans and Catholics

By Bp. Bill Fey OFM Cap - Kimbe

Bishop Bill Fey, OFM Cap of Kimbe is the Deputy Bishop for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Here he explains the reasons and meaning of the soon to be approved joint Statement on Marriage between the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea.

**How did a joint Statement on Marriage between the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea come about?**

The Catholic Ecumenical and Interreligious Commission has been in existence for many years. There has been ongoing dialogue with the Anglican Church in PNG. Since 2000 there has also been dialogue with the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) in PNG. This led to the signing of an agreement on baptism in 2003 between the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in PNG. In that statement it was said that, although divided on many things, we do recognize that baptisms in each of the three Churches are valid. This means that when an Anglican or Evangelical Lutheran wants to become a Catholic, or vice versa, that person does not need to be, and should not be, baptized again but only needs to profess his or her faith in the new community.

Further dialogue meetings with the Anglicans led to an agreed statement on marriage that was signed by bishops of the two Churches. Further meetings with the Lutherans led us to also talk about marriage. We discussed common pastoral concerns such as the fact that often young people live together and do not come to the Catholic or the Lutheran Church to get married. After a number of years of meeting, the result is a "joint statement on marriage" between the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Catholic Church in PNG. The Catholic bishops have just approved this statement. After formal approval by the Evangelical Lutheran Church probably this coming June, the plan is to "launch" this joint statement next year and

use this occasion to celebrate and proclaim the goodness of a faithful Christian marriage.

**Was it necessary to have this joint statement?**

Not really, but it was found to be a good way to talk together with respect and to appreciate what we hold in common as well as where Catholics and Lutherans disagree.

**What are the differences on sacraments and marriage?**

As we reflected together it became clear that there are important differences in what we believe. Catholics believe that Jesus Christ instituted seven sacraments as visible signs of grace through which God touches and sanctifies his people. Marriage is one of these sacraments. But Lutherans hold that Jesus Christ only instituted two sacraments: baptism and the Eucharist. As we talked together the Lutherans explained that they believe that sacraments are ways in which God makes his forgiveness present to people. They also explained that they believe that Jesus only explicitly said "do this" when talking about baptism ("go and baptize") and the Eucharist ("do this in memory of me"). Of course, there are other things about which the two Churches disagree such as divorce and remarriage. There is much for further discussion.

**And what are the common points?**

Regarding marriage, the Lutherans said that they do believe that when two baptized Lutherans get married and have their marriage blessed in the Lutheran Church, God touches their love and helps them to be faithful to each other as a sign of Christ's faithful love for his people. This is similar to what Catholics believe when two baptized Catholics receive the sacrament of marriage. Furthermore, both Catholics and Lutherans in PNG hold that marriage is to be only between one man and one woman – that polygamy and same-sex marriages are contrary to the teachings of Christ.

**How will this help couples?** What should young couples know who want a marriage in Church between a Lutheran and a Catholic?

There is a lot in this statement that would be good for young people to read when they are preparing to get married. A short version of the statement will be made available to help Catholic priests and Lutheran pastors, together if possible, instruct couples for a "mixed" marriage. There are important things said about being a "responsible parent" who loves and cares for his or her children.

But there are also practical things that are emphasized in the statement. It is important to give careful instruction to Catholic and Lutheran couples preparing for marriage, to avoid encouraging marriage between couples before they are ready to make a free and informed consent to be faithful to each other and to keep a record of a Church marriage. It is important to explain that "living together" is not the same as "being married" in a full Christian sense. It is stated that both our Churches respect the validity of the marriages performed according to the rite of each Church.

When a Lutheran and a Catholic want to get married in Church they need to reach a decision, with advice and permissions from appropriate Church authorities, in which Church they want their marriage to be celebrated. When the marriage is conducted in the Lutheran Church, a Catholic priest or deacon must be present to witness the exchange of vows unless a dispensation has been granted. But it is not necessary for the Lutheran to become a Catholic or for the Catholic to become a Lutheran for the two of them to marry.

When a Lutheran and a Catholic marry they are asked to promise sincerely to do all in his or her power to see that the children of the marriage are baptized in their respective Churches. Therefore it is important that they talk about the baptism and education of the children they will have, and when possible, come to an agreement about this before marriage.

Finally, the proposed joint statement makes clear that, although a mixed marriage may present difficulties to the couples themselves, pastoral care and help is to be extended to them emphasizing the positive aspects of what the couples share together as Christians in the life of grace, in faith, hope and love, along with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit. (G.L.)

## Vanimo to tackle drug and alcohol abuse

UNEMPLOYMENT, feelings of exclusion and a decline in parental influence have been identified as the driving forces behind alcohol and drug abuse in a recent research in Vanimo. The study was conducted by Sr. Gabriella Burgos from the National Family Life Apostolate and Br. Martin Trines from the Melanesian Institute. Catholic HIV and AIDS Services Incorporated (CHASI), with the support of the Diocese of Vanimo, commissioned the study as a basis for developing a program that will address the problem of drug and alcohol abuse.

The study found that substance abuse contributes to risky behavior that can lead to HIV and AIDS. A 20-year-old security guard is quoted as saying that, "youth are sexually active and engaged in many sexual encounters with multiple partners.

They take marijuana to protect themselves from contracting syphilis and sik nogut."

The study found that the easy availability of homebrew, sometimes known as 'steam' or 'white soup', is causing significant harm to the community.

For K7 you can buy one bottle of beer in rural communities in Vanimo.

For almost the same amount you can buy one bottle of homebrew, which is many times more intoxicating than beer, and has been blamed for spikes in violence and risky sexual behavior.

The abuse of any substance such as alcohol, homebrew or drugs, is harmful.

However, the high alcohol content of homebrew makes people more drunk, more quickly.

One interviewee was quoted as saying, "Liklik mani, bikpela spak."

The interviewers spoke to a wide range of people, including Church, community and government leaders, parents, substance abusers, youth and other members of the community.

The study includes 24 recommendations that may form part of a pilot program to address drug and alcohol abuse in Vanimo.

**ON 19 March 2013,**

*on the solemnity of St. Joseph Husband of Mary, the Salesian Delegation of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands rejoiced and thanked the Lord for the gift of the first Salesian deacon from Papua New Guinea in the person of Rev. Isidore Maramun SDB. The celebration was held in the school church of Don Bosco Technical School (DBTS) at Gabutu, Port Moresby. Twelve priests concelebrated at the Eucharist presided by the Salesian Archbishop Francesco Panfilo of Rabaul, and participated in by all the students and staff of DBTS. In his homily during the diaconal ordination of Br. Isidore, Abp. Panfilo gave two important messages that apply to all who serve and preach in the Church: resist the temptation of the 'big man'; and, preaching is not the sharing of ideas but the sharing of faith. (Fr. Ambrose Pereira SDB)*

## First Daru priest marks 25 years in ministry

By Bishop Gilles Cote' SMM Daru-Kiunga

IN the afternoon of the Solemnity of St. Joseph on 19 March this year people gathered at St. Gerard's Cathedral, Kiunga for a very special celebration.

Twenty five years ago, on that same day a young man by the name of Hubert Nekiri was ordained as the first diocesan priest of the diocese.

He showed a lot of courage and a great faith as at that time our Diocesan Church was only 25 years old in the southern part of the Western Province. God was giving his young Church a very beautiful gift.

Father Hubert comes from Samari village located on Kiwai Island at the mouth of the mighty Fly River.

His mother was from Bina II village in the Lower Bamu area.

There was a lot of joy in the assembly during and after the Eucharistic celebration with Fr. Hubert.

We were thanking the Lord for calling him to service in the Church as a priest. We were



Fr. Hubert Nekiri with Bishop Gilles Cote' of Daru-Kiunga.

grateful for all the graces showered upon him during the past 25 years.

We were also praising father Hubert for his perseverance and the witness of his life. Many pointed out that he is a very humble man and a man of prayer.

He always cares for the good

of the people and does not measure his efforts to come of service to them. It was also said that Fr. Hubert always updated his knowledge through reading and personal studies in order to be able to properly exercise his priestly ministry.

Fr. Hubert is a quiet person, but when we ask him an advice

what he shares with us is always full of wisdom.

In his sharing during and after the Mass Fr. Hubert mentioned that we were celebrating 'his' yes and 'our' yes to the will of God.

That is what is important he said: that we all listen to God speaking to us and respond to his call to witness to his love for all people.

Some gifts were offered to Fr. Hubert, among them a framed apostolic blessing coming from then Pope Benedict XVI. There was plenty of food to share and two big cakes that brought big smiles on the faces of the children.

We hope that the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of ordination of Fr. Hubert will bring us more vocations to the priesthood.

From August 11th to August 18th St. Louis Marie de Montfort parish in Daru will celebrate its Golden Jubilee of foundation.

On that occasion the Silver Jubilee of ordination of Fr. Hubert will also be celebrated as he comes from that parish.

Madang, 5-11 November 2013

# CHURCH ASSEMBLY TO TACKLE POVERTY, VIOLENCE AND INDIVIDUALISM

By Abp. Douglas Young SVD  
Mt. Hagen

Abp. Young, you are involved in preparations for the Second General Assembly of the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands this coming November 2013...

Not only me, but the Catholic Bishops of our two countries issued a pastoral letter at the end of their Annual General Meeting in Madang last month stressing that the Assembly is an opportunity to look again at the goals of the PNG National Pastoral Plan and to discern what have been the major achievements, and where are the gaps. Since the universal Church is celebrating a Year of Faith (11 Oct. 2012 – 24 Nov. 2013) this will be an 'Assembly of Faith' from which a new pastoral plan will be born that will guide both Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in the years to come. Our last General Assembly in 2004 was a great source of grace for the Church in Papua New Guinea and has given us a unified direction for the last nine years. This time the Solomon Islands will be included as well.

**What were the shortcomings of the previous pastoral plan and its implementation?**

Already at the very beginning of our PNG National Pastoral Plan in 2005 we realized that we probably had not given enough emphasis to the role of the Church in caring for the poor. In the meantime it has become even more clear that the Catholic Church has a special gift for being in solidarity with the poor and working for the alleviation of poverty. Our new Pope, Francis, is giving us a push in this direction also. The ongoing evaluation of the Plan is raising big issues about how we bishops and priests can be real witnesses to the gospel in our simplicity of life and our focus on and enthusiasm for evangelisation. The Pope himself has told us that we should have "the smell of the sheep

about us", meaning that we have to be in a genuine solidarity with our people, leading them as Pope Benedict has said "out of the desert, toward the place of life".

Pope Francis says that the worst that can happen to those that are anointed and called to service is that they live with the criteria of the world instead of the criteria that the Lord commands from the tablets of the law and the Gospel ... "The worst that can happen in the priestly life is to be worldly, to be a 'light' bishop or a 'light' priest." It is very important that we bishops and priests evaluate our own lives along with the laity.

**At what stage is now the preparation of the Second General Assembly?**

Now we have completed the first stage of the preparation for the General Assembly which will be held at Divine Word University in Madang from November 5-11, 2013. The evaluations coming in from the dioceses have been very helpful and there has already been a high level of participation. These responses are now being analyzed and there will soon be a follow-up process in the dioceses to enable a sharper focus on what we have to celebrate, what we have to repent, and what we have to hope for.

**Is the Church in PNG and Solomon Islands in good shape at the moment?**

When I read these excellent and thoughtful responses from our people I get the strong feeling that we are at our best as Christians and as a Church when we are focused on our true task of being a disciple who is with the Lord and sent by the Lord. We run into trouble when we start compromising with worldly values, thinking that the love of money, or revenge or violence can help us. So much of what we think is wrong in the Church and society is related to violence of different types. So, some of the issues that are emerging are not sur-

prising: sorcery, or worse, sorcery related killings, corruption, environmental damage, the suffering of children, and violence against women, for example. These are all serious issues for the whole of society, so we can expect that they will surface in a reflection among Catholics. Now we have to see what special effort our 1.7 million Catholics of PNG and 90,000 Catholics of Solomon Islands can bring to bear on these issues. If we are clear about our task as Christians, remain unified and work together, it is hard to believe that there is any problem that we cannot solve, even on behalf of the nation!

**What questions are being asked to the priest, the religious and the lay people in preparation for the General Assembly?**

Towards the end of their pastoral letter, the bishops invite everyone to keep reflecting on the Year of Faith and our preparation for the General Assembly. Some of the issues are the following. To what extent have we implemented the vision of the Second Vatican Council for a truly participatory Church? (We have to ask ourselves, am I a member of a basic Christian community? Does my parish have an advisory board?). In what ways is the Catechism of the Catholic Church used as an indispensable instrument for ecclesial communion and a sure norm for teaching the faith? (I have to ask myself, have I got a Catechism and do I study it?). What are the indications and signs of hope that a communitarian model of Church, with a special place for the poor and disadvantaged is taking hold? (Here too I have to ask myself, does everyone in my community feel included or are there some who feel rejected? Is there anyone I wouldn't allow in the Church?). Where has a sense of the common good won out over selfishness and tribalism? (Do you have more community activities than road blocks and compensation demands?) This is surely the direction that we would like our Church and our two

## Prime Minister Peter O'Neill and Catholic Bishops meet in Madang

*All children to be in school.  
Mining killing women and children in  
Western Province.*

*Asylum seekers in Manus should be working.*

PAPUA New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O'Neill declared that all children will have to be in school by 2014. The government will pay their school fees and the families will have to comply or be dealt with by the law. "We believe all children have a right to education", the Prime minister said while speaking to the Catholic Bishops of PNG and Solomon Islands at their Annual General Meeting in Alexishafen, Madang last April 11.

Mr. O'Neill also called for a revitalized partnership between government and Churches as the PNG economy grows and more resources become available for services to be delivered to the people.

Common concerns between government and Churches include not only education, but health, public security, fight against corruption, infrastructures, and economic development for local communities; which are the priorities of the present government according to Prime Minister Peter O'Neill.

Archbishop John Ribat MSC of Port Moresby, Chairman of the Catholic Bishops Conference, in his address to Prime Minister O'Neill also called for formal abolition of the death penalty in PNG, a better consultation and respect of Church stand in education and family values, checks and balances in logging and mining practices and special economic zones.

The Prime Minister assured the Bishops that Church workers in partnership programs with the government, such as education and health, will progressively avail of same and standardized salary levels. He also acknowledged that environmental problems caused by OK Tedi mine in Western Province is serious, with "women and children dying every day".

Requested by Arch. Francesco Panfilo SDB of Rabaul, Prime Minister Peter O'Neill agreed to bring together the heads of the Education and Health Departments to work out a new and better balanced partnership practice between Church and government. According to Abp. Panfilo, in the case of Education, three factors are crucial for the Church: appointment of teachers, selection of students, curriculum policies and contents.

Touching on the issue of immigration, Prime Minister O'Neill also signaled a difference in intentions with the Australian government on the issue of asylum seekers in Manus. PNG is willing to have the asylum seekers mingling with the community and for those with skills even to accept jobs while their case is being considered and processed by Australian authorities. (G.L.)

## People must now stand of their feet, Grand Chief tells Bishops

FORMER Prime Minister Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare briefly addresses the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in Madang on 15 April recalling first "the peaceful and non ruthless manner in which the Church came to this country". Mission centres such as Alexishafen, Kokopo and Yule Island soon became not only centres of spiritual irradiation, but of educational enhancement as well. People even learned foreign languages such as German, French and, of course English. The early times of the Church in PNG "should be written and preserved", Sir Michael said, adding that he is willing to fund the project.

The new task for the Church, as far as development is concerned, in Sir Michaels' opinion is now to instil in the people the idea that the time has come for them to stand on their own feet and depend on local resources, after decades of outside Church and colonial help. At the district level, however, the Church can still provide guidance and supervision in the investment of financial resources provided by the central government. There is also a contribution that is not financial in nature: "In the schools, teach people how to behave! This is the way I became a person - Sir Michael said -. And this is not happening anymore in our schools, hospitals, and clinics, while the TV projects a lot of violent behaviour. Young people are not thought proper manners and attitudes."

As far as 'mission land' that the Church now wants to give back to the people, Sir Michael suggested that the dioceses cede it to the government for lease among the residents. The Bishops, however, see this solution as a last resort when the identification of "original landowners" is really difficult and the issue becomes divisive among a number of claimants. (G.L.)



**Goroka, August 2012:** Bishops, religious and lay people participating in the Highlands National General Election Audit. Churches are at the forefront of the struggle against corruption, cheating and violence; still are the main providers of education and health services in PNG; but feel unheard when requesting the government for wider consultation and respect of Church stands in education and family values.