



The Catholic Reporter

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Manus Island: The wrong solution

By Fr Giorgio Licini
Catholic Reporter PNG

ON 17 February the refugee Manus saga took a turn for the worst when an Iranian asylum seeker identified as Reza Barati, 23 years of age, was murdered inside the makeshift refugee camp. Public outcry only partially contributed to the understanding and the solution of the problem.

In our view there a few things that need to be considered to address the issue with the brain rather than the guts. The first is that asylum seekers and economic migrants are in huge number all over the world.

The three main focal points are probably the US-Mexico border in the Americas, the Mediterranean Sea in Europe and the ocean between Australia and South-East Asia.

Poor or persecuted people try to reach either the US, Europe, or Australia. Any other country of transit is considered a temporary stay. A large number of asylum seeker requests are processed by the competent agency of the United Nations.

Another huge number of people, however, try to get into the above mentioned affluent, tolerant and free countries with their own means; a process that, technically speaking is illegal.

In principle, countries have to defend themselves from indiscriminate immigration assaults. Australia is already accepting a good number of refugees through



Reza Berati the Iranian refugee killed recently at the Manus Detention Centre.

United Nations channels every year. For the thousands more trying to cross the sea illegally, Australian authorities have now devised a "solution" to keep them rather on Indonesia shores by denying them any chance to ever settle around Sydney or Melbourne or Brisbane.

The new arrivals are taken to the remote PNG island of Manus and then sent back to their country of origin. If they are genuine refugees, however, they are being promised resettlement in Papua New Guinea. Something they don't like.

PNG is in an awkward position. Riddled by corruption and frequently depending on Australian aid, our government could not deny "help" to Australia when requested by the Rudd cabinet to scare off the boat people by hosting them on Manus Island.

The result is that today PNG is



holding hundreds of people on its soil in the most illegal manner: they have done nothing against PNG citizens or assets!

They never tried to violate our national borders! What if Australian decides to pack up and leave them behind?

Resettling refugees in Papua New Guinea? We don't know if the two governments are serious about it or it's just a strategy to discourage anybody else to illegally reach Australia.

Some educated refugees could

probably be offered a job in PNG at the LNG project or other companies. But does PNG have the capacity to cater for their cultural adjustment, emotional impact, health, education and safeguard of traditions including religious ones?

Can PNG assure them immunity from tuberculosis and malaria?

Will they really integrate in a country they never knew about and can't offer them much?

For the meantime Manus will

continue to be a dangerous place. Fights break out everywhere. Much more in a prison camp.

When this occurs, PNG young men, either policemen or security guards, start shouting "paitimem, kilimem". People get hit and shot and cut. They die and PNG once again pays the price of international ostracism.

The Manus "solution" is the wrong (and unfair) answer to a real problem. Australia should make an effort at rethinking the all issue.

One thousand children in detention

I HAVE personally written to both Kevin Rudd and Tony Abbott, the two Australian Prime Ministers involved in this horrible situation.

May I point out that strictly speaking an asylum seeker is

not "illegal". In my understanding, it is considered legal by the United Nations to seek refuge from danger and persecution.

Abbott and his government are very happy to stir up fear and animosity by labeling the

boat people as "illegal".

They are branded and treated as criminals well before any investigation is made as to their story.

Currently we have one thousand children in Australian de-

tention centres; perhaps the only western country to do so.

What I tell people is that if three wild dogs are in my backyard trying to kill me, then I am not trespassing if I jump over the fence.

God bless all our efforts for social justice!

Sr Bernadette Gauthier
PNG Federation of Religious

The Teaching of the Second Vatican Council

SALVATION AS A PEOPLE

By Fr Roger Purcell MSC

OFTEN we have been led in our spirituality to be centred mostly on our own personal salvation. By prayer and the reception of the sacraments we ensure our path to God. By charitable works we fulfill the call to help others.

The Council gives us another approach to this question. Salvation is not just of the soul, but of the whole person and of all persons, and as a community.

We are then challenged to see our individual self, and others, as a whole integrated person, on the journey towards God.

- "Human dignity demands that we act according to a knowing and free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within, not under blind internal impulse nor by mere external pressure." [GS 17]

In this section on the Dignity of Human Persons [GS 12-17] the Council speaks of human persons being body and soul, with intellect and wisdom, conscience and freedom. The whole person is important, being integrated for the completion of the human person and the glory of God. In this way all that is human has to be lived to the full and fulfilled according to the vision and will of God.

In fact God sees his creation of human persons as "very good" [Gn 1: 31] and "so loved the world that he sent his only Son" [1 Jn 4:9]. Catherine of Sienna said, "God has created man in such a way the he himself longs for man. He has fallen in love with him."

More importantly we are challenged to see ourselves as part of the community, and that only together do we journey to God.

- "God however does not make men holy and save them merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather has it pleased him to bring men together as

one people, a people which acknowledges him in truth and serves him in holiness." [LG 9]

If we go to God together and journey with God as a people, then we become responsible for each other.

While each of us must attend to our own lives in prayer, the sacramental life and charity, we are bound in duty to be attentive to others in their lives. This is more than just "doing" works of charity, but being responsible, together, for the lives of others, and the community generally.

This takes us into every aspect of our social/cultural life, where we all have responsibility to correct

what is wrong, to build up what is good and to make the life of all more in line with the will of God. Here we are concerned with building the Kingdom of God.

Reflection and discussion:

- How do we see ourselves as created by God as a whole integrated human person?
- In this do I honour my own dignity and that of my brothers and sisters?
- How as a people do we care for one another, our community and society?

Intrepid Catholics preach in the streets

By Fr Victor Roche SVD

FR JOSEPH Puthuserry SVD from India recently gave two "Kerygma Courses" in Alexishafen, Madang in the last week of January and Kefamo, Goroka in the first week of February.

Kerygma is a Greek word to denote the 'Proclamation of the Paschal Mystery' – The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ. This particular Bible based course is called "The Intrepid Evangelizer". The course is designed to help on "How to evangelize the baptised".

Fr Joseph has given this course for the past ten years in many countries. He uses Power Point presentation and dialogue method for his classes.

The Kefamo course was held from 4-9 Feb.2014 and was attended by 32 people.

There were 12 priests, 15 Sisters and 5 lay people. Fr. Romy Yadao SVD was the Coordinator.

They learnt to preach on different topics. On the last day they were prayed over and were commissioned by retired bishop of Kundiawa, Henk te Maarsse like the disciples to go out and preach.

Yes, they did go to the bus stops and markets and shared the good news of God's love for them.

Some of the listeners were amazed that Catholics were "preaching" the Good News in public places.

But they came back filled with joy and sharing their experiences.

Young musicians delight people

THEY play at Easter and Christmas in and around Goroka town and also perform at other bigger ecumenical gatherings.

As part of their community service they go into the wards at Goroka General Hospital where they perform common songs and other favorites for the patients. They also frequently perform for the public at Papindo supermarket in Goroka.

They are the "Brothers and Sisters in Christ" (BASIC) Recorder group from St. Mary's Catholic Parish in Goroka.

The group came as a result of involving young children in music training during Christmas and other school holidays as leisure learning.

Sr Angie from the Salesian congregation was instrumental in getting the group started in 2009 while being a dean of women and a lecturer at the University of Goroka.

From then onward the group grew bigger as the word went around the town for folks to enroll



their children into BASIC.

The first musical instrument they learn is to pass the recorder and get their fingers move swiftly up and down with minimal errors.

They then select between flute

and clarinet and eventually specialize in one.

Those who began in 2009 have now moved into higher learning institutions.

But Emmanuel, Martha, Serah and Joyce Bade have remained to be the leaders now in the group. (Fr Harry Gahare – Goroka)

2015: Year of Consecrated Life

(Oct. 2014 - Nov. 2015)

CARDINAL Braz de Aviz, in charge of Religious Life, told journalists at a press conference at the Vatican at the end of January that Pope Francis had announced the Year of Consecrated life at a meeting with the Union of Superiors General in November 2013.

The Year will take place in the context of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. Cardinal Braz de Aviz in fact said, "We believe that the Council has been a breath of the Spirit not only for the whole Church but, perhaps especially, for the consecrated life. We are also convinced that in these 50 years

consecrated life has undertaken a fruitful journey of renewal — not free, certainly, of difficulties and hardships — in the commitment to follow what the Council asked of the consecrated: fidelity to the Lord, to the Church, to their own charism and to the people of today. For this reason, he said, the first objective of the Year of Consecrated Life would be to "make a grateful remembrance of the recent past."

With this positive outlook on the past, he continued, "we want to 'embrace the future with hope'. Although the crises that affect the world and the Church are also felt within consecrated life, Cardinal

Braz de Aviz said women and men religious remain full of hope, based not on their own powers, but on trust in the Lord. "In Him," he said, "no one can rob us of our hope."

This hope, though, he said, cannot keep us from "living the present with passion". This passion, the Cardinal said, speaks of "being in love, of true friendship, of profound communion."

This is "the true beauty of the life of so many men and women who profess the evangelical counsels and follow Christ 'more closely' in this state of life."

In this regard, he said, the Year of Consecrated Life will have an

evangelical focus, helping people to realize "the beauty of following Christ" in the various types of religious vocations.

The Year of Consecrated Life is expected to begin in October of this year, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of *Lumen gentium* (the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church), which has a specific chapter dealing with consecrated life.

The anniversary of the Council's decree *Perfectae caritatis*, will be the occasion of the close of the Year, in November 2015.

(Vatican Radio, 31 Jan. 2014)

Give a Bible to the Youth!

At the Diocesan Youth Coordinators gathering in 2012 and 2013 we suggested that all youth acquire a Catholic edition of the Bible and a copy of the Catechism of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Can parishes and dioceses help? Thank you very much! - Fr. Shanthi Puthuserry

Mobile phones better than chalk

PAPUA New Guinea and Australia have trialled sending text messages to elementary teachers in two PNG provinces to improve the skills of students.

A group of teachers received 200 text messages over 20 weeks containing stories they wrote on the blackboard and lesson plans designed to help them introduce children to reading English.

At the end of the trial, the reading ability of more than 1000 children in Simbu and Madang provinces was significantly higher than other elementary school children.

Minister for Development and Cooperation at the Australian High Commission, Stuart Schaefer, said the trial provided strong evidence to help Papua New Guinea to tackle illiteracy.

"Poor literacy ruins lives and leads to poverty. Australia supports Papua New Guinea's efforts to increase the number of children who can read and write," Mr Schaefer said...

"The Acting Assistant Secretary of the Curriculum Development and Assessment Division in the PNG Department of Education, Mr Wesley Lakain, said the project was innovative and important.

"The Government of Papua New Guinea is committed to improving service delivery, and we are excited about being able to use text messages to help teachers based in rural and remote places," Mr Lakain said.

Papua New Guinea and Australia have also trialled using mobile phones to reduce maternal and infant mortality in Alotau and to collect more reliable data from 35 District Courts across PNG.

(<http://www.png.embassy.gov.au/pmsb/206.html>)

Pope Francis issues letter to families

Dear families,

WITH this letter, I wish, as it were, to come into your homes to speak about an event which will take place at the Vatican this coming October. It is the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which is being convened to discuss the theme of "pastoral challenges to the family in the context of evangelization". Indeed, in our day the Church is called to proclaim the Gospel by confronting the new and urgent pastoral needs facing the family.

This important meeting will involve all the People of God – bishops, priests, consecrated men and women, and lay faithful of the particular Churches of the entire world – all of whom are actively participating in preparations for the meeting through practical suggestions and the crucial support of prayer. Such support on your part, dear families, is especially significant and more necessary than ever. This Synodal Assembly is dedicated in a special way to you, to your vocation and mission in the Church and in society; to the challenges of marriage, of family life, of the education of children; and the role of the family in the life of the Church. I ask you, therefore, to pray intensely to the Holy Spirit, so that the Spirit may illumine the Synodal Fathers and guide them in their important task. As you know, this Extraordinary Synodal Assembly will be followed a year later by the Ordinary Assembly, which will also have the family as its theme. In that context, there will also be the World Meeting of Families due to take place in Philadelphia in September 2015. May we all, then, pray together so that through these events the Church will undertake a true journey of discernment and adopt the necessary pastoral means to help families face their present challenges with the light and strength that

comes from the Gospel.

I am writing this letter to you on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple. The evangelist Luke tells us that the Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph, in keeping with the Law of Moses, took the Baby Jesus to the temple to offer him to the Lord, and that an elderly man and woman, Simeon and Anna, moved by the Holy Spirit, went to meet them and acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah (cf. Lk 2:22-38). Simeon took him in his arms and thanked God that he had finally "seen" salvation. Anna, despite her advanced age, found new vigour and began to speak to everyone about the Baby. It is a beautiful image: two young parents and two elderly people, brought together by Jesus. He is the one who brings together and unites generations! He is the inexhaustible font of that love which overcomes every occasion of self-absorption, solitude, and sadness. In your journey as a family, you share so many beautiful moments: meals, rest, housework, leisure, prayer, trips and pilgrimages, and times of mutual support... Nevertheless, if there is no love then there is no joy, and authentic love comes to us from Jesus. He offers us his word, which illuminates our path; he gives us the Bread of life which sustains us on our journey. Dear families, your prayer for the Synod of Bishops will be a precious treasure which enriches the Church. I thank you, and I ask you to pray also for me, so that I may serve the People of God in truth and in love. May the protection of the Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph always accompany all of you and help you to walk united in love and in caring for one another. I willingly invoke on every family the blessing of the Lord.

Francis

Strengthening the priests

By Bishop Gilles Cote'
Daru-Kiunga

REGISTRATION for the fifth program (19Oct. – 28Nov. 2014) of the Vangeke Institute is already open. The Institute was established five years ago by the bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon islands and named after Louis Vangeke (1904-1982).

He was the first national Catholic priest and bishop, born of the Mekeo tribe in Veifa, Central Province. The purpose of the Institute is the on-going renewal and formation of our Melanesian priests.

The Institute has held four programs of six weeks during the last four years and 86 priests attended the program.

The focus of the six week program is the human aspect of the human person of the priest.

We have sessions on topics such as 'Who am I?', 'How am I leading my life', 'How do I take decisions', 'How do I

manage my emotions, my feelings and my time', 'Addictions', 'Ways to bring peace', 'Alternative to peace', 'Right Relationships in Ministry'.

In their evaluation all the participants always mentioned that the knowledge and skills acquired during these six weeks should have been offered to them at the early stage of their formation program in the seminary. I surely agree with them.

It has become very clear that the human dimension of the formation offered to our priests during their years of preparation for the priesthood is very weak.

We employ a lot of resources to train young men to become priests. If the human aspect is neglected we plan for failure and suffering.

That is one of the reasons why many of our priests are struggling with their life and their ministry.

They are wounded in many ways. It seems that the greatest challenge for our priests is to take proper decisions for

their lives and deal with their emotions.

The priests also mentioned the need for sessions on accounting, counseling and management. We need to work out a strategic plan to offer such courses to our priests.

The Vangeke Institute does not offer instant cure for addiction to alcohol, other addictions, profound difficulty with relationships.

What the priests learn during the six weeks program needs to be put into practice when back at home and involved in their ministry.

Changes for the better take time.

One difficulty is that the fraternity among our priests is not very strong.

They find it difficult to support one another or give advice to one another.

Many priests also find it difficult to relate with their bishops. They don't necessarily see that they need to find strength in prayer to overcome those problems. The

negative side of the wantok system can be very damaging.

Many people do not know how to support the priests in a way that is helpful to them.

Changes need to be made by the priests themselves, finding creative ways to support one another and feel responsible for the community of priests in their countries.

I invite all the bishops and all the priests to give a stronger support to the Vangeke Institute.

We have good priests in our countries and I believe that each priest has the vocation and potential to become a good and holy priest.

I hope that the 'Priests of the Vangeke Institute' will slowly but surely make a difference over the years.

I urge the priests who didn't live the experience of the six week program to give their names to their bishop to be a participant in the program planned for this year.



From left: Hon. MP Joseph Lera, Bishop Bernard Unabali and Autonomous Bougainville Government President John Momis, awaiting their turn of speeches during the ordination of Fr. William Satsie at Lemanmanu parish, North Bougainville on 31st January.

Bougainville leaders plead for unity

By Ray Girana
Buka

IN a few years, Bougainvilleans will be casting a direct vote to either accept or reject the fact of becoming an independent nation.

And the leaders of the new Autonomous Region once again called for unity on 31st January at Lemanmanu parish (North Bougainville) during the ordination of Fr. William Satsie.

Local bishop Bernard Unabali challenged the Catholic people of Bougainville in his homily to be true witnesses of their Catholic faith. As the diocese now embarks on a journey of 'Renewal', it

focuses on the family as the basis of a wider Christian and Political Community, "Renewal and conversion must start from the family because the family will determine the type of community. If we are to mould

Bougainville, we must mould our families first because a good community begins first at the family level and then at the national and universal level". The president of the Autonomous Bougainville Government, Hon. John Momis said that, "The gift of the priesthood is the gift of unification.

God united himself with humanity through the person of Jesus in the mystery of incarnation. God became man in order to

fulfil the plan of salvation through Christ's passion, death and resurrection. The priest who is man acts in this saving mystery in the celebration of the Eucharist to unite us with God. This is the basis of unity.

The regional member for Bougainville Hon. Joseph Lera embarked on Vocation as means of unity, "We may be called to different professions, but these differences in our vocation and profession are for the same purpose. We have to work together by sharing what we have for the betterment of our region because politics is all about people and not about leaders".

Students need guidance

THE President of Divine Word University (DWU), Fr Jan Czuba has called on staff members to make every effort to ensure students take full responsibility of their studies and personal development.

He called deans, heads of departments, lecturers and tutors to make sure students attend lectures and carry-out assigned tasks at all times.

The President made the call during his address at the opening of

the Staff Resumption Week at the Madang campus on Tuesday 28th January, 2014.

Fr Czuba said it was incumbent upon DWU staff to assist students in every way possible so they are committed to their studies and graduate from the university as responsible citizens.

The President made the remarks in the context of the declining quality of Grade 12 leavers coming out of PNG's ever-expanding secondary school system.

Fr Czuba said the drop in quality was once again witnessed by selectors from DWU and other institutions of higher education during the selection round for school leavers late last year 2013.

Fr Czuba said students were entering the university with various weaknesses that must be addressed. He said it was not good enough for a DWU staff to view a student as an adult who knows the right things to do because the reality is different. "We

can't say it is up to the students to behave and meet academic requirements. "It is our responsibility to assist them because they are coming with weaknesses from their secondary schools and communities," Fr Czuba said. "We are morally obliged to ensure students are properly groomed and educated at DWU." He said students are not "clients" but are part of the university community and all staff must ensure their welfare is prioritised. (dwu.ac.pg)

DWU to lead primary education

DIVINE Word University (DWU) President Fr Jan Czuba recently said the Office of Higher Education (OHE) has recently assigned DWU to lead the bachelor of primary education programs in the country while the University of Goroka would continue to take charge of secondary teacher education programs. He said the OHE has given DWU an important responsibility and the University is committed to delivering high quality primary teacher education where graduates can become better primary teachers in the future so they can go out and help in producing better students.

Fr Czuba said to help in the delivery of quality primary teacher education programs the OLSH Kabaleo Teachers College in East New Britain Province is now an amalgamated campus of DWU and joins the St Benedict's campus in East Sepik Province while Holy Trinity Teachers College in Western Highlands Province plans to do so in the near future.

Doc. Catherine Nongkas of DWU has been appointed to carry out the responsibility entrusted to Divine Word University. (dwu.ac.pg)

Why questioning education for all?

COMPULSORY education at least up to Grade 8 or 10 should not be questioned. Of course, everybody is aware of the shortage of classrooms and teachers. At the same time the law will have to be applied with leniency to those parents who have real difficulties in putting their children in school.

The O'Neill-Dion government interest in education is a good sign of sound and effective leadership. It reveals an interest for the present, but even more for the future. The country cannot go back to the forests and to the caves. Unfortunately there are signs of increasing illiteracy in over populated areas of the country, such as Kiriwina Island in the Milne Bay province. But local MP Douglas Tomuriesa at least proves to be one of those leaders the country now needs. In fact he is sending to tertiary studies dozens of young constituents; the same as Governors PowesParkop in Port Moresby, Peter Ipatas in Enga and a few others here and there whose good deeds for deserving students are known to the public.

Good example by political leaders will encourage the parents and the communities. Remote villagers still see sufficient future for the children in gardening and subsistence farming. There is nothing wrong with that profession. But I remember my father telling us that he would have been a better farmer had he enjoyed the chance of going beyond Grade 3. Yes, a farmer who knows how to read and write, make computation, speak English and approach people in a city office is better off than a farmer who is lost in the modern world.

PNG students, however, also need to shape up. Only few of them reach the secondary level and even fewer are admitted into tertiary institutions. Still, too many of them squander the opportunity by getting into alcoholism, disorderly relationships, lack of discipline, and laziness.

Any law on compulsory education has to target all stakeholders; from the government, with its duties for infrastructures, down to teachers, parents, youth, small kids who should not be allowed to just roam the streets, the mountains and the seashore without a purpose.

Universal education is the foundation of a modern, just and prosperous community. Whatever the cost and the sacrifice may take to achieve it! (G.L)

Fiji High Commissioner fighting alcoholism in PNG

HE doesn't cater for State to State relationships alone. He cares about people and the most vulnerable.

He has already started a group against alcoholism at Kanosia, along the Hiritano Highway in coordination with the diocese of Bereina and the local Fijian parish priest.

This is what Fiji High Commissioner to PNG Romanu Tikotikoca revealed at a gathering of the PNG Catholic Professionals in Port Moresby on 19th January.

And he is willing to do the same in any community in Port Moresby.

The diplomat said that he was a heavy drinking policeman at 29 when he decided to quit and help others to do the same.

He joined 'The Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart' in Fiji, a Church based group started by a Catholic priest in Ireland in 1898 and now spread all over the world.

It's not the first time that Mr Tikotikoca,

now 63 and married with six grown up children, fights alcoholism outside his country.

He already promoted the same groups and activities at Naru and Solomon Islands when he was assigned there as a policeman on overseas duty.

Should we jokingly call it "positive interference" in the internal affairs of the hosting country?

(Fr. Giorgio Licini)

Young and old: together!

**By Abp. Stephen Reichert
Madang**

RECENTLY Pope Francis said something like this: "The two most important groups in the Catholic Church and in society today are grandparents and young people." Think about that for a minute.

Grandparents have experienced much in life, good times and bad ones. Many are very wise and are able to give good advice. They are the most

faithful people in the Church. They are happy with what they have accomplished, big things or just small things. Grandparents know their time on earth is drawing to a close. They want those who come after them to be happy and live good lives. Young people can look to grandparents for inspiration and guidance. Young people are full of energy and dreams. If they follow the right path, they can achieve very much, even when they are still

young. Young people bring happiness to their families, their parents and grandparents, when they are kind and do good things. They make their grandparents feel young again when they come to visit them. Grandparents like to give special treats, food and other gifts, to young people.

What a happy relationship there can be between grandparents and young people! Grandparents and the youth should be with each other as

much as possible. I invite all the young people to come to Mass or Sunday Lotu every Sunday. The grandparents will be there. Share your lives with Jesus and with your grandparents. It is just a short time on Sunday, an hour or two, and grandparents will be so happy to be in the church with you singing and praying and receiving Holy Communion together. It will make a big difference in your lives too. I promise you.



2014 Catholic Secondary Principals' Conference, Don Bosco Boroko, 24-28 February.