



# The Catholic Reporter

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## 80 years on: 500 pilgrims walk from Madang to Mt Hagen

By Paul Petrus  
Mt Hagen

**ACTIONS** speak louder than words in Papua New Guinea culture.

It is customary that when a person does something good, words do not fully express the appreciation. One has to reciprocate with action. A common practice is the idea of saying thank you with action rather than words. Accordingly, the Catholic Archdiocese of Mt Hagen organised a pilgrimage to say thank you for the 80 years of the Gospel in the Highlands.

This year is a special year for the Catholic Archdiocese of Mt Hagen, which includes both Jiwaka and Western Highlands provinces.

The Archdiocese is celebrating 80 years of the Catholic faith in the two provinces and the rest of the Highlands. In 1934 the first Catholic missionaries from the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) led by Fr William Ross, Fr Alfonse Schafer and Br Frank Eugene with 72 carriers from Rempì in Madang, entered the highlands from the north.

Fr Schafer settled in Chimbu to evangelise and Fr Ross and Br Eugene moved on to the Western Highlands.

The first missionaries' sole purpose was to evangelise the people but services like education and health seemed necessary in order to evangelise meaningfully.

So schools and health services were established and contributed a lot to the development of the region. Today about 40% of the



Pilgrims going up the Gena mountain near Mingendi in Simbu province.

health and education services in the highlands is provided by the Catholic Church.

After 80 years, the Catholic faithful in the Archdiocese of Mt Hagen felt it is timely to say thank you and acknowledge all the blessings from God through the missionaries.

An appropriate action was a pilgrimage from Madang to Mt Hagen, following the route of the first missionaries. More than 500 Catholics including three local priests and nine seminarians travelled to Madang on 28 March. After two

days in Rempì, on the north coast of Madang, the pilgrims travelled by PMV to Yakumbu along the Ramu to Madang highway to start their two weeks pilgrimage.

Sixteen young men from Rempì also joined the group, some of them the descendants of the 72 carriers of the first missionaries.

The first week was a test of faith and physical strength.

They walked from Yakumbu across the Ramu valley to Brahman, a Catholic parish, then continued up the rugged terrain of the

Bismarck range to Bundi Catholic Mission, the last parish of the Madang Archdiocese.

The pilgrims then crossed the steep ridges of the Bismarck and continued their journey on the western side of the Mt Wilhelm through Mondia Pass on the border of Madang and Chimbu.

Travelling south along the Chimbu gorge, the pilgrims visited Denglagu, Golgme and the Ombondo parishes.

They also had a chance to visit the memorial sites to two of the first missionaries, Fr Carl Morschheuser

at Womatne and Br Eugene Frank at Anganere, where the local people attacked and killed them. Leaving the Chimbu gorge at Ombondo parish, the pilgrims travelled west up the steep hills of the Genamountains and arrived at Mingendi, ending the first week of the pilgrimage.

Physically most pilgrims had body aches and blisters on their feet but their spiritual strength motivated them to continue.

The second week of the pilgrimage from Mingendi to Mt Hagen followed the old highway and was the route that Fr Ross and Br Eugene took to travel to Mt. Hagen.

Continuing west along the Waghi valley, they passed Kerawagi the last parish of Kundiawa diocese, then on to Nondugl, Banz and Fatima parishes in the Jiwaka province and entering the Western Highlands through Mun Parish in the Dei district. Finally on Palm Sunday, the pilgrimage ended at Rebiatul, the Catholic Archdiocese headquarters with many of the pilgrims shedding tears of joy.

The Archbishop of Mt Hagen, Archbishop Douglas Young, welcoming them back said the pilgrimage was a sign of a family walking together and sharing the Gospel, as a Church alive in Christ.

Most of the pilgrims reflected that the long walk had been a perfect spiritual exercise to strengthen their Catholic faith during the Lenten season.

And it was a good experience to feel the similar pain and sufferings of the first missionaries, 80 years ago, as they entered the highlands region.

## Saints

Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) and Pope John XXIII (1881-1963) were canonized in Rome on 27 April 2014. They are now to be called Saints. John Paul II made a pastoral visit to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in May 1984. He came back in January 1995 for the beatification of Blessed Peter ToRot in Port Moresby right after attending World Youth Day in Manila, The Philippines.



Pope John XXIII (1881-1963)



Pope John Paul II (1920-2005)



Pope John Paul II in PNG 1984



# Big Koko's Kona

## Train Diocesan and Parish Child Protection Officers!



IT'S me again, *Big Koko*. Recently I teamed up with Catholic Children's Ministry PNG. We plan to do great things to promote a Child-Safe Papua New Guinea. We can count on your support; Right, Mate???

I'm sure you know that the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands at its last General Meeting, April 2013 at Alexishafen, unanimously re-

solved to give top priority to protecting our children and developing further in our Church, Catholic Children's Ministry. They also issued a public Statement and Commitment on "The Appropriate Care of the Child." I'm sure you've read it, right Mate???

Our Bishops also asked that we train Diocesan Child Protection Officers who in turn could train Parish Child Protection Volunteers and we did.

In September, 2013 there were 36 Diocesan Child Protection Officers trained for 15 participating dioceses. They're the ones who will train the Parish Child Protection Volunteers in their respective dioceses. Some dioceses are already training them.

Catholic Children's Ministry has five Objectives regarding Child Protection:

- To Educate the Public,
- To Empower Children,
- To Protect Children

- To speak out on their behalf (Advocacy),

To nurture Christian Life in the Child and in its Parents.

It's not easy being a child, Mate. Our world is neither safe nor friendly towards kids. If it were friendly and safe we would not have: child brides, child labour, child soldiers, child wasmamas, child waspapas, child abuse, child exploitation, child neglect, child violence and/or discrimination

against the child. Pope Francis once said (before he became Pope) "...a people that does not care for its children and its elderly has no hope." .... something to think about, Mate! Gutbai for now. Look for *Big Koko'Kona* in next month's edition of this great niuspepa! I send you lots of happy kokomo wishes from my cage. Stap gut! **Lukautim Pikinini 0-18!**

*Big Koko*

# The Teaching of the Second Vatican Council

## KINGDOM OF GOD

By Fr Roger Purcell MSC

**IN the Second Vatican Council (1962-'65) the Church directed us to look out to the world, to be part of the world, to engage with the world.**

In seeing the presence of God in the world, we see also that the Kingdom of God is something greater than ourselves.

Wherever there is the love and law of God, there is the reign of God.

In this way we are a Church which is not centred on itself, but which is the sacrament of God's Reign, a pilgrim Church needing

constant conversion, the servant of the Kingdom of God.

We are not the Kingdom nor do we own the Kingdom. We are here with the mission of proclaiming the Reign of God, to promote it in the world and build it up among all people.

- "The Church ... receives the mission to proclaim and to spread among all peoples the kingdom of Christ and of God and to be on earth the initial budding forth of that kingdom." [LG 5]
- "While helping the world and receiving many benefits from it, the Church has a single inten-

tion: that God's kingdom may come." [GS45]

To carry out the mission of proclaiming the Reign of God we must be its first converts, both individually and as community; to hear and know, to understand and accept the standards and values of the Kingdom; to be changed and converted to live by the Kingdom every day. Only then can we become missionaries of the Kingdom of God.

In this way our way of life in action and words will be an expression of the love of God. It will lead us to live by the law of God, and bring others to follow the same way. Then we can truly say, "Your

Kingdom come!"

Jesus said, "Behold the Kingdom is upon you!" The Kingdom is here, it is already among us. Can we see it? Do we recognize it in the happenings of the world around us? Do we recognize it in the people we meet and live with? The Spirit of God, alive and active in the world, is bringing the Kingdom alive in the world. The Spirit works in people, in events and movements in the world to establish the Reign of God. We need to see it, recognize it and work with it.

The Spirit can use any person, believer or non-believer, good or bad, powerful or powerless, to build

the Kingdom. Any event, happening or situation is a tool for the work of the Spirit. We can be part of it, or we can stand on the side and watch, or hide, or ignore what is happening. We need to SEE the signs of the times, to UNDERSTAND, to DISCERN and to ACT in line with the Spirit.

Reflection and discussion:

- Where do I see the Reign of God in my life and situation?
- How can we as a community live more by the love and law of God?
- How can we change our world to live more in the Kingdom of God?



**POOR BUT GENEROUS.** Adelbertha Wiiti, 22 months old, joyfully gives her Turangu Appeal envelop to help the poor, the needy and the homeless to Fr Martin We-en in the remote parish of Mukili, Sandaun province where the regular Sunday collection is less than five Kina. In spite of the poor cash flow in the area, Fr Martin is confident to raise at least K 150.00 among Catholics and members of other Christian denominations by the time all envelopes are returned on 18 May. (Photo by Fr Martin We-en)

## New Milne Bay Teachers College in the making

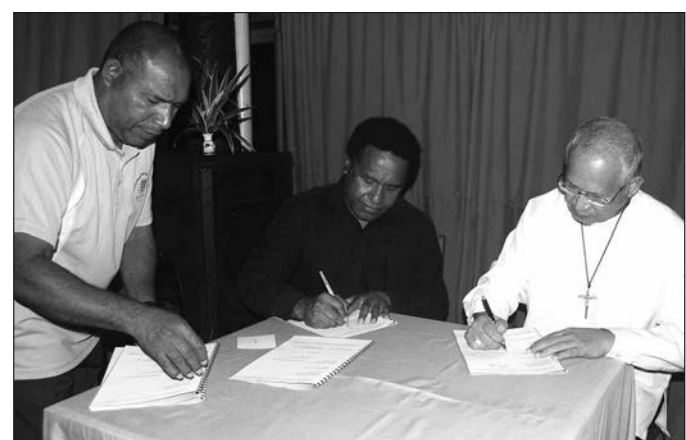
THE Catholic diocese of Alotau will soon open a Teachers College in cooperation with the provincial and national government.

A Memorandum of Agreement to this effect has been signed on the 3rd of April in Alotau between the parties, while the groundbreaking ceremonies took place on the 22nd of April.

The College will be owned jointly by the Milne Bay Provincial Government and the Catholic Diocese of Alotau, but will be considered as a Catholic Agency Institution with the Church taking overall responsibility in the management, administration and upkeep of the facilities.

It will be located on Church land at Hagita, about 15 km west of Alotau, where a Primary and Secondary school are also run by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

The provincial and national governments are expected to



From left: Milne Bay Acting Provincial Administrator Michael Kape, Provincial lawyer Atty. Simon Alberic, and Bishop Rolando Santos signing the Memorandum of Agreement for the new Milne Bay Teachers College on 3 April 2014 in Alotau.

shoulder most of the construction costs estimated at about PGK 25 million, though the European Union cooperation and development office in Port Moresby has also shown interest in the venture. According to local Bishop Rolando Santos the College will be able to accept the first intakes as early

as January 2016.

"Let us pray for the success of this very important partnership - Bishop Santos said after the signing of the agreement - it can bring much benefit to the development of the province as well as the evangelization of the young people of Milne Bay". (G.L.)

# SORCERY THREATENS STUDENTS



University students at Kalibobo lighthouse in Madang (Photo: Faith Benhalyn Tigali)

**Fr Giorgio Licini**

**YES, Christian churches must step up, as The National newspaper said on Thursday, 24 April (p. 32) in reference to sorcery.**

But, as I was talking with a group of university students about the issue, a few insights emerged, including that some students feel personally threatened by sorcery.

A girl originally from Gulf Province said she had never set foot in her village since she was born.

She maintained that about 20 of her relatives succumbed to sorcery in the last few years alone.

Her father barely survived it when he travelled from Port Moresby to the remote area to settle some land issues.

Another student, originally from Bogia, told a similar story. You could feel the sense of despair, suffering and injustice in their facial expressions.

The two wondered why the sacrifice of education should make

them outcasts and a target for murder in their place of origin.

According to their information, more poor and isolated youth are turning to sorcery practices out of envy towards anybody who may seem to be one step ahead of them.

It is like the evil part of the human having the upper hand in the inner struggle between good and bad. The students think that there is a religious aspect of the problem to be addressed by the Churches.

But they also think that the new generation should be taken out of isolation through better education, communication and travel.

When asked about the main infrastructural difference between urban and rural areas, the students hardly mentioned electrification.

The reason is probably that they grew up in Port Moresby and never realised that lack of electrical power in rural areas means long nights, no alternative entertainment, no radio and television, no

movies, no computers, no good communication networks.

The fight against sorcery can probably be won in a few generations, but everybody has to do their part - the Churches, the education system and the government - by investing in the electrification of the country and what follows this.

You remove electricity from a modern country and you go back one thousand years.

You put it in a developing country and immediately you jump ahead.

## PNG and Solomon Islands at Signis world congress

**By Fr Ambrose Pereira SDB  
Honiara, Solomon Islands**

OVER 300 Catholic communicators from over 100 countries participated in the SIGNIS World Congress 2014 in Rome on the theme "Media for a Culture of Peace: Creating Images with the New Generation". The three-day Congress opened on 25 February in the presence of Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communication.

Introducing the event, Archbishop Celli said that the SIGNIS Congress is an answer to "the reality of our times."

The President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communication encouraged Catholic

communicators to respond to the Pope's challenge:

"The revolution taking place in communication media and in information technologies represents a great and thrilling challenge; may we respond to that challenge with fresh energy and imagination as we seek to share with others the beauty of God." (Pope Francis, Message for the 48th World Communication Day).

"Fresh energy and imagination is what Pope Francis is asking from us if we are to meet the challenges of the future with "dedication and serious professionalism," concluded Archbishop Celli.

The SIGNIS Congress worked its way through several conferences, workshops, screenings and events aimed at Catholic

media professionals from different audiovisual areas and expertise.

The participants were able to tackle among others, social media, journalism, social marketing, cinema and spirituality, social documentaries, multimedia radio, communication training and media education.

The opening address, given by Jesuit Fr Antonio Spadaro, reflected upon the ethical and spiritual dimensions of the emerging digital culture.

Augustine Loorthusamy, the outgoing President of SIGNIS, the World Catholic Association for Communication, said that the programme of the Congress will give many opportunities to "renew our thinking".

"Every Congress is an opportu-

nity to celebrate the richness of our diversity as a truly worldwide association of communicators. I am sure that this Congress will see old friendships renewed and new ones formed as we learn from each other and are challenged and stimulated to think afresh. Sharing and listening to one another across generations we can start to co-create a new and effective SIGNIS that is ready to respond creatively and positively to the challenges of a fast-changing multimedia and digital world."

Participants from Papua New

Guinea and the Solomon Islands as part of the SIGNIS Pacific delegation (pictured) included: Fr. Giorgio Licini, Secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference Commission on Social Communications, Fr. Ambrose Pereira, outgoing SIGNIS Pacific President and Sr. Sesilia Sala, Catholic Communication Solomon Islands Director.

It is hoped that the experience of this Congress will help its participants return to their communication endeavors renewed, energized and inspired.

### Give us this day our daily bribe...

*By Abp. Douglas Young SVD - Mt Hagen - Easter message 2014*

THIS year my thoughts turn to a passage from the New Testament that forms part of the Easter Vigil, St Paul's Letter to the Romans, chapter 6, verses 3-11.

In this passage St Paul reminds us that through our baptism we die with Christ in order to rise with him to an entirely new life.

Although we have many signs of new life in active church life and many acts of kindness and generosity, we also have many very serious signs of death and dying.

The most serious of these must be the creeping corruption that we now begin to face almost daily. Where there is corruption there is bribery.

Apart from those who pay bribes to get something they have no right to, we increasingly have to pay bribes to get what we are actually entitled to.

Bribery flies in the face of the authentic Christian attitude of generosity which St Paul is speaking about. Bribery must have no place in a

Christian country which celebrates the fact that the greatest gift of all is given freely to those who ask for it in faith.

I have only one prayer this Easter, that all who call themselves Christians, born again in the waters of baptism, would truly turn from sin daily more and more, especially the sin of bribery, asking for bribes or "incentives" and giving them.

May we all begin to live truly the life of someone who is born again to a new life, who not only carries out their duties and responsibilities honestly but has space left for the same kind of generous loving kindness towards others that has been shown to them in the free offer of new life in Christ.

Easter celebrates the fact that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, and sin and death have no more power. Why would a disciple of Jesus want to return to the path of death characterised by bribery and corruption?



SIGNIS Pacific delegates (Rome, 25 Febr-1 Mar) from Australia, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Fiji, Samoa, Guam, Kiribati and Mariana Islands.



# Yule Island's pioneer Bishop de Boismenu on the path to sainthood

By Bishop Rochus Tatamai  
MSC Bereina

**POPE Francis has officially recognised the "heroic virtues" of Alain-Marie Guynot de Boismenu, former Apostolic Vicar of Yule Island, who just before Easter was declared "Venerable".**

There is now the need of a miracle to enable Alain de Boismenu to become a "Blessed" and from there a "Saint".

deBoismenu was born in 1870 in Brittany in France, the 11th and last child in his family. He never knew his mother since she died 15 days after his birth; so his elder sister brought him up.

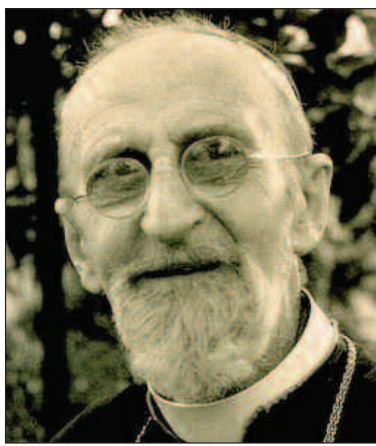
He always wanted to become a missionary and during his novitiate in Belgium he displayed a strong missionary spirit and made his first profession as a Missionary of the Sacred Heart in 1888.

Between 1888 and 1891 he completed philosophical and theological studies in Antwerp; then taught in an apostolic school before being ordained priest in 1895.

Some years earlier, de Boismenu had written to Father Henry Verius MSC, the pioneer missionary who arrived at Yule Island in 1885, seeking his advice about the best way to prepare himself for life in the mission. Verius's advice was:

"Here you need 100 times more virtue, spirit of sacrifice and spirit of faith than in Europe... Consider excellent the day when you are opposed, exercise yourself often in patience, in putting up with the faults of your brothers; this point is essential, patience with yourself, with others and above all with the natives who discourage you in the mission; such a habit of patience is so necessary."

As a teacher, de Boismenu was popular amongst his students and



Alain-Marie Guynot de Boismenu

He developed an interest in social questions. He was concerned about the working conditions of the poor and theological aspects of the Pope's teaching.

Alain de Boismenu received news of his appointment to the Yule Island mission in August 1897, ar-

iving in Sydney towards end of October.

However, some of his colleagues were skeptical about his suitability for the vigorous life of the mission. They were very mistaken.

He travelled to Yule Island, being appointed Bishop in 1900. He was in the office for 45 years, retiring to Kubuna in 1945 and dying on 5 November 1953.

deBoismenu set out to improve the living conditions of the missionaries and to strengthen the administration to offer better support to the missionaries in the field.

He was a very good diplomat in tribal conflicts and in dealing with the colonial Administration and the rival Protestant missions as the churches developed the policy of "spheres of influence" in Papua and New Guinea. He reorganized the structure of mission life to regroup missionaries into communities of about six or seven members.

Such an arrangement alleviated serious problems of isolation and loneliness. The men were able to move out from the central station to minister at different outstations; but also had a base, a community, to which they could return for support and companionship.

deBoismenu believed in indigenous vocations so he founded the women's Congregation of the Handmaids of Our Lord and, for the men, the Little Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

Later he promoted the first indigenous priest, Fr Louis Vangeke MSC, who was ordained in 1937 and consecrated Bishop in 1970.

Just before Easter, the Catholic Church in PNG received news that Archbishop Alain Guynot de Boismenu, former Apostolic Vicar of Yule Island, has been declared "Venerable", the first step along the pathway to sainthood.

## Rebuilding Solomon Islands after the floods

By Fr. Ambrose Pereira -  
Honiara

THE floodwaters have left a trail of destruction. Lives and property have been lost.

Most of the disaster victims have returned to rebuild their homes and their lives. We applaud the efforts of the authorities and the Aid agencies to reach out to the disaster victims, to see that they are housed and fed and finally returned home with food, household and other necessary equipment.

To assist the people as they rebuild their lives, the Salesians of Don Bosco, through Salesian Missions Australia have funded household items.

Drum ovens, tables and chairs will be fabricated for



THE worst ever recorded floods in Solomon Islands left about 30 people dead in April.

the most needy families who were housed at Don Bosco, Henderson.

The Machine Fitting students have commenced fabricating drum ovens.

Priced at SBD 1,500 the ovens will be for the families in the Foxwood and Nalibiu area.

The carpentry students will be preparing tables and chairs for the Tumurora Primary School.

While rehabilitation goes on, long term solutions to deal with disasters - natural or manmade - need to be worked out.

More important, the task



DON Bosco welding students in Honiara getting drum ovens ready for flood victims at Solomon Islands.

of reconstruction needs forward planning and committed action over the months and the years ahead.

With no doubt, education plays an important part in the ability to assist and deal with difficulties and disasters.

It is also important that in-

frastructure specifications be made clear and that building codes be strictly adhered to and followed.

We are grateful to all who have assisted in several ways to ensure that those affected are able to deal amicably with the situation.

### PRAYER FOR THE CANONIZATION OF ALAIN DE BOISMENU

WE praise you Lord, for the life of Alain de Boismenu, spent in the service of your Gospel and of the People of Papua New Guinea.

We thank you, Lord, for his simple, deep faith, lived in each moment of everyday life; for his trusting abandonment to your will; for the gentleness of his welcome to all in need; and for his wisdom and courage in serving them.

We ask you, Lord, for your greater glory, to glorify on earth, through his canonization, this apostle of your merciful love.

Through his example and intercession, may your Holy Spirit unite us ever more intimately with you in the heart of your Son, so that through us also your love may transform the world.

We make this prayer through Christ, Our Lord, Amen.



### Youthful Easter celebration

ABOUT five hundred students, staff and visitors packed the DWU Chapel in Madang for the Easter Vigil celebration on 19th April. It was the highlight of an intense three day commemoration of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ which also saw the PNG Highland students organize a moving Way of the Cross in campus on Good Friday. Students from all PNG provinces and Solomon Islands cooperated for the fourteen stations with the Jiwaka boys enacting a fight that to many appeared to be real (and... scaring) at first glance.

Chaplain Fr Giorgio Licini recalled during the Easter Vigil the untimely passing of DWU Vice-President Br Andrew Simpson last year in June and student Nigel Laki, killed just outside the campus on 14 March this year. He also invited those present to offer prayers and solidarity to people affected by the recent floods at Solomon Islands, the earthquake in Bougainville, and the typhoon Ita in Milne Bay province and Queensland.

(Pictured: DWU students at the Easter Vigil - Photo and story by Michelle Steven, DWU Journalism student)