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Secularization in PNG

By Fr. Boniface Holz MSC
Rabaul

SECULARIZATION is a process in which the traditional culture of the people in PNG was and still is changed by European culture and civilization.

A common sign of this secularization is the emergence of social, political, and economical spheres in which religious influence is declining.

This goes together with an increasing privatization of religion and an increasing loss of Christian values in public life.

The fathers of the constitution of PNG wrote, "We the people of PNG

... pledge ourselves to guard and pass on to those who come after us our noble traditions and the Christian principles that are ours now. ... We declare our first goal to be for every person to be dynamically involved in the process of freeing himself or herself from every form of domination or oppression so that each man and woman will have the opportunity to develop as a whole person in relationship with others."

This means that our country has two points of reference to get its bearings from, 'our noble traditions' and 'the Christian principles'.

The question is what happened to those noble traditions and the Christian principles since the time

when European culture and civilization met the people of PNG? Because when a culture/civilization meets another culture/civilization changes will take place and there is the danger that the dominated society gets disorientated because of all the changes; that it loses its bearings.

In order to answer the question we have to see how the Melanesian understands his world, his culture and himself.

When the missionary celebrated mass, the people saw very little of what he did because he turned his back to them; and they understood nothing because he celebrated in Latin. What the missionary did and what he said was a mystery for them.

But for the people this was exactly how it should be.

After all you can't explain a mystery, you can't understand a mystery, and you can't see a mystery. Cf. the sorcerer in the village: he doesn't tell anybody what he says or what he does or what is in those little packages in his bag.

Vatican II changed all this. No Latin anymore and the priest celebrated mass facing the people.

The mystery of the mass disappeared; it became a secular event.

Maybe the missionary was pleased because now the people could understand what he was praying and reading.

He thought that this would cer-

tainly have a positive effect on the moral life of the people. But the people were not pleased with the change.

They didn't want to see or understand what the priest was doing or saying. They wanted the mystery to continue.

The word 'mystery' has a vital meaning for Melanesians.

Whether the priest succeeds in bringing it back to his congregation depends very much on how he celebrates mass; how he celebrates the sacraments; how he blesses holy water or a rosary; how much time he spends in front of the tabernacle; it depends on his spirituality.

August- Bible Month- Catholic Attitude toward Bible Reading

AVERAGE Catholics asked today how often they read the Bible likely would say that they do not read the Bible regularly.

However, if asked how often they read Scripture, the answer would be different. Practicing Catholics know they read and hear Scripture at every Mass.

Many also recognize that basic prayers Catholics say, such as the Our Father and the Hail Mary, are scriptural.

But for most Catholics, the Scripture they hear and read is not from the Bible. It is from a worship aid in the pew.

Scripture always has played an important role in the prayer life of the Catholic Church and its members.

For the ordinary Catholic in earlier centuries, exposure to Scripture was passive. They heard it read aloud or prayed aloud but did not read it themselves.

One simple reason: Centuries ago the average person could not read or afford a book. Popular reading and ownership of books began to flourish only after the invention of the printing press.

Once the printing press was invented, the most commonly printed book was the Bible, but this still did

not make Bible-reading a Catholic's common practice.

Up until the mid-twentieth century, the custom of reading the Bible and interpreting it for oneself was a hallmark of the Protestant churches springing up in Europe after the Reformation.

Protestants rejected the authority of the Pope and of the Church and showed it by saying people could read and interpret the Bible for themselves. Catholics meanwhile were discouraged from reading Scripture.

Identifying the reading and interpreting of the Bible as "Protestant" even affected the study of Scripture. Until the twentieth century, it was only Protestants who actively embraced Scripture study.

That changed after 1943 when Pope Pius XII issued the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*.

This not only allowed Catholics to study Scripture, it encouraged them to do so. And with Catholics studying Scripture and teaching other Catholics about what they were studying, familiarity with Scripture grew.

Scripture awareness grew after the Second Vatican Council. Mass was celebrated in the vernacular and so the Scripture readings at



EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS: Church Agency Educationists & members of the Education Act (1983) Policy Review team during a consultative meeting at the National Library, Port Moresby. The team gauged views and comments from the largest education stakeholder in the country which owns 50 per cent or half of the schools in PNG, the Catholic Church plus the United, Seventh Day Adventists and other mainline and Pentecostal churches as well.

Photo & words: Veronica Hatutasi

Mass were read entirely in English. Adult faith formation programs began to develop, and the most common program run at a parish focused on Scripture study. The Charismatic movement and the rise of prayer groups exposed Catholics to Scripture even more. All of this contributed to Catholics becoming more familiar with the Bible and

more interested in reading the Scriptures and praying with them

In a round-about way, aspects of PNG/SI cultures also have encouraged Catholics to become more familiar with the Scriptures. References to John 3:16 appear in the stands at sporting events. Catholics who hear of and see other Christians quote or cite Scrip-

ture verses wonder why they cannot. Such experiences lead Catholics to seek familiarity with the Bible.

Such attitudinal changes bode well for Catholics, especially when reading and praying with the Word of God leads to lessons learned, hearts inspired and lives profoundly moved for good.

OUR COMMON HOME

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Everywhere he goes Pope Francis speaks with authority in the same way that Jesus spoke with authority. The people see that he speaks the truth and that is because he doesn't seek his own interest or profit.

On the 24th of May Pope Francis launched his Encyclical "on care for our common home". An encyclical is a teaching document from the Pope. It is addressed to all the Catholics but also to all who live on earth. It is a radical call to conversion of minds, hearts and lifestyles. Pope Francis is calling for a new and serious dialogue at all levels to deal with the issues affecting and destroying our environment.

The title given to his Encyclical is "Laudato si". It comes from a hymn coming from St. Francis of Assisi and it means "be praised". In that hymn St. Francis was praising God for the gift of creation, the animals, the birds, the flowers, the sun, the moon, etc. St. Francis felt truly connected not only to human beings but also to the rest of creation.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits (Pope Francis is a Jesuit himself) wrote years ago: "Consider that God, your Benefactor, is present in all creatures and in yourself. If you look at every step of the visible creation, in all you will meet God". Pope Francis says that all that lives on earth is gift from God and it is our responsibility to care for all life, whether human or not human.

In our Diocesan Pastoral Plan and often in our teaching, reflections and prayers we refer to communion with God, with one another and with creation. The Melanesian people are gifted in that sense that they feel very much part of nature. There is a vital link between the culture and the environment. Yet, because of the rapid changes taking place the people today struggle to take good care of that beautiful gift received from God.

There is no doubt that our environment is suffering and not cared for in the way God would like us to. There is destruction or damage done to our environment at two levels. The first level is the damage done through mining companies, oil industries and logging activities.

The harm done to nature by the big companies can be enormous. The second level is the damage done by people themselves at home, in the villages or settlements but also in the forest or the bush. We all see that much damage is done to our earth. Pope Francis is saying that things cannot just keep on as it is done now because we are heading towards our



Bishop Gilles

own destruction.

Pope Francis is taking a strong stand against all the polluters, big companies and individuals and the reasons why this is done. He writes that our earth is badly mistreated and abused and that it is time to take a new direction by taking on the responsibility of "caring for our common home", which is also the home of the future generations. "What kind of home would we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?" (Pope Francis).

The answers he suggests call for profound changes to political, economic, cultural and social systems, as well as individual lifestyles. "Only by radically reshaping our relationships with God, with our neighbours and with the natural world, can we hope to tackle the threats facing our planet today" he says.

I was thinking of a drawing that appeared in the newspaper some years ago. We could see a bird sitting on a tree. The bird is looking at a big bulldozer knocking down all the trees. And he is thinking like this: 'I used to be a bird of paradise and now I am only a bird'. What about the fishes that used to swim in clean water and now swim in dirty water? What about the great variety of animals, insects and plants who need healthy forest and bush to survive, but their land which is their home is being destroyed at an alarming rate by big companies always seeking more and more profit?

And what about the poor people in different parts of the world who have to resettle and suffer because their land, their homes, are being destroyed by so called development projects? We constantly hear the cries of the victims of injustice and climate change and pollution on the radio, the television and read about it in the newspaper.

Pope Francis writes that climate change, pollution, difficult access to fresh water, disappearance of thousands of plants

and animal species, the breakdown of society and the global inequality are all consequences of political and economic systems without ethics "where those with knowledge, and especially economic resources" have "an impressive dominance over the whole of humanity".

And Pope Francis points to the following avenues for solutions:

"The Gospel of Creation": All human life is grounded in our relationships with God, with our neighbours and with the created world. We must acknowledge our sins when we break these relationships and realize our "tremendous responsibility" towards all of God's creation.

The poorest of the poor: A good solution needs to be based on the care of creation in line with "a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters".

Dialogue: Pope Francis says that the Church needs to promote "honest and open debate" on the present situation, taking into account the common good. The decision making needs to be transparent and not serve personal or group interests; it needs to ensure that the use of natural resources be sustainable.

Education: Pope Francis is urging the families, the schools and the Church communities and its media to help reshape habits and behaviour. It is all about overcoming individualism and having the right type of influence on political leaders.

Conversion (ecological): Here Pope Francis presents St. Francis of Assisi as the model of "a more passionate concern for the protection of the world" (Pope Francis), characterised by gratitude and generosity, creativity and enthusiasm.

Spirituality: Pope Francis concludes by showing how faith in God can shape and inspire our care for the environment. The Sacraments, the Trinity, the model of the Holy Family and our hope for eternal life can teach, motivate and strengthen

us to protect the natural world that God has given us.

Brothers and sisters,

Pope Francis is giving to all of us a wake up call. We cannot let our common home be gradually destroyed without standing in solidarity with others and have the courage to take the required decisions in favour of a better world. We are all guardians of the earth. It is our duty to care for the gifts received from God and our beautiful world is one of those precious gifts.

St. John Paul II wrote: "Christians ... realize that their responsibility with creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith" (Laudato Si, 64).

The little steps that millions of people take to protect and care for creation can make a big difference on the long run and have a strong impact on the decisions of our politicians. It can lead them towards decisive and responsible actions towards the common good, the respect for our environment and a just society where all the people, rich or poor, can live with dignity in their common home. We are all called to help shape a new future through prayer and actions in favour of all human beings and all of creation.

WHAT CAN EACH ONE DO TO CARE BETTER FOR OUR COMMON HOME?

- Plant trees, flowers.
- Do not cut trees unless it is for a good reason.
- Clean around the house.
- Keep the village or settlement clean.
- Do not throw plastic bags, paper, tins or metal stuff just anywhere but drop them at the right place, certainly not on the road.
- Keep our rivers clean.
- Take good care of the springs that give us fresh water.
- Do not throw buai skin or spit buai juice on the ground or on the roads.
- If one has electricity, switch off the lights, fans, etc. when not needed.
- Combine trips by vehicle whenever possible.
- Do not let generators run for no reason.

"Pope Francis is asking us to restore our sense of responsibility for others"... "Where nature is concerned", he is calling us "to assume responsibility for it, taking all care so that everything stays healthy and integrated, so as to offer a welcoming and friendly environment even to those who succeed us" (Remarks from our Nuncio. Archbishop Michael W. Banach, 24 June 2015).

With St. Francis of Assisi and Pope Francis let us praise the Lord for the gift of creation.

+ Gilles, your bishop
Kiunga, July 22, 2015

Ol askim na bekim i pas long Encyclical Laudato Si' (preis i go long yu) em i encyclical bilong Papa Santu

Continued from July Issue...

HUSAT ol gen wantaim Cardinal Turkson i helpim Papa Santu long raitim dispela doku-men?

I gat planti tingting ol i kisim long planti ol kivung bilong ol bishop, tasol ol tingting bilong sains i kam long husat?

Planti ol manmeri i bin helpim Papa Santu long raitim dispela, tasol nem bilong em i stap long en na moa yet long en, em i encyclical bilong em.

Sains i kam long wankain ples yumi save kisim long en: ol saintifik komuniti, husat ol i bin wok long wok painim aut long ol dispela ol samting long planti yia tru.

Yumi mas save olsem Pop Francis i luksave olsem i gat planti ol samting long toktok na painim tingting long ol,; em i laikim tasol olsem toktok o tingting yumi kamap wantaim i mas tru.

Wanem samting i kamap long naturel lo? Em i bin save stap insait tru long ol moral skul bilong Sios, tasol i luk olsem Papa Santu ino putim dispela ol tingting long LS.

Ating dispela em i narapela kain lukluk long tioloji? Ating i luk olsem em i givim baksait long Pop Benedik husat long Bundestag, em i usim naturel lo long toktok long enviromen?

Wanem samting long LS em i no nupela lukluk bilong tioloji tasol em i wanpela kain wok kamap bilong traim long painim nupela rot bilong tromoi toktok bai olgeta i ken kisim gut.

Long dispela, ol lain tu we ol ino klia gut long save bilong naturel lo, ol tu i ken lukim olsem wok bilong lukautim gut enviromen bilong ol lain bilong bihainim taim em i gutpela samting long mekim.

Namba 24 i toktok long save bilong kamapim ol samting na mani tupela i soim pes nating tasol olsem tupela i rot tru bilong pinisim ol hevi bilong yumi.

Tasol yet save na mani i helpim long bringim aut planti manmeri long ol kain laip bilong ol rabis manmeri na tu i mekim rot bilong kisim na lukautim mani i gro. Na ating LS i laik bringim yumi i go bek olgeta gen?

Save bilong graun na mani i helpim sampela manmeri tumas moa long ol narapela. LS i no laik bringim yumi i go bek.

Em i rot bilong go het moa wantaim lukluk bilong rispektim namba bilong ol manmeri, na long traim long mekim wanem samting em i nap long mekim long sotim namba bilong ol lain ol i save putim ol long arere na ol i no kisim ol gutpela wok; gutpela haus bilong slip na gutpela helt sevis. Na em i rot bilong go het tu wantaim respek long mama graun bilong yumi.

Ol bisop bilong Bolivia (n. 48) i tok aut olsem ol kainkain hevi bilong enviromen i save bagarapim no gut tru laip bilong ol rabis manmeri.

Sampela long ol i tok narakain olsem taim yumi kontrolim enviromen, dispela bai bagarapim ol rabis manmeri moa. Bilong wanem yumi mas kisim dispela ol tingting bilong ol bisop bilong Bolivia?

Ol bisop bilong Bolivia i wok long mekim yumi i harim singaut bilong planti ol rabis manmeri long olgeta hap bilong graun ol i hangere bikos ol i nonap planim kaikai bilong ol famili bilong ol.

Putim ia long ol lain i wok long riskim laip bilong ol long wokabout long Mediterranean long hap bilong Not Afrika o long Rio Grande long long Yunaited Stets, bikos ol i ting dispela em i hop bilong ol.

Expected outcome of CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines

By Fr. Shanthi Chacko Puthussery PIME Secretary of Commission for Youth and Laity

THE new Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC) Youth Policy and Guidelines were approved and endorsed by the bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in April 2014.

The CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines aims at four different areas of formations - human - further dived into physical and psychological, intellectual, spiritual and social/pastoral of every young person.

It's a comprehensive and an integral formation.

In today's context through elementary, primary, high and secondary education one learns something of literacy, numeracy, science and social science but not much learning of morality, ethics, religiosity, faith, spirituality, leadership qualities and personal development.

In the timetable of the education system in the schools there exist personal development and religious instruction lessons; but how much learning and transformations are taking place among the students through these prescribed curriculum, remain a

puzzle! In effect it can be argued that somehow, formal education system fails to create proper leaders with adequate leadership qualities.

Hence Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands is in a position to address these issues effectively; that's the purpose and objective of the CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines.

If it is taken seriously and applied to the youth groups of every parish communities by the respective dioceses and by the diocesan youth offices, the expected outcome of the CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines can be achieved in a sustainable manner.

The reason for it is that through four areas of formation every young person will adequately gain personal self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness and social skills. One can find the summary form of the expected outcome of the CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines in the table below:-

Personal competence Social competence

1. Self awareness
 2. Self-regulation
 3. Self Motivation
 4. Social awareness
 5. Social skills
- Emotional awareness
Accurate self-assess-

ment
Self-Confidence
Self-control
Trustworthiness
Conscientiousness
Adaptability
Innovativeness
Achievement

drive
Commitment
Initiative
Optimism
Empathy
Service-orientedness
Developing others
Achieving unity in diversity
Political awareness
Influence
Communication
Leadership
Change catalyst
Conflict management
Building bonds
Collaboration & cooperation
Team capabilities

155 young people at Bougainville Diocese and 115 at Madang Archdiocese who attended the recent 'CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines' Awareness Workshop' could see through the four areas of formation a strong sense of direction for their own future.

They also understood that it's a hard work and they have to work for it for a period of time with a sense of commitment, stability, patience and perseverance.

Almost unanimously, the participants agreed that making short cuts and 'doing somehow' invites more consequences later.

In other words, every

Catholic diocese of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Island has to have a long term vision in action for its own young people with adequate structures under a qualified diocesan youth coordinator.

They are the parish youth ministry, athletic ministry, music ministry, ministry among the young people of the settlements and prisons, ministry among the students of High/Secondary, Tertiary Institutions/Students and ministry among young adults (single fathers/mothers, those who are above 25 years old and single persons, etc).

Also strongly advised to create offices for Catechetical, Scriptural and other spiritual formations, Distance Education/FODE, Literacy programs, counselling services for addictive/anti-social behaviours, skills development programs, values education programs and marriage preparation courses for the youth.

Once the young people become the greatest priority for the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands and they receive adequate formations and trainings; its for sure consequently every young person becomes better citizens of the Catholic Church as well as of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands!

for the decline of church attendance in general and in the reception of the sacraments in particular: lack of understanding of the foundation of the sacraments in the word of Jesus.

This of course is connected with the cargo cult mentality the people approach the sacraments with: receiving the sacraments as something spiritual has little basis in their culture.

They received them, but many didn't get what they expected. So it is only logical to drop the praxis. As one man told me some years ago, "Mi pre, pre, pre, tasol mi no kisim samting."

Why na mi pre? Lotu i pulimapim bel bilong mi long wanem samting?" We worry about people leaving the Church. So far I got the same answer whenever I asked people why they had left the Church: "The Catholic Church does not preach the Word of God (well)."

Commentary by Fr. Victor Roche



IN Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, on the first Sunday of August we celebrate the Bible Sunday.

Some parishes celebrate the Bible Week and Bible Month in the Month of August. All these activities help the faithful for a deeper love for the Word of God.

I want to share with you about an experience I had a few months ago: I went to one of the Government Departments one morning. The woman at the counter was reading the Bible. When she was ready to serve me, I said to her, "Madam, I am really impressed by you and your reading of the Bible in the morning. May I know your name?"

She replied with a gentle smile, "My name is Rosy and I am a Catholic. I begin my work with a passage from the Bible and a short prayer. I know that the Spirit of God will guide my work during the whole day".

After she served me, I told her, "My sister, thank you for your good service. I am very happy to see your faith in action. God Bless you!"

It is good to see more Catholics who love the Word of God. Activities of the Bible Sunday bring us an awareness about the importance of the Word of God in our life. God speaks to us individually through the Bible. So, I suggest the following:

Have your own Bible. Every Catholic should have a bible. Buy one today, if you do not have one.

Read the Bible. Read a Chapter every day; or the readings of the day from the Catholic Calendar. Bible is not an ordinary book. It contains the Word of God which is food for our soul.

Pray the Bible. After you read the Bible, let the Word of God guide you into a personal prayer.

Live the Bible. When you read the Word of God, it will lead you to live by it. It is challenging but it will give you inner peace.

Share the Bible. When you have the inner peace and answers to your life's challenges, you want to share with others. Share the word of God with your family, friends, work place and community.

Students attend Catholic Youth Expo

By Eva Wangihama

A TOTAL of 115 youth attended the one week Catholic Youth Expo Training from the 6th - 12th July, 2015.

The training was in two parts, first part was taken care of by the Catholic Youth Coordinator for Madang Archdiocese and Eva Wangihama as the volunteer and the organizer for the whole training.

The second half of the training was taken care of by the National Secretary for the Youth and Laity Commission, Fr. Shanti Chacko, PIME.

After the explanation of the expected outcome of CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines, there was a picture exhibition of 'Saints of the Day' - (May, June, July and August) (I have made my own all 'Saints of the Day' from January to December in three albums A' 4 Size pictures weighing almost 10 kg!!!) and asked every young person to get his/her patron saint's picture and history of it, the

way I showed them, they were very much interested in it and already majority of the participants are making it!

Hopefully these participants might influence their peers.

Another session was on two worksheets of Basic Skills in Scripture and they did enjoy with

it very much. The Skills on Theology of Body too very much inspired them.

The training was really and eye opening for the young as the sessions involve pray, meditations and adoration before the blessed sacraments and the relics of St. Padre Pio, St Maria Gorethi and Blessed Peter Torot.

Students from Madang Technical College, Tusbab, Malala, Good Shepherd Lutheran Secondary, Karkar, Bau Technical School, Madang International, Holy Spirit Primary, plus four parishes namely: Holy Spirit Cathedral parish, Megiar, Holy Cross (Sisiak) and Alexishafen.

The youth celebrated the youth Sunday mass with the parishioners of Megiar and the liturgy was led by the youths and main celebrant was Fr. Shanti.

Young Catholics are often at the crossroads not knowing what to do proper, they need priest and people who would sit down with them and listen to their personal stories.

And among the many only few priests face the challenge to sit down and listen to the stories of our young people and it is Fr. Shanti.

Every youth that participated in the training were able to tell their stories

The participants could see through the four areas of formation a sense of direction for their future and they understood that it's a hard work; and they have to work for it for a long time with a sense of commitment, stability, patience and perseverance.

Almost unanimously, they agreed that making short cuts and 'doing somehow' invites more consequences later!!! (Quote Fr. Shanti)

"Catholics don't know the Bible"

By Fr. Boniface Holz MSC Rabaul

ANYBODY who has listened to preachers in the marked has heard this statement.

I am not entering into an argument about the validity of the statement, but that's how other people see us.

That's how Martin Luther saw the Church at his time (16th Century; Protestant Reformation).

That's why he emphasized the importance of the Word of God and abandoned the sacraments (i.e. except two) in favor of the Word of God.

And that's why the Council of Trent (1545-63) neglected the Word of God and emphasized the importance of the sacraments.

Vatican II (1962-65) tried to balance the teaching of the Church and emphasized the importance of the Word of God again.

The bishops realized the importance of the Liturgy of the Word.

As one of them wrote, "A parish may be without a priest for 20 years and it will be a solid Christian community provided that there are enough qualified people who teach the faith to the people."

But for many priests the sacrament of the Eucharist is still more important than the sacrament of the Word of God. (St. Augustine).

So they try to uplift the 'Priest-less' (a misnomer) service with the distribution of Communion so that the faithful see that we have 'more' than the other lotu.

Jesus was first of all a preacher, not a healer.

The sacraments belong to Jesus the healer, to the Diaconia of the Church.

Jesus sent the disciples and said, "Go and teach". Healing took second place. 'Give witness', 'preaching the Word' had absolute priority in the early Church. Ap 6:1-7.

In Papal statements the Word of God has priority over the sacraments.

In EVANGELII NUNTIANDI the word 'Gospel' occurs 94 times, the word 'preach(ing)' 64 times, the word 'sacrament(s)' 24 times.

In ECCLESIA IN OCEANIA the word 'Gospel' occurs 26 times, the word 'sacrament(s)' does not occur.

IN THE DECREE OF THE MISSION ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH the word 'Gospel' occurs 64 times, the word 'preach(ing)' 30 times, the word 'sacrament(s)' 6 times.

In ECCLESIA IN AFRIKA the word 'Gospel' occurs 60 times, the word 'preach(ing)' 19 times, the word 'sacrament(s)' does not occur.

This shows that without the Word of God the sacraments, i.e. all diaconical and all liturgical work of the Church has no foundation.

Without the Word of God the sacraments are just so much papait.

And in my opinion this is one, if not the main reason

Basic Media Workshop a success-

By Sr. Daisy Anne Lisania

16-17 July 2015, 18 participants from KokopoDeneary in the Archdiocese of Rabaul graduated with certificates on Basic Media Course.

The workshop is the initiative of the Communications Office and putting into practice what was learnt from the Radio Workshop given by Sean Patrick Lovett of Vatican Radio and Fabrizio Colombo of Signis Rome in April of this year.

The two days, although intense, were successful according to the participants. The participants ranged from teachers, catechists and youths. They will be able to provide news of any events in their respective parishes to be published in the Archdiocesan newsletter 'The Voice' the facebook page' and the website www.archdioceseofrabaul.com and also to the Catholic Reporter the newspaper of the Catholic Church of PNG/SI.

They were able to learn news writing, radio presentations and touched on the advantages and disadvantages of social media. 'I use to think that media is only for journalist but I now know that I too can write a story for everyone to read' Sophie a Catechist from Vunapope said.

The two day workshop climaxed with the groups recording Radio Station promotions for PeterTrot Radio.



Sr. Daisy Anne Lisania MSC shakes hands with one of the participants at the handing of certificates while Fr. Francis Meli looks on.

SVD Missionary celebrates 40 years of priesthood

By Eva Wangihama

On the beautiful morning and bearing the June sunshine, the Irish born Society of the Divine Word Missionary Fr. John Ryan celebrates his 40 years of priesthood.

The 40 years of desert years in the life of the Israelites and new turn over into the promised land has also began for Fr. Ryan. He now looks back at what has happened and is looking forward for a new beginning as the Chaplain of Divine Word University

On the day of 14th June, 1975, he answered the call and dedicate his life to God by taking his priestly vocation to the heart and left his home country in October of the same year and came to PNG and had stayed here ever since.

As PNG prepares to celebrates the 40 years of political independence, Fr. Ryan also celebrates his 40 years as a missionary in PNG.

To witness this celebration were his friends from the two former dioceses of Mt Hagen (Kindeng) and Goroka as well as his fellow confreres.

In his homily and the message to the young people, he asks them to be chaste in all dealings so they can live a good life in the years to come.

An experience of a lifetime European Look at Religious Freedom ...A personal experience with Radio Maria in Port Moresby 1st Report by Parliament

By Father John Flynn
Rome, July 12, 2015
(ZENIT.org)

ing by giving me a positive and confident smile that reminded me of the previous workshop at Vunapope, Kokopo in the East New Britain Province last month.

After settling at the Emmaus Conference Centre, Fr. Martin arranged a visit to Radio Maria where he is the one responsible for the establishment of the radio station.

The current Director of Radio Maria, Fr. Paul Kote picked us up to the studio and that is when I was shocked to be interviewed live on air at Radio Maria.

It was just an experience which unexpectedly happened.

I was so happy to have a good conversation with Fr. Paul Kote and Fr. Martin while at the studio.

We shared the message on the Mariathon Fundraising drive program on air and that really inspired me to give views more on the bible quote on John 2:1 – 11.

The wedding at Cana was the beginning of Mariathon fundraising to help established the radio networks around the world.

Radio is part of the evangelisation process that helps to sustain our identity and faith of the Catholic Church.

The Mariathon was first started in 2013 to help the spread of the radio station all around the world especially with establishing and continuity of Radio Maria around the world. God bless Radio Maria.

THE annual report on religious freedom published by the United States is well-known, but this year the European Parliament decided to publish its first annual report on the topic by a newly-formed group of concerned parliamentarians.

In a little-publicized move early in June the European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance published its first Annual Report on the "State of Freedom of Religion or Belief" at an event hosted by the Intergroup in collaboration with the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.

The Intergroup was established in January 2015. It was previously the European Parliament Working Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief (EPWG on FoRB). This group had previously published a report on religious freedom. The latest report covers the events of 2014.

Along with providing information about violations of freedom of religion and belief the Intergroup explained in the report's introduction that they want to raise awareness of the issue among European policymakers and to assist in this they have included recommendations for the institutions of the European Union.

This is important, the report explained, because while interna-

tional and human rights law is mainly concerned with the responsibility a state has towards its citizens, the state also has a duty to ensure that non-state groups or persons are prosecuted for crimes they commit.

Freedom of religion, the introduction to the report noted, is increasingly under attack from both states and non-state actors, among which are Islamic extremist groups.

Severe problems

In the section on the Americas the Intergroup commented that while it is not a region where religious persecution makes the headlines in some countries there are severe problems. Thus, while in general religious freedom is respected "worrying exceptions remain."

For example, in Mexico criminal organisations and drug cartels have targeted Christians to extort money. Churches are also attacked because of their support for programs to rehabilitate drug addicts and alcoholics.

A report by Aid to the Church in Need stated that Mexico is the country in 2014 in which the most priests were killed, the Intergroup observed. All of these murders were linked to major drug cartels and groups that engage in trafficking in human beings and human organs.

A similar situation exists in Colombia the report stated, with hostility towards Christians from both guerrilla and paramilitary groups. The report cited figures

from 2013 showing the forced closure of approximately 150 churches in that year.

Turning to the situation in the Middle East and North Africa the report observed that it has captured the headlines.

Few countries "have any degree of religious or belief liberty," the report added, with violence and state persecution taking place on a "massive scale."

This is evident in Iran, for example, where the Constitution gives Shi'a Islam a monopoly. "Power is wielded by the religious elite, which does not protect or promote religious or belief tolerance," the report explained.

Meanwhile, in Iraq although there are some legal guarantees of religious freedom, "Iraq has become synonymous with religious motivated persecution."

The advance of Islamic State has worsened the situation, leading to "outright horror for all those opposed to their specific interpretation of Sunni Islam."

A situation of extreme persecution also exists in Saudi Arabia, one of the worst violators of religious freedom in the world, according to the report.

No church or non-Muslim house of worship exists in the country. Laws punish those who evangelize for other religions and atheism is considered an act of terrorism.

Saudi Arabia is also responsible for propagating its vision of Islam abroad and, along with some of the Gulf states, sponsors Islamic radicalization.



Fr. Marthin Ween and myself during the Mariathon talk back show at Radio Maria in POM.

By Bernard Warange

UPON arrival at the Jacksons International airport, everyone were just waiting for me and my fellow counterpart, Raymond Rangatin representing OLSH International School in Kavieng. Among the group waiting were fellow counterparts from last year's conference.

Anyway we were all going to attend the Religious Education Coordinators (REC) Conference which is done annually at the Emmaus Conference Centre, DTI.

Fr. Martin Ween brightened my morn-