



The Catholic Reporter

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Port Moresby Archdiocese opens its new office complex



THE NEW CHANCERY: Staff of the Archdiocese office doing the final touches before the opening and blessing of the new building as seen in this Julimark Castaneda photo.

By Veronica Hatutasi

CATHOLIC Church members of the Archdiocese of Port Moresby can now be proud to have a central office, following the recent opening and blessing of its new Chancery headquarters building complex at Boroko.

About 400 Catholic faithful from the 14 parishes in the archdiocese gathered at 4 Mile, Loretto on December 5, to witness the opening of the new two story office building.

The building houses various offices including the Archbishop's office, Education, Health, Youth, Marriage & Family Life, Caritas PNG, the Catholic Bookshop, Pastoral, Mothers Group, Legion of

Mary, Conference rooms and more.

Archbishop John Ribat who opened the new Chancery, built at a cost of about K4 million, including furniture and related office essentials, said the new office complex is a historical building for the Port Moresby Catholic Archdiocese.

He said it is the first such building which brings together almost all of the Archdiocese's offices which were previously located at various places in the city.

Archbishop Ribat said that after he took over the post in 2008, he saw a great need to have a central place for the purpose of administering the affairs of the archdiocese, thus the plan and fund-raising project commenced.

"A central place to be found easily which will bring us together as a result of all offices now concentrated in one place, will save time and also, work will be done efficiently," Archbishop Ribat said.

He said the successful completion of the Chancery project was a great effort, but at the same time, it was not an easy task, however, with concerted efforts from the faithful, overseas donors, the local parishes and friends, the project came into fruition.

Archbishop Ribat expressed his sincere gratitude to all donors, supporters, the parishes and friends without whose support in cash and kind the project would not have been completed successfully.

He said that each parish

contributed K5,000 each while donations came from Germany, devout Catholic friends and supporters including Sir Henry Chow and family, owners of Lae Biscuit Company, SVS Supermarket group and other individuals and groups.

The new Chancery is not only a place which promotes religious, social, ethical and human intergral values, but it also fosters cultural values as indicated by the 20 posts depicting the unique cultures of the 20 provinces of PNG.

A brief history of the Archdiocese saw it being established in 1966, when previously it was part of the Bereina Diocese. It will celebrate its Golden Jubilee next year, 2016.

To date, five archbishops have

been at the helm of the Port Moresby Archdiocese including the first, an Australian in the late Archbishop Virgil Copas, the late Archbishop Herman Topaivu from the Rabaul Archdiocese, East New Britain province, the late Archbishop Sir Peter Kurongku from the Bougainville Diocese, retired Archbishop Sir Brian Barnes of Australia, late Archbishop Cherubim Dambui, Wewak Diocese and the current Archbishop John Ribat of the Rabaul Archdiocese, East New Britain province.

Up until now, the Archdiocese has been operating from the Dove Travel building in Boroko with some of its offices located in various parts of the city.

Dialogue between Catholics and Muslims in PNG continues

By Bishop Bill Fey ofm Cap, Bishop Deputy Ecumenism

INTERFAITH dialogue between Catholics and Muslims in PNG continues with a meeting recently held in Port Moresby.

Sunday afternoon 25 October 2015 once again saw Muslims and Catholics gathered, this time at the Capuchin College at Bomana, to continue an interfaith dialogue that had begun in February 2002.

But this time it was different. For the first time His Excellency, Michael Banach, the Apostolic Nuncio to PNG and SI joined the group. He brought Fr Nicolas Guidi, his new secretary, with him.

The occasion was the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of Nostra Aetate, the Vatican II document on dialogue with other religions.

The actual date of the anniversary was Wednesday 28 October – 3 days after this meeting on Sunday. Bp Bill Fey OFM Cap, the bishop deputy for ecumenism and interfaith dialogue, chaired the meeting. Also present on the Catholic side was Fr Kevin Dance CP, secretary for ecumenism and interfaith dialogue, and Fr Modest Eligi OFM Cap,



INTERFAITH DIALOGUE: A recent meeting held at the Capuchin College, Bomana outside Port Moresby saw representatives from the Catholic Church headed by His Excellency, Michael Banach, the Apostolic Nuncio to PNG and SI, Bishop Bill Fey ofm Cap, Bishop Deputy Ecumenism & Interfaith Dialogue, Fr Kevin Dance CP, Secretary for Ecumenism and Interfaith dialogue, and Fr Modest Eligi OFM Cap, philosophy lecturer at CTI. The Muslims were represented by the Imam, Mikail Abdul Aziz and two other members of the PNG Muslim Community. Photo: Bishop Bill Fey, ofm

philosophy lecturer at CTI.

The Imam was accompanied by Yaqub Amaki, a long time participant in the dialogue, and Chowdry, a visiting Muslim from the UK.

The Nuncio summarized the sections of Nostra Aetate dealing with Hinduism and Buddhism and

other ancient world religions.

He spoke briefly on the section dealing with Judaism which strongly denounced any form of anti-Semitism. But he reflected in detail on the section treating Islam.

He also quoted more recent statements such as Pope Benedict XVI saying that dialogue with

Muslims is not an extra option but is essential for our future. And he noted that Pope Francis quoted a Muslim mystic in his encyclical Laudato Si.

He outlined the great number of initiatives by the Vatican over the past 50 years to promote dialogue with Islam.

And he ended by pointing out the way forward: to recognize our common values and to work together for peace and the end of violence that claims to have a basis in

religion. This meeting was only one in an ongoing dialogue that began when Bp Desmond Moore, then the bishop delegate for ecumenism and interfaith dialogue, and Sadiq Sandbach, a British convert to Islam, met and became good friends.

Bp Moore has since retired and Sadiq has died but this dialogue, built on their friendship has continued to the present.

The dialogue has, on occasions, been enlivened by the presence of Fr Thomas Mooren OFM Cap, a Catholic authority on Islam who has published extensively on this topic.

Issues discussed have ranged from the equality of men and women and the purpose of punishment, to religious freedom and the relationship between religion and the state.

Over the years attempts were made to explain a Christian belief in the Trinity and the Incarnation as well as a balanced Muslim understanding of Sharia law and Jihad. Current issues such as the rise of ISIS have also been discussed.

As friendships have deepened, the possibility of honest and respectful sharing has also deepened.

It has become possible to disagree while remaining friends committed to working together for a world of justice and peace and to reaching together toward the fullness of revealed truth.

Diocesan Youth Co-ordinators gathering 2015

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

THE Diocesan Youth Coordinators gathered at Holy Spirit Diocesan Seminary, Bomana, Port Moresby from 22 to 29 of November 2015.

Except for Goroka, Lae, Kimbe and Vanimo, all the other fifteen dioceses of Papua New Guinea participated at the gathering.

Three Dominican Seminarians and one priest of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart also participated in the gathering. Two Dominican Seminarians originally from Honiara and Gizo dioceses also attended.

Bp. Rochus Tatamai MSC - Deputy Bishop of Commission of Youth and Bp. Bernard Unabali - Deputy Bishop of Commission of Laity were also participants of the eight days gathering and their presence made the gathering more meaningful.

The expected outcome of the CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines was the first series of discussions of the gathering.

Every co-ordinator agreed with the outcome of the Youth Policy since it was the result of five years of regular gatherings and it is a complete picture of the pastoral care of the young people of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands if it is implemented adequately in every youth groups of the Dioceses. It is now up to each diocese to make its own choice and decision.

The extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy (8th December 2015 - 20th November 2016) was the second series of discussions at this meeting.

Fr. Shanthi Chacko Puthussery PIME, Secretary of Commission for Youth and Laity had prepared a eighty-six pages of booklet for the Coordinators and had discussions on every aspect of the Jubilee Year of Mercy in detail.

In a more specific way

four meditations from the Holy Father Pope Francis' World Youth Day Message 2016 (Kraków, Poland (July 25 - 31, 2016) in the booklet are appropriate for the young people.

The possible faith, prayer and spiritual activities are outlined at the end of the booklet (pages 76-80) and they are practical applications for any baptized person in the Catholic Church, particularly for the young people if one takes seriously the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

'CBC Youth Convention - Jubilee Year of Mercy' was the third series of discussions of the gathering. After five years of hard work and NYC gatherings, it was felt that it's the right time to demonstrate the fruits of the hard work of the gatherings in 2016 taking the opportunity of the extraordinary celebration of the Jubilee of Mercy.

It is more appropriate to do certain demonstration by the young people at this time because the Jubilee Year of Mercy coincides with the 50 years of establishment of the dioceses in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (15th November 1966 - 15th November 2016) and the 31st World Youth Day in Kraków, Poland (July 25 - 31, 2016).

Therefore, NYC's have decided to hold a CBC Youth Convention from 6th to 13th November 2016 at Don Bosco Technical Institute, Port Moresby. Fr. Shanthi, the Secretary of Commission for Youth and Laity, has already distributed all the details - the dates, venue, registration formalities, activities and other detailed logistics and information about the Convention a year ahead. The Diocesan Youth Coordinators are ready to work closely with him to make the event more meaningful and fruitful.

The Jubilee Year of Mercy will be a graceful year for the youth in particular and for all the Catholic faithful in general in Papua New

Guinea and Solomon Islands (The NATIONAL Newspaper, Thursday, 26th November, page: 12).

The fourth series of discussions was a unique experience for each participant of the gathering 2015 that was the exposure visit to the dioceses of Bereina and Kerema.

The reasons to visit these diocese were twofold: first is to see the reality of these dioceses and the second, is to show a sincere solidarity by the NYC's of all other dioceses to the family and the community of Joseph Puaka, the NYC of Kerema Diocese who passed away last May.

The journey began with in twenty-five seater bus at which departed at 1 pm from Bomana and arrived at Bereina around 5 pm on Thursday 26th.

The youth of the Bereina Cathedral parish welcomed us in a traditional way and had a Holy Mass at the Cathedral Church at 6 pm presided by Bp. Bernard Unabali - Deputy Bishop of Commission of Laity.

We had a brief visit to the Good Shepherd early childhood formation center run by the Cavani Sisters near to the Cathedral Church and it was an eye opening experience for several Coordinators' because several of us did not have any idea at all what is the 'early childhood formation' at all.

After the Holy Mass we moved to Mainohana Secondary School premises and had our dinner. It was a delicious dinner prepared by the staff of the Mainohana TVET School. Before going to bed each one of us received the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

On Friday 27th at 6 am we left for Kerema.

On the way we stopped at Terapo Catholic Mission for breakfast and it was an opportunity to see the current situation of the mission.

We proceeded with

our journey and arrived at Kerema around 11 am.

It was a great and at the same time a shocking experience for us the way the Diocese of Kerema welcomed us because everything was well organized and did it with us without having a bishop for the diocese and not a single priest was present for the occasion! Marvelous and unforgettable experience!

The welcome ceremony was a traditional dance, with welcome speeches and refreshment.

Every participant of the gathering shook hands with the late Joseph Puaka's family members. After refreshment we had an opportunity to walk around Kerema town until 3 pm. At 4 pm we had Holy Mass for the late Joseph Puaka presided by Bp. Rochus Tatamai - Deputy Bishop of Commission of Youth; and the youth of the Cathedral Parish prepared the liturgy very well. At the end of the Holy Mass Fr. Joseph, the Diocesan Health Secretary read the life story of Joseph Puaka, Fr. Shanthi thanked the community and Bp. Bernard Unabali encouraged them with his inspiring words.

The dinner and the distribution of the gifts to each one of us were the true signs of their genuine expressions of love and appreciation to us. We had a delicious dinner and each one of us have received a traditional woven mat and almost ten kilos of sego (the popular Sepik Province's staple food!). Almost all of us felt that the way the Diocese of Kerema did for us in the name Joseph Puaka will be an unforgettable experience!

At 8 pm we had a Holy Hour, honoring the 26th Anniversary of Bp. Rochus' Priestly Ordination praying for the Diocese of Kerema. As he was an Auxiliary Bishop

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Rome hosts Catholic Education World Congress



By Sr Mary McCarthy pbvm

THE recent Catholic Education World Congress was held in Rome from the 18 to 21st November 2015. Catholic Education Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands was represented by the National Christian Education Coordinator, Sr Mary McCarthy pbvm, Dr Catherine Nongkas from DWU-Education Curriculum and Leadership and Rita Kavanamur from OLSH Vunapope Secondary School. They attended two parallel sessions on schools and universities.

The Catholic Bishops Conference PNG/SI was quoted in the report made to the congress on the opening day - on how efforts are made to reach out to students who are disadvantaged and in particular need. In response to the working document, Instrumentum Laboris, and its preparatory questionnaire which was sent to PNG from Rome, various groups involved in Catholic Education met for discussion. The responses collated by the CBC Catholic Education Commission and a report were submitted to the Congregation for Catholic

Education in Rome. This became part of the Lineamenta document - a situational analysis- for the Congress containing much valuable information about Catholic Education worldwide.

The topics for reflection were Identity and Mission, People involved in Catholic Education, Formation and Challenges today and tomorrow.

There is a strong desire to reflect and renew our passion for Catholic Education and frameworks of action will evolve to give new energy to our mission in education.

KIMBE DIOCESE WELCOMES STATUE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

ON Sunday morning 1 November 2015 more than a thousand Catholics and other Christian Church members gathered at Hoskins airport to welcome the international statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

About 98 years ago in Fatima, Portugal, Mary appeared to three children: Lucia, Francesco and Jacinta. Lucia later described how the Blessed Mother looked when she spoke to them.

Today four identical statues of Our Lady, made to fit Lucia's description, are taken on pilgrimage to dioceses around the world.

The statue had already visited Port Moresby, Alotau, Rabaul, Manus, Enga and Wewak. In November 2015 it was the Kimbe diocese that celebrated this pilgrimage visit.

The Catholic people of West New Britain worked for months to prepare for this visit, not only by preparing church buildings with fresh paint and decorations, but also by a spiritual renewal. Priests heard countless confessions.

A number of couples who had never had their relationship blessed came to receive the sacrament of marriage. "Mama Fatima" visited all 19 parishes and many of the com-

munities that make up the parishes, travelling by road and by sea and even sometimes by air in a helicopter.

Roads were decorated for kilometres with temporary shrines along the way as a remarkable public display of the Catholic faith.

On arrival on the feast of All Saints, after a welcome ceremony at the airport witnessed by a number of government personnel, "Mama Fatima" was taken by police escort to Ulamora for a special Mass to open this pilgrimage visit.

Twenty five days later, in Kimbe's Independence Park, again a huge crowd gathered for a closing Mass of consecration of the diocese to Mary's care.

Bp Bill pointed out that it was providential that this visit should come at this time as if Mary, Mother of Mercy, came to help the Kimbe diocese prepare to enter into the Jubilee Year of Mercy that would begin only two weeks after this visit.

At Fatima Mary had spoken to the children of God's mercy. Now again she was calling the Catholic people of West New Britain to walk with her into the Jubilee Year to experience and proclaim the richness of the mercy of God.

The Most Joyous Time of the Year

By: Louise Mary Kodor
CBC Administrative
Associate

IT IS the time of the year again when houses and shops put up Christmas lights, decorations, nativity scenes and the like to celebrate the most wonderful time of the year which is Christmas.

As usual, most people will be hijacked by the Christmas frenzy to get festive decorations, food, gifts and make travel plans to visit wantoks or simply go home for the break.

Falling yearly on the 25th of December, it is the time on the liturgical calendar to celebrate

the birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary, an occasion that is celebrated throughout the world by Christians. Over the years, different traditions involving Christmas have evolved. Traditions such as exchanging of gifts, Santa Claus to name few have been incorporated into the Christmas celebration where traditionally it was to mark Christ's birthday.

Christmas has different meanings for people.

For 7 year old Paul Junior Kodor, Christmas is holiday time and a time to get lots of presents. It is time when Santa creeps into children's room and leave presents for all those who were good throughout the year.

As for his older sister 8 years old Quinette, Christmas is the time to celebrate the birth of Jesus who was born in a manger because he loves us. For God loved us so much he gave us his son.

Vivian Nangile who is an employee of Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC) says it is the most joyous time of the year knowing that we are celebrating the birthday of our Lord.

Another employee of CBC, Pauline Dai says Christmas is very special because it's about God's love for mankind. He gave us his son to bring us back to him.

Everyone has their own view of Christmas and ways to cele-

brate this festive period. For some it is a time of togetherness. Being in the presence of your loved ones and embracing the gift of family and friends.

It is a time when families come together for a mumu, aigir or barbeque as in the Western tradition.

For others it may be a great holiday season. Taking a break from the usual hectic schedule.

But no matter how you define Christmas, one thing for sure is it is a time of joy, peace, happiness and most importantly love.

For it is love that started all this some 2000 years ago and it is through love that mankind was given the most wonderful gift ever. The gift of baby Jesus.

MESSAGE FROM BISHOP GILLES AT THE KIUNGA TOWN CHRISTMAS CAROLS BY CANDLE LIGHTS – Dec. 18, 2015

Dear Friends,

Good evening to all of you.

I truly feel honoured to be given the opportunity to share with you some thoughts about Christmas. But before doing so, let me express our gratitude to Chief Inspector, Silva Sika, our Provincial Police Commander for taking the initiative to organise this Kiunga Town Christmas Carols by Candle Light. May you be blessed for this by the One we are celebrating, Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us.

All over the world people just can't wait for Christmas. Children count down the days. Extended families eagerly anticipate holiday gatherings. For many people Christmas is a time to get away from normal routines and celebrate with loved ones.

Of course all this is good. But as believers we have an even better reason to look forward to Christmas: we are celebrating the coming of Emmanuel, 'God with us', the One who "will save his people from their sins" (Mt. 1: 23, 21). Yes Jesus is with us. And yes he came to save us from our sins. To have a saviour to free us from our sins is the reason for the celebration.

This truth tells us how much God loves us and how much he wants to be part of our lives.

We can say that God has always been with us. He created us out of love and when you love someone, you don't abandon them.

The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament is one long story of God's

faithfulness to his people. But the New Testament tells us so much more about God's love for us. He didn't only stay with us in a spiritual sense but became one of us on the First Christmas Day. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14).

So there it is: Jesus came to be with us, he came to speak God's word in a new way. He came to reveal God's love in a new way and he came to sacrifice himself for us in a new way.

The more we try to understand how great God's love is for us and for everyone, the more we will appreciate everything that happened on the first Christmas day.

The birth of Jesus as man shows us very clearly that God is full of love, compassion and mercy for us human beings. God is a loving, merciful and forgiving Father.

Our challenge is not only to celebrate well Christmas as persons of faith but to welcome Emmanuel, our Saviour into our hearts, experience the joy, love and peace we are given when we are forgiven and saved from our sins.

We need to ask ourselves: how am I going to live the grace of Christmas? How am I going to show that I am saved, that Jesus is truly with me?

In Luke 3: verses 10 to 18, when John the Baptist was calling people to repentance and inviting them to be baptised they

were asking him: "What should we do?" His answer was that they should show that they are saved, changed by Jesus by showing their faith in the concrete action of their daily lives.

I was thinking a lot about this and asking myself what would John the Baptist say to us this evening, in this Christmas Season if he were with us and we were to ask him what should we do to prepare for and celebrate Christmas. And here is what came to my mind:

- To our MPs and all other elected leaders at all levels he would say: stop playing politics, fighting for power, working for your own wealth and your big name. Serve well the people and bring much needed development to the poor people of the Western Province. Make sure the money that belongs to the people is not misused.

- To the public servants he would say: be true to your name, your function - become servants of the people each day.

- To our policemen he would say: ensure the law is respected and followed by the people and be always strong with gentleness.

- To the members of the Defence Force he would say: protect well the people and their land and do so with gentleness.

- To the business people and those selling at the market places, he would say: do not overprice the goods you sell.

- To the medical workers he would say: always welcome the sick people and offer them

the best care possible.

- To our teachers he would say: always be in the classroom to teach our children. Make sure they are protected from all kind of abuses.

- To the parents he would say: make sure your children are protected and well cared for. Keep drinking, gambling and other sinful behaviours away from them.

- To our young people he would say: stay close to your families, share your talents, give life to others, get involved in your communities and in your church.

- To our children he would say: love and respect your parents. Listen to them. Know that Jesus loves you. He is your friend.

- To people in general he would say: stop cheating, stealing, threatening, paying back, stay away from cult practices, sorcery and witch craft. Be faithful to your baptism and become an active member in your church, contribute to the life of your community.

- To bishops, priests, pastors, church leaders he would say: teach and preach by example, be humble, be simple, be opened, be close to your people. Do not be afraid of differences. Seek to serve and not to be served.

If we all try our best to do what John the Baptist would tell us to do if he was here, our Christmas this year will be a very meaningful one, full of joy, peace and love. We would celebrate it as one big happy family.

Commentary by Fr. Victor Roche

November 2015



VISITED Jayapura (Indonesia) recently to attend a meeting there. I started in the morning from Vanimo (Papua New Guinea) and it took an hour to reach the border between PNG and Indonesia.

I passed through the PNG army check-post. Then after a few meters, I went to the PNG immigration. The officer was not there. After 10 minutes he appeared in his casual clothes, with betel nut (buai) in his mouth and completed my papers and those who were standing for immigration.

I walked to the Indonesian border. Two officers at the immigration did my papers. They were very professional. Then I was met by 4 army officers who checked me and the taxi I was in. Then a few meters away, again 5 army officers checked our car and sent me through.

My drive to Jayapura

was approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. I saw many markets on the road with garden food; stores with goods which were very cheap compared to PNG. People were working in the gardens or on the maintenance of the road. Jayapura is a city with lots of people and businesses.

The next day when I returned from Jayapura. I went through the Army checks and immigration formalities in the Indonesian border. I had similar formalities in the PNG territory.

Two things I noticed: The Army Officers and the staff at the Immigration of the Indonesian border had discipline.

The people in Indonesia were able to produce more and variety of garden foods because of hard work. It is good that each one of us reflect on our attitude towards discipline and hard work.

Holy Year of Mercy

By Louise Mary Kodor
CBC Administrative
Associate

"BE Merciful just as your Father is Merciful" (Luke 6:36) is the theme for the Holy Year of Mercy which started on December 8th 2015 and ends on the Feast of Christ the King on November 20th 2016.

Declared by Pope Francis early this year, the year-long celebration is not only for Catholics but for everyone to show mercy to others just as the Father shows mercy to us. It is an invitation for us not to judge and condemn but to forgive as a Christian.

The year of Mercy is expected to be lived as a pilgrimage and invites us to make sacrifices, pray and be witnesses of mercy.

As children of God, it is our Christian duty to forgive all those who have hurt us.

The Holy year not only asks us to forgive but also give assistance to all those

who need our help.

There are ways in which we can show acts of Mercy to others: Spiritual and Corporal

1. Corporal
Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned and bury the dead.
2. Spiritual
Counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish the sinner, comfort the sorrowful, forgive injuries, bear

wrongs patiently & pray for the living and the dead.

The year of Mercy requires our efforts.

It is an opportunity for us to help others not because we are told to but to show our love for the unfortunate and all those in special need.

It may not be possible to practice all acts of mercy but it is a great start to assist where we can.



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Diocesan Youth Co-ordinators gathering 2015

of Kerema, he could cherish his old memories of Kerema, meet his old friends, hear their struggles, hopes and dreams and he enjoyed the privilege to be with us. Missionaries of Charity and OLSH Sisters' generous cooperation and hard work made our visit more gracious.

On Saturday 28th at 3 am we all had breakfast and left Kerema for Bomana, Port Moresby to conclude the DYC gathering 2015. On the way we had a special privilege to pay visit to the statue of Our Lady of Fatima and we did it as the statue was going to the Yule Island Parish communities. We arrived around 12 pm at Bomana and had lunch; and began the

preparation for the closing Holy Mass of the gathering.

The closing Holy Mass was celebrated by Fr. Shanthi, the Secretary of the Commission of Youth and Laity. He thanked Bp. Rochus Tatamai MSC and Bp. Bernard Unabali for their extraordinary support during the last five years for the youth and the laity of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. They were always present during the annual regular gatherings over the last five years, and their openness, generosity, friendship and their precious words of encouragement to the DYC's was always appreciated in spite of the opposition and the discouragements. Fr. Shanthi

thanked all the DYC's and made clear to every participant that this is the last gathering of the DYC during his office and he will be finishing from this work at the end of 2016.

Fr. Shanthi has shared his concern for the young people of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands and proposed someone for his replacement for the continuation and sustenance of the Commission of Youth and Laity. Almost all the DYC's shared and discussed the same concern for the young people and recommended the same name to the Central Committee of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

for their discussion, approval and appointment. The letter was signed by all the participants and is ready to be submitted to the Central Committee.

With the dinner the gathering was closed on Saturday 28th and all the participants left for their respective dioceses.

Five years of regular gatherings of DYC's were very special with a variety of learning, experiences, materials, sessions, practical applications and now it is the responsibility of the each diocese to make it more systematic and organized way. Fr. Shanthi was not given an opportunity to talk to the bishops during their Annual Assembly or during their formation week in September even though

he is the full time Secretary of the Commission for Youth and Laity; yet he visited regularly the dioceses and did his best for the youth and laity. Now he is very happy to organize and to be responsible for the 'CBC Youth Convention - Jubilee Year of Mercy' and it is another opportunity for the young people to demonstrate their abilities in a systematic and an organized manner. All the DYC's are looking forward for it to make a milestone for the pastoral care of the young people in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Let God's Mercy prevail on every diocese and make the young people of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands enjoy that privilege!

Pope Francis addresses employees of the Holy See and the Vatican City State

Vatican employees encouraged on marriage and family life

Pope Francis' address to the employees of the Holy See and the Vatican City State, with their respective families, for the exchange of Christmas greetings, this week in the Vatican.

Translated by Zenit from Italian to English

Dear Brothers and Sisters, welcome!

CHRISTMAS, now close, offers us a beautiful occasion to meet with one another and to exchange greetings.

First of all, I wish to thank you for your work, for the commitment you have to do things well always, even when there is no recognition. So often one does something well and it is not acknowledged. I would like to thank particularly those among you who for the many years have been doing the same type of work that is often hidden; and who seek to do things as they should be done. We know that this is normal, it is simply to do one's duty, but we also know that it's not easy for us human beings; we are not machines – thank God! – and sometimes we are in need of an incentive, or of some change. I congratulate you who feel just pride in doing the normal everyday things to the best. Thank you! We go forward, in the different realms of work, collaborating together, with patience, seeking to help one another.



"And while I thank you, I also want to ask forgiveness for the scandals that have happened in the Vatican." Photo: Zenit News Agency, Vatican.

other.

And while I thank you, I also want to ask forgiveness for the scandals that have happened in the Vatican. However, I would like my attitude and yours, especially in these days, to be above all that of prayer, to pray for the persons involved in these scandals, so that the one who has done wrong repents and is able to rediscover the right way.

There is something else I want to say to you, perhaps the most important thing: I encourage you to take care of your marriage and your children. To take care and not

neglect them: to play with your children. Marriage is like a plant. It's not like a closet, which one puts there in the room, and it's enough to dust it every now and then. A plant is alive, it is taken care of every day: one sees how it's doing, gives it water, and so on. Marriage is a living reality: a couple's life is never taken for granted, in any phase of the course of the family. We remind ourselves that the most precious gift for the children is not things but the love of the parents. And I do not intend only the love of parents for the children, but in fact

the love of parents between them, namely, the conjugal relation. This does you, and also your children, so much good! Don't neglect the family!

Hence, first of all cultivate the "plant" of marriage, which you spouses are, and at the same time take care of the relation with your children, also here, focusing more on the human relation than on things. Speak to your children, listen to them, ask them what they think. This dialogue between parents and children does so much good! It makes the children grow in maturity. We focus on mercy, on daily relations, between husband and wife, between parents and children, between brothers and sisters, and we take care of the grandparents. Grandparents are so important in the family. Grandparents have memory; they have wisdom. Do not leave grandparents to one side! They are very important. A young lady was telling me that she has a seven-year-old son, and that the grandmother, in her nineties, lives with her, but that she is not altogether well, and she was advised to put her in a rest home. And this wise lady, who hasn't studied at a university, answered the one who was advising her to put the grandmother in a home of rest: "No! I want my son to grow beside his grandmother!" She knew the good

that grandparents do to grandchildren. Take care of peace in the family: we all know there is quarrelling in the family. When there is no quarrelling in a marriage, it seems abnormal. What is important is that the day not end without making peace. Are there brothers that don't quarrel? But, they always do! But make peace. And you, parents, when your children have quarrelled, before they go to bed, say to them: "Make peace, shake hands, give each other a kiss. One must learn this wisdom of making peace. You have made war during the day? Is your war still hot? Don't let it become cold, because the "cold war" of the day after is more dangerous than the "hot war." Understood? Make peace in the evening, always!

The Jubilee is to be lived also in the domestic Church, not only in great events! What's more, the Lord loves one who practices mercy in ordinary circumstances. I wish you this: that you experience the joy of mercy, beginning in your family.

Thank you for your work, forgive the scandals and go forward. Go forward in this community and bring my greeting and good wishes to your dear ones, to the elderly and to the sick. And, please, continue to pray for me. Thank you again and happy Christmas!

The Global Vatican, a new historic book launched

From Zenit News Agency, Rome

ZENIT was present for Ambassador Francis Rooney's presentation of his book, 'The Global Vatican,' at Rome's Sant'Egidio Community this month, Dec. 10. After speaking with us, the Former US Ambassador to the Holy See has written the following article for our readers:

"We almost did nothing" was how Pope Francis described the Holy See's role in convening the United States and Cuba in a series of intense diplomatic exchanges held both in Canada and the Apostolic palace in the Vatican and kept secret for more than one and one-half years. These negotiations resulted in a historic breakthrough which has led to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and reflect positively on the Holy See's unique position in the world of international affairs.

The Holy See has been actively engaged in international affairs since the early years of the Church, sending emissaries to Constantinople from 453 A.D. and receiving and accrediting the first foreign envoys in the Fifteenth century. The Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, the first institution in the world specifically designed to train diplomats, was founded in 1701 and the Holy See has been involved in numerous border disputes from the time of the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 to the recent mediation between Chile and Argentina over the boundaries of the Beagle Channel.

As the world's only sovereign which lacks both territorial interests



The Vatican City at a glance. Photo: Zenit News Agency, Vatican

and hegemonic ambitions, the Holy See can exercise a diplomacy based not on force, but on its sense of purpose grounded in the quest to protect human rights and nurture human dignity. As Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran once said, Holy See diplomacy seeks to "contest systems or ideas that corrode the dignity of the person and thus threaten world peace." It is a universal and enduring platform from which to seek to influence world events.

Being apolitical and seeking good in the world for its own sake, the Holy See doesn't seek credit for its accomplishments. This willingness to forego the spotlight serves to increase its influence and effectiveness. Pope Francis' humble, self-deprecating comment about the Holy See's role in the Cuba mediation reminds me of Pope Benedict's similar work in obtaining the release of a group of sailors from

the United Kingdom by the government of Iran in the spring of 2007. There were no press releases or attribution, just results.

I wrote *The Global Vatican* to broaden popular understanding of the Holy See's valuable role in today's global diplomacy and to provide a historical context for its work based on many important accomplishments it has had throughout history. These past actions have contributed cumulatively to the role which the Holy See can play today and give us an insight into areas where the Holy See can be a valuable diplomatic participant.

The book also makes the argument that the United States and the Holy See are uniquely aligned in their global engagements due to their orientation towards protecting the natural rights of man and individual freedom, especially religious

freedom. The Holy See has nurtured these values since its beginnings and the United States is the nation which was built upon ideas of the enlightenment philosophers. John Locke's writings in 1689 about man's inalienable rights and of government deriving its "just powers from the consent of the governed", rather than the divine rights of monarchs, resonate in our Declaration of Independence and the preamble to our Constitution.

The paths of these two sovereigns have crossed throughout the years, as in the similarity between Pope Benedict XV's Peace Note and the Fourteen Points which President Wilson published eight months later, and the work of Myron Taylor at the Vatican on behalf of President Roosevelt during World War II. The parallel actions and interests of the Holy See and the United States assured victory of the Christian Democrat party in Italy in 1948 and inspired the liberation of Poland, and ultimately the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, beginning with Pope John Paul II in 1979.

On 16 April 2008 a defining moment in the relationship between the United States and the Holy See took place on the White House lawn when Pope Benedict XVI spoke about the "self evident truth" that all men are created equal and endowed with inalienable rights" upon which the United states was founded and President George W. Bush responded by quoting the Holy Father and assuring him that America is a place "that welcomes the role of faith in the public square."

Since Pope Benedict's 2006 address at Regensburg, which George Weigel has called the most important papal pronouncement since Pope John Paul II's 1994 human rights speech to the United Nations, the Holy See has continued to use its "soft power" voice to weigh in against terrorism which continues unabated in many places around the world. The Holy See continues to forcefully critique violence in the name of religion while working to establish conditions for constructive dialogue among differing faiths.

Pope Francis has used diplomatic symbolism effectively in his travels to highlight instances of inter-religious cooperation and to call for peace. In Albania he noted the success of a coalition government of Muslims, Orthodox and Catholic Christians, convened the presidents of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to come pray with him in the Vatican Gardens. He has not been timid in criticizing ISIS and al-Qaeda, recently calling the conflicts they have wrought as a "third world war".

In summary, perhaps more than ever, the modern world requires the Holy See's "soft power" of persuasion rather than coercion, to drive a diplomacy based on ideas and fundamental human rights—and needs to provide a possibility of conflict resolution without military intervention.

—Francis Rooney served as U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See under George W. Bush from 2005 to 2008, and is author of the book, *The Global Vatican*.