



# The Catholic Reporter

Catholic Bishops' Conference of PNG & SI - Commission on Social Communications, P.O. Box 398, Waigani, NCD Tel.: 325 9577 - Fax: 323 2551

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## Pastoral Plan about to take off

By Fr Roger Purcell MSC

**“GO Tell Everyone”**; this is the theme of our Conference Pastoral Plan, which we begin to implement this year and carry on for the next five years.

As we enter into a new year in all our dioceses, parishes, apostolic works and institutions, so we look forward to finding ways to put this Plan into action.

Our Plan was “passed in principle as a working document, for improvement and endorsement, by the Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands Annual General Meeting, May, 2014”. The process since then has been to present the Pastoral Plan to the dioceses carried out by various members of the Committee.

This presentation has happened already in many dioceses; Daru-Kiunga, Port Moresby/Bereina/Kerema, Alotau, Kimbe, Madang,



Wewak, Aitape and Lae; the Highlands Dioceses planned for March with Kavieng in February; Vanimo, Rabaul, Bougainville and Solomon Islands, Honiara, Auki and Gizo, all with no dates yet.

Each diocese will then discern how to implement the plan in the diocese according to its own Pastoral Plan and situation.

In March we will do a similar

presentation to the Federation of Religious who will then be able to work with all their members, who are active in many of our dioceses, parishes and institutions.

It is early days yet, with much to do in the coming months and years.

However we can be happy and proud as this Pastoral Plan is the probably first of its kind in the world.

Our previous National Pastoral Plan was a first, and now we have a Conference level (international) Pastoral Plan; maybe a first in the Catholic Church.

It is a Plan yet to be developed fully and for this everyone at every level has a contribution to make from community to parish to diocese to Conference level.

Jesus told the apostles, and tells us now, go into the whole world and proclaim the Good News. The task is still there for us, and before us.

## Train the police!

Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG & SI  
2 February 2015

OVER the last few weeks, Papua New Guinea has seen cases of alleged abuse of power by the Police force: killing of a woman in Lae; sexual harassment in the police cells in Boroko; and most recently the killing of two men in Hanuabada village.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (CBC) strongly condemns the police brutality in any form. Police are to be a disciplined force. Human rights should not be abused.

Police abuse is mainly due to poor governance and endemic corruption in the Police force. This is also because of inadequate training and poor living

standards of the police personnel.

Therefore, the CBC suggests the following:

Hold proper investigation of the recent alleged cases of abuse and killing by the police;

Give in-service trainings to the police personnel;

Have better selection and training of police cadets;

Review wages and living conditions of the police force;

Get advice and increased personnel from the Australian Police Force.

Rev. Fr. Victor Roche, SVD  
CBC General Secretary

## Respect the refugees!

Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG & SI  
1 February 2015

LAST week Prime Minister Peter O’Neill told the ABC he believed most of the 1,035 asylum seekers at the Manus Regional Processing Centre were not genuine refugees,

and would be sent home “within weeks”. He said talks were underway with Iran and Iraq to return the men home.

A 13-day hunger strike by the detainees in

Manus was suspended on Monday, 26 January after security personnel stormed the compounds where the detainees were on hunger strike.

The hunger strike was against the plan by the PNG government to resettle the genuine refugees to a new camp in Manus Island under the guise of releasing them into the community.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands (CBC) is requesting the PNG Government and the Australian Government:

To give the asylum seekers a full and efficient refugee status determination process in the Manus Centre;

To provide safe and humane conditions for the asylum seekers;

Not to force the asylum seekers to return to their country if they are not safe;

To have a detailed policy on the resettlement of refugees in PNG.

This follows previous CBC statement of 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 2015.

Rev. Fr. Victor Roche, SVD  
CBC General Secretary



**YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE.** The Religious Congregations in Port Moresby launched the Year of Consecrated Life on Sunday, 1 February, the day before the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. Priests, brothers and sisters gathered for a solemn Mass at the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians at Don Bosco – Boroko, giving witness to the variety of charisms in the Church, and imploring God’s continuous blessings for a life of total dedication to God and service to the people.

# Memorable Children's Day in Sandaun

By Fr Gianni Gattei

**WE celebrated the 5th Sandaun Children's Day last 5-7 December in Lumi.**

The place is not easy to access. It challenged us to organize the event there.

The theme was: "Children's dignity builds society".

There were 17 songs for the competition but four of the children, from Aitape and Nuku District, couldn't make it. So we had 13 songs, with children from Aitape, Nuku and Lumi.

It was a memorable time for the children and people in Lumi. Some of the schools in the District participated in the event performing different items.

Around 150 children were accommodated for three days in the Catholic Mission facilities and well looked after with food and other needs.

Many people attended every day, starting from 9am and ending at 4pm.

The weather was fine most of the time.

A few showers didn't prevent people from participating and dancing in the rain.

Some disabled children also enjoyed the event and actively took part in the program.

The local Catholic youth helped in the preparation of the facilities and guaranteed security throughout the event.



Children singing competition in Lumi, Sandaun province on 5-7 Dec 2014.

The Catholic women helped with the cooking.

The daily program for the three days consisted in listening to the new songs of the competition and to other items prepared by the schools.

We also had some inputs on the rights of the children and on their dignity.

There were games to please the children and the public.

The second day we went live on NBC National Radio for 30 minutes.

It was a great achievement for

Lumi and the children.

This was thanks to Linda from NBC Vanimo, who came for the second year to broadcast the event.

The songs touched on many matters regarding the children: violence, family problems (including the negative impact of cell-phones in the family life), child abuse, rights of children, HIV/Aids, education problems, love for parents, village life, faith and government failure in dealing with children.

At the end presents were given to all the children, worth 6,000.00

Kina.

For the organization of the event we received some help from the diocese of Aitape, from some local businesses, and from the religious communities.

At a certain point we also received the good news of a generous donation from Nuku MP Joe Sungi. Unfortunately we didn't have much support from the local governments in Aitape and Lumi districts. This shows that the little ones are easily left out of budget allocations. This Children's Day was an eye opener for the local au-

thorities.

Hopefully they will better support the initiative in the future.

Again we achieved the goal: to let the children express themselves and grow in self-esteem; this was a strong message to the government authorities and the parents.

One of the children, who participated in the Children's Day since he was in Grade 6, now has become the studio engineer, and alone he arranged and recorded all the 17 songs of the latest event.

He was a singer until Grade 8. Then he composed songs for other children and now he is the studio engineer: one of the fruits of the Children's Day; a sign that if we cultivate the talents of the children and create opportunities for them, they can achieve great things.

"Let the children come to me", Jesus said.

That means, let them walk, don't carry them always in your hands preventing them from freely expressing themselves; give them freedom to use their gifts, express themselves and do what they should do at their age.

Sometimes being too possessive of the children keeps them away from following God's plan. Respecting the dignity of the children helps us build a better society, healthier communities and stronger families.

Let the children sing and shout! Let them play! Love them! Let them go to Jesus!

## Ten Commandments for Diocesan Youth Coordinators

Catholic Bishops' Conference of PNG & Solomon Islands (CBC)

Make a list of all young people in your area of responsibility.

Gather the parish youth leaders at different levels (parish, deanery, diocese) and explain to them the new CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines.

Use the Learning Materials 2015 as an effective instrument for every youth group.

Talk to all parishioners, parish priests, religious men and women, and the secretaries of the different diocesan commissions about the CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines. Also give them a copy of the Learning Materials 2015.

Encourage the youth to organize activities outlined in the CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines based on the Four Areas of Formation.

Visit all the High/Secondary schools, Tertiary Educational Institutions, Uni-Centers, correctional juvenile sections, etc.; and talk to them about the CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines.

Assist them in using the local resources and resource persons in a

regular way to give them formation activities at least once in a month if not every week. Also give them a copy of the Learning Materials 2015.

Make sure that there is a regular communication between the Diocesan Youth Office and all local communities by using also the mobile phones, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.

As in the LCI calendar 2015, celebrate the PNG and Solomon Islands Youth Sunday on 12 July, honoring St. Maria Goretti, Patron Saint of the youth, and Blessed Per ToRot.

Recall all the discussions we had during our Diocesan Youth Coordinators gatherings and continue to renew your commitment by assisting every young person in the diocese.

**(To receive the New CBC Youth Policy and Guidelines and the Learning Materials 2015, just contact Fr Shanthi Chakko – PNG/SI Catholic Youth Coordinator at: pngsicbcyouth@gmail.com)**

## Family and Communication

ON 24<sup>th</sup> January, Feast of St Francis de Sales, patron of journalists, the Vatican has issued Pope Francis' Message for the 49th World Day of Social Communications.

The theme of this year's message is 'Communicating the Family – a privileged place of encounter with the gift of love'.

The World Day of Social Communications is celebrated in almost all countries on the Sunday of the Ascension (one Sunday earlier in PNG and Solomon Islands – 10 May this year).

This year's message calls on the faithful to see families as a resource rather than as a problem for society and invites families to be examples of Christ's love, kindness and fellowship.

"In a world where people often curse, use foul language, speak badly of others, sow discord and poison our human environment by gossip, the family can teach us to understand communication as a blessing," the Pope writes.

"In situations apparently dominated by hatred and violence, where families are separated by stone walls or the no less impenetrable walls of prejudice and resentment, where there seem to be good reasons for saying 'enough is enough', it is only by blessing rather than cursing, by visiting rather than repelling, and by accepting rather than fighting, that we can break the spiral of evil, show that goodness is always possible, and educate our children to fellowship."

Pope Francis said the family is "a subject of profound reflection" by the Catholic Church.

"It is in the context of the family that we first learn how to com-



Sr. Imelda Wa'u, first Daughter of Wisdom (DW) from Western Province with friends and relatives just before her final profession on 25 January in Daru. See story on page 3

municate," he said.

"Focusing on this context can help to make our communication more authentic and humane, while helping us to view the family in a new perspective...."

"In the family, we learn to embrace and support one another, to discern the meaning of facial expressions and moments of silence, to laugh and cry together with people who did not choose one other yet are so important to each other.

"This greatly helps us to understand the meaning of communication as recognising and creating closeness.

When we lessen distances by growing closer and accepting one another, we experience gratitude and joy...."

"The great challenge facing us today is to learn once again how

to talk to one another, not simply how to generate and consume information," Pope Francis said. He concluded by saying that people are "not fighting to defend the past. Rather, with pa-

tience and trust, we are working to build a better future for the world in which we live." (Full message available at: [www.pccs.va](http://www.pccs.va))

Catholic Bishops' Conference of PNG & Solomon Islands  
(Port Moresby)

Centre of Research and Education in Communication  
(Lyon, France)

**PNG/SI CATHOLIC RADIO BROADCASTERS WORKSHOP**  
Kokopo Catholic Headquarters, ENBP

(Arrival) Sunday, 12 April - Friday, 17 April (Departure)

Conducted by:

Mr. Sean Patrick Lovett - Vatican Radio (Rome)

Fr. Fabrizio Colombo - SIGNIS office (Rome)

Registration fee: K. 200.00

Contact: Sr. Daisy Lisania MSC: [dalisaniamsc@yahoo.com.au](mailto:dalisaniamsc@yahoo.com.au)  
(only 15 slots – first come first served)

## Keep an eye on 2016!

AT the beginning of this year 2015 we are probably getting busy with many plans and projects. This time of the year is always a chance to start afresh with some renewed energy and vision.

For the Church generally in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands the Conference Pastoral Plan is our major challenge and we will work steadily with the implications of it all to develop the Plan together.

There is much happening for which we can be grateful, and which gives us hope.

I have a sense more and more that time is not important as it will all happen as God sees fit.

Our task is to continue with all our talent and resources to discern what God wants of us, and to get on with the task of making it happen, as best we can.

We continue to remember the 50 years of Vatican II which closed with its fourth session in 1965. It was a tumultuous session with often fierce debate and friction, but passed major documents that have had radical influence on the way that we are Church in the world today.

**Next year, 2016, will see 50 years of the erection of the PNG and Solomon Islands dioceses,** which moved us from the era of mission Church to established Church: a milestone worth celebration, a chance to reflect on and evaluate our history and point from which to look to our future.

There is much to do, but we are many, with many gifts and talents. As we work together we move forward with renewed hope, increased faith and stronger love. (Fr Roger Purcell)

## Poor Education and Health services in Madang

By Stella Paulus

**THE Madang Provincial Government is yet to deliver on its plan to build additional High Schools and Secondary Schools in the province.**

The promise was made last year during a review where statistics were presented to Governor Jim Kas, who committed almost K2 million from his Provincial Services Improvement Program towards the establishment of new Secondary Schools in Madang.

The failure by the Madang Provincial Government to do so after the implementation of the Tuition Fee Free Policy has seen only a small number of Grade Eight students continuing to Grade Nine each year.

Bruno Tulemanil, Madang Catholic Education Secretary also

recently stated that, "This year alone we had 3,600 students eligible to continue to Grade Nine, but with only 1,600 spaces available, where could the rest go?"

He said that for more than twenty years now the Provincial Education Board has been begging the Madang Provincial Government to build five more High Schools in the Province.

"We really need a High School in all of the six districts of the province. So far only one High School has been built since 1993 and that's the Rai Coast High School," he said.

In the meantime, the long awaited vacant positions for Josephstaal Health Center have finally been filled with 15 new staff.

The positions were part of a Memorandum of Agreement signed between the Catholic

Health Services, the Provincial Department of Health and the Madang Provincial Government since 2011.

The document stated that the Madang Provincial Government was to meet part of the operational costs of K186,000.00 per year for the running of the health facilities as well as positions of staff to be released to the Catholic Health Services in Madang by the Provincial Department of Health.

Paul Mabong, Deputy Health Director for Madang province recently confirmed that, "as the positions for Josephstaal Health Center and 10 satellite aid posts are now being filled, we want to thank the Catholic Health Services for the work they have taken on to make sure that basic services are delivered to that remote area of Madang Province."

## Ordination anniversary strengthens communities

By Bp Rochus Tatamai MSC  
Bereina

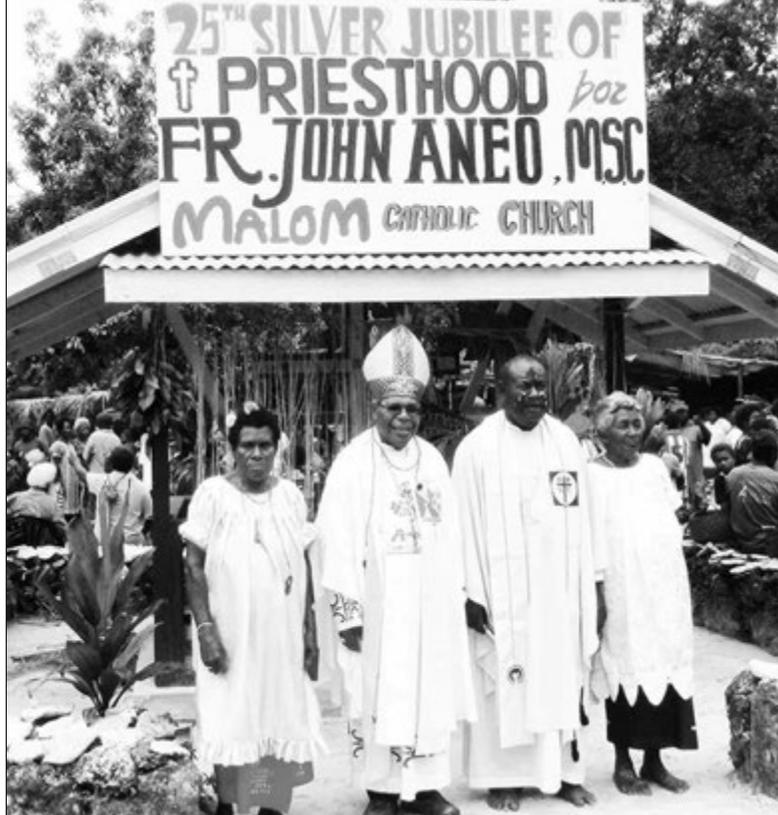
FOR the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of priestly ordination of Rev Father John Aneo MSC, the people of Malom village, in the parish of Lamasong, Central New Ireland Province, planned a three day celebration to give significance to the different dimensions of the one and same celebration.

On 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 the community celebrated the first Sunday of the year with the Mass to remember and pray for all the faithful departed of the significant peoples who have contributed to the life of Fr John Aneo.

These included his beloved dad Mr Joseph Aneo, his committed grandparents who were his foster-parents and mentors in his younger years until his novitiate.

All others included his teachers, members of his clans and the ancestors and parents in the Catholic faith from his local communities in Malom and Lambuso and the parish of Lamasong.

On the second day 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 the community gathered for



Bishop Rochus J. Tatamai MSC of Bereina and Fr John Aneo MSC with their respective mothers at the recent celebration.

celebration and prayed for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Fr Aneo was the main celebrant and Fr Charles Karol, the Dean of Hoskins in Kimbe Diocese was the homilist emphasising the need for more vocations focusing on the young men and women inspired by the spirit of the celebrations to make themselves available and generous with their lives and consider seriously the call to the priesthood and religious life.

The third and final day schedule on 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 the focus was on the 25<sup>th</sup> priestly ordination of Fr John Aneo MSC.

The day began with a lot of traditional activities and rituals.

It was an occasion for the families' reconciliations and renewal, recognition of the role of the elders and former generations and their commitment and contribution to the faith-life of the community.

The people from Leleit prepared a traditional chair decorated with taros signifying the importance of the clan and staple food of the community.

They carried Fr Aneo in this decorated chair amidst traditional chants and lively singing from his

house then down along the road towards the stage for the Mass.

It was also a traditional symbolic walk marking the 25 long years of labouring the vineyard of the Lord. This procession actually blocked off the Blumensky Highway as the crowd sang jubilantly and danced joyously until they entered the Church grounds for the Eucharistic celebration.

The liturgy was enriched with traditional tunes, dances and processions bringing out the peoples' full and active participation throughout the Mass.

In the homily, Bishop Rochus J. Tatamai MSC of Bereina Diocese traced the Lord's guiding hand and blessings throughout the priestly ministry of Fr John Aneo.

His famous composition of the "Aneo's Mass" is popularly sung by congregations throughout dioceses and parishes in Papua New Guinea.

After the Mass there were many exchanges of gifts and speeches, choirs and traditional dancers.

Though it was a rainy morning, the sun held out for the best part of the day giving God's blessing on all who came to celebrate.

## Vanimo youth: "Without Jesus we are zero"

he youth rally in Vanimo on 4-10 January 2015 invited the 800 participants to consider their vocation to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

The youth were called to be sentinels of peace, to love and respect one another and to stand in solidarity to quell the evil habits and practices in the society wounded by violence and conflicts.

The rally helped the youth to repent of their sins and to ask forgiveness from God and one another. The conditions of marriage were sounded out to the youth so that they would be cautious in their choices of

life. They were reminded of their freedom as well as roles and responsibilities of married life.

They were invited to abstain from premarital sexual relationships and to lead holy and authentic lives. Violence, corruption, bribery, etc. affecting the daily life of the youth were stressed.

The seminars on Christian spirituality were uplifting. They also focused on social media, advertising and money at times ruining souls and bodies.

The visit of the Sydney Catholic Youth was inspira-

tional and morale boosting through their part-time assistance in cooking and feeding the youth.

One afternoon was set aside for a march from Vanimo town to Ilolo; another afternoon the youth went around cleaning Vanimo town and its surroundings. The evenings were usually occupied with praise and worship, movies, dramas or other entertainment programs. The theme the youth chose for their rally was, "With Jesus you are hero, without Jesus you are zero." (Ignatius Wunum)

## First Daughter of Wisdom from Western province

By Fr Leo Kartika SMM

Sr. Imelda Wa'u is the first lady of Western Province to commit herself for the rest of her life to become a nun in the congregation of the Daughters of Wisdom (DW). She professed her final vows at the presence of DW PNG leader Sr. Julienne Rasoazanaroro during the Sunday Mass celebration led by Bishop Gilles Cote' at St. Luis Marie de Montfort Church in Daru on 25 January 2015.

Sr. Imelda hails from Barasaro village, in the

South District of Western Province. She belongs to the Kiwai tribe occupying the islands around the mouth of the Fly river. Sr. Imelda said that the love of God was really touching and pushing her to offer her life. "I am afraid but also proud.

Here I am", she said. Her uncle William Simua was also proud of her decision to offer her life for the glory of God.

The Mass was filled with emotions, tears of love and joy with many people in attendance. In his homily

bishop Gilles Cote' said that the vocation to become a religious sister was a grace from God. "We are able to know it if we open our hearts and humble ourselves in front of His majesty and cooperate with Him", he said.

The happiness of the Kiwai people was clear during the celebration with lively dancing and singing. Different groups and clan's members performed cultural dances and songs till next morning. "Please pray for Sr. Imelda", was bishop Gilles' final recommendation.

# PNG/SI Bishops finalize policy on abuse

**By Brother Frank Hough**  
**Director, Right Relationships in**  
**Ministry**  
**Catholic Bishops Conference of**  
**Papua New Guinea and**  
**Solomon Islands**

SINCE October 2014, five training sessions for Contact Persons have been held in the main regions of Papua New Guinea: Southern coast, Northern coast, the Islands, the Highlands and Western Province.

The role of the Contact Person is very important in implementing the Church Protocols, of dealing with cases of sexual abuse by Priests, Religious and Church workers.

Where does one go when they know they have been sexually abused by a representative of the Catholic Church?

The Contact Person is the one who will assist in preparing the complaint and sharing information about the Church process and other options.

The Contact Person is also in many ways the face of the Church in its compassion and healing role.

Last July in Rome when Pope Francis met with six persons who had been abused by priests, he was expected to spend ten minutes with each one.

He spent about thirty minutes with each and most of that time was the Pope listening.

One of the victims had stopped praying since being abused and has started again since meeting the Pope.

Earlier that day the six victims had attended a Eucharist with the Pope during which he apologized for the abuse.

"I beg your forgiveness, too, for



**Righth Relationships in Ministry Contact Persons Training Session for PNG Highlands at Banz on 25-26 Oct 2014. From left: Fr. Thomas Waiaken, Andrew Wau, Fr. Nelson Matthew, Maggie Turwai, Christopher Kawagle, Sr. Marie Norbert, Jacob Maima, Fr. Paul Patlo, Sr. Monika-Pia and Fr. Justin Soongie.**

the sins of omission on the part of Church leaders who did not respond adequately to reports of abuse made by family members, as well as by abuse victims themselves."

The Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands has been developing its own procedures in response to incidents of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct for some time and the most recent edition has been published in 2014 under the title *Protocols and Guidelines for Right Relationships in Ministry*.

They were developed by the Conference Board for Right Relationships in Ministry in 2012 and 2013, building on earlier approved policies.

The Protocols and Guidelines had been approved by the PNGSI Bishops Conference and the Federation of Religious in 2013.

Approval for Protocol One was granted by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith based in

Rome at the end of the same year.

Why is there a need for three documents when one may be enough? Protocol One presents procedures to follow when a person under the age of 18 (a minor) is sexually abused by a Priest.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has its own requirements as regards this matter. Protocol Two deals with issues of criminal sexual abuse carried out by a Priest, Religious or Church Worker.

The Guidelines concern sexual misconduct by a Priest, Religious or Church Worker.

A Church Worker is any person working on behalf of the Church, whether paid or voluntary. This includes Health workers, Teachers, Seminarians and secretarial staff.

Unfortunately sexual abuse takes place in all countries and in all cultures and for Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands there is no exception.

The Catholic Church is seeking ways to assist those who have

been abused, in a truly pastoral way, and to promote healing.

It is seeking to determine the truth as regards those who have abused and to ensure as far as possible that it does not happen again.

The Church wishes to be proactive in educating about Child Protection and Child Abuse and is fortunate to have Sr. Mary Claude Gadd and others actively promoting awareness and informing many of the importance of children and their appropriate care.

Soon to be available is the PNGSI Child Protection Policy that has been accepted by the Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Federation of Religious Executive.

Hopefully this will encourage all Catholic Institutions and groups working with children to develop their own policies if not already completed.

How do we practically apply the Protocols and Guidelines?

If you know someone who has

been sexually abused by a Priest, Religious or Church Worker or there has been inappropriate behaviour, take the matter to the Contact Person for the Diocese.

Generally there are two Contact Persons for each Diocese.

They will advise on possible procedures and assist in completing a Complaint Form.

They will be the link throughout the process.

As in many aspects of life, taking the first step is the hardest.

Through abuse the Church has been wounded and the Church is called to assume more strongly its healing role.

This takes place in reaching out to those abused, their families and others affected and also the abusers.

Healing takes time and requires humility and walking together.

Healing implies listening with much respect, as exemplified in Pope Francis.

In the same week in Rome that the Pope met with victims of abuse, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin, Ireland, concluded his keynote speech at the Anglophone Conference on care of the abused with the following words.

"My ministry has greatly benefited from what I have learned – and at time learned in a hard way – from survivors. That is why I ask not just their forgiveness for what happened to them, but I am grateful to them for what they have done for me."

Copies of the *Protocols and Guidelines* and the *Child Protection Policy* are available at CBC Waigani or through Diocesan Headquarters.

## He opposed witch hunting ...And died a martyr

**By Giorgio Bernardelli**

SOUTH Africa has its first blessed and martyr: a teacher and lay catechist, husband and father, murdered in 1990 for opposing witch hunting.

Pope Francis has signed the pertinent decree on 15 January 2015, only 25 years after the tragic events.

Tshimangadzo Daswa was born in the village of Mbahe, Limpopo province on 16 June 1946, a member of the Lemba tribe.

As a boy he started joining a group of Catholics meeting for prayer under a big tree.

At 16 he asked for Baptism.

He choose the name of Benedict and adopted the motto of St. Benedict, "Pray and work".

After graduating from Teachers College he began his career at Nweli until he became school principal. He continued as a catechist and helped building the first local Catholic church. I

n 1980 he married Shadi Eveline Monyai. They had eight children.



**The first South African blessed: teacher and catechist, husband and father Benedict Daswa (1946-'90).**

In January 1990 the Nweli area was unexpectedly affected by thunderstorms and floods when it's normally the dry season.

Some huts were hit by lightning and were burned down.

According to local beliefs, that was the sign of a curse due to witchcraft.

A shaman was called in to identify the suspect.

Benedict tried to explain that lightning is a natural phenomenon and refused to pro-

vide the family contribution for the shaman:

"My Christian faith – he said – prohibits me to join any sort of witch hunting".

His stand was considered an offense to the ancestral beliefs.

A few days later, on 2 February 1990, as he was driving home in the evening he found the road blocked by a log.

When he got off the vehicle to remove it, a threatening mob emerged from the bush.

Witnesses testified that as he was going to be killed he knelt in prayer.

Already at his funeral service the Catholics of the diocese of Tzaneen acclaimed him a martyr.

The formal diocesan inquiry on Benedict Daswa's martyrdom was completed in 2010.

With the Pope's signature on the final Vatican decree the beatification of the first South African blessed, and possibly a saint at a later stage is a matter of months.

And those who strenuously fight witch hunting around the world will have a model to look at and a certified source of strength and inspiration.

## 26 pastoral workers killed in 2014 ...2 in Papua New Guinea

DURING 2014, 26 Catholic pastoral workers were killed worldwide, three more than in 2013.

For the sixth consecutive year, the place most affected was Central and South America.

The pastoral care workers who died violently in 2014 included 17 priests, one religious man, six religious sisters, one seminarian and one lay person.

In America, 14 pastoral care workers were killed; in Africa seven; in Asia two; in Oceania two and a priest was killed in Europe.

During the past decade, 230 pastoral workers, including three Bishops have been killed worldwide.

In May 2014, Fr Jerry Inau and communion minister, Benedict, of the diocese of Bereina were murdered in the remote Goilala mountains of Kamulai as the result of intertribal tension. The killers have not been caught.

We cannot but mention

those who were killed not by the hand of a criminal but by the Ebola virus, which is claiming thousands of victims in West Africa, where the Catholic facilities, and not just healthcare, have been mobilised since the outbreak of the epidemic.

Four confreres who belonged to the religious family of the Hospitaller Brothers of St. John of God died in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and a religious sister and 13 employees of the hospitals in Monrovia and Lunsar died after having contracted the virus.

"Our Confreres gave their lives for others, just like Christ, to the point of dying infected by this epidemic," wrote Friar Jesús Etayo, Prior General.

A similar fate befell the six Italian missionary Sisters of the Poor of Bergamo who died in Congo in 1995 after having contracted the Ebola virus in order not to leave the pop-

ulation without health care.

In 2013 the beatification process of the six Italian missionaries was initiated.

Once again, the majority of pastoral care workers in 2014 were killed in attempted robberies, and in some cases violently attacked, a sign of the climate of moral decline, economic and cultural poverty, which generates violence and disregard for human life.

They all lived in these human and social contexts, carrying out the mission of proclaiming the Gospel message without making sensational acts, but by witnessing their faith in the humility of daily life.

Some were killed by the same people they helped, others opened the door to those who asked for aid and were attacked, others were killed during a robbery, but the reason why many other assaults and kidnappings ended tragically remain unclear.