



# The Catholic Reporter

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## Excerpts of the Pope's Christmas message

From Zenit News Agency, Vatican

FROM the central loggia of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in Rome, Pope Francis addressed the following Christmas Message to a crowd of approximately 40,000 people who gathered in St. Peter's Square.

For this reason, the birth of Jesus was accompanied by the angels' song as they proclaimed: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" (Lk 2:14).

Today this message goes out to the ends of the earth to reach all peoples, especially those scarred by war and harsh conflicts that seem stronger than the yearning for peace.

Peace to men and women in the war-torn land of Syria, where far too much blood has been spilled. Above all in the city of Aleppo, site of the most awful battles in recent weeks, it is most urgent that assistance and support be guaranteed to the exhausted civil populace, with respect for humanitarian law. It is time for weapons to be still forever, and the international community to actively

seek a negotiated solution, so that civil coexistence can be restored in the country.

Peace to women and men of the beloved Holy Land, the land chosen and favoured by God. May Israel and Palestinians have the courage and the determination to write a new page of history, where hate and revenge give way to the will to build together a future of mutual understanding and harmony. May Iraq, Libya and Yemen – where their peoples suffer war and the brutality of terrorism – be able once again to find unity and concord.

Peace to the men and women in various parts of Africa, especially in Nigeria, where fundamentalist terrorism exploits even children in order to perpetrate horror and death. Peace in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, so that divisions may be healed and all people of good will may strive to undertake the path of development and sharing, preferring the culture of dialogue to the mindset of conflict.

Peace to women and men who to this day suffer the consequences of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, where there is urgent need for a



Pope Francis greets children at the conclusion of the Christmas Eve Mass. Photo: Zenit News Agency, Vatican

common desire to bring relief to the civil population and to put into practice the commitments which have been assumed.

We implore harmony for the dear people of Colombia, which seeks to embark on a new and courageous path of dialogue and reconciliation. May such courage also motivate the beloved country of Venezuela to undertake the necessary steps to put an end to current tensions, and build together a future of hope for the whole population.

Peace to all who, in different areas, are enduring sufferings due to constant dangers and persistent injustice. May Myanmar consolidate its efforts to promote peaceful coexistence and, with the assistance of the international community, provide necessary protection and hu-

manitarian assistance to all those who gravely and urgently need it. May the Korean peninsula see the tensions it is experiencing overcome in a renewed spirit of cooperation.

Peace to those who have lost a person dear to them as a result of brutal acts of terrorism, and to those who have sown fear and death into the hearts of so many countries and cities.

Peace – not merely the word, but a real and concrete peace – to our abandoned and excluded brothers and sisters, to those who suffer hunger and to all the victims of violence. Peace to exiles, migrants and refugees, to all those who in our day are subject to human trafficking. Peace to the peoples who suffer because of the economic ambitions of

the few, because of the sheer greed and the idolatry of money, which leads to slavery. Peace to those affected by social and economic unrest, and to those who endure the consequences of earthquakes or other natural catastrophes.

Peace to the children, on this special day on which God became a child, above all those deprived of the joys of childhood because of hunger, wars or the selfishness of adults.

Peace on earth to men and women of goodwill, who work quietly and patiently each day, in their families and in society, to build a more humane and just world, sustained by the conviction that only with peace is there the possibility of a more prosperous future for all.

## Ordination Speaks of Hope at Jubilee

Written by Bishop Donald

Adding to the joy of the Golden Jubilee in Mendi was the celebration of the priestly ordination of Deacon Peter Mondo.

As has been stated before, a Jubilee is a time to give thanks for what (and who) has gone before us; a time to recommit ourselves to our mission and vision in the present; and a time to look to the future with hope. The fourth day of the Golden Jubilee gave the faithful of the Diocese of Mendi the opportunity to strengthen their hope in a bright future as Deacon Peter Mondo was ordained to the priesthood.

Now Father Peter came to the Diocese of Mendi from the Diocese of Kundiawa (Chimbu) over two years ago. He served as deacon, under the supervision of Father Isaiah Timba, in the Sumi Pastoral Area - one of the most remote areas of the diocese.

The Rite of Ordination is one of the most beautiful and ancient in the Catholic Church.

It is rich in meaning and symbolism. And in the Diocese of Mendi, the Rite of Ordination takes the on some of the extra colour of the peoples of PNG. At the beginning of the actual Rite of Ordination the deacon is called forth. He has been seated

with members of his family. He is dressed in some of the traditional attire of his people. He comes forth to the altar, accompanied by members of his family. In this case, Deacon Peter's father and mother (and others, dressed in full traditional attire) came forward with him. In front of the altar, Deacon Peter's father said some moving words presenting his son to the bishop for ordination. The deacon then removed the symbols of his traditional attire and proceeded close to the altar with the the bishop. This is a meaningful moment. It represents a kind of passing of a man from his tribe to a new tribe; from his incorpo-

ration in one family to his incorporation into another family.

The most significant and meaningful part of the Rite of Ordination is the laying on of hands. The bishops lays hands on the top of the deacon's head. It is the solemn moment of ordination that is completed by the Prayer for Ordination which follows.

It is a gesture which comes from the Holy Scriptures themselves and enacts, by the grace of God, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the new priest conferring on him the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ.

After the bishop (and celebrating bishops), the

priests who are present also lay hands on the new priest ... a powerful symbol of the unity of the priesthood in Jesus Christ.

After the solemn Prayer of Ordination, the new priest is dressed in the vestments of the priest and his hands are anointed with Sacred Chrism, that had been blessed by the bishop the previous Holy Week.

The priest's hands are anointed for his ministry of administering the Holy Sacraments and his service of the Holy People of God.

After all of the rites of Ordination are complete, the new priest takes his place with the other priests and continues

with the celebration of the Holy Mass.

The ordination, taking place during the time of Jubilee was a sign of hope for the future of the Church in the Southern Highland and Hela Provinces of Papua New Guinea.

A priest is a man who lives only for God and in loving self-forgetful service of his brothers and sisters. A priest is called to be "another Christ". Please pray for Father Peter and for all those who generously give their lives in service in various ministries and callings. Please pray for an increase of missionary vocations in the Church.

## Election Matters

with

Fr. Roger Purcell  
msc



## Living as Daughters and Sons of God

It is a very deep and profound mystery that we are made like God, that we have deep within us the life of God.

As God, in the Trinity, is love, peace, unity and harmony, so we are made in the same way. As God is creative from the beginning and to now, so we are creative in our lives and our world. All made in the image and likeness of God, regardless of race, colour, gender or creed, we are all sisters and brothers.

At this time of the year we are concerned about school beginning, a place in school and the important matter of school fees.

We are concerned because every child has a right to education, to knowledge, learning, formation for life and to training and skills.

All these are part of the dignity of being a human being, a dignity shared by all girls and boys.

Our traditional education system in the village, haus man and haus meri, in the gardens, bush or at sea, gave formation, education and knowledge; gave dignity as a member of the community.

With National Elections coming we reflect on our dignity as daughters and sons of God.

This dignity cannot be taken away, and must be respected at all levels, by all people.

It must be reflected in the style of government, in the laws, public services, health, education and justice.

Each citizen is daughter or son, as is each leader and service provider. Each of us is called to respect our own dignity in the way we live, and to respect the dignity of others.

All our candidates and leaders, the elected members, are called to live personally in this way, to govern and administer with this in mind.

The most remote voter, the last baby born, the older lapun, the sick, blind, lame and poor are all daughters and sons; all with God-given, and God-like dignity.

By Bishop Rochus Tatamai

SINCE Cardinal RIBAT touched down at Tokua airport Rabaul, the Provincial Events executives had been on full swing to accord this historical event its significance as underpinning the deep partnership between Provincial Government and Church in this case the Catholic Archdiocese of Rabaul. Under the efficient coordination of Gordon Guise the protocols and security with the coordination of the general public and dignitaries...one cannot ask for more. The entire operation had been prompt and professional. Congratulations ENB Provincial Government and Administration, to the Archdiocese of Rabaul and the cordial friendship and feeling of oneness amongst the Churches had been a telling atmosphere and experience. GOD BLESS us all and Our beautiful country PNG.

## Cardinal visits his home province



Cardinal with Archbishop Panfilo at St Joseph's Church Malagunan

# Letter to bishops around the world

by Elise Harris  
Vatican City  
(CNA/EWTN News)

**In a letter sent to bishops around the world for the feast of the Holy Innocents, Pope Francis lamented the many children who suffer from war, slavery and various forms of abuse, including within the Church.**

The Church not only hears the "cries of pain" of her children who suffer from war, slavery and malnutrition, he said, but she also weeps "because she recognizes the sins of some of her members: the sufferings, the experiences and the pain of minors who were abused sexually by priests."

"It is a sin that shames us. Persons responsible for the protection of those children destroyed their dignity. We regret this deeply and we beg forgiveness."

Francis condemned the sin "of failing to help," of "covering up and denial" and the sin of "the abuse of power" that happened in many cases.

In celebrating the Feast of the Holy Innocents, Pope Francis asked his brother bishops to renew "our complete commitment to ensuring that these atrocities will no longer take place in our midst."

"Let us find the courage needed to take all necessary measures and to protect in every way the lives of our chil-

dren, so that such crimes may never be repeated. In this area, let us adhere, clearly and faithfully, to zero tolerance."

The Pope's words were spoken in a letter, dated on the Dec. 28 feast commemorating the infants slaughtered by King Herod in his attempt to kill Jesus, and was addressed to bishops around the world.

He has often promoted a "zero tolerance" policy on abuse since his election, and has met with victims of clerical sex abuse and their relatives on several occasions.

During his 2015 visit to the United States, Francis met with a group of abuse victims ahead of his audience with the country's bishops, during which he issued harsh words on abuse, noting that many children had been "raped" and that covering up the crime was a "sacrilege."

He has also often praised the great efforts of retired Pope Benedict XVI made in dealing with the crisis, saying on his Feb. 18, 2016, return flight from Mexico that his predecessor "deserves applause," because he "fought in moments when he had no strength to impose himself, until he managed to impose himself."

As head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the then-Cardinal Ratzinger "had every-

thing in his hands. He conducted all the investigations, and went on, went on, until he couldn't go any further in the execution."

Francis has also come out as a man of his word when it comes to holding bishops accountable for negligence in abuse cases. Not only did he institute the Commission for the Protection of Minors at the beginning of his pontificate in 2013 as a means of developing guidelines and "best practices" for abuse prevention, but in June 2016 he published a motu proprio titled "Like a Loving Mother" saying negligence on the part of a bishop is enough to oust him from office.

He has also created a Vatican tribunal to prosecute bishops for abuse of office and has so far accepted the resignations of three U.S. bishops accused of mismanaging allegations of abuse: Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas City-St. Joseph and Archbishop John Nienstedt and Auxiliary Bishop Lee A. Piché, both of whom are from St. Paul-Minneapolis.

In his letter to bishops, Pope Francis also noted the many children who suffer and die due to other forms of abuse, saying to contemplate the manger at Christmas also means to "open our eyes and ears to what is going on around us, and to let our hearts be atten-

tive and open to the pain of our neighbors, especially where children are involved."

Just as St. Joseph was conscious of the events going on around him and was able to interpret them in a realistic way, today's pastors must also be "men attentive, and not deaf, to the voice of God, and hence more sensitive to what is happening all around us," Francis said.

"With Saint Joseph as our model, we are asked not to let ourselves be robbed of joy...we need the courage to respond to this reality, to arise and take it firmly in hand. The courage to guard this joy from the new Herods of our time, who devour the innocence of our children."

This innocence is stolen by scourges such as illegal slave labor, exploitation and prostitution. It is "shattered by wars and forced immigration, with the great loss that this entails," he said, noting that many children have fallen into gangs or criminal organizations and "merchants of death, who only devour and exploit their neediness."

He noted that according to statistics, there are currently 75 million children who due to emergency situations and crisis have no education, and that a third of the children who live outside

their homelands do so because they have been forcibly displaced.

Pointing to a recent report from UNICEF, the Pope said that unless things change, there will be 167 million children living in "extreme poverty" by 2030, and that 69 million children under the age of five will die between 2016-2030 while 16 million children will not receive a basic education.

Christian joy, he said, "does not arise on the fringes of reality, by ignoring it or acting as if it did not exist." Rather, it is born from the call to "embrace and protect human life, especially that of the holy innocents of our own day."

Francis closed saying Christmas is a time that impels us to "protect life" and which challenges bishops in particular to "find new courage" in both acknowledging the reality that many children experience today, and to work to ensure that their dignity as God's children "will not only be respected but, above all, defended."

"Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of joy, but guard it and nourish its growth," he said, praying they would go forward "with the paternal fidelity of Saint Joseph and guided by Mary, Mother of tender love, so that our own hearts may never grow hard."

# Christmas & New Year Greetings extended to all Dear Wantok of the Wantok

The Israel people were waiting for the Redeemer for a very long time. They were waiting for the One who is to come, who is to change their lives.

They were waiting for the King. They had very high expectations. Maybe, too high. And so, He was rather a surprise – little, poor, helpless baby in a manger. However, in these humble conditions there was love of the Holy Family and angelic joy from heaven and peace among shepherds - Values bigger than celebrity, riches and



Fr. Janusz Skotniczny SVD

power.

Christmas is a special time for everyone who celebrates

the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. This is a time that we wait for the whole year. This is the time when we got special expectations.

We expect peace – but the same time there is a lot of noise. Just to mention, near SVD gate boys explode homemade crackers. Every time there is explosion everybody almost jumps.

We expect experience of family love – but the world is tempting us to follow our own ways and habits leaving family behind.

We expect spiritual joy -

but preparation, shopping, decorations, cooking, keep us away from real joy.

And so, I would like to wish you that in any circumstances your secret profound expectations of peace, joy and love can realize during the Christmas and the whole festive season.

*And I wish you prosperous New Year 2017.*

*God bless you.*

*Christmas 2016,*

*Fr. Janusz Skotniczny SVD  
Chairman- Word Publishing  
Company - Madang*

Commentary  
by Fr. Victor  
Roche



I type this email from India where 80.5% are Hindus, 13.4% are Muslims, 2.3% are Christians, 3.8% are of other religions. A week before Christmas, in one of the Northern States of India (Rajasthan) a Parish Priest and a team of Christmas Carol singers were beaten up by a group of 25 fanatic Hindus. In Syria or Nigeria Christians are massacred in big numbers just because they are Christians.

On the Feast Day of St. Stephen, the first Martyr, Pope Francis deviated from his prepared text to say "I will tell you something, today's martyrs are greater in number than those of the first centuries. When we read the history of the first centuries, here at Rome, we read about so much cruelty to Christians."

"I tell you," he added, "there is the same cruelty towards Christians today, and in greater number." Francis invited those present to think of those that suffer persecution, and to be close to them with affection, prayer and tears.

"Yesterday, Christmas Day," Francis recalled, "Christians persecuted in Iraq celebrated Christmas in their destroyed Cathedral: it is an example of fidelity to the Gospel."

"Despite the trials and dangers, they witness courageously their belonging to Christ and they live the Gospel by being committed to the least, the neglected, doing good to all with distinctions, thus witnessing charity in truth."

In PNG we can 'boast' of being a Christian country with 96% Christians although we have our own problems. How do we live our Christian values in PNG?

It is good to reflect that we are really fortunate to live in a Christian Country like PNG.

## Pope's Ambassador in Mendi

By Bishop Donald

The Ambassador of Pope Francis to Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands was in Mendi to bring to a happy conclusion the year-long celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Diocese of Mendi.

His Grace, Kurian Mathew Vayalunkal, D.D., (Apostolic Nuncio) traveled to Mendi with Archbishop Douglas Young, SVD, (Archbishop of Mount Hagen - Metropolitan Archbishop of the Highlands Region of Papua New Guinea). They were joined by His Lordship Bishop Dariusz Kalusa, MSF, (Bishop of Goroka), Bishop Donald Lippert, OFM Cap., (Bishop of Mendi), scores of priests, consecrated religious and thousands of faithful people who had traveled from the remotest areas of the Southern Highlands and Hela Provinces to participate in the more than five days of religious and cultural celebrations marking the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Mendi.

Adding to the joy of

the celebration was the participation of more than forty young people from Saints Peter & Paul Parish, Det who received their First Holy Communion from the hands of the Nuncio at the Holy Mass. They had been prepared by their catechists under the direction of their parish priest, Father Sunny Mathew, OFM Cap. They were dressed smartly in clothes that reflected the meaning of the celebration. They are a sign of slow but steady growth of the Church and the critical mission of passing on the Faith to the next generation.

The Nuncio was noticeably moved by the celebrations. Later he spoke of the vitality and vibrancy which characterized the celebration - signs of the vitality and vibrancy of the local church of the Diocese of Mendi. It was observed that just sixty years ago there were no local Catholics... and now, sixty years later, there is a young and vibrant Catholic community celebrating their common faith in Jesus Christ.

As the celebrations came to a close, you could sense a certain

sadness or reluctance of the people to leave. The celebrations, the sharing of life and culture and faith, were so beautiful and so powerful that no one wanted them to end. It was if the people did not want to wake from a beautiful dream. It was not unlike Peter, James and John want-

ing to build tents to remain forever on the Mount of the Transfiguration. But as then, so now, the work of evangelization and formation in the faith must continue. The way of the Cross must be traveled in the footsteps of the Master who will lead us by that way to the eternal

joys of the Resurrection.

(Seventh and last in the series relating events of the celebrations marking the Golden Jubilee in the Diocese of Mendi. Thank you for sharing this experience with us. Let's continue to keep each other in thought and prayer.)



Enthusiastic gathers for closing of Golden Jubilee. Photo credit: Demoti Magini Demoti Magini

# Mumu Brings Culture to Jubilee

Written by Bishop Donald

It's not a true PNG Highlands celebration if there's not a mumu! For the uninitiated, a mumu is a traditional way of cooking, especially pork, vegetables and greens in an earthen oven.

It's not a true PNG Highlands celebration if there's not a mumu! For the uninitiated, a mumu is a traditional way of cooking, especially pork, vegetables and greens in an earthen oven.

Each local PNG culture has its particular variation on the theme, but basically it involves the digging of a pit in the earth; the heating of (usually) river stones; and the cooking of the pork, vegetables and greens in the pit to be cooked by the hot stones - all of which has been covered up with banana leaves.

There were dozens of pigs that were brought to Mendi for the Jubilee celebration. Many were given to various groups and individuals (e.g., bishop, Sisters, priests, Events Committee, etc.) in thanksgiving for their ministry and work. The pig is very important in many Melanesian societies. It is a symbol of wealth. It is a commodity used in exchange for bride price, compensation, etc.

After they are slaughtered, the pigs are rolled over the fire that has been started to heat up the



The pig is always the center of attention at a traditional mumu. Photo credit: Demoti Magini



Mumu brings culture together as seen here at the Mendi Archdiocese closing of the Jubilee year celebrations. Photo Credits: Demoti Magini

stones. This is done in order to burn the hair off of the pig. After this, the animal is cut up in a traditional way. The Pidgin word for this process comes from the English word, "to operate". In PNG cultures, it is usually the man who does the 'operating'. The women take the inner organs for cooking. Nothing is wasted. When the pig has been cut up, it is then placed in the mumu pit for cooking.

In traditional mumus after the pig is cooked, the owner or representative of the owner or sponsor

of the event distributes parts of the cooked pig to various people. More important people get a better cut of the pig... but everyone usually gets something. There is a local rule that one cannot be eating a piece of pork in front of those who do not have something to eat. A mumu is a powerful example of sharing with the community. It is one of the most joyful and festive times in the life of a community.

And, did I mention, it is absolutely delicious!

## For All That Has Been - Thanks!

### ...Thousands Gather in Mendi for Jubilee

Written by Bishop Donald

The third day of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Diocese of Mendi was marked by three main events. The Holy Mass, a Singing, and a Mumu!

The Holy Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Stephen Reichert, OFM Cap. Archbishop Steve is the Archbishop of Madang, and the previous Bishop of Mendi. Before being named Bishop of Mendi, Archbishop Steve served in many ministries in the diocese - Pomberel & Tari, just to name a few. He also served as a lecturer at Catholic Theological Institute in Bomana and as the Superior of the Capuchin-Franciscan Friars of PNG-SI. During the Mass, there was a special remembrance of the long-serving missionaries, both living and deceased, who had served in the diocese over the past 60 years. Truly heroic work has been done by so



Bishop Donald trying his hand at a Kundu drum with Huli-Drummers Photo credits: Demoti Magini

many dedicated priests, Brothers, Sisters and laypeople... In his homily, which was based on the Scripture reading of the Good Shepherd, Archbishop Steven also honored the service of so many lay catechists who were key in the evangelizing mission of the church from the very beginning. Archbishop Steve reminded the congregation that many of the first catechists who came to the Southern Highlands (and Hela) were from Chimbu. The Holy Mass was celebrated outside in the field

in front of the cathedral in order to accommodate the thousands of people who had come from all over the diocese to participate in the Golden Jubilee celebrations. Several special guests were also present for the Jubilee celebrations: Sister Martine Mayborg, OSF and Sister Ann Vander Muellen, OSF are Franciscan Sisters from Oldenburg, Indiana; Father Ben Madden, OFM Cap., who had served in the diocese for almost 50 years but had recently returned to the United States; Fr Colman Studeny, OFM

Cap., who had served for almost 50 years as parish priest of St Joseph Parish, Ekari (Upper Mendi) and is now serving in Madang... and many others. Father Dariusz Kaluza, MSF, Bishop of Goroka, who had served almost 20 years in the Diocese of Mendi was also present for the joyful celebration.

A time of Jubilee is a time for joy, but it is joy that gains its strength from thankfulness to God (and so many others) for what has gone before; faith in God's continuing presence and action in present moment; and hope in the Providence of God in the future.

(This is third in the series of articles sharing the highlights of the recent Golden Jubilee celebrations in the Diocese of Mendi. The next two installments are dedicated to the singsing and the mumu that also took place on the third day of the Jubilee. Thanks for sharing our joy!)

## Heaven Touching Earth!

Written by Bishop Donald

Words cannot begin to express the pageantry, the colour and the sheer beauty of a traditional Melanesian Singing.

Mendi exploded with colour and culture on the third day of the Golden Jubilee events as traditional groups gathered from all corners of the Southern Highlands and Hela Provinces to celebrate a traditional singsing. A Singsing is a gathering of people where many are dressed in traditional attire to mark an important event in the life of the community. In the past, a singsing may have been an incitement of a community to face a tribal conflict; or to celebrate a victory after such a conflict. More often today, they are organized to observe other important events in the life of the commu-

nity.

In celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Diocese of Mendi an invitation went out to all of the diverse cultures living in the two provinces of Southern Highlands and Hela to participate. There are more than 12 language groups located within the two provinces which comprise the diocese - each with its own history, tradition and identity. Each with its distinctive manner of traditional attire and, with its own chant, dance and song. Singsing groups from all of the cultures of the diocese gathered to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of the diocese. We were also graced by the presence of a group from the Chimbu Province (who had come to celebrate the priesthood ordination of Peter Mondo, who is from Chimbu); and a colourful group from Mekio, spon-

sored by a local leader now working in Port Moresby.

Singsings usually take place on special 'singsing grounds' which are located within the territory of a given tribe or people. In recent years, different cultural 'shows' have sprung up in various parts of the country. It becomes a great tourist attraction and a way of different tribes to share the beauty of their culture... however the shows are a bit unnatural and contrived. Much more rare is the coming together of various tribes to celebrate together a common event - such as the Golden Jubilee of the diocese.

This was not a show! This was an authentic expression of culture and faith - people from different languages and cultures coming together in fraternal communion and in celebration of a common faith in God.