



'To Bear Witness to the Light' - Jn 1:7

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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Pope appeals: End the war



Pope Francis blesses a Ukrainian girl wounded in the war
Article and Picture: Vatican News

World Health Day

Theme: **Our Planet, Our Health**
Date: **Thursday, 7th April 2022**

The theme focuses on global attention on urgent actions needed to keep humans and the planet healthy and foster a movement to create societies focused on well-being. The hashtag for this year's event is **#HealthierTomorrow**.

Brief Background:

Observed annually on April 7th since its inception, World Health Day is a global health awareness day which aims to create awareness of a specific health theme to highlight a priority area of concern for the World Health Organization.

Conceptualization of **World Health Day** took place at the First Health Assembly of WHO in 1948 where it was decided by the assembly to celebrate the World Health Day on 7th April every year with effect from 1950.

April 7th is also the foundation day of World Health Organization thus World Health Day also marks the foundation day of WHO.

Reflection questions:

1. During this time of pandemic, are we taking care of our health?
2. As Christians, are we visiting and reaching out to the sick in our communities and hospitals?
3. Do we pray for the health workers who dedicate their life in serving those who are sick?

Pope Francis—united to all the Bishops and Catholic faithful around the world - consecrated Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on Friday, the feast of the Annunciation.

The Act of Consecration was prayed during the "24 Hours for the Lord" Lenten penitential service in St. Peter's Basilica, which begins at 5 PM Rome time.

The Pope prayed the Act of Consecration around 6:30 PM, and asked all Bishops and priests to join him spiritually in this prayer, which was broadcasted across our Vatican News channels - radio, website, YouTube, and Facebook - with English-language commentary.

The Pope's renewal of the Consecration came in response to the war in Ukraine and at the request of the Blessed Virgin Mary made in an apparition at Fatima on 13 July 1917.

Rome: As Russia intensifies its invasion of Ukraine, Pope Francis renewed his heartfelt appeal for an end to the atrocities being committed.

"Unfortunately, the violent aggression against Ukraine does not stop, a senseless massacre where every day there is a repetition of slaughter and atrocities. There is no justification for this! I plead with all those involved in the international community to truly commit to ending this abhorrent war."

Innocents killed

He lamented the shelling of innocent civilians, including the elderly, children, and pregnant mothers.

"All this is inhuman! Indeed, it is also sacrilegious because it goes against the sacredness of human life, especially against defenseless human life, which must be respected and protected, not eliminated, and this comes before any strategy! Let us not forget it is inhuman and sacrilegious cruelty!"

Pope Francis also recalled his visit to the Bambino Gesù Pediatric Hospital, where he greeted several

Ukrainian children who have fled the war and are receiving treatment.

"One was missing an arm; one had a head injury...innocent children," lamented the Pope.

Many families have been separated by the war, he said, and many children and fragile people are left to "die under the bombs without being able to receive help and find safety even in the air raid shelters."

Long-term welcome of refugees

As millions flee Ukraine into other nations, the Pope urged Europeans to "be close to these martyred people" and welcome them wholeheartedly and generously.

He also extended that appeal, saying Ukrainian refugees must continue to be welcomed and assisted even in the weeks and months to come.

"As you know at first, we do all we can to welcome everyone, but then we can get used to it, and our hearts cool a bit, and we forget about it."

The Pope urged people to remember that those who have fled

are mostly women and children now separated from their husbands and are without work.

And he called for them to be protected from "the vultures of society" who will seek to prey on them. "Please, let us protect them."

Nearness of Catholic ministers

Pope Francis went on to thank the many Catholic Bishops and priests who have remained in Ukraine, some of whom he said he has spoken to in recent days.

He especially thanked Archbishop Visvaldas Kulbokas, the Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine, for bringing the Pope's closeness to "the martyred Ukrainian people."

Pope Francis, in these weeks, has expressed the Holy See's availability to help in any way possible to bring an end to this war.

On Friday, March, 25, 2022, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Pope Francis and bishops throughout the world consecrated Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, praying especially for peace and an end to war. Please unite your prayers with theirs.



LCI bookshop opened in POM

The Liturgical Catechetical Institute has opened a new bookshop in Port Moresby

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139 DBTI students graduate

DBTI Class of 2021 had 139 graduates graduating with with Diplomas and Degrees

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- Isabella Saleu and Jessica Oata

Catholic Church in PNG-SI in solidarity with Ukraine victims



L-R: Mavis Tito, Abp Douglas Young svd and Fr Giorgio Licini PIME

Port Moresby: The Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands together with Caritas PNG, have expressed their solidarity with victims in Ukraine and have pledged a total of K70,000 for relief efforts.

In a press conference on 16th March 2022 at the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNGSI, the conference contributed K50,000 through the Archdiocese of Lviv in Ukraine while CPNG pledged K20,000 in response to the launch of a three-month emergency rapid response by Caritas Internationalis to support the needs of refugees fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

Presenting their statements on the call for peace in Ukraine were Abp. Douglas Young svd, Archbishop of Mt. Hagen, Fr Giorgio Licini PIME, General Secretary of CBC PNG SI and Mavis Tito, Director of Caritas PNG. "The Catholic faithful of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands joins the Holy Father Pope Francis in expressing our solidarity with the

people of Ukraine during this time," said Abp Douglas spoke on behalf of the President of CBCPNGSI and Archbishop of Madang Abp. Anton Bal

He said that when we call for peace, we are not telling Ukraine to stop defending itself but Russia to stop the invasions, assaults, and bombings on a free and independent nation.

"In PNG, we need to also reflect on what happens when we lose our democracy. If you give too much power to one person, this is what dictatorship does. As we prepare for the National General Elections, it's very important for us that we cherish our democracy and see how fragile it is. Let us learn from what is happening there and promise ourselves that the same does not happen in our country. Our votes are very important in choosing the right type of leaders", Abp. Douglas said.

He also stressed on what happens when there is no free press. In Russia, anyone speaking

out on the war or even mentioning the word 'war' may be jailed for up to 15 years. In PNG, we enjoy the privilege of having a free press where we can challenge our leaders when things do not go the way we believe should be. He made a stern call to Papua New Guineans to protect the freedom of the press.

In his presentation, Fr. Giorgio gave a background on the war in Ukraine describing it as 'complex' and stating that the problem is not with the Western influence over Ukraine but with Russia and its political interests.

He stated that the invasion of Ukraine by Russia creates a concern for everybody, and we must find ways to show solidarity to the refugees of the war and pray for peace and the safety and security for everybody.

Whilst looking at refugees from the Ukrainian war, Fr. Giorgio encouraged all PNG citizens not to forget the refugees we have in PNG. He said that although PNG is a big country with a small population, we have a good number of refugees, especially West Papuans, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers.

According to Ms Tito, civilians are increasingly becoming targets as the conflict expands across Ukraine and the humanitarian situation remains dire with little access to basic goods, like food, water and medicine.

She stated that the pledge by CPNG is one of over 5,000 pledges received so far worldwide and has extended an invitation to the public and individuals who would like to contribute to this cause.



Chat Room looking promising

With the gradual decline in Covid over the past few months, Chat Room looks promising in hosting successive sessions undisturbed throughout 2022.

The Chat Room Program for the year kicked off on Wednesday 2nd March 2022, with Grade-11 students of Jubilee Catholic Secondary School (JCSS) who spoke on the topic "Role of Youths against COVID-19."

All 5 students from the Eleventh Grade spoke with confidence and much conviction live on radio at the TribeFM Studio, Boroko. Their talk highlighted a brief history on COVID-19, symptoms of the virus, importance of youth in creating awareness and advocacy in society, a call for government and organisational support, and recommendations for ways parents could support their children and youth in their society.

The dialogue with students from JCSS was proudly sponsored by WaterAid PNG, an affiliate of the International Non-Profit Humanitarian Organisation WaterAid.

On 9th March 2022, the program had five students from Marianville Secondary School speak on the topic 'Pandemic an opportunity for Youth Engagement'. Six students from Caritas Business College had their session on 16th March that focused on the 'Impact of Covid on Student Education'. March 30th saw four students of St Joseph's International Catholic College, take to discussion the 'Role of youth in caring for environment'.

Out of the 39 Chat Room sessions for Year 2022, 1 session has been cancelled so far. The last session will be on Wednesday 23rd November, and will have students from La Salle Technical College discuss the topic 'Young people crucial to PNG's Governance'.

Quite frankly, the students have shown definite courage, authenticity and care in their discussion over matters affecting the country. The students are fully aware of the country's current socio-geopolitical issues (health, sports, law and order, economy, politics) and are willing to speak up and take action when given the opportunity to.

Chat Room has undoubtedly given them the opportunity to become proactive, strong passionate speakers and advocates for the common good in the long run.

Surely Chat Room is setting the precedent for more of such Youth Programs and Platforms to be created for the Voices of the younger generation to be echoed.

For those who wish to be a part of the Chat Room, contact the SOCOM Team today at socom@catholic.org.pg.

LCI opens branch in Port Moresby

- Abigail Seta

Port Moresby: The Liturgical Catechetical Institute (LCI) officially opened and blessed its new branch at the Catholic Bishops Conference Headquarters in Port Moresby on Tuesday, 8th March 2022.

Present to officiate the opening and bless the bookshop was His Eminence Cardinal Sir John Ribat MSC. Cardinal Ribat signified the opening of the bookshop with a reading of the gospel, responsorial psalm, the cutting of the ribbon and the blessing of the shop.

Gathered to witness the ceremony were president of CBCPNGSI and Archbishop of Madang, Anton Bal; Archbishop Douglas Young SVD of Madang; Bishop of Mendi, Donald Lippert



Cardinal Ribat blessing the LCI shop with Bishops, LCI Director and staff

OFM Cap and Bishop Otto Separy of Bereina, Fr Giorgio Licini and staff of CBC.

Fr Tomas Ravaioli IVE, Director of LCI in his opening address acknowledged Fr Giorgio Licini, CBC General Secretary, Jimmy Son, CBC Business Manager and Bp Dariusz Kaluza, Bishop Deputy

of LCI, for their contribution towards the bookshop. "The goal of the bookshop is not to run a business but to give the people from all the provinces the possibility to see what the LCI has to offer in order to improve the catechesis and liturgy in the dioceses," he stated.

Media Education Seminar 1

NEWS IN BRIEF

'LISTEN! Do Everything with LOVE,' was the empowering theme for the first Media Education Seminar (MES1) with students from ten catholic agency schools in Port Moresby.

Facilitated by the Social Communications Commission, the seminar was held on Saturday 2nd April, at the Catholic Bishops Conference Centre and focused on: Media and Communication; Photos to Inspire; Logos with a Message. The seminar had the engagement of 55 fortunate and talented students hand-picked by the 16-Animators.

Priests on retreat in Lae

The Priests of the Diocese of Lae had their annual retreat from 14th-19th March 2022.

Fr. Roger Purcell MSC who facilitated the retreat encouraged them to work together and to build up unity in the Diocese. He furthermore urged them to embrace diversity and to know each other more beyond their pastoral concerns. The retreat which started on Monday with particular focus on the Spirituality of Communion ended with a Mass in honour of the Solemnity of St. Joseph at the St. Joseph's Pastoral Centre.

Ordination of two priests in Alotau

Alotau: The Diocese of Alotau welcomed two newly ordained priests, Fr. Japhet Kemali and Fr. Thaddeus B'Gaiva, in a joyous celebration on 13th March, at the Sacred Heart Cathedral.

In his homily, Bishop Rolando, urged the two priests to serve with love and dedication. He asked the people to pray for more priests for the Diocese of Alotau.

At the end of the Eucharistic Celebration, Fr. Japhet and Fr. Thaddeus acknowledged everyone who attended and those who worked hard to make the ordination a success.



Hearing everybody's voice

Fr. Giorgio Licini, PIME, CBC General Secretary

As the grip of COVID-19 appears to relent, two important events are in schedule for us this month of April. The first is the General Assembly of the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

Five delegates from each of the twenty-two dioceses will converge in Mingende, Simbu province on 21-26 April for a four-day reflection and prayer on "Salt and Light: The Church in Society". This is expected to usher in a five-year new Conference Pastoral Plan aimed at stimulating the individuals and the communities as positive agents of change among the people. Not only the need for free and honest elections is now incumbent, but corruption, domestic violence, sorcery practices, tribal fights remain a huge challenge to a genuine Christian way of life.

The General Assembly in Mingende will be immediately followed by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Besides the

usual task of discussing the ongoing work of the Pastoral Commissions and addressing other issues in agenda, the bishops will evaluate and finalize the recommendations of the General Assembly in view of the five-year Pastoral Plan. It is expected that the strategies involved will directly touch on the current crosscutting social issues. These need to be addressed not only by means of our limited human resources, but by the power of the Holy Spirit which manifests itself in prayer and in a life of integrity and service.

The AGM will take place in Mt. Hagen where the bishops will be offered occasions of interaction with the local people and the Catholic parishes. We are moving towards a model of Church which values listening and learning from the grassroots. The voice of everybody must be heard now. The challenge comes directly from Pope Francis with his proposal of a Synodal process 2020-23. The guiding words are, *For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission*. The Synods used to be the work of bishop representatives periodically meeting in Rome

on a particular pastoral concern. Pope Francis has decided to be true to the meaning of the word ("journeying together" in its original Greek). Now the whole Church participates in the Synod and determines its outcome.

The current Synod, therefore, will culminate in Rome in October 2023, but it will avail of the consultation and sharing that is currently taking place in all small communities, parishes and dioceses including Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Group discussions are encouraged on three areas: personal positive experiences in the parish and in the diocese; level of participation in governance and decision making in the parish and in the diocese especially by women and laity in general; suggestions to the Pope on good decisions for the Church.

Please, contact your parish leaders and be part of this common effort. Give your contribution for the Church to improve and be salt and light of the world. It's everybody's task!

- Jessica Oata

139 DBTI graduates advance with diplomas and degrees



Port Moresby: Don Bosco Technological Institute saw 139 proud graduates advancing with diplomas and bachelors in various trades during the 20th graduation rites.

The graduation ceremony which was supposed to be held last year was deferred to this year due to COVID-19 and was held on Thursday 31st March 2022 at the DBTI gymnasium.

With the theme: 'Building a better tomorrow through competence character', the graduates were urged to change society and build a better future through competence and character, being good Christians and honest citizens. In his keynote address, President of Don Bosco Technological Institute, Fr. Alexander Garces sdb reminded the students to always remember true Bosconian identity.

Prior to the celebration, a graduation mass was held on Wednesday, 30th March. Bishop of the Diocese of Kerema, Bp. Pedro Baquero sdb was the main celebrant. He encouraged them to seek the Kingdom of God that was personified in Jesus. He asked them to be open and sensitive to finding God's Kingdom wherever they would go after studies.

Catholic Church in Highlands gather for regional conference

Kundiawa: The Catholic Church in the Highlands Region met in the Diocese of Kundiawa in Simbu Province for the regional bishops and secretariat conference that was held from 21st to 23rd March 2022.

It was held at the Mingende Pastoral Centre and had the presence of bishops and secretaries from the five dioceses of the Highlands Region, which is made up of the Archdiocese of Mt Hagen, Dioceses of Kundiawa, Goroka, Mendi and Wabag.

The bishops and secretaries met to discuss the work and responsibilities of each commission at the regional levels.

Representatives from each diocese were grouped into each commission area such as Caritas, Marriage and Family Life office, Laity, Health, Education, Vocation, Callan Service, Youth, Woman and Pastoral Coordinators. They shared their achievements and plans for the betterment of the church in the region.



The lived experiences shared by each group brought a clear picture of the pilgrimage of the church in the highlands region.

The participants learned a lot from the gathering of bishops and secretariats as the discussions were very meaningful to grasp the clear picture of the church of the highlands region. The realization of the strengths and weaknesses of each commission area gives us more energy to work more with understanding.

- Fr Robinson Parappilly

Serve the Lord with gladness



Tetere: Twenty-five Altar Servers made up of young boys and girls of the Christ the King parish had a one-day orientation on Wednesday, 23rd March with the theme "Serve the Lord with Gladness."

The orientation was given by the Parish Priest, Fr. Robinson Parappilly and had the altar servers willingly offering themselves to be closer to the Altar of the Lord in assisting the priests in the Holy Mass and Liturgical celebrations.

The Altar servers learned more about the Liturgical Calendar, understand the proper use of Liturgical colours and vestments.

They also were given an in-depth understanding of different Feasts, Solemnities, Memorial, Optional Memorial, Different Liturgical seasons, proper use and names of different Liturgical articles and appropriate gestures while serving the Altar.

Fr. Robinson told them that they are privileged to serve the Lord and that they have to be always in the state of grace to receive Holy Communion and serve the Lord and foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life. They have to spread Christian joy in their families and communities like Saint Dominic Savio.

Each Saturday is now a day for all Altar servers to come together to clean the Church and play together in the Salesian Oratory.



3RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CATHOLIC CHURCH IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA & SOLOMON ISLANDS

21st to 26th April 2022
Mingende, Simbu Province

PROGRAM

Thursday, 21 April:
3pm: Welcome program (All are welcome)

22-25 April:
Sessions for Participants

Monday, 25 April:
4pm: Closing Mass (All are welcome)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
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LIVE ON ZOOM

Cardinal, Bishops, Priests, Religious, Lay Leaders (5 participants selected from each diocese of PNGSI) will come together to:

- Celebrate the Catholic Faith
- Propose a 5 year Conference Pastoral Plan
- Share the experiences of journeying together (Synodality)



"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me will live, even though he dies. – Jn 11:25

May God shower you with blessings, love and peace this Easter.

Happy Easter!

3rd General Assembly of the Catholic Church of PNGSI

Dear Friends,

After almost two years of postponement due to the pandemic, the 3rd General Assembly of the Catholic Church will be held in Mingende, Diocese of Kundiawa, Simbu Province from 21 to 26 April 2022.

The first General Assembly was held in Rabaul in 2004 and the second General Assembly was held in Madang in 2013. The third one will be held in Mingende where the first Divine Word Missionaries landed in the Highlands in 1933.

It is good that we refresh our memories about how the first missionaries landed in the Highlands. Bishop Franz Wolf was appointed in 1922 as the Vicar Apostolic (Bishop) of the Prefecture Apostolic of Central New Guinea with its headquarters in Alexishafen. In June of 1932 Bishop Franz Wolf SVD returned from Leave in Europe with a message from Pope Pius XI, "Do not missionize New Guinea intensively, but extensively, Spread out!"

Fr. Alfons Schaefer and Br. Anton Bass obeyed immediately. They walked for two days past the

Ramu to Wakirai where they met the first Highlanders and then on to Guyebi. Fr. Schaefer set up stations from Mt. Otto and Mt. Wilhelm. One of them was Bundi which he made his main station.

A Simbu Chief named Kawagl had married at Bundi and often visited there. He spoke Simbu and Bundi languages. He invited the missionaries to visit Simbu with him, telling them that the Leahy brothers had already been there six months previously.

In early November 1933 Fr. Alphonse Schaefer, Fr. Antonius Cranssen and Br. Anton Bass and a group of carriers left Bundi following Kawagl into Simbu. They set up the headquarters in Mingende and the first flight landed in 1935.

It is right and fitting that the 3rd Assembly is held in Mingende. Bishop Paul Sundu and the organizing Committee are working very hard to make the General Assembly a great experience for all.

The three-fold purpose of the General Assembly are: 1. To celebrate the Catholic Faith, 2. To propose a Five year Conference Pastoral Plan and 3. To

share the experiences of journeying together (Synodality).

Five participants from each diocese will come from the 19 dioceses of PNG and 3 dioceses of SI. They will be Cardinal, Arch/Bishops, Priests, Religious and Lay Leaders.

The program will be:

Thursday, 21 April

3 pm: Welcome program for the Participants and speeches in front of the Church, Mingende – (All are welcome)

22-25 April -Sessions for Participants

Monday, 25 April

4 pm: Final Mass- in Mingende (All are welcome)

I request the Catholics in PNG and SI to pray for the General Assembly so that the Holy Spirit may guide the celebrations, discussions and the outcome. May God be praised!

**- Fr. Victor Roche SVD
Coordinator**

- Fr. Tomás Ravaoli IVE



Homecoming

**Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb,
Secretary for Social Communication**

The Season of Lent gives us several opportunities to examine our lives and be converted. It invites us to reflect on our greed for wealth, power, and pleasure (Lk 4:1-13). It has summoned us to dive deeply into the inner recesses of our hearts and our lives and look closely at our attitudes that have caused pain, anguish, and heartache to ourselves and those we love. It has called us to acknowledge our sins, seek forgiveness, make our peace with God, our sisters and brothers and live in peace.

The story of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32) gives us insights into the merciful heart of God who awaits our return. He is always ready with open arms and welcomes us with tenderness when we return to him.

- 1. A parable of miscalculations:** Kenneth Bailey writes: "In the Middle Eastern culture, to ask for the inheritance while the father is still alive is to wish him dead". It is a social disgrace and an economic blow. A social disgrace because care for our parents, honour your father and mother (Commandment 4) is broken. Secondly, an economic blow as the inheritance is squandered on a life of debauchery and loose living. It is wonderful that children in Papua New Guinea care for their parents and those who are sick and suffering (CCC 2208) rather than putting them in old age homes where they receive health care but miss the contact of children and loved ones.
- 2. Unconditional Love:** Human love is finite, fragile and conditional. In the Bible, 'four unique forms of love' are expressed through the four Greek words *eros* (romantic love), *storge* (family love), *philia* (love of friends), and *agape* (sacrificial/divine love). God is lavish in his love for us. Jesus has given us a unique standard of Divine Love! His arms are open wide ready to welcome us back. We have only to take that step to return to Him. We need to manifest 'love' in our homes and families and ensure that our love is respectful, empowering, sacrificial, and unconditional?
- 3. The Pride of Rebellion:** The younger son realized his sinfulness, acknowledged his sins, and accepted the call to repent. The elder son was filled with rage and pride. He recalled what his father did not do for him and felt that his father cheated him. Often in our lives we feel cheated, and we wish to take revenge. Revenge takes the form of violence, abuse, and destruction to lives and property. Is there that spark of revenge in us? We are now invited to reach out in love and forgiveness.

Pope Francis reminds us that the Father loves us beyond measure. He waits for our conversion and is ready with open arms to welcome us back. Jesus our true elder brother makes the ultimate sacrifice on the cross so that we can be reconciled with the Father. No sin is too big or too small for you to reclaim your rightful place in the Father's house and table.

The sacraments of Confession and Holy Eucharist renew in us God's grace. Lent is about returning to the Father. May this season of Lent draw us closer to the Father and bring about a beautiful homecoming!!! Happy Easter.

May the Light of the Risen Lord shine through you! Happy Easter.



Second Marian Dogma: The Perpetual Virginity in the Bible

The second Dogma is that Mary was a pure virgin before, during and after the birth of Christ. But does the Bible say something about this? The allotted space for this article won't be enough, so I apologize in advance for the superficiality with which this topic will be treated.

This dogma has three parts:

1) Mary was a pure virgin before the birth of Christ. The Bible is clear when it affirms the virginity of Mary before the birth of Christ. The Gospel of Luke says, "...the Angel Gabriel was sent from God... to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary." (1:26-27) The Gospel of Matthew reads, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: 'Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel,' which being interpreted is, God with us." (1:22-23)

2) Mary was a pure virgin during the birth of Christ (child-birth). The Gospel narrative of the birth of our Divine Saviour contains nothing either to prove or to disprove His virgin birth. However, the dogma has sufficient Scriptural warrant in the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. He says that "a virgin will

bear a son," and according to the teaching of the Fathers, it means that she would remain a virgin though bearing a son. A passage of Ezekiel is also used in the liturgy as referring typically to the virgin birth, "And the Lord said to me: This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it: because the Lord God of Israel hath entered in by it." (44:2).

3) Mary was a pure virgin after the birth of Christ. It was Mary's resolution to remain a virgin which inspired her timid query, "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" (Lk 1:40) Only after the Angel had assured her that her chastity would remain intact did she consent to become the mother of Jesus, "Be it done to me according to thy word." (Lk 1:38) What about the "brothers and sisters" of Jesus that appear in the Gospels? It is to be noted that these "brethren" are nowhere referred to as sons of Mary. Some authors suggested that they could be sons and daughters of St Joseph from a previous marriage. But this opinion has been generally rejected since the time of St Jerome (340-420).

A simpler explanation, now generally accepted, is that the term "brother" is used in both Testaments as a synonym for "kinsman" (nephew, cousin, etc.). Then the so-called "brethren of Jesus" were probably near relatives of His Blessed Mother.

RR formative workshop

Yule Island, Central Province: The Right Relationship Ministry (RRM) of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, organized a one-week Formative workshop at the Novitiate of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Yule Islands, from 21st-25th March 2022.

The one-week program was facilitated by Sr Ancy John Chirayath SCSA, Right Relationships in Ministry Directress of the CBC PNGSI. The participants were three OLSH sisters who are preparing for their Final Profession and four of their Novices. The objective of the workshop was to enhance and equip the young religious with the appropriate skills and knowledge in relationship issues as they journey in their Religious Formation in responding to their vocation. With the focus on 'Building Healthy and Mature Relationships in our Communities and in Ministries', the workshop dwelt on the main topics Boundaries, Right



Relationships, Human Sexuality, Values and Rights.

Sr. Ancy explained that the foundation of Human Happiness - a Happy Life, is good Relationships and the Boundaries are very essential in building healthy and good relationships in the families, communities and pastoral ministries.

According to Sr Alvina Salam OLSH, she said, "I will take the initiative to mend my broken relationships within the biological and religious family members."

The Catholic Reporter Team

You are invited to send in your articles, photograph and reflections on events and happenings in your parish, community, institution and diocese. Please send in your material to: socom@catholic.org.pg on or before **20th of the month, 2022.**

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