

# 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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- Courtesy Vatican News

## Pope on Palm Sunday: Let us ask for the grace to be amazed

humiliation, the Pope observed; he triumphs "by accepting suffering and death, things that we, in our quest for admiration and success, would rather avoid." And Jesus did this for us, going to the depths of human experience, existence, and weakness "to draw near to us and not abandon us in our suffering and our death", the Pope said, "to redeem us, to save us".

the Pope underscored, and realize that we are loved by Jesus upon whom we gaze on the cross. The grace of amazement helps us also realize that in welcoming the dismissed and discarded who surround us – those ill-treated in life – "we are loving Jesus", the Pope said, "for that is where he is: in the least of our brothers and sisters, in the rejected and discarded."

In this way the Lord "redeemed and transformed" our deepest struggles and conflicts, he noted; "God triumphs, but the palm of victory passes through the wood of the cross."

**Ask for the grace to be amazed:** A faith that no longer experiences a sense of amazement can grow dull, the Pope noted, whereas we should remember to be "astonished and amazed" by the love of Jesus which always brings forgiveness and the possibility of new beginnings.

The Pope invited everyone to "lift our eyes to the cross, in order to receive the grace of amazement", to be moved by God's boundless love and let go of our regrets or disappointments that might be trapping us from experiencing it.

**"Lord, how much you love me!":** "Let us be amazed by Jesus so that we can start living again"

**Truly this man was the Son of God!:** The exclamation of the Roman Centurion who upon seeing that Jesus died said: "Truly this man was the Son of God!" is a powerful testimony of his amazement in witnessing the gratuitous and unprecedented love of Jesus, the Pope said. The Gospels mention many others who admired Jesus for his miracles and works, but Christ silenced them, the Pope noted, because they risked embracing only the idea of a God to be adored and feared for his power and might. That understanding must evolve since at the foot of the cross, "God has revealed himself and reigns only with the disarmed and disarming power of love", which is why today, the Pope concluded, "let us be filled with that amazement as we gaze upon the crucified Lord. May we too say: "You are truly the Son of God. You are my God".



**From admiration to amazement:** We hear of the crowds shouting "Hosanna" and a few days later crying out "Crucify him". The Pope said this contrast reflected a reality where people *admired* Jesus, but did not let themselves be *amazed* by him. He said both terms are fundamentally different: *admiration* "can be wordly" since it follows its own likes and expectations, whereas, *amazement* remains open to the wonder of others and the newness they bring, allowing our attitudes and lives to change as a result. We have to go beyond admiring Jesus, the Pope said, and "follow in his footsteps, to let ourselves be challenged by him; to pass from admiration to amazement."

**Glory through humiliation:** The Lord and his Passover amazes us, as he achieves glory through

## One nation, one people of God

- Rosemary Yambune and Abigail Seta

**Port Moresby:** A Requiem Mass was held at the Sir Hubert Murray Stadium to honour and celebrate the life of the Late Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare on Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> March. It had the theme: 'One nation, one people of God.'

The stadium was packed to capacity with several thousands of Papua New Guineans, each braved the scorching sun for long hours to bid farewell to the founding father of the nation.

Celebrating the Mass was Cardinal Sir John Ribat MSC, Archbishop of Port Moresby together with 11 Bishops as concelebrants. Masters of Ceremonies were Dadi Toka Jnr Chairman of the Motu Koita Assembly and Deputy Governor for National Capital District with Mr Samson Kaipu as the Funeral Mass Commentator.

At the start of the mass, the grand chief's casket was escorted into the stadium by the PNG Defence Force as they solemnly played requiem tunes on their bagpipes. The entrance procession consisted of the pall bearers who carried the casket behind the Cardinal and the bishops into the stadium to commence the Eucharistic celebration. Cardinal Ribat then laid the bible on the casket that was already draped in the black, red and gold flag of Papua New Guinea. In his homily, Cardinal Ribat highlighted the readings of the day. "The readings perfectly illustrate for us who Sir Michael Thomas Somare was and also provide a splendid summary of the life of our founding Prime Minister, the husband, loving father and a friend to many", he said.

The Cardinal spoke of the joy and enthusiasm with which he lived out his faith. "He was not only involved in the political space, but also lived out his faith in his daily life", he said. Connecting the gospel (Jn 17:4-8,

18-21) to the life of the late Grand Chief, the Cardinal said that he had found Sir Michael as a man of integrity and faith.

"He was the salt and light for this nation and other nations, he never concealed his faith in Jesus Christ and his death helps us to promote public discourse". The Cardinal stressed on the aspect of the unity of all people and that the life of Sir Michael should help us all to overcome divisions. "We lower our flags, we pray, we bow our heads in search of a thing, anything that might unite us", he said.

The offertory procession was led by the New Guinea Islands dancers. Symbolic gifts from the different provinces of Papua New Guinea and the Council of Churches were then presented to the Cardinal. Following the solemn consecration Eucharistic ministers fanned out for the distributed the Holy Eucharist to Catholics across the stands.

The eulogy of the late Grand Chief was then read by his daughter, Dulciana Somare-Brash. She beautifully highlighted the highs and lows of her father's life, stressing: Fidelity to Country, Fidelity to community and Fidelity to family and marriage.

Following the eulogy, the rite of final commendation commenced. As a sign of farewell, the Cardinal sprinkled the coffin with Holy Water and incense. After the mass ended, wreaths were laid and the program continued with speeches of gratitude and reflections from Sir Dadi Toka, Sir Arnold Amet, Sir John Momis, Hon. Powes Parkop, Governor of NCD; Hon. James Marape, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea and many others.

The Late Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare was laid to rest at Kreer Heights in his home province of East Sepik on 16<sup>th</sup> March.



Picture 1: Cardinal, Bishops and Priests at the entrance procession to begin the requiem mass

Picture 2: PNG Defence Force pall bearers carrying the casket to the stage

Picture 3: Lady Veronica being comforted by daughter, Dulciana Somare-Brash

Photographs by CBC SOCOM

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# Easter message by Cardinal John Ribat

The Good News of Jesus Christ rising from the dead on Easter Sunday is a sure hope for us, who were baptized and now can proclaim with Joy, CHRIST HAS DIED, CHRIST IS RISEN and CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN. This is the mystery of our faith, our coming to life in Christ and union with him in Baptism binds us to the death and resurrection of Christ. The death of Christ does not end in the tomb, rather he went down to the realm of death, in order to bring out of our weak and sinful nature and transform us into his New Life.

This New Life transforms and gives joy to those who encountered the Risen Lord on the Sunday morning. Mary Magdalene and other women were filled with joy when the Risen Christ spoke to them and told them to go and bring the NEWS to his brothers, to his disciples.

*"Go to my brothers and tell them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." May Magdalene went, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord and these are the things that he said to me". (John 1:17-18)*

The News that Mary Magdalene announced to the disciples is not ordinary news. It is a Great News! It is the Good News that brings hope and peace! Christ greeted his apostles with peace as he appeared to them in the upper room after rising from the dead.

*Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you, as the Father send me, so I send you." (John 20:19-21)*

Easter is a time of Peace and joy! The Good News of Christ who loved us and gave up his life for us must be our conviction and must motivate us to bring Peace and Joy of the Risen Christ to our brothers and sisters.

Today, we continue to face the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are deprived of doing business and the economy of the super power recedes. We are away from important personal, family and church gatherings. Many of our brothers and sisters are affected and the world suffers yet we are united with Christ who shared our humanity, our suffering but overcame all these should be the

Source of our strength. The Lord never abandoned those who trust him in times of severe suffering, doubt and uncertainty. The Lord is the giver of life and has promised us to be with us always until the end of time. When we are down and when the storms of life bewail us, trust in our Lord Jesus Christ!

This pandemic should make us aware that we are responsible for the welfare and common good of all including creation and the environment we live in. We have to work for a common goal, lasting happiness and peace that Christ promised to give to a world shattered by fear, greed, arrogant, pride and many others divide the world. Be bearers of the hope and of the Risen Christ!

I wish you all my Easter blessings.



## Holy Week



### Rising to New Life

Fr. Ambrose Pereira sdb  
Secretary for Social Communication

The fascinating story of a butterfly never ceases to inspire us. A caterpillar stops its incessant crawling and chewing and then attaches itself firmly to a stick. It warps itself in a shiny, leather-like case, scientifically called a 'pupa'. 'For weeks they seemed dead, unmoving in their grey wrappings', states Ralph Wilson in his story, a broken Chrysalis. Within its protective casing, the caterpillar radically transforms itself.

A remarkable transformation or metamorphosis happens. 'Suddenly it begins to twist and turn violently, and suddenly splits open. A beautiful butterfly emerges. It stands for hours gently moving its wings, pumping fluids into them to extend them fully. Then the butterfly gracefully flies into the summer breeze, leaving nothing behind but a broken chrysalis to indicate its former bondage'.

This beautiful story gives us a clear insight into the empty tomb and the grave clothes of the Risen Christ. It is a story of rising to a new, very different and transformed life.

Christ was dead and he rose to the New Life of radiance and glory! Easter is the highlight of our faith! It is the culmination of the Gospel story. It is Salvation, Redemption, Resurrection, Eternal Life. If Christ had not risen from the grave, then our faith has no meaning. (1Cor 15:14). The disciples were sad, confused and dejected when they came in the early hours of the morning to the tomb and were unable to find the body. Unable to grapple with the situation and filled with fear they locked themselves indoors.

Coronavirus, that invisible enemy has brought with it sickness, isolation, fear and above all death. Over the past year, we have had loved ones, family, acquaintances and friends affected by this virus. Most have recovered but some have succumbed. For those who have lost loved ones, the pain has been unbearable, aggravated by the many restrictions of not having to be there by their side. While we search for answers wondering what the future has in store for us, we are confused and afraid. At this point, we can only turn to the God of our faith. He is the one to steady our nerves and grant strength to our weak limbs.

The Easter Triduum is the high point of our Liturgical Year. Sadly, amidst our COVID-19 restrictions, the majority of our people are restricted to closed doors and are following the liturgical services on television, radio or as they are being live-streamed. This Easter the Risen Christ comes radiant with His message of 'Peace'. Amidst all the confusion may each of us and our families find time to get down on our knees, thank God for faith, his presence in our lives, and grant us the serenity to trust Him for He is the source of New Life. He will grant us Peace. It will be a time of unity, togetherness, respect and understanding. Together we will emerge victorious.

The caterpillar went through a transformation. Each of us needs to go through a transformation. Perhaps we need to spend time at home with family and loved ones, give up our addiction to smoking or alcohol, being faithful to your spouse, ... the list goes on. Transform yourself and let the Risen Lord radiate through you.

Happy Easter to you and your loving families!

### History of Evangelisation in PNG - Part 3

Fr. Victor Roche SVD, Secretary for New Evangelization

The Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) are celebrating the 125 years of their presence in Papua New Guinea (1896-2021). So we shall see their history in brief.

In 1884 the German Flag was raised on the coasts of New Guinea and the Island's northeast quarter became Kaiser Wilhelmsland. This area and the Bismarck Archipelago formed the German Protectorate of German New Guinea. On 29 May 1895 Cardinal Ledochowski of Propoganda Fide Congregation wrote to Fr. Arnold Janssen SVD if he would take over the "Prefecture Apostolic of Wilhelmsland" in New Guinea. Fr. Arnold Janssen is from Germany and he founded the Society of the Divine Word (*Societas Verbi Divini-SVD*) in 1875 in Steyl, Holland. He wrote to the Cardinal that he would comply with the request as he sees 'God's will' in that request. He was putting together a team of SVDs to be sent to New Guinea. Fr. Eberhard Limbrock SVD was appointed as the leader with 13 years of experience in China. He was joined by two priests and three brothers in Singapore. The six of them arrived in Friedrich Wilhelmshafen, now called Madang on 13 August 1896. As there were Lutheran Missionaries already from 1887, the SVDs moved to Tumleo Island near Aitape to establish their first foundation. There were around 300 people in Tumleo. The people had very friendly trade relations with villages and tribes along the coast. Tumleo trade

contacts became Catholic mission contacts and soon children from these various linguistic and tribal areas were attending the central school at Tumleo. Mission work had started in the full swing.

The first four Holy Spirit Missionary sisters arrived on 26 March 1899 in Tumleo. The mission work expanded to Aitape, Wewak, Sepik River, Bogia and Madang. So the Headquarters of the SVDs were shifted to Alexishafen.

World War I broke out on 28 July 1914 and it affected the mission work. The Allies and Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919 terminating the state of war. The former German New Guinea Protectorate was then handed over to Australia by the league of Nations as a Mandated Territory on 17 December 1920. Australian Civil Administration of New Guinea began.

Bishop Francis Wolf SVD was appointed as the Bishop of Vicariate Apostolic of East New Guinea with the headquarters at Alexishafen, Madang and Fr. Joseph Loerks as the Prefect Apostolic of the Prefecture Apostolic of Central New Guinea in Wewak.

By 1930 the statistics of the two territories were: 18,600 Catholics, 4,809 Catechumens, 29 priests, 29 brothers and 53 sisters.



- Fr. Tomás Ravaioli IVE



### The Creed: Suffered, was crucified, died and was buried

We find that many arose from the dead, such as Lazarus (Jn 11:1-44), the son of the widow (Lk 7:11-16), and the daughter of the Ruler of the synagogue (Mk 5:35-43).

But the resurrection of Christ differed from the resurrection of these and is unique. Why? Mainly for four reasons:

- 1) Christ's resurrection differed from that of all others in its cause. Those others who arose did so not of their own power, but by the power of Christ. Christ, on the contrary, arose by his own power, because he was not only man but also God. He said: *"I lay down My life, that I may take it again.... And I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it up again."* (Jn 10:18) By that same power whereby he gave up his soul, he received it again.
- 2) Christ's resurrection was different as regards the life to which he arose. Christ arose again to a glorious and

incorruptible life, and dies no more. The others, instead, were raised to that life which they had before, as seen of Lazarus and the others, and died again.

- 3) Christ's resurrection was different also in effect and efficacy. Christ's resurrection is the cause of our own resurrection. In virtue of his resurrection all shall rise again: *"Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of those who sleep."* (1 Cor 15:20)
- 4) Christ's resurrection was different in point of time. Christ arose on the third day; but the resurrection of the others is put off until the end of the world, when Christ will come again.

St Thomas Aquinas says: "Let us endeavor to arise spiritually, from the death of the soul which we incur by our sins, to that life of justice which is had through penance: *'Rise, you who sleep, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall enlighten you.'* (Eph 5:14) Let us not delay to rise until our death, but do it at once: *'Delay not to be converted to the Lord; and defer it not from day to day'* (Sir 5:8)."

### WORLD COMMUNICATION DAY

**"Come and see" (Jn 1,46)**  
Communicating, encountering people as and where they are.

"In the call of the first disciples, with Jesus who went to encounter them and to invite them to follow Him, we also see the invitation to use all media, in all their forms, to reach people as they are and where they live."

WCD | May 2021

### WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

**ASCENSION – PENTECOST**  
16 – 23 MAY 2021

*"Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit"*  
(cf. John 15:5-16)

Commission for Ecumenical and Inter-Faith Dialogue  
Email: ecumenismpngsi@catholic.org.pg  
Website: <https://www.pngsicbc.com/ecumemism-inter-faith-dialogue>



## The family, an intense complex journey

Fr. Giorgio Licini, PIME, CBC General Secretary

The family is again at the centre of our prayer and reflection after Pope Francis launched a new Year of the Family which began on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and will conclude on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022. This is to mark five years

since the publication of his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* on the beauty and joy of love in the family.

Unfortunately, this "beauty and joy" escapes many conjugal relationships and homes in our communities. Negative circumstances frequently threaten the family, such as poverty, lack of employment, alcohol dependence by parents, immaturity and poor preparation for a stable union. In other instances, commitment to one spouse alone is not there. But a healthy family life can only develop if focused on one home alone.

It takes a significant exercise to make a family functional. First, the lovely young couple need to prepare well: know and understand each other not just in a superficial manner; have a meaningful plan for life in terms of shared values, primary goals, education of children, personal skills and resources;

ensure that a network of friends and relatives is around to help in case of emergency and unforeseen negative developments.

Second, no significant human enterprise, such as the family, really thrives without a powerful community support. The conjugal and parental love need inspiration, sympathy, and support from those around. A family needs to feel that they are welcome and loved; and never left to completely fend for themselves.

The success of family life, therefore, heavily relies on personal responsibility, commitment, hard work, self-sacrifice, community support. Still, that would not suffice without feeling the presence and the lovely guidance of God. The Catholic Church holds the marriage among the seven Sacraments. It means that the conjugal love of husband and wife is the same love of God. It is a bond that is for life. It is exclusive, between one man and one woman only.

At the same time, the Church and people in the Church must always be fully aware of the difficult circumstances and the human weaknesses that frequently affect the family. In many instances what conveyed in the official teachings is an end of the road outcome rather than the ideal starting point of

a new family. What becomes increasingly relevant, therefore, is not a debate around the principles, but the accompaniment any person and family needs and deserves.

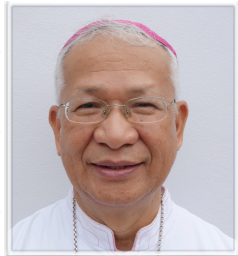
The accompaniment begins with an attitude of sympathy and sincere concern towards whatever situation and relationship a person may be in. People tend to claim rights rather than acknowledge duties.

A distinction is to be made between what the State may need to assure to any citizen, regardless of their different ethical approaches, and what individuals and groups, such as faith-based groups or Churches, also have a right to respectfully propose to the public debate and to those who freely and actively wish to be their members.

After the initial approach of friendship and respect, accompaniment will take the form of a deeper sharing on meaning, values, ethics, and God's revelation of truth, on one side, and mercy on the other side.

A genuine Christian family is in any case the result of an intense and complex journey; not just a few rules and practices only formally being complied with.

- Fr Harry Gahare



## With a Father's heart

Bp Rolando Santos  
Deputy Bishop of Family Life Apostolate

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of December of 2020, Pope Francis issued the apostolic letter *Patris Corde, With a Father's Heart*. He speaks of St. Joseph as being truly a father. During the

*Amoris Laetitia* Year of the Family, it is good that we reflect on how St. Joseph lived his vocation as a father. In the document *Patris Corde*, Pope Francis describes several characteristics of St. Joseph as father.

### 1. A beloved father.

All fathers should equally treasure and love their own vocation in the way they love, care, educate and protect their children. If fathers have a close intimacy with Jesus and Mary, they will receive sufficient grace to become a reflection of the face of the Heavenly Father within their own families.

### 2. A tender and loving father.

Joseph reflected in his daily relationship with Jesus and Mary the face of our Heavenly Father who is rich in kindness and mercy. Pope Francis says that tenderness is the best way to touch the frailty within us. Only tender love as well as encountering God's mercy, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation will save us.

### 3. An obedient father.

Joseph fulfilled his role as husband of Mary and guardian of the Redeemer by his ready and total obedience to the will of the Father. It is not easy to be a father in our present times. The world, the flesh and the devil confuse us and tempt us in many different ways. Fathers need to pray, listen to God and honour the silence of Joseph. Fathers need to rediscover the value of silence. The silence of fathers is what will help them bring peace and healing to their homes and their own hearts.

### 4. An accepting father.

Fathers have to endure many trials in the family, especially in dealing with their own children. In his recent encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis spoke about the importance of dialogue, listening and forgiveness. In dialogue we learn how to listen and to understand one another. We discern what God is saying to us, and we learn how to give each other the free gift of loving forgiveness. St. Joseph was a creatively courageous father, a working father and a father in the shadows.

In *Patris Corde* Pope Francis speaks of three other virtues of St. Joseph: a creatively courageous father, a working father and a father in the shadows. During this Year of St. Joseph and the Year of the Family, I encourage you to read and reflect on the whole apostolic letter as I commend you to the special protection and prayers of St. Joseph. May he obtain for us and all fathers the grace to bear in our own lives the tender, loving and merciful face of our Father in Heaven.



**Goroka:** St. Therese Primary School, Tafeto, in the District of Daulo in Eastern Highlands Province paid their tribute to the late grand chief by erecting a monumental cornerstone on Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> March.

## CCHS celebrates International Woman's Day

**Lae and Goroka:** Catholic Church Health Services staff around the country joined in the celebration of International Woman's Day by wearing purple ribbons to work on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> March.

CCHS Lae celebrated women's achievements in healthcare, regardless of race, tribe, culture or positions.

Each of the CCHS Lae employee received a purple ribbon and all the female staff received an IWD gift card to commemorate the day.

Although they celebrate IWD every year, this year was special as all their male colleagues showed their support by wearing the purple ribbon and posing for pictures with placards of challenges.

Integration Officer for CCHS Lae, Samantha Tirang said woman in health are exposed to many risks everyday of their lives, yet their achievements go unnoticed.

"Being a healthcare worker, you achieve something everyday when you diagnose a patient, prescribe medicine and save a life which is the greatest achievement.



**Wabag:** Ten male participants who were part of a three-year disciple course graduated with a certificate at the Par Pastoral Center in the Diocese of Wabag. The event held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March, had men of different ages come from

## Tribute to Late Grand Chief

The staff and students had prepared a good liturgy preceding the unveiling of the monument at the school ground.

A little Sepik community comprising mainly of the teaching staff and their families took charge of the monument. The surrounding communities also showed their mourning by bringing garden food to the Sepik community at the school.

This will be commemorated every 26<sup>th</sup> of February in honour of Grand Chief Somare. Staff, students and community members went to lay their wreaths and poems and speeches were given by community representatives in honour of the Great Grand Chief.

- Jelilah Kum



While in Goroka, staff at St Joseph VCT celebrated the day with a light refreshment to acknowledge the tireless woman who care for People living with HIV and carry out awareness in the communities over the years.

CCHS joined in the global #ChooseToChallenge campaign to call out inequality, support woman's rights, celebrate woman's achievements and collectively assist women who access services and to be in a position of power to make informed decisions about their health.

- Dony Daniel Lakan

## Ten disciples graduate in Wabag

the three parishes of Pogera Mugulap, Kasap and Landor.

"Do your best and give best to the people when you go out to preach the Good News," was the message of Bp Arnold Orowae, Bishop of Wabag to the ten disciples during the graduation mass.

Fr. Elias Aiyako SVD emphasised on the bishop's homily and encouraged them to be the best among the sheep.

The liturgy was led by the Mungulep Parish Youths who came all the way from Pogera. The joy filled youths made the day colourful with dedication songs and processions. The day ended with light refreshments.

## Launching of the Year of the Family

Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, on the beauty and joy of love in the family. The guest speaker and Deputy Bishop of the National Catholic Family Life Apostolate, Bp Rolando Santos presented a synthesis of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* highlighting Love in Marriage and in the Family.

Present at the Seminar was Bishop Francis Meli, Bishop of Vanimo who mentioned the need for Spiritual communions through the Communion of Desire. He encouraged young couples to go to church and actively participate and practice their catholic faith through prayer, singing so as to enable them to be part of a bigger community. Also present were nine newly appointed diocesan Family Life coordinators who are were part of a two-week basic training program on topical issues that involve catholic family life.

The launching of the Year of the Family was broadcasted live to the listeners by Radio Maria and was also live-streamed on Facebook. Joining in to witness the launching from other dioceses via zoom were Bishop Donald Lippert, Bishop Dariusz Kaluza, Archbishop Rochus Tatamai and several others.

The program ended with words of appreciation by CBC's Business Manager, Jimmy Son followed by a closing prayer by SOCOM Secretary, Fr. Ambrose Pereira.

Picture above: Bp Rolando Santos speaking at the launching

**Port Moresby:** The Year of the Family was launched by the Family Life Commission of the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG-SI on 14<sup>th</sup> March with a Seminar on *Amoris Laetitia*, the Joy of Love, by Bp Rolando Santos, Bishop of Alotau.

Following the theme of the Year of the Laity, the Family Life Commission has aligned its theme as: 'Our Catholic Families, Holy, formed and sent for Service and to Evangelize the families amid a storm of COVID-19'.

The Year of the Family began on March 19<sup>th</sup> and will conclude on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It was officially launched by Pope Francis on March 19<sup>th</sup> and marks five years since the publication of the Apostolic

Bp Rolando emphasized the need for strengthening the family life apostolate, catechizing, pastoral accompaniment and hosting diocesan as well as a national congress. Modules will be prepared and circulated to assist the Diocesan coordinators as they animate their families.

The program had persons who shared different aspects of how they lived their married life and practiced their Catholic Faith. Lucy Lavu, Joe and Caroline Aribi and Alphonse Gende inspired the participants as they spoke on how they connect with the members of their family and hold on to prayer and the sacraments as necessary elements of their catholic faith.

## 66 students graduate as community health workers

- Moses Ben

**Mendi:** The Mother of Divine Shepherd Community Health Workers (CHW) Training School run by the Diocese of Mendi graduated 66 students on Sunday, 21st March.

It was a combined graduation for students who were unable to graduate in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, together with this year's graduates. Graduating students came from the Southern Highlands, Hela, Western Highlands, Jiwaka, Eastern Highlands, Simbu, Sepik, East New Britain and Madang

The combined 43rd and 44th graduation started with an opening Eucharistic Liturgy held outside at the Cathedral grandstand in adherence to the COVID-19 precautionary measures. The presentation of certificates and awards took place the next day at the same venue.

Bishop Donald Lippert, Bishop of Mendi, in his homily, said that community health workers are frontline professionals who are vital in our society as

they understand the real needs of the community where they serve.

"When Jesus walked this earth, he showed mercy and compassion to those who were sick and suffering."

"The ministry and presence of Jesus continues today in the church. The work of community health workers is something holy because it imitates the same love and compassion of Jesus towards the afflicted."

Principal Cathy Lepi Pilang said that as a church-run institution, the school faces many struggles and hardships and stated that it is important for the church and Government to work in partnership.

Government subsidies to CHW Training Schools throughout the country are woefully inadequate to run these vital institutions. Budget cuts make it difficult for some graduates to find employment even though medical professionals are desperately needed in the field.



Community health graduates during their graduation in Mendi

Southern Highlands Provincial Health Authority Public Health Director, Mr George Epei, acknowledged the institution for its continuous support to public health in providing trained community health workers that will play an important role in serving people, especially in rural areas.

Present to witness the graduation festivities were invited guests, priests, religious brothers and sisters, students, parents and guardians



## Young people focus on respect and dignity of life

- Jessica Oata

**Boroko, Port Moresby:** Young people from schools, colleges and youth groups attended the Life Matters Program, held at the Archdiocesan Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, Boroko on Saturday March 13. It focused on the Respect for Life and the Dignity of Life.

The discussion and presentations during the program were centred around the respect of life at conception, a current issue that is on the rise. Sr Alice Fulgencio fma helped the young people understand the difference between 'pro-life' and 'pro-choice.' A video testimony by a pro-life advocate Patricia Sandoval was then screened. The program was aimed at helping young people make good decisions based on ethical and moral values according to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Questions raised were answered by committed young adult leaders.

The program had prayer moments, presentations, questions and discussions. It was coordinated by the SOCOM Commission of the Catholic Bishops Conference with the support of Caritas PNG, Family Life, Youth and the other commissions. Participating young people were young people and leaders of the different schools and some parishes

of the Nation's Capital.

The participants actively participated and asked reflective and relevant questions on moral issues. These were answered by vibrant young animators. "It is important that you share what you have learnt in your school or parish", said Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb, coordinator of the program. Young people are easily influenced by the Media and the program gave them a platform to share their faith and grow in spirituality.

300 participants were initially expected to attend the program, but numbers were restricted to enable social distancing. Cardinal John Ribat has encouraged that programs for young people of the Archdiocese be held.

"The testimony of Patricia struck me as she mentioned that medical practitioners were unaffected by what they were doing. They did not care about the life they were destroying, nor did they care about the effect on the young undergoing the abortions", said Juliette Dawa, a participant of the program.

Another participant, Shaynn Kokova said: "What struck me in this program was the personal story of Patricia."

Picture: Young people at the Life Matters Program

### Catholic Reporter

Invites you to send in your articles, photograph and reflections on events and happenings in your parish, community, institution and diocese.

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The resurrection of Jesus is victory of light over darkness, mercy over sin and life over death.

May His radiance dispel the darkness of ignorance, violence, domination and abuse. Wishes for a COVID FREE Easter! God bless you and your families!

