



'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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Issue No: 194



Listening is essential for Dialogue

Pope Francis conversing with Journalists
Article and Picture: Vatican News

World Day of the Sick

The 30th World Day of the Sick has as its theme:
"Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke: 6:36)"

In his message for the World Day of the Sick, the Holy Father highlighted five points.

1. *Merciful like the father*
Being merciful like the Father makes us turn our gaze towards God who is rich in mercy.
2. *Jesus, the mercy of the Father*
The supreme witness of the Father's merciful love for the sick is his only-begotten Son.
3. *To touch the suffering flesh of Christ*
Jesus' invitation to be merciful like the Father has particular significance for healthcare workers.
4. *Centres of care as "houses of mercy"*
The World Day of the Sick is also a good occasion to focus our attention on centres of care.
5. *Pastoral mercy: presence and proximity*
In the past thirty years, pastoral health care has also seen its indispensable service increasingly recognized.

Thirty years ago, Saint John Paul II instituted the World Day of the Sick to encourage the people of God, Catholic health institutions and civil society to be increasingly attentive to the sick and to those who care for them.

Questions:

1. Are we doing our part as Christians to visit the sick in our communities?
2. Are we committing the health workers in our prayers during this pandemic?



Repeal of Death Penalty Law

Catholic Professional Society welcomes decision to repeal death penalty law.

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Churches on COVID awareness

Churches in Bougainville unite for COVID-19 vaccinations awareness.

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After focusing last year on seeing reality and conveying it to others, Pope Francis in his 2022 Message for the World Communications Day emphasized the quality of *listening*, which he said "is decisive in the grammar of communication and is a condition for genuine dialogue." The Pope noted that people are quickly losing the ability to listen to one another, while at the same time listening is undergoing new developments, especially due to new forms of communicating. These trends demonstrate that "listening is still essential in human communication."

Listening with the heart

The title of this year's message, "Listening with the ear of the heart," invites us to reflect that listening involves more than simply the sense of hearing. True listening is a foundation of genuine relationships, and is foundational to the relationship between God and humanity.

The Pope, quoting St Paul, noted that "faith comes through hearing." In fact, he remarked, "listening corresponds to the humble style of God," who reveals Himself by speaking, and by listening to men and women recognizes them as His partners in dialogue.

Human beings are called in turn to "tune in, to be willing to listen," as God calls them to a covenant of love. Fundamentally, the Pope said, "listening is a dimension of love."

A condition of good communication

In many relationships, however, true communication is lacking, as dialogues end up as competing monologues, where the two sides refuse to listen to one another. This is evident nowadays even in public life, the Pope said, where people often end up "talking past" one another.

Pope Francis insisted, however, that "listening is the first indispensable ingredient of dialogue and good communication."

Without listening, he said, there is no good journalism; journalists need to listen to many voices in order to ensure the "reliability and seriousness" of the information they transmit. Listening, he continued, allows people to exercise the art of discernment, the ability "to orient ourselves in a symphony of voices."

Listening in the Church

There is also "a great need to listen to and hear one another" in the Church, the Pope said, adding, "Freely giving of our own time to

listen to people is the first act of charity."

He pointed to the ongoing synodal process, asking for prayers "that it will be a great opportunity to listen to one another."

Comparing communion in the Church to a choir, the Pope said "unity does not require uniformity, monotony, but the plurality and variety of voices, polyphony."

He continued, "At the same time, each voice in the choir sings while listening to the other voices, and in relation to the harmony of the whole."

The Holy Father concluded, "With the awareness that we participate in a communion that precedes and includes us, we can rediscover a symphonic Church, in which each person is able to sing with his or her own voice, welcoming the voices of others as a gift to manifest the harmony of the whole that the Holy Spirit composes."



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CPS welcomes decision to repeal death penalty law



Catholic Professionals Society PNG
 A Light and a Voice of Catholic Faith

Under Pope John Paul II in his teaching on Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life), the Church taught that the State may have recourse to impose the death penalty on criminals convicted of heinous crimes and if death penalty is the only available means to protect society from grave threat to human life. However, this right should not be exercised if there are other available means or ways to punish criminals and to protect society that are more respectful to human life. Human life must be preserved at all times.

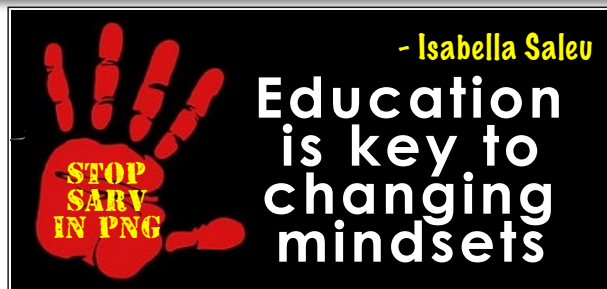
The Catholic Church in PNG has always opposed and still stands opposed to death penalty for it being un-Godly and un-Christian, inhumane, morally wrong and against the inherent human right to life of every person. Human life is defended on the basis that it is created in the image and

likeness of God (Gen 1:26-27), and in conformity with the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex 20:13). Principles for not supporting death penalty include, dignity of the human person, image of God and Jesus teaching of love, compassion, and forgiveness, even of enemies. The recent statement by Cardinal Sir John Ribat stated the position of the Catholic Church against the law on death penalty.

If we claim to be a nation of Christians we have to walk-the-talk. Our laws must reflect moral and Christian values and death penalty is against that. It will be ludicrous for the State to continue with the law on death penalty when the State itself is against violence and killings.

We commend the Government for taking this move and we hope that the amendments abolishing death penalty can come during this term of Parliament.

We welcome the Government's decision to repeal the 2013 law (as amended) on death penalty. In 1991 the Government re-introduced death penalty after it was abolished in 1974 and applied only to willful murder and treason. In 2013 the then O'Neil Government extended the law to other offences due to public outcry against increase in heinous crimes, which includes willful murder, aggravated rape and robbery. Willful murder also extended to killings from Sorcery Accusations Related Violence (SARV).



- Isabella Saleu

"If we are to change the mindsets of people, it has to be through education and in order to stop all this violence as Papua New Guineans, we have to change the way we think."

This statement was made by Mrs. Bernadette Ove, a representative of the Lasallian Women of Hope and an educationist, during a Press Conference on Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV) that was held on 11th January 2022 at the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

Mrs. Ove highlighted that despite all the efforts and resources been directed to SARV by Churches, NGOs, Government agencies, particularly the Departments of Justice and Attorney General; Community Development and Religion and the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission, the issue still exists targeting women and children as victims.

"In the joint strategic plan, only the Churches and the government of PNG represented by the two departments and commission were mentioned. The Department of Education could have been amongst those departments because regardless of gender, ethnicity, geographical and economic backgrounds, I strongly believe education is a very powerful tool to transform lives," she stressed.

She added that whilst it would be a challenge to change the mindset of an older person, younger children on the other hand presented the opportunity to teach and guide in schools through the Citizenship Christian Values Education (CCVE) subject. She proposed that learning materials to aid in the teaching of SARV and GBV also be produced and implemented into the topics under CCVE to be taught to students.

Other proposals made by Mrs. Ove included a call to local members of parliament to work together with community leaders, church workers and councillors to be the forefronts of change in their communities.

A suggestion to identify influential individuals or "change champions" to be trained and equipped with all necessary resources to go out and support the drive to combat SARV by been advocates, was also called for. However, she said if such did not work, the popular sport of the region, rugby league, could be used as a platform to create awareness on Sorcery Accusation Related Violence.

"So much has been said and done for so long. It's about time now that we stop talking and take action", Mrs. Ove said.

Dame Carol Kidu who spoke after the panelists, said SARV was an emerging disease in the society as it is not part of the PNG culture and condemned the sick people that carried out the torture and killings. She supported the call by Mrs. Ove to have the Department of education onboard the fight against SARV by working with our young people.

She said this fight was not easy as resources and funding have always been a setback but commended the Churches for always leading the way in terms of addressing social issues. She made a call to the government to work closely with the Churches as well as Human Rights advocates in eradicating SARV.

Bold unified action vital against SARV

- Nigel Akuani

Port Moresby: Bold unified action by all individuals and organisations is the way forward to seriously combatting the issue of Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV).

The strong emphasis was made by Rev. Roger Joseph, General Secretary of the PNG Council of Churches (PNGCC) on Tuesday 11th January 2022, during a Press Conference at the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (CBCPNGSI), Waigani.



L-R: Rev. Roger Joseph, Cardinal Sir John Ribat, Mrs Ove and Bp Justin Soongie

Forming part of the conference's distinguished panel of speakers were Sir John Cardinal Ribat MSC, Archbishop of Port Moresby; Mrs. Bernadette Ove, Spokesperson for the Lasallian Women's Hope; and Auxiliary Bishop of Wabag, Justin Ain Soongie. Moderating the session was Paul Harricknen, President of Catholic Professional Society PNG.

In the statement presented by Rev. Roger, it highlighted the growing number of SARV cases in rural areas and implied that there was certainly an ill-advised generation who undermined the rule and function of Law in resolving matters.

"The rise in cases informs us that there is an emerging culture of misguided people taking the law into their own hands by inflicting physical abuse and barbaric acts of violence against innocent women and young children causing the

death of many innocent lives," it stated.

The statement condemned the actions of those self-appointed vigilante groups that often preyed on the most vulnerable members of society especially women and children. "As Church leaders we call upon the government of the day and concerned leaders to ensure that there are strong and effective Social and Justice policies that will empower our village Court Systems to effectively respond to anyone found indulging in such acts of violence to be arrested and punished," it further read.

In his reflection of the dignity of the human person, Cardinal Ribat, described how life was a precious gift from God and should be lived out in fullness and in peace. "God in his own way gave his life for us so that we too may not perish but enjoy life ever after. God showed us the value of our lives and it is our responsibility of protecting and

promoting the much goodness life has to offer," he explained.

In his recollection of SARV in the Highlands Region, Bp Justin said there were numerous variables that had a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of addressing SARV.

"The sad reality is that there is a very slow response in saving victims when they are being accused and tortured, mostly due to geographical factors, logistics, and mostly because of poor coordination and preparedness on the part of authorities," he stated.

All statements presented by speakers in the conference sought to understand and resolve three key points: SARV being a serious violation of Human Rights and Personal Dignity; Ways forward for an inclusive approach to eradicating SARV; and On the ground perspective of the fight against SARV in Enga province.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ordination ceremony for deacons

A special ordination ceremony for three deacons in the Diocese of Wewak was held at Christ the King Cathedral in Wirui, East Sepik Province, on Sunday 23rd January.

The seminarians ordained were Br. Jerry Kirme, Charles Woyeng and Raymond Malken. As the Brothers' transitioned into deacons of the Church, Bishop of Wewak, Jozef Roszynski, was present as the main celebrant to bless and ordain them.

The Mass was accompanied by a very lively liturgy animation and had in attendance religious, parishioners and a large crowd from the nearby communities

Parish plans to build new church

The 'Queen of the Pacific' parish in Waigani, Port Moresby, plans to raise K5 million by 2024 to build a new church building. The confirmation was made by Parish Chairman and leader of the fundraising team, Joseph Klapat.

He told parishioners after mass celebration on Sunday 23rd January, that due to increased number of Catholic faithful in the parish, there was now a greater need to build a bigger Church for worship.

He said that there were more than 3,000 parishioners and if each bought a K10 raffle ticket per week for 52 weeks and continued till 2024, the target could be achieved.

Diocese of Mendi hosts 1st Synod

The 1st Synod of the Diocese of Mendi was held from 11th - 14th January and focused on communion, participation, and mission. Present for the Synod were people from all over the diocese.

Held at the Mother of the Good Shepherd Cathedral, the synod was filled with prayerful reflections and sharing that led to action steps aimed at promoting stronger communion, greater participation and a renewed enthusiasm for the mission of building the Kingdom of God.

Bishop of Mendi, Donald Lippert, said that while the Synod is over, the vision and dreams experienced, and the concrete plans developed will be realized with God's help in the coming years.



Everybody's homework for the new school year

Fr. Giorgio Licini, PIME, CBC General Secretary

Our children go back to school these days amid challenges of all sorts. Teachers and classrooms are insufficient in number. Distances, calamities, poverty and at times irresponsible parents still keep a number of the young away from literacy and numeracy education. But an illiterate person will forever be a second class citizen and a marginalized member of society.

It is commendable that free education is being maintained. The families unable to afford school fees would be by the thousands and their children roaming the streets an unaffordable nuisance. Some sort of positive discrimination, however, should be promoted based on the family income and size, expecting at least some contribution from those who can afford it.

It is frequently the environment that cripples the learning capacity of the children, with lack of electricity and crowded homes being the main factors. Without light, space and a silent place it is

hard to concentrate on the handouts and complete one's homework.

Too many parents also do not guide and check on their students' school duties. It would be good that our facilities, including chapels, pastoral centres, classrooms remain open late in the afternoon and, when possible, on weekends for the students from the neighbourhood to come and find a conducive space for personal studies and schoolwork.

There will be no overcoming of traditional social evils without a massive effort at general education. All children must be in school for as many years as possible. It doesn't matter that their future may be in the village or in the city, employed or unemployed. An educated person is in any case better and preferable than an uneducated one. The investment on education is not to be considered primarily against its financial returns. It is rather a guaranty and assurance on human dignity, liberty, and respect.

Is anyone really expecting to defeat alcoholism, gender-based violence, sorcery practices and

sorcery related accusation violence with millions of brains trapped in their small world with no way to break the chains of ignorance and prejudice? The only way out is education, teachers, classrooms, books, tablets, online instruction, committed parents, media.

It is for the government not only to invest in education, but also to discourage social practices that hinder the learning capability of children. Village people should not unnecessarily travel to Port Moresby and Lae crowding the city residents' houses and making life unbearable and studies impossible for their children.

Hefty fines should be imposed on those who pose a serious threat to education including frequently absent teachers. And no lighter punishment should befall parents who keep their children at home or people who drink in the presence of minors, and school administrators who mismanage education resources and funds.

Children are going back to school, but adults too have some urgent homework to do!

Cardinal receives booster vaccine



His Eminence Cardinal Sir John Ribat MSC has received the COVID-19 booster vaccine and is encouraging persons who have been fully vaccinated to receive the booster shot.

The Cardinal together with Rev. Roger Joseph, General Secretary of the PNG Council of Churches

and the PNGCC staff received the booster vaccination on Tuesday, 25th January in Mendi during the Southern Highlands Church leader's annual convention.

"We did not feel any side effects after the boost. Until now we are all feeling well. I encourage those who have received the 2nd vaccine to go ahead and receive the boost," said the Cardinal in an interview on Friday, 28th January.

At the annual convention, the PNG Council of Churches Team spoke to 1000 Church Leaders representing the Mainline Churches and BOC Churches within the Southern Highlands on the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine and to dispel fears and suspicion.

- Bp Dariusz Kaluza

Churches unite for COVID-19 Vaccine awareness

Buka, Bougainville: The Bougainville Church Council Association leaders united with the PNG Council of Churches to raise awareness on COVID-19 and Vaccination issues from the churches' perspective.

Facilitated by the PNG Council of Churches, the intense one-day program was held on Tuesday, 18th January at the Fr. Begg Conference Centre at Hahela that had as its theme "I am my brother's/sister's keeper."

The PNG Council of Churches delegates included his eminence Cardinal Sir John Ribat representing the Catholic Church, General Secretary Reverend Roger Joseph, Bishop Hitolo Aura from the United Church and Pastor Kewai Kero from the Evangelical Alliance.

Open discussions and moments of reflection were centred around how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the spirituality of their congregations. The participants agreed that the only way forward was to unite with other churches and support the National Covid-19 Vaccination Program.



Almost 180 clergy and church leaders made up of the Catholic Church, United Church, Pentecostal and Seventh Day Adventist Churches were present

The clergy and church leaders were chosen to participate because they are the shepherds of their flocks and therefore, it is part of their Christian duties and responsibilities to take care of their flock by knowing the right way to approach their congregation members and inform them about the options they have in keeping themselves and their loved-ones safe from Covid-19.

- Abigail Seta



Priests formation program

Bomana, Port Moresby: Priests from within the dioceses of Papua New Guinea were part of a 6-day ongoing formation program that focused on the theme 'Synodality: Listening Church, Listening Clergy.'

It was held at the Holy Spirit Seminary in Bomana from 6th to 11th January 2022 for priests who have passed 15 years and above in the priesthood. 49 priests from 11 dioceses were part of the program and among them was Bp Justin Ain Soongie of the Diocese of Wabag.

"Fifteen or more years after ordination is an opportune time to reflect, rekindle and renew the zeal

of the priestly ministry. So, through this time of ongoing formation we want to help the middle age priests to grow in their personality, holiness, and spirit of service, so that they can continue their pastoral challenges with commitment, enthusiasm, and serenity," said Fr Jacek Tendej, who coordinated the program.

The sessions ranged from techno youth, cyber mission, to the humanity of priesthood and synodality. The program also saw an open forum that dwelt on 'Listening to each other's Wisdom: Synodality among other priests.'

Bp Justin said he was grateful for the program as it renewed and reenergized the priests to be attuned to the changes in society. The ongoing formation of priests was a program which started with the first two groups in 2019 and in 2020 with the junior priests.

CHAT ROOM
2022

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- Jessica Oata

A call starts with an inspiration

Hailing from beautiful Manus province, Sr. Emma Lapun, OLSH, recently celebrated her 30-year anniversary as a nun.

Sr. Emma made her profession on 11th January in 1992 at Yule Island in the Diocese of Bereina, Central Province and has been dedicated and committed to her vocation in serving God.

She attributed her inspiration of becoming a religious sister to her aunty. While in grade nine at the Manus Provincial High School, her aunty had told her of the Dutch OLSH sisters who were murdered during the Second World War by the Japanese on a

boat from Kavieng to Rabaul. These sisters were missionaries in Bundralis Catholic Mission in Manus Island.

Sr. Emma was convinced back then by the heroic lives of the OLSH Dutch sisters given to God and she chose Our Lady of the Sacred Heart congregation to join and train as a novice.

During her time as a Villa Verius novitiate, she was guided by Fr. Earl Henly, an American MSC priest with the assistance of Fr. Henry Einhaus MSC, where she was directed to find the OLSH sisters.

For the past 4 years, she has served as the National Catholic Education Coordinator of the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG and SI. Her job as the NCEC coordinator came to an end on 31st January 2022. Her new designation will take her to

the Archdiocese of Mt Hagen where she will join the Commission of New Evangelization and Pontifical Mission Societies as Assistant Secretary.

"The environment at CBC has been very conducive and friendly for me and I have learnt so much in the past 4-years", she said.

As an educationist, she is always vocal to young people about taking their studies seriously.

"Always aim high in whatever you are doing. Education is the key to success so young people have to be serious about their studies", she encouraged.

We wish Sr. Emma Lapun OLSH the best as she takes up her new post as the Assistant Secretary to Fr Victor Roche SVD of the Commission of New Evangelization and Pontifical Mission Societies.

- Fr. Tomás Ravaioli IVE



Listen, with the ear of the heart

Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb,
Secretary for Social Communication

One morning, I was invited to a school celebration. I walked in early and glanced around the hall. On the far end was a person, whom I had not met for several months. "A nice chance to catch up and share what has been happening in our lives", I thought. I walked up to him and noticed that he was engrossed in his digital device. "Hello, Good morning", I greeted him. He glanced up and said, "Good morning" and then turned back to his device. "How are you?", I asked. "Fine", he replied without even looking up. I hesitated to say another word, knowing fully well that he connected with someone at the other end of the device and was not interested in my presence. That was the end of my conversation. I turned and walked away.

In the midst of the pandemic, we have isolated ourselves from the outside world. Work from home, Eucharistic celebrations, meetings online, study sessions, a variety of celebrations, etc. are daily happenings. The digital world has been our connection to friends, families and loved ones and have kept us in contact with the world around us. But the isolation has erected barriers between ourselves and the family, friends and loved ones around us. We seem to be losing a human connection as we get lost in our digital world.

Pope Francis has entitled this year's World Communication Day message, "Listening with the ear of the heart." He reminds us that listening involves more than simply hearing the words spoken. True listening is a foundation of genuine human relationships, and is very much needed in our relationship with God as well as all human persons.

Quoting St Paul, the Holy Father said that "faith comes through hearing." He remarked, "listening corresponds to the humble style of God," who reveals Himself by speaking, and by listening to men and women and recognizing in them His partners in the work of building up the kingdom. Human beings are called 'to be willing to listen,' as God calls them to a covenant of love. Let's always remember that 'listening is a dimension of love', said the Holy Father.

So, the next time, a friend, relative or your loved one walks up to you and greets you, switch off your phone, look into his or her eyes and smile. Listen with your ears and above all listen with your heart. That is when the conversation can begin.

God bless us all!

First Marian Dogma: The Divine Motherhood in the tradition



One of the most important arguments that comes from the Tradition of the Church is the fact that the Creed that we recite every Sunday, is the same Creed that comes from the Apostles. During the Creed we solemnly say, "I believe in Jesus Christ, His [God the Father's] only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary..." This is an unequivocal assertion of two truths:

- 1) That Jesus is the Son of God, and so He himself is God.
- 2) That Mary is really and truly the mother of Jesus. And so, our argument follows thus: if Jesus is God and Mary is his mother, Mary is the Mother of God. And this, we repeat once again, comes directly from the Apostles.

Some adversaries of the Dogma affirm that the expression "Mother of God" was created in the year 431, when the Dogma was solemnly declared. But the history shows the opposite. For example, there is a treatise titled "On the Mother of God" written by an

author in Alexandria around the year 281. It shows that the expression "Mother of God" was already used at that time. Besides this, ancient liturgies from around the year 300 expressly refer to Mary as the "Theotokos" or "Deipara," both meaning "Mother of God." The word "Theotokos" was originated in Alexandria in the third century!

Saint Athanasius (+373) says, "We confess that the Son of God became man by the assumption of flesh from the virgin mother of God." Additionally, Saint Gregory Nazianzen declares, "Let him who will not accept Mary as the mother of God be excluded from God."

Saint Cyril (+444) says, "The sacred writers [the evangelists] have handed down to us the belief, and in this sense we have been instructed by them. This name 'Theotokos' was perfectly familiar to the ancient Fathers."

So he admits that calling Mary "Mother of God" comes from the Apostles themselves, and this expression was familiar to them.

It follows then, that the Dogma of Mary as the Mother of God has been included in faith since the time of the Apostles.

House of Hope providing support to survivors

2021 was the official start for the project House of Hope, a shelter in the Diocese of Mendi that provides compassionate, holistic, and transformational assistance to the brave and resilient survivors of the atrocity of sorcery accusation related violence and other forms of gender-based violence. They recently released their 2021 report and below are extracts by Sr Lorena Jenal who runs the project and Lina Auth, a social worker.

In 2021 we registered 29 new cases of sorcery accusation related violence; among them we were able to save 22 women, seven women were killed. We were able to continue the support of the survivors from the previous years and address more than 100 cases of sexual and domestic violence.

The women who stay with us in the House of Hope have gone through horrific experiences including torture and different types of violence. We offer them holistic support in a peaceful, safe, and calm environment with the aim to stabilize and empower them to be reintegrated with their families. This support also includes the work with their communities, with the perpetrators, the village and church leaders. Moreover, it is very important to include their families, husbands and children too. The women can only be at peace when they know that their children back in their villages are safe too.

The House of Hope is well integrated into the community of Pomberel Parish. The people respect and protect the women who live in the shelter and

work together with them in the garden. For the time being in the shelter the women become part of the Pomberel Community.

We implemented a weekly and daily structure for the women in the shelter. The daily structure includes church service (for those who would like to pray), breakfast, garden work, washing, cooking, showering, school, private talks/interviews, group interviews and input as well as group dynamic exercises, singing and physical exercises as well as sports. The weekly structure includes washing the house, washing bed sheets, cleaning the flower garden, going to the market, going out to the community, integration with families, communities, and churches.

We follow the aim for the project House of Hope to become financially self-reliant. Therefore, we started together with the survivors our own garden where we grow sweet potatoes, beans, pumpkins, greens, peanut, and many other foods to feed the women for as long as they are staying with us.

To be continued in the next issue

Youth Alive!

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- Spiritual insights by and for young people

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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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