



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

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Pope at Angelus: Look out for others this Advent

- Francesca Merlo

Vatican City: Pope Francis emphasises the importance of vigilance at his Sunday Angelus, highlighting this does not mean living in fear, but rather waiting in loving anticipation of Jesus' arrival.

In his catechesis for the first Sunday of Advent, Pope Francis focused on the theme of vigilance.

He was referring to this Sunday's Gospel passage, in which Jesus issued a simple exhortation three times: 'Keep watch'.

The Holy Father noted that we sometimes think of this virtue as an attitude motivated by the fear of imminent punishment, but quickly assured the faithful that "this is certainly not the meaning of a Christian vigilance".

As he is currently recovering from an inflammation of the lungs, the Pope's catechesis was streamed live from the Chapel at Casa Santa Marta where he resides, and was read by Bishop Paolo Braida, an official at the Vatican's Secretariat of State.

Vigilance means keeping the heart ready: Jesus illustrates this with a parable, in which servants eagerly wait for their master's return. These servants have a close, affectionate relationship with the master and are not fearful, but eagerly anticipate his return out of love. They prepare diligently, wanting to welcome him warmly and joyfully when he comes back, like a happy family awaiting a special reunion.

Reflecting on this parable, Pope Francis noted that "it is with this affection-filled expectation that we also want to prepare ourselves to welcome Jesus at Christmas".

So, Pope Francis continued, in the weeks leading up to the special day, "Let us carefully prepare the house of the heart, so that it may be orderly and hospitable". Vigilance, he explained, means keeping the heart ready.

Share what you can: The Holy Father then invited the faithful to plan to use Advent to share with their brothers and sisters in need, giving listening, time, concrete help.

Dear friends, the Pope concluded, let us cultivate His expectation without being distracted by so many useless things "and without complaining all the time, but keeping our hearts alert, that is, eager for Him, awake and ready, impatient to meet Him".



Pope Francis and Bishop Paolo Braida during the Angelus at Casa Santa Marta

Meet your Bishop: Bp Joseph Durero SVD (Bishop of Daru/Kiunga Diocese)

- Ahisha Mangot



Bishop Joseph Tarefe Durero S.V.D was born on April 13 1968 in Dapa, Philippines and is the current Bishop of the diocese of Daru/Kiunga.

The humble Bishop was ordained as priest on December 12 1995, appointed as a Bishop of Daru/Kiunga on May 23

2021 and finally ordained as the Bishop of Daru/Kiunga on August 29, 2021.

He comes from a Catholic oriented family where his mother is a volunteer catechist and a teacher by profession.

He also mentioned that wanting to become a religious was not part of his plan. He was a brilliant young lad at that time, he wanted to get good grades, get into college and becoming a professional was a priority for him because his mother made sure of that. He recalled that his mother always made sure that everyone is in the classroom and must be at the house before 6pm.

His family was and still is mostly involved in church activities, and at one point he was an altar boy when he was in high school. That was his step to religious life but he expressed that not to be a religious but to find a sense of belonging because most of his classmates were altar boys and girls.

After grade 10 he wanted to study Bachelor in Science major and Political Science and for two

years, he studied that course, however, during that time there was a group of vocation campaigners from his diocese. He took their exam and passed eventually to be a seminarian but it was not immediate as they had to wait for another three months to be accepted.

"While waiting I also took an exam with the SVDs which I also passed. And then came the crucial decision I had to make at that moment; either I study within the diocese or I join the SVDs and I will have to move to the capital city Manila which I never been to" Said Bishop Durero.

As challenging as it was for Bishop Durero, he opted to join the SVD.

Bishop Durero added that Mother Mary was his major inspiration because he was a member of Legion of Mary in high school.

He also recalled being a registered Varsity Basketball player and trying to balance out everything was a challenge which he overcame.

Although in the beginning his family was not supportive of his decision, they learned to accept it. But all in all, he said that his family was his major influence.

He also expressed his admiration for his father who left formal employment to work in the farm and prepare money for their tuition fees for college. His father was not a regular church goer, but he made sure they all went to church.

Looking back, he said it is really God's calling to be what he is today.

Hailing from the Philippines Bishop Durero adapted to the culture of Papua New Guinea and expressed that in order to do so, one must be prepared mentally and spiritually in order to allow one's physical being to come to terms with the challenge of being out of your comfort zone.

He said one thing he wished for his diocese is to not be dependent on the mining companies and waiting for a miracle to come.

"We have to sweat in order to harvest there is no such things as easy money".

He commended the Catholic Church to provide for the majority of basic services in his diocese where the government or mining companies cannot reach.

"It is difficult in a diocese like Daru/Kiunga because the major setback is the geographical aspect but as a shepherd, this won't stop me to reach out to my people, I travel on dinghies for more than 10 hours to a certain location to celebrate mass and events and experience the love of God, and I would do that more often as this is my calling "

With a smile on his face, the down to earth Bishop expressed that it is a challenge but as a shepherd, it was his calling to be there for everyone and help in the little way he can and he wished his diocese can be more independent in the next five years, as he expressed it is not good to always give excuses.

He also called on to religious nuns, brothers, priests and Bishops to always pray as this is what will set them apart to help serve the people God entrusted to them, especially priests.

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Overwhelmed by the challenges but confident for 2024

- Fr. Giorgio Licini, PIME, CBC General Secretary



For the Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands the year 2023 opened in February with the Assembly of the Federation of the Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania (FCBCO) in Fiji. It continued in May with the Visit ad Limina to Pope Francis and the Holy See in Rome. It concluded with the Synod on Synodality in October with the participation of Bishop Dariusz Kaluza of Bougainville and Ms. Grace Wrakia, Lasallian Family Coordinator in our country. Grace was the first ever Papua New Guinean lay person to take part in a Synod in Rome. Though these events more directly involved the leaderships of the Church, the purpose remained and always remains that of reaching all Catholics and benefiting society at large. The FCBCO Assembly, which is held every four years, this time with the theme *Our Ocean Home*, focused on the care and protection of the seas as source of life and

strength for our communities. It may appear to some to be a secular concern, but if the ocean gets badly damaged by irresponsible human behavior, then life will be compromised and so our ability to worship and praise the Lord in His creation. The bishops of the Pacific gathering in Fiji also turned their attention to the journey of the universal Church through the Synod on Synodality (2021-'24), trying to better develop what the terminology in fact means: a more communitarian and participatory approach, since the Church as a whole is called to evangelize and bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ savior of the world. There are individuals and groups frequently excluded not only from our midst but from our concerns and our prayers. We proclaim the poor to be our first option, but we hardly share our life with them. Are our parishes really open to everybody or only to small groups of selected and trusted individuals? Are the lay people shaping the face of the Church with their valuable contribution and at the same time with their thirst for formation, participation and sharing? Do their daily family problems and concerns for

education, employment, security and peace reach the altar of the Eucharist? An all range of topics was discussed and discerned in prayer by the bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in Rome in May this year. The periodic *Visit ad Limina Apostolorum* (Visit to the Tombs of the Apostles) by the bishops of the world is at the same time a spiritual journey, a pilgrimage to the sources of Christianity, and a sharing of pastoral concerns, plans and initiatives with the successor of Peter and his most immediate aides: evangelization and catechesis, worship, consecrated life, vocations, youth, family, lay participation and co-responsibility, protection of children and vulnerable people, social communications, and more. The sense of inadequacy vis-à-vis so many challenges is at times overwhelming. But feelings of gratefulness and the hope that goes hand in hand with faith and charity confidently pushes us into the new year 2024. To all in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, all best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a peaceful festive season from the Catholic Bishops Conference!

The Gospels: The Gospel of Luke

- Fr. Tomás Ravaioli IVE
Liturgical Catechetical Institute Director



We already wrote about its authorship in March, and about its date and place of composition in April. Let's see some of its characteristics.
1) The Gospel for the Gentiles. It is clear that Luke wrote mainly for gentiles. Theophilus (to whom Luke dedicates the Gospel and the Acts) was a gentile, as was Luke himself, and there is nothing in the Gospel that a gentile could not grasp and understand. Luke begins his dating from the reigning Roman emperor and the current Roman governor. The Roman date comes first. Unlike Matthew, he is not greatly interested in the life of Jesus as the fulfilment of Jewish prophecy. He very seldom quotes the Old Testament at all. He has a

habit of giving Hebrew words in their Greek equivalent so that a Greek would understand.
2) The Gospel of prayer. Luke's Gospel is specially the gospel of prayer. At all the great moments of his life, Luke shows us Jesus at prayer. He prayed at his baptism (Lk 3:21); before his first collision with the Pharisees (Lk.5:16); before he chose the Twelve (Lk 6:12); before he questioned his disciples as to who they thought he was and before his first prediction of his own death (Lk 9:18); at the Transfiguration (Lk 9:29); and upon the Cross (Lk 23:46). Only Luke tells us that Jesus prayed for Peter in his hour of testing (Lk 22:32). Only he tells us the prayer parables of the Friend at Midnight (Lk 11:5-13) and the Unjust Judge (Lk 18:1-8). To Luke the unclosed door of prayer was one of the most precious in all the world.

3) The Gospel of women. In Palestine the place of women was low. In the Jewish morning prayer a man thanks God that he has not made him "a gentile, a slave or a woman." But Luke gives a very special place to women. The birth narrative is told from Mary's point of view. It is in Luke that we read of Elizabeth, of Anna, of the widow at Nain, of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee. It is Luke who makes vivid the pictures of Martha and Mary and of Mary Magdalene.
4) The universal Gospel. In Luke's Gospel, all the barriers are down. Lukes tells us that Jesus came to save all men without distinction: Jews, Romans, Samaritans, Gentiles, lepers, poor, rich, outcasts and sinners.



We need renewal in the Catholic Church Why do Catholics leave the Catholic Church?

- Fr. Victor Roche SVD
Director | Pontifical Mission

Dear Friends,

I write these reflections from a rural and remote parish in Papua New Guinea. This was an active parish when there were residential priests for 35 years. Now, a Catechist is looking after the parish for the past 12 years. A priest comes to say mass once in a month. Sadly, many Catholics have left the Catholic Church and have joined other churches. It is a familiar story not only in PNG but also in other parts of the world. Most of the Catholics who leave the Catholic Church, join other churches. There are a few who profess to be SNL (Stap Nating Lotu-Stay Nothing Church)!

In some of the seminars, I asked this question: "Why do Catholics leave the Catholic Church?" Here are some of their answers:

1. Looking for better Shepherds: We are looking for shepherds who stay with us in times of joys and sorrows; suffering and death. We see

priests only when he comes to our community to say Mass. It is a pity that he does not spend time with us. He hurries and goes to say mass in another sub-station.

2. Looking for Lively Singing and Lively Preaching: Most of the Catholics who leave the church are youth and young adults. We are looking for lively singing and lively preaching. In the Pentecostal Church, there is life in the Sunday-service and the Pastor's preaching is lively.

3. Looking for better Spiritual Food: We get better food for our spiritual life in other churches. There are sessions for parents; lively activities for teenagers and young adults; well-organized Sunday School for children. In the Catholic Church, Sunday Mass and homilies are the only spiritual food for most Catholics.

4. Looking for better Methods of Catechesis: We get better explanation of the Word of God and clearer messages about the life's problems from

other churches. In the Catholic Church, the methods of preparation for Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation and Marriage are usually given by the Catechists. Their methods are 20 years old. They have not updated their methods of catechesis for today's modern generation of Cell phone, Internet and Social Media.

5. Looking for active roles for Lay People in the Church Service: In the Pentecostal Church Service, Lay people are able to share their witness stories; they can be prayed over for their sicknesses and problems. In the Catholic mass, Lay people have less roles to participate.

6. Scandals of the priests and religious: We have painfully experienced the scandals of priests and religious such as: sexual abuse; financial abuse; political involvement etc.

Teaching Service Commission accepts 80 graduates from Sacred Heart Teachers'

- Ahisha Mangot

Bomana: Sacred Heart Teachers College in Bomana held their 12th graduation ceremony on November 9th 2023.

The ceremony saw a total of 80 students receiving their Diploma in Teaching (Primary) & Acceptance of the graduands by the Teaching Service Commission.

The ceremony was well organized with a Commissioning Mass in the morning and other activities after. Following the mass was the procession of the Governing Council, Official Guests and Academic staff being led by POMIO Cultural Group.

The opening Remarks was given by the Principal of Sacred Heart Teachers College Ms Rose Polome, followed by guest speakers, the Deputy National Catholic Education Secretary Mr Victor Piniau, Central Governor's rep Mr Henry Kita, Minister Counsellor, Australian High Commissioner Ms Penny Morton and the key note address was by His Lordship Bishop Pedro Baquero, SDB Bishop for Kerema Diocese, Gulf Province.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of SHTC special and academic awards, conferral of Diploma in Teaching (Primary) and Acceptance of the Graduands by the Teaching Service

Commission and speeches by outgoing Student Representative Council President.



Some of the invited guests during the graduation

Why young brains are especially vulnerable to Social Media

- Sr Daisy Anne Lisania Augustine MSC
Secretary for Social Communication



On the first Sunday of Advent, the Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands published the PASTORAL LETTER 2024 with the theme; 'Bring children to Jesus'

Promotion of vocations among children and young people.

This is a great time to show our children we care for them and their formation for life. As the bishops wrote, 'Catechists, Teachers and Parents are responsible for their formation', so too priests, religious and all of us in the communities.

I write on the effects of social media amongst young children in Papua New Guinea.

Recently, I took time to check how many children are on Facebook, Tiktok, Instagram and Snapchat in the country. In addition, I checked the content they post online. The results were alarming.

I found out that most children in Papua New Guinea use Tiktok. Tiktok seems to be attractive to them. "TikTok is a popular way for teens to share videos. Each video lasts up to three minutes, and users can add a variety of filters and effects to enhance them. They also have the ability to send videos privately among friends or with the general public. Anyone can see public videos, even if they don't have an account.

These are some of my findings;

1. Barely any of you are watching your child's videos or videos they are in with their friends. Would you be surprised to know that your daughter is dancing and mouthing words to songs with obscene words, every awful word and phrase you can imagine?

2. Some of your kids document their whole day on TikTok. Putting aside the safety concerns (especially if the account is public or if they've accepted followers they don't know), Do they post all day because they are bored and unstimulated or because they want the likes and attention from their followers?

3. Many of your kids are followed by strangers, even if their account is private. Does your child know and have relationships with 400 plus people? Have you seen the names of some of their friends? You may be surprised with friends' names such as Bitch etc.

4. And then there's always the porn.... For the love of God, make sure your kid's profiles are private and that you check who they are following and are followed by. You may be surprised.

5. Children stalk each other on the Tiktok application. But ask your child who happens to be home alone on a weekend what their friends are doing tonight, without having them call or text? She

will likely know who played together and at whose house for every part of the day, all from this app. Kids stalk their friends to see who is together and what, if anything, they are missing out on.

Starting around age 10, children's brains undergo a fundamental shift that spurs them to seek social rewards, including attention and approval from their peers.

At the same time, we hand them smartphones (Kids & Tech, Influence Central, 2018).

Social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Snapchat have provided crucial opportunities for interaction that are a normal part of development— But they've also been increasingly linked to mental health problems, including anxiety, depressive symptoms, and body image concerns and children face a higher risk of harm on social media.

First and foremost, when mobile phones came to Papua New Guinea, no one made awareness to us all on the advantages and disadvantages of the gadgets.

That is where you as a parent, teacher, concerned citizen have an enormous role to play.

In the next edition of the Catholic Reporter, we look at ways to help children use tiktok in a safe way as well as use it for evangelization.

CBC PNGSI takes part in Pacific Conference of Churches 12th General Assembly

- CBC SOCOM Desk

Noumea, New Caledonia: The Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands was among the many members present for the Pacific Conference of Churches 12th General Assembly held in New Caledonia from November 16 – 24, 2023.

Hosted by the Église Protestante de Kanaky Nouvelle-Calédonie (EPKNC) at the University of New Caledonia, the General Assembly started with the pre-assemblies which set the pace for discussions on different pressing issues that are of concern to the Pacific Household of God.

The 12th General Assembly had as its theme: Do Kamo, which translates to 'Khris! Transform us into your new humanity! It is a celebration of ecumenical fellowship and a reconnecting of Pacific peoples.

The PCC Secretariat has been working extensively on the themes of Ecumensim, Child Protection and Safeguarding, Ecological Stewardship and Climate Justice and Self-Determination.

Topics presented and discussed during the General Assembly include: *Transformation as Ecumenical Fellowship*, *Transformation as Self-Determination* and *Transformation as Economic and Ecological Stewardship*.

Other highlights of the PCC include:

- Update from the Pacific Theological College, Fiji and a 'Soft Launch' of the Pacific Communities Universities (PCU).

- The official signing of the Pacific Ecumenical Community Charter which saw the Pacific Theological College, the Pacific Conference of Churches and the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS), as regional ecumenical institutions commit to greater collaboration, dialogue and partnership to furthering the vision and mission of Pacific Churches.

- Welcoming new member-churches to the PCC: the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches, Anglican Church of Australia, the Reformed Congregational Church of the Marshall Islands and the National Council of Churches in Australia.

- Presentation of affirmations and recommendations of statements on issues concerning the people in the diaspora that were discussed during the pre-assemblies held over the weekend prior to the assembly proper.

The 13th Pacific Conference of Churches General Assembly will be held in Fiji in 2027.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands was represented by three representatives: Bishop Peter Houhou (Bishop of Gizo Diocese, Solomon Islands), Shane Ailu and Jessica Oata (Papua New Guinea representatives).

CBC PNGSI is a large member church in the Pacific Conference of Churches.

The PCC has 33 member churches and 10 Councils of Churches from 18 countries and territories across the region.



CBC PNGSI participants: Bp Peter Houhou (left), Shane Ailu (middle), Jessica Oata (right)

Papal Nuncio to PNGSI to depart diplomatic role for new post in Bolivia

- Sr Daisy Lisania Augustine MSC

Archbishop Fermín Emilio Sosa Rodríguez is departing his role as Apostolic Nuncio to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. The Mexican cleric has held the post since 2021.

A Vatican Communiqué issued on 17 November announced that the Holy Father has appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Bolivia, His Excellency Reverend Monsignor Fermín Emilio Sosa Rodríguez, Titular Archbishop of Viruno and presently the Apostolic Nuncio to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

Rodríguez will succeed Archbishop Angelo Accattino, an Italian prelate who was appointed apostolic nuncio to Bolivia in 2017.

The Apostolic Nunciature of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands informed of the appointment on its Facebook Page on November 17.

"We accompany this transfer of our Nuncio with affection and prayer, entrusting to the Lord and the Virgin Mary his new mission which will begin in the South American country at the beginning of the new year 2024", it stated.

Father Giorgio Licini, General Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands said, the Nuncio is a pastoral man who visited almost all dioceses of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. "In his time two bishops were appointed and one bishop was transferred to another diocese" he added.

Rodríguez was ordained a priest on 12th July 1998, and graduated in Canon Law, entering the Holy See Diplomatic Service on 1st January 2003, and served in the pontifical representations in Papua New Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, the United States of America, Canada, and Serbia.

The Holy Father Pope Francis, appointed His Excellency Most Reverend Fermín Emilio Sosa Rodríguez, as Apostolic Nuncio to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in 2021.

To be honest, I was saddened to hear that the Holy Father has chosen to move our Apostolic Nuncio, Abp Fermín Emilio Sosa Rodríguez to another assignment so soon. We all understand that the life and ministry of a Nuncio has an itinerant character to it... like the missionary life of Jesus and the Apostles in the Holy Gospels. We must trust that there are good reasons for this decision. It is nevertheless very true that Abp Sosa Rodríguez will be sorely missed by the people of PNG, but especially by the bishops whom he has served so faithfully and well as the representative of our Holy Father Pope Francis. He has been a truly missionary Nuncio. We must always trust in Divine Providence, and are confident that the Lord will continue to provide for the Church in PNG. In this situation I am truly happy for the Catholic people of Bolivia who will be blessed by the presence and ministry of Abp Sosa Rodríguez. In PNG, we will truly miss him and in doing so, we will pray for him and for the spiritual success of his new and challenging assignment. Dear Abp Sosa Rodríguez, "you will always have a home in PNG! As you prepare to take up this new ministry, may the Lord bless and keep you, and may our Lady of Guadalupe keep you ever close to her maternal and Immaculate Heart." - Bp Donald Francis Lippert, OFM Cap

Apostolic Nuncio Monsignor Fermin is a down to earth person, who is sociable, prepared to go out on his way to talk with people and to do things himself. Like his predecessor Archbishop Mathew Vayalunkal, under Monsignor Fermin the office of the Nunciature was visible to the ordinary people. The Catholic Professionals had close working relationship with His Excellency Monsignor Fermin. We praise and thank God for his friendship and wish him well in his new mission in Bolivia. - Paul Harricknen, CPS President

Catholic Theological Institute, Bomana holds 25th Graduation

- Jessica Oata

Bomana, Port Moresby: A jubilant atmosphere filled the Catholic Theological Institute as parents, guardians and relatives came together to witness the 25th Graduation ceremony.

The program had two parts; the graduation mass held at the Holy Spirit Seminary and the graduation ceremony held at the Karl Gastgeber Hall.

The Graduation Mass had as its theme: **'Trust in the Lord'** with Archbishop John Cardinal Ribat MSC as the main celebrant.

In his homily, Rev. Fr. Abogado OP reflected on the significance of 'graduation' with two themes by making reference to two gospel readings, **'It is done'** - the creation story (Gen 1:1-31) and **'It is finished'** - the early ministry of Jesus and his crucifixion (John 19:30).

"Looking at the themes: **'It is done'** and **'It is finished'**, these come with a great sense of determination fulfilment. As students, you have to make a lot of sacrifices in order to get good grades. You spend long hours working on your assignments, working on group projects, studying for your exams while balancing your personal lives as well by dealing with your own issues. Thus, many of you will agree that getting a degree is generally an exciting activity, for through it, your

horizon is widened when you learn new things. But it is not to be denied that it can also be challenging, that is why graduates often feel a mixture of joy and sadness", he said.

He congratulated the graduates on the hard work that they have put into their studies and encouraged them to remind themselves of the sacrifices they have made during their years of study and to be ambassadors of God when they are out serving the people.

The graduation mass was followed by a brief graduation program at the Karl Gastgeber Hall that began with a procession of the graduands with lecturers and the invited guests led by the students' singing group.

Once the graduands were in their respective seats, the National Anthem was sung followed by welcome remarks from the SRC President Matthew Gona.

The Graduation Speech was given by the Dean of Studies from the Faculty of Sacred Theology at the University of Santo Tomas Rev. Dr. Jannel Abogado OP following the CTI President's address by Rev. Dr. Zenon Szablowinski SVD.

The presentation of certificates which was the highlight of the program had Rev. Dr. Abogado OP and Dr. Blaise D. Ringor from the University of

Santo Tomas, Philippines present Theology Awards and Philosophy Awards respectively.

Giving the speech on behalf of the Graduates was Clement Tarmat. He thanked the hardworking and dedicated staff of CTI who have been there for them every step of the way in their studies throughout the years and their families for their continuous support.

Parents, friends and distinguished guests witnessed 14 students receiving Theology awards, 21 students receiving Philosophy awards and 17 students receiving exit awards.



The graduates in a group picture with the invited guests and the staff of CTI.

Missionary Sister farewelled by PMGH Chaplains

- Abigail Seta

Port Moresby: In a heart-warming ceremony on Friday, 24th November 2023, Sr Mary McCarty PVBVM was farewelled by the chaplains of Port Moresby General Hospital as her missionary work to PNG concludes.

The farewell program saw the chaplains gifting Sr Mary with flowers and a PNG painting from Simbu as well as the presentation of songs being sung soulfully.

Coordinator of the PMGH Chaplains, Mr James Temop, reflected on the work that Sr Mary has done describing her as an asset to the chaplainship.

"Sr Mary has been an asset to us. Over the years, she has served the chaplains and has given a lot in training and upskilling of chaplains. When there are new chaplains that come in she's always there to teach, train and help them. She sees the need areas and comes in to help with that," he said.

Reflecting on her experiences, Sr Mary shared that she has gained enormously from her work in the ministry and has worn many hats working as a teacher, librarian and even assisting with the delivery of a baby.

"The patients have been the focus. Just listening to their stories, responding with words of encouragements, showing that you really listened and heard their story and praying with them. The scripture has something to say to everybody at a certain time. It's a matter of echoing," she stated.

Despite the challenges, Sr Mary has stood by the motto 'your feet know the way, your heart carry's the light' which has brought her through many experiences that have turned out for the good.

Sr Mary has been doing pastoral work at the Port Moresby General Hospital since 1993, even before the establishment of the chaplain's office and working with other churches to spread the Word of God.



Sr Mary McCarthy holding a painting that was gifted to her.

Aitape Diocese celebrates ordination of new priest

- Sr Maria Tongop pbvm

Aitape: On 26 November 2023 Blessed John Muzzuconi Sub-Parish, Warapu, of Sacred Heart parish, Sissano, celebrated two great events: The Solemnity of Christ the King and the Sacrament of Priestly Ordination.

Fr. Adrian Yandani, the 6th priest from Warapu, was ordained for the Diocese of Vanimo by Most Reverend Siby Mathew Peedikayil, HGN, Bishop of Aitape Diocese. It was a privilege for Fr. Adrian to be the first priest to be ordained by Bishop Siby Mathew. Present at the celebration were five priests, one deacon, religious nuns from six different orders and nine seminarians, important guests and a large number of faithful from Vanimo and Aitape dioceses.

For his priestly ordination Fr. Adrian chose the theme, *"My shepherds, come follow me"*. He expressed that to be a priest is not very easy.

"You have to lean on Jesus, the King and master of your life and you must have self-dedication and perseverance despite human weaknesses.

The people of Blessed John Muzzuconi, Warapu, filled with joy, gratefully thanked God for the goodness and mercy he has bestowed on them and blessed their families with a good number of vocations to priesthood and religious life.

In his homily, Bishop Siby Mathew thanked and congratulated Fr. Adrian, his family and all who helped him in life.

Bishop Siby encouraged the new priest to take good care of this "treasure in clay", the holy priesthood.

"By the sacrament of priestly ordination, you become a servant of God and a servant of God's people. Through this great sacrament you become 'Alter Christus', another Christ. You will be preaching the word of God and administering the sacraments, and caring for the people in the name of Jesus. The first duty of the priest is to work for his own holiness and the second duty is to work for the sanctification of the people entrusted to him by the Bishop".

He also reminded Fr. Adrian as well as all priests, religious and laity of the recent invitation of the Holy Father Pope Francis to "return to worship" and adore the Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist.

Bishop Siby concluded by saying that although the priest becomes "another Christ", his human nature remains, therefore, he needs to work with God's grace to overcome his weaknesses, struggles, and temptations.

Bishop also stressed to the people that the dioceses need many more holy priests emphasising that formation must begin from the family and the village.

The celebration was well planned and organized by Fr Patrick Posani the parish priest and parishioners, with beautiful traditional processions, decorations and lovely music and brought a lot of joy to all the people who participated in the celebrations. At the end of the Mass Fr. Adrian thanked everyone for their help in the journey of his life. He thanked the priests, religious and the laity of Vanimo diocese, and especially Most Rev. Francis Meli, DD, JCL, the Bishop of Vanimo, who promoted him to holy priesthood.



Bishop Siby Peedikayil HGN with Fr Adrian Yandani during Fr Adrian's ordination. (Picture supplied)

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, 2024**.

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