



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

# The Catholic Reporter

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## Pope at Armed Forces Jubilee Mass: be courageous witnesses of God's love

- Deborah Castellano Lubov

During his homily at the Jubilee of Armed Forces Mass on Sunday, Pope Francis entrusts their efforts to Christ, recalling that turning to Him in constant prayer is a source of strength for their important duties. He praises chaplains providing accompaniment, saying, "they are in your midst as the presence of Christ."

"Be courageous witnesses of the love of God our Father..."

Pope Francis stressed this at his Jubilee Mass for Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel on Sunday, as he reflected on St. John's Gospel account of Jesus' actions at the Lake of Gennesaret, which the Pope observed can be dissected in three ways: he saw, he went aboard and he sat down.

**God-given hope endures when all seems lost:** First, the Pope noted that Jesus, with a discerning gaze "saw," even amid the great crowd, the two boats approaching the shore and the disappointment on the faces of those fishermen, now washing their empty nets after a night of fruitless labour. He underscored how Jesus' gaze was full of compassion for them. And he added that we must never forget God's closeness, compassion, and tenderness for us always, as we see in Jesus' concern here.

The Pope then asked his Master of Ceremonies, Archbishop Diego Ravelli, to continue reading his homily for him, as he was a bit out of breath. Over the past few days, the Pope has been getting over bronchitis, but he has continued his activities and meetings at his Casa Santa Marta residence.

Second, seeing their discouragement, the Pope in his homily remembered how Jesus went aboard asking Simon to put out a little way from the shore to climb aboard the boat, in order to enter into Simon's life and share in his sense of disappointment and futility.

This, Pope Francis stressed, is significant.

"Jesus," he noted, "does not simply stand by and watch as things go wrong, as we often do, and then complain bitterly. Rather, taking the initiative, he approaches Simon, spends time with him at that difficult moment and chooses to board the boat of his life, which that night had seemed fraught with failure."

Third, the Holy Father pointed out that once Jesus was aboard, He sat down and taught.

"Glimpsing in those fishers' eyes and hearts the frustration of a night of fruitless toil," he observed, "Jesus boards the boat in order to proclaim the Good News, to bring light to the dark night of disappointment, to tell of the beauty of God even amid the struggles of life, and to reaffirm that hope endures even when all seems lost."

**The miracle happens:** "When the Lord gets into the boat of our lives to bring us the good news of God's love that constantly accompanies and sustains us, then," the Holy Father said, "life begins anew, hope is reborn, enthusiasm revives, and we can once again cast our nets into the sea."

This message of hope, the Pope noted, accompanies us today as they celebrate the Jubilee of the Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel.

In this spirit, Pope Francis thanked them all for their service, as he greeted all the authorities, military associations and academies, and military Ordinaries and chaplains, present.

**Your hallmark is courage:** "All of you," Pope Francis acknowledged, "have been entrusted with a lofty mission that embraces numerous aspects of social and political life: defending our nations, maintaining security, upholding legality and justice."

"To go aboard," he continued, "because your uniforms, the discipline that has shaped you, the courage that is your hallmark, the oath you have taken — all these are things that remind you of the importance not only of seeing evil in order to report it, but also of boarding the storm-tossed boat and working to ensure that it does not run aground."

And, finally, the Pope stated, to sit down, "because your presence in our cities and neighbourhoods to uphold law and order, and your taking the part of the defenceless, can serve as a lesson for all of us" to "teach us that goodness can prevail over everything."

**Holy chaplains:** The Pope recalled that in carrying out their work, which embraces their whole lives, they are accompanied by their chaplains, "an important priestly presence in your midst."

"Their job," Pope Francis underscored, "is not — as has at times unfortunately happened in history — to bless perverse acts of war. No."

Rather, he said, "They are in your midst as the presence of Christ, who desires to walk at your side, to offer you a listening and sympathetic ear, to encourage you to set out ever anew and to support you in your daily service."

As a source of moral and spiritual support, chaplains, the Holy Father recognized, "accompany you at every step and help you to carry out your mission in the light of the Gospel and in the pursuit of the common good."

**Gratitude, vigilance, and great personal risk:** "We are grateful for what you do, at times at great personal risk," Pope Francis commended, adding, "Thank you because by boarding our storm-tossed boats, you offer us protection and encourage us to stay our course."

At the same time, the Pope told them to never to lose sight of the purpose of your service and all your activity, which is to promote life, to save lives, to be a constant defender of life.

Lastly, the Pope called on them to be vigilant.

"Be vigilant against the temptation to cultivate a warlike spirit. Be vigilant not to be taken in by the illusion of power and the roar of arms," he said, adding, "Be vigilant lest you be poisoned by propaganda that instils hatred, divides the world into friends to be defended and foes to fight."

Instead, Pope Francis implored, "be courageous witnesses of the love of God our Father, who wants us all to be brothers and sisters" as he encouraged, "together, then, let us set out to be artisans of a new era of peace, justice and fraternity."



Mass in Saint Peter's Square for the Jubilee of the Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel... (Picture Courtesy: ©Vatican Media/Dicastery for Communication)

## Jubilee of the World of Communications in Pictures



Social Communications Commission Secretary Sr Daisy Anne Lisania Augustine MSC presenting a PNG bilum to the Holy Father.



Social Communications Commission Bishop Deputy Most Reverend Jozef Roszynski SVD presenting a gift to the Holy Father - a 2025 Calendar with pictures from the Holy Father's visit to PNG last year.



Participants of the Young Professional Communicators Initiative from Australia and Papua New Guinea take a group picture with the Prefect of the Dicastery for Communication, Dr Paolo Ruffini.

### IN THIS ISSUE:

1. Pope at Armed Forces Jubilee Mass: be courageous witnesses of God's Love
2. New General Secretary for the Catholic Bishops Conference.
3. Archdiocese of Port Moresby opens Jubilee Year with Solemn Mass.
4. CBC PNGSI donates supplies to Hereparu Village.

## New General Secretary for the Catholic Bishops Conference

- Fr. Giorgio Licini, PIME  
Outgoing CBC General Secretary



Welcome to Fr Lawrence Arockiaraj, from the diocese of Wewak, who is taking over as the new General Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea & Solomon Islands (CBC). He has been appointed by the Central Committee of the Conference in November last year, following the

improving their services to the dioceses and the local communities, though for some the potential remains huge and the task daunting. The main problem is not about plans, suggestions, and ideas (the Conference Pastoral Plan 2022-'27 contains many) or financial means, but about human resources, meaning individuals properly trained, experienced and committed to working at the national level; a shortage that may become even more acute in the years to come. Giving a chance and spending money for studies on capable lay people, besides what is being done for the clergy and the religious, should be seriously considered with no opportunity wasted, for the benefit of the Church and society.

beneficial to the work and the presence of the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea.

It is impossible for me to list the people to thank at the end of these wonderful years. They are too many and too good. But those to whom I owe most are the staff who came across the CBC gate every morning and faithfully took up their position and responsibility in the hospitality services, the pastoral commissions, the administration, and the social services. The bishops, the clergy and the religious reminded me daily of God and the Church; the laity kept my mind and my heart focused on the things of the world and daily life, the difficulties of the families in the city, the children struggling to go to school and relatives falling sick, the poverty that bites the stomach and the damage created by the abuse of alcohol, gambling and violence. Observing the resilience of mothers, single parents and young people willing to succeed despite all odds, made me resolute in times of difficulty and rejection, which will certainly accompany my steps in a new chapter in life. Thank you very much! To all!

end of my second term on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September.

I spent, therefore, almost seven years with the Bishops Conference beginning with the Annual General Meeting of April 2018 when I was the minute taker. It was a long and rewarding journey. I was lucky to receive from my predecessor, Fr. Victor Roche SVD, the new CBC building almost completed and inaugurated in September 2018. We then had to fill it with additional qualified and dedicated staff to complement those inherited from the past.

With the new building and the renovations that took place in the old building, now the small CBC compound is also hosting hospitality services, a bookstore (LCI), Caritas PNG, Caritas Australia, the Radio Maria studio and offices, the newsroom of the *Wantok niuspepa*... This creates opportunities for cooperation and integration of services very

These years all CBC Pastoral Commissions and other CBC entities have taken positive steps by reorganizing themselves where needed and

## The Letters of St Paul: 1 Timothy

- Fr. Tomás Ravaioli IVE  
Liturgical Catechetical Institute Director



**Date:** Proponents of Pauline authorship generally date 1 Timothy in the mid 60s, between Paul's first Roman imprisonment (A.D. 60 to 62) and his martyrdom at the hands of Emperor Nero (ca. A.D. 67). The first letter to Timothy must have been written towards the end of the year

the flock away from the certainties of divine revelation into the mists of conjecture and speculation (1:3-7; 6:3-5). Timothy was charged with the difficult task of repairing the damage done by these troublemakers, two of whom Paul was forced to excommunicate (1:20) when he passed through on his way to Macedonia (1:3). Unable to return immediately, Paul wrote to admonish Timothy and authorize his mission to help this struggling congregation to safety. The bulk of the letter, which is personal in tone and informal in arrangement, covers the gamut of Timothy's pastoral responsibilities. Paul was counting on him to stabilize the Church with sound doctrine (4:6-7; 6:20) and the appointment of

reliable pastors to shepherd the flock (3:1-13; 5:22). Among the congregation, he was to encourage prayer (2:1-8), set limits on the dress and conduct of women (2:9-15), attend to his liturgical duties (4:13), show respect for parishioners of all ages (5:1-2), manage the support of widows (5:3-16), take a public stand against wrongdoers (5:20), and, above all, keep himself unstained by sin (4:12; 5:22; 6:11-14). As a loyal friend and traveling assistant of the apostle, Timothy was well suited for this task, as he had been sent on previous assignments to other young Churches in Corinth (1 Cor 4:17), Philippi (Phil 2:19), and Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:2).

65. **Destination and Themes:** The letter was written to Paul's associate Timothy, who was stationed in Ephesus on special assignment (1:3). The Ephesian Church was at this time threatened by a serious pastoral crisis, with teachers and shepherds leading

## The Jubilee of Communications - A personal experience

- Sr Daisy Anne Lisania Augustine MSC  
Secretary for Social Communication



The Jubilee of Communication took place on the weekend of 24 to 26 January 2025, the first of the great appointments organised on the occasion of the Holy Year. In two different appointments, in the meeting with the media on Saturday and in the Mass on Sunday at St Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis renewed the call for genuine and true communication.

The following day, the celebration of the Jubilee of Communication was completed with the Eucharist of the Sunday of the Word of God in which Pope Francis reflected on the central role of the Gospel as a sure guide and source of hope.

As indicated in the bull of indiction of the ordinary jubilee of the year 2025. This journey is renewed from our baptism, that became manifest in our own life of faith, which begins with baptism, develops in openness to God's grace and is enlivened by a hope constantly renewed and confirmed by the working of the Holy Spirit (*Spes Non Confundit* 3)

From the Catholic Bishops Conference Social Communications Commission, Bishop Jozef Roszynski SVD, Bishop Deputy, Sr Daisy Secretary, Jessica and Ahisha were able to attend the events of the jubilee thanks to the Vatican Dicastery of Social Communications.

'The Gospel is a living and certain Word, which never disappoints,' he said, inviting the faithful not to give in to the illusions of power and vanity. The Pontiff recalled that history proves that evil does not have the last word and that war and death will not prevail over peoples. 'Evil's days are numbered,' he said firmly, urging the Christian community to remain steadfast in faith and love of neighbour.

Personally the pilgrimage through the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica will forever remain as a journey from leaving the things of the earth to crossing to the things of heaven. And the Church encourages all Catholics to enter through the Holy Doors for the special grace of the Jubilee Year.

At Saturday's meeting in the Paul VI Hall at the Vatican, the Holy Father delivered the speech he had prepared for the occasion and spoke to workers in communication, reminding them of the deepest sense of their vocation: 'To communicate is to go out of oneself a little to give a little of self to the other. Your work is a work that builds, keeps everyone going...' he said.

The Pope also turned his thoughts to the weakest and most vulnerable, emphasising that the Church's mission is to accompany those who suffer and those who are marginalised. 'Jesus frees us from every inner chain,' he said, urging everyone to live with hope and solidarity. He reiterated that true freedom comes from trusting in the Word of God, which offers support and guidance in times of difficulty.

Not everyone will be able to make it to Rome therefore the Holy Father has asked bishops from all around the world to have their designated Holy Doors throughout the dioceses enabling the faithful to have pilgrimages and time for prayers, reconciliation and while entering the Holy door. The pilgrims are encouraged to be reminded with the announcements of the Jubilee Indulgence to be gained in accordance with the prescriptions found in in the ritual indications. (in the next edition, I shall continue with the Jubilee Indulgence)

## Students encouraged to balance faith with academic pursuits

- Sandra Tuga

The Catholic Community at Saint Charles Lwanga Parish in Gerehu Stage 2 in Port Moresby held a special dedication Mass on Saturday, January 25th to pray and offer the success of the 2025 academic year to God.

In his talk, Judge Narakobi emphasized the importance of balancing academic studies with spiritual growth. "A balanced life is crucial," He emphasized. "Our Constitution recognizes the importance of integral human development. This means making time for faith, academics, family, and recreation."

Students were also reminded of the significance of setting goals. "If you want to do well in your studies, you must set yourself goals. Your vision, your objectives, and you must have a motto in life," he said, sharing various school mottos that had inspired him, such as "I can and I will" (St. Charles Secondary), "Courage to Act" (St. Joseph), "Aim for the Highest" (St. Xavier's High School), and "What you sow, so shall you reap" (St. Gregory's College-Sydney).

The Mass, was celebrated by the Parish Priest, Fr Robert Spania, MSC who welcomed students from primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions alongside their parents.

Judge Narakobi also urged students to live as witnesses of Christ within their school environments. "If there's a school fight, do not participate, if there's gossiping, do not take part."

Students and parents ended the event with well wishes for each other and light refreshments.

With the theme, "Rooted in Faith, Growing in Knowledge," the Mass highlighted the importance of starting the academic year with strong spiritual foundation and provided special blessings for students, teachers and school stationaries with prayers to support their academic pursuits.

He's talk also touched on overcoming challenges such as peer pressure and self-doubt and he reminded students to choose good friends and manage resources given by parents wisely. "You must know the important people in your life, such as your parents and your teachers. Listen to them, cultivate a good relationship with them, and they will help you to be successful," he advised.



Students take a group picture after the mass.

The dedication Mass, coincided with the Feast Day of the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle, one of the greatest evangelizers of the Christian faith and an influential figure, in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He also shared the principle of sowing and reaping. "When you plant the seeds of good study habits, good behaviour, daily prayer and reading your Bible every day, you will be pleased with the fruits that will be borne by the seeds you have sowed,"

After the Mass, the Parish invited Judge Dr Vergil Narakobi, a long-time resident of Gerehu and a parishioner at St Charles Lwanga, to give an inspirational talk and share words of encouragement with students and their parents.

### Archdiocese of Port Moresby Opens Jubilee Year with Solemn Mass

- Donovan Pintol

**St Mary's Cathedral, Port Moresby:** The Archdiocese of Port Moresby officially opened the Jubilee Year on Saturday, January 25, 2025, with a grand Eucharistic celebration at St. Mary's Cathedral. The theme for this year, **'Pilgrims of Hope: Journeying from Darkness to Light'**, set the tone for a deeply spiritual event that brought together parishioners from all deaneries within the Archdiocese.

The Mass was presided over by His Eminence Sir John Cardinal Ribat, MSC, alongside Chargé d'affaires of the Nunciature Monsignor Federico Boni and priests from various parishes. Hundreds of faithful, including religious sisters, brothers, catechists, and lay people, filled the cathedral, reflecting the vibrant and united spirit of the Catholic community.

In his homily, Cardinal Ribat encouraged the faithful to use the Jubilee Year as an opportunity for spiritual renewal and deeper conversion. Reflecting on the Gospel reading from the Book of Mark, he reminded everyone of the words, *"For whoever believes shall be saved; those who do not will be condemned"*. Calling faithfuls to reflect on their lives and seek a closer relationship with God, just as St. Paul underwent a profound conversion in his journey of faith.

The Cardinal stressed the importance of participating in parish and diocesan activities planned

for the Jubilee Year, urging everyone to embrace the opportunities for prayer, reflection, and service. He also encouraged the congregation to pray for Pope Francis, who has invited Catholics worldwide to celebrate this special year of grace and renewal.

As part of the Jubilee Year celebrations, Cardinal Ribat announced that three churches within the Archdiocese have been designated as Jubilee Churches: **St. Mary's Cathedral, Holy Trinity Boregaina Parish, and The Shrine of Mary Help of Christians**. These sacred sites will serve as destinations for pilgrimage, offering the faithful opportunities for special prayers.

The Mass concluded with a symbolic ceremony in which Cardinal Ribat presented candles to each parish. These candles, to be lit during prayer times throughout the Jubilee Year, symbolising the Church's collective journey from darkness to light and the hope that unites all believers. The presentation of candles was met with great reverence, as parishioners accepted them as a commitment to uphold the spiritual significance of the Jubilee.

The atmosphere during the celebration was filled with joy and a renewed sense of purpose as the faithful left the cathedral, ready to embark on the spiritual journey of the Jubilee Year. The Archdiocese has lined up various programs and activities to guide parishioners in their journey of faith, ensuring that the

theme of hope and light resonates throughout the year.

The opening of the Jubilee Year marked not only a spiritual milestone but also an opportunity for Catholics in Port Moresby to strengthen their faith, deepen their relationships with one another, and embrace their shared mission of being pilgrims of hope. The celebration served as a reminder that through unity and faith, the Church can continue to journey forward as a beacon of light in the world.

The Closing Mass of the Jubilee year as per His Eminence will be on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January, 2026.



Sr Ancy John Chirayath SCSA presenting a candle to His Eminence John Cardinal Ribat MSC during the opening mass for the Jubilee Year.

### Young Communicators Gather at the Jubilee of the World of Communication in Rome

- Ahisha Mangot

**Rome, Italy:** The Jubilee of the World of Communication took place from January 24-26 in Rome, bringing together journalists and communicators from around the world, despite their diverse cultural and professional backgrounds.

The event saw thousands of pilgrims in attendance, with over 100 young journalists and communicators participating in the **Initiative for Young Communicators**. Among them were Ms. Jessica Oata and Ahisha Mangot, representing the young communicators of the Church of PNGSI. The guiding theme of the event was *"Uniting Communicators for a Shared Journey."*

Rooted in communal activities and reflections, the initiative aimed to cultivate a sense of belonging and

encourage a lasting vocation grounded in shared values of hope. The three-day program focused on four key themes: Vocation, Impact, Narratives, and Community, serving as a framework for personal reflection and professional development.

The program featured storytelling sessions, interactive activities, and keynote addresses by prominent figures in journalism and communication.

On Friday, January 24, the Jubilee team organized a penitential liturgy and an International Mass in honor of the Feast of St. Francis de Sales, the patron saint of journalists at the St John Lateran Basilica.

The following day, January 25, pilgrims from around the world, including the young communicators, visited the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica. This was

followed by a cultural event titled *In Dialogue with Maria Ressa*, a veteran Filipino journalist and activist, and Colum McCann, best-selling author and founder of the non-profit organization *Narrative 4*.

In the evening, young communicators attended a panel discussion with influential media professionals such as Eli Pariser (New Public), Paterno Esmaguel II (Rappler), and Chris Walter (On Our Radar). The discussion was highly interactive, with many young participants engaging in the Q&A session. This event was held at St. Pius X Hall, Via dell'Ospedale 1.

On January 26, the young communicators attended the Holy Mass on the Sunday of the Word of God at St. Peter's Basilica, presided over by the Holy Father. In the evening, Colum McCann delivered a talk on storytelling through *Narrative 4*, a global non-profit that uses storytelling and the arts to build empathy, connection, and compassion among young people. The session also included a story exchange activity to foster these values.

The program concluded with a dinner, where young communicators were joined by Professor Paolo Ruffini, Prefect of the Dicastery for Communication, who offered words of encouragement and support.

This initiative is an example of a Synodal Church in action. Many participants noted that the involvement of the Vatican and the Dicastery for Communication in making this event possible demonstrated the Church's commitment to walking together, fostering dialogue, and sharing a common mission.



Picture left: Participants of the Initiative for Young Communicators posing for a group picture with the organizers from the Dicastery for Communication and the facilitators after the session at St Pius X Hall.

### Catholic Professionals Society Calls for a Stop in the Growing Killings and Inhumane Acts in Papua New Guinea

- Donovan Pintol and Jessica Oata

**Port Moresby:** The Catholic Professionals Society has joined the Law Society of PNG in expressing concern on the escalating situation with the law and order in the country when rule of law now seems only a lip service.

This was revealed during a press conference held on January 22, 2024 at the Catholic Archdiocese of Port Moresby Chancery that had the President of the Catholic Professionals Society Mr Paul Harricknen as the speaker.

He said that as Church, we are concerned about the out of control and escalating law and order situation in our communities and nation.

"Where is the rule of law? Nobody cares anymore. Each person, family and community are forced to take care of themselves for their protection, defense and survival. The rule of law does not provide guarantee for protection without enforcement"

The President highlighted that the increasing violence is not only a direct attack on human lives but also an

erosion of law and order in the country. He stressed that such lawlessness puts into question the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies and the justice system.

"Indiscriminate killings have become regular and normalized, and that is why we are joining the Law Society of Papua New Guinea in voicing our concerns."

Mr Harricknen highlighted that the increasing violence is not only a direct attack on human lives but also an erosion of law and order in the country. He stressed that such lawlessness puts into question the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies and the justice system.

Speaking on the Bishops' Pastoral letter for 2025 titled **"Pilgrims of Hope, journeying from darkness to light"**, he said the pastoral letter was based on the Holy Father's reflection on the Jubilee theme as an opportunity to start fresh with one's relationship with God and other people.

The Church's pastoral efforts for consolation and hope in the midst of the

darkness of lawlessness is a tough call to calm the fear and anxiety in the prevailing chaos and disorder with the spiraling violence and killings.

"When the holy Father visited PNG in September 6-9, 2024, he prayed for PNG to end tribal fights, violence and killings and respect for human dignity and human lives.

His central message was for the love of God and for each other to replace violence, hatred, indifference and killings."

As PNG counts down the months to celebrate its 50 years of independence anniversary, Mr Harricknen posed two critical questions: *What do we celebrate for? Is it worth any celebration?*

"We still harbor the memories of black Wednesday of 10 January 2024. The tribal killings in Enga, Southern Highlands and Hela, violence and killings in Alotau, Rabaul, Madang, East Sepik, recent savage killings in Goilala, Port Moresby, West Coast of Wewak seem an endless cycle".

The Church's pastoral efforts for consolation and hope in the midst of the darkness of lawlessness is a tough call to calm the fear and anxiety in the prevailing chaos and disorder with the spiraling violence and killings.

He concluded by saying that churches and the civil society can only do so much and encouraged everyone to pray and hope for good governance, justice and peace in our country and communities.



Catholic Professionals Society President Mr Paul Harricknen... (File Photo)

### CBC PNGSI donates supplies to Hereparu Village

- Donovan Pintol

**Hereparu Village, Central Province:** On January 18, 2025, a dedicated team from the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (CBC PNGSI) made a significant donation to Hereparu Village, Kivori, in Central Province, following the destruction of 15 homes due to a malicious attack on December 14, 2024.

The donation, valued at around K8,000, was composed of food, canvases, and clothes, and household items to help the villagers recover from the devastating attack that left many families homeless and vulnerable. Ms. Stephanie Gerep, the Child Protection Officer of the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG SI, along with Ms. Helen Oa, the CBC's Human Resource Manager, and Mr. Terence Gumsusupa, the Project Officer, were the dynamic team that pulled together the small donation drive to help the village through such time.

The villagers expressed their deep appreciation, as CBC PNGSI became the first organization to offer substantial assistance. The team's visit was warmly welcomed by the village, and a short speech of thanks was delivered by Mr. Mana Miria, the village Catechist. The help also came with contributions from neighboring villages and the working-class elites of the area, who rallied together to support their affected neighbors. However, it was through the persistent efforts of Fr. Bernard Boem, the Vicar General of the Bereina Diocese, that the connection between CBC PNGSI and Hereparu Village was established. Fr. Boem worked behind the scenes to facilitate

communication and bring the two parties together, ensuring the villagers received vital aid.

During the donation ceremony, Ms. Stephanie Gerep made a heartfelt statement that resonated with all in attendance: "The whole reason we came here is because of the children," she said. Ms. Gerep, who serves as the Child Protection Officer under the Family Life Commission, expressed her deep concern for the children of the village, who have been affected particularly hard by the crisis. "As the Child Protection Officer, my sole responsibility is to make sure the children are okay. And that is why we've come to support the village because we know many children will be suffering too."

Indeed, the children of Hereparu Village are bearing the brunt of the tragedy. Many have been forced to live without shelter, and their education has been disrupted, with no clothes or educational materials to allow them to go to school. Furthermore, the loss of homes has meant that many children no longer have adequate clothing or a balanced diet. The situation remains dire, and the need for continued support is vitally needed.

The villagers, still reeling from the attack, expressed gratitude for the help they have received so far, but their needs are far from over. As part of their recovery efforts, the community has requested prayers from fellow Catholics, hoping for continued support and divine intervention. Additionally, they have asked for small donations—food, clothing, or other essentials—that can help ease the hardship they face in the aftermath of the attack.

The team's visit and donation now stand as a powerful reminder of the Church's role in supporting the most vulnerable members of society. Through the generosity of organizations like CBC PNGSI, communities like Hereparu Village will surely find hope in the midst of such tragedy.

The road to recovery will be long for the people of Hereparu Village, but with the continued support of the Catholic community and other stakeholders, there is hope for a brighter future. The people of Hereparu will surely rebuild their lives and their homes again.



Village volunteers assisting the CBC team to distribute donation items.

- Sr Grace Nakan FSM

### St Joseph's Upper Mendi Parish celebrates different programs.

**Mendi:** Parishioners and the youth of St Joseph Upper Mendi gathered at Komia Outstation for two significant events: a song competition for the youth and the first priesthood anniversary of Fr. Thomas Posul. The festivities took place from January 15 - 17 with the youth song competition and culminated on January 18 with the first priesthood anniversary of Fr. Thomas Posul.

The song competition was organized by Mr. Lucas Martin, a local businessman from St. Joseph Upper Mendi (Ekari) Parish. Mr. Lucas aimed to inspire and motivate young people to detach from negative influences and strengthen their Catholic faith through music and singing. The event's atmosphere was graceful and inspiring, with different priests celebrating Mass and many lively activities taking place.

The opening Mass was held on January 15, 2025, and was presided by Fr. Onesmus Wambua OFM Cap, the diocesan youth coordinator. In his homily, Fr. Onesmus emphasized the primary purpose of the gathering: to worship and pray to God. He remarked, "As Jesus prayed in a particular place to draw strength, we, as young people, gather in this outstation to worship and pray to bring good news to where we come from."

On January 16, Morning Mass was presided by Fr. George Mathew CST, who stated, "We must work and eat. If we are lazy and do nothing, we must not eat, for laziness is a grave sin." Additionally, catechetical

sessions were conducted by FSM Sisters Christina, Maryann, and Grace, as well as Seminarian Amos from Komia. Topics addressed included:

1. The Catholic faith, the seven deadly sins, and their causes.
2. Brief Mariology and the role of Mary in the salvation.
3. Different vocations call by God: Consecrated or religious life, marriage, and single life.
4. The importance of prayer life.



Fr. Thomas Posul, a diocesan priest celebrating mass to commemorate the first anniversary of his priestly ordination...PC: In House Gallery

These catechetical sessions aimed to encourage young people to be steadfast in their faith and prayer

lives, supporting them in achieving their dreams with God's guidance. Throughout the day, attendees also engaged in creative activities and social dances.

On January 17, Fr. George presided the Morning Mass reminding the youth that "JOY" "can serve as an acronym to define our priorities: Jesus first, others second, and yourself last. He explained that by following this principle, we would attain eternal life." This day also featured the most competitive portion of the song competition, judged by a panel comprising of Mr. Lucas Martin, Sr. Grace Nakan FSM, Seminarian Felix, and Mr. Jacob from the Mary Mother of the Divine Shepherd Cathedral Parish.

Parishioners from Imbongu, along with Fr. Alan Muguya, came to support, pray, and celebrate with Fr. Thomas Posul on his anniversary on January 18. They were received warmly by youth and parishioners of Upper Mendi. Additionally, a few parishioners from Nebilyer with Fr. Simon Paglau SOLT of the Mt. Hagen Archdiocese joined in the celebration.

In his homily, Fr. Thomas shared, "I was chosen by God in the midst of all. I was a sinner, yet He called me, and I give thanks. Let us pray for each other on this long journey of faith." The presence of fellow priests, religious leaders, and seminarians added to the day's vibrancy.

Congratulations to Fr. Thomas Posul, and well done to the St. Joseph Upper Mendi Parish for a successful song competition!

- Sr Philomena Waira RSM

### Religious Sisters attend Theology and Pastoral Ministry course

**Port Moresby:** Thirteen Religious Sisters from different congregations in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands attended a course on Theology and Pastoral Ministry at the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG & SI headquarters - Gordons, in the nation's capital.

The eight - day course was held from January 17 - 24 and covered topics on Introduction to the Word and Worlds of the Bible.

Facilitating the sessions were Sr Duyen Nguyen RSM and Sr Elizabeth Young RSM who came from Australia.

Group discussions, presentations and prayer moments were included in the program to enable the Sisters to interact with each other and enjoy the learning process.

The diploma course is run by the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea for Religious women here in PNG and Solomon Islands.

The program is affiliated with Divine Word University. After the completion of 8 units, the marks are sent to DWU for assessment before the participants can graduate with a Diploma in Theology and Pastoral Ministry.

Lecturers for this diploma course are Religious Sisters and lay Theologians from the Australian Catholic University.

The participating sisters some from different congregations such as Dominican Sisters (OP), Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI), Sisters of Mercy (RSM), Handmaids of our Lord (AD) and Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny (SJC).

Participating sisters expressed their gratitude to the two facilitators of the diploma course and shared sentiments of joy being part of this cohort.

The sisters are now looking forward to working hard to successfully complete their units and graduate with their diplomas.

Picture right: Participants of the Theology and Pastoral Ministry Course take a group picture with their facilitators after the workshop...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](mailto:socom@catholic.org.pg) on or before **20th of the Month, 2024.**

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