

'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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- Devin Watkins

Pope Francis: "Poor in Spirit" requires us to overcome throwaway culture

"After the multiplication of the loaves and the fish, [Jesus] asks that the leftover food be gathered so that nothing would be wasted," the Pope offered by way of example.

He offered Christians three challenges to combat the throwaway culture that predominates the world, especially in affluent societies.

Gift that we are

Pope Francis first challenged people "not to waste the gift that we are." He said each person is good, independent of the gifts we have, since "every man or woman is rich not only in talents but in dignity."

Gifts that we have

The Pope then challenged us "not to waste the gifts that we have." He lamented that over a third of the world's food production goes to waste, even as many people die of hunger.

"Goods should be taken care of and shared in such a way that no one lacks what is necessary," he said. "Rather than waste what we have, let us disseminate an ecology of justice and charity!"

Gifts of people

Pope Francis offered the third challenge "not to waste people." He said the throwaway culture uses people only so long as they are useful, after which the person is only a bother to society.

Those most affected by this selfish mindset are "unborn children, the elderly, the needy, and the disadvantaged."

Examination of conscience

The Pope wrapped up his Angelus address with a series of questions we can ask ourselves to assess how we live our poverty of spirit.



Rome: In the Angelus address on Sunday January 29, Pope Francis reflected on the first Beatitude and says that being "poor in spirit" requires us to welcome everything as God's gift and strive against society's throwaway mentality.

Pope Francis prayed the traditional Marian prayer of the Angelus on Sunday, and reflected on the first and fundamental Beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:1-12).

The "poor in spirit", he noted, are those who recognize that they cannot rely on themselves or remain self-sufficient.

Treasuring every one of God's gifts

Pope Francis noted that the poor in spirit also "treasure what they receive" and therefore know that "no gift should go to waste".

He then reflected at length on the actuality of this teaching of Jesus, since it runs up against much of our consumerist society that fails to appreciate the value of people and things.

Meet your Bishop: Bp. Otto Separy (Bishop of Bereina Diocese)

- Ahisha Mangot



Along the busy Highway of diocese of Wewak for 15 years was a commitment East Sepik province, lies that brought so much joy to me and everyone who Tangori village, Kubalia, believed in me".

Yangoru Sausia District. "About 2000 people were there on my ordination, Tangori bore a selfless man, it's a pride for the church and the people. Usually in the Most Reverend Bishop Wewak whenever there is an ordination, there is Otto Separy of Bereina. He always a huge celebration, like during my ordination grew up in a background of a catholic population, a said Bishop Otto. community of friendly and

God-fearing people at that time compared to now.

Bishop Otto Separy was born on the 5th of August in 1957, now 65 years of age yet very energetic and lively.

The year 1991 opened doors for the outspoken Bishop of Bereina who was ordained as the Wewak Diocesan priest, a call to serve the Lord and people. When asked about his initial reaction at that time, he recalled the moment, as a moment of lifetime happiness where his supportive spirited family and congregation celebrated with joy as he was ready to take on this holy role.

"My commitment is a life of sacrifice but a rewarding life which I am proud of, serving at the

When asked about his experience, with a wide smile on his face he answered, "rewarding". He recalled, "I also served at a parish at the back of Dreikir in Wewak, between East Sepik and West Sepik". A parish tucked away in the rugged mountains where he experienced the life of the local people and served for 6 years. This may not be a friendly experience but the warm hospitality of the people outweighed the experience of the unkind setting.

"It's a feeling of joy to see people come and hear my sharing as they transform. After serving the people at the rural part of Wewak, I was then transferred to Wewak, Kaindi Teachers College for six years and then I was appointed as a Bishop of

Aitape on June 9, 2009. Later, I was installed as Bishop of Bereina in 2019 till now."

Bishop Otto proudly shared his countless achievements, but to name a few he said, "I am always happy to ordain priests. When I was in Aitape I ordained 5 priests. As a priest my achievements are in the work that I do. I am always happy to visit people, touching people's lives, available for people to hear confessions. I enjoy my life serving God. I stayed, ate, slept, and experienced people's way of living whether in the rural parts of the country or in the town vicinity."

As the current Bishop of Bereina, he said that he is serving the Lord by doing administration work, representing his congregation, being at forefront for decision making and making sure the decisions made are in favour of the Lord and his congregation.

Bishop Otto concluded with this challenge, "Young men and women sometimes you need to find time to sit down and ask the Lord this: "where do you want me to be? Do you want me to choose this life or that life? Have time to pause and think. God will give you the answers you're looking for."

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Bishops of the Pacific on the Ocean, the Synod

Fr. Giorgio Licini, PIME, CBC General Secretary

“Our Ocean Home” is the theme around which the Catholic bishops of the Pacific meet this month in Suva, Fiji for the Assembly of the Federation of the Catholic Bishops

Conferences of Oceania (FCBCO). It occurs every four years with a delay of twelve months this time due to the uncertainties created by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past few years.

There are about eighty Catholic dioceses and bishops in the Pacific grouped in four Bishops Conferences: Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, Pacific Islands. The situations are quite different with great distances, different history, culture and traditions, a complex ethnic composition and the Church trying to read the signs of the time and journey with the people.

The debate and sharing on the Ocean reflect the concern for the environment highlighted by Pope Francis encyclical *Laudato si'* (2015). The perception is that, rather than dividing us, the vast sea connects us, provides nourishment and support, defines the attitude and the spirit of the inhabitants of the

islands. It is a lifeline now threatened by dangerous projects such as seabed mining and showing here and there worrying developments like rising levels of water followed by coastal erosion and the displacement of communities.

Although science may attribute the changes to human activities or natural phenomena, the fact remains that the Church cannot turn a blind eye to social and pastoral challenges. At the core of the social doctrine of the Church is the person, its dignity and integrity. The destruction of the planet is an attack on humanity. The death of the Ocean would deal a big blow to life on earth. The abuse of creation is a sin with devastating spiritual and material consequences for everybody.

The need for stronger cooperation among the Churches in the Pacific on this and other issues is widely felt. It is also being required and encouraged by the Synodal process 2021-'24 which in fact has now reached its continental stage. The Bishops of the Pacific in Suva will devote a couple of days to define how the theme and the purpose of the Synod (*For a synodal Church: communion, participation*

and mission) can be enhanced in this part of the world and how it can enrich the universal Church. In the young Churches, born out of the missionary work of the past two centuries or so, the communion and participation by the clergy, the religious and the laity remains a strong point. But what about the mission and the desire to continue reaching out to those who remain distant from the faith or untouched by the care and solidarity of the disciples of Christ? Caritas Internationalis, through the local and national Caritas, appears now to be the only permanent entity and form of cooperation among Catholics in the Pacific beyond the individual Bishops Conferences. A permanent FCBCO Secretariat, which will also be discussed in Fiji, would certainly facilitate communion, participation, and mission on many other fronts: social doctrine and action, youth, training of laity, vocations and clergy formation, religious life, theological research and reflection, pastoral exchanges and cooperation. Meeting every four years helps but can hardly inspire and sustain a common pastoral plan, which is also an aim of the February 2023 Assembly.

- Fr. Tomás Ravaoli IVE
Liturgical Catechetical Institute Director

The Gospels: Sources for the History of Christ



During 2023 we'll dedicate our short articles to talk about the Gospels. But as an introduction to this topic, let's talk briefly about other historical documents that witness the existence of Christ.

Pagan Sources for the History of Christ: Tacitus, a great Latin historian, writing around the year 116, already talks about “the

Chrestians.” He goes on to say that the founder of this “sect,” Chrestus (= Christ), had been put to death by the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate, during the reign of Tiberius. This brief description of Tacitus fully supports what we know of Jesus from the Gospels.

Tacitus' witness is confirmed by the writings of Suetonius around the year 120. He tells us that the emperor expelled the Jews from Rome because of their constant agitations “over Chrestus”. The word which he uses, “Chrestus,” obviously stands for

Christ, the Greek translation of the Hebrew term “Messiah” (anointed).

And before Tacitus and Suetonius, Pliny the Younger, Roman governor of Bithynia, in his correspondence with the Emperor Trajan (year 112) speaks of Christians and their presence throughout the territory under his administration. Describing their religious practices, he says that they used to congregate at dawn on a given day to sing hymns to Christ whom they regarded as their God.

From this testimony, written less than 100 years after the death of Jesus, we have exact information regarding the place and time in which Christ lived. These sources speak of him as a historical personage, and not a myth.

Jewish Sources: On the subject of Jesus, the Jews used a conspiracy of silence. This explains the scarcity of Jewish sources regarding Jesus. No matter how hard they tried to discredit Christ as a person, they never made any attempt to cast doubt upon the historical reality of his existence. The only author to present the figure of Jesus in its real

grandeur was Flavius Josephus. “In those times - he writes in the year 93 or 94 - there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed he can be called a man; for he was a doer of the most extraordinary deeds, and the teacher of men who receive the truth with joy. He attracted many Jews to himself, and many Greeks as well: he is the Christ”

We might ask why the evidence from non-Christian sources is so scarce. The answer is not difficult. The importance of Christianity was not apparent from its beginnings: the events took place in a remote province of the Roman Empire, and they were hardly such as to provoke any great notice.

The Gospels: The most important sources for the life and teaching of Jesus are the Christian sources. In their letters, the Apostles (and especially St. Paul) allude to many facts in the life of Christ.

These allusions, however, are only drops of water compared to the wealth of information presented by the four Gospels. And we'll talk in detail about them in the next articles.

Faith - Formation of the Children 2023

- Fr. Victor Roche SVD, Secretary for New Evangelization



Dear Friends,

As you know, the Catholic Bishops of PNGSI issued a Pastoral Letter on 27 Nov 2022 (1st Sunday of Advent 2022). The focus of the Pastoral Letter for the two years 2023-24 is the Faith-formation of Children.

It was found out from the evaluation of the Conference Pastoral Plan 1 that many of the Catholic Parents are not able to teach the Catholic Faith to their children because they themselves do not know it well enough. That is the main reason that the Bishops are suggesting in the Pastoral letter that the children are the focus of our efforts in the year 2023. One year is not enough. We will focus all our pastoral efforts for the next two years (2023-24) on the Faith-formation of our children.

The possible programs that the families, communities, parishes and dioceses can follow are:

1.1 Programs at the pre-natal stage: In the next two years, 2023-24 at the pre-natal stage, the parents are given at least two sessions about the importance of respect for the mother and the child.

1.2 Positive parenting: It is good that the parents know the good effects of Positive Parenting; the parents learn to be positive towards their children instead of yelling or beating the children.

1.3 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE): How can the parents, extended family and the schools cater to the wholistic growth of the children- physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and morally?

1.4 Sunday School for Children: Most of the parishes have Sunday school for our Catholic Children before or after Sunday Mass. Some parishes and communities do not have Sunday school for children. We need to have a systematic

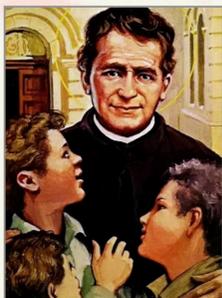
and unified lesson-plan for the Sunday School for PNG.

1.5 Holy Missionary Childhood of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS): It is a good program for the faith-formation of the children. Some parishes and dioceses follow them with great success.

1.6 Altar boys and girls: Most of our parishes in PNG have altar boys and girls for assisting at Mass. We need to have a systematic training and formation for the Altar Boys and Girls.

1.7 Saturday for Children: Saturday is a good time for children's activities in the parish. The Catholic children can come in the morning for one hour of catechesis; one hour of work or games. Parish priest and lay volunteers can have a regular workable program for children.

In the next issue, we can see how these programs can be followed in our communities and parishes.



Prayer to

St. John Bosco

Friend of the young.
Teacher in the ways of God.
Your dedication to empowering
the needy inspires us still.

Help me to work for a better world
where the young are given
the chance to flourish,
where the poor's dream
for justice can come true,
and where God's compassion
is shown to be real.
Intercede for me as I bring my needs
to you and to our heavenly Mother,
the Help of Christians.

Amen

Pope's Monthly Intention: For educators

(January)

We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all.



Social Communication Formation in Priestly Ministry

Sr Daisy Anne Lisania Augustine MSC,
Secretary for Social Communication



In an address to the Federation of the Asian Bishops Conference, Pope St Paul II through Cardinal Angelo Sodano said; "Priests today must not only receive a solid and complete formation in the sacred sciences; they must also know how to communicate the Christian faith in an effective and convincing way, making use of all the possibilities offered by the modern means of social communication. (Bangkok, May 2001)

The Church is concerned about sharing spiritual messages to humans as members of society. Social Communication therefore in a broader understanding is the communication *of* and *in* human society. As such it is not only concerned about Mass Media, like Press, Radio, TV or Film. Social Communication should be concerned about *all* ways and means of communication in human society. This includes all traditional means of communication like dance, theatre, songs and even group and interpersonal communication.

This was the understanding from the preparatory committee for the Second Vatican Council document *Inter Mirifica* on social communication. It was this committee that coined and proposed the expression 'social communication'. The expression is in a growing way also accepted beyond the Church and used also in non-Christian academic circles.

The new thinking of Vatican II has important consequences for priestly formation since the concern here is not only anymore alone the Mass Media but the whole range of human communication in society. It concerns all ways of communicating

with people and communities. In speaking generally of communication we very often automatically think of Mass Media or mass communication. This is, in Vatican II understanding, quite a limited view, which probably has contributed to a lack of awareness for the real communication formation in our seminaries and Church institutions.

The word *formation* and not *training* is purposely used here because training is concerned about skills and technologies whereas formation affects the whole person and his/her basic inner dispositions. Such a view goes beyond a narrow understanding of communication.

The Pastoral Instruction *Communio et Progressio* (1971, No.11) describes communication as "the giving of self in love"

If communication really is the 'giving of self in love' it should be at the core of any priestly formation. It signifies an essential element in formation because any priestly ministry finally is self – giving, reflecting 'kenosis' of the Lord. The same Pastoral Instruction in fact binds this attitude to Jesus Christ himself who revealed himself as the 'perfect communicator'

Avery Dulles, a renowned Jesuit theologian and professor and other theologians developed this understanding further in saying that the whole of theology can be considered under the perspective of communication. Referring to Rahner's concept of God's Self – Communication he concludes "that theology is at every point concerned with realities of communication". He unfolds this in reference to fundamental theology, fields of systemic theology like Christology, Creation, Ecclesiology, Eschatology,

sacraments and practical theology including missiology and pastoral theology.

If we follow Avery Dulles in seeing all areas of theology as expressions of God's Trinitarian communication also our teaching of Theology should have this dimension. It should begin with and include the reality of life, the interpersonal communication as well as the reality of our Mass Media culture.

If Mass Media reflect society, if they are, according to George Gerber, social indicators i.e. indicators of the state and situation of our society then they can also teach us something about the situation of the people around us and their world.

What does all this now mean for the communication formation of (future) priests? We should see that priests are supposed to be communicators "par excellence" but not only in the understanding of skills but rather to live and develop basic dispositions and attitudes of God's communication with and to us.

Because of this, we must learn to critically assess this 'new Culture' (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 37c) of communication which demands for priests and seminarians at least a basic media and communication education. At the same time, they should learn how to creatively use these modern means.

May the challenge of Archbishop Adriano Bernardini to the participants of the "3rd Bishops' Institute for Social Communications be for every one of us.

"Do not be afraid to invest in your priests, be it for their formation in the Seminary, as well as in their "on – going formation "as Priests. They are the Principal agents of Evangelization. (Bangkok, 2001)

Kamap Lait na Soim Rot igo long God

- Nigel Akuani

Mt Hagen : "Kamap lait na brukim tudak blong sin na opim ai blong ol manmeri na ol tu bai ken save long rot igo long kingdom bilong God," said Archbishop of Mt Hagen, Douglas Young SVD, as he encouraged newly ordained SVD Priest, Rex Andrew Dokta.

More than a thousand people flocked in to witness the special priestly ordination on Thursday 19th January 2022, at Tiling Komkul of St Paul's Parish, in the Archdiocese of Mt Hagen, Western Highlands Province. Present for the ceremony were SVD Provincial Superior PNG, Father Joseph Orathinkal; Fr John Ryan SVD, former Chaplain of Divine Word University; Priests and Religious; Deacons and Seminarians; families and friends; and media personnel from Trinity FM and Radio Maria PNG.

The ordination was guided by the theme, '*I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service,*' taken from Timothy 1:12.

Abp Young in his homily, reflected on the aspect of 'Salt and Light' and urged young Fr Rex to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to all areas of society.

"Nau yumi stap long taim we igat planti tudak na ol pipol blong yumi faul long gutpla rot krais ibin lainim yumi long en. Kamap olem sol na lait na bringim olgeta dispela manmeri igo long kingdom bilong Papa God," he said.

Fr Rex recalled how his journey of becoming a priest wasn't easy but reminded the faithful gathered to always put God before any and all challenges in order to succeed. "It was a long and hard road filled with so many challenges especially when my dad passed because he was very supportive and it was his dream for me to be ordained here in Komkui. I thank God for seeing me through," he stated.

Chairman of the Ordination's Organizing Committee, Mr Christopher Philip, congratulated the newly ordained Priest, and thanked the Catholic church for calling their son, Rex Andrew, from Komkui to become an inspirational vessel of God.

Various exotic traditional dances were performed throughout by members from the archdiocese's different outstations and parishes. The Choir group was led by youths from St Paul's Parish.

Fr Rex celebrated his first thanksgiving mass on 20th January, at the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Rebiambul, with fellow brother Priests, Religious, and



Abp Douglas Young SVD lays hands on newly ordained priest Fr. Rex Andrew Dokta SVD. (Picture supplied)

members from his Komkui Community. He will be later sent as a Missionary Priest to Kenya in Africa.

The announcement was made by Fr. Josh Orathinkal during the ordination.

He is the 24th Papua New Guinean SVD being ordained today. Thursday 12th January, saw the ordination of Fr John Hal, at Kumin in the Diocese of Mendi and today another SVD Ordination in Mt. Hagen Archdiocese.

Sisters empowered by Theology Workshop

- Jessica Oata

Port Moresby: Five Religious Sisters from four congregations successfully completed an intense but insightful program of Theology from January 13th – 21st at the Catholic Bishops Conference.

Focused on Sacraments and Sacramentality, the program was aimed at empowering Religious women by enriching them with theological knowledge to strengthen them in their pastoral and social work and was facilitated by lecturers from the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea Sr. Helen Nolen rsm and Sr. Nicole Rotaru rsm.

"It always gives me joy to see religious women going out with a whole new level of confidence to do

their pastoral ministry after being empowered through the sessions", said Sr. Helen.

Sessions on the workshop included interactive engagement, periods of silent reflection, journal writing/recording, reflective reading, art imagery, lectures, music and song, role play and group discussions.

Participant from the MSC congregation Sr. Evelyn Tarpakia said the program was an enlightenment of how we can see Theology in many different ways and to come to its simplest form that we can understand.

"The program helped me to understand on a deeper level what sacraments are and how we can

inter-relate them with our traditional initiations", she said.

The five nuns who attended the program are from the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart (MSC), Sisters of Saint Joseph of Cluny (SJC), Handmaids of the Lord (AD) and Filiae Mariae Immaculatae (FMI).



Group picture of participants and the facilitators.

Campaign for Ecological Justice

Solwara 1 Seabed Mining exploration project in the Bismarck Sea in Papua New Guinea.

Caritas PNG through our Bishops has made its position clear on many occasions that Seabed Mining is not an option.

Sound scientific knowledge and theology have warned governments of the environmental devastation the mining activity brings. However, after the first exploration by Nautilus Mineral failed, the Government allowed for the Exploration license to be bought off with all Nautilus mineral assets by a new company.

On record, the Solwara 1 project is the first international Seabed Mining exploration on earth. This means our ocean will be used as an international seabed exploration test laboratory.

As the mining giants prepare for new explorations and mining, we also extend the call to advocate ecological justice amongst our religious and laity in the Spirit of Laudato SI – caring for our common home.

The awareness and campaigns are taking momentum across coastal and island provinces.

Kavieng Diocesan Caritas Coordinator John Momori who is taking the lead said objection forms have been shared with Diocesan Coordinators and Volunteers in Alotau, Bougainville, Rabaul, Kavieng, Manus and Madang as they prepare to support civil society and Environmental NGOs to raise objections against Deepsea Mining.

In Alotau, Diocesan Caritas Coordinator, James Tomiyavau, is doing educational awareness in schools on the risks that Seabed Mining will potentially have on livelihood and the future of Marine ecology for the Milne Bay Islands.

The campaign on ecological justice for the ocean is also a key topic of discussion at the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conference of Oceania (FCBCO) meeting in Suva, Fiji in February this year.

Coinciding with our campaign on Seabed Mining here in Papua New Guinea, The FCBCO theme for their meeting in Fiji is "Save the ocean to save Mother Earth".



Primary school students and teachers of Kulumadai Primary School on woodlark island after an awareness information session on the impact of Seabed mining.

The ocean covers 71% of the earth, holds 95% of all earth's water, and provides for the earth's balance of oxygen and carbon cycle. By protecting the ocean, we are saving Mother Earth to provide for the generations to come.

This call for the common good of earth is echoed in the words of Archbishop Oscar Romero, "We are prophets of a future not our own".

Today we are facing an eminent threat to our ocean, particularly with the resurfacing of the

Right Relationships in Ministry Protocols

-Sr. Ancy John SCSA

Rabaul: The Right Relationships in Ministry of the Catholic Bishops Conference had its first workshop of this year 2023, from January 3-6 at Degenhardt Convention Centre, Vunapope, in the Archdiocese of Rabaul.

Together with the Archbishop of Rabaul Most Rev. Rochus Tatamai MSC, a total of 43 diocesan and a very few Religious priests attended the two and half day workshop.

The purpose of the workshop was to create an awareness on the RR Protocols and its importance in the priestly ministry as well as having boundaries in Ministries.

Archbishop Tatamai felt that it was very appropriate time to induct them on the Right Relationships protocols.

The objective of the workshop was to create in the participants an awareness that various forms of

abuses are occurring in the church and in our ministries and to prevent them from such.

The workshop dwelt on the Role of the priests in the parishes, importance of setting professional and ministerial boundaries, clericalism, abuses in the Church, call to holiness in today's world following the Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete et Exultate of His Holiness Pope Francis, Safeguarding with compassion, RR Protocols and Child protection Policy of the Catholic Church in PNGSI.

They were challenged with the protocols that if any abuses do happen, church leaders will respond with respect, compassion, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation. Protection of children and vulnerable people are the core of the Gospel and the mission of Evangelization.

A similar workshop for another one and half day was held for all the Women Religious of the



Priests taking notes during sessions. (Picture supplied)

Archdiocese at the Couppe Conference Centre. There were 32 women religious from four different congregations.

The Right Relationships in Ministry Directress, Sr Ancy John SCSA facilitated the sessions.

Year of Priests Declared

-Abp Rochus Tatamai MSC

Kokopo: With the theme: *Personal growth, Spiritual Growth and Spiritual Formation for an effective Fruitful Parish Ministry*, the Year of the Priests was launched in the Archdiocese of Rabaul on January 1, 2023 by the Apostolic Nuncio his excellency Abp Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez.

The launching is a pastoral initiative and response to the Conference Pastoral Plan.

Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Rabaul Abp Rochus Tatamai said that in order for the diocese to move forward, all baptised faithful have to undergo renewal as they are key agents in pastoral leadership and have an influential role in the parishes throughout the three deaneries of Pomio, Kokopo and Rabaul.

The launching was followed by an opportunity for the Catholic faithful to interact with His excellency Abp Fermin Sosa Rodriguez and listen to his teachings.

He encouraged the people to accept and be inspired by the Holy Spirit to see transformation in their daily lives.



Group picture with Abp. Fermin Sosa Rodriguez and Abp. Rochus Tatamai MSC.

Feast of St Francis de Sales commemorated

-Ahisha Mangot and Jessica Oata

Port Moresby: Journalists, media personnel from different media organizations and the staff of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands celebrated the Feast of St Francis de Sales, the patron Saint of Journalists and Writers on January 24th, 2023.

Hosted by the Social Communications Commission of CBCPNGSI and guided by the World Communications Day theme, the event was celebrated with the theme: "**Speaking the truth in LOVE**" and present as guest speakers were Auxiliary Bishop of Wabag Bp. Justin Ain Soongie and President of the Catholic Professionals Society Mr. Paul Harricknen.

The speakers advocated and presented on two ongoing issues affecting men, women and children in the society: Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV) and Gender Based Violence (GBV).

Participants also had the opportunity to evaluate and challenge themselves to work collaboratively and coordinate themselves to address and advocate on these issues consistently, by doing news reports, follow up reports and speaking up without fear or favour.

The celebrations of the Feast of St. Francis de Sales was significant for the Social Communications Commission because it was the first of its kind and it will be celebrated annually in the coming years.



Guest speakers Bp Justin Ain Soongie and Mr Paul Harricknen.

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, 2023**.

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