



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

July 2020

Issue 175

Pope speaks of Unity and Prophecy on Feasts of Sts Peter and Paul

Pope Francis focused on the keywords unity and prophecy in his homily at Mass on June 29, 2020, the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul. also included the blessing of the pallia to be bestowed on the Dean of the College of Cardinals and the Metropolitan Archbishops named in the last year.

another, but to love one another. He is the one who unites us, without making us all alike. He unites us in our differences.

Regarding prophecy, Pope Francis recalled Jesus' challenging question to Peter: "Who do you say that I am" and Peter's prophetic admission that He was the Lord. Peter's proclamation led Jesus to say he would build the Church on the apostle, thus changing the direction of the man's life. Likewise, Saul was struck blind and encountered the Lord in a manner that would lead him to become Paul, a great teacher and evangelist.

"Today we need prophecy, but real prophecy: not fast talkers who promise the impossible, but testimonies that the Gospel is possible," the Holy Father said. "What is needed are not miraculous shows. It makes me sad when I hear someone say, 'We want a prophetic Church'. All right. But what are you doing, so that the Church can be prophetic? We need lives that show the miracle of God's love."

We need pastors who offer their lives: *lovers of God*. That is how Peter and Paul preached Jesus, as men in love with God. At his crucifixion, Peter did not think about himself but about his Lord, and,

considering himself unworthy of dying like Jesus, asked to be crucified upside down. Before his beheading, Paul thought only of offering his life; he wrote that he wanted to be "poured out like a libation" (2 Tim 4:6). That was prophecy. Not words. That was prophecy, the prophecy that changed history.

Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus prophesied to Peter: "You are Peter and on this rock, I will build my Church". There is a similar prophecy for us too. It is found in the last book of the Bible, where Jesus promises his faithful witnesses "a white stone, on which a new name is written" (Rev 2:17).

Just as the Lord turned Simon into Peter, so he is calling each one of us, in order to make us living stones with which to build a renewed Church and a renewed humanity. There are always those who destroy unity and stifle prophecy, yet the Lord believes in us and he asks you: "Do you want to be a builder of unity? Do you want to be a prophet of my heaven on earth?" Brothers and sisters, let us be challenged by Jesus, and find the courage to say to him: "Yes, I do!"



Rome: The celebration took place in St. Peter's Basilica at the Altar of the Chair in St Peter's Basilica, with the participation of a limited number of the faithful in light of the pandemic health restrictions.

Referring to unity, the Pope noted that on this feast day, the Church celebrates "two very different individuals: Peter, a fisherman who spent his days amid boats and nets, and Paul, a learned Pharisee who taught in synagogues.

When they went forth on mission, Peter spoke to Jews, and Paul to pagans. And when their paths crossed, they could argue heatedly...". In short, they were two very different people, yet they saw one another as brothers, as happens in close-knit families where there may be frequent arguments but unending love. Yet the closeness that joined Peter and Paul did not come from natural inclinations, but from the Lord. He did not command us to like one

New Archbishop appointed for Rabaul

The Holy Father has appointed Archbishop of Rabaul His Excellency Most Reverend Rochus Tatamai, MSC, until now Bishop of the Diocese of Kavieng.

The appointment follows the resignation of His Grace Most Reverend Francesco Panfilo sdb from the pastoral governance of the Archdiocese of Rabaul for having reached the age limit.

His Holiness Pope Francis accepted the resignation and appointed Most Reverend Rochus Tatamai msc on Friday, 19th June at 8:00pm, PNG time.

The newly appointed Archbishop is from Rakunai, East New Britain Province which is also the home of BI Peter ToRot.

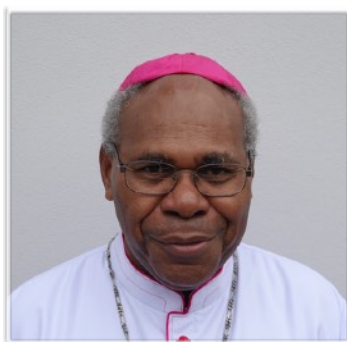
He was first appointed as Auxillary Bishop of the Diocese of Kerema by the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI on 8th July 2005. On 29th November 2007, the same Supreme Pontiff appointed him Bishop of the Diocese of Bereina.

In 2017, Bishop Tatamai was elected President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

On 22nd June 2018, the Holy Father Pope Francis appointed him Bishop of the Diocese of Kavieng.

The Nuncio has urged for all to pray for him so that the Lord may bless and guide him as he takes up the pastoral governance of the Archdiocese of Rabaul.

On behalf of the Catholic communities and agencies: Congratulations to Most Reverend Rochus Tatamai msc, for his new mission in the Church; and our sincerest Gratitude to Archbishop Francisco Panfilo sdb, for his dedicated service to the Church in Rabaul.



Catholic Bishops from across PNG gathered in the Nation's Capital for the 61st Annual General Meeting. It was held from 23rd June to 3rd July at the Catholic Bishops Conference.

The Bishops from Solomon Islands were not able to participate because of COVID19 quarantine requirements.

The theme of the meeting was: **"Our Catholic Laity: Holy, Formed and Sent for Service."**

61st AGM 2020

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Catholic Professionals raise concern on Public Health Bill



Port Moresby: In a press conference, the Catholic Professionals Society openly deplored the Public Health Emergency bill that the Government of Papua New Guinea had passed recently.

On Thursday June 18th, the faith-based organization said the extreme restrictions under the emergency laws are affecting the churches, religious faith and worship activities.

The Catholic Professionals Society called on the Ombudsman Commission to initiate a constitutional reference in the Supreme court to determine the constitutionality of this emergency law.

While giving the background of the emergency law to the audience, President of CPS, Mr. Paul Harricknen said the emergency bill was passed on

June 12, 2020 and was rushed in total secrecy without justification while the bill also contains serious constitutional issues, lacks transparency and accountability. There were eight concerns highlighted by CPS

from the bill. Firstly, the bill takes away powers and functions of the Legislative arm to the Executive Arm which compromises the supervisory powers of the Parliament and delegates powers without reservation.

Secondly, the Bill confers unlimited powers to the controller without much oversight from the NEC. This remains dangerous for common people.

The third point claims the word 'emergency' was not adequately defined under the Bill; it is risky especially when powers are left to the executive government of the day.

Financial accountability under the Public funds is seeming without transparency and accountability and that is the fourth issue of the Bill that CPS saw.

Important constitutional rights and freedom of the people will also be suspended and deserved the interpretation of the supreme court before the passing.

The sixth argument that CPS raised stated that the bill excluded provisions for Extra-Territorial Applications like vessels overseas or foreign vessels in Papua New Guinea. Furthermore, the penalties are onerous considering the freedoms and rights on hand.

Lastly, the transitional and savings provisions under the bill have retrospective effect, which means any transparency and accountability of funds will be at the discretion of the Controller there is no oversight of the Auditor General.

"Our churches and people have been praying and will continue to pray for the protection and end to this COVID-19 Pandemic" he concluded his statement.

Picture 1: Mr Paul Harricknen addressing the media and public.

Picture 2: The media and general public at the press conference. Picture: Rosemary Yambune



Living amidst COVID-19

Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb, Secretary for Social Communication

It has all happened so suddenly. Symptoms of the SARS live virus, hygiene and sanitising, social distancing and stay at home instructions have been constant reminders to all of us. Over the past

months we have been engaged in online education and zoom meetings and have been connected with friends and family using a variety of programs that new technology offers us.

We may want to return to early 2020 and go about our peaceful lives, however, COVID-19 has changed all that. It has changed our daily routine and above all the outlook to our future. Living amidst the COVID-19 we are now forced to make sudden and drastic shifts to our way of life. The pandemic has made us reflect on the relationship between each of us and the environment. With pollution reduced the beauty of places have been revealed. Family time has been enriched and our personal interaction with each other has led us to appreciate the hidden qualities of heart and mind of our loved ones. We

have realized that every person, be they the marginalized, the underprivileged or the refugees, form a vital part of our community and that we are all in it together. No one can be left out. Above all, these weeks have given each of us the possibility to spend quiet time in reflection and prayer and enter into a deeper relationship with our Lord, our Master and our Creator.

As we resume our activities, uncertain of the future, we can still find reasons to hope as we hold on to the God who loves us and on whom we ultimately depend. We need to carefully put into practice the vital lessons we have learnt over these past few weeks. We need to ensure that our common home, our relationships and above all our dependence on God will empower us and ensure that we keep ourselves and our communities healthy and safe.

May the experience of our lockdown inspire each of us to live our lives positively as we put into practice the 'New Normal'.

God bless you all!

Gender-based violence is everybody's business



- Abigail Seta

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a social pandemic that has been prevalent for decades and should be everybody's business as countless women have lost their lives in brutal ways to it.

It does not discriminate. It does not 'respect limits or borders.' It is seen as normal and as part of society that many of us have become bystanders to this issue.

Recently, the inhuman killing of a young woman and mother of two sparked outrage across the country and many have voiced their concerns. One of those voices was the Catholic Professionals Society of PNG (CPS) where they condemned in 'strongest terms the streak of senseless, barbaric and inhuman killings against our women in PNG.'

In an interview with CPS President, Mr Paul Harricknen on the types of laws in place for victims of GBV, he stated that there is a Family Protection Act 2013 that provides for victims for domestic violence to obtain protective or restraining orders against the perpetrators of domestic violence. Although this Act is in place, the main problem is the enforcement of the laws.

"The effectiveness of laws is as good as the people entrusted with enforcement. Our police and welfare officers are well placed through the Family and Sexual Violence Committees (FSVAC) through out the country to help with domestic violence and GBV issues," he said.

He said that the government funding and professional commitment of officers involved in enforcement need to step up to help victims and survivors of gender-based violence. He advised that those who know of domestic violence even within the family members must help the victim and not simply watch and do nothing until it is too late.

GBV is not a private matter and therefore, we should not be bystanders. It is everybody's business.

Communicating change through short films

- Abigail Seta



Port Moresby: The Social Communications Commission of the Catholic Bishops Conference hosted its 3rd Media Education Seminar for 2020 that had nine schools create and produce short films.

Held from 26th to 28th June at the Emmaus Conference Centre, Boroko, the short films focused on the theme 'Keep it Clean. Go Green' and the COVID-19 Precautionary measures.

"The important aspect of this program is not merely to communicate an idea or a news item but how we can elicit change in ourselves, make sure that there is community change and ultimately to ensure that there is change at the level of government," said Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb, Social Communications Commission Secretary as he spoke on the aim of communicating messages through short film.

The seminar commenced on Friday, 26th June with the first session on COVID-19 that was facilitated by Caritas Australia Representative, Charlotte Vada. In her session, she spoke on the

'New Normal: Risk Communication and the 6 Key COVID-19 Messages.' She challenged the students to be good risk communicators.

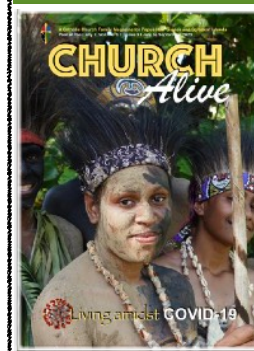
The second day of the program began with a session on the Environment that was facilitated by Environmentalist, Carol Aigilo and Marianville Secondary School Teacher, Janice Warak. Both facilitators dwelt on Climate Change and its impact on the communities. This was then followed by sessions on Storyboard, 20 Second Films and Shooting Short films by the CBC SOCOM Team. The sessions had activities that required the students to create their storyboards and shoot 20 second films on COVID-19 and 2 to 5-minute films on the environment.

The third day of the seminar dwelt on Writing Articles by Jubilee Secondary School Teacher, Sheryll Isoaimo. The students wrote articles on the media seminar and were given the chance to interview others. Apart from the sessions, the program also had prayer moments, interactive games and reflection time.

The three-day program concluded with a presentation of eighteen short films. The films were screened by Archbishop Emeritus Francesco Panfilo sdb, newly appointed Archbishop Rochus Tatamai MSC, Bp Donald Lippert, principals from the different schools and invited guests.

The nine schools that participated in the seminar were from Don Bosco Technological Institute, Boroko; Don Bosco Technical School, Gabutu; Limana Vocational Centre, Gordons; De La Salle Secondary School, Bomana; La Salle Technical College, Hohola; Marianville Secondary School, Bomana; Caritas Technical Secondary School, Boroka; Jubilee Catholic Secondary School, Hohola and St Charles Lwanga Secondary School, Gerehu.

CHURCH ALIVE MAGAZINE



Church Alive Magazine a Catholic Family magazine for Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Volume 2, Issue 3, July to September.

Price: K2/

Bulk purchase of 50 copies and more are priced at K1.50 a copy



Domestic violence is the tip of the iceberg

Fr. Giorgio Licini, PIME, CBC General Secretary

Amidst the coronavirus crisis our attention was once again caught, over the last few days, by terrible facts of domestic violence. It is particularly gruesome when human evil unveils its worst effects on women and children. To see the conjugal relationship shattered by mistrust and murderous reaction is simply disheartening. Family violence is destroying souls before bodies. It denies the basic and unique human attitude for love and care destined not only to generate good sentiments but human life as well. There is no way to justify the slightest manifestation of violence against the weak and the kind, the women, the children, the disabled and the elderly.

Family violence is much more regrettable than social violence, though this cannot be condoned as well. It is frequently fueled by alcoholism, which in turn is a reaction to neglect, lack of purpose and opportunities, such as means for studies, employment, just salaries, and decent leisure facilities. Rascalism is at the same time the result of personal incapacity or laziness and need of survival in an environment which offers insufficient

opportunities and resources. Violence increases in society when people feel that they are alone to fend for themselves, and nobody really stands at their side.

Much more so if violence stems from the institutional level. Police brutality is just the most immediate manifestation of the State failing its citizens. Lack of professionalism and resort to coercion and abuse is not a sign of strength. It is rather proof of weakness and confusion, made worse by arrogance in administration. People feel abused when neglected by bureaucrats, administrators, local and national politicians, when pushed aside as voiceless and powerless. Rejection is unconsciously interiorized and later returned by violent attitudes and actions.

What response to the intertwined evil of domestic, social, and institutional violence? No easy answer, indeed! But the most urgent and effective medicine probably must be supplied at the level of the family. The family is rapidly deteriorating in Papua New Guinea. The prevalence of occasional relationships prevents mature and emotionally stable partnerships beyond initial infatuation. Without dedicated parents, children cannot grow properly mentored, cared for, and

educated. That will add in the future to the inherent difficulty of young people to control emotions and violent instincts.

It would be unfair, however, to lay the blame of violence on the youth. It is the responsibility of the State and the government of the day, with the support of the sitting Parliament, to ensure proper education, policing, and social services. Violence is not dealt with repression alone, but with constant efforts at education, mind changing, advocacy and proper legislation aiming at positive social change.

What stands between the family and the State is of paramount importance as well, especially for the youth: sports associations, the education system, non-government organizations, the Churches. They are all needed to take the children and the youth out of the streets, transform their confused wandering into quality time with a message and a purpose, give them a direction beyond emotions, lust and immediate satisfaction.

Petty violence is frequently being perpetrated by young people. But that is just the tip of the iceberg of a much deeper situation of arrogance and neglect of which the adults and at times the leaders are directly responsible.



The Story of Creation

- Marie Mondu, CBC Development Secretary

On the 24th of May, a short but important awareness was given to 30 children in the Diocese of Bereina. The children who were accompanied by their 4 female teachers, attend the primary school that is located in the heart of the Diocese. It is run by the Canavis Sisters, a religious group that originates from Italy and are doing mission work in PNG. What is very visible about this congregation is their love of children and care for creation. Their residents all use solar power systems with walls covered by brick made of local clay.

Explaining Pope Francis' Encyclical on Laudato Si to a group of young children was challenging. However, soon relating our call to care for creation to the Book of Genesis opened doors to interpretation. The following points are very relevant to all Christians:

- We are descendants of Adam and Eve - who were instructed specifically to multiply and govern all that God created.
- By mismanagement of Creation we have disobeyed once more our Creator.
- We can all reverse and undo this wrong by adapting healthy practices to care for the environment.
- Some suggestions from the students include: Replanting trees, collecting rubbish and recycling, limit bush burning and logging activities.

Towards the end of the session the children did a practical tree planting activity. They were tasked to work in groups to keep an eye on their trees weekly, and taught how to look after the seed they have planted. It was heartwarming to notice their eagerness and little hands learn to care for the environment. There is hope that they can become better stewards as they grow up.

The "Keep it Clean, Go Green" campaign is still ongoing and every diocese is challenged to plant 5000 trees to reach the target of 100,000 trees. Questions were raised on where to get seedlings, a practical challenge to which Dioceses, parishes and families must tackle by building tree seedling nurseries to distribute to faithfuls.



Emeritus Bishop passes on

On 2nd June 2020, Bp Desmond Charles Moore, MSC, Bishop Emeritus of Alotau-Sideia passed away in the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia. He was 94 years old.

The late Desmond Moore, MSC, was the second bishop of Alotau and served for 31 long years from 1970-2001. He took over from the late Bp. John Doyle, and was replaced by Abp. Francesco Panfilo.

In remembrance of him, Bp Rolando Santos, Bishop of Alotau-Sideia described the late Bishop as respectful and kind as he always encouraged his priests to be faithful to their vocation and ministry.

"Thank you, Bp. Des Moore, for the good and inspiring example you give me as a bishop, and for all the good work you did in this diocese that 'all may be one in the love of Christ.'

"As you proclaimed the Gospel and celebrated the sacraments faithfully for the salvation of God's people, may you now receive the Lord's reward and enter into his Kingdom," said Bp Rolando.

The late bishop was born in Thebarton, Australia on 12th May 1926. He was ordained priest of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on 27th July 1957 and appointed as Bishop of Alotau-Sideia on 7th March 1970.

It was on 2nd July that same year when he was ordained as Bishop. He was replaced on 15th June 2001.

Diocese of Wabag donates relief supplies

- Fr Newman Kingi

Wabag: The Diocese of Wabag has stepped forward in an effort to assist victims of frost and other natural calamities.

Assistance was given through the supply of seed banks, water tanks and jerry cans, and is part of a five-year Aid Program of CDW. It is headed by Sr. John Mary FIHM, Secretary of Bishop Arnold Orowae of Wabag, to help its disaster-stricken population.

Enga province over recent months has been hard hit by prolonged drought and famine and the water tanks supplied

will cater for water provision for the seeds during the dry season.

12000 seeds have already been distributed in the province's four districts of Wapendamanda, Wabag, Lagiam- Porgera and Kandep.

Prior to the distribution of seeds, a total of 49 training workshops were conducted with selected people from the four districts.

The training focused on planting, nurturing, and production of the seeds; food processing, preservation and sustainability; methods of



cooking, and operation of mill machines. The Diocese of Wabag is located in the higher altitude and remote villages are prone to experiencing frost. Heavy downpour is occasionally the cause of environmental damage.

- Fr. Joseph Durero and Benny Bogg

Pentecost Message: God is in us



Madang: Madang Holy Spirit Cathedral was filled to capacity on Pentecost Sunday as it marked many reasons for the parish to celebrate, including its feast-day and name's-day.

A double Eucharistic mass opened the celebrations for the nine parish communities and

Archbishop, Anton Bal, Vicar General and Parish Priest, Fr. Joseph Durero and Vicar Pastoral, Fr. Solomon Akaya who co-celebrated the mass added bonus to the parish's joyous occasion.

Archbishop Anton Bal's main message for Pentecost

over 1,000 Catholic members to sing, dance and witness their faith in action. The presence of Madang

was "God is in us." This message was repeated throughout the celebration as parishioners reminded themselves that the occasion also marks their hard work and contributions towards the recent completion of the K800,000 extension of the Cathedral building, the successful hosting of 2019 Parish Youth Rally and the building and completion of the K600,00 Archbishop's House - which is a valuable addition to parish infrastructure- built with funding from Emeritus Bishop Rev Stephen Reichert.

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

'Keep it Clean. Go Green.'

Criteria for competition

- Films and photographs to reflect the theme
- Participants: Individual - 15 to 26 years of age Institutions - Schools, colleges, parishes etc

- All participants to fill out a registration form.
- Due date: **Saturday, 15th August 2020.**

Registration form can be downloaded from the CBC Website: www.pngsicbc.com

For more information, contact:
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A call to end all forms of violence

Following the brutal murder of a young mother, Ms Jenelyn Kennedy, human rights, civil society and other professional groups have called for an end to all forms of violence.

One of those groups was the Catholic Professionals Society

PNG. "Despite much effort both by the public and private sectors on awareness against Gender Based Violence (GBV) it seems this evil has no end. This is unacceptable. This behaviour is evil that must be eradicated. We call on the Government, churches and communities to double efforts in protecting our

women and vulnerable persons and groups," they stated.

"The enforcement agents of Government must seriously, professionally and faithfully enforce the laws. We cannot call for more laws when we cannot enforce the laws we already have for the protection of our people especially the vulnerable persons and groups."

Representatives of the Human Rights and Civil Society, Marie Mondu, Eva Wangihama and Shirley Kaupa also took a stance on 24th June in a media statement.

Marie Mondu who is also the Development Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC) said that justice is not enough and that all violence needs to end. She called on the government to prioritise its commitment to end all forms of violence.

Ms Eva Wangihama, Laity Commission Secretary of CBC said that one form of violence that is increasingly creeping into PNG is the trafficking of women and girls. Ms Wangihama said men shouldn't use their masculinity to exert power over women.

She called on the government and its agents to – re-educate men in proper moral and ethical behaviour. She also added that as for killings; it is a mortal sin, and being a Christian country it is clearly against the Sixth Commandment that states – "thou shall not kill."

The group called on the 8 million citizens of PNG not be mere spectators and observers of violent behaviour happening in their homes, workplaces, streets, and communities and take a stand against all forms of violence.

Refugees encouraged to uphold their dignity

- Nigel Akuani

Port Moresby: "Refugees are not any different from you and I, and deserve just as much respect and dignity like every other person," said Honourable Garry Juffa, Governor of Oro Province.

The governor made the statement during the 2020 World Refugee Day, commemorated by Caritas PNG on Saturday 20th June, at the Limana Vocational Centre, Gordons.

The occasion had Mr Juffa as its keynote speaker, and other special guests that included Mr Lance Bonneau, Chief of Mission of the International Organisation for Migration; Mr Kedar Poudyal, Human Rights Adviser from the UN Office of the High Commission of Human Rights; Rev Fr Giorgio Licini PIME, General Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBCPNGSI); West Papuan Refugees from Hohola, Rainbow and Waigani, Staff of CBC and Immigration; Staff and students from Limana Vocational School.

In his keynote address Governor Juffa commanded the efforts of Caritas PNG and the

Catholic Bishops Conference and reassured that the issues affecting refugee resettlement would be raised on the floor of parliament. He urged for West Papuan communities especially the younger generation to take full advantage of opportunities presented. He implored from the local population empathy and hospitality toward all those who were seeking asylum.

"For us Melanesians it is in our culture and custom to accept people and share what we have with them, and we are also told to practice it by the word of God," he stated.

Ms Mavis Tito, Director of Caritas PNG, stated that the organisation's mandate is to be the voice of the poor, vulnerable and marginalised and will continue advocating for refugees in PNG.

"Caritas PNG will continue to provide support where it can through advocacy, scholarships and immediate relief assistance," she said.

Mr Bonneau clarified how the term 'refugee' was not a name but a word that referred to the circumstance of a person or group of people due to



L-R: Hon. Garry Juffa, Fr Giorgio Licini, Mr Bas Fairio and Mr Lance Bonneau.

their situation. He urged for people seeking refuge to rise, speak up and act to enable support to be given.

Mr Bas Fairio, spokesperson for the refugees, stressed the importance of education and urged young West Papuan individuals living in PNG to embrace it and make a change for the betterment of their people.



Bp Rolando Santos in a group discussion at the talk.

Port Moresby: An animated session of information and discussion on 'New Evangelization' was held

New Evangelization talk

- Rosemary Yambune

on Saturday, June 22nd at St Josephs, Boroko.

Fr Victor Roche svd, secretary of the New Evangelization commission dwelt on the definition of New Evangelization. He outlined the need to strengthen our Catholic Faith and how the Laity, priests, and religious can be New Evangelisers.

Fr Victor dwelt on a brief history of evangelization. He emphasized that new evangelization refers to new ardour, a new method and new expressions.

He also highlighted the "Kerygma Program" which would be presented during the Annual General Meeting for Bishops to approve, before it would be shared to the dioceses for incorporation and evangelizing.

The audience was given time to discuss and present feedback on the positive aspects of the catholic church, the challenges, and the possible solutions to the challenges.

The lively talk captured the attention of the audience of nearly a hundred people in the room.

"The challenge is with you and me, what do I do to make a difference and what will you do to make a difference," concluded Bp Otto Separy, the Bishop for New Evangelization.

Bp Rolando Santos, the Bishop of Alotau- Sideia was also present for the session. Laypeople, members of the Catholic Professionals society, seminarians and parishioners of St Josephs participated in the discussions.

Good mental health vital to coping with COVID-19

- Nigel Akuani

Port Moresby: A Mental Health Talk focused at helping people cope with the effects of COVID-19, was held on Wednesday 10th June at the Catholic Bishops Conference Headquarters in Gordons.

The talk had as its keynote speaker Dr. Umadevi Ambihaipahar OBE, a pioneer in the field of mental health in PNG, having driven mental health services at the national level since 1999.

Her session dwelt on methods essential to coping with impacts and stress of COVID-19, overcoming stress and anxiety, importance of a good mental spiritual and physical health, safety precautions and advise for adults and children,

health centres, personnel and programs in place for help and support.

In her address she told of how the COVID-19 pandemic was a devastating global crisis that caused stress, pain and grief to many, and emphasized the essential role positive mental health played in coping with its effects.

"COVID-19 is a crisis, but also a window of opportunity and optimism for humanity to reflect and build its way out from, and emerge stronger than ever before," she said.

"When you have a positive emotion that is accompanied by frequent exercise, the endorphin in the body increases and that significantly reduces the stress and pain level experienced in both mind and body."

74 participants attended the talk session that included students and teachers, councillors, Priests and Religious, lay persons, health workers, care givers, media personal and members of the public. Participating schools included Don Bosco Technical School (DBTS), Don Bosco Technological Institute (DBTI), La Salle Technical College, and St Charles Lwanga Secondary School (SCLSS).

The talk was moderated by Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb, Social Communications Secretary of the



CBCPNGSI.

Picture 1: Dr Umadevi Ambihaipahar speaking at the talk

Picture 2: Relaxation exercise for the audience

Pictures by Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb

Catholic Reporter

Invites you to send in your articles, photograph and reflections

on events and happenings in your parish, community, institution and diocese.

Editor: **Fr. Ambrose Pereira sdb**

Sub Editor: **Abigail Seta** Layout: **CBC SOCOM**

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on or before **20th of the month, 2020**

Published by: **Catholic Bishops Conference PNGSI**