



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

The Catholic Reporter

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Pope at Mass in Mongolia: Christian faith is the answer to thirst for love

- Christopher Wells

In his homily during Sunday Mass in Ulaanbaatar, Pope Francis reflects on "the thirst" within every human being and "the love that quenches that thirst."

Mongolia, an "immense" country, "rich in history and culture", is yet "marked by the aridity of the steppes and the desert" – an apt metaphor for the thirst for happiness and love that is found in the heart of every human being.

In his homily during Mass on Sunday in Ulaanbaatar's Steppe Arena, Pope Francis dwelt on this "thirst within us" and "the love that quenches it," taking his inspiration from the day's responsorial Psalm: "O God... my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water."

Only Christ can quench our thirst: This verse invites us first "to acknowledge the thirst within us." The Psalmist's words "have a particular resonance in a land like Mongolia, with its traditional nomadic culture," the Pope explained, adding, "All of us are 'God's nomads,' pilgrims in search of happiness, wayfarers searching for love."

"Dear brothers and sisters," Pope Francis said, "the Christian faith is the answer to this thirst... For in this thirst lies the great mystery of our humanity: it opens our hearts to the living God, the God of love, who comes to meet us and to make us his children, brothers and sisters to one another."

The Holy Father said, "This is the heart of the Christian faith: God, who is love, has drawn near to you in His Son Jesus, and wants to share in your life, your work, your dreams, and your thirst for happiness."

If at times in our lives we "experience the desert of loneliness, fatigue, and emptiness," the Pope said, citing St Augustine, God refreshes us with "the dew of His Word... He has opened for us a highway in the desert, Our Lord Jesus Christ." God offers us consolation in the preachers of the word, and water in the desert "by filling those preachers with the Holy Spirit."

The heart of our faith: This Word, Pope Francis said, "always brings us back to the very heart of our faith: allowing ourselves to be loved by God and in turn to make our lives an offering of love. For love alone truly quenches our thirst."



Turning to the Gospel, which speaks of Peter's inability to accept Jesus' Passion and Cross, Pope Francis said the worldliness exemplified by Peter "leads nowhere; indeed, it leaves us thirstier than before." Only by denying ourselves and taking up our crosses, as Jesus did, will we be able to satisfy the thirst in our lives.

This, the Pope said, "is the truth that Jesus wants us to discover, the truth He wants to reveal to all of you and to this land of Mongolia: You need not be famous, rich, or powerful to be happy. Only love satisfies our hearts' thirst, only love heals our wounds, only love brings us true joy."

Pope Francis called on all of us to take to heart the Lord's words to Peter, to become disciples of Jesus, to walk in his footsteps and stop thinking as the world does.

"If we do this," the Pope said, "we will be able, with the grace of Christ and the Holy Spirit, to journey along the path of love... when we lose our lives for the sake of the Gospel, the Lord gives them back to us abundantly, in the fullness of love and joy for all eternity."

Meet your Bishop: Bp Rolando Santos CM (Bishop of Alotau/Sideia Diocese)

- Ahisha Mangot



Located at the Eastern cone of the Island of New Guinea, and on the shore of Milne Bay lies the Diocese of Alotau- Sideia. The diocese of Alotau is headed by the 74-year-old Shepherd, Most Reverend Bishop Rolando Santos CM.

Hailing from the Philippines, Bishop Rolando belongs to the Society of Apostolic Life called the Congregation of the Mission or the Vincentians.

The smiling Bishop entered the Seminary when he was just a young energetic lad at the age of 12.

"I made the decision before the Blessed Sacrament after a daily Mass I attended. I felt God calling me to offer my life to God as a priest," said Bp. Rolando.

During his time in the Seminary, he was very shy but he learnt to be very disciplined and give his best in his studies too which he managed to get the highest honor in his class.

When asked about what his family was like, he shared: "We were a middle-class family, 12 children. We were a very happy and well knitted family, we all studied in a Catholic School and all of us finished college and a few got their master's degree despite our parents struggling with finance to take care of our needs."

His hardworking parents had the greatest influence on him during his upbringing where his father went to Mass regularly which taught him to be devoted to the Eucharist and his dear mother taught him how to be responsible and industrious.

Bishop Rolando comes from a loving home and that is showed through his smile; like a beam of sunlight illuminating people when crossing paths with him.

Bishop Rolando recalled his typical days with his family and described it as 'very family oriented'. They would have their meals together every day as well as have gatherings at their family altar at 6pm for the Angelus daily.

He also added that during his holidays he would attend Mass with his father while his mother would assign chores for him and his siblings to do during

the day, and they also had fun too where he played fun games with his brothers and sisters.

"As a priest, I hardly thought of my family, but I always look forward to enjoying and spending my vacations with them. I am very close to all of them and I feel loved by them," expressed Bishop Rolando.

He also added that as a bishop a lot stood out for him, the mission of evangelization, service of the poor and the Eucharist as the centre of his life and Ministry and to be able to form others to be true disciples of Christ and apostles of the Kingdom.

The radiant Bishop served as a Bishop for over 12 years and come next year, he will celebrate his 50 years of religious life since he was ordained a priest.

Bishop Rolando Santos might be all smiles everyday but he has a lot of challenges in his diocese.

One of his focus has been trying his best to re-ignite the zeal in the lives of his priests in their Priestly Ministry.

The loving Bishop is also encouraging the Catholic Faithfuls in the country to always stick to Christ through prayer and do whatever Jesus wants, and to always be kind, forgiving and smile to everyone.

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A Pastoral Plan for inspiration and guidance

- Fr. Giorgio Licini, PIME, CBC General Secretary



The Pastoral Plan 2 (CPP2) (2022-'27) by the Catholic Bishops Conference Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (CBC) was launched last year on the first Sunday of Advent.

Copies in English and Tok Pisin of the booklet containing the Pastoral Plan, with summary leaflets, have been recently forwarded to the dioceses. The text is also available in soft copy from the Bishops Conference for anybody wishing to have it. Write to: cbcgensec@catholic.org.pg

Bishop Dariusz Kaluza of Bougainville is the bishop in charge for the dissemination and implementation of the CPP2 with the support of Bishop Peter Houhou of Gizo, Solomon Islands, the CBC Commission for New Evangelization and the CBC Secretariat. He has recently written to all his brother bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands stating that **"the actual implementation of the CPP2, either in conjunction or not with a local diocesan plan, stands or falls depending on the interest and the efforts by the dioceses"**. In fact, among the "Critical Enablers" of the Plan, in the summary leaflets are listed first the CBC Pastoral Commissions and next the Bishops & People of the dioceses.

It is in fact a plan for the grassroots. It starts with an evaluation of the prior five-year plan (CPP 1 2015-'20) with a consideration of the positive signs of vitality and participation in the Church, but without ignoring the serious weaknesses related to the formation in the faith, prayer life and liturgy, evangelizing passion, the cultural crisis with widespread communal violence, neglect of children and youth, casual relationships and broken families, an identity crisis in Catholic educational institutions, perseverance in priestly and religious vocation, etc.

The new Pastoral Plan proposes three pillars of reflection and action: A Church Sanctifying, Proclaiming, and Serving. And this "in Synodality", meaning by means of a common effort and sharing of the journey, not in isolation from other individuals and communities.

Church Sanctifying. Prayer and contemplation provide strength to the Church. It's our personal time and effort given to the Word of God, Sacraments, Sunday Eucharist, Holy Rosary, spiritual devotions, call for priestly and religious vocations. It takes the persons and the communities to a higher level and helps them face the harshness of daily life with so many signs of suffering and death. Union with God makes earthy life superior and divine with additional strength against the forces of desperation and destruction.

Church Proclaiming. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto

salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom 1:16). It is in fact a Gospel of reconciliation and peace, love for neighbors, struggle against injustice and exploitation, primacy of God and respect of creation. Nothing to be ashamed of, as the Apostle Paul strongly maintained with the Romans. The proclamation of the Gospel it's not only expected to be done in words, though powerful as well, but in deeds! It's a serious matter when actions contradict the words and the promises of Baptism.

Church Serving. It goes from the glass of water given to the thirsty (Mt 10:42) to the big projects for "Integral Human Development" as we emphatically say nowadays. The fact is that, in the current practice, each one of us and our communities give a fair amount of time and energy to feasts, anniversaries, ceremonies and liturgical celebrations; much less probably to the sick at home and in the hospitals, those in prison, the children without means for their education, the migrants and refugees, the hungry and the naked. But it's exactly on this that we will have to report (Mt 25:31-44).

The booklet containing the Conference Pastoral Plan 2 is small but very rich in suggestions. It can inspire and nurture local diocesan pastoral plans, parishes and outstation, schools, family groupings, even individual Catholic faithful and people of good will searching for direction and guidance in their human and spiritual journey.

- Fr. Tomás Ravaioli IVE
Liturgical Catechetical Institute Director

The Gospels: The Apocryphal Gospels



It is a fact that a body of legend and myth often grows up around great historical personalities. Little by little, the idealized figure tends to lose his real dimension and become a myth and a legend. This has happened to a good number of historical and religious personages.

Might we not legitimately expect that the Jesus presented in the Gospels fell prey to the same idealistic tendencies?

In the second century, when the canonical Gospels (= the four Gospels that we read nowadays) were already written and circulating among the faithful, a literature of legends and myths grew up among the faithful regarding the person and teachings of Christ and his Apostles. Some of this literature is referred to

as the **"Apocryphal Gospels."** The word "apocrypha" means "things put away" or "things hidden." The title "Apocryphal Gospels" conventionally applies to certain early Christian texts that are written in imitation of the books of the New Testament, and are full of events and sayings in the life of Jesus and his immediate circle of family and disciples. Many of the imaginary reconstructions attempt to fill gaps in the canonical Gospels. For example, the canonical Gospels give very little information concerning Jesus prior to his public life. The apocryphal versions, however, have filled Jesus' hidden life with a number of miracle stories. The authors used to attribute their writings to famous personalities, in order to give more authority to their books. And so, books like the "Gospel of James," or the "Gospel of Peter," or the "Gospel of Thomas," or

the "Gospel of Judas" began to appear and be read among Christians. But, as we know, James, Peter, Thomas and Judas had died many hundreds of years before these books were written. There are more than 50 Apocryphal Gospels, and hundreds of Apocryphal letters, Apocryphal Acts, Apocryphal Apocalypses, etc.

The pluralism of the centuries of Christianity, the absence of a clearly established canon, the role of orality in the shaping of the new texts, and the existence of different "editions" of even the future canonical texts also encouraged the writing of Christian apocrypha. In such cases we are dealing with fantasy, and that is why the Church rejects the apocryphal gospels.

- Fr. Victor Roche SVD
Secretary of the Pontifical Mission Societies

Statues in the Church



Dear Friends,
I want to bring an old topic of 'Statues' for discussion. Some churches and homes have good and proper use of statues. But some over-do it.

1. Why do Catholics use statues?

In the early Christianity, most people could neither read nor write. The Church used paintings, statues, icons and glass windows to teach bible stories and to present truths about the Faith. Art was the crucial way to educate the faithful. To display holy art in our homes and churches is to inspire us about the glorious truths about the Catholic church; to have formative effect in our day-to-day-lives. These images are focal points in our prayer and encourage deeper devotion.

2. Biblical Background for the use of statues:

People who oppose religious statues forget about the many passages where the Lord *commands* the making of statues. For example: "And you shall make two cherubim of gold [i.e., two gold statues of angels]; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat....." (Ex. 25:18-20). David gave Solomon the plan for the temple and it included the statues of angels (1Chr.28:18-19). Similarly Ezekiel 41:17-18 describes graven images in the idealized temple he was shown in a vision. During a plague of serpents sent to punish the

Israelites during the exodus, God told Moses to "make [a statue of] a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it shall live. So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live" (Num. 21:8-9). One had to *look* at the bronze statue of the serpent to be healed, which shows that statues could be used ritually, not merely as religious decorations.

3. The instruction from the Catholic Catechism:

"Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first commandment which proscribes idols. Indeed, "the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype," and "whoever venerates an image venerates the person portrayed in it." The honor paid to sacred images is a "respectful veneration," not the adoration due to God alone.

—The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2132

4. Photos and Statues: We keep photos of our loved ones to remember them. Statues of famous people adorn our government buildings, parks, and memorials. In a similar way, Catholic statues honor and preserve the memory of the important men and women whom the Church recognizes as holy. The saints are notable people who should be honored and remembered for their incredible lives on earth and their part in shaping our history.

5. The use of statues brought division in the Christian Churches:

The use of statues in prayer

has been one of the most misunderstood forms of Catholic Art. Catholics do not worship statues as 'idols' as described in Leviticus 19:4. Misapplication of this commandment—which claimed that statues used for veneration were idols used for worship—caused controversy within the Church. To resolve this, the Church formally confirmed the use of statues and other art as a means of veneration at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 A.D. They clarified, approved, and encouraged the honoring of Our Lord, Our Lady, saints, and angels, through the proper use of statues. We do not worship them. Worship is reserved for God alone.

6. Five reasons for the use of statues: a) *Statues are powerful visual reminders of our faith,* b) *Statues are an opportunity to evangelize,* c) *Statues serve as starting points (or focal points) for prayer,* d) *Statues encourage deeper devotion,* e) *Statues are reminders of the important place our faith deserves in our homes.*

7. Proper use of statues in the church:

Recently I visited a parish church. The sanctuary had many statues and holy pictures: There was a statue of Our Lady of Fatima; a statue of our Lady of Lourdes; a statue of St. Joseph; a statue of Blessed Peter To Rot; a relic of Blessed Peter To Rot; a big picture of Divine Mercy and a picture of St. Padre Pio. Too many holy images may bring distraction instead of devotion to the Catholic faithful.

World Day of Prayer for Creation

Sr Daisy Anne Lisania Augustine MSC, Secretary for Social Communication



Sept. 1, marks beginning of the Season of Creation.

In 2015, Pope Francis established Sept. 1 as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, encouraging Catholics around the world to pray for our common home. In his letter establishing the day as an annual celebration, the Holy Father wrote

that its purpose was to "offer individual believers and communities a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the

protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live."

Season of Creation: September 1 – October 4

The World Day of Prayer marks the beginning of the Season of Creation, Sept. 1 through Oct. 4, which culminates with the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron of ecology and animals. The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration of prayer and action for our common home. Together, the ecumenical family around the world unites to pray for and act to protect God's creation.

World Day of Prayer inspired by pope's encyclical on Care for our Common Home

Pope Francis' Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home is the first encyclical to focus on the

environment as an integral ecology among all of God's creation, including the human impact on life and the poor. Its foundation rests in a long history of Church teaching on creation. This encyclical was written with both hope and resolve, looking with candor and humility to humanity's common future.

The title is taken from the first line of the encyclical, "Laudato si', mi Signore," or "Praise be to you, my Lord." In the words of the beautiful "Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister Moon" of St. Francis of Assisi.

St. Francis reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

At Gizo installation, Bishop Houhou says service is love in action

- Sr. Daisy Anne Lisania Augustine MSC

Gizo, Solomon Islands: As he was installed in the Diocese of Gizo on Sunday, Bishop Peter Houhou stressed the need for bishops and all Catholics to be of service showing love in action so that the Gospel will impact the culture and the Church will prosper.

"My dear people, there is nothing more important for a bishop than the care of souls in love," he said in his August 27 homily. "If the Church is to flourish in the world today, if the New Evangelization is to really take root, if we are to truly build a culture of life – holiness and service must begin with us."

The installation Mass began at 9a.m. local time in Gizo Cathedral of St Peter the Apostle.

Dozens of priests and few bishops processed up to the altar. Their procession was flanked by a beautiful dance from the diocese of Auki. Family and faithful brought bishop Peter Houhou to be presented to his new diocese of Gizo.

During this part of the Liturgy, Bishop Houhou was greeted at the main doors to St Peter Cathedral by Fr. Lawrence Kimaere, Rector of the Cathedral, together with Cardone, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Honiara, and presented with a crucifix to venerate.

Among the few bishops, and many priests in attendance was Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez, the Vatican Ambassador to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. As part of the Rite of Installation, the Nuncio read the Apostolic Letter of Appointment from Pope Francis.

Bishop Houhou was then guided by Archbishop Cardone to the cathedra. Once formally seated in the cathedra, Bishop Houhou was installed as the fourth Bishop of Gizo. He was welcomed by

representatives of the people of the Diocese including parishioners, families, and clergy and then, in front of the altar, by representatives of other Churches, faiths and civic authorities.

The new Bishop of Gizo's homily focused on service in the divine plan of God.

"Each of us is in the plan of God, no one knows the mind of God. The only thing is to listen attentively from the very ears of our hearts to the voice of God. It was not easy for me to get out of the diocese of Auki when I was only in my fourth year as bishop and when I was only beginning to get a grasp of the people and diocese"

"But the love of God is found precisely at the foot of the Cross and in obedience to his call I have to leave my familiar shores," he said.

Bishop Houhou then addressed each of the groups present: the bishops who preceded him, the priests and religious of the diocese and the laity. He expressed gratitude for the diocese's "rich Catholic history" and the leadership of his predecessors Bishop Eusebius John Crawford O.P, Bishop Bernard Cyril O'Grady, O.P and Bishop Luciano Capelli S.D.B.

He thanked vowed religious men and women for their witness to Jesus and he called seminarians "a supreme blessing to the diocese."

He also had a message for the laity.

"You were made for greatness. We are all made for greatness. However true holiness begins with service in love which is love in action"

"Your greatest vocation is to holiness," he said. "Your holiness can transform the world."

Civic guests included the Premier of Gizo Honourable Billy Veo and his delegates.

Most Rev. Peter Houhou was born on October 10, 1966, in Marau, Guadalcanal. On July 3, 1999, he was ordained as a priest and was incardinated into the Archdiocese of Honiara.

The Diocese of Gizo is one of three Dioceses in the Solomon Islands and was formed from the Vicariates of North and South Solomons in the early 1960s. It encompasses three provinces: Choisel, Santa Isabel and western Province. It spreads over an area of 12,600 square kilometres, populated by 129,000 people, of whom approximately 14,000 are Catholics. There are eight Parishes with several Priests and Religious.



Bishop Peter Houhou is escorted by his sister and Catholic Faithful of the Diocese of Auki to be presented to the Diocese of Gizo.

Diocese of Kavieng welcomes Bishop Ronald Vunuvung as 5th Bishop

- Jessica Oata

Kavieng: The Catholic faithful flocked in numbers to the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Kavieng Town to celebrate and witness the Episcopal Consecration and Installation of Bishop Ronald Vunuvung as the new Bishop of the Diocese of Kavieng on Tuesday August 15th 2023.

The Episcopal Consecration and Installation had Archbishop Rochus Tatamai MSC from the Archdiocese of Rabaul as the principal consecrator with Bishop Dariusz Kaluza MSF from Bougainville Diocese and Bishop John Bosco Auram from Kimbe Diocese as co-consecrators.

In a heartwarming welcome remark, Dean of Kavieng Deanery Fr. Mark Kombeng welcomed everyone who braved the heavy rain to be part of the celebration and described the occasion as a milestone achievement for Kavieng Diocese.

"For too long, our diocese suffered. We have been like sheep without a shepherd for too long and this celebration today marks the end of our suffering and the beginning of our joy and our walk into a new era with our Shepherd", he said.

Tatamai in his homily reflected on the history and transition of Kavieng Diocese from the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) to the Diocesan Clergy.

"Since the establishment of Kavieng Diocese in 1966, the diocese has been administered by the MSC Bishops with Bishop Alfred Stemper MSC as the first bishop, Archbishop Emeritus Karl Hesse MSC as the second bishop and later Bishop

Ambrose Kiapseni MSC as the third Bishop. Bishop Kiapseni had big plans for localization in the diocese which I tried to follow when I took up post as Bishop after his retirement and today, I'm very happy that Kavieng Diocese is finally under the administration of a Diocesan Bishop."

Following the homily was an emotional procession by the family of Fr. Ronald Vunuvung as they took him to the altar to be consecrated as Bishop after the reading of the Papal Bull by the Apostolic Nuncio his Excellency Archbishop Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez.

The congregation cheered after the consecration rites as Fr. Ronald Vunuvung now became Bishop Ronald Vunuvung and was led to the Cathedra by Archbishop Tatamai and the two co-consecrating Bishops.

Bishop Ronald when sharing his sentiments as the new Bishop said he is looking forward to journeying with the people in his Diocese and encouraged everyone to put their differences aside and work together for the betterment of the Diocese.

"When I accepted the role of Bishop, I didn't want to hear the good things happening in the Diocese, I wanted to know more about the challenges faced in the Diocese, so I know how to walk with my people when I become their shepherd. It is now our duty to work together to overcome these challenges", said Bishop Ronald.

The Episcopal Ordination was graced by the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands His Excellency Archbishop Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez, ten Bishops, Priests, Religious Nuns, parishioner representatives from the three deaneries of Kavieng Diocese, the New Ireland Provincial Government representatives, friends from far and near and other Christian denominations as well as media personnel.

The Coat of Arms for the new Bishop is taken from the Synodal theme: Communio, Participatio et Missio.

Bishop Ronald Vunuvung hails from East New Britain and is the 5th Bishop of the Kavieng Diocese. He was ordained a priest on November 24, 1985.



Group Picture of the Priests together with the Apostolic Nuncio to PNGSI His Excellency Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez, Bishops and the newly consecrated and installed Bishop Ronald Vunuvung.

- Ahisha Mangot

CBC SOCOM facilitates Seminar for Priests in the Archdiocese of Rabaul

Kokopo: The Social Communications Commission of the Catholic Bishops Conference recently facilitated a Social Communications workshop for more than 38 priests in the Archdiocese of Rabaul on August 7 to August 11.

The workshop was a success under the leadership of Sr Daisy Anne Lisania Augustine, the Secretary for the Social Communications Commission with the assistance of SOCOM media officers Ms Jessica Oata and Ms Ahisha Mangot.

On the first day of the workshop the priests and the SOCOM team were graced by the presence of the Archbishop of Rabaul most Reverend Rochus Josef Tatamai who expressed his support in his opening remarks to invest in priests with workshops like this to help them serve in this evolving world.

“This is the Year of the Priests in the Archdiocese, therefore, I would like to invest in my priests so that they can be formed and trained to be better communicators of the Gospel”, he said.

During the course of the workshop from Monday to Thursday, it was evident that the priests were

overwhelmed with new skills and knowledge to accompany their work of evangelization.

The Workshop saw the priests learning about Communication Theology, Pastoral Communication, Church and Mass Media, Social Communication Evangelization, Corporate Communication of the Church and Public Relations, Communication Ethics and Evangelization through radio which was facilitated by Sr Daisy Anne Lisania.

While Videography especially filming and editing, Photography, News Stories, News Letters, News Writing Elements, Parish and Diocesan Bulletins was facilitated by Ms Oata and Ms Mangot.

During the Workshop the priests were able to do practical activities in relation to the topic facilitated. They were able to take pictures, film and edit, write news stories, identifying news values, using news elements, photography and videography guidelines as well as open discussions.

The priests were also given an opportunity to present their hard work and most of the elderly priests were appreciative as the workshop is mainly

to do with how they can use media tools to evangelize in this modern world.

Many expressed that new technology is a challenge however with this training they can be able to use their simple mobile phones to create positive contents for their parishes.

The program concluded with a mass and certificate presentations.



Participants taking notes during a session.

Citizens urged to take care of Environment

- Jessica Oata

Gordons, Port Moresby: “When we sin against God, we are always forgiven. When we sin against man, we are forgiven maybe once or twice and on rare occasions, maybe three times, but when we sin against nature, we must be prepared to suffer the consequences”.

This was the take home message from the CBC General Secretary Reverend Fr. Giorgio Licini PIME and Emeritus Archbishop Francesco Panfilo SDB during a Press Conference held on Saturday 26th of August at the Catholic Bishops Conference.

The Press Conference was held to make awareness on the World Day for Prayer for the Care of Creation which falls on September 1st.

Fr. Giorgio in his statement highlighted the need to stop the injustice done to the environment through activities like pollution, logging and mining to name a few and encouraged everyone to take ownership of the environment and protect it for the future generations.

“We don’t have to look outside of the country to see the injustice done to our environment, it is evident in our streets, you see people throwing rubbish everywhere”, he said.

Archbishop Emeritus Panfilo in his talk reflected on the need for awareness to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Creation so that people can make informed decisions when it comes to dealing with issues relating to the environment.

“During my time as the Archbishop of Rabaul, I was always vocal on issues, especially on the environmental issues affecting the people”, he said.

Archbishop Emeritus Panfilo recalled that not only was he advocating on behalf of the Catholic faithful in the Rabaul Archdiocese, but for other denominations as well who approached him and sought his help.

The panellists concluded the talk by making mention that the Catholic Church in an effort to care for our common home celebrates September 1st as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.

The World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation was announced by Pope Francis in August 2015 and has been in observance since then. It also kicks off the season of Creation, which is a time of sustained prayer and action which lasts a month and four days.



Media Personnel setting up before the Press Conference.

Pontifical Mission Societies holds Kerygma Course in Simbu

- Fr. Victor Roche SVD

Mingende, Simbu: Twenty-one Catholic faithful of Kundiawa Diocese attended a two-weeks Kerygma Course conducted in Mingende Pastoral Centre, Simbu Province from August 7-19.

The aim of the course was to enhance the participants to experience the person of Jesus and His Church. They were given talks on many topics on the Catholic Church and had group discussions on issues affecting the Church in Papua New Guinea today. They were also trained to give this course to other Catholic Groups to strengthen the faith of the people in the families and Basic Christian Communities (BCC).

The group also had a two-day retreat in which they reflected on their own lives; they were anointed and sent as Kerygma Disciples of the New Evangelization. They are to go two-by-two (Lk 10:1) to bring the good-news to the Small Christian Communities (SCC) with the aim to strengthen the faith of the Catholics through knowledge and experience. The group also vowed to refrain from Betelnut, (Buai), Beer, Smoke, Coke (BBSC) as these addictions are considered health and spiritual hazards.

The team that gave this course consisted of Fr. Victor Roche SVD, the Director of Pontifical Mission

Societies in PNGSI; Fr. Thomas Waiaken (Diocesan Priest of Wabag Diocese); Fr. Antony Siluvai SVD (Director of the Spiritual Year in Good Shepherd Seminary); Ms. Jennifer Aure (Lecturer- Holy Trinity Teachers College-HTTC); Ms. Flora Teng (Lecturer-HTTC); Ms. Johnyta Passingan (Lecturer- HTTC); Dr. Camy Thomas (Dentist-Baptist Hospital, Kompiam, Enga).

A Graduation and Eucharistic Celebration was held on Friday, August 18, 2023 with Fr. Ryszard Wajda SVD, the Pastoral Vicar of Kundiawa Diocese as the main Celebrant which saw the participants receive their certificates and the materials for their preaching.



Participants of the Kerygma course with their certificates after the closing mass with Fr. Ryszard Wajda SVD and Fr. Victor Roche SVD.

Annual Priests’ Retreat held at Kefamo, Goroka

- Fr. Peter Kopil

Kefamo, Goroka: The annual Priests’ retreat at Kefamo in Goroka Diocese was conducted successfully by Fr. Tomàs Ràvaioli IVE from the Liturgical Catechetical Institute (LCI), for the twenty-five priests from the Archdiocese of Mt. Hagen with Archbishop Douglas Young SVD, beginning on Sunday on July 30 and ending on August 5, 2023.

The week long retreat was full of surprises but inspirational and challenging as the director led and explored the mysteries of the book of Revelations chapters 1, 2, and 3 in comparison to the lifestyle of Priests in various ministries. Fr. Ràvaioli invited the priests to find the strengths and weaknesses in the seven churches in Asia with the letters from the Lord. He said every church has some good points to be praised and be rewarded but they also have some bad points to be acknowledged, do penance and confessions. We as priests are not far from situations as such described by the Lord in his letters to the seven churches in Asia.

Fr. Paul Gunbi with other brother priests said

unlike other retreats, this retreat has really challenged them to look into their spiritual lives and clean up the unnecessary things that hinder them in their respective ministries.

Archbishop Douglas Young SVD, in his remarks during the mass thanked Fr. Tomas and reminded his priests that there is constant presence of the devil out there that we all have to be aware of in our respective ministries.



Priests participating in the annual retreat pose for a group picture after the closing mass with Fr. Tomàs Ravaoli IVE and Abp. Douglas Young SVD.

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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