



The Catholic Reporter

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Capital punishment soon to be implemented in PNG

By Fr. Giorgio Licini PIME
Catholic Reporter

DEATH sentences will really soon be carried out in Papua New Guinea probably before the end of the year.

This was confirmed at a Symposium on Capital and Corporal Punishment held on 8-9 August at Divine Word University in Madang by Justice Minister and Attorney General Kerenga Kua and the Sec-

retary of the Department Lawrence Kalinoe.

A technical team has been tasked to travel outside the country to the United States, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore to acquire know-how on the practice and technical procedures.

The PNG national Parliament voted in May this year on four possible options for the implementation of the death penalty: lethal injection, oxygen deprivation, hanging and firing squad.

It is believed that the PNG option will likely fall on the lethal injection as the least "inhumane" and most commonly practiced procedure in developed countries that still uphold the death penalty.

The two government representatives were adamant in their support for current laws and their actual implementation.

The death penalty has been in the PNG criminal code since independence in 1975 for the crimes of

treason, sea piracy, attempted sea piracy and willful murder, but has never been carried out. There are at the moment thirteen convicts on death row.

Last May the Parliament also legislated for aggravated rape, sorcery related killings and armed robbery to be added to the crimes liable of death penalty.

DWU students and staff present at the Symposium, along with other panel members such as former

Justice Secretary and Atty. General Amet Arnold and psychologist Br. Frank Hough expressed serious reservations about the reliability of the justice system, the real deterrence effects of the death penalty and the fact that it will be probably applied only to the poor and uneducated offenders.

But Kua and Kalinoe reiterated the fact that the government's decision it is really to implement the law as it is and as it reads.

Going around. For what?
INSTEAD of going around and spending a lot of money to find the "best way" to execute convicts, people from the Justice department should learn methodologies of education and recuperation of individuals who have broken the law. In the past even members of terrorist organizations, like the Red Brigades in Italy changed their ways and converted!
(Bishop Francesco Sarego SVD - Goroka)



9 August 2013. Papal Nuncio Most Rev. Michael Banach with Port Moresby Archbishop John Ribat, MSC at the Catholic Bishops' Conference Headquarters.

New Apostolic Nuncio welcomed

THE new Apostolic Nuncio to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, Archbishop Michael Banach, from US, was welcomed by the staff of the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC) on Friday 9 August. On behalf of the Church of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, Archbishop John Ribat of Port Moresby accepted the new Nuncio's letter of appointment signed by Pope Francis.

It was a day of great celebration, which began with the Eucharistic celebration, followed by gift giving, a simple but delicious refreshment and a tour of the CBC offices and grounds.

Staff were touched to hear that Pope Francis sent his blessing with the Nuncio for the people of Papua New Guinea.

The Papal Nuncio represents the Holy See to the government of his country of assignment and coordinates relationships with the local Church, including the appointment of new bishops by the Pope.
(Sr. Mary McCarthy)

The true Church-State partnership

YES, Prime Minister Peter O'Neill and many other good Members of Parliament and Government officials never miss an opportunity to praise the Churches for being partners in service delivery and development. The show went on again on Monday, 26 August on the occasion of the National Covenant Day celebration. According to news reports, in Goroka Governor

Julie Soso also reiterated the call "for a religion policy to be implemented for all Christian churches to remain in PNG while outlawing other religions" (The National, 27 August 2013); something about which for a start the Churches do not agree with. At all!

The Churches also do not agree with the death penalty. They do not agree on the treatment reserved to the asylum seekers. They have reservation with many policies in the field of education. Neither they are happy with the way public funds are used and misused.

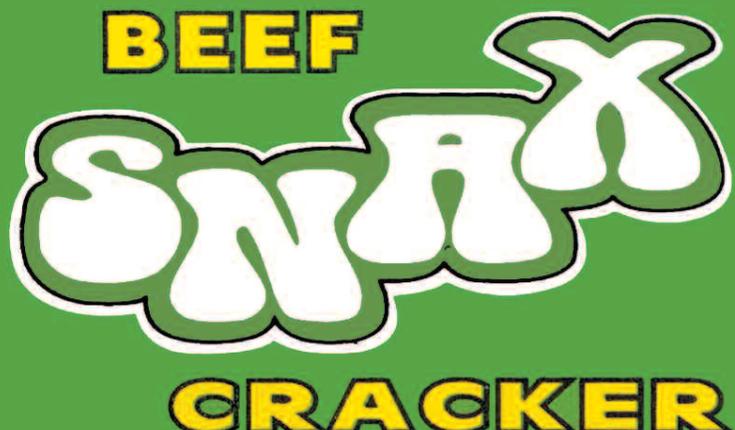
A true partnership between the Churches and the State, therefore, doesn't really exist in Papua New Guinea. What is in place is a remnant of the colonial structure or more precisely of the missionary era. European religious men and women sailed in forces to the Pacific one hundred-fifty years ago and found a total lack of education and health services.

They put in place schools and hospitals that today they still run in partnership with the government. They continue to do so because of their faith, their charitable attitude and pity for

the people. Remove the Churches and the poor are largely left to fend by themselves.

Of course, the State cannot replace overnight the social role and functions of the Churches. But it should not take advantage of the goodness and kindness of their leaders and members.

If you really value and respect the Churches give them a real space in the legislative process, in policy making, and auditing of public funds. Listen to the Churches rather than praising them! *GLadius*



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From faithful to evangelizer

By Fr Roger Purcell MSC
National Director, Community
Animation Service

WE continue our Journey of Faith towards our General Assembly in which we wish to renew, strengthen and deepen our faith.

To do this we need to know our faith and to be able to question ourselves on our faith. We can become comfortable in our faith, and not be challenged by what our faith calls us to in the changing world around us.

In *Porta Fidei* Pope Benedict,

again quoting Pope John Paul II, calls "for the whole Church to make "an authentic and sincere profession of the same faith"; moreover, he wanted this to be confirmed in a way that was "individual and collective, free and conscious, inward and outward, humble and frank"

Pope Benedict also calls us to reflect, think and discuss more deeply about our faith; to speak to each other about what we believe, and what we think this calls us to:

"Reflection on the faith will have to be intensified, so as to help all believers in Christ to

acquire a more conscious and vigorous adherence to the Gospel, especially at a time of profound change such as humanity is currently experiencing."

Essential also to our faith is how we live it. It is not enough to say we believe, or to go to church and the sacraments; we must live it every day in what we say and do.

"The renewal of the Church is also achieved through the witness offered by the lives of believers: by their very existence in the world, Christians

are called to radiate the word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us."

Reflection

Let us be "humble and frank", open, honest and sincere.

What are our great weaknesses in our faith?

How are we challenged in our faith?

Discussion

What are 10 areas in which we are weak and challenged in our faith?

Write them down for yourself
Discuss them in your family, community, clan

Share them with others
Write down a final list.

Now look them up in the catechism; study them; discuss them; pray about it.

Let us confess our faults in honest humility in community reconciliation, prayer, song and sacrament

[In the diocese refine this to 3 items and bring to the General Assembly]

New PNG generations to reject sorcery?

By Willie Dulu
Madang

"CHRISTIAN" Papua New Guinea is now experiencing a flood of brutal attacks and murder of suspected sorcerers and witches.

The *Tok Pisin* word '*posin*' is generally used to indicate sorcery practices. It has its origins either in the English words "potion" or "poison".

The term sorcery covers a range of magical practices that are used to both influence the outcome of events and explain the causes of them.

The *Tok Pisin* word '*sanguma*' is used in Papua New Guinea to mean witchcraft. Witchcraft activities are carried out by witches.

Witches are female human beings considered to be unsociable, unfriendly, bad-tempered, uncharitable, and prone to unusual or suspicious behavior, especially at night.

They are said to eat human waste and to rob graves to satisfy their hunger for human flesh.

In many parts of Simbu province, witches (*sanguma* people) are said to possess evil spirits that take the form of animals or birds.

Shocking incidents

On Feb. 6, 2013 file photos bystanders can be seen watching as a woman accused of witchcraft is burned alive in the Western Highlands provincial capital of Mount Hagen.

The 20-year-old mother of one, Kepari Leniata was stripped naked by several assailants, tortured with a hot iron rod, bound, doused in gasoline, and eventually set alight on a pile of car tires and trash.

In March 28, 2013 in Lopele village in Bougainville province, two women were toured for three days, suffering knife and axe wounds, before being beheaded in front of

policemen who had been sent to the village to mediate.

This was done after the women were suspected of practicing sorcery and blamed for the death of a former school teacher from the village.

In another event in Wa village outside Mendi town in the Southern Highlands Province, a woman was accused of practicing witchcraft. The villagers stripped her naked and tortured her. What was alarming was that the village leaders, including the pastor, "a man of God", took part in the horrifying exercise.

Belief in witchcraft is widespread in rural Papua New Guinea, and killing for suspected sorcery is a common practice.

While there are no exact figures, many incidents occur in remote areas of the country and remain unreported.

When death occurs, the locals often close ranks and refuse to cooperate with the authorities.

This leads to an increasing rate of sorcery related killings, which are now gaining world attention.

The reasons behind sorcery

The practice of sorcery is due to many factors.

The most common ones are jealousy (due to someone else's wealth or status), conflict over something like a piece of land, adultery, fighting...

It can also be seen as a means of settling a problem in line with the Melanesian culture of payback.

People are tempted to use sorcery and witchcraft, or accuse others of sorcery and witchcraft during times of change, struggle, trouble, inequality, injustice, misery and desperation.

In hard times some Papua New Guineas turn to sorcery and witchcraft practices because these offer a way

to survive, and possibly even prosper.

Papua New Guineans also turn to sorcery and witchcraft because it's just part of the culture.

The sorcery issue is not actually getting proper government and public attention.

Poorly educated people are unaware of the fact that killing is a crime; and do not understand that death is caused by sickness and other causes that can be scientifically explained.

The churches should better emphasize the value and the importance of life as a gift and "property" of God.

Death penalty will not eliminate sorcery related killings; education may.

Courses should be promoted in schools addressing sorcery beliefs with scientific arguments and with the explanation of the scientific causes of sickness, death, and disasters.

At present the topic of witchcraft is hardly taken up in PNG educational institutions.

The same thing could be done in churches and during catechism and Bible classes, explaining the reasons why the Bible and the churches have consistently forbidden the practice of sorcery and necromancy.

Integral human development, in fact, includes not only religious instruction and practice, but also education, and other social services.

There is now a need to urge the national and local authorities to make better use of our natural resources by fighting corruption and providing infrastructure and better services to the population. Isolation, lack of education, poor health, and scarce opportunities for economic progress are all factors which increase tensions between individuals and communities.

The cure against sorcery

In PNG the actual practice of sorcery is a crime.

People should be encouraged to report to the police and to the courts sorcery suspects, for them to be tried and not summarily executed.

The possibility always remains that the accused persons might well be innocent and that the accusations are based on anger, greed, or revenge.

In many parts of PNG, however, the police and the judiciary largely seem to ignore the fact that so many people take the law into their hands and evict, torture, and even kill suspected sorcerers.

Often only a strong punitive sentence can deter people from taking the law into their hands.

A legislation which criminalizes the practice of sorcery and witchcraft, instead, seems to strengthen people's beliefs that those evil powers are real and effective.

The accusations rather should be criminalized.

That way people would be forced to look for other explanations for misfortunes than simply accuse others.

Religious, clan and village leaders could prevent the establishment of a witch trial after a death by simply being present in the house of the deceased.

The same could be said in a case of sickness.

Leaders could convince the family or clan members not to look for sorcerers and witches, or could simply disrupt the proceedings of the sorcery trial.

The government has recently repealed the Sorcery Act of 1971 and imposed the death sentence on sorcery killings.

But does it sound good for the State to kill its own people?

Global experience and research has shown that state-sanctioned killing does not solve criminal issues, but add fuel to the fire.

Victims of rape in PNG: Crying in vain?

By Sr. Lorena Jenal - PNG Catholic
Family Life Apostolate

AS long as I live I'll think of the morning I was called to the bedside of twelve year old Tamaris in one of the provincial hospitals of the Highlands accompanying her to her death.

Tamaris was from a remote area without health facilities. She had been raped and got pregnant. The man involved got away without any charges or punishment.

Tamaris was uneducated and tremendously afraid that her parents would find out about the tragedy.

When menstruations disappeared, her girlfriend, who was two years older, helped her to perform a 'bush' abortion. But she started bleeding so heavily, that she was rushed to the hospital. There I met her in her agony, pain and desolation.

She was only a child and had to experience such a severe crime. How could such brutality, injustice, ignorance and neglect be possible?

For three months I was at her bedside almost every day, just listening to the agony that can't be expressed. I still remember her eyes at times shining like stars.

In her imagination, she was able to see her real beauty, uniqueness and dignity, in the likeness of God.

She had done no wrong and could not be blamed or held responsible for any fault.

She was a child with rights of security and protection.

But everything had been taken away from her in a most disgusting manner!

She was deprived from growing into a beautiful woman, a wonderful mother, a grace filled, inspiring professional, perhaps an educator... Somehow it was a privilege to be with her during this too short time of her agony and pain.

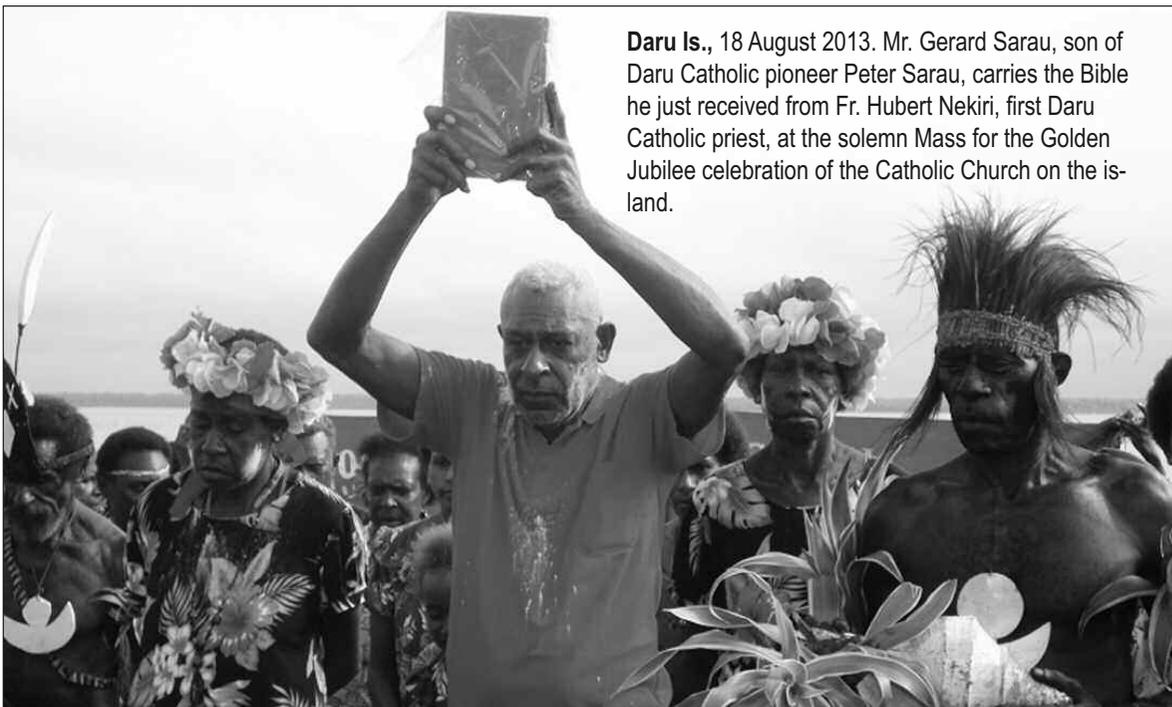
Tamaris still cries out 'I am a woman and the blood of my unborn baby cries; the blood of violence against me cries; because of your power connected with fear and shame you made me shake and disappear.

I'm a woman and the blood of my womb, but even more my bleeding heart cries; because as a woman I cannot cope with hatred. I'm created for compassion and love.'

Tamaris' cry is for the silent cry of violated women, 'Give us a voice to make known our rights to equality, dignity, respect, truth and justice.

My cry is for all women: stop torturing us; stop blaming us for witchcraft that does not exist. Start taking a stand against abandoning us. Start acknowledging our equality; as your mothers, sisters, wives we are the backbone of society.

'My story is an invitation to face our naked reality of girls and women dying by bleeding to death for lack of protection and security. My cry is a call for our children, youth, families, and communities all around the country and the world. Enough with wrong attitudes and behavior!'



Daru Is., 18 August 2013. Mr. Gerard Sarau, son of Daru Catholic pioneer Peter Sarau, carries the Bible he just received from Fr. Hubert Nekiri, first Daru Catholic priest, at the solemn Mass for the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Catholic Church on the island.

Pacific Churches critical of refugee deal

CHURCHES in the Pacific region are concerned about plans to send people seeking asylum in Australia to Papua New Guinea for assessment and resettlement.

In PNG, Christian leaders have asked their Prime Minister O'Neill to reconsider the refugee deal he signed with Australia.

During a press conference on 21 August

in Port Moresby, the PNG Council of Churches, and the PNG Christian Leaders Alliance on HIV/AIDS said there needed to be proper consultation with the people through the churches before such deals were signed.

Catholic Archbishop John Ribat said, "The asylum seekers are interested in settling in Australia, not PNG.

We have been forced to take in something we are not capable of handling."

In Samoa the Pacific Conference of Churches general secretary, Rev. Francois Pihatae called on Australia and Papua New Guinea to reveal the terms of their asylum seeker processing and resettlement agreement. (*cathnews.co.nz*)

Fifty years of Catholic Church in Daru Island

By Fr. Yohanes Werang CM
Kiunga

"TODAY we celebrate our God who is so faithful to us and always speaks to us in unique ways in the Scripture. He is our loving Father who enters into our darkness of life because he cares for us and loves us"; these were the words of Bishop Gilles Cote' of Daru-Kiunga, in the Western Province, during his sermon on Sunday, 18 August 2013.

It was the celebration of the golden jubilee of St. Louis Marie de Montfort parish in Daru Island and the silver jubilee of priesthood of Fr. Hubert Nekiri, the first Daruan Catholic priest.

The Catholic Church was established in Daru Is. by the Canadian Montfort missionaries in 1963 upon invitation of a few local Kiwai people led by Mr. Peter Sarau.

Later on also residents of Samari Is. invited the missionaries to provide education. Fr. Chris Diau, current parish priest of Daru Is., said

during the recent celebration that "becoming Christians for our people at the beginning was not very clear, because they had to embrace new concepts; but the presence of the missionaries, who brought the Word of God, enlightened all aspects of people's life".

Hon. Ati Wobiro, the Governor of Western Province, who was also present at the celebration, acknowledged "the presence of the Catholic Church and said that the Catholic Church has always been

a good partner of the government in providing services to the people."

Speaking after the Eucharistic celebration, Fr. Rozario Menezes, Delegation Superior of the Montfort Missionaries in Papua New Guinea, to whom the diocese of Daru-Kiunga has been traditionally entrusted, stated that the first missionaries "helped us to accept God as our Father; the golden jubilee is the time to reflect about what we have learnt from them and transmit the same Gospel message to the

generations to come."

He also invited the families to be faithful to God and by their witness encourage their children to choose religious life.

After the Eucharistic celebration led by Fr. Hubert Nekiri, there was a short felicitation program, during which people brought their gifts to Fr. Hubert; then, in the thousands enjoyed the songs and the dances for the rest of the day and the all night at the local Montfort school grounds.

Popular SVD bishop remembered

By Bradley Gregory –
DWU Journalism Student

"DO more for the Lord, while you still have the chance," Jomba Parish Priest and Spiritual Director of the Legion of Mary for the Archdiocese of Madang Fr. Joseph Durero, SVD said.

While celebrating the Holy Eucharist for the Feast of the Assumption yesterday at Alexishafen, Fr. Joseph also said, "The earth will remain but we will perish, so while we have the chance to give glory to the Lord, do it!"

The Mass, which was promoted by the newly

appointed Kuria president of the Legion Mary, Br Danny Bai was dedicated to Bishop Arnold Noser, a SVD missionary who served and died in Madang 37 years ago.

Fr. Joseph said that all Christians should follow the example of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, as

she lived a life that gave testimony to the glory of the Lord, and for which in return she was taken body and soul into heaven.

This, he said, was the example of how a Christian should live, a life of humility, obedience and service to the Lord. Mary

is the role model.

He also warned the gathered not to depend too much on the material goods of today.

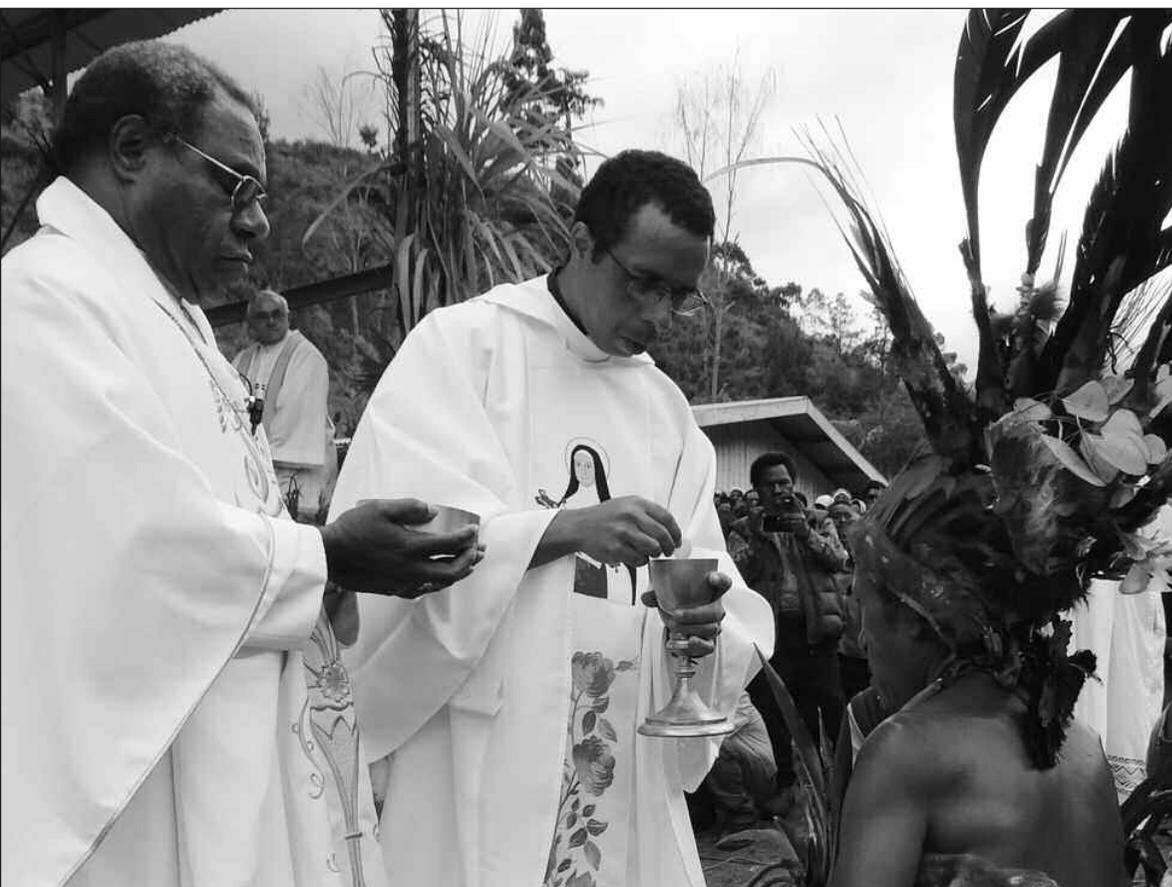
"There is a tendency to let other things take control of our lives, for example music, drugs and alcohol. It's evident in the youths who wear headphones and listen to music and walk on the road, time and again they almost get run over by vehicles because they are carried away listening to music, and they don't concentrate on the road".

After the Mass, the celebration continued throughout the day.

The parishioners prayed decades of the rosary, starting from the church to the cemetery where a prayer was offered for the late Bishop Arnold Noser at his grave and later to the area's iconic Marian monument which was built by Bishop Noser.

The late bishop Noser was a SVD missionary who died in 1976. He was known for his significant contribution to the Momase region and parts of the High-

lands especially spreading the love of God through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Meanwhile, newly appointed Kuria president of the Legion of Mary in Alexishafen, Br Danny Bai was really grateful for the occasion and said it was very significant "because Mary is the mother of God and we are also blessed to have come to know a wonderful bishop who has done a lot in spreading the love of Mary for God in this part of the world."



**MADANG,
5-11
NOVEMBER
2013
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY OF
THE CATHOLIC
CHURCH OF
PNG SI**

**"Give us the
water of life."**



Wanna be a Catholic street preacher? Why not?

By Glenda Awikiak & Fr. Giorgio Licini PIME
Divine Word University - Madang

Fr. Giorgio, have you come across one street preachers in Madang town?

Not actually here in Madang since my activity here is almost completely confined to the DWU campus as Chaplain; but certainly in Port Moresby when I was there in 2006-'11.

Do you agree with street preaching and preachers?

There is nothing wrong with the practice of street preaching as far as it is done in a respectful manner. The contents of the preaching, however, may be subject to a different evaluation on a case by case basis. I suppose that people practicing street preaching have an intention to convey a good message and call the public to faith, conversion and good behavior. Therefore I basically agree with street preaching. About the contents it may depend on the intention and the spiritual and intellectual preparation of the preacher.

Why do you think that the Catholic Church does not engage in this practice of street preaching?

Traditionally street preaching is not practiced in a massive way by the Catholic Church. There are instances, however, of street preaching. Recently the Catholic Bishop Alotau mentioned in a Circular letter to his diocese, as part of the activities developed during the Year of Faith (Oct. 2012-Nov. 2013), a "Friday evening visitation and preaching at the Alotau Government Transit House" and "the Sunday preaching at the Alotau market". These activities are probably bound to increase also for the Catholic Church

as a way of meeting people where they actually live, especially when they normally don't come to church. Something similar is being done through media, especially radio e television trying to reach out to people in their homes. In this the Catholic Church has always been very active. For the Catholic Church, however, preaching mostly takes place in the context of the liturgical celebration, especially during the Eucharist celebration as a comment and actualization of the Scripture readings. Prolonged public preaching in the public space is not that common, but it has always been practiced by individuals and groups, and may still increase in the future.

As a preacher, what would you say about the quality and effect of street preaching on the people's life compared to your way of preaching in the church?

Again, it all depends on the contents being conveyed. If the contents are meaningful and correct, street preaching certainly has a positive effect. I personally never practiced street preaching, but I suppose it entails lengthy preparation, accurate exposition, good verbal and vocal skills... Certainly street preachers need not to only repeat what the Bible says, because in that case most of the people can read it by themselves, but to apply Bible teachings to people's life, present situation, etc. Furthermore, we know that the language of the Bible is that of the time and it is the message that needs to be brought out. A street preacher cannot be improvised overnight. He or she needs a very deep knowledge, understanding and experience of the message of salvation. When that is there, in my opinion street preaching is to be encouraged and appreciated.

Preaching at the market

THANK you, Fr. Giorgio for the article on street preaching on www.cbcpngsi.org (14 Aug 2013) and for giving Alotau as an example. Many people listen intently to Fr. Richard's preaching at the market, and my preaching at the transit house. We talk to both Catholics and non-Catholics, especially those you don't normally see in church, and they are listening, seemingly drawn by a hunger for the Word of God. (Bishop Rolando Santos - Alotau)

Chief Ombudsman willing to become PNG Human Rights watchdog

PAPUA New Guinea new Chief Ombudsman Atty. Rigo Lua doesn't see the need for the creation of a new government agency tasked with the promotion, supervision and implementation of human rights in the country.

"The Ombudsman Commission - he said at a Human Rights Symposium hosted by Divine Word University in Madang on 28 August 2013 - already has a supervisory role on the validity and implementation of the legislation and the leadership code; provide

better support to the Commission and the task of upholding human rights can be carried out effectively".

Former Chief Justice Sir Arnold Amet, however, also a member of the panel, pointed at the fact that while in principle all government agencies and institutions should converge on the same purpose of promoting human rights, on the other hand reciprocal rivalry, lack of coordination and shortage of human resources cripple the justice system and

leave common citizen hopeless in the face of all sorts of abuses.

Sir Arnold vehemently attacked widespread police practice of rounding up people, beating suspects, enforcing extrajudicial killings, damaging properties and burning houses. "These ill practices are so widespread - he said - that people believe that police have the right to do so, while only the courts can pronounce a person guilty and inflict punishment according to the law".



"IT has given us an opportunity to thank God for his blessings over the past fifty years and to acknowledge and thank so many bishops, priests and laity who continue to support us. We look forward with confidence to the seminary's future years", Fr. Peter Miria, from the diocese of Bereina and Chairman of the Organizing Committee, said at the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Holy Spirit Seminary in Bomana on 24 August 2013.

For more information on the event see: www.cbcpngsi.org - 29 AUG 2013 - **Pictured:** First Year Mt. Hagen Seminarian Paul Misig reading the Prayers of the Faithful in Jiwaka language at the solemn Mass.

Brothers for the youth

THE Sacred Heart Brothers are SHB in short and not MSC as stated in the article *SOCAY: Save Our Children and Youth!*, which we published on page 2 of the August issue of the Catholic Reporter. Furthermore, Br. Bernard Weroa is the current Superior General of the Congregation, founded by Archbishop Leo Arkfeld SVD and co-founder Fr William Liebert, SVD in 1959 1st May at Wewak. Their charism: to assist in the work of the Church in giving

service to those whom no one wants; mainly youth who are in trouble with the courts.

Apologies to Br. Bernard, his team and also to the author of the article, Sr. Mary McCarthy, for poor editing on my part! But again congratulations for the wonderful work done in Hohola; and hope that it can be expanded to other parts of the country for the benefit of the most neglected youth. - Fr. Giorgio Licini (Catholic Reporter)

The way they see us. True or false? 'Severe' brutality against women in PNG

The Sunday Morning Herald - 14 August 2013

Sydney: WOMEN in poverty-stricken Papua New Guinea suffer "severe brutality" with violence, including savage attacks involving knives, axes and whips, occurring in two-thirds of all families, a new study said.

Based on interviews in Central Province's Rigo district, the report by Australian charity ChildFund detailed extreme acts of violence...

One study cited by the charity in its report found that half of all women would be raped in their lifetime, and another reported that 86 per cent were beaten during pregnancy. Of those seeking medical help after being raped, half were younger than 16, one quarter were younger than 12 and one in 10 were under eight years of age. ChildFund inter-

viewed 37 women in four villages and 14 men for the case studies used in the report.

"Most women interviewed during our field research in Rigo district, Central Province had experienced violence, and not one claimed to have a husband who had never beaten them," ChildFund said.

The case studies included a woman whose one-month-old baby was punched unconscious by her husband and his body used as a weapon against her. The baby survived the attack.

Another, Helen, had her lower lip bitten off in a random attack in the capital Port Moresby. "Sometimes when I sleep, I dream he will come to me and I am really scared about it. I think he is coming back again," she said.

At the city's Family Support Centre, ChildFund said they saw women with chunks of skin, cheeks, noses and ears missing after violent biting attacks, as well as injuries from spears, bush knives or machetes and whips.

PNG's government enacted harsh new laws earlier this year making sexual and other crimes against women punish-

able by death after a spate of violence including the burning alive of a young mother accused of witchcraft, the beheading of another, and the rape of two foreigners.

Aid organisation 'Medecins Sans Frontieres' (MSF) has labelled PNG's sexual and domestic violence a humanitarian crisis, with epidemic levels of abuse unique outside of a war-zone or state of civil unrest.

The group has said that violence is inherent in the way the population resolves disputes at a tribal, family and interpersonal level. The extremely low status of women in the country is also a factor.

PNG ranks 134 out of 148 countries in the 2012 UNDP Gender Inequality Index, and 156 out of 186 in the Human Development Index - the lowest in the Pacific.

Life expectancy is low, at 61 years for males and 65 for females. Infant mortality is high, and maternal mortality is the highest in the Pacific, among the highest in the world. Currently, 37 per cent of the population lives in poverty, and less than half of school-age children are enrolled in classes...