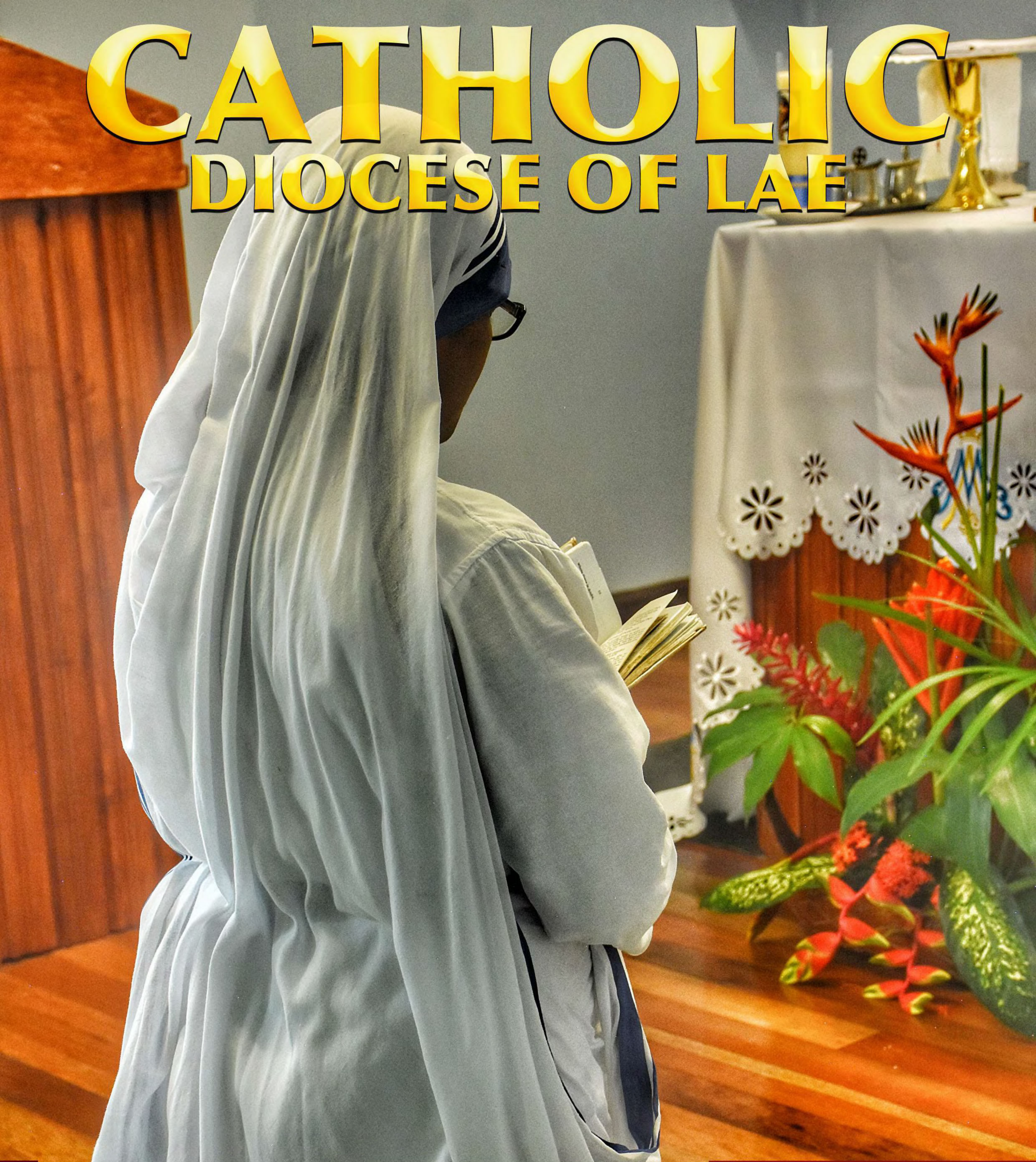


CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LAE



Newsletter

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- St. Mary's Cathedral Turns 70



VOLUME 4

Bishop Rozario Menezes SMM

The year 2021 has been a year of struggle for us, we have gone through times of uncertainty, despair, hopelessness etc. all because of COVID 19. All through the year we have lived in fear and anxiety, fear of lockdowns, anxious about 'what is next.' Fear of getting vaccinated, because of mixed messages that we read in social media, we are confused we do not know what is real and what is fake. Some were forced to be vaccinated for the fear of losing jobs, "NO JAB NO JOB" others preferred to go with the negative campaign against the jab, some others just don't believe that COVID is real. Whatever it may be, the struggle and pain caused by COVID is real. Many have lost their loved ones, others lost their jobs, some are stranded not able to travel and be with their families for Christmas.

"The year 2021 has been a year of struggle for us, because of COVID 19"

2000 years ago, Mary and Joseph were in the same situation as we are at this moment, they were anxious, they were fearful, they did not know what to do and where to go. But they did not give up, they were not sad but rather happy, because they trusted God, they knew that God will not abandon them, they believed that God is near to the broken hearted (Psalm 34:18). They put their trust in God, knowing that He will never break His promise (Isaiah 43:16-18). Mary did not have a comfortable place to give birth to her first-born baby boy,

Joseph did not have the time to decide what to do to protect Jesus and His mother, he just followed the instructions given by the angel in the dream. Life was hard for both of them, but they never gave up, they never complained, they were joyful and happy, because EMMANUEL-GOD WAS WITH THEM.

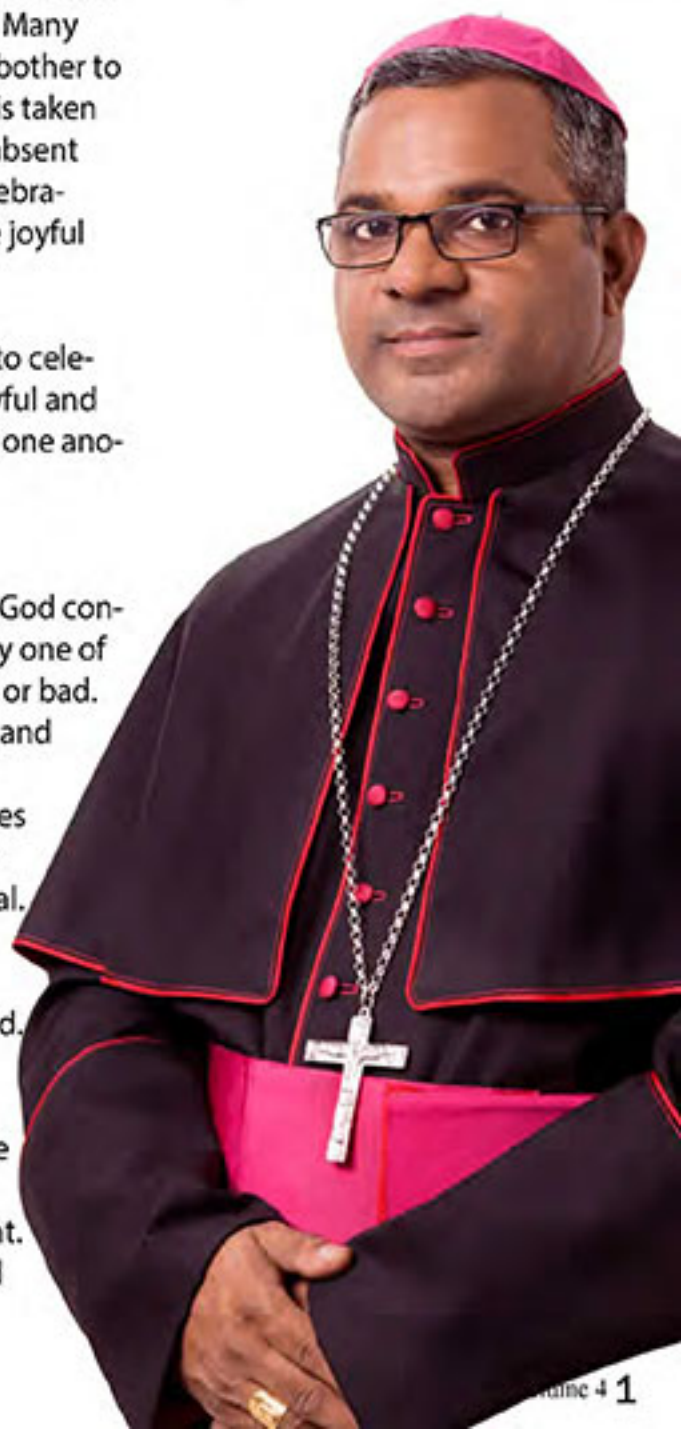
One of the causes of our anxiety and fear is that; The image of the Holy Family in Bethlehem is replaced with giant Christmas Tree and other worldly decorations. Jesus Christ is totally overshadowed by Santa Claus and his red-nosed reindeer. Many people don't or even didn't bother to go to Mass. So, when Christ is taken away from us, when God is absent from our gatherings and celebrations, what is there left to be joyful and happy?

In this situation, what is left to celebrate, what is there to be joyful and hopeful about? Did we wish one another a HAPPY NEW?
Do we still have faith?

Christmas reminded us that God continues to love each and every one of us, no matter if we are good or bad. God tells us that he loves us and always loves us, and we are precious in His eyes. God does not love us because we love Him, His love is unconditional. How often do we think that God is good if we are good and punishes us if we are bad. Yet that is not how he is. In spite of our sins, he continues to love us. His love does not change. It is not fickle; it is faithful. It is patient. This is the gift we celebrated on Christmas.

He is absolute gratuity, absolute tender love. His glory does not overwhelm us; his presence does not terrify us. He was born in utter poverty in order to win our hearts by the wealth of his love.

As we celebrate the new year 2022, we should ask ourselves: "Do I allow myself to be loved by God? Do I abandon myself to his love that comes to save me?" God's love is immense we need to be grateful for His love. To accept this love means being ready to give thanks in return





IN THE PHOTO: BISHOP ROZARIO WITH THE CHILDREN

CHRISTMAS CAROLS IN PICTURES

Let us learn to say THANK YOU even for small good things that we experience. Instead of being grateful, we find fault and tend to criticize, we want to change the world, but the best way to change the world is to change ourselves, when we change our attitude, everything around us becomes better, the diocese changes, history changes, things around us become better.

All we need to do is; stop trying to change others but try to change ourselves and to make our life a gift;

God did not expect us to change but he changed Himself and became like us, (John 1: 14) Jesus did not change history by pressuring anyone or by a flood of words, but by the gift of his own life. John's Gospel tells us why Jesus' birth is the pivotal moment in history:

The Incarnation brings God to us. God humbled himself to become one of us, to teach us about himself and show us how to live, love, and serve him. In doing so, the eternal Son revealed the Father to us. He opened the gates of heaven through his death and resurrection, enabling us to live with God forever. Jesus lowered himself to bring us something we could never reach for ourselves. But the question remains: How does this change me?

New parents might say that their first child taught them to be less selfish and more self-giving, that they experienced a deep joy even during difficult times, or that a child inspired them to improve themselves. Can we say the same about our encounter with Jesus?

Imagine the God of the universe, who created the stars and angels, and you and me, swaddled tightly and napping in his mother's arms

With a loving smile, she hands her son to you. Imagine his heavy eyes opening as he looks at you before drifting back to sleep. You're holding the Messiah, who will one day die for you. Rise for you. The same Jesus whom you will receive in the Eucharist.

This year let us not wait for others to be good before we do good to them. This year is the time of giving, as God gave his only Son to us, so let us give as we receive.

“God did not expect us to change but he changed Himself and became like us, (John 1: 14) Jesus did not change history by pressuring anyone or by a flood of words, but by the gift of his own life.”

Bishop Rozario Menezes SMM



MOTHER TERESA SISTERS NEW IN LAE

- Sr. Christine Masivo CPS

Missionaries of Charity Sisters commonly known as Mother Theresa Sisters opened their new convent at St Michael's Parish in Eriku on 10th September last year 2021. The opening of the new convent in our Diocese Lae coincided with 75th anniversary Inspiration Day of Mother Teresa. On Inspiration day the Missionaries of Charity commemorates Mother Teresa's call to serve the poorest of the poor.

The Missionaries of Charity were founded by Mother Teresa of Calcutta. They were welcomed in a Solemn Mass and blessing of their chapel by His Lordship Bishop Rozario Menezes SMM. The Blessed Sacrament has since then been placed in their chapel for them to have an ample time and space for prayer.

They will be a great blessing for the Diocese as they are very few religious women and men serving in Lae. The new missionaries to Lae Diocese will do works of evangelization and charity in Bumbu settlement and at St. Michaels in Eriku where their convent is.

The sisters were very happy for the warm welcome accorded to them and promised to work hand in hand with the Bishop and the people in Lae Diocese for the greater glory of God's kingdom and the betterment of humanity.

Lae Catholic Diocese Bishop Rozario Menezes has described 2021 as the year of Jubilee as the diocese welcomed the new congregation of nuns into the diocese:

“

2021 though been a year of struggle was a year of jubilee. We had a lot of jubilee celebration: the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) Missionaries who celebrated their 125 years anniversary, the Legion of Mary celebrated their 100 years jubilee, St Mary's Cathedral here in Lae Diocese celebrated its 75th years anniversary and we are thankful that God has blessed us with the new congregation of Sisters (Charity Sisters

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CHURCH SIGNS MOA WITH UNITECH

by Janet Kari

The Catholic Church and the PNG University of Technology signed a memorandum of understanding on the 18th of August. This partnership is aimed at promoting Catholic faith and educational principles among students. The Church understands the education is not simply the acquisition of knowledge but the process of forming a person for the good of society. The wholistic approach is thus needed in Universities and all learning institutions in the country. This is a small seed planted by Fr. Anthony Mulderink for the Catholic students in the campus of the University of Technology in Morobe.

Fr. Anthony first identified the problem of lack of good accommodation for the students and built a hostel to help them. Later on as a chaplain, he realised that the university needed spiritual guidance in its training program. The memorandum of understanding which is the fruit of Fr. Anthony's work was signed by Bishop Rozario Menezes SMM and the Unitech Vice Chancellor Dr Ora Renagi and was witnessed by Cardinal Sir John Ribat, who was in Lae for a visit.

Dr Renagi said partnering with churches is vital as churches provide the discipline that is needed at the university. He said there is still a lot of challenges at the university because not every students are well behave.

"As the university and an academic institute we have the mind to provide solution where there are problems and we are focusing on providing solutions to students who are causing problems.



We have the different churches in the university and we want work together with them to upholding values within our community because values are important." Dr Renagi said. Cardinal Ribat and Bishop Rozario both stressed the need for faith and spiritual formation in all learning institutions in the country among the students. "We want to thank the university for having the confidence in the Church to mould the character of the students and for the kindness to make the agreement formal," Bishop Rozario said.

"The university is training the students who are the future of this nation and at the same time disciplining the students and with the confidence the university has in the Church we will ensure there are improvements." added Cardinal Ribat. The church believes that education without faith is not good education and believes and teaches that good education should go beyond intellectual acquisition and benefit.





AGREEMENT WITH HEALTH AUTHORITIES

The Catholic Diocese of Lae in the person of Bishop Rozario Menezes SMM signed an agreement with the Morobe Provincial Health Authorities at Agua General Memorial Hospital on 6 December 2021. Bishop was accompanied by the Vicar General Fr. Roland Matoyi CMM, Sr. Dr Pauline Mpongo CPS, Lae Diocese' Communication Director Fr. Brian Nonde CMM a nurse from center of mercy and the volunteer worker of Catholic FM Radio in Lae. Sr. Dr. Pauline, Bishops Delegate for Health said that the agreement is aimed also at safeguarding the Church's stance on abortion and contraceptives. The Church forbids the use, distribution and promotion of artificial contraceptives. Therefore inclusive in the agreement is the following conscience clause:

“Catholic Church Health Services, along with its subsidiary network partners in the various dioceses, constitute a faith-based, non-profit, Catholic Church healthcare provider (contractor), which operates consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. This is particularly relevant with regard to abortion, whether manually performed or chemically induced, which is morally wrong and illegal in PNG. It also applies to certain methods of family planning, for example, the use of artificial and surgical means of birth control, (surgical sterilization such as tubal ligation, birth control drugs, hormonal injections and implants, physical devices etc.)...”



CATHOLIC PROFESSIONALS LAUNCHED IN LAE



The Catholic Professionals Society of PNG launched its 4th Diocesan Chapter in Lae on Sunday, 3rd October after Port Moresby, Alotau and Madang.

The launching was officiated by the Apostolic Nuncio to PNGSI, His Excellency Archbishop Fermin Emilio Sosa Rodriguez together with Bishop Rozario Menezes, SMM of the Diocese of Lae. Concelebrating at the Eucharist was Fr. Victor Roche, Secretary for New Evangelization Commission.

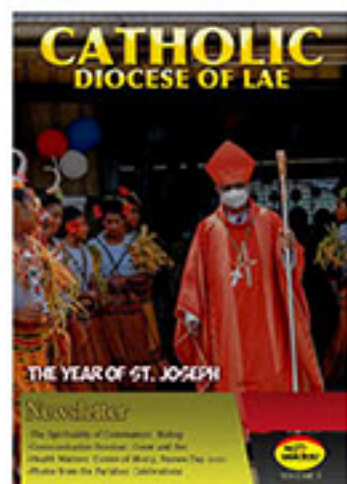
The Catholic Professionals Society Central Committee was represented by President Paul Harricknen, Vice President Dr. Patricia Paraide and Mrs. Helen Harricknen.

During the Eucharist, 14 men and women of various professional backgrounds were commissioned where they took their oath of membership and gave their pledge of commitment to the Society and to the Church to be "a light and a voice of Catholic faith" in their families, communities and workplaces. Candle lights were carried and small metal crosses and Blessed Peter ToRot's prayer cards for families were handed out to the new members symbolizing a commitment to a life of service and fidelity.

Archbishop Fermin encouraged members and all Catholics to live out a life of engagement, commitment, and fidelity in work and relationships. Bishop Rozario highlighted the need for Gospel values and Catholic Church teaching to permeate the secular

Mr Harricknen expressed gratitude to Archbishop Fermin's attendance as a sign of Rome's continued interest in the work of the Catholic Professionals in PNG. He thanked Bishop Rozario for allowing the establishment of the Lae Chapter and highlighted its importance, which in the future may become the centre of CPS and Church activities because of its central location.

by Paul Harricknen





**Apostolic Nuncio to PNGSI,
His Excellency Archbishop Fermin
Emilio Sosa Rodriguez together with
Bishop Rozario Menezes SMM of the
Diocese of Lae**



ITS PRIESTHOOD NOT A CAREER OR PROFESSION

Do you know that each one of us did not choose which family, environment, race or time to be born in? That our instincts and perhaps a large portion of our personalities are ordained beforehand. How each one of us respond to life has sometimes very little to do with what we learn but is as natural as feeling thirsty. We are unique and respond uniquely even if we were in the same circumstances.

We may not be Muslims who believe in Kismet (fate) or Christians like the original Calvinists who believed in absolute predestination but it is worth noting that there are certain things in life which are pre-ordained. To begin with, it is not an accident or happenstance that we were born. God called us into this life and we have a purpose for each and every one of us.

This is what the Bible clearly says in Hebrews 4:5 about priesthood. "No one takes this honor upon himself but only when called by God, just as Aron was." These words alone explain in the best possible way why some people become priests and why others do not.

These words I chose 8 years ago for my priestly souvenir and I always ponder them and I hope that one day their true meaning can be seen in your life too. 'No one takes this upon himself, yes' because ultimately it is God's will that is accomplished. "For many are the plans in the man's heart but is the Lord's purpose that prevails" says Proverbs 19:21.



God therefore knew, it is part of his plan that some of us become priests and other marry.

"Priesthood for me is a genetic makeup of certain people. It's part of their personal quality that can't be changed or duplicated."

Jeremiah 1:5 says, "before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you."

Romans 8:28-30 says: "We know that by turning everything to their good, God co-operates with all those who love him, with all those he has called according to his purpose.

They are the ones he chose especially long ago and intended to become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers. He called those he intended for this; those he called he justified, and with those he justified he shared his glory". Cardinal Newman puts it this way, "God created me to do him some work to me which He has not committed to another". St. Bernardine says "Divine Goodness chooses a man for some particular service." Romans 11:29 sums it up, "the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable".

So my dear friends, priesthood is not a job or a career that one chooses for himself, for as the scripture says no one takes this honor upon himself, just as Aron didn't. Priesthood is but a calling from God. It is part of Master's plan. See also John 15:16, 1Cor 1:26-29, 1Tim 1:12, 2Tim 1:9.

by Fr. Brian Nonde CMM



MEET DR. SR. PAULINE MPONGO CPS?

“Your Mother is the Best Doctor in the World”

She is a missionary in Papua New Guinea from Congo Africa with a well versed experience in the medical field and heart for children. She is a missionary sister of the Precious Blood and a qualified Pediatrician, Administrator and the Sister in charge of the Centre of Mercy in Lae Kamkumung. She has been the Secretary for Health in the Catholic Diocese of Lae but at the end of 2021 Bishop decided to appoint her Delegate for Health, a position almost equivalent to that of the Vicar for Health in the Diocese. Her name is Sr. Dr. Pauline Mpongo CPS.





ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL TURNS 70

Timeline: As gold was discovered in Wau in 1927, the Township of Lae gradually developed. Between the years 1930 to 1942 Lae was sporadically visited by a priest from Madang Diocese or by a priest from Australia or the Army. After the war Lae got its first resident priest.

1946 to 1948 Fr. Leo Arkfeld SVD
 1948 to 1951 Fr. William Backus who died in an air crash
 1951 to 1952 Fr. Adolf Aufinger SVD

1952 to 1954 Fr. George Bernarding SVD, builder of St. Mary's Church in 1953.

1955 to 1956 Fr. Tra SVD
 1956-1960 Passionist Fathers, Fr. Anselm Turner and Fr. Gregory Kirby
 1961 Missionaries of Mariannahill took over

1965 to 1971 Fr. Gerald Hafmans CMM
 1971 to 1973 Fr. Phil Heier CMM
 1973 to 1978 Fr. Sido van der Werf CMM
 1978 to 1983 Fr. Gerard Hafmans CMM
 1983 to 1984 Several Mariannahill priests
 1984 to 1995 Fr. Michael Sheehy CMM
 1995 to 2005 Fr. Sido van der Werf CMM
 2005 to date Fr. Arnold Schmitt CMM.

On 8th September 2021 (on the Feast of the Birthday the Blessed Virgin Mary), Christians in Lae Diocese came together to mark 75 years – platinum Jubilee of St. Mary's Cathedral Church. St. Mary's Cathedral is the first parish in the Diocese of Lae and was built in 1953.

The third Bishop of Lae, His Lordship Rozario Menezes SMM expressed gratitude and thanked God for leading the SVD missionaries to Lae, "they planted the good seed which later was watered by the Mariannahill Missionaries" said Bishop. "We thank the Missionaries of Mariannahill for building and establishing the Diocese and for their tireless dedication to work of evangelisation in Morobe." he added. Bishop Rozario encouraged the parishioners and all the faithful in the diocese who participated in this celebration to keep the faith that has been handed on to them by the missionaries. "Make the Platinum Jubilee year of the Cathedral church, a year of grace. Let us all take Mary the Immaculate who is full of love for the Lord as our example. Let us imitate Mary," said His Lordship Rozario Menezes SMM



NEW HOUSE FOR THE PRIEST IN BULOLO



**APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO PNGSI,
HIS EXCELLENCY ARCHBISHOP FERMIN EMILIO SOSA RODRIGUEZ
TOGETHER WITH BISHOP ROZARIO MENEZES SMM,**

CENTENARY OF THE LEGION OF MARY



The Legion of Mary celebrated 100 years. It was a time of joy, of celebration and of thanksgiving. The celebration took place at St. Mary Hall in Eriku on 28th August. The main celebrant was the Vicar General of the diocese Fr. Ronald Matoyi CMM. More than 20 priests concelebrated. These came from different dioceses in Papua New Guinea.

The Holy Eucharist celebration started at 10 am and the women were dressed in their colourful regalia (blue wrappers and white meri blouses) the colours the Legion of Mary use in their devotional group.

The celebration was colourful, unique and special and many were touched by the presence of many priests. Priests too were edified by the number of the faithful who gathered on this special day to celebrate the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

After the Liturgy of the Mass the celebration was marked by the cutting of the cake, traditional singing and item presentation.

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It was an occasion to promote the devotion to Mother Mary. Members of the Legion of Mary shared their testimonies of answered prayers through the intercession of Mary. Fr. Matoyi the main celebrant reminded the Legion of Mary to follow the true devotion of Mary through careful study of the Word and the Tradition of the Church.

The majority of the members of the legion of Mary in Lae Diocese are women. Mothers in the Diocese seem to be very active and this was seen during the centenary celebration of the foundation of the Legion Mary.





CHALLENGES OF THE CHURCH IN PNG

Increase of sorcery related violence, cult groups, tribal fights and an influx of modern weapons and ammunition is a growing challenge for many dioceses in the country and in particular those in the Highlands regions. Fr Isaiah Timba of the Diocese of Mendi raised these concerns during the Vangeke Institute Program, a six weeks training program held at the St Joseph Pastoral Centre in Lae Diocese. Apart from his priestly duties he works as a peace promoter of Hela Province in the Highlands region of PNG.

Fr Isaiah said despite these growing challenges the church continues its work and help in addressing of these challenges. "Currently there are three main challenges in the diocese including

surrounding Highlands region, and these includes influx of modern weapons and ammunition, sorcery related violence, tribal fights and people's excessive love for money." "Weapons includes M16, AK47 and others, we don't have a factory for ammunition and weapons but we have all these ammunition and these modern weapons," Fr Isaiah said.

Fr Isaiah said; "Every village or every clan possess a certain amount of modern weapons and when there is tension, like political problem, land issue or violence they bring out their weapons and start shooting each other."

The excessive love for money amongst people is also a grave concern. "Money is becoming like God for people, money is something to sustain

our lives but the problem we have is how to use the money, we don't know how to manage the money, and the problem we have is management of money," Fr Isaiah said. In the midst of all these social challenges priests do give up, they preach to the faithful that God is still with them in and through these challenges. Fr Isaiah has been working as a priest in the Highlands region for nine years and now works as a peace promoter in Hela province.

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11 January 2022 a Press Conference on Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV) is held at the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG/SI

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Lae Diocese Communication Team

Fr. Brian Nonde CMM - *Director of Communications Lae Diocese*

Sr. Christine Masivo CPS - *Bishops Secretary*

Schofield Mutum - *Radio Announcer*

Snyder Williams - *Volunteer Content Creator*

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