

Neues aus Papua Neuguinea - April 2017

Dear friends of Mariannahill PNG!

Greetings from Lae, from where I send you this first TANGET of 2017.

On the 18th and 19th of January we, CMM in PNG, had our Annual Assembly, deliberating on the challenges lying ahead. And they were mainly the challenges the Diocese faces. **Bishop Christian Blouin** gave a detailed account of them and made clear where he would like Mariannahill to step in. One field is the Catholic Radio and fortunately we have now a confrere, **Fr. Brian Nonde**, already formed and skilled in that area. Another field is the formation of the faithful, with the Diocesan Pastoral Centre at St. Joseph's Station as important point of reference. How to balance this need with the need of pastors for the parishes?

In the first months of 2017 we had some reshuffle of tasks and responsibilities. **Fr. Brian** is working hard on restarting the Radio, which temporarily was closed down. At the same time he has been put in charge of St. Stephen's Parish, taking over from **Fr. Sido v.d. Werf**.

**Fr. Roland Matoyi** has been appointed parish priest of St. Therese in Kamkumung, while the Bishop has given him also an important mission with the Diocesan Youth.

**Fr. Krzysztof Zacharuk**, up to now in charge of St. Therese, is now the parish priest of the Siassi parish with a total of eight churches and communities.

As **Fr. Krzysztof** will be mainly residing on Siassi, he resigned as local Superior of Mariannahill House. This task was taken over by **Br. Yvon Bourret**.

**Br. Yvon** has a lot of experience with local management and under his guidance the renovation of the building, already started before, is progressing well.

Thus quite a few of us started the New Year with new responsibilities.

Others are suffering (or enjoying) less changes. **Fr. Ludwig Teika** is already more than half a year parish priest of St. Michael's and getting used to all the work involved having also at his pastoral care St. Mary's Primary School and the National Polytechnic Institute of PNG, both belonging to his parish.

Fr. Ludwig with parishioners on the school grounds of St. Mary's Primary School.

While our two student-confreres **Alois Gende and Wilfred Salhun** are going towards their final year in Zambia, our Mariannahill College in Bomana is rented out to the Dominicans who needed more rooms than their own College can provide.

The New Year didn't welcome everybody with good news. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January patients of a remote area in PNG found the following note pinned on the door of their rural health centre:

All medicines finished – 31-12-16

-No medicine against cough

-No pain killers

-No plaster for dressing wounds

Happy New Year 2017 to you

and take care of yourselves!

New supply not arrived yet.

If sick, go to another hospital

The note reflected, of course, only part of the health care situation of the country and contrasts sharply with the dedication, care and good-will that comes from people, individuals and institutions.

We could witness the positive side a few weeks ago, on the 18th of March, when at the Backroad in Lae a Health Centre was opened as part of the new parochial structure, in which the Diocese of Lae has put a lot of energy, especially through its Vicar General and our confrere **Fr. Arnold Schmitt**, and the financial support of generous donors, many of them from overseas. (You who are reading this may be one of them. Thanks so much!) The Health Centre needed alone for its construction some 850.000 Kina. Now comes the functioning, with the needed medicines and nurses. The Government has promised help, but the printed promises have not been followed up by printing the money! The Catholic Health Services will temporarily pay two nurses, waiting for the Government to take over these charges.

Some 400 people attended the ceremony. The Health Centre is badly needed, as that area of Lae is far away from any health facility.

Health Centre “Mary, Queen of Peace” on the 18th of March 2017.

The day before, on the 17th of March, St. Joseph’s Technical School celebrated its Patron Saint.

**Fr. Sido** presided the Eucharist. He has been a member of the School Board for many years. He was able to give them much good advice and he cared for years also for the 50/60 boarders. **Fr. Sido** plans to return to the Netherlands for good on the 8th of May. A last farewell celebration is still to come.

For our confreres **Fr. Roland and Fr. Brian**, who attended the celebration, it was a good opportunity to know closer this important formative and social body, which is St. Joseph’s technical School, started by our first pioneers, especially the Brothers, as one of our most important social projects, the formation of young people in different trades. Their first classroom is still standing, functioning now as a garage for the School truck. The students, coming out of that single class room, had straight away their practice helping the Brothers to build up the station, all under the guiding hand of late **Br. Leo Trommelen**.

In the context of social projects and development it is good to mention here a great man who has done much for PNG and its development, **Sir Henry Chow** and who died on the 21st of January.

He was a great benefactor of Lae Diocese and a good friend of Mariannahill. He owned a wharf in Rabaul and built our first mission boat. Settling down in Lae later, he started Lae Biscuits. He will not easily be forgotten as “Lae Bisket” belongs to the staple diet of many people, especially those who have no breakfast or lunch. He has supported many projects of the Catholic Church and others. He passed away in a Hospital in Sydney on the 21st of January. While in Sydney his family celebrated his funeral, in three major cities of PNG, Port Moresby, Lae and Rabaul, parallel celebrations took place, attended by many. In Lae the Cathedral was too small for the thousand people that attended the Eucharist. Mr. Chow was one of these few great business men whose concern goes far beyond their own interests. PNG would be blessed if in the new Government resulting from the elections in June this year we would have people with the broadmindedness and generosity of Sir Henry Chow!

Back to Mariannahill! On the 26th of March we celebrated in the “haus win” of Mariannahill House the birthdays of **Fr. Arnold and Fr. Krzysztof**.

Our **CPS Sisters** were, of course, also there. They are still in small numbers. **Sister Henriqueta Muchate** is still in Africa because of health issues.

**Sister Michaela Kim** went on home-leave on the 2nd of April. Thus **Sister Pascal Nyamadzawo** is now alone, waiting for the other two Sisters who are expected to come. One of them is to arrive this month.

Now we are looking forward to two upcoming events, quite different in character: the Holy Week and Parliamentary Elections..

The Passion songs will fill the streets of Lae and of other cities of PNG on Holy Friday, when the Stations of the Cross are lived out colourfully, celebrated ecumenically, many members of other denominations participating in great numbers. After Easter the country will plunge head-over into the election campaign.

In name of all the confreres and CPS Sisters here I wish you wholeheartedly:

**A BLESSED , HAPPY AND PEACEFUL EASTER!**