



NG TANGET

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LAE AND BOMANA UPDATE

After an absence of 5 weeks because of a medical treatment in Canada, **Bishop Christian Blouin** returned to Lae in the middle of April being in a good shape.

Meanwhile **Fr. Sido van der Werf** had come back from a 3 months stay in the Netherlands for reasons of health. He has shifted down his activities after the bishop had entrusted **Fr. Gerard Vains** with the pastoral work in the vast Markham Valley. Fr. Gerard had been transferred back from the Siassi islands to Lae City.

After the ordination of the diocesan priest **Fr. Philemon Korake**, another priest has joined the de Diocese of Lae. He is **Fr. Freddie Ossifello** from the Solomon Islands who has been appointed as parish priest of the St. Michael's parish.

Fr. Anthony Mulderink is still at St. Paul's in the Netherlands but hopes to be able to return to PNG in June.

A newly ordained priest, **Fr. Adrian Ndlovu** of the Zimbabwe province has been appointed for the PNG Region. After some months of pastoral practice in Zimbabwe he will move to Lae. These are hopeful signs of rejuvenating the CMM manpower and replacing the outgoing models.

Since the personnel situation in the diocese has improved recently, the temporary assistance of **Fr. Frans Lenssen** is not needed anymore. He has been 'on loan' from the Dutch Region since June last year and has been engaged in three parishes, the last one St. Steven at 3-Mile. In the first 5 months he was in charge of the formation of postulants. At present he is in the Mariannahill College at Bomana where he has been a lecturer at the Catholic Theological Institute for

five years. He will return to the Netherlands in the second half of May.

Frans remembers that when he came for the first time to PNG in 1971 there were 2.5 million inhabitants in the country. At present, 40 years later, there are 7 million. The population of villages on the Siassi Islands where he has been working 40 years ago, like Mandok and Aupwel, has now more than doubled.

The **Mariannahill College** in Bomana/Port Moresby is not overpopulated with CMM members this year. **Fr. Alfonso Voorn** as rector and lecturer at the Theological Institute is residing with two postulants, **Wilfred Salhun** and **Alois Gende**. Deacon **Daniel Apas** is assisting the rector and looks after home affairs for the time being, while waiting for a visa for Zambia. Three rooms are rented to external students.

Thanks to an increasing concentration of students for the priesthood in fewer study centers, the Catholic Theological Institute at Bomana has maintained in the last years its numerical level of students. At present there are 56 diocesan seminarians, 70 religious and 8 external, a total of 134 students on the campus. The diocese of Lae has 3 seminarians studying theology in Bomana besides 3 in the Good Shepherd Seminary for religious studies (philosophy) in Banz. There are 5 dioceses with the same number of seminarians at Bomana..

FR. ARNOLD SCHMITT CMM 25 YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD

On the 7th of May **Fr. Arnold**, who is at present Vicar General of the diocese of Lae and in charge of St. Mary's Cathedral's parish, woke up to the day of his Silver Jubilee as a priest. According to his wish not to have any big public celebration, his

jubilee was celebrated in a closed gathering of the CMM/CPS/FMI/M religious communities in Lae. It may be good to remember a few PNG milestones along his road up to the present day. After having been ordained a priest and having served as rector of the St. Pius-Seminary in Würzburg/Germany for several years, he was transferred to Papua New Guinea where he arrived for the first time on 5 February 1999. After an initial familiarization period Fr. Arnold was most of his first term parish priest of the All Saints parish in the Bumbu settlement.



He returned to Germany in January 2002 but his mind and heart remained attached to PNG. Three years later, in 2005 Fr. Arnold was back in Lae where he succeeded Fr. Sido van der Werf as parish priest of the cathedral parish of St. Mary. He has developed several new activities in the parish among others literacy classes and the care of street kids for which he has provided adequate facilities. He has been provincial superior for 2 terms. At present he is the vicar general of the diocese.

CPS IN LAE

Sr. Henriquetta together with **Fr. Alfonso Voorn** attended the annual general meeting of the Federation of Man and Women Religious in PNG in Port Moresby in March. Five weeks later Sr.

Henriquetta was back again in Port Moresby accompanied by **Sr. Grace Karinga** to take part in the annual national meeting of representatives of Church Health Services in the country. The Minister of Health acknowledged that the health services of the Christian Churches are by far the biggest partner in the provision of health service, delivery and training of health workers in the country. A total of 27 Christian denominations operate these facilities ranging from rural hospitals to health centres and aid posts. The Catholic Church is heading this list and is frequently lauded by the government for its health and education services throughout the country. The Churches have together a staff establishment of 3557 trained health workers.

Meanwhile **Sr. Maria Pascal** has been appointed manager of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre in Lae and has taken over the work of **Sr. Clemence Klever**. This pastoral centre is fully booked out for the current year not only by church groups but it is also well appreciated by civil organizations as conference centre.

A NEW BUILDING PROJECT



At present a new building project of the diocese is in progress in Lae. The frame work of a solid steel construction on the premises of St. Mary's Primary School gives already an idea of the spacious multi-purpose hall which is arising. It looks like becoming an impressive and eye-catching building – length 50 , width 25 and height 7 meter - which will solve the problem of facilitating a proper place for big gatherings on various occasions. A couple of small Cessna airplanes could easily be parked in the hall.

CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS NO TO DEATH PENALTY

The recent increase of cases of sorcery-related gruesome murders has provoked a public outcry and demand for the death penalty for serious crimes is on the rise. Officially the death penalty has been legislated some decades ago, and a number of criminals have been sentenced to death, however, so far none of them has yet been executed.

The Catholic Church strongly opposes the death penalty. This was clearly confirmed by **Bishop Christian Blouin** during an interview with the national television. Catholic **Archbishop of Port Moresby, John Ribat**, announced the church's position at a press conference. Archbishop Ribat called for life imprisonment with hard labour for perpetrators of serious crimes including rape, murder and armed robbery. The church's call comes in light of frequent crimes committed against humanity and especially against women and girls. PNG's serious law and order situation has been further highlighted recently with several sorcery-related killings, and cases of pack rape. Archbishop Ribat said he acknowledges the immense pressure on the Government to curb law and order problems and its moves to introduce maximum penalties to crackdown on the country's serious law and order problems. Speaking on behalf of the other churches, he said the church would live by its principles. "No life will be taken. We do not have the right to do that but we do have the right to better a person's life," the Archbishop said. He said there was moral breakdown in PNG society and called on the Government to work with churches to address the serious law and order problems by properly funding and strengthening the law enforcing systems. from the top right down to the local' level governments and get perpetrators to answer for their crimes. This is a matter that must not be left for the police alone but everyone should be involved. "We want to be united with the Government for programs that will help people develop themselves in a more positive way,"

Archbishop Ribat said. The church wants to promote good awareness among the people but the church can't do it alone. While encouraging peace, he said the church wanted to be part of the peace making with government bodies that address and promote peace. He also urged men to respect women.

(Post Courier 2/05/13)

UNITED NATIONS CONDEMNS SORCERY KILLINGS

The United Nations (UN) is deeply disturbed by the increasing reports of violence, torture and murder of persons accused of practicing sorcery around the country. UN agencies functioning in Papua New Guinea said in a joint statement yesterday that they condemned and demanded an end to extra-judicial killings related to accusations of sorcery in PNG. "These killings constitute murder and must not be treated with impunity," their statement said. "Thorough and fair investigations of such actions should be conducted and perpetrators tried in court accordingly.. "This year alone cases have been reported in the Highlands, Madang and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, thus it is an issue of national concern. "These reports raise grave concern that accusations of sorcery are used to justify arbitrary and inhumane acts of violence. "The UN strongly advocates that cultural and traditional beliefs can never be used to justify the murder, torture or brutal attack against another person. "All criminal cases should be pursued through the judicial system." *(The National, 12th April, 2013)*

The judicial system is there. A lot, however, remains to be done on the educational level. The Church, with its extensive educational service, and with a vast historical experience in the field, has no doubt an important mission in this area, even – if we see things globally - as a kind of belated compensation.

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