



PNG TANGET

News Leaflet of Mariannahill in Papua New Guinea

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Mariannahill College Bomana
P.O. Box 54, Gordons, NCD

Dear friends of “Mariannahill in Papua New Guinea”!

With a bit of delay the second TANGET of this year comes herewith to you.

With all the troubles coming up in the world, especially in the Middle East, the Ukraine, and with the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, writing from PNG feels like writing from a safe corner of the world. There are problems, and lots of them, but they seem to be local and reduced. And in the midst of them we move. Here a few of our movements.

This year it was **Bishop Chris Blouin**'s and **Fr. Alfonso Voorn**'s turn to go for home-leave. They did so in May and both returned safe to PNG in August.

In the meantime our community in Lae and in a special way the Saint Mary's parish was rocked with a shock when on July 9 **Fr. Arnold Schmitt** was rushed to the hospital because of the first symptoms of a stroke. Fortunately Fr. Arnold was quick in going to the doctor. By the time the symptoms became stronger he was already in the doctors' hands and in a few days he recovered sufficiently to be able to walk out of the hospital on his own feet. A later scan in a hospital in Port Moresby showed that all possible traces of the stroke had disappeared. As Fr. Arnold told me a month later, he feels even better than before. So thanks be God and let us hope that no load of work or stress may cause a relapse.

Work Fr. Arnold has enough as parish priest of St. Mary's, Vicar general of the diocese – at the time of the stroke the bishop was on home-leave - and several projects running, among them the so-called “street

kids” and a parish hall at the back road in Lae, now finishing.



Fr. Arnold Schmitt.

No wonder kids feel protected!

There are other projects in the diocese, like a staff room for the teachers to be built in the new big hall of St. Mary's primary School, and a double classroom Elementary School in Situm. A new church building in the St. Francis parish of Wau has successfully been completed and will be inaugurated and blessed by **Bishop Chris** on October the 6th. As usual, the building could only be done thanks to generous financing from abroad. This time, and certainly not the first or last time, our German Mariannahill Province has provided the main contribution. Our heartfelt thanks go to all the benefactors who made possible the new church building, really necessary as the old one has been finished by the termites.

The new church in Wau reminds us painfully of the lack of priests in the diocese of Lae. The last parish priest in Wau, a member of the Missionaries of Jesus, couldn't cope anymore and left his Congregation and the parish. **Fr. Crespo Lape, MJ**, is on a sabbatical and next year three of

us, Missionaries of Mariannahill, will go for some months on home-leave.

Fr. Anthony Mulderink celebrated on September 8 the 60th anniversary of his religious profession. He and Fr. Sido, residing at St. Joseph's Mission, are clearly on the retiring side of life.

Fr. Krzysztof Zacharuk is the parish priest of St. Martin's parish in Lae. From time to time, however, he goes for a few weeks to Siassi, because the six parishes there have no priest at the moment. Moreover, travelling to Siassi has become more difficult as Lutheran shipping has gone bankrupt and had to stop its operations.

Our two novices in Mariannahill Monastery in South Africa, **Brs. Alois Gende and Wilfred Salhun**, seem to be doing well. In Bomana we had also a candidate. But just a few days ago the young man gave up and enrolled in the recruit school for prison wards. Quite a change of vocation, I would say. Blessings go with him and may he be happy!

Our small community in Bomana has been, on the other hand, enriched with the presence of an Indian missionary who works for the Bishops' Conference as Secretary of the Commission for Youth and Laity. **Fr. Shanti Chacko** (PIME) has a wealth of experience in Church life. He also was personally acquainted with Mother Theresa of Kolkata, with whom he has worked for several years.

No special news from our two “students” in Rome, **Fr. Matthew Kim**, and **Fr. Ludwig Teika**, except that they are doing very well in their studies. To decide on their future engagement in the field will be up to the General Government, which is supposed to know best where to ap-

ply their newly acquired knowledge and skills.

During the European summer holidays I invited Fr. Ludwig to come to the Netherlands.

With him we had a kind of Mission Day in my home parish and he had ample opportunity to know our community at St. Paul, and he visited Fr. Sido's brother **Frits and his wife Hanneke**, whose house respires PNG atmosphere through all its pores.



Fr. Ludwig putting flowers on the grave of Fr. Henk Jansen at St. Paul, Arcen, Netherlands.

He also could visit our community at Reimlingen, Germany, where he met **Br. Werner Hupperich**.

I myself had also an opportunity to visit Br. Werner together with **Fr. Frans Lenssen**. We found Br. Werner a happy man, well cared for and even making some progress in his speaking in spite of the severe paralysis he suffers.

The trip with Fr. Frans brought us also to our Swiss confreres in Altdorf, for whom we had a little carving as a sign of gratitude for the steady help our work in PNG receives from our Swiss community.

By the way, Fr. Frans, tireless in publishing historical material about Mariannahill's presence and work in PNG, has edited two new collections of reports and memories. One is a compilation of the TANGETS called "Mariannahill in Papua New Guinea, 1999-2014. A review." It offers 273 pages of information with an index. The second publication is called "From the Melanesian horizon" with the subtitle "Writings from Papua New Guinea". It contains 93 pages of Fr. Frans' letters and reflections from his time in PNG. The last contribution to the collection is a talk he gave on "Abbot Francis and his charisma" in 1982, on the 100th anni-

versary of the foundation of the Mariannahill Monastery in South Africa. Also at that time Fr. Frans was challenging. He writes "We should view the charism of Abbot Francis Pfanner and his Mission Institute of Mariannahill not as an interesting antique, but as the gift and call of the Spirit that constantly appears in new forms." Our trip along our aging communities in Europe in June makes such a statement sound like the battle cry of El Quijote, heading on his mule for the windmills, with outstretched arm, holding high his lance "to fight the unbeatable foe and to go where the heroes don't go", as the song in "Man of la Mancha" has it.

But when we look at Africa where Mariannahill has nearly a hundred young men in formation, dreams don't seem absurd but the only way – the one of the prophets of old – to go forward, going ways not less "countercultural" than those of Abbot Francis.

The two publications mentioned are interesting reading and available via Fr. Frans (flenssen@mariannahill.nl).

In the meantime, history goes on in PNG and also Church history. On September 16 the country celebrated the 39th anniversary of its independence. For days the national flag and the regional flags were omnipresent, on cars and PMV's, on doors and windows, on cloths and hair. The Papua New Guinean genius is able to make a big memorial just by the pure act of going festive. It is a bit like creation. At the beginning there was nothing and now we have a wonderful multi-coloured world. Independence came to PNG not after its people had shed their blood for it. It came, to say so, without any noise. It was welcome, of course, but more a duty than a conquest. It was not so that each of the more than 800 tribes got back its independence. Independence meant to a great extent interdependency and would force the different ethnic groups to walk together as one nation, rubbing shoulders instead of throwing spears at each other. Indeed a multi-coloured army. To bring about union in the European Union is a child's game in compari-

son with forging unity in PNG. Up to today a uniform discipline on any level belongs to the impossible. Festivity and celebration, however, unites all peoples of PNG. Sharing is a super value in Melanesian culture. It is also a great open door through which Gospel values enter this cultural space.

Although the Church has its confrontation with some customs of the "outgoing culture, the main challenges today come and will increasingly come from the "modernity" to give it a name, in which the "market" and the international corporations set the tone with their "vulture capitalism". The Spanish "Aqui te pillo, aqui te mato" (Here I get you, here I kill you) becomes a rule of life in order to survive in the upcoming new urban jungle. On Independence Day, the Father of the Nation, the Grand Chief Michael Somare, had to admit in his discourse that "we have reduced the greatness of this country by our greed and selfishness. What was once a passion to live and die for Papua New Guinea has now turned into a passion to live and die for one's self-interests". (Post Courier, September 17, 2014) The government sees a possible way out of the corruption in siphoning a substantial part of the money destined for services, schools, hospitals, community buildings, to the Churches, as normally these are much more reliable than the body of public servants, low and high.

Around Christmas the next Tanget should appear on your screen. Let's hope that in the meantime the cause of peace in the world, especially in the Middle East, may have gained ground and that the "piece-meal world war III", as Pope Francis calls it, has been reined in.

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