



PNG TANGET

News Leaflet of Mariannahill in Papua New Guinea

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St. Joseph's Mission,
P.O. Box 3, 411 Lae, PNG

Dear friends of Mariannahill PNG

You all have heard of the sudden death of our dear Bishop Emeritus Christian Blouin, on the 12th of January. Within a month after the new Bishop of Lae, Msgr. Rozario Menezes, SMM, had taken over, our Lord called Bishop Chris to Himself. He may rest in peace! The TANGET should have been among the first media to inform you. It wasn't. Sorri tru! But I know that Bishop Chris would have forgiven me. All kinds of "happenings" blocked a timely "special edition".



During his last days, Bishop Chris was apparently in a relatively good condition. When on Friday, the 11th of January, I met him at St. Mary's Cathedral, it called my attention – again, as so often after he had handed over his office to his successor, – that he looked so relaxed and happy, even younger!

The following day, Saturday the 12th of January, after breakfast he went to visit some friends in the Markham Valley. That means that he felt fit enough to drive.

When he arrived at his friends' home, he entered the house and collapsed. They took him immediately to the hospital, where he arrived still alive. There, however, he died soon after his arrival, at 9.45 am.

The medical certificate of death states that he died A SUDDEN DEATH related to an ISCHAEMIC HEART DISEASE. His heart had given up.

We, the Catholics of the Diocese of Lae were all very shocked.

Not even a month before, on the 15th of December, he had handed over the episcopacy of Lae to the new Bishop. He was thinking of returning to Canada, his home-land, in April, remaining of course deeply united with his beloved people in PNG. But he, and all of us, were in for a surprise. God allowed him to remain closer to his people than he had imagined. Everytime we celebrate Mass in our chapel at St. Joseph, afterwards people visit the cemetery and show their affection for Bishop Chris, who had been working in the Diocese of Lae as a priest for nearly 20 years in several parishes of Lae town, and then as a Bishop for nearly 12 years.

Within our Mariannahill PNG Province and before he became Bishop, Fr. Chris had been Provincial Superior from 1993 to 1999. He also was a strong promotor of local vocations for Mariannahill, supervised the construction of the Mariannahill College at Bomana, and was the first rector of our major Seminarians from 2002 till 2005.

After Bishop Chris' sudden death, **Fr. Arnold Schmitt**, as Vicar General of the Diocese, took upon his shoulders the coordination of the preparations for the mourning ceremonies and the funeral.

On Tuesday, the 15th, the HAUS KRAI was set up in the parish hall of St. Mary's. Each parish of Lae took its turn in organizing the praying and singing next to the body.

On Wednesday, the 16th of January, the Funeral Mass took place in the Cathedral, after which the body was taken to the little cemetery at St. Joseph's, 8 Mile, where several missionaries have found already their last resting place.



Graves of the two first bishops of Lae, Bishop Henry and Bishop Chris, the one with the fresh flowers

On the day after the funeral, Bishop Rozario had to absent himself from the Diocese for a journey to India, planned already long before. He came back to Lae on the 18th of February.

On Sunday, the 24th of February, the HAUS KRAI was closed. With that the time of mourning was officially over. A last farewell was left for Wednesday, the 27th of February.

At St. Joseph, 8 Mile, Bishop Rozario presided a Memorial Eucharistic Celebration for the eternal rest of Bishop Chris. The church was packed full so that people had even to stand outside. After Mass the congregation went to the cemetery where the memorial plaque was blessed and installed at the grave, and prayers were said. Afterwards cooldrinks and sweets

were offered.

The text on Bishop Chris' memorial plaque reads as follows:

BISHOP CHRISTIAN
BLOUIN, CMM
GRAND COMPANION OF THE ORDER OF LOGOHU

BORN : 01 - 11 - 1941
ORDAINED PRIEST : 03 - 05 - 1969
ORDAINED BISHOP : 05 - 05 - 2007
DIED : 12 - 01 - 2019

BISHOP CHRIS SERVED THE DIOCESE OF LAE FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, FIRST AS PRIEST AND THEN AS BISHOP. HE WAS PARISH PRIEST OF THE ALL SAINTS PARISH IN BUMBU, ST. PATRICK'S PARISH IN TENT CITY, AND LATER OF THE PARISH OF ST. MARTIN DE PORRES IN THE PAPA COMPOUND. HE WAS BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF LAE FOR NEARLY 12 YEARS. HE HAD A GREAT LOVE FOR HIS DIOCESE AND ITS PEOPLE. HE SERVED AND GUIDED THEM WITH TRUE CARE AND GENTLENESS OF HEART.

REST IN PEACE, DEAR BISHOP CHRIS!

Another significant farewell took place in Lae also on the 24th of February.

The diocese, and especially the Bumbu settlement in Lae, said farewell to our much loved and known Sister Gertrude Vavine, member of the Congregation of the Little Sisters of Jesus. This Congregation has as its charism and mission to share the life of the poorest and be a sign of God's love among them.

Sister Gertrude has done so for more than 50 years in the Bumbu settlement in Lae.



Sister Gertrude when she came to Bumbu. The smile never left her. How great a Little Sister can be!

As a young girl and in the outskirts of Port Moresby, she came in contact with the Little Sisters of Jesus, founded in 1939 and inspired by the life of Charles de Foucauld. There she found her vocation, was trained as a nurse for three years and then started her apostolate together with another Sister in Bumbu, Lae.

The many years there and her loving dedication earned her the name of "the bubu (grandmother) of the Bumbu". But the years went on and her weakening health motivated her Superiors to look for a place where the care she had been giving to others

during her whole life could be given to her.

Bishop Rozario presided the Eucharistic celebration in which the farewell from the All Saints Parish in Bumbu and from the Diocese took place. The shawl she was given as a present and which the Bishop put around her shoulders symbolized very well the love of the whole of Bumbu embracing her, in answer to her lifelong dedication as a Sister and nurse to the needy.



Sister Gertrude Vivane,
honoured in front of the altar
in All Saints Parish, Bumbu, Lae

From 25 February till 2 March **Sister Pascal Namadzawo, CPS**, and **Fr. Alfonso Voorn, CMM**, attended the Annual Meeting of Religious Superiors. This year it took place at Alexishafen, near Madang. The topic was “Religious in the 21st Century”. 46 Congregations and Orders were represented. The “challenges from inside and outside” were viewed, analysed and discussed.

As the conference took place just after the “abuse-summit” in Rome, due reflection was also given to the topic of “right relationships”.

Ample time was given to the presentation and discussion of the widespread presence of human trafficking and related abuse of children and vulnerable adults. PNG today is also a source-, transit- and destination country of this kind of criminal activity. In which way can and should Religious Congregations be engaged in the fight against it? Information about what is being done in the Pacific you can find on the website: www.acrath.org.au.

With shock and dismay we heard of the crash of the Boeing 737 near Adis Abeba on the 10th of March. Our confrere **Fr. George Kageche Mukua** was on board. In the Eucharist we celebrated for his eternal happiness, we sang the song “I have carried you on eagle’s wings”. Though man-made wings may fail, God’s love never fails to carry us through time and eternity. May our confrere George for ever enjoy fullness of life in God’s love!

On the 18th of March, our confrere **Fr. Roland Matoyi** took off from Port Moresby’s airport flying to Nairobi to have a well deserved homeleave, preceded by his participation in a Tertianship for members of our Congregation. We wish him a fruitful and enriching Tertianship and a great time with his family!

Fr. Roland has been appointed our next Regional Superior. Due to his home-leave,

however, his term of office will start when he is back in PNG, on the 1st of August.

Wishing you all a Joyful and Blessed Easter, and thanks for your faithful interest in our life and work in PNG, and in name of all the confreres here,

Fr. Alfonso Voorn, cmm

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