

THE POPE

Pope Addresses Bishops of Papua New Guinea

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (AP) — Here is the Vatican text of Pope John Paul II's address to the Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands at St. Joseph's Parish in Port Moresby May 22.

Dear brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

I am happy to have this time, in the midst of a busy day of various pastoral activities, to be alone with you, the successors of the apostles in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. I have come a great way to see you and your people in person. God's name and in thanking the Lord of history for the many blessings which he has bestowed upon the Church in your country. In particular, I am grateful to the Holy Trinity for the opportunity of celebrating the eucharistic sacrifice here in Port Moresby and in Mount Hagen, and I look forward to the liturgy which I shall celebrate tomorrow in Honiara. Although I deeply value all the other events that make up this pastoral visit, these are the high points of my time among you. In the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the Second Vatican Council speaks to us about our own identity when it says: "A bishop, marked with the fullness of the Sacrament of Orders, is the steward of the grace of the supreme priesthood, especially in the Eucharist, which he offers or causes to be offered, and by which the Church constantly lives and grows" ("Lumen Gentium," 26).

As we meet here today, I rejoice in the way that God has brought to rich fruition the missionary work of the past century. There has indeed been a great flowering of the Christian faith on these islands, despite the many obstacles which must often have seemed insurmountable. I am thinking of various difficulties, including those of travel, lack of roads and communications, and the problems of trying to proclaim Christ to people of hundreds of different languages and dialects. With all my heart I thank you for what you have done and are doing for the Gospel, and for your love of Jesus Christ and his people.

I rejoice, too, in the way that the young missionary Churches are making great strides towards maturity. Examples of this, to mention only a few, are the institution of the ordinary ecclesiastical hierarchy by Paul VI in 1966 and, more recently, the establishment of the metropolitan Sees of Honiara and Mount Hagen.

The Church in your countries has been endowed by the Holy Spirit with unity in diversity. The richness of a great variety of cultures and backgrounds, as is reflected in their many languages and traditions. The missionaries, too, come from all over the world and different religious institutes. Your dioceses differ widely from one another, in both their historical development and their present pastoral situations. And, in the midst of all this diversity, you are one in faith, hope and charity, one in the doctrine and discipline of the Catholic Church, one in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

One of the many ways in which this unity is made visible is collaboration and joint action by the Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. I wish to

encourage you in this important collaboration, which is a link to the universal Church and a sign of the unity of the whole Church. I would like to point out two which are of particular relevance in our efforts to proclaim the Gospel. First of all, episcopal conferences should strive to address the major pastoral problems affecting the life of the Church. After due deliberation and consultation, it is often most helpful to the local Churches, and to priests, Religious and catechists, if the bishops take a common pastoral stand on particular issues. There are many topics that await the clarifying and encouraging teaching of the bishops. The family, sacraments, evangelization, catechesis and prayer are just examples. Joint pastoral documents give opportunities to present the official doctrine of the Church in clear and understandable terms while taking into consideration the concrete situations and problems. In addition to such initiatives of the episcopal conference, I would also encourage you individually, in your dioceses, to make use of the written word in proclaiming the Gospel, and thus to fulfill your role as authentic teachers of Catholic doctrine.

A second matter which cannot be overlooked arises from our prophetic mission as bishops. There are profound links between evangelization and human advancement, for the people we evangelize are at the same time subject to social and economic factors. Thus it is important to face together questions of the social order, such as human work, political ethics, alcoholism, bureaucratic corruption and so on. In the light of the Gospel, the Church always has something to say on matters touching the common good of society.

Allow me, now, to direct your attention to the topic of the laity. For many years I have heard of the outstanding contribution to evangelization which has been made by your catechists and lay Church leaders. They have made and continue to make a truly indispensable contribution to the life and mission of the Church in your countries. Their roles as translators and assistants to the priests and Religious are extremely important, as are their proper tasks of catechesis, Christian service and the permeating of society with the leaven of the Gospel. I commend you in your encouragement and support of these lay leaders in your Churches, especially through your training centers

which provide an opportunity for their continuing education and growth. I am sure that in your efforts to foster vocations to the priesthood and Religious life, your young Churches are moving quickly towards greater responsibility for themselves and less reliance on missionaries and the help of other Christians round the world, and to the need for Religious and priestly vocations is becoming particularly acute. For the most crucial factor in this time of transition is a steady increase of indigenous vocations, accompanied by careful provision for the spiritual, educational and cultural formation of these young men and women.

In this regard, the major regional seminary at Bomana is performing a vital service for the Church, a service without which the future development of your individual dioceses could not be ensured. As you know, it is important that candidates for ordination and Religious life be well prepared to embrace a life of celibacy and be helped to develop a fervent life of prayer built around the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours. I know that the fostering of vocations is a pastoral duty as dear to your hearts as it is to mine. And I assure you of my oneness with you in prayer as you seek to further this vital work. May the mother of Jesus fill your lives with gladness and hope.

Dear brothers in Christ: It is indeed a great joy to be with you in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. I thank you for your warm hospitality and for all the preparations which you have made for my pastoral visit. In the bonds of hierarchical communion and collegial service which unite us, in the universal fellowship of charity and faith which binds all the local Churches with one another and with the Lord, let us go forward together in the name of Jesus. Let us proclaim together the message of salvation. And let us give praise and glory to God whose power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever" (Eph. 3:20-21).

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my Confirmation. I was comforted when the pastor wiped my tears; I felt encouraged. The thought kept going through my head, "this is real!" I felt both happy and sad, for all that was happening and for the changes that will come. I knew that the group that I had come to love would never be the same, and that's sad to me even though that's the way life is.

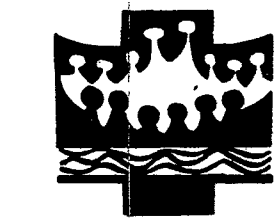
My First Communion made me feel very close to Jesus. I wanted to prolong the moment — inspect the host, treasure it — but I also wanted to receive what I'd been yearning for. At the Sunday Mass after I was baptized, I found that the feeling of closeness was with all the other people in the church.

Ever since the Easter Vigil, I have been so very happy. That feeling has not gone away. I look forward to Sundays, especially so I can receive Eucharist. Every time I go into the church I stop when I bless myself and remind myself to say "Hi!" to the Lord. I can't ever want the blessing to become so routine that I do it automatically. I don't want to lose what I've been given.

concerns on my mind: I worried that my family wouldn't arrive on time; I was excited; I felt almost like I was getting married — a church full of people, a walk down the aisle, a change in my life. Throughout the ceremony, my mind bounced all over — I kept thinking of my family: I wanted them to understand what was happening to and in me, but I knew they didn't. I wanted all of the elect to gather at the font with me, not just those getting baptized. When the rest of the group joined me, I felt complete again; then it hit me that these people, who were all strangers to me a year ago, understood what I was feeling, even if my family might not. It was hard to let go of my family that way.

I hoped for a lightning bolt when I was baptized, it didn't happen. I wish I could have been immersed, but even so, I found that when I looked up from having the water poured and looked out over the people, I couldn't help the tears. No lightning bolts, it's true, but a very good feeling of making official what had already happened inside of me.

I cried when the priests laid hands on me before



Insights In Liturgy

Renewed Church: A Neophyte Shares

The following reflection was written by Katherine O'Hearn, a neophyte from St. Mary's Church in Auburn, New York. The Office of Liturgy is most grateful to Katie for her willingness to share so deeply and personally. Katie's words hold up to us the "treasure" that we all share, and too often take for granted — it is revitalizing, renewing to read her thoughts! We're sure the readership will agree.

I am now a Roman Catholic. I was baptized, confirmed and made my First Communion on April 21 at the Easter Vigil Mass at St. Mary's, Auburn. As I look back over the past several weeks, I think of a kalei-

doscope, because different pictures come into my mind of separate moments all running together.

The first picture is of the Chrism Mass. That stands out very clearly: I felt so proud to stand when the bishop asked that the catechumens rise. Until that moment I still had a lingering doubt that this was really real — that shortly I would be baptized. Suddenly I no longer doubted; I clearly felt that I was joining a Church that goes way beyond the group I knew in Auburn. I felt connected to the bishop and to the Church in a new and larger way. I wanted so much to receive Eucharist that night, and it was harder than ever to wait. The faith I had seen in the Catholics at my parish was in me somehow, and I remember feeling very good and happy about the change in me.

At the Easter Vigil, there were all kinds of



One of the students in the Villa's Day Treatment program is helped by his teacher, Ann Gullo.

Villa Program Expands

The St. Joseph's Villa Day Treatment Program has expanded to two classrooms, Villa officials said, thus allowing the program to double the number of adolescents and families served.

The program is designed to help young adults, ages 12-18. According to a press release from the Villa, these youths are dealing with emotional problems which have interfered with their ability to function in family, school and community settings. There are currently 20 students involved in the program.

"It is essentially a preventive program," said William Carter, director of Day

Treatment. "Our goal is to help families with troubled children without having to remove the children from their homes and place them in residential settings."

The adolescents participating in the program attend special education classes during the day and return home at night. A staff of trained social workers provide intensive counseling for the entire family.

The program was started in January last year with just four students. It moved from the Villa's Dewey Avenue campus to the former West Ridge School on Alcott Road last September.