



# The Catholic Reporter

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## Anglican Leader to visit Papua New Guinea

*The Most Revd Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, will be visiting PNG on 20-25 October this year. Catholic Reporter asked Rt Revd Peter Ramsden, Bishop of Port Moresby in the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea, to shed light on this historic event for the Christian Churches in the country.*

**BISHOP Ramsden, what will be the purpose and the program of the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to PNG?**

The purpose of the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury is for the leader of the worldwide Anglican Communion to make a pastoral visit to the Anglicans of PNG. He will arrive on 20th October and after making a courtesy call on the Governor General, Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition will meet the local clergy, their families and parishioners in Port Moresby. On 21st October he will fly to Popondetta for a Eucharistic celebration at Resurrection Cathedral. On 22nd October he will open the new St Margaret's Hospital at Oro Bay. There will be a groundbreaking ceremony for the proposed Anglican Teachers' College and he will meet the brothers and sisters of our Religious Orders and the staff and students at Newton Theological College. On Tuesday 23rd he will fly by helicopter to Dogura in Milne Bay Province, the landing point of the pioneer Anglican missionaries in 1891 and now headquarters of Dogura Diocese. Back in Port Moresby, on Wednesday 24th he will meet the members of the PNG Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission, visit a new Anglican elementary school at ATS and visit the *Anglicare* centre in North Waigani. At *Anglicare* he will see the services offered for counselling, testing, treatment and care, he will meet victims of domes-

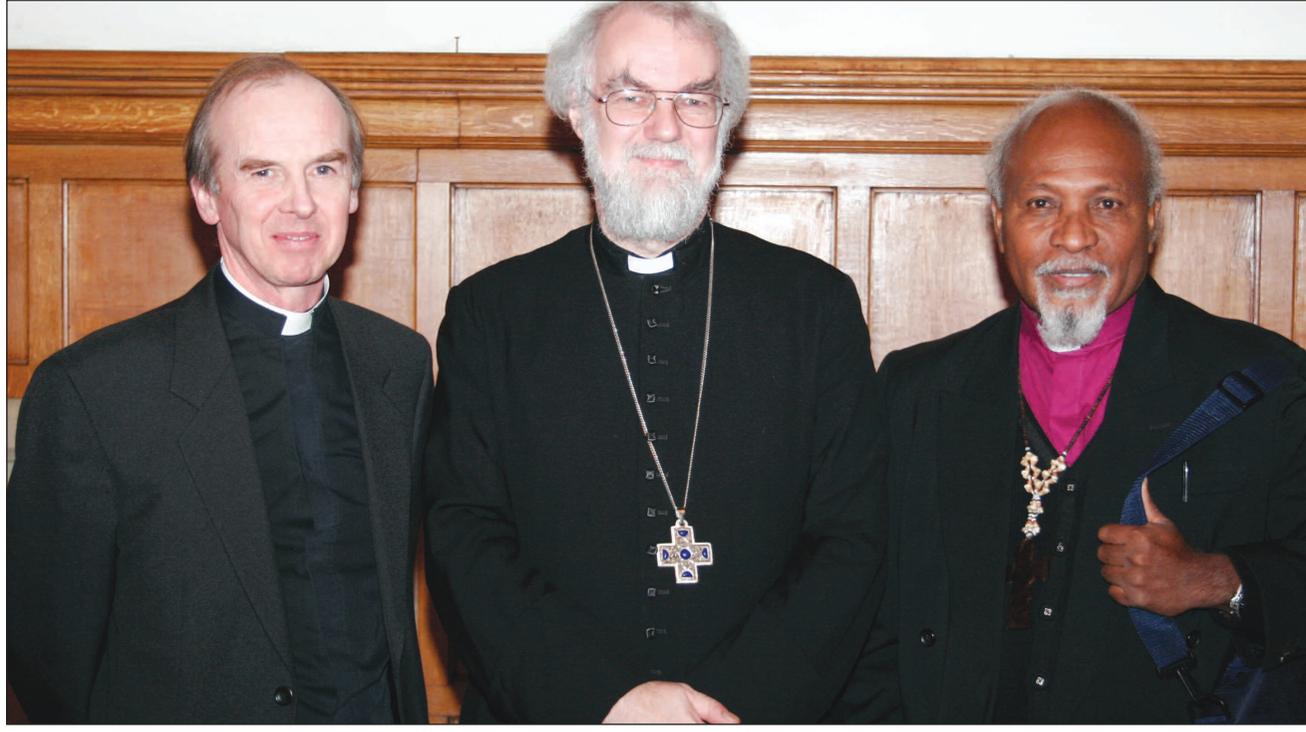
tic and sexual violence and record his World Aids Day message. He will also speak to the Church Leaders' Alliance on HIV AIDS.

**What is the consistency of the Anglican community in PNG? What are the main highlights?**

Anglican missionaries, Fr Albert McLaren and Fr Copland King, began work in this country on St Lawrence's Day 10th August 1891. Today there are five dioceses (Dogura, Popondota, Aipo Rongo, New Guinea Islands and Port Moresby) under the leadership of Most Revd Joseph Kopapa, the Archbishop of PNG. Most Anglicans live in Milne Bay and Oro Provinces but there are large Anglican communities in West New Britain, Simbai, Jimi and Siane and in urban centres. They are served by about 180 PNG priests most of whom are married. There are over 200 Anglican schools in the country and a hospital (Oro Bay), health centres and aid posts. Anglicans seek to proclaim the gospel of Christ by a ministry of preaching, teaching and healing.

**How does the Anglican Church interact and talk to the youth in PNG?**

Young people make up a large part of the Anglican population of PNG. Many of them are part of parish youth groups and fellowships. Choosing to be confirmed remains an important time for many young people to make decisions about their faith and life. In Port Moresby for ex-



**FROM LEFT:** Anglican leaders Bishop Peter Ramsden of Port Moresby, Archbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury, and Archbishop of PNG Joe Kopapa

ample we have a Diocesan Youth executive who with one of the priests as their Chaplain organise events across the diocese and are represented on diocesan council and synod. We also have an annual sports festival for young people from all our parishes.

**How do you rate the level of cooperation between the Anglican Church and the Catholic Church in PNG?**

An important aspect of Anglican life in PNG is working together with other Churches: we were a founder member of the PNG Council of Churches

and cooperate with other churches in various institutions and committees. The relations with the Catholic community have been close over the years – the Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission is a theological dialogue that is now over 40 years old. In recent years it has produced common statements on baptism and marriage. There are some Anglican priests studying at the Catholic Theological Institute at Bomana and earlier this year I had the privilege of accompanying the Catholic bish-

ops on their "ad limina" visit to Rome.

**Could the Churches better coordinate for issues of common concern: HIV-Aids, protection of the environment, health, education?**

PNG already has many ecumenical bodies like PNG Council of Churches, Church Leaders Alliance on HIV AIDS, Heads of Churches Meetings. There is a centre for research at the Melanesian Institute and support through the Church Partnership Program. All this represents a great deal of

good work being done throughout the country. Often it is the churches who are leading service delivery at the grass roots level in both the highly populated urban environment and the most isolated rural areas of PNG. However, there could certainly be better coordination among the churches and a stronger relationship between the churches and government, building on the Church State Partnership which could have much greater impact across PNG. (G.L.)



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