

Catholic professionals stress teaching of Catechism

By Veronica Hatutasi

CATHOLIC Professionals in Port Moresby will form a committee to support the work of the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG & Solomon Islands (CBC), and to act as a body that will help the laity and the clergy to take the Church forward.

The idea on the formation of such a group transpired during a meeting on the 22nd of September at the Holiday Inn in Port Moresby, where more than one hundred Catholic professionals attended, including East Sepik Governor and former Prime Minister, Grand Chief

Sir Michael Somare, and the new Goilala MP, Daniel Mona, along with Bishop Rochus Tatamai of Bereina and Bishop Bernard Unabali of Bougainville. The rest were Catholic teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers and members of the public and private sectors.

According to Fr Victor Roche, General Secretary of the CBC and initiator of the meeting, the purpose was to reflect on the way the Catholic Church gives pastoral care to the Catholic Professionals; the challenges of the Catholic Church today; the upcoming Year of Faith (October 11, 2012 - November 24, 2013);

the new evangelization and the laity. He lamented the current declining state of the Catholic Church not only in the western world, but also in our country, where members of all mainline Churches (Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran and United Church) tend to join the Seventh Day Adventists or the Pentecostal Churches.

Several people also pointed at the fact that Catholics need to know more about basic doctrine and catechism of the Catholic Church in order to uphold their faith. "We have to go back to the roots and teach Catechism. I see this lacking in our Church today,

but we have to bring it back as it strengthens our faith," Ambassador Max Rai stated. He said that Catechism has to be revived and taken up in all the parishes, "otherwise our members will in fact be attracted and leave for other Churches".

While echoing the same sentiments as Ambassador Rai, Principal of Jubilee Catholic Secondary School in NCD, Bernadette Ove said that there should also be a revival of the different Catholic associations such as those for teachers, nurses and so forth. The newly established committee is expected to work along these lines.

COMMENTARY

BY
FR. VICTOR ROCHE, SVD
Catholic Bishops'
Conference General
Secretary



Year of Faith and New Evangelization

Dear Friends,

The Synod of Bishops on the "New Evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith" is taking place in Rome while the Year of Faith is also being inaugurated on the 11th of this month. I have already discussed these issues in a previous Commentary (Aug. 2012), but I have further reflected on them before putting down these thoughts.

I love my Catholic Church. I have praised it much and I have criticized it much. Br. Carlo Carretto of the Little Brothers of Jesus writes, "How much I criticize you, my Church, and yet how much I love you! How you have made me suffer and yet how much I owe you. You have given me so much scandal and yet you have made me understand holiness" (1994).

I have similar sentiments. After many months of discussion and research, the working paper for the upcoming Synod of Bishops on New Evangelization is out. The first chapter is dedicated to the heart of evangelization: the encounter with Jesus Christ. The second chapter focuses on the changes which affect the way we live our faith and which influence our Christian communities. The third chapter deals with the basic places, means, persons and activities in the transmission of the Christian faith. The fourth chapter discusses areas of pastoral activity with a special focus on New Evangelization.

The focus is on the relationship of the Church with the outside world. But it presupposes first an ongoing **internal renewal**, a continuous passing from **evangelizing to being evangelized**.

The internal renewal is necessary to be effective evangelizers. I have three practical suggestions.

Bishops should retire at 70 instead of 75. In any case a bishop should serve in a diocese for a maximum of twenty years. The pressure of administration in the modern world is very high. Many of our bishops have stress-related sicknesses. Eventually they get burnt out fast.

Priests should be appointed and constantly evaluated by the Bishop in coordination with the Parish Pastoral Council. It is commonly accepted that the reforms and renewal promoted by the Second Vatican Council did not reach the ordinary people of the parishes because of the priests. I blame myself too. Sometimes, the directives from the Bishop about pastoral renewal do not reach the people. Nor the cries of the people reach the Bishop. People need to care for their priests but also to hold them accountable.

Religious congregations were founded with a vision and in order to answer a particular need. Their members, therefore, should live and minister according to the charism of their founders and foundresses. Thus they will play an important role in the evangelizing mission of the Church.

PNG LOST GENERATION

Gospel against sex, alcohol and marijuana

By Fr Shanthi Puthussery
PIME
National Catholic Youth
Coordinator

What was your experience with the youth at Kavieng regarding prayer and faith at the end of their leadership training program on Sept. 16-23?

It was a terribly struggle! I found the Kavieng youth particularly in trouble with prayer life and faith practices. It's seems like if they grew up without any prayer life. They struggled to make a good confession. The participation in the inner healing prayer was superficial and the liturgical and meditation sessions were just a routine. Although I was continuously helping them with tips and techniques attached to the program, they could not just rise up to a minimal level.

A number of them have finished Grade 12, but they could not make a spontaneous prayer of the faithful during the Mass. During the morning hour of meditation, a few could literally repeat passages of the Gospel but no more than that. Edwin

Paijag of Namatanai parish said, "in my life this was the first time I read the Bible myself and tried to say share a reflection publicly in a group". "I do not think that I ever prayed in my life other than attending the Church services because at home we do not have any prayer", said Cassian Maris of Mapua parish. Moreen

From what you say, it looks like if families and parishes do not exist for these young people.

Almost everybody said that other than the Holy Mass or the Service without a priest, no other activities or formation programs are taking place in the parishes. They expressed the wish that the parishes should organize study programs of prayer, meditation, Scripture, Sacraments, Catechism of the Catholic Church and few teachings of history and biography of the saints.

Emil Arumes of Karu parish complained that "we are not taught or educated how to pray and what to pray. We just pray when we are desperately in need, but

it may not be a prayer, but a request." Otto Pansipik of Anir parish did his Grade 12 but he felt that "nobody instructed me how to read and pray the Bible and I never did it by myself. Actually I do not know really what is prayer and faith".

How is their actual Catholic life then?

One of the boys was saying, "From my Grade 8 onwards, I began having sex with girls.

I cannot tell how many, at least a dozen. Also at the same time I began to take jungle juice, smoke marijuana and watch pornographic materials. Now I am 21 and I feel that have already tried everything in life". Several young people shared with me similar experiences at Kavieng, but it's the same think everywhere. It just makes me wonder what youth ministry may be actually be in Papua New Guinea.

What's your answer to the question?

The Catholic Church is coming up with the Year of

Faith (Oct. 2012 – Nov. 2013), but in the context of Papua New Guinea we need to accompany it with social action and transformation of society.

A large number of young people, aged fifteen to twenty, are already corrupted and almost destroyed by disorderly sexual relationships, alcohol, jungle juice, marijuana and pornography.

I am not sure how much aware are the authorities in this country of the seriousness of these issues, but as Catholic Church I feel that we need to be very responsible in our integral formation activities for the young people in every parish.

Otherwise, faith practices and ordinary life will just be running parallel creating more vacuum in society and personal relationships. Justin Manguri of Lamasong parish is just doubtful that youth are "going to take our teachings seriously in order to change their lives" when it has already become so difficult for them! "It looks like if we are in a chaos", he says. (G.L.)

October of Faith and Mission

1962

Opening of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

1985

General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the 20th anniversary of the end of the Second Vatican Council

1992

Publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church; a text, in the words of Blessed John Paul II, that was meant "to illustrate for all

the faithful the power and beauty of the faith".

2011

Pope Benedict XVI, with the Apostolic Letter Porta Fidei (The Door of Faith), announced a Year of Faith.

2012

Year of Faith begins that will end on the Solemnity of Christ the King on 24 November 2013.

General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the theme The New Evangelization for the *Transmission of the Christian Faith*.