

**MARIANHILL
IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

1999-2014

A REVIEW

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Mariannahill/NL

2014

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About this book

The purpose of this collection of news items compiled from the quarterly newsletter PNG TANGET 1999-2014 is to store the records of some data of the Mariannahill presence in Papua New Guinea in that particular period. In the past, people in Papua New Guinea often used tree leaves to pass on certain messages to others. ‘Tanget’ means ‘leaf’. PNG TANGET as a CMM leaflet was meant to establish a communication link between the Mariannahillers in Papua New Guinean and the other CMM provinces.

1999/1

CMM in the Morobe Province

Papua New Guinea rarely reaches the headlines in the world press. There are hardly ever news items that would draw the attention beyond the local or national boundaries. Many even do not know where to find this country on the globe. That is why this newsletter will try to fill a communication gap within the Congregation by sharing our joys, hopes, plans, and our worries with our confreres elsewhere.

CMM in PNG is a tiny group. However, in fact, this team of ten confreres will soon get some fresh blood coming from other provinces. This means that we will become a multi-national group consisting of six nationalities. This surely will make the home-provinces of these confreres more interested in what is going on in this corner of the world. We hope that Tanget will strengthen the fraternal union between the provinces.

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On 1 January 1999, a new provincial administration began its term of office. Members of the team are Fr. Frans Lenssen, Fr. Sido van der Werf, Br. Werner Hupperich, and Fr. Hubert Hofmans. After having terminated his second term of office as provincial, Fr. Chris Blouin was not available for a further term because he is going to Spokane USA, for a Sabbatical Year.

For the time being the new provincial, Fr. Frans Lenssen will continue to stay in Bulolo as pastor of the Holy Family Parish. The provincial office will remain in the Mariannahill House in Lae. He will go to Lae regularly for visiting and business. At present, the Lae province counts 10 members. Besides Fr. Chris, two other confreres are leaving the province. Fr. Henk Janssen has decided to terminate his ministry in the Diocese of Lae for reasons of health. He has been pastor at the Siassi Islands for more than ten years. He has just completed an important project, the extension of the Primary School of Mandok with grade 7 and 8. Those new 'top-up' classes have been built not in Mandok, but on the nearby large island Umboi, where the Mandok people have their food gardens. This is a very important move for the island people. Their children will be away from Mandok during the school terms. They are accommodated in new dormitories. The parish priest has also a house at the new school area. Fr. Henk will return to the Netherlands in the course of this year.

Our youngest confrere in Lae, Fr. Antonio Chong Aguila (from Panama/Spanish Province) will terminate his term of three years in June 1999. After having worked in the St. Mary's parish, he is now parish priest of the St. Francis parish in Wau, 150 km from Lae in the mountains. He is also in charge of the St. Matthew's parish in the Menyamy District, 150 km from Wau. He can write a book about the adventures of visiting this sub parish regularly by car. This road is very rough, with thousands of curves up and down through thick forest and across wild rivers. His first Christmas in Wau, Fr. Antonio had to spend in bed because of a heavy malaria attack.

Confreres who have heard of some new appointments for PNG might be wondering why suddenly this influx of four newcomers. In fact, the province gains only one member, because we are losing three in the same year.

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One of them is Fr. Arnold Schmitt, former rector of St. Pius Seminary in Wuerzburg, who has been assigned to the Lae province. He is expected to arrive soon, depending on the issuing of his entry visa. A real novelty is the appointment of two young African confreres, Fr. Pacificus Duma from Mariannahill and Fr. George Dube from Zimbabwe. We are eager to welcome both in PNG as soon as possible. The fourth newcomer will be our Panamanian confrere from the Spanish province, Fr. Jorge Espinosa Bernal. He will continue the Central American presence in PNG after Fr. Antonio will have left us. Another novelty is that our very first candidates will go to Mariannahill to enter the novitiate. Thomas Maroko and Daniel Apas will leave for Singapore on 16 January. There they will obtain an entry permit at the South African Embassy and then they will fly from Singapore to Durban on 21 January. We hope that they will feel at home in Mariannahill soon.

Br. Werner Hupperich is going on home leave in February. He will have a medical checkup in Germany and will attend the tertiate course in Riedegg in July.

At present there is only one CMM candidate doing grade 12 in the St. Fidelis minor seminary in Kap (Madang Archdiocese).

On 2 January Fr. Frans flew to Rome to attend a meeting of the Commission for Identity and Spirituality. He will be back in Lae on 26 January.

From the Diocese of Lae

Bishop Henry van Lieshout returned from home leave and the Synod of Bishops of Oceania in Rome. At the first welcome gathering on New Year's Day, he informally shared his first impressions from the Roman meeting with his co-workers, spiced with some amusing stories. He surely will talk more about it in detail.

For a long time, the diocese has been looking for better facilities for the diocesan offices. Extending the present building would be difficult because of lack of proper space at the area a of St. Mary's cathedral. A satisfactory solution was offered when the Free Masons hall was for sale. This spacious building is quite near the Cathedral and is adjacent to a Lutheran Church. The purchase of the property has already been finalized and in February, the Diocese can take over

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the building. This will be a great relieve for St. Mary's which is already a quite overcrowded place.

Fr. Geoffrey Lee, a diocesan priest, returned from home leave in New Zealand. Fr. Geoffrey attended a three months course in communication in Rome last year. He is commissioned by the Bishops Conference to be active in this field on national level.

Two seminarians who graduated at the minor seminary are staying in Lae for a year of pastoral experience before entering the major seminary. Both are from Aupwel on the Siassi islands. Another seminarian is doing his second year at the Good Shepherd major seminary in Fatima/Banz in the Western Highlands.

Fr. Chris Blouin, parish priest of St. Patrick's in Tent City could finally start the construction of a new church. Tent City is a large settlement where people from another area have been resettled after a devastating flood that destroyed their former housing area in the Bumbu compound in Lae in the early eighties.

A parish centre is under construction in the Holy Family Parish in Bulolo. The project could be started, thanks to generous contributions from the generalate and some province.

PNG current affairs

Politically and economically, Papua New Guinea is not doing well at present. Since the elections in 1997, the government is unstable. The Prime Minister Bill Skate can still keep a majority because of many independent members of parliament, who support him for their own private benefit. Ministers and high-ranking officers are replaced frequently, which does not improve stability and continuity of government affairs. After the first eighteen months of the present government are over, the opposition can bring in a no-confidence vote. The Prime minister tries to avoid this by adjourning the parliament as long as possible. However, as long as too many independent members are siding with the government for their own advantage, the opposition will hardly be able to get the numbers for a successful no confidence vote.

The financial crisis in South East Asia has also badly affected the South Pacific region that shows in the inflation and devaluation of the national currency, the Kina. The World Bank is not eager

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anyone to grant loans. Various sections of the government have been abolished which means that many public servants lose their jobs. The people are told to tighten their belt this year. Many people do not even have a belt.

1999/2

Wind of Changes

The 'Wind of Changes,' (a study by Lambert on the present situation in the South Pacific), is being felt in Papua New Guinea as much as in other countries of the region. Affected is the political and social life at all levels.

Those working in the pastoral and educational field experience that their work has become more difficult today than some 20 years ago. People think and act more independently and differently than yesterday. This, of course, is not to be understood as a negative development. On the contrary, this also means that those in charge of parishes and church institutions are much more challenged today to take other opinions and proposals really into account. Sharing responsibilities and respecting the principle of subsidiarity regarding the variety of groups and movements in parishes are to be taken seriously. What is at stake is the unity in the pluralism of group interests and directions. That means keeping them well balanced at the same time avoiding the temptation of 'divide and rule'. Peace and harmony are much desired values in the world today in all its dimensions.

CMM in the Morobe Province

Fr. Arnold Schmitt arrived from Germany on 8 February. During his initial stage at present, he is familiarizing himself with the life, work, and situation in the diocese. He has spent some time in Lae, Bulolo, and the Siassi Islands, where he took care of the church services in Aupwel during the Holy Week and Easter.

Br. Werner left at the end of February for Germany where soon after his arrival he had to undergo an operation. We wish him all the best for his health.

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Fr. Benno Hotz, our secretary general in Rome, arrived on March 26. He was kept quite busy with visiting the various places of pastoral and educational activities of the confreres in Lae, Bulolo, and Wau during the first two weeks. Then he went by boat to the Siassi Islands, a 14 hours trip. There he joined Fr. Henk Janssen, the parish priest in Mandok and Fr. Arnold Schmitt who was still there to assist Fr. Henk temporarily in the pastoral work. A week later, he, and Fr. Arnold returned to Lae full of interesting impressions from the island life in the South Pacific.

During his stay in PNG, he experienced also some quite strong earthquakes, one up to 7.2 on the Richter scale, which made many people fleeing in panic from the settlements on the sea shore of Lae to higher places in town. The disastrous tidal wave in Aitape last year is still fresh in memory.

Sr. Godelief Leyten CPS went on home leave in April and Fr. Sido van der Werf is going at the end of May. Fr. Arnold Schmitt will take over the pastoral care of St. Mary's parish during Fr. Sido's absence. We are still waiting for the new confreres from South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Spain. The bureaucratic mill of the government departments works slowly.

From the Lae Diocese

The annual meeting of the Conference of Religious Superiors was held in Madang in March and attended by Fr. Frans Lenssen CMM, Sr. Margaret Nabben CPS and Little Sr. Gertrude. During ten days, the individual associations of clerical religious, brothers, and sisters (including Anglicans) held separate and combined meetings and workshops. The apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Hans Schwemmer, gave several talks during the conference.

There are 21 Congregations of Women Religious, 11 of Religious Brothers and 18 of Clerical Religious working in NG. The total of religious in PNG is 891 Sisters (630 Melanesians), 224 Brothers (168 Melanesians) and 577 religious priests (192 Melanesians). The number of Catholics is over one million.

A major project was achieved in Siassi when the buildings of the so-called 'top-up' classes for grade 7 and 8 were officially opened. A revolutionary change is that those two Upper Primary classes

are separate from the school at Por/Mandok and have been erected in Muru, the garden area of Mandok on the main island Umboi. Fr. Anthony Mulderink, vicar general, went for the occasion to Mandok, where Fr. Arnold already had arrived. Special guest of honor was Fr. Benno Hotz representing the generalate, which has generously contributed to the project. The diocesan priest, Fr. Augustine Aigilo, who is from Mandok, was also present.

The celebration of the opening of this boarding school was at the same time the last big happening attended by Fr. Henk Janssen, who has been pastor of the Siassi Islands for the past 12 years and will leave for good on 13 May. On his flight back to the Netherlands, he will make a detour via South Africa to visit our Mariannahill missions there. Fr. Henk underwent major heart surgery in 1995 and it is for this reason that he terminates his 30 years of missionary ministry in PNG. Fr. Henk was the principal promoter and for many years the director of the diocesan pastoral centre in Lae, besides being parish priest of All Saints parish (Bumbu). He surely can look back in gratitude at three decades of interesting and fruitful ministry in the diocese of Lae. Thanks, Henk, and our best wishes for your new engagements in the Netherlands.

Another confrere is leaving the diocese soon. Fr. Antonio Aquila Chong will return to the Spanish Province after expiring of his term of 2.5 years service in the diocese. Fr. Antonio is parish priest in Wan. The various experiences he has been exposed to in this parish will surely remain in his memory for quite some time.

On 12 June, the new church of St. Patrick's parish in Tent City will be blessed. Four days later the parish priest, Fr. Chris Blouin, will leave for Canada and start a sabbatical year.

At a conference at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre a Catholic Forum of Laity has been established, which will serve as a body monitoring various matters of the social and political life in PNG and take a public stand whenever opportune.

PNG current affairs

The present state of the nation was strongly criticized by the Archbishop of Port Moresby, Brian Barnes OFM in his Easter message published in the two daily newspapers. His rather blunt appeal

to the Prime Minister, Bill Skate, to resign and give way to a new government caused a tidal wave of reactions, mostly in strong support of the archbishop. The major matters of concern are the deteriorating economy, mal- or not functioning of several public institutions, like health care and public service, high criminality, the frequent sackings of high ranking government personnel causing instability, corruption and many other reasons for discontent among the people. Only some ministers concerned started a counterattack. The prime Minister, however, who at times sees himself as a kind of Messiah, was clever enough to accept the critic of the Archbishop, and forbade his ministers to attack the Church. He even went to see the bishops at their annual bishops conference in Rabaul, to discuss matters of concern with them. If you can't beat them, join them.

1999/3

Slow localization

Passing on as many responsibilities as possible to local church members is still a top priority of all developing young churches. The Church of Papua New Guinea, however, is being confronted with a seemingly reversed development. In the past year less than 5 vacant episcopal sees have been assigned to 5 expatriates: Archbishop Barnes OFM (naturalized Australian) to Port Moresby, Bishop Deschamps SMM (Canada) to Bereina and Bishop Couture SMM (Canada) to Daru-Kiunga, both Canadians, Bishop Crapp OFM (Australia) to Aitape and Bishop Kronenberg SM (Netherlands) to Bougainville. Only one national priest has been appointed recently auxiliary bishop for Rabaul. It is not surprising that critical comments are being voiced at present pointing out that there are many capable members of the local clergy who would be able to assume higher leadership positions in the Church of PNG. The recent appointments are being felt as a lack of trust in our national priests. The critics however might take into consideration the age of the new appointees that makes them a kind of transition bishops, keeping the episcopal sees temporarily warm for potential local successors.

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CMM in the Morobe Province

Since Fr. Pacific Duma from the Mariannahill Province in South Africa got his visa, he is expected to arrive soon in Lae. All four newly transferred confreres will have reached their destination at finally. The first to arrive was Fr. Arnold Schmitt, former rector of St. Pius Seminary in Wuerzburg. He landed in Lae on the eighth of February. In the first weeks, he zealously used all his spare time to enrich his Pidgin vocabulary and quite soon, he was able to communicate in this noble language, which can be very straightforward in expressing one's feelings. If somebody tells you 'Yu no ken bulsitim mi,' - you can't make a fool of me -, the message is loud and dear.

Meanwhile Fr. Arnold is acting 'Dompfarrer' at present, replacing Fr. Sido van der Werf as parish priest of St. Mary's Cathedral. Fr. Sido is on home leave since the end of May. Fr. Arnold likes the job and is performing the manifold pastoral duties with full swing.

The next arrival was on 28 May: Fr. Jorge Ariel Espinosa (Spanish Province) from Panama He came just in time to say farewell to his compatriot, Fr. Antonio Chong, who was about to terminate his PNG assignment. The day after his arrival Fr. Jorge was taken to Bulolo by Fr. Frans Lenssen and the next day, Sunday, he went to Wau to attend Fr. Antonio's farewell Mass. The parishioners, though knowing that Fr. Antonio was going to leave soon, were taken by surprise when he announced that this was his last Mass. People were visibly feeling sad and tears were flowing freely. 'Partir c'est mourir un peu'. Fr. Frans Lenssen and the CPS and FMM Sisters from Bulolo attended Fr. Antonio's farewell. The same day Fr. Antonio went to Lae and two days later, on June 1, he left for Panama via Singapore, London, and Miami, Panama.

Fr. Jorge is staying at St. Mary's parish and is studying English and Pidgin. Fr. George Dube arrived from Zimbabwe on 8 June. After a week on his new post in Bulolo, he had to see a doctor in Lae because of a malaria attack, an inevitable Melanesian kind of initiation rite. He is in good health again.

Fr. Henk Janssen left Lae on 13 May and terminated his ministry in the diocese. He returned to the Netherlands via Australia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. A few weeks later Henk was seen on TV in

Papua New Guinea, when a video of the opening of the Upper Primary in Siassi was displayed. Therefore, Henk's 'tewel' (spirit) is still going around in the country.

Br. Werner Hupperich, who is also on home leave in Germany, has to prolong his stay until October in order to have his teeth fixed up properly.

Fr. Chris Blouin left for Canada on June 14. He will stay for a sabbatical year in the US. His parish, St. Patrick's in Tent City, is taken care of by Fr. Anthony Mulderink who is the chaplain of the Catholic community at the University.

According to information from overseas, our two Brothers, Daniel Apas and Thomas Maroko, are doing well in the novitiate at Mariannahill. They appreciate life in a young end multinational CMM Community.

At present, there is one candidate for CMM, Ludwig Teika, and doing Grade 12 at St. Fidelis Minor Seminary near Madang. He will graduate at the end of this school year

From the Diocese of Lae

The departure and arrival of confreres made a reshuffle of personal in the Diocese necessary. Fr. Augustine Aigilo was transferred to the Siassi Islands, as successor of Fr. Henk Janssen. That caused a vacancy in his previous parish, All Saints in Lae/Bumbu. Fr. Ansgar Haeusler, parish priest of St. Martinis, takes care of All Saints parish, and will be assisted by one of the new Mariannahillers transferred to Lae. Fr. Anthony Mulderink, chaplain at the university, takes care of St. Patrick's, since Fr. Christian Blouin went to Canada, and will be assisted by another new priest.

Fr. George Dube was assigned as co-pastor to Fr. Frans Lenssen at the Holy Family in Bulolo. Together they are taking care of the parishes in the Bulolo/Wau and Menyamy Districts.

Celebrations on the opening of some new buildings may also be seen as a sign of the external growth of the diocese. After the opening of the buildings of the Upper Primary at Muru/Siassi, another opening attracted a big attendance. Just two days before his departure Fr. Christian Blouin's dream was realized, when the new parish Church of the young parish of St. Patrick in Tent City

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was solemnly blessed and opened. Among the special guests who attended the Concelebration of Bishop Henry with most of the priests of the Diocese, were the Governor of the Morobe Province, Luther Wenge, the Member of Parliament for Lae, Bart Philemon, the Lord Mayor of Lae, representatives of other parishes of the diocese and of other Churches. Vibrant singing groups in traditional colorful dress gave a special festive touch to the celebration.

The next opening ceremony will take place in Bulolo, Holy Family Parish, on September 4. A spacious parish centre will be opened, which has been erected on the edge of the land of St. Peter's Primary School. This building will provide facilities for pastoral activities in the region. Already before the opening, the hall is being used. Lately the Antioch Youth Movement with participants from Bulolo, Wau, Menyama, and Lae were accommodated in the building for a three days gathering.

During the past thirty years, the Sisters of the Precious Blood have been living in Bulolo. The first Sisters who came to Bulolo were Sr. Clemence and Sr. Margaret. They have been working in primary and secondary education, in religious formation of children en adults, in human development of women, and in various sectors of the pastoral field. Their presence in Bulolo has so much been taken for granted that it will be difficult to imagine that it is ending. Sr. Paul-Marie who had also worked in Bulolo especially with young people for many years, died suddenly in Lae in 1993. Sr. Anno joined the team in 1993 after having worked for many years in West Papua/Indonesia.

On 25 July 1999, the Holy Family Parish will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving for the work our CPS Sisters have done in Bulolo and say farewell to them. Sr. Anno is leaving the country on 28 July. Sr. Margaret will stay in the diocese until the end of the year. It is impossible to sum up all the benefits of the presence of the CPS Sisters the parish has enjoyed over the past 30 years. Their absence will surely be felt very much.

Sisters of the local Congregation of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI) have settled down already in Bulolo for some years and will take the place of CPS. The FMI Sisters at present in Bulolo are Sr. Xavier and Sr. Joan.

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A team trained by Fr. Geoffrey Lee is visiting the parishes in

town, proclaiming the message of God, the Father of mercy, by word and drama. This is in preparation of the Great Jubilee.

The 12th of July, St. Henry's day, was the 40th anniversary of the ordination of Bishop Henry van Lieshout and Fr. Anthony Mulderink. Since the bishop was absent because of bishops consecrations in Aitape and Bougainville, the jubilee will be commemorated by the mission staff on 26 July. It looks like providential that about 3 weeks previously there was another 40th anniversary, the erection of the Vicariate Apostolic of Lae by decree of Pope John XXIII of 18 June 1959. By this decree, Lae was separated from the Vicariate of Madang as a new vicariate, which was elevated to a diocese some years later. The diocese will commemorate both 40^{iest} anniversaries later this year.

PNG current affairs

Change of government. The appeal of Archbishop Brian Barnes of Port Moresby to the Prime Minister Bill Skate to resign had the effect of a snowball during the past months. From all sides the Archbishop was given support. Gradually members of parliament and even ministers changed camps and deserted the prime minister. There was much confusion about who was siding with whom. Finally, two weeks before the next session of the parliament that would bring in a vote of no confidence, the Prime Minister Bill Skate resigned.

On 14 July, a new Prime Minister was elected, Mekere Morauta, a former minister who was sacked by Bill Sake recently and had joined the opposition. Because of the constant shifting of alliances on the previous days before the session, the outcome of the election was unpredictable up to the last day. The election showed a picture of parliament unseen ever. Suddenly almost all members moved to the side of the opposition, even the outgoing prime minister. Mekere Morauta was elected prime minister with 99 of 104 votes, a most unexpected result. May God bless Papua New Guinea.

1999/4

100th Anniversary of the death of Abbot Francis Planner
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According to a prominent religious superior, Mill Hill Fr. John Wijngaards, all Mariannahillers should return to the place of their origin, i.e. to South Africa. Going back to their original vocation and mission in Southern Africa would express an essential feature of the identity of the Mariannahillers. Thanks God, the founder of Mariannahill himself had a much wider vision of the mission field for his men: ‘God’s Kingdom that has no boundaries’. Otherwise, the Mariannahillers would not have come to Papua New Guinea. One of Abbot Pfanner’s dreams became reality when 90 years later a new missionary territory was assigned to the Mariannahillers, far beyond their familiar boundaries of Southern Africa. Papua New Guinea was a challenge that certainly would have appealed to Abbot Francis Pfanner.

How did the Mariannahillers come to Papua New Guinea? When in the late fifties, the number of young priests in the Dutch Province was growing and several of them were assigned to South Africa, it became particularly difficult for Dutch priests to obtain a work permit because of the strong anti-apartheid stand of the Dutch government. The generalate decided to ask the Vatican in Rome for a new mission field without specifying a particular country, but focusing on Indonesia which had become independent from the Netherlands. The initial option of the Propaganda Fide was Taiwan. However, when the SVD missionaries in Papua New Guinea asked for new missionaries to take over a part of the Vicariate of Madang that was to be divided into new ecclesiastical territories, the new apostolic vicariate of Lae was assigned to the Missionaries of Mariannahill. The papal decree was signed by Pope John XXIII on 18 June 1959, 40 years ago. The first Mariannahillers arrived in Lae in February 1960. The Catholic population was a minority, about 1750. Forty years later the diocese can look-back at a steady growth of the number of the faithful up to over 25.000 and at the many schools and institutions erected during this period. ‘The Lord your God has blessed you in all the works of your hand. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you.’ (Deut 2:7).

CMM in the Morobe Province

After having taken many bureaucratic hurdles over the past seven months, Fr. Pacific Bongani Duma finally arrived safely in Lae on

August 8. He was the last of the four new Mariannahillers transferred to Lae this year. Unfortunately, Fr. Jorge Espinosa left Lae two months after his arrival and returned to Panama for personal reasons on August 6.

Fr. Arnold Schmitt, who had replaced Fr. Sido as parish priest of St. Mary's Cathedral for the past four months, got a new assignment as priest in charge of St. Patrick's in Tent City, a suburb of Lae. Fr. Pacific Duma works with Fr. Ansgar Haeusler in the parishes of St. Martin's and of All Saints.

Fr. George is co-pastor of the Holy Family Parish in Bulolo and lives with Fr. Frans Lenssen in the presbytery. Together they take care of the parishes in the Bulolo/Wau and Menyamyama districts with places accessible by car or only on foot or by plane. Fr. George was alone in charge of the pastoral area during the five weeks of Fr. Frans' stay in Rome.

Meanwhile Fr. Sido van der Werf returned from home leave. On his way back, he had to make a side trip to Taiwan where he attended an international conference of the Apostolate of the Seafarers. He arrived there on September 21, the day after the heavy earthquake in Taiwan and still felt some aftershocks.

Br. Werner Hupperich, in Germany since February, had to postpone his return to Papua New Guinea because of new health problems. He had booked already for his return in October. During his leave, Br. Werner also attended the CMM Renewal Course in Riedegg in June/July. The confreres will be happy to have him back in Lae where he can take up his work at the Catholic Youth Development Centre at Three-Mile and the Pastoral Centre at St. Joseph'.

Fr. Christian Blouin is doing well in Boston where he is attending a sabbatical year program at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology. He is happy with the program offered by the institute.

Fr. Henk Janssen who left Lae in May has joined the community of St. Paul in Arcen. Recently it was agreed that he shares the work of the mission procurator with Br. Harry Schaminee. Henk takes care of the communication with missionaries and relevant missionary organizations, and Br. Harry Schaminee remains in charge of the administration.

Our two novices Daniel Apas and Thomas Maroko are doing well in Mariannahill. They are already looking forward to the post-

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novitiate study at the Cedara Institute of Theology. Candidate Ludwig Teika will graduate at St. Fidelis Minor Seminary at Madang/Kap on 16 November. He has been admitted to the postulancy that he will start in Lae in the beginning of 2000 and continue with a five months course of spiritual formation on Kairiru Island (Wewak) in July. Another young man Ronald Hembesaho has been accepted as a candidate to be sponsored as a student of St. Fidelis Minor Seminary (Gr. 10).

From the Diocese of Lae

On 26 July, Feast of St. Anne, The priests and religious of the Diocese gathered for a Eucharistic celebration in the cathedral to commemorate the 40th anniversary of ordination of Bishop Henry van Lieshout and his vicar general, Fr. Anthony Mulderink. The celebration was continued with a dinner in the Melanesian Hotel.

After 40 years the time of building up the diocese is far from being completed. Internal spiritual growth is accompanied by external expansion and buildings. In Bulolo Bishop Henry opened and blessed the newly erected Pastoral Centre of the Holy Family Parish in Bulolo and the administration block with library of St. Peter's Primary School on September 4. However, as the Bishop stressed in his homily, the best buildings are useless and only window dressing if they do not promote the spiritual life and foster the maturity of Christian life of the faithful. Many official guests attended the celebration, among others the Governor of the Morobe Province, Luther Wenge. He praised the Catholic Church for its contribution towards development and education in the Province. He was grateful that many of his election promises, which he could not fulfill by himself, were being materialized by other institutions like the Catholic Church. He was referring to the plans of the Catholic Church of Bulolo to start a Catholic High School in Bulolo, which he fully supported.

Three years after Bishop Henry had started negotiations with the General Superior of the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception (CICM=Scheut Missionaries), living next door to our generalate in Rome, the first member of a promised team of three has arrived in Lae. Fr. Crespo Lape is a Filipino who previously worked in Jayapura, West Papua (Indonesia) arrived in September. One of his special tasks

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will be to co-ordinate the pastoral care of the youth in the diocese.

At the Diocesan Pastoral Conference on September 6, it was agreed that a new Church would be built at Eleven Mile, on the road to Nadzab Airport. This area is being developed for housing and it is expected that many people will move to newly erected residences. Fr. Hubert Hofmans is the promoter of the new church project.

In Wauwoka, a Catholic community in a remote area of the Menyamya District will also get a new permanent church building. The project will be realized in the beginning of 2000.

Mrs. Ann Barnabas was appointed the new Catholic Education Secretary, succeeding Mr. Paul Namuru, who will take over the Justice and Peace affairs. A new Coordinator for Religious Education has also been appointed.

The diocesan offices are now accommodated in the new Catholic Diocesan Centre. The spacious building is the former Free Mason Hall, purchased by the Diocese from the Free Masons. Because of its unusual construction (e.g., a windowless meeting room according to Free Masons rules), the whole interior of the building had to be remodeled. The bishop has his own office in the building. The new Centre is next to the Lutheran Resurrection Church and on a ten minutes walking distance from St. Mary's Church. The new diocesan office building is a real improvement and above all a relief for the overpopulated St. Mary's station.

Meanwhile Sr. Anno Hylkema CPS terminated her work in the diocese and returned to The Netherlands. She was managing a sewing workshop in Bulolo for women for many years. Sr. Margaret moved from Bulolo to Lae. The Superior General, Sr. Nicholas CPS is coming to Lae in November. During her visit, she will also give a retreat to the religious mission personnel. Sr. Godelief Leyten CPS returned from home leave in the beginning of September.

Current affairs in PNG

The change of government raised hope for a real improvement of the state of affairs of the nation. Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta makes the impression of a sincere man committed to good governance in PNG. His declared as his first objective to restore the integrity of the great institutions of state, the parliament, the

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departments of justice and of finance, the ombudsman and other state institutions, to respect them, seek advice from them and listen to their calling. Sir Mekere also stated that he would restore relations with the international Monetary Fund and the World Bank in an attempt to restore financial stability. The Catholic Church, which had strongly advocated a change of the previous government earlier this year, applauded the new government's priorities in addressing the country's needs. The Church challenged the Prime Minister to pay special attention and give financial support to the social welfare services such as education and health and to look into the situation of the women who remain second-class Citizens in the country.

Archbishop Leo Arkfeld, SVD, 87, died on 21 August. The government had declared it a state funeral that was held on August 8. The very popular 'flying Bishop' was the first parish priest of St. Mary's in Lae in the late forties, before the vicariate of Lae was separated from Madang. Heavy rain did not keep the thousands of people from attending the night vigil. On the morning of Saturday Bishop Leo Arkfeld's body was laid in state in the Cathedral of Wewak for viewing. At 2.30 pm, the body was taken by the Armed Forces to the open-air stage where the Funeral Mass was held. There were estimated to be around 15 thousand people gathered. Archbishop Benedict To Varpin of Madang was the main celebrant.

2000/1

A new millennium

Being in Rome at the beginning of the Third Millennium, one cannot fail to see say that the Eternal City appears in a new look. The St. Peter's Basilica with the vast square looks like newly built, cleansed from centuries of dust and smog. Many other churches and buildings have thoroughly been renovated. Special Jubilee buses carry the pilgrims quickly to the major churches. The traffic situation around the Vatican has drastically been changed in order to give more space to pedestrians. A huge underground car park for hundreds of buses has been constructed near the Vatican. A whole army of volunteers is everywhere clearly visible to help the visitors with information.

They are wearing an apron with the words 'I was a stranger and you have received me.'

A new millennium, a new Pope? A misinterpretation of the chairman of the German Bishops Conference, Bishop Lehmann, provided exiting headlines. Pope John Paul II reacted, 'I am not old, and I go to the Holy Land.' He is still in full action and fulfills all his commitments, which are not a few in the first weeks of the year.

At the beginning of the new millennium, the Church in PNG has to look once more at herself. Which shape is she going to take? In an assessment of the current missionary situation, William Longar, a pastor of the United Church writes in CATALYST 29, 1999/1:

'There is a growing awareness of the inadequacy of Western theologies and church structures to really address the cultural and spiritual needs of national Christians.

There is a growing desire for national Christians to participate adequately in the growth and ministry of the local churches in their respective contexts

There is a need to see the Church having a powerful impact on society. The church must be the voice of the voiceless in society and participate in the struggles and sufferings of the powerless society.

There is a desire to embrace Christianity and Christ not as foreign imports, but as their own, Christianity and a Christ who relates to them within their cultural context.'

Something to think about also in the Catholic Church in PNG, which is still the least localized of all churches. The author, however, sees not a solution in sending the foreign missionaries home and putting an end to their missionary activities. He sees the missionaries as co-workers and as support staff of the national churches. They are in PNG as servants to serve God's people. As such, they must be sensitive to the needs of their hosts; after all, every missionary is a guest in this culture. They are not to impose their ideas but to facilitate, to educate, guide and encourage their national colleagues, wherever possible to take more of leading roles in the life and the affairs of the church. They should be free from preconceived ideas, prejudices, and personal agendas. This will do for a start into the new millennium.