

Tanget aus Papua Neuguinea - Juli 2019

Dear friends of Mariannahill PNG!

Greetings from a rainy Lae!

We hope that you are all in good shape, in the North enjoying still summertime and in the South looking forward to spring time. We have abundant rain, which means lower temperatures. We are happy with the frequent 24-25 degrees Celsius. In the months since the latest TANGET of last April we, the missionaries of Mariannahill in PNG, have been a very small community. **Fr. Roland Matoyi** was already off for his home-leave. He will come back on the 24th of July. On the 1st of August he is due to start his first term of office as our Regional Superior. Our best wishes and prayers are already putting the red carpet.

On the 28th of May we had a “farewell party” and said goodbye and a big Thank You to **Brother Yvon Bourret** who has been for three years a member of our Region. Br. Yvon Bourret, still with late Bishop Christian Blouin at our Mariannahill House in 2018

As such he has been for two years the local Superior of Mariannahill House in Eriku.

Thanks to him the house has received a good overhaul in maintenance and renovation. Br. Yvon has also been Diocesan Coordinator of Religious Education. In April he accompanied **Fr. Krzysztof Zacharuk** to Siassi, where he participated in the Easter celebrations on Mandok.

Now Br. Yvon has returned to his home Province Canada, where we wish he may enjoy a well deserved retirement, although – knowing him a bit – he will still be on the outlook for some usefull engagement in pastoral work.

On the 29th of May **Fr. Krzysztof** went again to the Siassi islands. We will not see him in Lae till half August.

Thus Mariannahill House had in the last months a real mini-community, moreover each one being stretched in his pastoral mission.

Since Br. Yvon’s return to Canada and Fr. Krzysztof being in Siassi, **Fr. Marco Saavedra** has been acting Superior of Mariannahill House, taking for the time being also Fr. Roland’s place in the parish of St. Therese at Kamkumung. As he is still new in the field, **Deacon Daniel Apas** is his right hand in the parish.

Since May, **Fr. Ludwig Teika** has been released from his responsibility as parish priest of St. Michael’s in Lae, and is going through a period of discernment. The next Tanget may see him in a new appointment.

Fr. Arnold Schmitt, Vicar General of the Diocese, has an extra work-load on his shoulders, as **Bishop Rozario** is often absent, visiting the parishes of the Diocese in order to know his flock, and sometimes even further away, gathering support, especially in personnel, for the Diocese.

The Bishop had planned for April the annual retreat for the priests and male Religious working in the Diocese. Thus, we all joined at the Pastoral Centre on the 1st of April for a retreat of five days, given by the Provincial Superior of the Canadian Province of the Montfort Missionaries.

Fr. George's input was about the basic concerns of the OT prophets as indicators for our personal life and pastoral ministry.

The Diocesan Pastoral Centre saw in May all the catechists of the Diocese coming for their yearly retreat and workshop. Thirty five catechists were there, really a representation of all the parishes of the Diocese. **Fr. Krzysztof** coordinated the retreat. On the 1st of May, **Bishop Rozario** flew to POM to attend the 60th Annual General Meeting of the Bishops' Conference of PNG and the Solomon Islands. The theme of the Meeting was "Laity, a call to holiness in today's world".

On the same day **Fr. Arnold Schmitt** flew to Vanimo, to attend a meeting of the "Consultative Implementing Council" representing the Bishop. This Council is composed by representatives of all Government Departments and of the different Churches, based in PNG. The meeting was about **how to work together to generate a crime-free society**. The meeting took place in the Pastoral Centre of the Catholic Diocese of Vanimo.

On the 7th of May at 7.27 am, we were all surprised by a strong earthquake. Houses were rattling. Books fell from bookshelves. . . .

It turned out to be an earthquake of 7.2 strength on the Richter scale with its epicentre not far from Bulolo, some 80 kilometers from Lae as the bird flies.

Some people in Lae saw the water at the beach of the Huon Gulf receding and the rumour of a tsunami spread quickly. Parents rushed to the schools to get their children out, many gathered at Top Town near the cathedral expecting to see from there the tsunami invading the industrial area next to the harbour.

But the tsunami didn't come, similar to the **political tsunami** expected that day in Parliament. A vote of no-confidence should be tabled against the Prime Minister, but the Government was able to adjourn Parliament till the 28th of May before any such move could take place.

The crisis came to an end when the opposition in Parliament had enough votes and – Prime Minister O'Neil having stepped down "voluntarily" – MP James Marape was elected Prime Minister on the 30th of May with an overwhelming majority obtaining 101 votes, with only 9 against. In his first message to the people of PNG he addressed corruption and bribery.

And in general he said: "May I ask one thing from all our citizens? Give me a good law and order environment. Stop crime, stop tribal fights – my Hela province! -, stop torture of mothers and daughters, stop corruption at all levels, honour time by being punctual, do little things like stop littering and spitting the red stain of betel nut."

The Bishops of PNG have addressed the new government with an appeal, stressing the following needs:

1. Preferential attention to the rural and urban poor;
2. An immediate solution for and an end of the illegal detention of asylum seekers and refugees;
3. The protection of the environment and the country's natural resources;
4. Legislation to establish an Independent Commission against Corruption.

They also have requested from the government an effective partnership in the managing of the Education and Health sectors.

On the 1st of June the blessing and opening of the new chancery of the Diocese of Lae and the blessing of the newly installed Radio Station FM 103.7 took place.

Two important projects of the Diocese came therewith to completion. Both Chancery and Radio are now next to the Cathedral and the residence of the Bishop. Organization as well as outreach of the local Church will benefit with this new structure. It was all possible thanks to substantial support of our benefactors overseas, in case of the Radio especially those of our Swiss CMM Region. **Fr. Arnold Schmitt**, as Diocesan Vicar General, coordinated the yearlong effort and mobilized also important local financial support. **Fr. Brian Nonde**, as Director of the Radio, has a full-time apostolate with this important ministry.

For the opening and blessing a big tent was erected next to the new chancery in order to celebrate the official opening and blessing.

PNG may have reached the international news recently because of two volcanic eruptions, one in West New Britain on the 26th of June and the other on Manam Island on the 28th of June. Thousands had to be evacuated. The rain of scoria on Manam with pieces of the size of a fist destroyed fruits and garden products, leaving a 10 -15 cms thick layer of lava covering extensive areas.

Wishing all of you showers of a more beneficial character on life and work, we say good-bye again, till the next Tanget!