



CHIEF HENRY VAN LIESHOUT
CMM, GCL

Retired Bishop of Lae

Bishop Henry van Lieshout was on the top of the list of recipients of awards of honour for various services to the people of PNG. During the investiture ceremony presided by the Governor General Grand Chief Paulias Matane in the Government House on 20 November. Bishop Henry and a bishop of the United Church were seated on special chairs, in front of the Governor-General, as the only ones who were invested with the Insignia of the Grand Companions of the Order of Logohu (Bird of Paradise) ("GCL").

The official text of the conferral reads as follows: *"Most Rev. Bishop Henry van Lieshout, CMM, DD, GCL, is to be conferred the title of "Chief" for services to the Catholic Church and the community, particularly the people of Morobe Province, to whom he provided pastoral care for 46 years until his retirement in 2006, the last 40 years as Bishop of the Diocese of Lae"*

Queen Elizabeth II, the Governor-General and the Prime Minister of PNG are Grand Chiefs of the Order of Logohu. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton, who recently visited PNG on the occasion of his anti-AIDS campaign, was also awarded the heavy gold medal of a PNG Grand Chief.

During the same ceremony over 100 other New Guineans and expatriate residents in PNG were awarded honours in 12 lower categories, among them two Australian Sacred Heart Missionaries and one German Holy Spirit Sister.

Frs. Wojtek Drazek and Frans Lenssen were invited to attend the ceremony. Dove Travel, a travel agency for missionaries, hosted a dinner in honour of Bishop Chief Henry. Among the guests were 11 bishops including the Apostolic Nuncio.

In 1993, on the occasion of his silver jubilee, Bishop Henry van Lieshout was awarded the honour of Officer of the Dutch Lion. This lion has now the company of the bird of paradise. Strange bed follows!

CONFIRMATION ON THE SIASSI ISLANDS

It was a celebration all round for the Catholic Community on the Siassi Islands in the last week of October, when more than 100 youths received the sacrament of Confirmation. The celebration took place at three separate islands in Mandok, Aromot and Aupwel. On the occasion of his first visit to Siassi, Bishop Christian Blouin of Lae told the villagers that those who received the sacrament were anointed to become instruments and witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ within their villagers, communities and the country as a whole, All those villages expressed their joy and gratitude by putting on feasts,

singing and dances to celebrate the occasion.

SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY

Social Justice Sunday is a new initiative promoted by the National Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in PNG. Caritas PNG has been assigned to carry out this task. Representing the Bishops Conference as board member of Caritas PNG Bishop Christian Blouin had come from Lae to Port Moresby to officially launch the Social Justice Sunday program which for this year highlights especially the need to properly care for children and address issues affecting them. "Social justice is important for the evangelisation" Bishop Chris said in his address during the launching ceremony. The program is focused on issues affecting children which call for greater awareness and protection of the rights of children", he said. An official for Child Welfare representing the Department of Community Development said that child welfare in the country was being looked at as the least important. Her Department was mandated to ensure the children could exercise their rights in societies.

NEW PARISH PRIEST AT BOMANA

A Eucharistic celebration with a meal marked the farewell of Fr. Frans Lenssen from the Bomana Holy Name Parish which he had served as acting parish priest for one year. It is a parish in the surrounding of Bomana of 12 villages and settlements without a central parish church. A Columbian Vincentian Father who has been one of the spiritual directors of the diocesan seminarians at the Bomana CTI was installed by the Archbishop of Port Moresby on 4 November. A new Vincentian priest from Nigeria is

expected to take his place as spiritual director but he is still waiting for a visa since January.

CTI GRADUATION

The graduation ceremony at the end of the academic year on 17 November began with a Eucharistic Celebration presided over by retired archbishop Michael Meier SVD of Mount Hagen who happened to be on visit in PNG. He is a former member of the Governing Council of the CTI. Guest speaker was the Minister for Higher Education, Michael Ohio. Among the prominent guests was the Police Commissioner Jerry Baki.

During the graduation ceremony at three CMM students were awarded the Advanced Certificate of Religious Studies. One of them Bernard Sakor will go to the novitiate yet in Mariannahill 2008. Hopefully he will get his visa in time.

Most of the CMM seminarians flew to Lae on 20 November and from there they went on home leave. One of them, Elijah Moiho was conferred the sacrament of Confirmation by Bishop Chris Blouin in the Mariannahill House in the same evening of their arrival in Lae.

ORDINATION IN PORT MORESBY

Saturday, 24 November was a memorable day for the Archdiocese of Port Moresby when a deacon was ordained priest. It was 25 years ago since the last ordination of a diocesan priest for the Archdiocese. In spite of 100 years Catholic Church in Port Moresby there are only two local diocesan priests in the Archdiocese. It was the first and at the same time the last ordination celebrated by Archbishop Brian Barnes OFM who will retire in March 2008. His successor is his coadjutor John Ribat MSC.

NEW EXPATRIATE MISSION STAFF MEMBERS

The Superior General of Mariannahill has assigned the following Mariannahill Fathers to Papua New Guinea: Fr. Alfons Voorn (NL) from the Generate in Rome; Fr. Krysztof Zacharuk from Poland; Fr. Ignatius Bwalya from Zambia;

Fr. Wojciech Drazek, at present Rector of the Mariannahill College in Port Moresby has been assigned to Czeladz in Poland.

It will take quite some time before the newcomers will arrive in PNG, due to the slow procedure of issuing the required documents for entering the country.

PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

At the Provincial chapter in Lae on 27 November the shortage of mission personnel was discussed with reference to a request from Bishop Chris Blouin for suitable persons for several positions in the diocese. It will take some time before the three new Mariannahillers from overseas who have been assigned for PNG will arrive and can be fully engaged after a period of initiation in the field.

At present there are three candidates for the spiritual year in St. Fidelis in Madang. Another candidate is a seminarian from the Diocese of Wewak with two years study at the Good Shepherd Seminary in Banz. He will continue his studies with Mariannahill at the Theological Institute at Port Moresby. Bernard Kasor will enter the novitiate in Mariannahill, South Africa. The novice Raphael Ipipi will return from the novitiate in January and make his first profession for one year on 2 February 2008. On the same occasion Br. Ludwig Teika will take his final vows.

The 5-year plan was of the province and the agenda points for the 2008 Council of the Congregation in Rome in October 2008 were discussed.

The remodelling of the house on the Mariannahill property in Lae/Eriku which previously was rented to four families of Telikom employees is progressing well. It will accommodate 3-5 CPS Sisters from Korea and Zimbabwe who have been assigned to the Diocese of Lae.

The provincial chapter elected the following members for the new leadership team: Fr. Arnold Schmitt as provincial, Fr. Frans Lenssen vice=provincial and Br. Werner Hupperich and Fr. Sido van de Werf as councillors. Fr. Frans Lenssen was

transferred from the Mariannahill College in Port Moresby to Lae and elected as the new superior of the Mariannahill House in Lae/Eriku. They will take up their offices on 1 January 2008 for three years

BUILDING ACTIVITIES

The construction of the church of the new St. Therese Parish is completed. Sunday Masses are already being celebrated. The official blessing will take place at a later date.

The project of a new church near the Boys Town (for juvenile delinquents) at Erap in the Markham Valley is off the ground. Fr. Sido van der Werf envisages this building as a centre for the disperse Catholics living there in the surrounding.

ANTI-VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN

A recently published report about violence against women shows that PNG is ranking high on the international list. The media started an awareness campaign by publishing daily stories of women who have been victims of domestic violence. An anti-violence protest march was organised by members of the civil society and a petition presented to the parliament. During the debate on the issue Prime Minister Michael Somare called violence against women a cancer that had crept into the PNG society and is not part of the local tradition. The government is going to strengthen the legislation to protect the rights of women and children. The Catholic Church has always raised her voice in defence of women and children. As a major part of the pastoral activities the church tries to help husband and wife to try to solve together family problems and stop domestic violence.

Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year 2008

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