

BISHOP'S FEBRUARY MESSAGE

LENT: A TIME FOR RENEWING OUR FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE



Faith calls us to accept the truth and testify to it before God and all our brothers and sisters. Lent is a time for us to renew our faith, draw from the "living water" of hope, and receive with open hearts the love of God, who makes us brothers and sisters

Fasting: The path of poverty and self-denial

Almsgiving: concern and loving care for the poor

Prayer: *the dialogue with the Father that makes it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith, living hope and effective charity. (Mt 6:1-18)*

Our Lenten task:

opening our hearts to God's word

Fasting as self-denial, which helps us to love God and our neighbor

love which is a movement focusing our attention on others allowing them to "make their dwelling" among us

Hope as "living water" enabling us to continue our journey.

The Samaritan woman at the well, whom Jesus asks for a drink, does not understand what He means when He says that He can offer her "living water"

Saint Paul urges us to place our hope in reconciliation: "Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20). By receiving forgiveness in the sacrament that lies at the

heart of our process of conversion we in turn can spread forgiveness to others. Forgiveness brings experience an Easter of fraternity.

speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement, and not words that demean, sadden, anger or show scorn" (Fratelli Tutti, 223)

simply to being kind and "willing to set everything else aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference" (ibid., 224).

Through recollection and silent prayer, hope is given to us as inspiration, it means receiving the hope of Christ, who gave his life on the cross

Love, following in the footsteps of Christ, concern and compassion for all, is the highest expression of our faith and hope. Love rejoices in seeing others grow.

Social love' makes it possible to advance towards a civilization of love, love is capable of building a new world.

Love is a leap of the heart; it brings us out of ourselves

Love is a gift that gives meaning to our lives.

It enables us to view those in need as members of our own family, as friends, brothers or sisters.

A small amount, if given with love, never ends

To experience Lent with love means caring for those who suffer or feel abandoned

Acknowledging and valuing their dignity, respecting their identity and culture (Fratelli Tutti, 187).

Conclusion:

Every moment of our lives is a time for believing, hoping and loving.

The call to experience Lent as a journey of conversion, prayer and sharing of our goods, helps us, as communities and as individuals, to revive the faith

May Mary, Mother of the Savior, ever faithful at the foot of the cross and in the heart of the Church, sustain us with her loving presence.

(Outline by Bishop Capelli, on the message of Pope Francis for lent)

HOLY FORMED AND SENT FOR SERVICE

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THE DIOCESE OF GIZO UPCOMING EVENTS 2021

- **Month of February** 8–12 Hey Dad training, northern deanery at Moli
22–26 Hey Dad training, southern deanery at Gizo
- **Month of March** 8–12 NFP moral issues training, northern deanery at Nila
22–26 Priest meeting, Gizo
- **Month of April (pilgrimage with the Candle)**
13–15 Candle to Noro
15–17 Candle to sacred heart, Wagina
17–19 Christ the King, Voruvoru
19–21 St Dominic Parish, Sirovanga
21–23 John Bosco Parish, Taro
23–25 St Joseph, Moli
25–27 Holy Rosary, Nila
27–29 St Peter parish, Gizo
- **Month of May** 3–7 SCC follow up, St Peter parish, Gizo
10–14 SCC follow up, Holy Rosary parish, Nila
17–21 SCC visitors training, St John Bosco parish, Taro
24–28 SCC follow up, St Dominic parish, Sirovanga
31–4 (new month) SCC follow up, Christ the King, Voruvoru
- **Month of June** 1–4 SCC follow up continue, Christ the King parish, Voruvoru
7 – 11 SCC follow up, Sacred heart parish, Wagina
- **June** 14 – 17 Media training at Gizo
18 – 20 FSW Northern Deanery, Moli
21 – 25 Priest retreat, Gizo
25 – 27 FSW for the Southern Deanery, Noro
- **Month of July** 5– 9 come and see (venue depend on candidates)
12–16 Hey Mum southern deanery at Gizo
26–30 Hey Mum northern deanery at Moli
- **Month of August** 6–8 YE Christ the King, Voruvoru
9–13 Training for new Catechists, Nila
13–15 YE Sirovanga, St Dominic
20–22 YE St John Bosco, Taro
27–29 YE St Joseph Moli
- **September** 3–5 YE Holy Rosary, Nila
13–17 Priest Meeting, Gizo
17–19 YE St Peter, Gizo
24–26 YE St Eusibius, Noro
- **October** 1–3 YE, Sacred Heart, Wagina
11–15 Justice and Peace Workshop, Nila
- **November** 4–6 Media Training northern deanery, Moli
11–13 Media Training southern deanery, Noro
15–19 DTPA evaluation and planning, Gizo
- **December 13–17 Bishops cup northern deanery parishes, Moli**
27–31 Bishops cup southern deanery parishes, Vanga



**VANGA CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION (VCEI)
Undergoes renewal Seminar for its staff**



Vanga has a glorious history to tell but even a greater story to write for the future which will depend on the greatness of their staff dreams and on their fidelity to their commitment taken at their baptism and renewed in this seminar: to proclaim the good news to the young solomon islanders searching to become good Christians of their particular churches and honest citizens of our country, aiming high... **with Faith and courage**

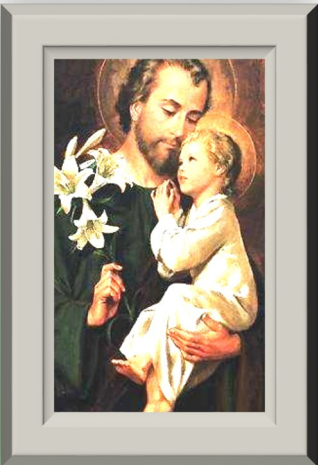
The Gizo Catholic Diocese Education Authority is happy to share its efforts and resources to contribute to nation building

The Catholic Diocese of Gizo has been running Vanga Teachers College directly under its education authority since 25 years. With the help of the Marist Teaching Brothers it also run Saint Dominic Rural Training Center for the past 50 years and Saint Marcellin primary school for the past few years.

The staff of these three institutions met at the Church Betania Formation center at Jah Mountain for 4 full days from January 19 to 22 for renewal and planning for the new year as one institution serving three different clients: The Primary school, the RTC and the Teachers College. The 16 participants listened to inputs and shared their ideas on their Vision and Mission as baptized Catholic running a Church Institution with its specific identity as partners of the Government in the process of educating the youth entrusted to their care. They worked on their yearly plan and programmed their common and single activities.



COMING AHEAD IS THE FEAST OF ST JOSEPH—HUSBAND OF MARY



On this Feast Day of St Joseph husband of Mary, our Diocese (Gizo) is going to celebrate a Father's day in all its parishes. A day dedicated to St Joseph to remember his significant role in the Church. A relevant moment for all Daddies to strengthen themselves as they reflect upon their roles as heads of families.

In order for the day to be more special and memorable for our daddies it is good to initiate more activities in our parishes. Activities that bring joy to the community, strength and inspiration to our fathers in their roles as head of the families and leaders of our communities.

HAPPY FATHERS DAY MARCH 19 2021

WORD OF GOD SUNDAY IN WAGINA 2021

Pope Francis invited us to have this special Sunday for the Bible, as he wrote in *Aperuit Illis* "I hereby declare that the third Sunday in Ordinary Time is to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God... The various communities will find their own ways to mark this Sunday with certain solemnity". In our Sacred Heart parish in Wagina, we, the parishioners, tried to respond that invitation by making it very special Sunday focus on the Word of God.



We started early in the morning with a solemn procession carrying the Bible, very beautiful decorated by the community members from Tengeangea along with a banner with the theme "The Bible is useful for teaching the truth". While we prayed the Holy Rosary and sang holy hymns about the Bible, we walked from the one end of the village towards the Church. Some of our children during the procession sprinkled flowers on the Bible as sign of their love for the word of God.

Arriving to the church, we had the Holy Mass presided by Fr. Lawrence Kimaere, who was visiting our parish, and the concelebrant was Fr. Humberto Villa. Members from Tekaranga community led the liturgy in the celebration.

In the Mass, we had some special moments in order to help the congregation understand that the Bible is not just a book but above all God speaking to us at every moment we read the Bible. A Gospel procession before the proclamation of the Gospel was beautiful done in a Kiribati way. Fr. Lawrence encouraged us in his homily to read the Bible and come to know it well because very often we,



Catholics, are accused of not knowing the Bible. After the homily, Fr. Humberto blessed and commissioned the readers in our parish for one year to be living words of God. Moreover, just before the end of the Mass, Fr. Humberto blessed the Bibles that parishioners brought in the celebration and encouraged them to enthrone the Bible by having a very special place at home.

Around midday, parishioners gathered, together at the Holy Family Maneaba for a program in which they shared lunch, songs, choruses, play and some games having The Word of God as main theme.

In the evening, after the prayer of Holy Rosary in front of the Blessed Sacrament, there was a movie show in the Maneaba. Children enjoyed 2 animated videos from the series the Superbook, and adults a documentary about the Bible and science.

Indeed, we can say that it was a Word of God Sunday at our parish. We pray as pope Francis says in *Aperuit Illis* "May the Sunday of the Word of God help his people to grow in religious and intimate familiarity with the Sacred Scripture." (SHP, Wagina)



NUSABOSCO PRIMARY SCHOOL OPENING



On the 29 of January 2021 Bishop Luciano Capelli of the diocese of Gizo was requested for the opening Mass of the newly erected primary school at the million dollar view, (Nusabosco). Though the weather was not in good shape, the ceremony was well attended and witnessed by a great number of children, parents and staff. It was a joy-felt ceremony for both the students and staff as they also receive gifts from the Bishop and the Italian volunteer Mrs Paola Besta.



The primary Mistress of the school convey her sincere words of thanks, to the Bishop of the Diocese, the Education Secretary, the benefactors and to all who support them in one way or the other. This year 2021 the newly erected Nusabosco primary school was already been flooded by children from the surrounding communities of Gizo.



It is our best wishes to all staff and student of Nusabosco to proceed with integrity, progress and prosperity.

*Never stop
learning, because
life never stops
teaching.*

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NATIONWIDE ADDRESS

UPDATE ON COVID-19 SITUATION IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

HON PRIME MINISTER MANASSEH SOGAVARE, MP

29. 01. 2021

Fellow Solomon Islanders and residents of our beloved country. A very good afternoon to all of you that listening and watching around the country and overseas.

This is a Special National Address aimed at providing an update on the COVID-19 situation in Solomon Islands as of today, Friday 29th January 2021.

Fellow citizens, there have been some level of concern over the past 24 hours that there could be community transmission of COVID-19 in the country.

Before going any further, **let me assure the nation that as of this moment, we do not have any evidence of community transmission of COVID-19 in Solomon Islands.**

Fellow citizens as many of you will have seen in today's newspapers or on social media platforms, there have been some concerns regarding a reported positive case of COVID-19 from one of the students that had earlier returned from the Philippines.

I can confirm that we have indeed picked up a 'weakly' positive COVID-19 test result from our GeneXpert machine on one of the students that returned to Honiara on the first repatriation flight from Manila on 29th September 2020.

This student tested negative for COVID-19 when he arrived in the country from Manila. After arrival, the student showed signs and symptoms of COVID-19, however all his initial tests were negative.

On 20th of October 2020 [22 days after arrival] he tested positive for COVID-19. He was kept in isolation until he returned 5 consecutive negative COVID-19 tests before he was released on 24th November 2020. He was in quarantine and isolation for a total of 8 weeks before his release, as compared to the normal 3 weeks for students that returned from Manila.

In total, we have released 15 people that were previously positive after they returned 4 consecutive negative tests taken 7 days apart since our first diagnosed case of COVID-19 on 3rd October 2020.

The first 10 people had been followed up in accordance with the follow-up plan of the Ministry of health. 9 of the people had returned negative test results. Only one student had returned positive test with our GeneXpert machine.

Fellow Solomon Islanders, the student had travelled to his village in Malaita province after being released from the quarantine station. The student was brought to Kilu'ufi hospital by the Ministry of Health to undertake his review and re-swabbing on 26th January 2020. He was perfectly healthy and was not sick. The swabbing was a planned follow-up by the Ministry of Health.

The swab was transferred to the Molecular Lab in Honiara on the same day and showed a positive result on the GeneXpert machine on the evening of 26th January.

Fellow citizens based on this result, the National Health Emergency Operation Centre [NHEOC] of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) activated its 'Emergency Response Plan' to validate, track, and contain a potential COVID-19 outbreak.



They implemented the four priorities swiftly

Firstly, to locate, re-swab and re-admit the Student – The NHEOC located the student who had travelled to Honiara by boat, within 3 hours of being advised of the result. They collected, swabbed, and admitted the student to the Field Hospital in rapid time.

I am very happy to inform the nation that the result of the repeat swab taken from the student tested NEGATIVE on both the GeneXpert machine and the qPCR machine.

This simply means the student did not have COVID-19 at the repeat testing at around 11pm on 26th January 2021.

Secondly, to urgently deploy of a field team to the student's village to conduct urgent contact-tracing, awareness sessions, and to collect swabs from every individual in the village the student stayed in.

The field team flew to Auki at 6am yesterday (Wednesday) by a chartered Solomon Airlines flight. The field team to the village comprised staff from the NHEOC, Kilu'ufi hospital and Auki police.

I am pleased to advise that the team had completed the contact tracing in the village. They conducted much needed education awareness and they collected swabs from more than 30 individuals. The swabs will be analysed at the Molecular lab on the team's return to Honiara today.

Thirdly, to undertake a Comprehensive Risk Assessment – The feedback from the student and relatives at the student's village has enabled the NHEOC team to focus their risk assessment around, the student's movements and locations over the past 2 – 3 weeks.

I am happy to inform the general public especially in Malaita and in Honiara that, based on their initial assessments, the Ministry of Health believes that the risk of COVID-19 community transmission is low at this stage.

The results of swabs taken in the village where he stayed at in Malaita will give a better indication of the risk-level in the village and the other locations the student has travelled to in the past 2 weeks.

In this regard, I am happy to inform the public that our NHEOC team has already established an up-to-date mapping of the student's travel

and lodging pattern over the past two weeks that will assist them in the event a broader contact tracing exercise is required.

Fourthly, to urgently Set-up the Kilu'ufi Hospital's COVID-19 Testing Capacity – The head of the Molecular laboratory and two of his senior staff were deployed to Kilu'ufi hospital by helicopter this morning to urgently set-up the COVID-19 testing capability at the Kilu'ufi hospital laboratory. The field team will return on the helicopter return flight.

Fellow citizens, to summarise the sequence of events to date.

We have picked one positive COVID-19 case on 26 January 2020 from a routine follow-up test on a previously discharged student, 62 days after he was released from the quarantine station. The student has been readmitted to the Field hospital the same day and has tested NEGATIVE on both the GeneXpert and qPCR machines.

A field team had been deployed to the student's village in Malaita. Contact tracing had been completed in the village and swabs were collected in more than 30 individuals for analysis at the Molecular lab in Honiara.

A high-level team from the Molecular lab is in Kiluufi hospital today to install the GeneXpert machine to enable Kiluufi hospital to undertake COVID-19 tests in the hospital.

Based on feedback from the student, and the people our field team spoke to during the contact tracing, it is our view that the risk of a COVID-19 community transmission is still low.

We will await the results of the swabs collected at the student's village before making further assessment and announcements on the risk level and what additional actions might need to be taken.

The Ministry of Health is confident that the first positive GeneXpert result is showing remnants of COVID-19 fragments and not actually live COVID-19 virus. This means that it will not be infective and can not therefore infect other people.

Fellow citizens, many of us are confused about the differences between the GeneXpert machine and the qPCR machine. While I too struggle to fully understand that it has been explained to me in this way.

Both machines provide a quantitative measure of the level or concentration of the virus present in the nostril of the person that is infected by the virus.

The qPCR machine will detect the concentration of COVID-19 Virus in the sample being tested. The test result will range from negative, weakly positive

to very strongly positive.

To an extent it is similar to the result of your malaria slide test where the microscopist usually writes a '1 plus' for low parasite count to a '4 plus' for very high parasite count.

So, for the qPCR, there is a cut-off between the positive and the negative, although sometime there is an in-between in which case another swab is collected to validate.

The GeneXpert machine does the same assessment as the qPCR. However, it is a lot more sensitive machine than the qPCR. So, it can pick up Covid-19 virus fragments that could be remnants of dead viruses that are not necessarily infective even when the qPCR result is negative.

This difference explains why sometimes, a person's test can come back negative for qPCR, and yet could show a weak positive for GeneXpert. Whenever this occurs, a repeat swab is usually taken and retested in both machines to validate the results.

So, for our purposes in Solomon Islands, a qPCR positive or negative result can be taken as the basis of our reporting and our GeneXpert being more sensitive, is extremely useful in also following up of cases that maybe qPCR negative but show a positive GeneXpert result.

Fellow citizens, the key message I have this afternoon is for all of us to remain calm and allow our health professionals to complete their analysis.

After we know the results of the swabs collected from the student's village in Malaita, we will be in a much better position to provide further focussed advice. At this point it is our view we do not have community transmission. Therefore, there is no need for any lock-down in any part of the country.

Our Front-liners have the situation covered. I commend our front-liners for their rapid response to locate and admit the student, and for moving very quickly on contact tracing.

Fellow citizens we should have the results from the swabs taken from individuals at the student's vil-

lage within 24-48 hours after they arrive at the Molecular laboratory at the NRH.

We will then come back to you at that point on further updates on this situation. On the broader COVID-19 front, I am very happy to report that our two footballers from the UK that had remained positive had finally tested negative.

However, given the length of time the two had been positive, we have not yet declared them free of COVID-19. We will wait for the next 3 consecutive negative tests before we declare the free of COVID.

We are currently watching one of the students that returned from Manila in the last flight a week ago that could turn positive. Again, we hope that would not be the case, but if it does get confirmed that he is positive, we will manage him in our isolation facility at the Field hospital. On a brighter note, we have submitted our application for the first doses of vaccines to cover the first 0.25% of our population. We have already committed to procure through the COVAX facility adequate vaccines to cover 50% of our population in the first instance.

Fellow Citizens let us always look to our Lord, our God for his never-ending blessing in our country and our people. In God we trust. He will continue to protect us during this pandemic.

Let me close with a quote from the Book of Psalms Chapter 121 verse 1, and I quote

I lift my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth....” Close quote

The same God will bless and guide Solomon Islands and will protect us from the COVID-19 pandemic. The same God will help us prevent any community transmission of COVID-19.

To God be the Glory, great things He has done.

May God bless our Beloved Solomon Islands from shore to shore.

Thank you all for your attention.

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