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Bishop Peter Houhou  
Catholic Diocese of Gizo

## MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD PRAY FOR OUR DIOCESE.

Dear beloved Diocesan and Religious Priests and Religious Brothers and Sisters and Laity of our Diocese, before we journey in this New Year 2025, as the Spiritual Father and Shepherd of our Diocese, from the bottom of my heart, I want to acknowledge all your contributions in whatever form of services you give towards our families, communities, parishes, church ministries, schools, clinics and Chancery Office of our Diocese of Gizo. Let us thank God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for guiding and protecting us, despite of difficulties and challenges that we encounter as we journey through the year.

### TOGETHER, LET US FAREWEL 2024 AND WELCOME 2025.

Every New Year, on the 1st day of January, according to the liturgical calendar, the Universal Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. Let us pray and thank God for choosing Mary, among all women to be the holy mother of His Son. Since the beginning of Christianity, the Virgin Mary has been venerated as the Theotokos, a Greek title which means, 'Mother of God.' During the fourth century, Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, contested this Marian title, insisting that Mary should be called Christotokos or "Mother of Christ" and not the "Mother of God." In 431, the Council of Ephesus solemnly declared that Mary, being the mother of Jesus, who is God, could be called, "Mother of God." At the end of the Council, the people carried the bishops in triumph throughout the city. Pope Sixtus iii, as the memorial of that event, built the basilica of saint Mary Major in

Rome. (This quote was taken from; My first book of Saints, page 6).

To begin this New Year 2025, let us together with the Universal Church celebrate the solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. In this Feast, we are celebrating the Motherhood of Mary. A humble young Virgin from a simple village of Nazareth, in Judea who received a message from God through Angel Gabriel announcing to her that she would be the Mother of God. Mary was deeply trouble by the angel's message, and wondered what his words meant. "I am a virgin.... How can this be?" Lk 1: 34 The angel said "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest on you. For this reason, the holy child will be called the son of God." Lk 1: 35. As the angel and Mary continue to converse, .....

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**BISHOPS PASTORAL MESSAGE CONTINUE.**

*BP message cont..*

.....at last, she humbly, said, "I am the Lord's servant, may it happen to me as you have said." Lk 1; 38. The very moment Mary said "YES" there is a great Rejoicing in Heaven. This is the beginning of Salvation History of humanity and of all God's creation. It all began in the Holy Virgin Womb of Mary who was engaged to a man named Joseph.

To be a mother is a vocation, and not a profession. The Feast of Mary, the Holy Mother of God that we celebrate on the 1st of January 2025, was a great Feast. It teaches us so many good things and above all, it teaches us the importance of the role of a mother in our families, communities, parishes, and diocese. Mary, the holy mother of God and our mother too, is a model for all mothers in all works of life, to follow. Beloved Mothers, following Mary the mother of God as your model, many blessings will come your way, and your families will be protected and guided from all dangers and snares of life. Above all, Mary will be your only companion on the journey in your vocation as a mother. Reflecting on the life of Mary as the mother of God, it is important to take note that before she was conceived and gave birth to her first born son Jesus, she was the only woman on this planet earth, God has chosen and prepared in a very special way, conceived without sin to be the holy mother of His Son, Jesus. Beloved mothers, you too, God has chosen and prepared you together

with your husband to be a mother and father of God's image, in your family. As co-creators with God, you have been given the responsibility to make choice and to have children, to fulfil God's command to our first parents in Faith, Adam and Eve: "Be fruitful and multiply...." Gen: 1: 28

Therefore, each one of us, with all our hearts should give thanks to God for the great gift of our parents. Our mothers and fathers are special and important people in our lives. If your parents are still living, care for them, look after them and do what you can do to show that you love them. In a very special way, You must remember, that, as from Womb to Tomb, your mother loved you so much and her love for you will never end until death. Every single day, as a mother she always making sure that something is on the table for you to eat, for breakfast, lunch and dinner and also other basic needs. To conclude this short reflection, as we began this new year 2025, dear beloved children of God's Family, let us journey together with one another and above all with our beloved Mary, the Holy Mother of God, humbly asking her to PRAY FOR OUR DIOCESE OF GIZO. May the Blessing of God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you all. Go forth, journeying in the PEACE of CHRIST.

**Your Servant Bishop, Peter HOUHOU**

**Bishop's Visit Shows some Significance.**

Bishop's pastoral visit to Voruvoru Parish highlighted several important events that took place there from 8th to 11th December 2024.

During his visit, he was warmly welcomed to Sariana village before proceeding to Kandova village the next day. On the following day, he visited Tutu village, with his final destination being Voruvoru Parish Mission Station on 11 December said the parish priest, Fr. Thomas.

His pastoral visit was colorful and enjoyable for the parishioners, who flocked to witness additional blessings for the communities as our bishop continued his pastoral visit.

Highlight of the visit was the Sacrament of Confirmations, where about 100 candidates received the fire of faith (Sacrament of Confirmation), while 10 received their first Holy Communion at Tutu village.

It was a well-prepared program, with special emphasis on Bishop Peter's visits to these communities, giving everyone the opportunity to feel the presence of the Lord in the church.

In addition, the Bishop's pastoral journey reached isolated communities as far as Choiseul in the northeast, where he blessed elderly people and children and visited and met with people, including those with disabilities.



**VATICAN NEWS**



**VATICAN NEWS**

**Pope Francis marks Immaculate Conception in Rome with prayer, surprise art visit.**

By AC Wimmer

CNA Newsroom, Dec 8, 2024 / 15:33 pm



Pope Francis marked the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception with a spiritual journey across Rome on

Sunday, beginning at the Basilica of St. Mary Major and continuing to the Spanish Steps — where he reminded the faithful that “the true jubilee is inside” — before making an unexpected visit to a painting particularly dear to his heart.

Beginning his Marian devotions at Rome’s most important Marian basilica, the pope prayed before the ancient icon “Salus Populi Romani” (“Protectress of the Roman People”), echoing his cherished tradition of visiting this beloved image before and after his international trips.

Despite cold and rainy weather, thousands of faithful gathered in Rome’s historic center as the pope continued the long-standing papal tradition of paying homage to the Immaculate Conception at the foot of the Marian column near the Spanish Steps.

The statue of the Immaculate Conception, which sits atop a 39.4-foot-high column, was dedicated on Dec. 8, 1857, shortly after the Church proclaimed the doctrine of Mary’s Immaculate Conception. Since the 1950s, beginning with Pope Pius XII in 1953, it has been customary for popes to venerate the statue for the feast day.

At 7 a.m., Rome’s firefighters had continued their own decades-old tradition, ascending to the top of the statue to place a wreath of flowers on the Virgin’s arm. The gesture honors their 220 colleagues who participated in the monument’s inauguration over 166 years ago.

In his prayer at the Spanish Steps, Francis highlighted the significance of Rome’s preparation for the upcoming 2025 Jubilee Year, which he will inaugurate this Christmas Eve by opening the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica.

**Pope Francis Opens Holy Door Inaugurating 2025 Jubilee.**



As Pope Francis opened the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica, the evening of 24 December 2024, he ushered in the widely-anticipated 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope. With the liturgical

gesture of the Door's opening at the start of the Christmas Mass during the Night, as explained in the papal bull for the Jubilee *Spes non confundit*, the Pope inaugurated the Ordinary Jubilee, a historic event taking place every 25 years.

The Ordinary Jubilee will conclude with the closing of the same Holy Door on 6 January 2026, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.

**The significance of the Holy Door.**

The Holy Door is deemed 'Holy' since it calls all those who enter through it to walk in holiness of life. In the footsteps of the Pope, during the singing of the Jubilee hymn, representatives of the entire People of God crossed its threshold, as a prelude to the countless pilgrims of hope from every country and language who will visit St. Peter's Basilica and celebrate the mysteries of salvation during the Holy Year.

The origin of the custom goes back to Pope Martin V who, for the Extraordinary Jubilee of 1423, opened a Holy Door to enter the Lateran Basilica. In St. Peter's, it was first used for the Jubilee of 1450.

Its location, the rear wall of the chapel dedicated by Pope John VII to the Mother of God, corresponds to a place where it is found today. Pope Alexander VI, in 1500, endowed this symbol of the opening of the Jubilee with a ritual that remained virtually unchanged over the centuries, until the turn of the millennium, when in the year 2000, the removal of the former brick wall was replaced by the ceremonial opening of the bronze Door already in 1983.

The last opening of the Holy Door for an Ordinary Jubilee was when Pope St. John Paul II had done so in the Year 2000. Pope Francis opened the Holy Door in 2015 for his 2016 Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.

**SACRED HEART PARISH NEWS IN BITS****More Children Participate, Christmas Drama, Wagina.**

Sacred Heart Parish in Wagina staged an important Christmas drama about the birth of Jesus. The three separate Christmas night events meant a lot to everyone as children portrayed what happened 2000 years ago.

They were grouped according to age groups from PPY, primary, and intermediate levels, and around 400 of them were involved in making the Christmas celebration vibrant and beautiful.

**15 Receive Sacrament of Confirmation in Wagina.**

15 candidates for the sacrament of confirmation received their confirmation rites as the community awaited the Christmas in Wagina on Sunday, December 22.

They were witnessed by dozens of faithful as the bishop of the Diocese of Gizo, Bishop Peter Houhou consecrated them.

Before these children are ignited by the fire of faith, Bishop Peter emphasized his message on the gift they have received.

**Bishop Peter Visit makes Milestone.**

Bishop Peter Houhou's visit to Sacred Heart parish has made a momentous step to have him celebrate Christmas at the parish level.

"We are happy to have the first Bishop to celebrate Christmas with us and this is a historic event that is happening in our parish". This was one of the speeches of a church leader who warmly welcomed him during his 10-day Christmas pastoral visit from 21st to 30th December.

Bishops involvement in their pastoral programs before, during and after Christmas highlighted some of the important activities where everyone was involved in celebrating.

On Sunday 22nd, 15 candidates received their sacrament of confirmation and Bishop Peter emphasized his message on the gift of the Holy Spirit. The next day, he visited a church on one of the surrounding islands.

He celebrated Christmas Eve Mass on the 24th December commemorating the birth of Jesus. The next day, Christmas Day, he reminded everyone how God became man through the Incarnation, the birth of Jesus.

Bishop Peter Houhou continued to be involved in other activities until he celebrated Children's Day on Saturday 28th and witnessed talented performances by the youths and the little ones.

On Sunday 30th, the feast of the Holy Family, he celebrated a special Mass for couples to renew their relationship as spouses.

During the farewell celebration from afternoon until night, about 400 children from PPY, primary and secondary schools performed a show of great talent and creativity to expressing their performances in a more meaningful and significant way for all.



**VORUVORU NEWS IN BITS**

**33 Receive Confirmation, 10 for Holy Communion.**



Thirty-three candidates received their Sacrament of Confirmation on December 10th 2024 during the bishop's visit to the Tutu zone, and 10 candidates received their first Holy Communion.

Their well-prepared program has highlighted Bishop Peter's visitation to their host venue Tutu, giving them a chance to experience the Lord's presence with their bishop and among their zone.

While there, the bishop commissioned an extraordinary Eucharistic minister, a catechist, and a prayer leader.

**At Katazi 43 Receive the Fire of Faith.**



At Katazi zone, 43 candidates received their Sacrament of Confirmation at their host community of Kadova on the 9th of December 2024.

This was a big privilege for these candidates to be confirmed to have the fire of faith for the bishop's visit to their isolated communities. There they were nourished by the bishop's homily and wit-

nessed their loved ones receive their Sacrament, and God's Blessing upon their zone.

Their program became a success and they thanked Bishop Peter for his visit.

**Teqavole Welcome Bishop Visit to Sariana Zone.**



The vice chairperson for Sariana zone welcomed the bishop to their area to commence his pastoral tour to Voruvoru parish on the 8th of December 2024.



Speaking at their host community in Sariana, Peter Teqavole welcomed the bishop and his companions, Fr. Frank Soloko, their PP Fr. Thomas Pata, their parish coordinator Paul Kae, the seminarians and the come and see boys. He said that they had longed and waited for this special day to come.

Teqavole said that he was very pleased with bishop's acceptance with his presence among their community, and stated that other Christian religious also came to witness this mission of faith.

On behalf of his zone, he expressed that the bishop's pastoral visit would be a great record, and stated that he knew their zone is looking forward to work in collaboration with other zones and the bishop.

HEALTH TIPS AND THE COMING EVENTS

ABDOMINAL PAIN (Bele Soa)

continue from last issue

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- Heart attack
- Injury
- Intestinal obstruction — when something blocks food or liquid from moving through the small or large intestine.
- Intussusception (in children)
- Kidney infection (also called pyelonephritis)
- Kidney stones (Hard buildups of minerals and salt that form inside the kidneys.)
- Liver abscess, a pus-filled pocket in the liver.
- Mesenteric ischemia (decreased blood flow to the intestines)
- Mesenteric lymphadenitis (swollen lymph nodes in the folds of membrane that hold the abdominal organs in place)
- Mesenteric thrombosis, a blood clot in a vein carrying blood away from your intestines.
- Pancreatitis
- Pericarditis (inflammation of the tissue around the heart)
- Peritonitis (infection of the abdominal lining)
- Pleurisy (inflammation of the membrane surrounding the lungs)
- Pneumonia
- Pulmonary infarction, which is loss of blood flow to the lungs.
- Ruptured spleen

- Salpingitis, which is inflammation of the fallopian tubes.
- Sclerosing mesenteritis
- Shingles
- Spleen infection
- Splenic abscess, which is a pus-filled pocket in the spleen.
- Torn colon.
- Urinary tract infection (UTI)
- Viral gastroenteritis (stomach flu)

**iCliniq** The Virtual Hospital

**Types of Female Abdominal Pain**

Right-sided Abdominal Pain	Upper Abdominal Pain
<p><b>Causes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gallstones</li> <li>Appendicitis</li> </ul> <p><b>Symptoms:</b> Feeling sick, Loss of appetite, Shivers and sweat, Diarrhea</p>	<p><b>Causes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to byproducts of digestive process</li> </ul> <p><b>Symptoms:</b> Bloating, Breathlessness, Sweating, Heartburn, Loss of appetite, Nausea</p>
Lower Abdominal Pain	Left-sided Abdominal Pain
<p><b>Causes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Menstrual cycle</li> <li>Constipation &amp; Urinary tract infection</li> </ul> <p><b>Symptoms:</b> Cramping, Diarrhea, Backache, Bloating, Unusual discharge, Painful urination, Painful sex</p>	<p><b>Causes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kidney stone or infection</li> <li>Diverticulitis (Constant severe abdominal pain, Fever, Blood in stool)</li> </ul> <p><b>Symptoms:</b> Pain in the abdomen, back</p>

*To be continue next issue*

▪ **UPCOMING FEAST DAYS FOR FEBRUARY 2025** ▪

**THE FEASZT OF PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD** (2nd Sunday February)



The Presentation of the Lord is an early episode in the life of Jesus Christ, describing his presentation at the Temple in Jerusalem. It is celebrated by many churches 40 days after Christmas on Candlemas, or the "Feast of the Presentation of Jesus"