



Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands



National Synthesis

1. **The Diocesan Phase:** The Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (PNGSI) comprises of 19 Dioceses in PNG and 3 Dioceses in the Solomon Islands. Most of the dioceses took the opportunity to hold the “Diocesan Synod”; some dioceses had “Diocesan Assembly” and some dioceses combined with other “Diocesan Celebration and Synodal Process”.



1.1 Important Milestone: Many of the aspects of the Synodal Process are already practiced in PNGSI with regard to: Communion, Participation and Mission. Diocese of Mendi Reported, “ For many years now both in the wider Church but also in the Diocese of Mendi there is a famous and favorite refrain: “Yumi yet i Sios!” WE ARE (THE) CHURCH! That “WE” includes everybody: men, women, youth, children, ordained ministers, laity, rich, poor, abled and disabled. There is a growing sense of this unity in the various calls and efforts at self-reliance. When everyone takes ownership of the church and expresses this investment by their willingness to generously share their time, talent and treasure then this communion will be strong and true.



The ultimate goal of our journeying together is heaven. Heaven is the end of our journey but journeying together here and now (guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit) is our mission and it is the only way of reaching our true goal: “We are Church, alive in Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life!”

Archdiocese of Madang after their Synod, reported: “The Spirit of Unity in collaboration between clergy and laity and their specific responsibilities demonstrates who we are as Church”.

2. **Conference Phase:** The culmination of the Synodal Process from the Dioceses was the “General Assembly of the Catholic Church of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands” held in Mingende, Simbu, Diocese of Kundiawa on 21-26 April 2022. Participants from the three dioceses of SI could not attend the General Assembly due to the Covid – 19 restrictions. There were 111 participants representing 19 dioceses. There were 17 Bishops, 27 Priests, 19 Sisters, 1 Brother and 24 Lay people. Besides the participants, the Catholic Faithful of the Diocese of Kundiawa participated the Liturgical celebrations.



The threefold purpose of the General Assembly was:

- Celebrate the Catholic Faith by listening to the stories of exemplary faith in the lives of Lay People in different dioceses.
- Propose a 5 year-Conference Pastoral Plan
- Share the experiences of journeying together (Synodality).

The Six-day General Assembly of the Catholic Church in Mingende was an experience of Synodality: Communion, Participation and Mission. The participants prayed together; ate together and shared their views on Synodality with genuine interest in the “Journeying together”.

3. **The fruits of the Synodal Process in PNGSI:** During the General Assembly, participants of 19 dioceses shared two stories each of Lay people who have died but their lives are an inspiration. They are of exemplary faith and holiness.

One such story is of Ms. Veronica Delna from the Archdiocese of Mt. Hagen: Her faithful devotion to her Catholic faith in Christ Jesus has influenced others in pursuing or committing to that same cause. Her family members, now in the third generation and all continue to live and practice the Catholic Faith. From other people of Kimil area also mentioned that, her devoted life as a Catholic contributed meaningfully, not only her immediate family but many people have shaped and changed the course of history over the many years. She is known to many people in Kimil, Banz in the now Jiwaka Province and Dei District of Western Highlands Province”.

Another story of exemplary holiness: “The life of Helen Vanuninoer Tomatono can simply be seen as not an impeccable one but one which was accompanied with joys, pain, perseverance, and prayer. She truly lived a life of faithfulness by being the salt and light amidst these various aspects of life she was going through”.



4. **Synodality is lived:** After the six-day General Assembly of the Catholic Church in Mingende, the Catholic Bishops of PNG gathered together in Mt. Hagen for their Annual General Meeting (AGM). During this meeting, they discussed the Synodality:

Communion, Participation and Mission. Most of the Bishops agreed that Synodality is being lived and put into practice in the Catholic Church in PNGSI.



- 5. Conference Pastoral Plan:** One of the fruits of the Synodal Process is that of the Conference Pastoral Plan. In the 1990s, there was a call for a National Pastoral Plan (NPP) from different dioceses of PNG. So there was a General Assembly of the Catholic Church, beginning in Banz in 2002 and closing in Rabaul in 2004. This first Assembly proposed a National Pastoral Plan for PNG 2006-2010 with the theme, “We are Church Alive in Christ”

There was then a Second General Assembly, this time including Solomon Islands, held at the Divine University from November 5-11, 2013. That gave birth to the Conference Pastoral Plan (CPP1) of the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (2015-2020) with the theme: “Go tell Everyone”.

The Evaluation of the Conference Pastoral Plan (CPP1) was carried out in different groups and different dioceses. These evaluations were presented at the third Assembly of the Catholic Church, which was held 21 – 26 April 2022 in Mingende, Kundiawa Diocese. The theme was “Salt and Light” (Mt 5:13-16).

One group in Lae Diocese commented about the Synodality in their parish: “In our parish pastoral council meeting, we see that we take the opinion/ suggestion of all the people and also of woman before taking decision which will affect the life of all people in our parish”. Another parish commented: “When we want to do anything in our parish, we meet together, take the suggestions of everyone in the community, decide together and carry out the decisions together.

The participants went into groups and discussed a possible Conference Pastoral Plan2 (CPP2). The draft copy of CPP2 was given to a “Formulation Committee”. After three months of hard work, they presented the CPP2 to the Bishops for endorsement. The following is the CPP2 for Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

6. Conference Pastoral Plan 2:

1. The Conference Pastoral Plan 2022 – 2027

1.1. Vision

We, the Catholic Church in PNGSI are alive in Christ, witnessing the love of God in synodality as **Salt** and **Light** in the world.

1.2. Mission

Called by the Father, sent by Jesus, and moved by the Holy Spirit, we strive to promote God's Kingdom by:

- 1.2.1. proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ in the spiritual, social, political and economic life of the people of PNGSI,
- 1.2.2. fostering growth in holiness for all,
- 1.2.3. working for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, and
- 1.2.4. encouraging fuller participation in the mission of the Church and in the society so as to transform the world through the love of Christ in communion, participation and mission.

1.3. Aim

By the end of 2027, the Catholics of PNGSI and people of goodwill will have lived a life of communion, participation and mission as salt of the earth and light of the world (Mt 5:13-16) in our families, Basic Christian Communities, parishes, dioceses, and will have experienced Jesus Christ through the Sacraments, the Word of God, catechesis and Catholic social teachings.

2. Pillar One: We are the Church Sanctifying in Synodality

We are the Church sanctifying by living and promoting the lived spirituality of communion as the way of life of the church. The call for holiness comes from our baptismal dignity "Be holy as my Heavenly Father is holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

2.1. Defining Statements – In the Light of Scripture and the Teaching of the Church

"Before the world was made, He chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in God's presence (Eph.1:4).

We are called to holiness (Lev. 19:2, 1Pt.1:16) by the Holy Trinity, through the spirituality of communion as the way of living in the Church.

In Mt. 5:8 Jesus says, "Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God." And St Paul prays for the Thessalonians (1Thes.5:23 -24), "May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul, and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and He will not fail you."

In Jn. 2:13 – 16 we read that Jesus chased the merchants and said, "Take all this away and stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!" At which His disciples recalled the words of the Scripture: Zeal for your house consumes me like a fire.

The primary vocation of a person is a call to Holiness (*Gaudete et Exultate - par.10*).

Let us think of our body, the Church, the temple of Holy Spirit, and cleanse ourselves to be pure and holy (1Cor 6:19).

2.2. Goal: Encountering the Person of Jesus Christ in the Church

2.2.1. Objective One: The Liturgy and the Sacraments lead us to encounter the Person of Jesus Christ



2.2.1.1. Strategies

- 2.2.1.1.1. Intensify celebration and participation in the Liturgy of the Eucharist in parishes.
- 2.2.1.1.2. Promote vocations to Holy Orders and the consecrated religious life in parishes.
- 2.2.1.1.3. Promote the Sacrament of Matrimony in parishes.
- 2.2.1.1.4. Provide in-depth formation on the Sacraments.
- 2.2.1.1.5. Encourage the regular reception of the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.
- 2.2.1.1.6. Organize the regular celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation in parishes.
- 2.2.1.1.7. Make available regular parish celebration of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.
- 2.2.1.1.8. Schedule regular and consistent Eucharistic adoration and benediction.

2.2.2. Objective Two: Growth in faith through a variety of ministry programs

2.2.2.1. Strategies

- 2.2.2.1.1. Engage in diocesan and parish ministry retreats.
- 2.2.2.1.2. Promote spiritual and material initiatives in parishes.
- 2.2.2.1.3. Revive Charismatic Renewal programs in dioceses.
- 2.2.2.1.4. Establish or revive and encourage Men's (Papa) Group ministry.
- 2.2.2.1.5. Strengthen National Catholic Men's Conference.
- 2.2.2.1.6. Establish, encourage and strengthen Women's Groups.
- 2.2.2.1.7. Initiate youth mentoring programs.

- 2.2.2.1.8. Establish vibrant Sunday Schools in parishes.
- 2.2.2.1.9. Establish children’s ministry in parishes.
- 2.2.2.1.10. Organize and provide formation and other programs for Altar servers.

2.2.3.Objective Three: Support Lay Devotional Groups and programs

2.2.3.1. Strategies

- 2.2.3.1.1. Develop Policy and Statutes for all lay devotional groups and lay associations.
- 2.2.3.1.2. Create Profile and Directory (database) of all ministries and ministers.
- 2.2.3.1.3. Organize Eucharistic celebrations of devotional groups and lay associations.
- 2.2.3.1.4. Promote Missionary Childhood (Holy Childhood) ministry in the Catholic schools and parishes.
- 2.2.3.1.5. Appoint priest or consecrated religious as spiritual director of all lay associations and devotional groups, as called for by their respective statutes.

2.2.4.Objective Four: Families are an experience of the Presence of Jesus Christ

2.2.4.1. Strategies

- 2.2.4.1.1. Develop and conduct family life course for parents and children
- 2.2.4.1.2. Promote family prayer, Bible study and reflection in families.
- 2.2.4.1.3. Enrichment of family life through retreats.
- 2.2.4.1.4. Provide guidance and pastoral care for single parents, and additionally, canonical and pastoral assistance to those with marriage difficulties and those in irregular marriages.

2.2.5.Objective Five: Faith Formation of young Catholics

2.2.5.1. Strategies

- 2.2.5.1.1. Develop a school curriculum for the students at all levels.
- 2.2.5.1.2. Develop formation programs for youth groups/ affiliated youth groups for students and out of school children (school leavers).

3. Pillar Two: We are the Church Proclaiming in Synodality

We are the Church proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in new and creative ways.

3.1. Defining Statements – In the Light of Scripture and the Teaching of the Church

“Go, therefore, and make disciples from all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to fulfill all that I have commanded you. I am with you always until the end of this world” (Mt.28: 19 – 20).

Jesus in Lk 4: 18 – 19 says, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and sight to the blind; to free the oppressed and to announce the Lord’s year of mercy.”

Pope Francis says “the joy of the gospel, springs forth from the encounter with Jesus. We must not hold back on the fear of making mistakes and our fear of following new paths”- *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Therefore, we continue to go forth and preach the Gospel. (Mk16:15). Herein, we proclaim through evangelization and catechesis to deepen our personal and communal faith.

3.2. **Goal:** To Give Authentic Witness of the Love and Light of Christ to all.

3.2.1. **Objective One:** Lay people formed as teachers of the faith



3.2.1.1. **Strategies**

- 3.2.1.1.1. Invite lay people for catechism and Biblical training courses.
- 3.2.1.1.2. Identify lay people for theology and spirituality training.

3.2.2. **Objective Two:** Formation and sending of Catholic evangelists

3.2.2.1. **Strategies**

- 3.2.2.1.1. Identify and train Catholic evangelists both lay and ordained.
- 3.2.2.1.2. Train and guide Catholic street preachers within dioceses.
- 3.2.2.1.3. Create a Ministry of Preaching within dioceses.
- 3.2.2.1.4. The Commission of Catholic New Evangelization will provide guidance to all efforts of evangelization.

3.2.3. **Objective Three:** Children and Youth are formed and strengthened to participate in the New Evangelization.

3.2.3.1. **Strategies**

- 3.2.3.1.1. Engage parents in forming and training children in their Catholic faith.
- 3.2.3.1.2. Develop creative ways of engaging children in the parishes and schools.
- 3.2.3.1.3. Form and train students in the Catholic faith in schools and parishes.
- 3.2.3.1.4. Create suitable programs to involve the youth in parish communities.

3.2.4. **Objective Four:** Proclamation of Jesus Christ who died, rose again and is alive in the Church.

3.2.4.1. Strategies

- 3.2.4.1.1. Before evangelizing others, the new evangelizers must experience the person of Jesus.
- 3.2.4.1.2. Identify and support trainers for New Evangelization and Kerygma courses.
- 3.2.4.1.3. Develop and implement short Kerygma formation programs to strengthen the faith of the people in parish groups and communities.
- 3.2.4.1.4. The diocese and parishes should engage trained leaders in their structures and programs.

3.2.5. **Objective Five:** Create more opportunities for ecumenical dialogue

3.2.5.1. Strategies

- 3.2.5.1.1. Develop programs to promote ecumenism in the dioceses and the parishes.
- 3.2.5.1.2. Partner with people-of-goodwill from other churches and religions for Integral Human Development (IHD).

4. Pillar Three: We are the Church Serving in Synodality

We are the Church carrying forth the ministry of charity of Jesus Christ in service to all, especially those who are most in need.



4.1. Defining Statements – In the Light of Scripture and the Teaching of the Church

Now you are the body of Christ and each of you is a member of it (1 Cor. 12:27).

In Lk. 22:27 Jesus says, “Here am I among you as one who serves” And again, “Let the

greatest among you be the servant of all (Mt 23:11)". St Peter in 1Pt.4:10 says, "Each one of you has received a special grace, so like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others."

St Paul continues encouraging us in 1Cor.12:4 – 11 when he says: "There is a diversity of gifts, but the Spirit is the same. There is a diversity of ministries, but the Lord is the same. There is diversity of works, but the same God works in all."

All gifts must be used for the good of the whole community.

4.2. **Goal:** To develop, promote and defend the integral human person.

4.2.1. **Objective One:** All commissions of the CBC and all dioceses have a five year Strategic (or Pastoral) Plan.

4.2.2. **Objective Two:** All commissions of the CBC and all dioceses have integrated the CPP2 in the elaboration and implementation of their five year Strategic (or Pastoral) Plan.

4.2.3. **Objective Three:** The contract of all the commission secretaries includes the phrase: "Know, familiarize yourself with and implement the Conference Pastoral Plan.

4.2.4. **Objective Four:** In Appendix Three you will find brief descriptions of the Commissions of the CBC and how they fit into the Conference Pastoral Plan.

5. CONCLUSION

In our planning through our communal discernment, we collectively have acknowledged the signs of growth as well as the challenges that present themselves to the Church in PNGSI. Prompted by a dynamic approach through our collaboration and openness, we commit ourselves again to face these challenges through the spirit of synodality. We encourage fuller participation by tapping the richness of the gifts and talents of the Catholic faithful in order to enable them to recognize themselves as active members of the Church *Alive in Christ*'. Let us journey together with trust and confidence in Jesus Christ our Lord in the spirit of communion towards our goals. Let us be salt of the earth and light of the world and continue to bear witness to gospel values in our spiritual, social, political and economic life.

May Mary, Mother of the Church and Star of the New Evangelization, pray for us!
