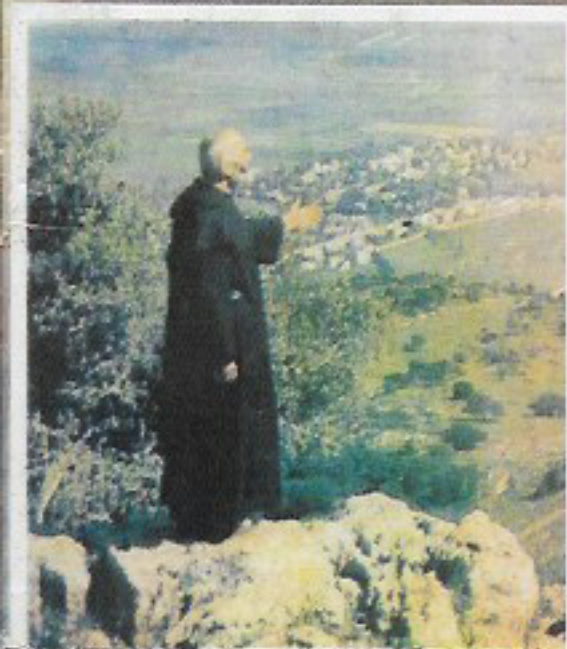


Grade 9 Religious Education

BOOK 1

CHURCH HISTORY



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CHURCH HISTORY

This book is the first of a series of four books which make up the Religious Education Programme for Grade 9.

Nilai Ustat: Fr. Anthony Arthur MSC, S.T.L., M.A.

Inprimatur: Rev. Bishop Gerard J. Deschamps SMM, L.E.D., M.A. (LIT), L.C.L.

Prepared by: Commission for Christian Education in Secondary Schools
Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

Writing and Layout: Sr Elizabeth Taylor OLSH. (Much of this writing has been adapted from previous
RE books for PNG schools edited by Sr. Joan Walker OLSH)

Photo Credits: Word Publishing: Fr. Tom Tokaliu
From cover and pages 33, 34

Published by: Commission for Christian Education
Goroka, P.O. Box 127, Papua New Guinea

1999

Printed by: Wirui Press, Wewak, PNG

* This publication was made possible through generous donations from
JUNGSCHAR - Austria, MISSIO - Germany and Austria, SVD - Holland,
and many private benefactors.

Our special thanks go to those who have given advice and support during the course of the production.
God's blessing be with them all.

Sr Ehrentrude Pretzl, SSsS, Coordinator

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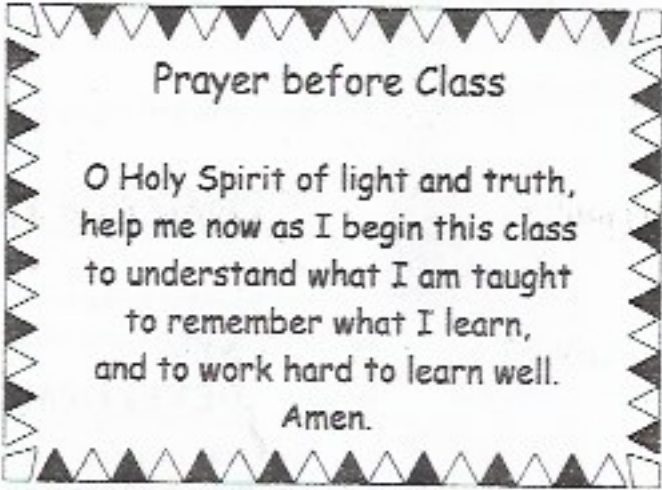
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P.N.G. AND S.I.



Prayer before Class

O Holy Spirit of light and truth,
help me now as I begin this class
to understand what I am taught
to remember what I learn,
and to work hard to learn well.

Amen.

To the student:

Your exercise book is a companion to this book. By writing down your thoughts, sharing them with your teacher and with others, you will learn far more about yourself and God's action in your life, than by using this book by itself.

And after all, isn't this what life is for?

There are many questions that come to our mind when we think about the history of the Church.. May you discover more and more, the love of Father, Son and Spirit, their dwelling place within you, and their plan for your life and for the world, as you journey through your religion programme this year.

Topic One

Times of Trial

All of us know about the beginning of the Church, when the Holy Spirit was sent into the world, giving new life and new courage to the Apostles.



We probably even know about people who lived in the time of the Apostles, such as Saul and Stephen.

Discuss with your friend, something you know about Saul or Stephen.

In this book we are going to look at the story or history of the Church since the Apostles, all the way to our own country and our own day.

Church history is the story of ordinary people who loved Jesus. They had all the problems of growing up, of learning to work with others as we have. It is the story of people who felt just like we do when faced with difficulties or with events that changed their lives. Some of these people influenced the world for good and became extraordinary because of their love for Jesus and their desire to be true to the way Jesus asks us to live.

When we study Church history, the very word 'history' takes a new meaning. It becomes 'his story' - the story of Jesus and of his promise to be with us.

Church history however, cannot be separated from the general history of the world. In talking about any particular time of Church history, we also have to talk about the political, social and economic problems of that time as well. And although we will see different problems from age to age, we will also see that often the causes of the problems are the same: jealousy, pride, greed, the spirit of evil working against God's Holy Spirit. Many times in fact, people have tried to destroy the work Jesus began and to wipe out his name from the earth. But they have never succeeded.

Our story is a very interesting story. There are times when we are filled with pride at the heroic deeds of people, and times when we are sad at the sinfulness of those claiming to follow Jesus. It is a story of intermittent persecution as Jesus foretold in the Gospel.

Look up the word intermittent in your dictionary. What does it mean?

In this book, we are going to look at our history through the stories of people who lived during the time we are looking at. When we learn about these people, we will see the political and social problems of their time and also understand the kind of problems the Church faced.

St. Polycarp

During the first 300 years, Christianity was not a legal religion. Persecution came at the orders of the Roman Emperors. At this time, many Christians had to give their lives for what they believed. One of these people was Polycarp.

He was born in Asia Minor in the year 69. Little is known of his early life. Tradition tells us that he was sold as a slave to a lady called Callisto. She brought him up as her son, and when she died she left him all her money.

Callisto and Polycarp lived in Ephesus, which was the main port of Asia.

At Ephesus they heard the message of Jesus, and became Christians.

They heard about Jesus from the Apostle John, who spent his last years in the city of Ephesus. John would sit for hours telling stories of the days he spent with Jesus and of the teachings of Jesus. Polycarp was among those who listened to this Apostle. He sat and listened to John and was deeply impressed.

Polycarp gave away all the money he had received from Callisto and worked to help his community become a real Christian community. After the death of John, he carried on the spreading and the living of the Good News. Everyone loved him. When the early Christians asked: What did Jesus look like? What did he say about this? What did he do in this case? they would say:

'Let us go and ask Polycarp'.

At that time the Romans were the Administrators of Asia Minor. The Romans believed their gods had given them their great Empire and the peace and riches they enjoyed. To keep these blessings they worshipped their gods faithfully.

It was the duty of the government to see that the people did this, for if the gods were neglected, they believed war, poverty and other troubles would come.

In the same way, many of our people believe if the spirits are neglected, bad things will happen. For example they make special actions or say certain words to please the spirits before planting a garden, or harvesting the first fruits. This is so the harvest will be good and not spoilt.

When the people became Christians, they said they worshipped the unseen and only God in a different way. Because the Romans couldn't understand this, they said the Christians were atheists who did not believe in a god. This was a serious crime against the state of Rome.

Another reason why the Emperors were angry with the Christians was that they would not take part in the worship of the Emperor. The Christians believed there was only one God, so they could not worship the Emperor as a god.

When Polycarp was an old man of 86, a big crowd came to Smyrna for a games festival. One of the events was for Christians to be brought before the crowd and asked to burn incense in honour of the Emperor. If they refused they were thrown to the lions to be killed and eaten.



A Roman shrine

The crowd enjoyed this game. They shouted, 'Away with the Atheists! Go and find Polycarp! He is the leader of these Christians!' Some people in the crowd realized what was going to happen and ran to tell Polycarp to escape. They made him move from house to house. The soldiers however, made two slaves talk and tell them where the people were hiding Polycarp.

When Polycarp's hiding place was discovered, he came down and talked to the soldiers and ordered food for them. He asked them to give him an hour to pray. He prayed and prayed and the soldiers listened. As they watched, they were sorry that they had come after so old and so holy a man.

Polycarp was taken to the games ground where the crowds were. As he stood before the Governor, Quadrates, he was asked to burn incense to the Emperor and to say 'Away with the Atheists'.

Polycarp pointed to all the rows of people who had come to watch the Christians die, and said: 'Away with the Atheists'!

Of course this made the crowd very angry!



The governor said 'Remember how old you are. Swear the oath and curse Christ. It will not hurt you to say 'Caesar is Lord' and to burn incense to the Emperor. Save your life!'

There was a great silence in the crowd as they waited for Polycarp's answer.

Polycarp looked up at the governor and raised his hand. He said 'For 86 years I have served Jesus and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me? You know that I am a Christian and can never say Caesar is God.'

The governor still tried to reason with Polycarp. He said: 'Listen to those people calling for your death. I have wild animals. I will throw you to them if you do not repent.'

Polycarp said 'Send for them'.

So the governor sent his messenger around the grounds calling to the people 'Polycarp says he is a Christian.'

The people answered, 'This is the teacher of Asia. He is the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods. He teaches many not to sacrifice or to worship the gods. *Burn him alive.*'

Then the people took the law into their own hands. They collected wood and seizing Polycarp they began to tie him to a post.

He said: 'Don't tie me up. I die freely. I die because I believe. I am happy to do so.'

This made the crowd very angry. They ran with torches to light the fire. Polycarp was burnt to death. He died rather than deny his belief in Jesus.

Many others also died rather than deny the belief which the Good News gave them. Many who saw them die asked about the Good News and learned to believe in God and in Jesus whom God sent to live with us.

People asked 'What makes these Christians love one another? Why aren't they jealous? Why don't they payback?' Persecutions did not even frighten them and often as they died they sang, for their hope was great. One emperor was cross that the Christians died singing and with a smile on their faces. He asked angrily 'Why aren't they afraid to die?'

These stories tell us that Christian witness was one of the first means of spreading the Good News and a very important means. It is still important today.

Act out the story of Polycarp in your class.

Think of a time you have been influenced by seeing someone do something good.
Write your story in your book.



Polycarp refuses to be tied

At last, an old servant came to the Prefect and said: *'I think that Agnes is a Christian!'*

When the Prefect heard this, he was very angry. He, like most Romans, would have liked to get rid of all Christians, because they would not worship the Roman gods. The Prefect went to see Agnes' parents.

'Your daughter is to marry my son' he announced. 'If she refuses then she will be put to death. You know the law about Christians.'

Agnes' parents were terrified. As soon as the Prefect had left, they called Agnes to them.

'The Prefect knows that you are a Christian. If you do not marry Procop, you will be put to death. Go to the catacombs and hide there; or else marry Procop, and live.'

At this time, many Christians were using the catacombs for gathering to hear the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist. (The catacombs were places where people buried their dead, and the Christians loved to gather around the tombs of the martyrs.) They were also good hiding places.

'Don't worry,' replied Agnes. 'I am not afraid. I will not marry Procop, neither will I run away and hide. I shall remain faithful to my Saviour and he will help me with the grace I need.' Within a few days, the soldiers came, armed with spears and swords, and they took Agnes away from her parents.

The next morning, when the streets of Rome were crowded with people, Agnes was roughly pulled to her feet, and led out into the road outside the prison. Laughing and swearing, the prison guards tore the clothes from her body and forced Agnes to walk along the public highway.

With her head held high and her lips moving in prayer, she walked slowly along the road. The people stared to see so young and beautiful a girl being humiliated and shamed.

When Agnes arrived at the arena, the people expected her to be afraid. Instead she was smiling and at peace. Full of anger, the Prefect shouted at Agnes to renounce Jesus and to offer sacrifices to the pagan gods.

Calmly, she made the sign of the Cross, and replied, 'You may kill me, but you cannot shame me. I have consecrated myself to Jesus Christ.' As she spoke, a shining angel with a flaming sword, appeared at Agnes' side, and lo and behold! she was clothed in a beautiful white robe. At the sight of the angel, Procop rushed forward with his sword drawn, to strike the angel.

But was the angel harmed? No way! Quick as lightning flashed the sword of the angel, and Procop fell to the ground. In agony the Prefect rushed to his son, but he found that Procop was dead. 'Agnes,' he cried, 'If you have done no wrong, prove it, by giving me back my son.'

'I will ask Jesus,' replied Agnes. 'If he wishes, he can restore your son to life.' Silently her lips moved in prayer. All eyes were upon Procop. Surely this thing could not happen! And yet, first his head moved, then a hand, and slowly, as though waking from a deep sleep, Procop rose to his feet. The people stared in wonder, and overjoyed, the Prefect led his son from the arena.

The Prefect immediately forgot the great debt he owed to Agnes, and ordered another soldier, Aspersion, to continue the work of killing Agnes. Agnes was led to the stake, there to be burnt to death. As she walked up to the burning wood, smiling and unafraid, the flames bent to one side, forming a clear path for her to tread. In a loud voice she cried out to praise God.

The crowd was silent. The sight of this young girl, so lovely and so calm, moved them to tears. Many fell on their knees, crying out: 'Show me how to be Christian too'. At this, Aspersion was filled with a terrible anger. He ordered a soldier standing by to cut off Agnes' head, since the flames refused to burn her. As she knelt with her beautiful hair falling about her, people cried out in sorrow. Calmly, Agnes pulled the shining hair from her neck and prayed aloud:

'Take me Lord. I long to come to you.'

As the sword fell, her blood stained her dress and the ground around her. The soldier who had killed her could not move. As a soldier he had obeyed orders, but he felt deep sorrow at taking the life of this girl.

The body of Agnes was buried in a simple grave outside Rome. Daily her mother and father went there to pray, full of grief at the loss of their beloved daughter. While they were at the grave one day, Agnes suddenly appeared to them. She was leading a group of young girls, and in her arms she carried a snow-white lamb.

'Do not cry for me' she said gently to her parents. 'I am happy with Jesus. There will be many young girls who will follow me. They too, will give their lives to Christ, through the years to come.'

This has come true. Countless young women have given their lives to Christ, not all by dying at the hands of a soldier, but many by giving up all and following him on earth.

The name Agnes means 'a lamb'. She is often pictured with a lamb in her arms.



When we read of the sufferings of Agnes and Polycarp, and the many early martyrs of the Church we see Jesus' words coming true in the life of the Church, as well as in the life of individuals:

'Truly, truly I say to you, unless a seed dies and is buried in the earth, it remains only a single grain. But if it dies, then it bears much fruit.'

(Jn 12:24).

Our next topic talks about how Christianity becomes truly established in Europe. The seed that died and was buried in the earth, has grown and become strong. Now it is sending out new branches.

Before going on to this topic however, make sure you have done all the activities in the next column, and the ones on the next page.

Some of the main people in this story are:

Procop, Agnes, Aspersion, the Prefect, Agnes' parents. Other people mentioned are a slave and a soldier.

1. a) Choose one of these people and see if you can find out from the library,

- the kind of clothes they would have worn
- something they would have used in their house or for their job.

b) Choose 3 of the above people and think of something good to write about each one. e.g. The Prefect was a man who loved his son and wanted him to be happy.

c) Write out one paragraph from the story and draw a picture to illustrate it. Or ..

Mark different students to draw the main events in the story, and when the pictures are finished join them along the classroom wall or notice board to make a picture story.

2. Agnes was not a sister, or a priest or even a married person.

How do you think she got the strength to be so brave?

3. A teacher once told her class: 'I can tell which ones of you are going to lose their faith!' The students were very surprised. 'How can this person know whether or not we are going to be faithful to Jesus?' they thought to themselves.

The teacher went on to explain.

'Faith is like a tree. And the leaves of this tree are prayer. Just as a tree needs its leaves in order to survive, so our faith needs prayer in order to survive.

The ones of you who will lose their faith are those who do not pray.'

Draw a tree in your exercise books.

If you often talk to Jesus during the day put plenty of leaves on your tree.

If you also try your best to pray to God on Sundays or other days by going to Mass, put some more leaves on your tree.

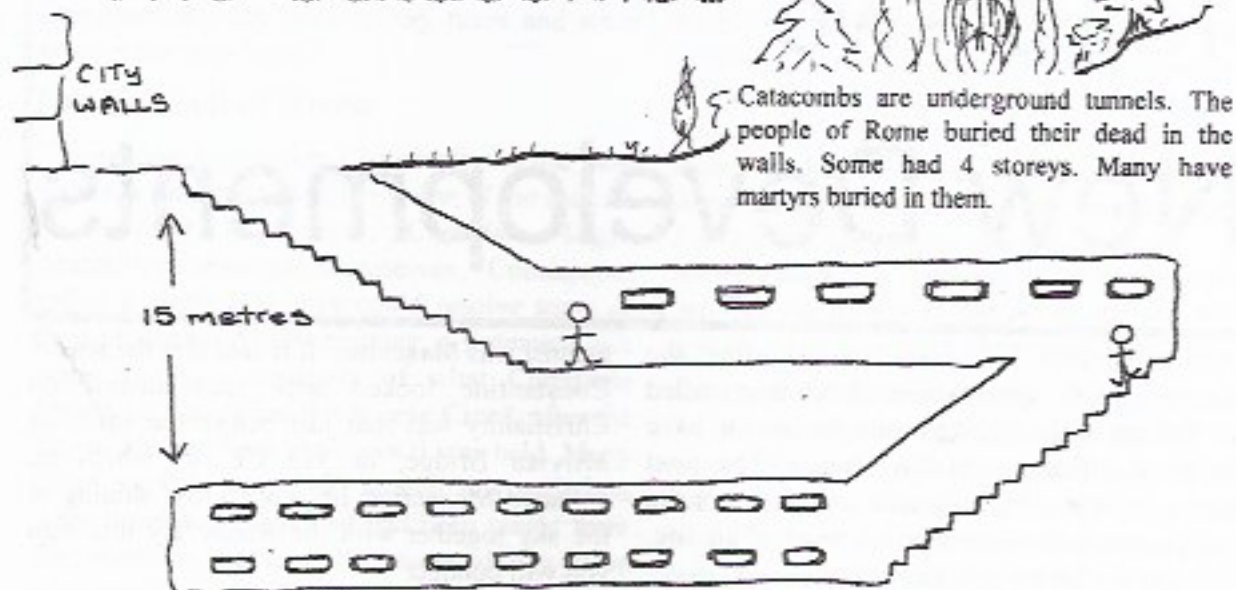
If you belong to a prayer group, add some more leaves.

If you used to pray a lot, but have dropped off a bit, put some leaves floating to the ground.

Write a sentence about your tree, and what you can do to improve its leaves.



The Catacombs



Turn back and look at the front cover of this book. The background picture is a picture taken inside some catacombs called the catacombs of St. Callistus. These catacombs are some among many which still exist and can be visited today. There are no lights inside the catacombs but you can see your way quite easily because special smaller tunnels have been dug up to the surface which let in both light and air. Inside the temperature stays the same. It is not too hot and not too cold.

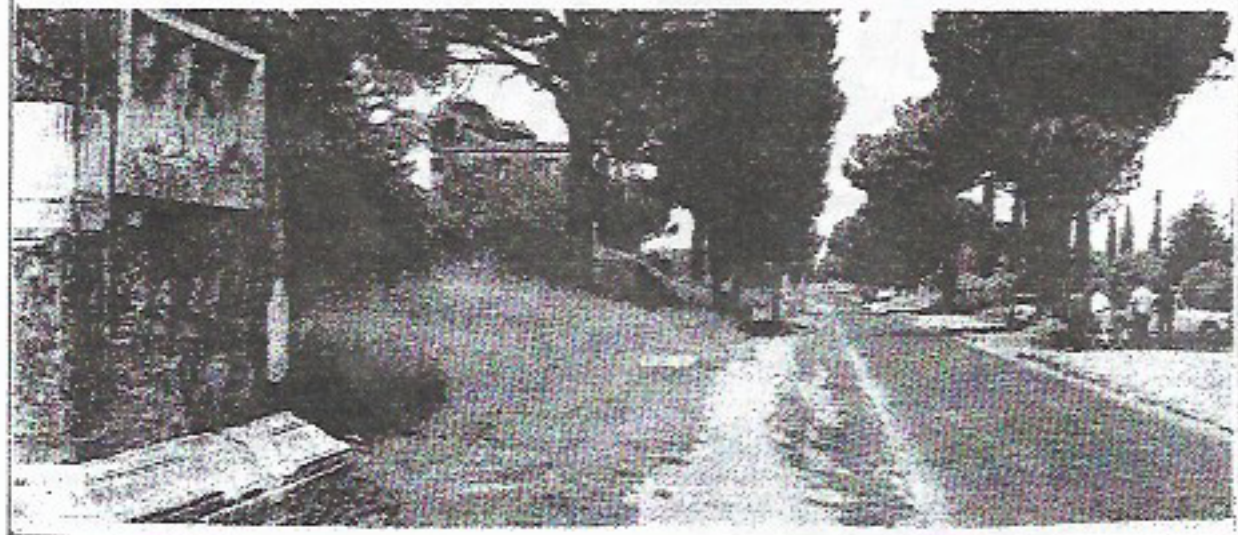
The spaces you can see in the walls are tombs. Because tourists used to take pieces of the rock that sealed the tomb and even take away the bones, many of the tunnels just have empty spaces along them. There are some tunnels and rooms that now have security bars across them so you can see what it used to be like, before the tourists and others took things for souvenirs. Some rooms are beautifully painted and even have marble columns or pots and vases in them.

These catacombs are built near a main road called the Appian Way which leads out of Rome, so they are not secret places. They are really public cemeteries, but underground. The catacombs are in different areas just like we have cemeteries in different places. The Christians felt safe down in the catacombs because in a time of persecution, the Roman soldiers did not usually like to go where so many dead people were buried. Perhaps they felt nervous about disturbing the spirits of the dead as some of our people would feel too.

Questions:

- Q. 1 Why do you think the Christians did not mind being where dead people were buried?
- Q. 2. If you went to visit Rome one day, would you like to go to visit the catacombs? Why?

The picture below shows the road called the Appian Way. The buildings on the left are 'above the ground' tombs of rich Romans who wanted to be remembered by all who passed along the road.



Topic Two

New Developments

During the first 300 years, the Apostles, the Martyrs, and the great writers of this time (called the Fathers of the Church) were the ones to have the most influence on the Church. The next person to have a big influence on the life of the Church was a non-Christian for most of his life. This was the Emperor Constantine.

Constantine influenced the Church because of his tolerance towards Christianity, and because of an edict he issued in Milan in 312, which made Christianity a legal religion in the Roman Empire.

Milan is a city in Italy. See if you can find it on a map. How far is it from Milan to Rome?

Background

The first official persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire was by Nero in 64 CE. The Roman Empire at this time was united and strong. Over the next 250 years this Empire started to crumble. There were many reasons for this. Politicians got selfish. There were wars on the borders of the Empire. Soldiers were not getting their pay and were unhappy. The currency was devalued and the people were subject to heavy taxation. Villagers that used to provide food for the army and towns, left their farms and migrated to the city. There were a lot of urban poor.

One serious persecution of the Christians was by the Emperor Diocletian. He blamed the Christians for the breakdown of the great Roman empire. In 303-304, he banned Christian worship, ordered the destruction of Churches and books, arrested Church leaders, and ordered everyone to sacrifice to the gods.

In 305 Diocletian resigned and appointed four of his colleagues to succeed him. These men were Galerius, Maxentius, Licinius, and Constantinus. They were Roman Commanders already in charge of certain areas. When Constantinus died, his son Constantine wanted the whole Empire for himself. The first person he marched to war

against was Maxentius. It is said that the reason Constantine looked with such favour on Christianity was that just before the battle of Milvian Bridge, in 313 CE, in which he defeated Maxentius, he saw a cross shining in the sky together with the words 'By this sign you will conquer!'



Constantine took these words as his motto. He had the first two letters of the Greek name of Christ put on the helmets and shields of his soldiers.



Constantine probably also favoured Christianity because the Christians were ordinary people like himself. Constantine did not come from a great and famous family. He was a soldier. He became Emperor because he fought battles and won them.

Name 2 advantages for Christianity when it was a legal religion. Name two disadvantages.

Name 2 advantages for Christianity when it was a persecuted religion.

When Christianity became legal, it also became important. Sunday was declared a holiday. Christians did not have to pay taxes and were given many privileges.

The Council of Nicea

Constantine hoped that Christianity would help unite his Empire, and this was one of the reasons he allowed it. Instead, Christians began quarrelling amongst themselves. Constantine called a meeting so they could resolve some of their problems. At this meeting, a statement was made giving a summary of what Christians believe. It was called the Nicene Creed, after the city of Nicea where the Council was held. Many other councils were held around this period to write down the things that had been taught from the beginning, because there were always those who wanted to put their own bits in, which had not been taught by Jesus.

Find the city of Nicea on a map.
Work with a friend and see if you can write out the Nicene Creed. Check the last page of this book to see if you are right.
We sometimes say this Creed at Mass.

Monastic Life

Before it was hard to be a Christian. Now it was easy and Christians were favoured. Many people became Christians to get a job, or to please the Emperor, without caring about real Christian attitudes. Men and women wanting to live a more serious Christian life, began to go off to live in the desert or hills by themselves, or to form communities where together they could worship and work for God. If they lived by themselves, they were called hermits. Next to the Creeds, the greatest achievement of the early Church was this kind of lifestyle. The deep desire of people living a monastic or hermit lifestyle in the early Church and still today, is the desire to find God in the depths of one's heart, and to tune one's own spirit to God's indwelling Spirit.

St Antony

Christian monasticism took on an organized style in Egypt in the late third century. A young Egyptian hermit named Antony was the first to draw followers to himself in this way.

St. Antony was born about the year 250. He came from a well respected family who owned land in a beautiful and fertile valley. His parents died when he was only eighteen, and he was left to look after a young sister. One day, he was going to the church as usual, and thinking about those who had sold all they had to follow Jesus. When he got to the church, the gospel for that day was the story of the rich young man.

"If you would be perfect, go, sell what you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, then come, follow me."

Antony went out immediately, and gave away the possessions he had inherited. He left his sister with some devoted people to be cared for and educated, and he gave himself to prayer and work. Perhaps the evil spirits knew that many people would be inspired to follow Antony, because they gave Antony a really hard time. Antony overcame them by prayer and sacrifices. Antony died when he was 105 years old. There are many stories about Antony. One story tells how God sent a bird every day with food, when Antony was too old to grow his own.



There were also women in Egypt who were hermits. One is St Mary of Egypt.

St Jerome



Jerome was born in Italy. In 360 AD at the age of 18, Jerome was baptized by Pope Liberius.

*At what age were you baptized?
Which do you think is better, to be
baptized as a baby or to be baptized at
about 18 like Jerome? Write a sentence to
explain the reason for your choice.*

Jerome was very intelligent. He studied in Rome and then travelled throughout the Roman empire. In 374 he went to Antioch. Here he had a dream. In the dream, he saw himself in judgment before Christ. Jerome was deeply affected by this dream because in it he was being corrected for showing so much interest in worldly knowledge and not much interest in spiritual knowledge. Jerome loved learning, but he discovered that learning to know and love God is the most important work we have on earth.

Jerome went into the wilderness and began to study Hebrew under a Jewish teacher. Later he spent 23 years translating the Bible into Latin, which was an important language at that time. Jerome said *'Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ'*

Jerome began communities around Bethlehem and lived in a cave there for many years. You can still visit his cave. He is often pictured with a lion because there is a story that Jerome pulled a thorn from a lion's paw, and the lion became his pet.

*Give yourself a mark out of 10 for the effort you
make to know and learn about God in R.E.
Give yourself a mark out of 10 for the effort you
put into knowing the Scriptures.
Check if you really know the Scriptures by seeing
if you can write down 3 sayings of Jesus.
Look at Jerome's picture. What is the meaning of
the things in the picture?*

A prayer that Jerome wrote is:

Lord show me your mercy
and make my heart glad.
I am like the man going to Jericho
wounded by robbers:
Good Samaritan, come help me.

I am like the sheep gone astray:
Good Shepherd, come seek me
and bring me safely home.
Let me dwell in your house all my days
and praise you forever. Amen.

Monks and monasteries are important to the history of the Church, because from them came great missionaries, and also in troubled times, they kept alive the spirit of Christianity and the values of previous days.

St Patrick



St. Patrick went to Ireland, to teach the Irish people about Jesus. His story is a very interesting one. When he was a boy of about 16, he was captured and sold into slavery to King Milchu of Ireland. At that time there were no Christians in Ireland, only the traditional religion of the Druids, who were something like priests.

Even though Patrick had been separated from his parents, he knew that God his Father was still with him. He often prayed while minding the sheep on the hills. He also talked to the children of the King and told them about Christ. For six years he was a slave. Then he escaped and made his way back to his home, which was probably Wales. At home he decided to become a priest, but he always heard the voice of the people of Ireland calling him: *'Come back to us Patrick and tell us about Jesus.'*

Finally Patrick was made a bishop and sent to Ireland as a missionary. When he landed on the shores of Ireland, the people were surprised to hear him speak their language. This did not make him loved however, and everywhere he went he found he had many enemies. His life was difficult and dangerous. The King gave Patrick permission to teach all the people of Ireland about Jesus. He went all over the land. He settled in a place, built a church and then around it, the new Christians built huts and organized monasteries. Patrick prayed that the faith of the Irish people would never weaken, and even today 1500 years later, it is still strong.

1. Who do you think Patrick's enemies would have been?
2. Why do you think they would have hated him?
3. Who may have helped persuade the King to listen to Patrick?

The men in the Irish monasteries often went as missionaries to other lands.

One of these missionaries was Columba. The story of Columba tells how he founded many new monasteries in Ireland and then set out with twelve companions to carry the Good News to the people of Scotland and down into England. These monks travelled across the sea in tar-covered baskets with sails.

Draw a picture of what you think a tar-covered basket floating on the sea, would look like.
Why didn't the monks use fibreglass boats and outboard engines?
Why do you think Columba chose 12 companions?
Find a map that shows Ireland, England and Scotland.
Draw the map with some arrows showing the places the monks sailed to.

St. Martin of Tours

Across the English channel, in France, a holy man lived in Tours. (Tours is a town in France).

Find it on your map.

Martin founded the first monastery in France, and promoted the spread of monasticism in Europe by placing himself and his monks at the service of local churches for preaching and teaching.

Martin was born in a cold part of Europe and he became a soldier in the Roman Army. One evening as he rode back to camp over the snow, he saw an old man almost dead with cold. Martin cut his own cloak in half and gave half to the beggar.

That night, Martin heard Jesus saying: *'Martin, you clothed me with your cloak. Now I will clothe you in my grace, by baptism.'* So Martin became a Christian, and later was appointed as Bishop of Tours. He is now called St. Martin of Tours.

His feastday is the 11th of November.

A story says that when Martin died, the boat carrying his body floated upstream by itself and that the trees along the river banks flowered as it passed by.

Draw a picture illustrating this last sentence.
Another Martin celebrates his feastday in November, see if you can find out about this other St. Martin.

St. Benedict

Benedict of Italy, was born at a time when a fierce people came down from the North, and destroyed much of the Roman civilization. Benedict's father wanted him to be a leader and he became well educated. But Benedict did not like the way the people lived in Rome. Many people thought only of money, of getting rich, of having a good time. Benedict wanted peace, where he could learn to know God better and be free to follow the teachings of Jesus.

So one day he just walked away from home and lived in a cave, praying to God to guide him. Here he was very happy. He prayed and sang as he worked in his garden. When others wanted to join him, he was at first unwilling. But God showed that this was what he wanted.

Soon he had many followers. He founded many monasteries and his way of life spread throughout the different countries of Europe.

These monks had as their motto
'To work, and to pray.'

Their work was to copy the scriptures and other books. They did this because there were no printing machines. By this work and also their work in looking after libraries, they preserved much learning for all time.

The monks also supported themselves. In many cases they took land that was bush or swamp and turned it into good farming land. What they learnt they passed on to others.

One other important service to the people who lived around them was to look after them when they were sick. Travellers also knew they could get hospitality (food and shelter) at monasteries. (This is where our word hospital comes from).

Their *prayer* was to meditate on the scriptures in order to learn to know God better; and to praise God by praying together four times a day. This special prayer is called 'the divine office'. It is made up of psalms, readings and hymns.

Look up the words 'divine' and 'office' in your dictionary. Now write the meaning of 'the divine office' in your exercise book. Check your meaning with your friend.

One of the reasons monasteries spread out through the country was because when there were over 20 monks in a monastery they sent a group to go to a place where there were no Christians.

St. Scholastica

Scholastica was a sister of St. Benedict. She was born about the year 480. She too, consecrated herself to God and became a very holy person. She founded a convent not far from where her brother was and these two great saints met regularly. When they met, Scholastica would stay with Benedict the whole day, talking of spiritual things.

On one visit to her brother, they had their evening meal and continued talking until it was quite late. Then Scholastica said to her brother, 'Please, can we keep talking until the morning?'

'What are you saying?' replied Benedict, 'You know I cannot stay away from the monastery!'

When her brother refused her, Scholastica folded her hands on the table and began to pray. Suddenly a great storm burst.

The wind blew. The rain fell. The lightning flashed.

Benedict could not go back. Realizing this, Benedict began to complain.

Scholastica answered, 'When I asked you, you would not listen to me. So I asked God, and he heard my prayer.'

Three days later Scholastica died. As Benedict stood in his room looking up toward the sky, he saw her soul going up to heaven in the form of a pure white dove. He sent his monks to bring her body to the monastery and he put it in the tomb he had prepared for himself.

The bodies of these two great saints are buried together, just as in life their souls were one in God.



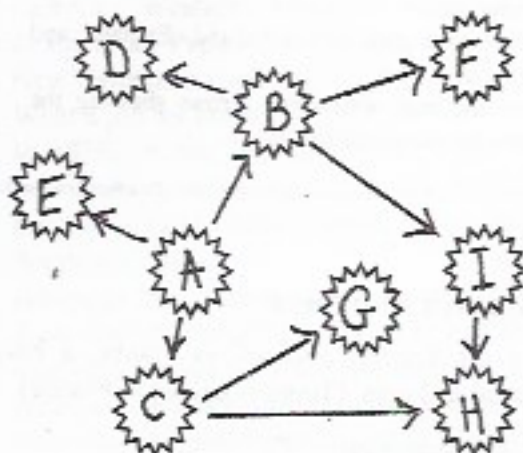
Questions:

Some people think that Scholastica knew she was going to die. Why do you think they say that?

Do you think she asked God for more time with her brother for herself? or for her brother?

Give a reason for your answer.

Look at the diagram below. How many monasteries were founded by Monastery A? Monastery B? Monastery C?



Topic Three

The Need for Renewal

By this period in history, the Church had been growing for 1000 years. Some branches were only dead wood on the tree that had been planted so long ago. These branches did not give life to the tree. Despite the famous saints and the many ordinary good people, there were those in the Church who scandalized everyone by their lack of virtue, by their greediness, and by their search for power.

Some priests lived lives of sin. Some Bishops gave their wantoks high jobs in the Church. Some of the Popes of this time did not give good example to others.

There was need for the tree to be pruned and renewed. Some people tried to renew the Church but only ended up dividing it. Others were successful in their attempts at renewal. One person who was successful was Francis Bernadone, now called St. Francis of Assisi. He lived from 1182 to 1226.

St. Francis of Assisi

Francis' father had a large trade store in Assisi, a town in the hills behind Rome. His father was a rich man who made clothes for rich men.

As he grew up, Francis was good looking and a real leader among boys and girls. His father gave him money and fine clothes every time he asked for them. He did not have to work. He spent his time enjoying himself. He led his friends in their loud singing and dancing in the streets as they went from one party to another.

Francis' father was very proud of Francis. He thought that one day he would marry a rich girl. He wanted him to become a big man in the town. Then at the age of twenty, Francis joined the local army. He wanted to show how brave he was. When war came, Francis went. His proud father gave him beautiful clothes to wear. The army went off shouting that they were going to win. But they lost and Francis was taken prisoner. He found himself in jail.

There the food was not good and Francis became sick. He thought he was going to die. He looked back on his life. He saw that he had used it only for his own pleasure. 'God,' he said 'When I get better I'll work for you.'

When the prisoners were allowed to go home, Francis' parents were very happy. His father gave him everything. He made a big feast. The young boys and girls came to the party and he joined them again in their old life. But Francis was not the same Francis any more. He began to think a lot. His life now seemed empty, not enjoyable. There was something missing. But he did not know how to start a new way of life.

Then one time he went into the market place and the sight of the poor, begging for food, made him think. He stopped going around with his friends and began giving away his money to help the poor. He began to pray 'Lord, what do you want me to do?'

One day he gave his own clothes to a dirty beggar, while he himself put on the poor man's clothes. It was his first time to feel poor.



Helping this man made him feel happy. Francis began to see Christ in the poor.

One afternoon Francis was riding along on his horse. On a lonely road he saw a sick man begging for help. Francis got off his horse to give him some money. But the smell of the sores, the dirtiness of the man and his clothes, made Francis want to vomit. He jumped on his horse and turned away. As he galloped off, something deep inside him pulled him back. He said to himself, *'Coward! Is this what Jesus would have done?'*

He turned back and went to the leper. He got down from his horse, put his arms around the sick man and kissed him. Suddenly Francis thought no more of the smell and dirt but felt a great peace. He took the man, washed him, tended his sores and gave him new clothes and food.

Francis was a new man. He knew that what he had done to this poor dirty leper he had done to Christ. He knew now that Christ wanted him to live for him, especially in the poor. Francis went into an old broken-down church and began to pray. He begged God to guide him in his new life. As he looked at the crucifix, he heard Christ speak, *'Francis, go and repair my Church.'* Immediately Francis began gathering stones and getting people to help him mend the church.

Little by little Francis realized that Jesus was not talking about the church building, but about the Church, the people of God. Jesus showed Francis that he wanted him to repair and renew the way that people were living.

Francis began to preach to the people. He gave away his father's money. His father was angry and took him to the Bishop. When his father talked about all the things he had given Francis, Francis took off his clothes and gave them back to his father. He put on a bag with a piece of rope for a belt. He lived like the poor. He was very happy and many men followed him and came to live with him.

These men were called Franciscans. They travelled two by two, going from town to town talking to the people about how God loved them. They did not go only to the churches but to the market places and to homes. They gathered the poor and the sick and looked after them. Because the people could not read, Francis used new ways to teach them about the Good News. One thing he did was to make a stable and figures to teach the story of Christmas. This was the first Christmas crib.

Everywhere Francis went, he took with him the peace of Christ. Francis loved all of God's creation. Here is a song he made.

Thank you God, for Brother Sun
Who gives us warmth and light.
And thanks for our sisters,
The Moon and the Stars,
They're lovely and bright in the night.
Thank you God for Brother Wind
And Fresh Air and the Clouds and the
Rain
For Sister Water, and Brother Fire,
So useful, clear and serene.

Copy Francis' song into your book and illustrate it. You can use the words above or you can use the song 'Canticle of the Sun'.

Francis is an example of a person who did not leave the Church because either the priests or the people were no good. Instead he tried to do some good himself. He listened to God speaking to him and responded with his whole heart.

Women also followed Francis. His lifelong friend was St. Clare. She possessed the same love of Christ and dedication to holy poverty. Clare received her religious habit from Francis and founded the first convent of Franciscan sisters. She was in charge of her community for 40 years and during that time founded many other convents.

Franciscan priests, brothers and sisters work in P.N.G.



St Catherine of Siena

Siena is another town in Italy. *Find it on your map.*

Catherine was born in this place in 1347, the youngest of 25 children.

How many children are there in your family? Who has the nearest to 25?

Catherine's father was a wealthy businessman and her mother, a housewife. Catherine wanted to give herself to prayer and the service of God from the time she was small, but her parents wanted her to get married, and she faced a lot of opposition from her family. Finally they realized that God had favoured her, and at sixteen she began to follow a rule recommended by St Dominic for those seeking God.

Catherine began to nurse the sick in the Siena hospital, preferring the cancer patients and the lepers whom others found too difficult to care for. Gradually, other people were drawn to her to share her inspiration and work. Frequently Catherine went to the prisons to talk to and comfort those condemned to death and to prepare them for their final ordeal.

Her reputation for holiness and wisdom spread, and families and rival political parties called on her to help solve their problems and reach a compromise. At this time in history there was a rise in nationalism, which caused many conflicts and much hostility towards the Pope, especially when the country concerned did not favour Italy where the Pope lived. Catherine became an advisor to the Pope and other famous people. She worked for the reform of the Church.

Catherine did not expect to become an important and well-known person, and even though she was respected because of her leadership qualities and her ability to communicate, she also met opposition from those who did not agree with her. Catherine died in Rome on April 29, 1380, at the age of thirty three.

Catherine is a 'Doctor of the Church' which is a special title given to a person who writes about God in a way which helps people to understand our faith more and draw closer to God. People who are given this title, have the gift of Wisdom.

DIVISIONS

From the beginning of the Church there have been people who preached something a bit different from the Apostles, and who formed a separate group. In the early Church, most of these groups remained small, or died out over the centuries. In the next period of the Church's history however, in the 15th and 16th Centuries, there were very large communities that came to be separated from the Church. The first big division came because of a man called Martin Luther.

Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483, in a little village called Eisleben, in Germany. His father gave up farming to become a copper miner. Martin's parents were good German Catholics, and provided the best Christian education possible for their son. But Luther's upbringing at home as well as at school was very hard and severe. This made him afraid of God and Jesus. Luther's father wanted him to become a lawyer, and so in 1505 he began the study of law, having two University degrees already. But in July of that same year, Luther was caught in a storm and he was thrown to the ground by lightning. He was scared of dying and cried out: *St. Anne, help me and I will become a monk!* He survived the storm, and against the advice of his friends and against the will of his father, later that same month he entered the Augustinian monastery.

Before making such a serious decision, what are three things you think would be sensible things to do?

After less than two years preparation Luther was ordained a priest. The divine office and his Scripture studies made Luther very familiar with the Bible and he at last came to believe in God's love for him.

At this time, a Dominican priest named John Tetzel was preaching wrong information about indulgences. (Many priests were poorly educated and had only a short training for the priesthood).

The word indulgence means a pleasure or a privilege. The Church has the pleasure and the privilege to be able to forgive sins and the punishment due to sin.

But sinners have to be willing to change from their bad ways, and do good. This good thing can be to pray, but it can also be to make a donation to the Church.

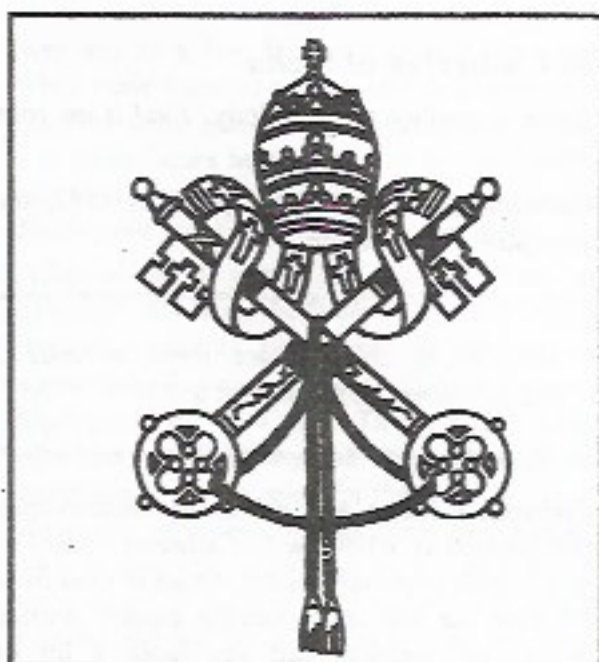
Fr. John Tetzel did not stress in his sermons that the sinner had to be willing to change the bad things in his or her life, but he put all the stress on the payment of money. When Luther heard about this he got very upset. He wrote to the Archbishop to complain.

The Archbishop did not like what Luther had written. This was because the Pope had told the Archbishop he could keep part of the money to pay off debts. The other part had to be sent to Rome so that St. Peter's Church could be rebuilt. Luther did not like the idea of sending money to Rome, because Luther was from Germany and Rome is in Italy. At that time, the German people did not like the Romans very much, and they certainly did not like giving them their money! Also Luther had visited Rome and he was horrified by the way some of the Italian bishops and priests were living, compared to the serious and strict German way of life.

The Archbishop did not reply to Luther's letter and he told the Pope that Luther was preaching new and false things. The Pope asked Luther to come to Rome to talk about the problem, but Luther refused. He wanted the meeting to be in Germany. He started to write about a lot of other things in the Church. Many of the things he said were true, and needed to be changed, but others were quite untrue.

After a time, the Pope told Luther to make very clear in a debate what he really believed. The debate took place in 1518 between Luther and the Pope's delegate, Cardinal Cajetan. The men could not agree, and did not even discuss things properly. It did not help that Cardinal Cajetan was a Dominican like Tetzel, and that Luther was an Augustinian monk, supported by most of the priests of his order. Since arguments about theology between different religious orders were nothing new, the Pope mistakenly believed that things would get forgotten in time.

Too late he realized his mistake. Although Luther in the beginning was zealous and good in wanting to reform the Church, later he made remarks which showed more and more that his beliefs too were getting to be different. Things went from bad to worse. Some of Luther's followers who were originally German Catholics, called for a



complete change in everything the Church did and taught.

They preached against the Mass and against the three vows of the monks and nuns.

They also said that it was wrong to honour the Blessed Sacrament.

As a result of this preaching, one day people went into the parish church of Wittenberge in Germany and drove the priests out. They destroyed all the pictures and statues in the church. Although the government leaders did not agree with what was happening, no one was able to control the situation.

Luther reacted to the sinfulness of Church leaders that he saw all around him. Instead of beginning a true renewal however, Luther gave the Christian world more anger, more condemnation, more confusion, and more scandal (caused by Christians arguing with each other).

The Council of Trent

The Council of Trent (1545-1547) faced the fact that the Church had allowed evil to spoil its ideals. In the Council, the Church set out to correct and repair itself.

For example it promoted the setting up of seminaries where priests might train properly.

It also clarified doctrine that had become unclear, such as indulgences.

But at this Council, the Catholic Church like Luther, lost an opportunity to conquer evil with good. Instead of admitting the problems and asking for forgiveness, the delegates to the

Council were angry with the criticism. Some people hoped that the Council would discuss differences with Protestant leaders, but unfortunately this did not happen. Luther died in 1546, while this council was still on.

It is only in our own times, that Lutherans and Catholics and others, are entering into dialogue together, and trying to mend relationships. Let us try to learn from the past and listen to each other, and forgive one another for the faults there have been on both sides.

The Anglicans

Another big group of Catholics to break away from the Church also about this time were the Catholics of England. The Anglican Church or Church of England, started as a result of King Henry the Eighth.

Background

Christian missionaries went to Britain very soon after the time of Christ and his Apostles. The first ones were sent by the Pope himself, and we have read about how the Irish monks also went to England. England had been a Catholic country for over a thousand years when Henry the Eighth came to the throne in 1509. Henry was intelligent and at first, a loyal Catholic leader.

In fact, when Henry heard about some of Luther's teachings about the Sacraments, he disliked it so much he wrote a book in defense of the Church's teaching. The Pope was so pleased with the book that he gave Henry the title 'Defender of the Faith'. English Kings and Queens still have this title today.

However, Henry had a problem in his life. At the age of 12, Henry's father had arranged for him to marry his deceased brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon, daughter of the King and Queen of Spain. Henry had children by Catherine, but they all died except a daughter, Mary, who was betrothed to the heir of the French crown. Henry wanted a son to succeed him. He began to look for ways to divorce Catherine. He said she had been his brother's widow and so his marriage was illegal (Le 20:21). Henry also had his eye on another woman, Anne Boleyn.

Henry tried but could not get a divorce from the Pope. So in 1533, Henry by an Act of Parliament had himself proclaimed 'Supreme Head of the Church in England'.

Henry said that the Pope was only the head of the

Church in Rome, and that he, Henry, was head of the Church in England. This shows that he did not really intend to begin a new Church, but like Luther, that is what happened in the end.

A friend of Henry's, Thomas Cranmer, became Archbishop and he gave Henry the divorce he wanted. The King then married Anne Boleyn.

Many people stood against what the King and Parliament had done. They were punished, no matter how important or holy they were.

Anne bore Henry a stillborn child, and Henry began to look at yet another woman. In 1536, Henry had Anne beheaded, and he married Jane Seymour. Jane died shortly after giving birth to a son, and Henry married three more times, earning the contempt of his still mainly Catholic people who disapproved of their King's behaviour.

Henry also confiscated all the monastic property in England. With the money he made from the sale of all this property, Henry rewarded his wantoks and friends. By 1540, monasticism had practically come to an end in England.

St. Thomas More

Thomas More was a good friend of the the King and he held the highest place in England, next to the King himself.

Yet Thomas More was one of those that Henry the VIII put to death.

Henry the Eighth



Thomas More was the son of a London judge. He became a famous lawyer. His friendliness and his reputation for justice were known to everyone. He greeted all people with a smile, and never refused to help those in need.

When he was twenty seven, he married a young girl, Jane, who was 10 years younger than himself. For some time Jane was very unhappy. She did not understand her husband, and she missed her home and her parents. Thomas discussed the matter with her father. He loved his wife dearly but could not bear to see the tears falling down her face. Her father told him to give her a good beating. Thomas laughed. He had never hurt anyone in his life. Jane's father was angry with her. 'You have the gentlest, kindest man in the world for your husband,' he said. 'Tell him you are sorry or else go home in disgrace.' Jane decided to return to her husband and try to understand his ways. They became very happy and were full of joy when they had their first child. Margaret was the eldest of their four children but she was only five when Jane died suddenly. Baby John was less than a year old, and Elizabeth and Cecilia came in between.

Jane's death made Thomas very sad. He had four children to care for and yet his work as a lawyer kept him away from home. How could he look after his little ones? They needed a mother. So he married again. Alice Middleton was a widow. Although she was kind, loyal and generous, she could never take the place of Jane with Thomas. Yet she was ready to marry him to look after his children, and in the years to come she was a real mother to them.

Thomas More was very anxious to have his daughters educated. In those days, only the boys went to school. However Thomas got private teachers to come into his home, and the boys and girls were educated together. Margaret, or Meg as her father called her, was very clever, and became her father's favourite. The love between them grew stronger than ever, and it was Meg to whom Thomas turned later when he was imprisoned.

Thomas' fame as a lawyer grew. Many people went to him for help and advice. His position gave Thomas very great power and he could have become very proud and rich.

The King especially loved Thomas and wanted his company. He often sent for him. Despite all this attention, Thomas did not become proud, and he would not be dishonest and accept bribes.

Even though the King wanted him at court often, Thomas preferred his family life. He loved to stay in his comfortable house with his wife, his father, his son and daughters, his sons-in-law and his grandchildren. These he considered his greatest blessings, along with his 'hidden' life with God. The reason for his great peace and happiness, wrote Meg's husband, 'was his special love for God, and his effort to keep his conscience whole and sincere'. Sometimes he would slip away from the serious affairs of business, to go to the church to pray. He liked to think of himself as first, the servant of God; and second, the servant of the King.

When the King wished to divorce Catherine, he pressed Thomas More for his support. Thomas refused. It was against his conscience, he said, because he believed Henry's first marriage was legal. Thomas thought that if Henry married Anne, greater troubles for the country would follow, for if the King would break the laws of God, then what about the laws of the country?

When the divorce case came to court, most of the Bishops there sympathized with Catherine, but they were afraid of Henry. No one came forward to speak for Catherine, except the elderly Bishop, John Fisher.

'She has been a good and loyal wife,' said the Bishop. 'I will not agree to this divorce. Whom God has joined together, let no man put apart.'

Still as we already know, Henry insisted on the divorce and sent Catherine away. Anne Boleyn the next wife, moved into the Queen's apartments, but the people were angry and shouted at her when she appeared in public!

Henry prepared a document saying that in future, no priest or Bishop could do anything without the permission of the King. All the leaders were told to sign this document, to show that they accepted Henry as Head of the Church in England.

Sir Thomas More at once resigned his great position, with all its power. He knew he could not sign the document, and he hoped that as a poor unimportant person, the King would not worry about his signature. The family was poor because Thomas no longer had a job. Yet Thomas remained happy and at peace with his conscience.

He spent more time at prayer, and spoke often of the holy martyrs who had died for love of Christ. He declared that if this should happen to

him, he would go merrily to his death. After the divorce took place, Thomas was ordered to attend the marriage ceremony between the King and Anne Boleyn. He refused, and the King's anger grew. He summoned Thomas to account for his conduct before the court. Thomas defended himself so skillfully that no charge could be made against him and he was freed. His daughter Meg, was delighted. 'Now the King will be your friend again' she said. 'No' replied her father. 'The King's plan has only been postponed for a little while'.

The King then prepared an oath - a very solemn promise to God, for people to say that they would serve Henry as Head of the Church, in place of the Pope, and accept Anne as Queen.

Most of Thomas More's friends had signed the oath and they begged him also to sign it. 'Thomas, the King depends on you to sign.

We have signed it.

Please sign it out of friendship.'

Thomas replied 'Will you come with me to hell out of friendship?'

The next morning Thomas went as usual to his parish church. There he received Holy Communion and begged his Lord and Master to help him to persevere in what he knew was right. His family believed that because he was living quietly and not saying anything, he would be safe. But Thomas knew better. Sure enough, when he arrived home from Mass, he found that the King had sent people for him. Sadly he said good-bye to his wife and family.

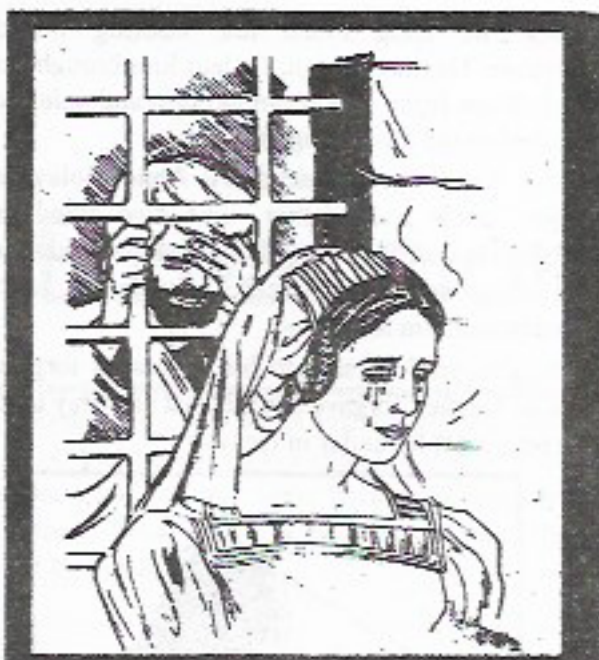
The messengers took him to the palace to sign the oath. His answer was a firm 'No'. He was given time to think it over. The answer was still the same. So Sir Thomas was sent to prison, together with the old bishop, John Fischer.

Meg was allowed to come for a visit, because the King thought the sight of the daughter he loved might change his mind.

When Meg saw her father behind prison bars, in the damp and terrible Tower, she cried and begged him to sign the Oath and to come back to his family.

She said, 'Father, all your friends are signing, if you love us, please sign it and come home to us.' After she left he broke down and sobs filled his prison cell.

Then he took a paper and wrote: 'None of the terrible things that might happen to me have made me as weak as to see you and hear you.



But how can I choose to follow my King rather than my God?'

For fourteen months Sir Thomas was kept in prison. Thomas loved writing and reading but the King took away his pen and ink and all his books. Once he used a piece of coal and wrote to his beloved Meg,

*'Of worldly things, I desire
no more than I have.*

*Written with a coal by your
loving father, who in
his poor prayers,
forgets none of you, not your
babies nor your nurses, nor
your good husbands, nor their
wives, nor your father's wife,
nor our other friends.*

*May Our Lord keep me always
true and faithful.'*

When the King found that nothing would persuade Thomas to sign, he had him brought to trial. Weak from imprisonment, thin and pale, he listened to the charges against him.

These had been prepared by Anne Boleyn's father, uncle and brother, who also acted as judges. He defended himself against their charges but they still pronounced him guilty, and condemned him to death.

'I forgive you' he said to his judges. 'I forgive you as Stephen forgave Saul. I trust and pray that we may meet hereafter in Heaven.'



The condemned man was taken back to his small damp cell in the Tower of London. At the gate of the prison Meg waited. She pushed through the crowd and flung her arms around her father. 'Why can't you sign' she begged 'and come home once more?'

Tenderly he kissed her. 'Whatever I suffer, is God's will' Do you believe that?' he whispered, and then he went on his way.

On July 6th he walked slowly from the prison. In his hand he held a cross, at which he gazed lovingly, thinking of the suffering of Christ. Slowly the procession travelled its way along the path that led from the great prison fortress. A woman wept, and stretched out her hand to the prisoner, offering him a cup of wine. 'Christ had only vinegar and gall' he said, as gently he put the wine aside.

The short procession reached the scaffold. The executioner, dressed in black and carrying the great axe, walked in front of the man condemned to die. Slowly they ascended the steps. The prisoner knelt and joined his hands in prayer, then rose to his feet and faced the waiting crowd.

'I have always been the faithful servant of the King' he cried, 'but above all, I have been God's faithful servant.'

Then turning to the executioner, he hugged him, and pressed some coins into his hands.

'Do not be afraid, to do your work, but do not hurt my beard. It has done no wrong!'

He laid his head on the block, arranging his beard so it wouldn't get cut.

Thomas More died with a joke on his lips, and a great love for God's laws in his heart.

- *****
- * 1. We are told that Henry loved Thomas *
* More very much. What made him *
* become his enemy? *
 - * 2. Thomas More is an example of a saint *
* who is a martyr. What makes him a *
* martyr? *
 - * 3. When our friends ask us to do *
* something, even if it is wrong, we *
* usually do what they want. What *
* qualities did Thomas have that we *
* sometimes lack? *
 - * 4. In this story there are some examples *
* of injustice. Write down two. *
 - * 5. What part of the story did you find the *
* most interesting? *
 - * 6. Meg had a great love for her father, *
* and we know that Mary had a great love *
* for her son Jesus. In what way were *
* these two women different? *
- *****

Topic Four

Growth and Expansion

The next period of the Church's history that we are going to look at, embraces the time from the 16th Century to our own day. During this time there were many inventions and a lot of scientific discoveries. Some of these allowed travel to many places which had been unknown to the Europeans. This was a time then of much missionary activity and there was growth and expansion in the Church. There was also intermittent persecution in the old countries as well as the new. In some of the old countries the new understanding about the world made some people and governments go against religion. In new countries where the Good News arrived for the first time there was opposition from people for many different reasons.

It would take many books to tell the story of the joys and sorrows of this time in each country, both old and new. In this chapter we are just going to look at some stories from countries outside Europe - one story from Japan, one story from Africa and one story from America. In the last chapter of this book, we will look at our own country of PNG.

First of all, let us look at the history of Christianity in Japan.

More than 450 years ago, in 1549, St. Francis Xavier, a great Jesuit missionary, landed at Kagoshima in Japan on the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. At that time, no missionary had ever been to Japan. To Francis Xavier's great joy, the nobles and the rich men listened to him attentively, and opened their hearts to the wonderful story of God's love for us. Hundreds of people became Christians, and soon more priests arrived to carry on the work.

By 1585, the Pope had placed the country of Japan entirely into the hands of the Jesuit priests. Within 25 years, the valley of the Urakami, together with the neighbouring city of Nagasaki, had become Catholic. While in Japan, Francis

heard about China so he tried to go there. On his way, the captain of the ship left him at a little island and did not come back for a long time. Francis became sick with fever and died there all by himself.



More missionaries came to Japan, and they were happy to see the people of Japan making Christ their way of life to God their Father. These early Christians did not dream of the troubles that soon would come to them because of their faith in Jesus.

The Martyrs of Japan

Suddenly, there was a change in the government of the country. A military dictator became the ruler of Japan. He was determined to get rid of Christianity, and to restore the old religion. The Shogun, (police), were ordered to pull down churches, destroy shrines and take prisoner any

persons who still remained Christian. The punishment for staying a Christian was death.

All foreign priests were sent out of the country. The dictator thought that without them, the Japanese people would give up the foreign religion easily. But the people clung to their faith. Like the early Christians during the persecutions in Rome, they met secretly to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The ruler then decided that he must get rid of all priests and brothers, so he sent his soldiers to arrest them. He tried to make them give up their religion, to say that Christ was not God. But they would not. They were told that they would be tortured and crucified. Still they refused.

On the morning of February 5th, 1597, after much suffering, the Japanese priests, brothers and active church lay people, were taken out and crucified in public. Witnesses said it was amazing to see the love and faith on their faces as they hung upon their crosses. This is what they said about those being crucified:

One kept his eyes raised as if he could see Christ welcoming him into heaven. Another thanked him for allowing him to die for love of him. Another said loudly the 'Our Father' and many prayed aloud the 'Hail Mary'. The witnesses said that then there was silence for awhile, and then the voice of Father Paul Miki rang out:

'This is the most honoured pulpit I have ever been in,' he called to the people waiting there.

'I am a Jesuit and I belong to Japan. Now I thank God that I am dying, because He gave me the privilege of preaching his love to my own people. As I die upon this cross, you know that I would not lie to you. I tell you truly then, that Christ alone, is the Truth and the Way to God our heavenly Father. I forgive the King and his men who have made us suffer and I beg them to learn from Christ and to be baptized as his followers.'

Turning he gazed at his companions who were suffering as they hung on their crosses and he began to encourage them. They too, showed that they were full of joy in their suffering and again and again they asked those who were watching to remain strong in their Christian living.

When the executioners came with their spears to make an end of them, a sorrowful cry of 'Jesus and Mary' rose to Heaven from all the Christians standing nearby. Although Paul Miki and his companions died, the people's faith in Jesus did not die.

The Christians met secretly together and made their plans. For example, they decided to set a date to celebrate the birth of Jesus. In preparation for this feast, every house and stable was cleaned. Wood and food were collected and prepared.

But first there was an offering made, because they believed that all things are a gift from the Divine Child.

When the day chosen to celebrate the birth of Christ came, the Christians would wait for the stars to come out in the night. Then they would gather together and say over and over the 'Hail Mary'. By the time the group had said this prayer many times in honour of Mary giving birth to Jesus, it was midnight. Then the people had a feast. The animals were given special food too, for Jesus was born in their stable.

After eating, the old people remembered the Japanese martyrs, the time when their ancestors had Mass, and all the things the missionaries had taught their people about God their Father.

They hoped that one day a priest would come to say Mass for them and bring the Lord Jesus into their midst again. After they had talked, then in silence the old people would bring out from their hiding places, their precious objects from Christian times, a picture, a rosary, a crucifix.

So Christianity remained in Nagasaki, like a light in a dark box, until 300 years later when the missionaries returned to Japan. In 1856 when Japan allowed people to visit the country again, 50 000 Christians were found.

1. What other stories have we read in this book, where the person or persons being persecuted forgave those who made them suffer?

Write out the words that were used.

2. See if you can find out something else about Nagasaki, the city in Japan where the Japanese people were crucified.

3. Find some pictures of Japan, put these at the front of your classroom, and say one or two decades of the Rosary for the Japanese people, and for the missionaries presently working in Japan.

4. Write a prayer to God, praising him for the strength and courage of all martyrs.



Kateri Tekakwitha

Three hundred years ago in the northern part of America, lived five Indian tribes. They were a proud, warlike people, worshipping their sun-god Areskoi.

Most Red Indian tribes lived in wigwams or tents made of skins, but the Mohawks were different. They lived in 'long houses' which were as long as forty metres. These fierce people tried to capture and torture the white traders and missionaries, because they believed that in this way they pleased their war gods.

Kateri Tekakwitha was the daughter of a Mohawk brave (man), and a Christian squaw (woman), from another tribe, who had been taken captive during one of the tribal wars. The fierce Mohawk chief had fallen in love with the gentle prisoner, and had made her his wife. When Kateri was a tiny child, her mother would tell her stories about how God made the world and of his Son who died on the Cross for sinners. Kateri was full of questions.

'Where do the birds come from?

Can I see my soul? Shall I ever see Jesus?'

Her mother encouraged her faith and instructed her in the Christian life.

'If only the Blackrobes would come, so that my daughter could be baptized', her mother would think. Her heart would go out in prayer to God, begging that the Jesuit priests who had taught her about God's love would pass that way again.

One day, Kateri went out as usual to the forest to play. To her, it was like Heaven, with the tall trees, the birds, the squirrels, and above all, the silence. This morning there was a new sound in the forest. It was a heavy drum beat, sending a message from far away.

It was a strange rhythm, one she had never heard before, and it filled her with fear.

'I must go home' she thought. 'My mother will know what the drums are saying. I'll go and ask her.' The news was bad. Smallpox had come to the Mohawks. Men, women and children were dying daily. 'Father is a great chief. He will kill the smallpox or drive it away' said little Kateri. 'No, child,' said her mother, 'No-one knows how to drive this devil away, not even the Blackrobes with their powerful medicine.' Indeed, before many days had passed, the sickness had killed Kateri's mother, father and little brother.

Orphaned at the age of 10, Kateri was taken to live with her uncle, Chief Thunder Cloud and his wife Light Foot.

Although he was not a Christian, Thunder Cloud liked the little girl and treated her kindly. Light Foot however, was jealous of her, and said that too much attention was being given to the little orphan. Although she never hurt Kateri, she was unkind to her, and Kateri ran away whenever she could, to the house of the old Christian squaw, Anastasia, who had known and loved Kateri's mother. One day Anastasia arrived at Kateri's cabin in great excitement. 'Kateri,' she said, 'the Blackrobes are coming. They will stay at your uncle's place for 3 days. You must pray very hard that they will baptize you.'

'Oh Anastasia' replied Kateri. 'Do you think they will? I long to hear about God and His Blessed Mother, and to belong to them alone. Surely my mother is praying for me too.'

But it was many years before Kateri was to be baptized.

Although the missionary spoke to her about God, he could not stay long enough in the village to instruct her and baptize her.

'Pray to God and His Mother', the missionary said, 'and try always to be patient with everybody. One day you will find great happiness.'

In this way Kateri grew up. Life was hard for her. Often she was exhausted by the tiring work she had to do. It was the custom for the women of the tribe to build the houses and many times Kateri was so worn out that she felt she couldn't go on.

'Do you truly love God?' asked Anastasia one night when Kateri was lying on her bed of skins.

'You know I do Anastasia,' replied Kateri. 'I wish I could do something to show my love for God.'

'There is one way of showing him,' said Anastasia. 'At present you suffer all your hardships in silence, because you are the daughter of a chief. Learn to suffer for a better reason. Bear your hardships for the love of Jesus, and offer all your pain and sorrow for the tribe, that they too, may come to know about Christ and his blessed Mother.'

So this was how Kateri lived until it was time for her to be married.

All the arrangements had been made in secret by Thunder Cloud and Light Foot. The guests had been invited to a great feast. Kateri was told to dress in her best clothes and join the group of women who sat apart from the men, talking quietly among themselves. When the men had finished smoking their pipes, the Chief made a signal to Light Foot. Quickly she rose, took a dish of corn-cakes, gave them to Kateri, and indicated that she should give them to a young warrior sitting nearby.

At once Kateri understood. This was the husband who had been chosen for her. If she gave him the corn-cakes, it would show that she agreed to marry him. She was being tricked into a marriage she did not want!

Kateri rushed outside into the forest. In vain did the chief and the young brave search for her. Only when the young man had gone home in disgust, did Kateri return to the chief's house.

As you can imagine, many people made fun of her. But without complaining, Kateri did her work. When people spoke hurtfully to her, she replied with a smile.

The gentle patience and affection she showed to all won her many friends, and at last she was left

in peace to follow her own way of loving God. When she was nineteen, to her great joy, a Blackrobe came to her door.

'Anastasia told me you wanted to see me,' he said. 'My name is Father de Lamberville, and I am a Jesuit priest.'

'Oh Father, for many years, since I was a little girl', exclaimed Kateri, 'I have longed to be baptized. I want to belong to God entirely.'

'But first you must learn what it means to be a Christian,' said the priest.

Kateri told him that her mother had been a Christian. She told him that Anastasia had already taught her many things. Father de Lamberville was surprised at the fervour shown by Kateri. He questioned her and was amazed at the amount of her knowledge.

'You know a great deal,' he said. 'I will prepare you for Baptism, but first you must have your uncle's consent.'

That very night, Kateri asked the Chief's permission to be baptized. At first, he was reluctant, but seeing how greatly she longed for this one thing, he at last agreed. Overjoyed, Kateri rushed to Anastasia to tell her the wonderful news.

On Easter Sunday, 1676, Kateri was baptized.

Anastasia and Katherine, as she was now called, rejoiced together, but many hardships were in store for Katherine. The women of the tribe could not understand the life that Katherine led. Light Foot's anger against her was greater than ever since her baptism, and when Katherine prayed or said the rosary, the people of the tribe stood around her laughing and pointing at her in scorn.

'Look at her, what is wrong with her that she cannot find a husband,' they would say.

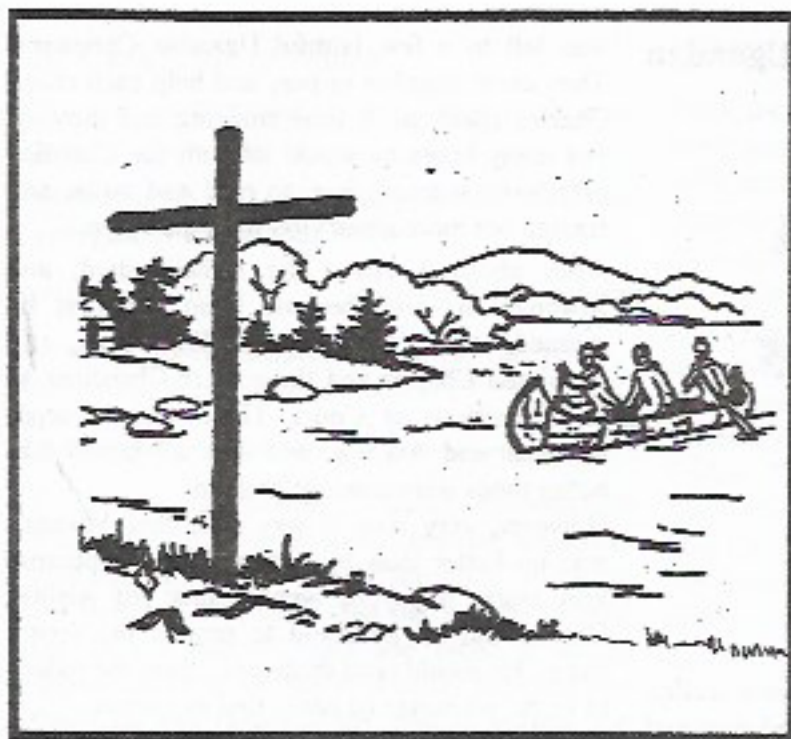
To make matters worse, Anastasia came to say goodbye.

'I am going away from here to live in a Christian village,' she said. 'Then I can worship God in peace. I would like to take you with me, but your uncle will never agree.'

Katherine's heart was heavy as she watched her old friend leave.

Anastasia was all she had left in the world.

Now she depended on God entirely to fill her life. Once again, she offered her pain and sorrows to God, who had already planned her future life for her.



One day, some Indian missionaries came to the village. Katherine was filled with joy at meeting Christians of her own people. She talked with them for a long time, and they were amazed at this young woman who had borne so much suffering for God.

'Take me with you when you go away,' she begged. 'My uncle will never give his permission, but my aunt will be happy to see me go. Please let me come with you.'

Early the next morning Katherine slipped out of her cabin and ran swiftly into the forest. Her new found friends were waiting for her, to take her with them on the long trip to the far north where the Catholics lived. Her uncle and his warriors tried to follow her but her friends tricked them and they got safely away. At the Mission there was a wonderful reunion when she found Anastasia waiting to welcome her.

'My home is yours,' said Anastasia. Katherine was very happy, she found herself in a new world where people understood how she wanted to live. Even so, a further trial awaited her. Her adopted sister, finding out where Katherine was, followed her all the way and tried to arrange a marriage for her. Katherine steadfastly refused. Her sister pleaded with her.

'It is not our custom for a woman to remain unmarried,' she said. 'Mohawk women always have a husband. Why do you think that you can be different?'

But nothing would make Katherine change. She had promised her life to God. Even if she had to live in poverty for the rest of her life, she would never marry. Finally in 1679 she settled the question of not marrying. She made a vow of chastity in the Church before all the tribe. Her people now knew she belonged to God in a special way.

Because she loved God very much and showed it in her life by her patience and forgiveness, Katherine was allowed to receive

Holy Communion. This was very rare in those days.

Just one year later, Katherine died. For the last two months of her life, she lay on her bed in great pain. All who came near her were amazed at the smile which was always on her face. She was only twenty four years old when she died. Most of her life had been lived amid hardships and with a lot of misunderstandings. Through all the years she had offered her sufferings to God, whom now she was to meet face to face.

Her sufferings of mind and body bore great fruit.

Most of the Mohawk Indians became Christians and now Catherine is known as the 'Lily of the Mohawks'.

Questions:

1. It was only in the 20th Century that people were encouraged to receive Holy Communion very frequently.

Do you think this is good or not so good?

What is a possible problem with being allowed to receive Holy Communion frequently?

What is a good point about it?

2. Some PNG sisters have also had to run away from home when they wanted to give themselves to God. What do you think your family would say if a member wanted to become a religious sister? See if you can think of the reactions of the following people and the reasons they would have:

grandparents Yes/No Why?

parents Yes/No Why?

aunties/uncles Yes/No Why?

brothers/sisters Yes/No Why?

Charles Lwanga and the Ugandan Martyrs



Deep in Central Africa is a country called Uganda. It is a very mountainous land. Some of the mountains are so high they are called the 'Mountains of the Moon'. Their tops are always covered with snow. The valleys below are warm, with rich forests filled with all kinds of animals and beautifully coloured birds.

A hundred years ago, the country was ruled by a king called the Kabaka. He owned all the land and all the people. He was very wicked and everyone was afraid of him. At this time some White Fathers went to Uganda to bring the Good News of Christ. At first, the Kabaka was very friendly to the missionaries, but when they told him that he did cruel things, he was very angry and tried to murder them. They hid for a time and then came back, when things were quiet.

The Kabaka tried to make the missionaries work for him against other tribes, but they refused. For awhile he did nothing, but he did not forget. Near the King's palace, the White Fathers had built a large mission station. There were outstations about a day's journey away. Charles Lwanga, a young Chief from one of these outstations, who had become a Christian, was chosen to be one of the King's pages. This meant that he had to go to live in the Palace, along with other young men who were also Royal Pages.

Look up the meaning of Page as it is used in this story.

This was the time the missionaries had been sent away, so the spreading of the Good News

was left to a few faithful Ugandan Christians. They came together to pray and help each other. Charles spent much time studying and praying. For many hours he would sit with the Christian catechists, learning how to read and write, and finding out more about God from the Bible.

After about 3 years, the Kabaka died, and Mwanga his son, became King. At first he seemed eager to please the Europeans, and appointed Charles and three other Christians to high positions at Court. These were Joseph, Matthias and Andrew, and they all hoped that better times were coming for them.

However, very soon it was clear that Mwanga was no better than his father. He also became very angry if anyone went against his wishes. Charles did all he could to protect the young pages. He would send them away from the palace to work, whenever he could find an excuse.

One day a message arrived at the priests' house to say that three Christians had been arrested. Immediately, the priests rushed over to the palace to see the King. The King received them with great courtesy, listened to what they had to say and then told them to wait outside, letting them believe that he would free the young men. All day they waited, and then they learnt the sad news - in a fit of anger the King had ordered the three young men to be killed in front of him.

For a time after this, there was a period of calm. Charles and Joseph tried to fight the wicked ways of the king, which were now openly practiced at the court. This made the King very angry and he screamed, 'Whatever the Kabaka desires is good'.



On the Feast of All Saints, 1st November, 1885, Fr Lourdel baptized twenty two Ugandans.

'This is the feast of All Saints,' he said. 'This Feast Day will not come around for some of you again next year, because you will be put to death for love of Jesus Christ.'

Mwanga began blaming the Christians in his own household for working against him. 'Yes' some jealous people said, 'they are the ones who disobey the Kabaka.' Mwanga roared, 'Yes, you are right. Whenever I want them they are working in the park or off on a message .. Excuses! Disobedience! Treason!

He went on to say that they alone, of all his people refused to obey his commands.

The leader of the court Christians was the ever faithful Joseph. On the night of November 14th he was summoned into the royal presence. 'You are a traitor' screamed the king. 'I serve my master with loyalty and love' Joseph replied quietly. 'You pray' the king accused. 'I pray for God's blessing on the King and his country.'

And so it went on all through the night. At dawn, Mwanga seemed calmer. He allowed Joseph to leave, and it looked as though another storm had passed. Joseph knew better. He hurried to the Mission where he attended Mass and received Holy Communion.

Soon a page came to recall Joseph to the royal presence. The king had worked himself into a rage again. As Joseph walked into the room, he jumped up and shouted, 'Mukaso, falsely called 'Joseph', you are condemned to be burned alive as soon as the fire can be lighted.' Joseph said coolly, 'then I am to die because of my belief in Jesus.' The guards took Joseph to the place of punishment. The chief executioner admired Joseph and did not want him to be given such a slow and painful death. He asked a guard to bring him a sword. Joseph understood; he knelt down, and bent his head. It was cut off and thrown into the fire.

If the king hoped to put an end to Christianity he was sadly mistaken. Twenty pages raced to the Mission and begged for Baptism. The next morning they made their first Communion. Then they hurried back to the palace, strong for whatever might come. They did not have long to wait. The king ordered all the pages to come into his presence, then he said: 'Let everyone who prays, step forward and confess.' All but three of the young men stepped forward. For hours he

kept them there, yelling, screaming and accusing them of being against him. He told them that if they did not give up their faith, he would have them put to death. Another forty pages went to Father Lourdel to ask for Baptism. Mwanga did not know what to do. 'How can it be' he said, 'that they do not fear death?'

On May 22nd, one of the young Christians refused to commit a sin of impurity for the King. The King came in from his hunting trip and when he heard what had happened, he started to scream and run around like a mad man. The King asked all the pages: 'How long do you intend to remain Christian?'

'Till death,' they responded. 'Then you will be put to death,' the ruler angrily shouted.

He ordered all Christians to be handed over to the guards, and to be cut and put to death by fire. Charles gathered all the young pages round him and told them to run and hide. 'No' they replied. 'We will stand together, firm for Christ.' Some of the pages were Anglicans but they all stood together for Jesus.

As night fell, the war drums sounded, calling the executioners. Charles gathered the pages around him. Some who were not yet baptized, were given the Sacrament. They prayed together all night.

Early on the morning of May 26th, Mwanga sat in Council. He forbade the practice of Christianity. In vain did Fr. Lourdel beg for mercy for the Christians. The royal pages were all assembled before the Kabaka. 'Now' Mwanga said, 'All who wish to pray walk to the right side of the room.' Without hesitation, Charles and his companions did so. Then one of the guards threw down his spear and joined them. The death sentence for the royal pages was final. They were tortured even before the death march began. Then they were roped together and made to march to the place of execution forty kilometres away.

As the group, led by Charles, passed Father Lourdel, he was amazed along with all the other bystanders, to see their courage and serenity. For several days the pages were kept bound hand and foot with sticks around their necks. During this time, they prayed continually and said the rosary. Charles continued to instruct and comfort the whole group. Through the week they watched the pile of wood for the fire grow

higher and higher. Yet there was never a thought of giving up. As the clans gathered there was a growing sense of something wonderful that was to happen. There was some attempt at begging for mercy, not by the pages, but from others who realized the wickedness of what was being done. But Mwanga would not listen.

On the morning of Ascension Thursday, June 3, 1886, the executioners began the day with preparations for ritual dances. As they danced they sang these words

*'The mothers of these boys shall weep today!
Yes they shall weep today.'*

The boys understood that this was their last night on earth. Their custom was to free the prisoners so that they might try to escape. Instead of running away, the boys greeted each other with shouts of joy, praising God that they had all remained faithful to the end.

Charles was the first to die. The wood was arranged around his body and then he was slowly roasted to death. The rest of the pages were given one last chance to return to the palace, but nothing would make them give up their faith. Even the youngest, Kikali, persevered to the end, despite the pleading of his family.

The boys were wrapped in reed mats and placed between layers of wood which were then set on fire. The only sounds to be heard above the roar of the flames were the prayers of the victims. Among these victims were members of the King's own household, and even his own son.

All the people who saw them die, tell of the peace and joy with which the martyrs gave their lives to Christ in this great act of love. In the following year, the number of people who wanted to become Christians multiplied at an extraordinary rate.

Read Mt 10:34-39. Who does it particularly apply to in this story?
Which part of the story did you find the most interesting?
Why do you think Charles was put to death first?
Find a picture of the Ugandan flag and copy it into your books. Write a prayer for Ugandan youths underneath.

Why honour the Saints?

On T.V., video and in the newspapers, we see many examples of human beings being unkind and cruel to each other. Sometimes we might think:

Can the world ever change?

Can people be good?

Is it even worth being good?

It is a welcome change to look at people whose lives were devoted to God and to others, and who opposed the evil things they found in the world.

In canonizing the saints, the Church is not just interested in praising their bravery or saying that they are now in glory. She looks on the saints as people with a message for every age. The example of the saints can stir our imagination, freshen our hopes, and awaken in us the courage and generosity we need, if we too are to reach the holiness that is intended by our Christian vocation.

The saints are proof that the action of the Spirit is effective in human lives, in people from different nations, married or single, religious or lay, men, women and children.

The realization that the saints pray for us and that we can ask them to pray for us, strengthens us and gives us courage. The saints remind us that we cannot use excuses that we are not intelligent enough, or educated enough, or strong enough. Children are saints, and men and women and the uneducated as well as the educated.

We are all called to be saints. But many Christians do not take their call to holiness very seriously. When we look at the canonized saints of the Church, we are invited to live up to the example of those who have won the struggle against sin, who have overcome their own weakness, and 'fought the good fight to the end.' 2 Tim 4:7.

Reflecting on their lives reminds us that holiness is always the same. It involves a life of loving and listening to God and opposing evil.

Lastly, the Church is a net which has caught all sorts of fish. She is and always has been, a combination of the dull and the magnificent, the selfish and the heroic, the untidy and the beautiful. She can also be compared to a garden which has produced both weeds and flowers. The net and the garden contain the worthless and the valuable. The valuable fish, the beautiful flowers, are people who opened themselves to the action of the Spirit, they put their trust in God and God was faithful to them.

Copy four of these verses: 1 Pet 2:9, Eph 4:1, Rom 1:7, 1 Cor 1:2, Phil 1:1, Rom 12:1, Eph 5:3, 1 Cor 6:9-11, 1 Pet 1:15.

Topic Five

Christianity in PNG and SI

All of us know that Jesus, the Son of God, chose Israel as the country where he would be born, where he would live, work, suffer and die. But we also know that Jesus told his Apostles, *'The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed which, when buried in the ground, will grow into a big tree' (Mt 13:31).*

Israel was the first country where the Kingdom of God was planted and grew. But from there, the Apostles took the seed and planted it all over the world.

We saw in the first centuries how the suffering of many martyrs was the seed buried in the ground. We saw in the next centuries how Christianity spread through Europe and how the tree began to grow and spread new branches. We saw how the tree needed pruning. And finally we saw how the Kingdom spread to many other countries outside of Europe.

Now it is time to look at our own country. The history of Christianity in our country has a definite beginning, it began when the first missionaries arrived. But before Jesus was born, God spent a long time preparing the Jewish people. In the same way, God's Spirit was active in our society, long before any missionaries arrived. How? Well, ...

- there was belief in life after death
- there was the desire to overcome sickness and the power of sorcery
- there was the desire to keep life going for oneself and one's clan
- there was the desire to live in an atmosphere of secure social relationships
- there was the belief that people of themselves are 'not enough' to bring about good crops and other good things
- there was the belief that the land must be respected and loved
- there was belief in joy and beauty seen for example, in our music and dancing



These and other values of traditional Melanesian life were the ways God's Spirit was active in preparing our people to receive the Good News.

At the beginning of this book, we said that one cannot really talk about the history of the Church in a particular place, without knowing all about the culture, and the social and economic and political conditions.

But now we are going to talk about our own place, and these things are things we do know. We might not know what it was really like in the time of Henry the Eighth, but we do know what it is like to be a Papua New Guinean or a Solomon Islander. We know our own customs, and the life of our own people. We know the condition of our country. So in these next pages as we look at our own story, let us reflect on what it meant to be a Christian in our own country today. Let us ask ourselves

- what place does Jesus have in my life?
- am I living up to the witness of the early Missionaries and the early Melanesian Christians?
- how is the Church showing that its roots have spread deep down into our soil?



Our beginnings

The Solomon Islands have the privilege of being the place where the first Mass was said in Melanesia.

Mendana, a Spanish navigator sailing from Peru, took with him Franciscan priests, and these were the ones who in the 16th Century celebrated the first Masses in the Solomons. The first one was in 1586.

The first Mass that we know was celebrated in Papua New Guinea was in 1605, about 30 years later but in a new Century, the 17th Century.

This Mass was celebrated at Sideia, an island in Milne Bay. If you go to that island today, you will find the place marked with a white wooden cross. It has these words written on it:

Here on the 28th April, 1605,
the Franciscan Chaplain on
Torres' ship, came ashore
and said the first known Mass
to be celebrated in Papua

The reason we know these dates and the places, is because ship's captains are required to keep 'log books' which are diaries of the activities of the ship. Into this diary also has to be entered the ship's position (its latitude and longitude).

Many of the log books of the early explorers are still available for people to look at today. Usually they are in the museums of the countries the explorers came from.

The first Christian Mission to commence work in Papua New Guinea was the London Missionary Society (LMS). Their first station was at Manu-Manu near Port Moresby, where six teachers from Raratonga in the Cook Islands began work on the 21st November, 1872. Some famous LMS missionaries are Dr. and Mrs. Lawes, and Dr. James Chalmers.

The next Christian group to arrive were the Methodists (now part of the United Church). A famous Methodist is Dr. George Brown who landed in the Duke of Yorks on 15th August, 1875.

The first permanent Catholic Missions were established by Fr. Navarre M.S.C., in Rabaul in 1882 and at Yule Island in 1885.

Dr. Flierl, the Lutheran missionary, came to Finschhafen in 1886.

The Anglican priest, Copland King, started his work at Wedau on the North Coast in 1891.

Only in 1844 is the name Melanesia (which includes Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands) used for the first time in official Church documents. This was when the Vicariates of Melanesia and Micronesia were set up.

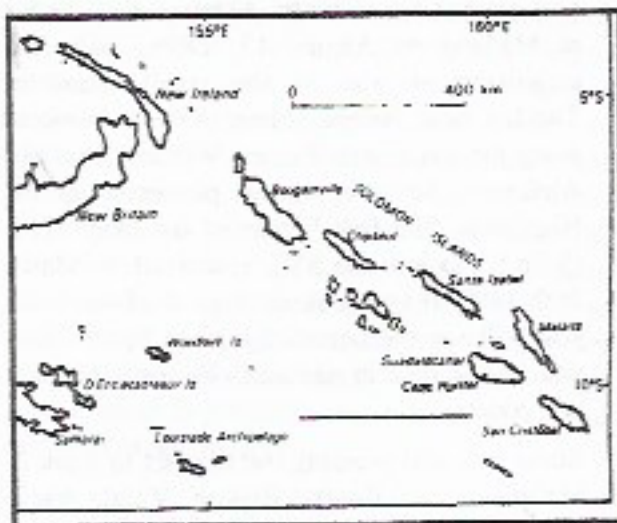
Before that, these areas were part of the Apostolic Prefecture of Western Oceania set up in 1836, and given to the care of the Marist Fathers. Western Oceania included New Zealand, all Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Fiji, New Caledonia and many other places.

What a job for the Marists!

In 1836, on the 24th December, eight Marist missionaries, including one who would later become a saint, Peter Chanel, left France for Western Oceania.

Although the Bishop in charge of the group, John Baptist Pompalier, originally had ideas of coming to Papua New Guinea, there were many problems and changes. He finally ended up in New Zealand, and Peter Chanel in Futuna.

On the 2nd February, 1845, more Marists, including another Bishop, John Baptist Epalle, left London, this time specifically for Melanesia. They arrived in the Solomons at the beginning of December in 1845. Their first foundation was made at Makira on the SW coast of San Cristobal Island.



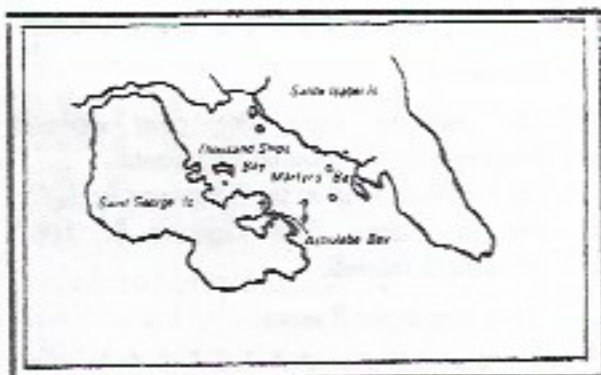
Draw this map in your books. Colour in San Cristobal Island. Put a dot on the SW coast. Think of a suitable title for your map. Write it in.

Before the foundation was made on San Cristobal however, tragedy struck. Bishop Epalle wanted to visit Santa Isabel Island before making the foundation at San Cristobal, because it was the centre of the archipelago, and map makers called it the most important of the Solomon Islands. He arrived in Thousand Ships Bay on 12th December, 1845.

Exactly one week later he was dead.

The map in the next column shows where the ship was anchored, where Bishop Epalle was attacked by the people (Martyr's Bay) and where he was buried (cross) on 20th December, 1845.

Sadly the missionaries returned to San Cristobal to begin their work. Many suffered from fever and were so sick they could hardly walk. In some outstations they were attacked and killed. When the new Marist Bishop, Bishop John Collomb arrived, he found that 3 missionaries had been murdered and one had died, so he took the rest - three priests and three brothers, and headed for Woodlark on the 3rd September, 1847.



In a letter written from Woodlark in December, of that same year, Bishop Collomb wrote that fever still troubled them as it did in San Cristobal. But they would not give up. The Bishop began to learn the language, mastering ten words a day. He divided the area into three sections and gave one to each priest.

In April, 1848, another priest arrived, Fr. Villien, and Collomb decided to open a new Mission. So on May 9 they sailed westwards from Woodlark towards Umboi (Rooke Island). (see the map below)

They had not been there very long, when on 16th July, Bishop Collomb died.

Then 6 months later, Fr. Villien died. The ones on Rooke then withdrew to Woodlark.

Even with only one station, the Marists found their men suffering from exhaustion, fever and starvation. By this time, 1850, eighteen missionaries altogether had been lost, and the health of all of them was bad.

Reluctantly, the Marists asked to be released of their responsibility for Melanesia, and in 1852 Rome agreed. The Marists tried to get others to replace them, but found it very difficult. Eugene de Mazenod who was asked to send members of his congregation said: 'I do not flatter myself that I could succeed where the Marists did not. They do not lack either zeal or personnel.'



- Summary:
- ~ The Marists were the first religious congregation to come to Melanesia.
 - ~ They arrived first in the Solomons in 1882 and in Papua New Guinea in 1885 (Woodlark Island).
 - ~ They stayed for 8 years.

The next Congregation to try were the PIME Fathers. These priests were Italian, with their headquarters in Milan.

What do you know already about Milan?

On October 8, 1852, seven PIME fathers left Sydney for Woodlark and Rooke. The Marist Fathers, who remained until the end, welcomed them gladly and gave them encouragement. They also advised them to leave Woodlark and to reoccupy Rooke Island.

The newcomers set to work in their new mission without delay. But very soon they faced the same difficulties: sickness, starvation and the lack of interest of the local people. One priest Fr. Mazzuconi, then left for treatment in Sydney. Soon the others also were so sick they had to follow. They hoped to meet with Fr. Mazzuconi in Australia, before he returned. However when they arrived in Sydney, they found he had already left, anxious to bring them their needed supplies. Fr. Mazzuconi, back on Woodlark, found the priests gone. The people around him pretended to rejoice at his return, but when his back was turned a man sneaked up behind him and murdered him. The mission was abandoned.

The PIME Fathers were on Woodlark and Rooke for three years. They arrived on 8th October, 1852, and departed Woodlark on 10th July, 1855. When they left there was no Catholic priest left in Melanesia. It would stay like this until 1881, when Rome called on the MSC Fathers to take up the challenge.

The MSC Fathers set foot on Matupit (ENB) on the feast of St. Michael the Archangel in 1882. They settled at Nodup where the people made them welcome and gave them shelter and land to live on. In 1885, the MSC's made a second foundation at Yule Island off the coast of Papua. Here on the fourth of July, Mass was celebrated and this anniversary is still remembered with special devotion today more than 100 years later.

From the very beginning, the MSC's were assisted by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH Sisters) and later by the MSC Sisters.

In 1896, the Society of the Divine Word under the leadership of Fr. Limbrock, opened up a third area of missionary activity, along the north east coast of New Guinea. Although they landed at Madang on August 13, 1896, their first establishment was on the small island of Tumleo near Aitape. Many SVD's laboured along the coast, later Fathers William Ross and Alphonse Schaefer were pioneers in the Highlands. The first Sisters of the Holy Spirit (S.Sp.S.) to join the SVD's, arrived on March 26th 1899. If you look on Page 2 of this book you will see the name of a Holy Spirit Sister who has worked in education for many years in this country.

Rome was still pressing the Marists to work in Melanesia, so finally Bishop Vidal, Vicar Apostolic of Fiji, offered to take charge of the North Solomons. The Marists settled originally on the Shortland Islands in 1899, then later moved the centre of their missionary activity to Kieta in Bougainville.

As early as 1912 the first local Congregation of Sisters was founded: the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI Sisters). Six years later the Handmaids of the Lord (AD sisters) were founded in Papua.



Louis Vangeke

In the year 1904, the wife of a famous sorcerer in the village of Veifa'a (which is in the Mekeo district of Central Province), gave birth to a son.

But the baby was so small and weak that his father would have nothing to do with him. He suggested that the mother throw him away. There were OLSH Sisters in the village at that time, and Sr. Antoinette took the tiny baby to her clinic and had him baptized Louis, after the patron saint of France. Tiny Louis received very special attention and Sister said he would be a great man some day.

Louis grew up at the mission and when he was old enough, he went to school on Yule Island. Here Louis heard the story of Jesus, and from that day knew that he wanted to be a priest.

He kept this to himself as he continued his schooling, and later trained to be a teacher. When he was old enough he worked as a teacher in his own place of Veifa'a. Later it was planned that he would marry a girl from Veifa'a, Stephanie Maino. Louis still preferred to be a priest, but could see no way to realize his secret dream.

Then he heard that Bishop de Boismenu was starting a group of Papuan Brothers. Louis forgot about the marriage, as he was not very interested from the beginning, and soon departed for Kubuna to join the first group of Religious Brothers.

Louis was a very good student and one day his teacher asked him if he had ever thought of becoming a priest. Louis was too shy to say that he had thought about it every day for some years. Instead he said 'Oh, I could never aim as high as that!'

Father explained how important it was for people to have their own priests instead of missionaries from other countries and Louis agreed to study for the priesthood.

How excited Bishop de Boismenu was when he heard this news. The problem was, where could he be trained? Louis was given special lessons in Latin and French while the Bishop wrote letters to Seminaries all around the world to find the most suitable one for his Papuan student.

After a few months a letter came from Madagascar, near the East Coast of Africa, saying they were willing to train Louis. Louis had never

been far from his own place, and when he looked in the atlas and saw the position of Madagascar, it seemed very frightening and very far away.

Despite his fears, just one month later he was on his way. But first a long voyage on a huge ship, his first ride in a train, and then Tanarive, where the seminary was, and always the French language! All the lessons were given in French, and although there were certain days at the seminary when the students were allowed to speak their own language, poor Louis had no one to talk to - for nobody could speak Mekeo!

After three years Louis graduated to the Major Seminary, where he studied philosophy for the next two years, and then Theology for another four years. Then in 1939 when Louis was 33 years old, he graduated and a Jesuit Bishop from France ordained Father Louis Vangeke to the priesthood. Louis had been away from home for 10 long years. Two months later he was on a ship, heading for Papua New Guinea. When he arrived on the wharf in Port Moresby a great crowd waited to greet him. He was escorted to the church where he celebrated his first Mass in his own country, giving thanks to God for his safe return.



Sir Hubert Murray welcomed him at Government House and there were many other official welcomes in Port Moresby.

After a few days he was able to take the mission boat to Yule Island. As the boat came into the jetty, it seemed to him that everyone for miles around was gathered there, men and women, babies, school children, very old people, all singing. And the church bells were ringing to welcome him home!!!

But this was just the beginning, for all the villages around wanted to see him and wanted him to say Mass for them.

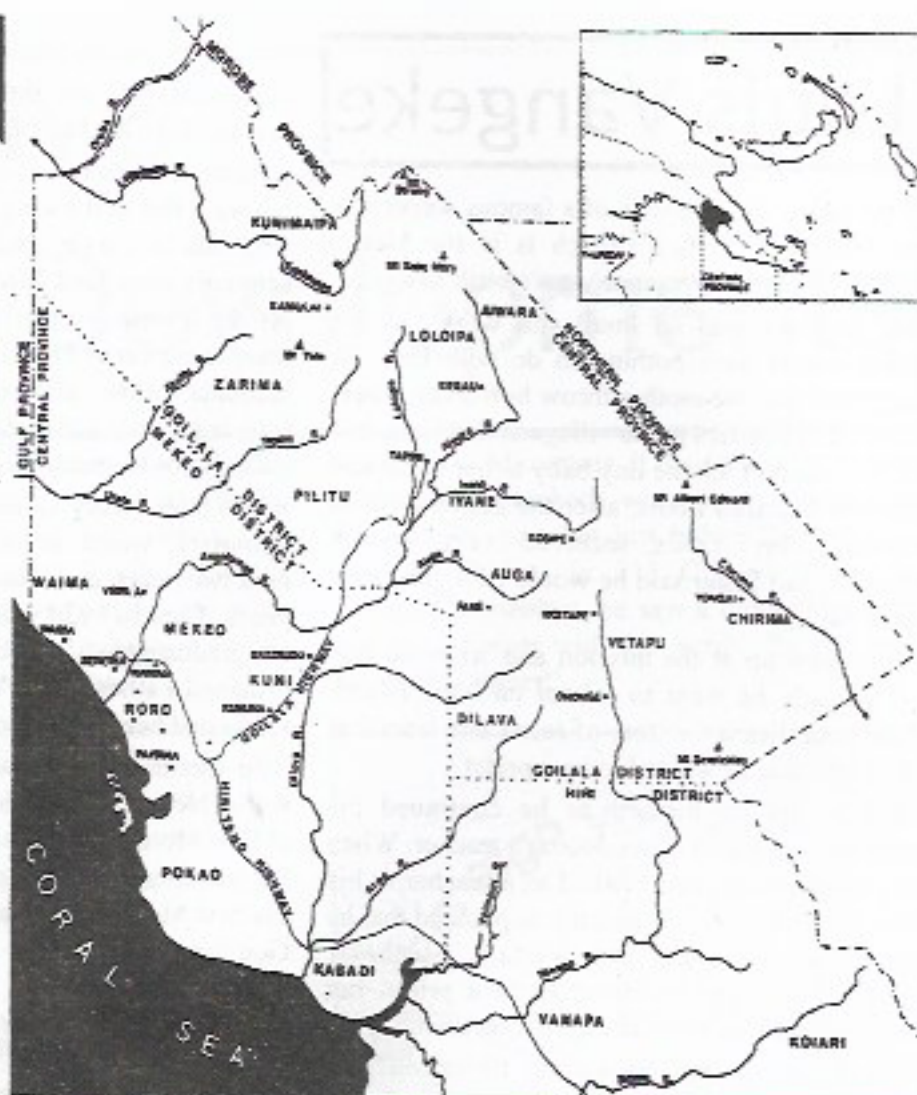
Words of Pope John Paul on May 7th, 1984 on his arrival at Jackson's airport

God Bless
Papua New
Guinea !

May his peace
descend on your
beautiful
islands,
your great
rivers,
high mountains
and deep
valleys.

May it settle on
your volcanoes
and fill your
blue seas.

And may the
love of Christ
abide in your
hearts
and your
homes,
today and
forever!



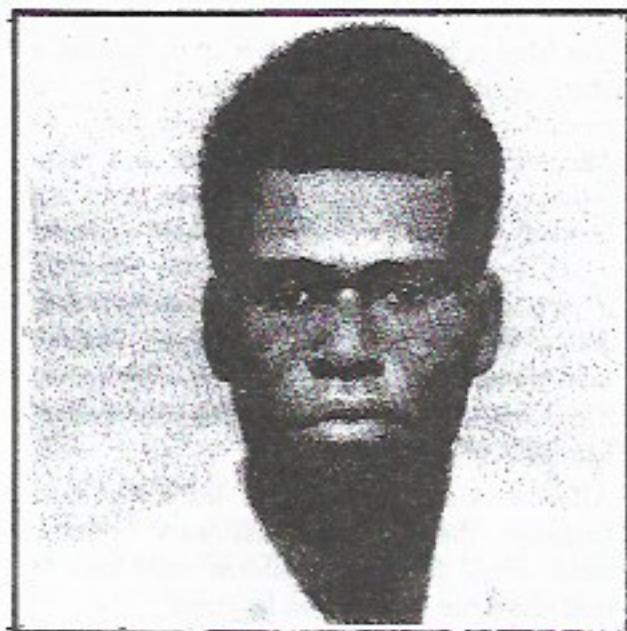
When he finally reached his own village of Veifa'a, the people had prepared a great feast. He was carried on a chair attached to two long poles on the shoulders of the men. When they reached the centre of the village his own brother stepped forward and smashed a bunch of betelnuts across the back of a pig, an honour and a sign of peace. After Mass, ten thousand people took part in the feasting and dancing. Fr. Louis had never seen anything like it. A bull from the mission, thousands of wallabies, birds, and fish had been cooked. The piles of bananas and vegetables stood over two metres high. In 1962 Fr. Louis Vangeke celebrated his Silver Jubilee as a priest. Many times the expatriate bishops had asked Louis to take on the responsibility of leading a diocese as a bishop. Every time he refused. However, with independence in sight he was forced, for the sake of his people, to say 'Yes'.

On the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, 3rd December, 1970, in St Mary's Cathedral Sydney, before a big crowd of missionaries and others, Fr. Louis Vangeke, of Mekeo, Papua New Guinea, was consecrated Bishop by Pope Paul the sixth, at that time visiting Australia. The son of a Mekeo sorcerer had become a successor of the first Apostles in his own land. Sister Antoinette's prophecy had come true.

The Map above shows the main areas of Central Province where Bishop Louis Vangeke lived and worked.

1. See if you can find: Veifa'a (his birthplace), Yule Island (where he went to school), Kubuna (where he trained as a brother), Waima (a place where he worked)
2. The Map also shows the Mission Stations of his area. Write down all the places that you think are Mission Stations. Hint: There are 15 shown on this map.
3. Rewrite the prayer opposite, but naming a river, a mountain, a person's heart : to make it a really personal prayer.

Peter ToRot



Peter ToRot was from the Gazelle Peninsula. His home village was Rakunai, just a short drive from the busy town of Rabaul.

His people had very fine plantations of coconuts and cocoa, with big gardens of fruits and vegetables. His father had been a chief in the village, and when ToRot was only a young boy, his father sent him to school to have a good education. Later ToRot went to St. Paul's College Taliligap, to be trained as a catechist.

In 1942, the war came to Rabaul. Very soon the Japanese had taken control of the town and the villages around it. Before long they came to take away Fr. Laufer, ToRot's parish priest and good friend. Fr. Laufer spoke to Peter: "I'm leaving my work to you. Look after the people and help them to remember God."

When ToRot saw his friend taken away, his heart was very heavy. How could he lead the people in God's ways during this difficult time? It seemed too hard for him. But he knew God would help him and he decided that he would try his best. Since the Japanese would not allow the people to move around without a pass, ToRot organized people to meet in small groups to pray. He got them to build tunnels so that they could meet in safety, away from the guns and bombs.

When the people were afraid he encouraged them. He visited the sick and the dying and prayed with them. He encouraged young people to marry and to be faithful to each other.

One day, the Japanese called many of the village chiefs together. Tata from Rakunai went too. "We have a new rule" they said. "Nobody can pray to God any more. You are praying to your God that we will be defeated."

The chiefs listened but they were not impressed. Then the Japanese soldiers said, "Forget about God's laws. Don't follow Jesus Christ! Do whatever you want to do, you can sleep with all the different girls if you want to, but do not continue to be Christians."

Tata the chief went home to Rakunai and told ToRot all that he had heard. ToRot disagreed with all this, and many of the people and the other catechists felt the same. ToRot continued to pray with the people and to help them in their spiritual lives. He witnessed marriages in the chapels in the caves. He had services in different villages on Sundays. He visited the sick to care for them and pray with them. He buried the dead and prayed with the relatives. He baptized the babies.

One day a Rakunai man wanted to marry the wife of another man. ToM had heard that Japanese say they were free to take any woman. ToRot warned ToM not to take another man's wife and he also spoke to the woman. When the woman refused to go with ToM he was furious. He went and reported Peter to the Japanese Officers. He told the Japanese that ToRot was still holding prayer services and performing marriage ceremonies.

The next day the Japanese police went to see Peter's brother. "Is it true that ToRot had lotu for the people yesterday?" Tatamai, Peter's brother replied, "It is true." "Did you take part in the service?" asked the Japanese, Meshida. "Yes". Thirdly Meshida asked him, "Did you know that your brother was not to hold any more religious services?" Tatamai said, "Yes". Then Meshida hit him over the head with a stick and sentenced him to one month's jail.

Immediately the Japanese Police and ToM left for ToRot's home. They raided the cave where ToRot conducted his religious services and also the houses of his three brothers. They broke their suitcases and took ToRot's Bible, a Catechism, and the baptism and marriage registers. They also took two crucifixes.

After raiding the houses, they took ToRot prisoner. He was questioned about his activities as a catechist.

When he said "Yes, I had a Lotu service yesterday" he was belted with a stick and put in jail.

When his uncle came to visit him, Peter ToRot told him, 'I am in jail because of my work for God. I am not afraid and I will not give up God and my work for Him. Even now I know that the Japanese will not let me out to live. I know they will kill me.'

Everyone knew that ToRot was in jail because he kept the Church active and alive in spite of the warning of the Japanese, and especially because he defended marriage.

Paula, Peter's wife, brought him clean clothes and food. 'Please' she begged, 'Remember me and your two little children. Come home to us. Promise the Japanese that you will give up your Christian work, then they will let you go.'

ToRot replied 'Don't try to buy me back from the soldiers. I can't disobey God's words to my heart, and if they want to kill me, I am ready to die for him.'

One day the Japanese told ToRot that a doctor was coming to give him an injection. The young catechist understood what that meant. He washed and shaved and put on his best clothes. When the doctors arrived, the officers sent all the other prisoners away.

When they returned, Peter ToRot was dead.



Yot

Yot lived at Nobonob which is up in the hills, a short distance from Madang town. From his mountain village, he could look down on Madang Harbour and see Karkar and other islands, away over the beautiful blue sea. For a number of years the Lutheran mission had been working in this area, but now for the first time, a missionary had come to live at Nobonob. When the missionary began to teach, Yot and his mother and father were very interested. They were among the first group of people baptized at Nobonob.

After working very hard to learn the local language, the Lutheran missionary began a small school so that the children could learn to read and write in their own language.

'Can I come to school?' asked Yot. The missionary looked at him. He was much bigger than most of the other boys, but he was very keen to learn. 'Yes', said the missionary, 'but you must work very hard.'

Yot did work hard, and after a few years he was doing so well that he was asked to help with the teaching.

In the church meeting at Nobonob one day, the congregation began to talk about other people who lived in their district. They were concerned for the many other villages, where the people didn't know anything about God. 'We should send somebody from our church to teach others,' they said. 'We could start at the village at Silopi.' But who would go?

Yot, who was a young man by now, stood up. 'I'll go,' he said. 'I've been praying about this and asking God what he wants me to do. Now I feel sure that God wants me to go to Silopi.'

At first, Yot found the work at Silopi very difficult. He built a house for himself and a school building, but not many children came. 'We don't want to sit in school all day,' they complained. 'We want to play, or go hunting in the bush.'

The Silopi people too were unfriendly to Yot. Most of them just left him alone, and didn't help him with his house or garden. Very few ever came to his house.

Yot thought about this, and decided that the people did not understand that he really wanted

to be their friend, because he didn't speak the Silopi language. So every day he sat with the people and tried to learn their language. In the end the new school became strong and people began to learn about God.

After some time, the people of Nobonob asked Yot to come back to teach at their school again. Yot said 'I want to wait until the first group of Silopi people have been baptized, some of them are nearly ready. Also please send somebody here to take my place.' This is what happened, and so Yot with his new wife, went back to Nobonob.

The years went by. Yot was a good teacher and he also helped the missionary translate books into the Nobonob language. His family grew until he had two sons and four daughters.

At that time, there were two American missionaries working at Nobonob, Mr. Ander and Mr. Inselmann. Mr. Inselmann started a new mission station quite a long way from Nobonob, inland in the mountains.

Just before Christmas, on 18th December, 1942, the Japanese soldiers landed in Madang, and soon they were moving all over the district, looking for any Australians and Americans still around. They found the Nobonob missionary, Mr. Ander and took him off to prison. (Later he was murdered with the other missionaries who were prisoners on a Japanese ship at Wewak.)

Yot was very upset when he saw Mr. Ander being taken away. He hurried to his friend Yagmai, who was a Lutheran pastor at Nobonob. 'What about Mr. Inselmann?' he asked. 'He is away at the new mission station in the bush, and he doesn't know about the danger here. You must write a letter to him and warn him that the Japanese are coming.'

'Yagmai was worried. 'No, it would be too dangerous. Somebody might show the letter to the soldiers and then we'd be in trouble. They would think we were spying for their enemies.' 'Then I had better go and tell him myself,' said Yot. Yot didn't talk about it any more. Nobody knows what he did, but probably he did write and send that letter because Mr. Inselmann was able to escape and Yot got severely punished.

For about a year, the Japanese were in charge of the Madang area. Then bombs began to fall around Madang. (The Americans and Australians were trying to win Madang back from the Japanese.) Soon the village people found it too dangerous to stay in their homes on top of the hill because of the bombs.

Instead they built houses hidden in the bush in the lower valleys. It was very frightening. Nobody cooked their food during the day in case the fighter planes noticed the smoke and bombed them, and at night they only made small fires inside their houses. Every day Yot encouraged the people and gathered them together to pray.

One day a Japanese patrol arrived. They searched all the houses, and brought out a book from the house of Ipaug the Luluai. Although it was just the story of the mission, the Japanese arrested Ipaug for working for the Americans.

The soldiers didn't leave the Nobonob village people alone after that. They kept coming back and searching through the huts as if they were looking for something special.

One dreadful day they came and took all the headmen of the village. The soldiers tied Yot and seven others together and marched them off to Kauris, where the Japanese had a camp and prison. 'The Kempei wants them' the people whispered anxiously. 'He is a terrible man, what will he do to our men?'

The leader of the Japanese Military Police in that area was a hard, cruel man and everyone was afraid of him. Even some of the Japanese soldiers themselves told the village people, 'That man is a cruel and unfair person, he is a heathen who doesn't know any better'. The Nobonob headmen arrived at the camp at Kauris, and found their friend Ipaug the Luluai there already. Soon the Kempei (Captain) marched in to question them.

'How long have you been working with the Americans?' he asked Yot.

'Ever since they came to my village when I was a boy,' replied Yot.

'They are our enemies and you have been helping them. You men have been putting a bright light on top of the Nobonob church steeple to guide the American planes!'

The nine headmen looked at each other in great surprise. A light on the steeple? It was impossible.

'No, No,' they all said. 'How could we make a light? Our kerosene was all finished months ago, and if we lit a fire, the whole church would burn down. You are making a mistake.'

The Kempei looked very angry. 'You are lying! We've seen the light many times and I've sent my men to try to find it.'

Then the Kempei separated Yot and Ipaug from the other headmen. While the others watched, he asked those two over and over again about the light, but both were completely puzzled about it. 'We don't know anything about it,' they insisted. This made the Kempei angrier than ever. He ordered his men to hit Ipaug again and again with a heavy stick. Then they tied Yot to a pole like a pig, and hung the pole over a deep hole. While poor Yot was hanging there by his hands and feet, the Kempei kept on asking questions, and the soldiers cut him with their bayonets.

'And another thing,' the Kempei shouted. 'You and your people have been praying for our enemies, the Americans, if you do that they might win the fight.'

'That is true,' replied Yot. 'I do pray for them every day. But I pray for the Japanese people too, and for all people everywhere.'

'Fool!' cried the Kempei. 'I'll make you change your mind.'

He made one of his men stand below Yot in the hole with a burning coconut frond, which burned Yot's legs and back. The other headmen who were watching wanted to cry, and to stop this terrible man, but they were prisoners and could do nothing.

In the end, the Kempei grew tired of his cruelty. He sent Ipaug and the others home, warning them not to have anything to do with any Americans. But he took Yot off the pole and left him lying at the bottom of the deep hole.

For the next three months, Yot was kept in the hole nearly all the time. Mostly his hands and feet were tied, and often they hung him on the pole again while the Kempei tried to make him change his mind. Yet, although they hurt him terribly, he kept on saying 'I know nothing about a light on the church, and I will not stop praying for everybody.'

Yagmaji brought Yot's wife and oldest daughter to see him one day, but the soldiers were rough with the girl and they went away heartbroken at what was happening to Yot. Then Yot, who by now was so badly crippled that he couldn't walk, was carried from Kauris to another prison at Baitabag. There he was put into a small hut with two American pilots who had been captured. He felt sure that all three of them would die soon.

As Yot lay in the prison, he recognized a labourer there as one of his former students. Mal was very upset to see his teacher in prison.

Whenever he could, he visited Yot.

'Why are you a prisoner?' Mal asked unhappily.

'Why do they hate you so much?'

'I don't understand these things,' Yot said, 'but I can't change my mind about prayer. God is helping me.'

After three weeks at Baitabag, Yot sent Mal a message. 'Please cook me a Chinese taro for tonight, I think I will die tomorrow.'

Mal did as he was asked.

The next day, the soldiers ordered Mal and others to dig a big grave on a hill near the camp. That afternoon, Mal helped Yot as the three prisoners were taken out to die. As they walked along, Mal sobbed and cried in despair.

'Don't cry,' said Yot gently. 'Listen carefully to everything I say, and watch what happens. Don't be afraid.'

When they reached the grave, the officer let Yot talk to Mal before he died. Yot encouraged Mal. He told him what he wanted to be done about his children and their education. He sent messages for his family. He said, 'I am happy and content for myself, but I am very sorry for the Christians at Nobonob. You will have many problems in the future. When peace comes, you must all pray together for a new leader to help you and keep you strong in faith.' Then he prayed very lovingly for the people of Nobonob and for himself. He was not afraid to die as a soldier stepped forward and killed him with his bayonet.

After his death, Mal very carefully filled in the grave and marked it with stones so that he could find it again and show the place to Yot's family. However, although he tried many times to find the place again after the war was over, he was never able to find it.

The people of Nobonob however, do not need a grave to remind them of Yot, a great and fearless man of God.



The FMI Sisters

Many stories could also be told about the women who courageously carried on missionary work during the hard war years. The following story is about the bravery of a group of NGI women.



These women had already given their lives to God, in the Congregation called Daughters of Mary Immaculate.

In October, 1942, all the missionaries were brought into the prison camp at Vunapope while the Japanese declared the local nuns free to go where they liked. The Bishop called the Sisters and explained to them that under the circumstances, he was willing to give them permission to change their religious dress for ordinary clothes and allow them to go home. Not a single one accepted the offer.

They emphatically insisted that they would not only stay together but wear their religious dress.

The Sisters went back to Takabur, about 12 km away, where they had begun their training, since their house at Vunapope was already taken over by the Japanese. But then came another shock. At Takabur also, the military police soon came and ordered them from their Convent and all other buildings, the church included. So the 45 Sisters collected just a few belongings each and walked off into the bush. They were in a desperate situation, exposed to the weather without a roof over their heads.

Fortunately, the teacher trainees, who had also been expelled from their buildings, heard what happened to the Sisters and soon the whole lot of them appeared, armed with axes and bush knives.

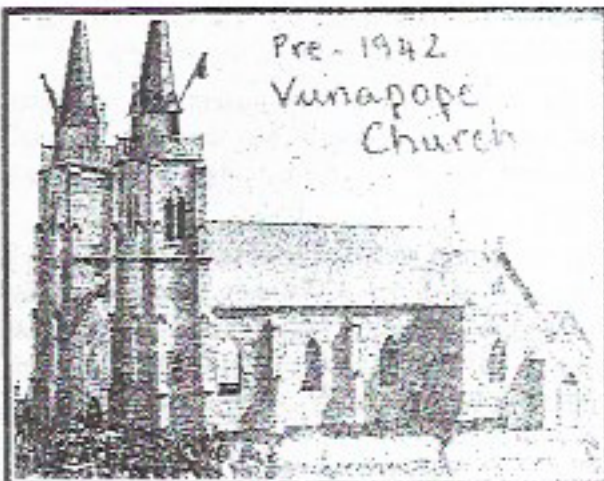
'Here we are Sisters, don't worry, we will take care of you and build decent houses for you,' said the young students.

These boys did the hard work of cutting the trees for the posts and rafters, while the Sisters lent a hand providing the long kunai grass for the roof. In a few days, enough houses were standing to accommodate all the Sisters.

The boys even dug air-raid shelters for them. The Japanese did not give them any rations, but their gardens were close by. In fact, during the next three years, they were not without food for a single day.

Old Fr. Zwinge, from Takabur, before being taken off by the military police, put Sr. Cecilia in charge of the community. She arranged the sisters into little groups, giving them their daily work, of gardening, looking after the sick, and doing the work of the catechists. Not one day during the three and a half years, did they miss their morning and evening prayers, their meditation and the divine office. They also kept First Fridays in a special way.

For Sunday Mass, they walked the 12 kilometres to Vunapope. At this time a priest was allowed to remain outside the camp with the brothers in the workshops. The Sisters began their journey on Saturday afternoon, slept in one of the villages on Saturday night, and arrived at Vunapope at 6.00 a.m. on Sunday morning. Those Sisters who were unable to walk the distance, gathered as many people as possible in their place and said together the Mass prayers and the Rosary. They did this for two years, in spite of terrible bombing and the Japanese occupation, and the Japanese dislike of Christian prayers. Two of the sisters fell victims to the bombs, two others died from sickness.



After 2 years, the bombing had completely destroyed Vunapope. The missionaries were removed to Ramale, a wet and unhealthy valley where the Japanese thought they would soon all die. The FMI Sisters promptly decided to transfer their homes to the same area, because a priest had been left free in the vicinity.

The faithful student teachers put up new houses for them, dug new air raid shelters and planted new gardens. Their happiness lasted only a few weeks. The Priest was then imprisoned with the others, and the Sisters were once more without Mass and the Sacraments. There was nobody now to protect them against the offensive actions and the atrocities of the military police.

One day, one of the police spies reported that Sister Theresia had spoken badly about the Japanese. She was accused of saying that the Japanese were 'Number Ten' and that she liked the Americans and Australians better. All the Sisters were rounded up for a court case.

Sr. Theresia was charged with having said the offensive words. She emphatically denied it. (The Japanese had no witnesses so probably they invented the charge for their own reasons).

Sr. Cecilia stayed close to her, even when the Japanese tried violently to push her away. The whole night through the Japanese continued their interrogation, with a bayonet at Sister Theresia's throat and body, jabbing it at her in a savage manner. When they said that they would take Sr. Theresia into the police tunnel, Sr. Cecilia replied, 'I am going with her, you can't separate me from her.'

'We are going to kill her tonight,' they said.

'Then you will have to kill me first,' said Sr. Cecilia. When the other sisters heard that, they shouted, one after the other,

'Kill me, kill me, leave Sr. Theresia alone!'

Then Sr. Theresia spoke up: 'Let them kill me. I have done no wrong and I am not afraid to die.'

In the meantime, the other sisters had not been just watching. The guards had devised a special treatment for all of them, called the bamboo torture.

The sisters were ordered to form lines and kneel down. A long piece of bamboo was laid across their legs behind the knees. Two police boys had to stand on both ends to weigh it down. The cruel torment was very painful. The Sisters began to cry with the pain.



Then Tagai, the interpreter, put in an appearance, laughing at them and sneering

'And you pretend to be true followers of Kristo? Did Kristo, when hanging nailed to the cross, cry as you do? You should be ashamed of yourselves.'

After that, the Sisters made no sound, although the pain was very dreadful. The Japanese admitted to them that there was no charge against any of them except Sr. Theresia.

They were being tortured because they believed that it would help make Sr. Theresia confess her crime. Poor Sr. Theresia!

Besides being tortured herself, she was forced to watch her Sisters suffering on her behalf.

The Japanese also thought that in order to free themselves from the bamboo torture, the others would make charges against Sr. Theresia, and agree that she had made the comment.

This plan failed miserably.

The inhuman treatment of the Sisters continued until four in the morning. Then the Japanese gave up. By then they knew that there was nothing they could do to break the Sisters, because they had even volunteered to die.

They were sent home and told that court procedures would be continued later in the morning. They could hardly walk and the thought of further torture prevented them sleeping. They waited the whole morning for the summons to go to court again, but it never came.

After having recovered from this ordeal, the Sisters began a new work of keeping the missionaries at Ramale prison camp supplied with vegetables.

This was a dangerous job, because the Japanese intended the missionaries to die and who would know when they would suddenly get annoyed at them being fed. Also there were 360 missionaries in the camp. How were they to feed them all?

This was how they managed. Three brothers worked in the gardens about 6 kilometres away from the camp. Every day they sent two ox carts with food as far as the top of Ramale mountain. From there it had to be carried down to the camp. The Sisters were the ones who offered to do this exhausting and difficult job.

Soon however, they realized that two loads were not enough for the 360 missionaries imprisoned there. Sister Cecilia and her community then rose every morning at 4.00 a.m., to go to the gardens and collect an extra load of food. To feed all these people in the camp for 3 years, was an extraordinary achievement. Without the FMI Sisters, many more of the missionaries would have died. Sometimes the Sisters smuggled in medicine inside the food.

One small miracle from the camp was that the small amount of flour that the missionaries took with them to make hosts, never went mouldy in the damp and wet environment, and the jar never finished but lasted the whole three years.

Women, strong and faithful women, have always followed Christ, right from the very early days of Christ's life, and from the early days of the Church.

Here in PNG they continue to follow him still.



***** * Conclusion * *****

When we read the story of the history of Christianity in our country, we see that it is similar to the history of Christianity in all times and places. The battle never ends between the evil which is so easy for us, and faithfulness to the Gospel.

At each era, there are new problems. For PNG now, some of the problems are the fascination of the towns, the breaking up of families, unemployment, alcoholism, aids, drug addiction and rascals, which shows itself in lack of respect for people, for their things, and for their lives, even within our own school environment.



Although we have looked at only a few of the major stories in different countries including our own, we know that the story of Christianity in a country, matches the story of Christianity in a parish and and it even matches the story of Jesus in our own lives.

Sometimes we see growth; sometimes persecution, and sometimes setbacks. Sometimes we are heroic, and sometimes we are mean and selfish.

Write down a time when you think you have been heroic.

Write down a time when you were mean or selfish.

But, in spite of storms and even of cyclones, in spite of droughts and floods, in spite of problems inside the Church and outside it, the small mustard seed, buried in the soil by our ancestors in faith, will become a big tree, and birds of every kind will shelter in its branches.

We have read some pages from the beginning of the story. But our story and 'his story' is ongoing. It is not finished.

There are more empty pages to fill.

What will these pages say?

Certainly, what some of the pages will say, is up to me and to you.

Looking back over the journey we have travelled as the people of God, is rather like climbing a mountain, gaining new and wider views, discovering unexpected connections between our starting point and the whole scene that we see before us.

As we look back, over our own lives and over the life of the Church, we see mistakes we have made. We see short cuts we could have taken, and obstacles we could have avoided.

We see pain and suffering that was unnecessary.

But we also have a better view of the whole. And we realize that we have come a long way, we have moved closer to our destination.

As we travel on our journey, let us always remember those who have gone before us.

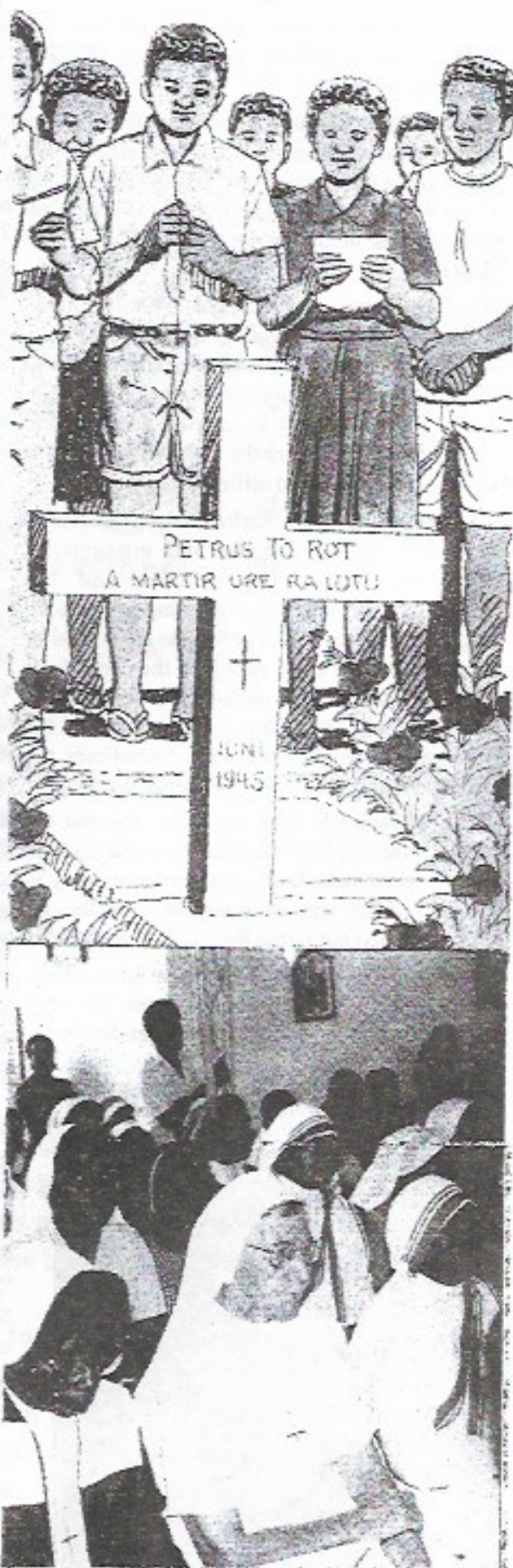
Let us honour all those who lived and died in other countries, so that Jesus might be known and loved. Let us honour those who lived and died here in our own country, so that we, the sons and daughters of PNG and the Solomons might know and love Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

Above all, let us continue our journey in hope, since we know 'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.'

He is with us still, giving us the strength to love, to suffer, to work, that his Kingdom of peace and justice and forgiveness will one day be a complete reality in our world.

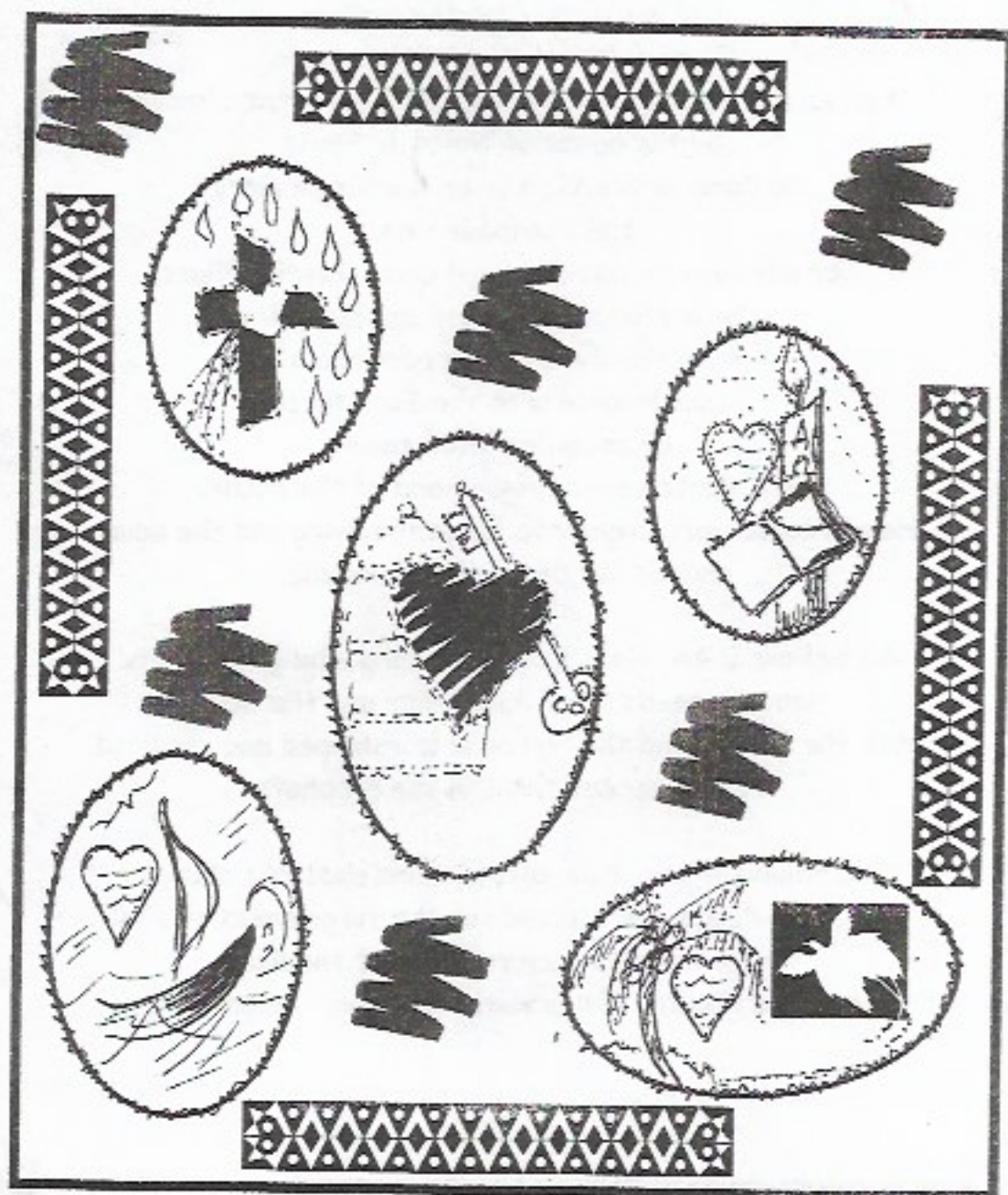
Divide your class into groups to prepare and act out the stories of Louis Vangeke, Peter ToRot, Yot, and the FMI Sisters.

Draw a poster showing the main events in the lives of these people.



Activities.

1. On the front cover, there are pictures which represent the 5 topics in this book. See if you can match the pictures and the topics.
2. Below there is a 'storyboard' of the history of the Church. Study the storyboard carefully. Try to work out the meaning of each separate picture, then try to explain the whole story to your friend.
3. Make up your own storyboard using the story you liked best from each topic of this book. Write out the meaning of your storyboard.



THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God,
Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made,
of one being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us, and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures:
he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

