

## **Peter ToRot, a champion of family life**

*Archbishop Francesco Panfilo, SDB of Rabaul writes in preparation for the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Blessed Peter To Rot in Rabaul on 7 July this year.*

The year of Blessed Peter To Rot (Jul. 2011 – Dec. 2012) has been, so far, a time of grace for the Archdiocese of Rabaul: the monthly catechesis have given to everybody the opportunity to reflect on the topic of family and family life; the relics of Blessed Peter To Rot, that have gone from parish to parish, have also contributed greatly in the renewal of family life.

Another important moment for the Archdiocese of Rabaul has been the pilgrimage of the Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands to Rakunai, the birth place of Peter ToRot in East New Britain, on 19 April this year. With their presence the Bishops recognized the holiness of this simple and humble lay person and, at the same time, reminded all the Catholic faithful of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands of the importance of the institution of the family and Christian marriage.

I pray and hope that the coming celebrations in honor of Blessed Peter ToRot may bring greater holiness in our families and, above all, that young people may discover the importance of the Sacrament of Marriage.

Pope Benedict XVI, in his message to the Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, at the end of the 'ad limina' visit to Rome on 9 June this year, said: "As you continue the centenary celebrations of the birth of Blessed Peter ToRot, who shed his blood in defense of the sanctity of marriage, I encourage all married couples to look to his example of courage and thus help others to see the family as a gift from God and the privileged environment where children are enabled to be born with dignity, and to grow and develop in an integral manner".

May these words of the Pope, through the example and the intercession of Blessed Peter To Rot, become a reality in all our families.

+ Francesco Panfilo, SDB  
*Archbishop of Rabaul*