

FOREWORD

In the Apostolic Letter “Novo Millennio Ineunte” (2001), Blessed John Paul II asked the whole Church to “*set out into the deep*” – “**Duc in altum**”. As you know, this is the theme I chose for myself at the beginning of my ministry as Bishop. It is a pastoral program for me, but it is also a challenge to all Catholic faithful: individually and as a community.

“These words invite us to *remember the past with gratitude, to live the present with enthusiasm and to look forward to the future with confidence*” (Novo Millennio Ineunte, 1).

1. Time to remember the past with gratitude!

The Diocesan Assembly gave us the opportunity to look back and remember, with gratitude, those who brought the faith to our Archdiocese. Missionaries brought the light of the Gospel and many other good things. Many of them died when they were still young, decimated by fatigue, malaria and other tropical sicknesses. Some of them, like the Baining martyrs, shed their blood.

Perhaps, in the process of establishing the Church and spreading the Good News, some mistakes were committed. Can we look at these mistakes of the past in a positive light? Can we leave the past behind and move on from here? We may have to seek for forgiveness for our mistakes, and to offer forgiveness to those who wronged us. “Offer forgiveness, receive peace!” (J.P. II).

2. Time to live the present with enthusiasm!

After remembering the past, we ask ourselves: “Where are we as a Diocese?” Now is the time for all of us: laity, consecrated persons, and clergy, to assess our fervour and find fresh enthusiasm for our spiritual and pastoral responsibilities. Now is the time to reflect on what the Spirit is telling us, to deepen our faith and to profess the faith without fear. This means that we must strive for **Holiness**; it means, too, that we must give importance to **Prayer, to the Sunday Eucharist**, and it means that we must **listen to and proclaim the Word of God**.

3. Time to look at the future with confidence

The Assembly approved a five years Diocesan Pastoral Plan (2013 – 2017). It is an important step toward a bright future for the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Rabaul.

Our Vision is “**that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ**” (1Jn 3:23a).
And our mission is to “**go and make disciples of all nations**” (Mt 28:19a).

This can be achieved only if we all work together in the spirit of “**communio**”: lay faithful, consecrated men and women, and clergy.

DUC IN ALTUM! Let us set out into the deep! We can count on the power of the same Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost and who urges us still today to start out

anew, sustained by the hope “which does not disappoint” (*Rom 5:5*). On this journey we are accompanied by the Blessed Virgin - Star of the Sea - the radiant dawn and sure guide for our steps and by the intercession of our martyr, Blessed Peter To Rot.

The threefold mission of “God’s family”

(Deus caritas est 25 & Pastores dabo vobis 43)

PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

Jesus is our Teacher: *God’s family gives witness to its faith*

We can be sure that if evangelization and catechesis are done well in our diocese, everything else will be easier to do.

In order to arrive at a systematic knowledge of the content of the faith, we have at our disposal two precious tools: the **Bible** and the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**.

Jesus Christ does not come to destroy any culture, rather, his teachings, combined with the positive values of culture, purify and complete what is defective. It is our task to take a good look at culture and cultural values and preserve and purify those things that are good and leave aside those things which are not good.

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENTS

Jesus is our Priest: *God’s family celebrates its faith*

“All the sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the **Eucharist** and are directed towards it. For in the most blessed Eucharist is contained the entire spiritual wealth of the Church, namely Christ himself our living bread, who gives life to humanity through his flesh - that flesh which is given life and gives life by the Holy Spirit. Thus men and women are invited and led to offer themselves, their works and all creation in union with Christ”. (*Sacramentum Caritatis 16*).

BUILDING THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN CHARITY

Jesus is our Shepherd: *God’s family lives its faith*

The call to discipleship is a vocation to **Communion**. All are called to a union of love with God and with one another. In other words, all – without exception – are called to **HOLINESS**, the perfection of charity (*see Lumen Gentium 32*).

Authority in the Church is hierarchical, but those who belong to the clerical state should not fear losing their authority or their power if they allow the consecrated persons and the laity to play their respective role within the Church.

For certain structures such as *the Council of Priests, the Parish Pastoral Council, and the Diocesan Pastoral Council* to function, the relationship between Bishop and Priests, between Parish Priests and the entire People of God, between Clergy and Religious, between associations and ecclesial movements should be characterized by this *spirituality of communion*.

At times, we do sacrifice ourselves for our own tribe, clan and/or village, but we are unable to go beyond the clan and see that, by faith, we belong to a much bigger community. Through Baptism all of us became children of God. Through Baptism we all become members of the Body of Christ. The Church becomes our family, is our community, it is, in a sense, our clan, our tribe.

Within this one universal vocation to fulfil the one mission of the Church, the various “vocations” in the one people of God have each a particular role.