



#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Pg1&2: Bp's Lenten message. Pg2: Vatican News, Pg3: Internet Issue, Pg4: Emeritus & other News, Pg5: Taro, Moli & Nila News. Pg6: Health & coming Events.



Bishop Peter Houhou  
Catholic Diocese of Gizo

## LENTEN SEASON: A Time to Prepare and Cleanse Oneself.

**Every year the Church enters into the great Season of Lent.**

Beginning on Ash Wednesday and lasting until Easter. Lent is a time for us to draw closer to Christ and enter more

deeply into our relationship with Him, spending the 40

days of Lent dedicated to fasting, abstinence, and prayer.

It is very important to take note that, in the sacred Scripture, the number 40 signifies new life, new growth, and transformation. In the Old Testament, the great Flood lasted 40 days and 40 nights and the Israelites were in the desert for 40 years.

In the New Testament, Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights in the desert and ascended into heaven 40 days after His Resurrection from the dead. We see in all these events in Scripture, a period of preparing and cleansing. It's with this same spirit we approach the season of Lent.

Now, while we are preparing to commemorate the death and resurrection of Jesus at the Paschal Triduum, we enter a period of cleansing ourselves from sin and from some of our worldly desires, in imitation of Christ's journey into the desert for 40 days. The question I want to pose before us here now is that, are we prepare to take this journey with Jesus?

In his message for Lent, Pope Francis called for the season of prayer.

"It is a time to act, and Lent, to act also means to

pause," he said.

"To pause in prayer, in order to receive the word of God, to pause like the Samaritan in the presence of a wounded brother or sister. Love of God and love of neighbor are one love."

Another quote is from Bishop Anthony Randazzo echoed this message in his Lenten Penance Letter 2024.

"In our Catholic tradition, Lent is commemorated as a time for conversion, repentance, and renewal," he wrote.

"In imitation of Jesus our teacher and master, we also fast (cf. Matthew 4:1-11). Like our Lord, we will journey into the desert places of our life. Where the Lord has gone, we hope to follow, and so we must expect some challenges and temptations because the Gospel reminds us that this too was the plight of Jesus. Christians are people of hope, so during this moments of vulnerability, let us take shelter in God's mercy and compassion.

While journeying through the Lenten Season we may get caught up with the discipline and temptations of our penitential sacrifices, it's important to remember the season is first and foremost about growing closer to God and cleansing ourselves to prepare to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ.

As the spiritual Father of our Diocese, I want to encourage us all to journey together as brothers and sisters as we begin our Lenten season. If you see one of our brothers or sisters in need, assist him or her in whatever way you can. Above all pray for one another.

May God Bless us all.

**Your Servant Bishop Peter HOUHOU**

*This Publication is from the Catholic Media Office*

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## PRAY FOR PEACE



VATICAN  
NEWS

### Pope Asks Catholics to Pray Every Day



#### Pope Francis Reiterates his Con- stant Appeal for Peace. "Pray for Peace, do Penance for Peace," he Urg- es

Towards the end of his General Audience on Wednesday, Pope Francis laid aside his prepared greetings to Italian speakers and made an off-the-cuff appeal for peace.

"I think of all those countries that are at war," the Pope said. "Sisters, brothers, let us pray for peace. Let us all do our part."

"We are not born to kill", he stressed, "but to help people grow. May we find pathways of peace."

The Pope also urged all those present to "ask for peace" in their "daily prayers". He then mentioned "tormented Ukraine", as he has done at almost every single General Audience since the outbreak of war in the country. "How much it suffers!", the Pope stressed.

And, bringing his appeal to a close, Pope Francis highlighted some of the worst warzones around the globe: "Palestine, Israel, Myanmar, North Kivu, South Sudan".

"Please, pray for peace," the Pope urged. "Do penance for peace."

#### Pope Francis Prays for Peace in Conflict Zones around the World

At the conclusion of the Jubilee Mass for the Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel, presided over by Pope Francis in Saint Peter's Square, the Pope quoted from the Pastoral Constitution, "Gaudium et spes," and the importance of contributing to the establishment of peace.

He first warmly greeted all those present for this Jubilee celebration, including the military chaplains for their pastoral service. And he extended his greetings to those in military service throughout the world.

Recalling the Second Vatican Council constitution, "Gaudium et spes," the Pope encouraged them saying, "those who devote themselves to the military service of their country should regard them-

selves as the agents of security and freedom of peoples." He noted that armed service "is to be exercised only in self-defence, never to impose domination over other nations, always observing international conventions on conflict and, first and foremost, with sacred respect for life and creation."

In conclusion, the Pope asked everyone to pray for peace in "tormented" Ukraine, Palestine, Israel and throughout the Middle East, Myanmar, Kivu (Democratic Republic of Congo), and Sudan. He prayed that "weapons be silent everywhere" and "the cry of people who are asking for peace be heard!"

"We entrust our prayers to the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace."

#### Pope Stresses Importance of Meaningful Prayer within Families

May the heartbeat of love always be felt in your work, Pope Francis said to the Executive Committee of the II International Congress of Confraternities and Popular Piety, in Casa Santa Marta on Saturday.

The Holy Father began his remarks by expressing his delight in welcoming the Committee of the Congress—which took place, 4-8 Dec. 2024, in Seville, Spain—as pilgrims this Jubilee Year, acknowledging they have come to give thanks to God for their Congress.

"When I was told that you would be coming, I was a little worried," the Pope joked, recalling that in the message he had sent them for that occasion, he called them "crazy," "and I wondered if that was why you were so eager to meet me."

"But Monsignor Saiz Meneses tells me that this initiative has been a grace whose echoes are still being heard," he added, quipping, "and so I feel more at ease."

In his remarks, the Holy Father recalled the invitation he gave them to live their event as a prayer of praise "that accompanies our earthly journey like a pilgrimage toward God and toward our brothers and sisters" and asking them "to be witnesses of a love so overflowing that it might seem 'crazy,' crazy with love."

"How good it would be, at the conclusion of this event," the Pope noted, "if the first of these echoes could be heard especially within families."

AN ISSUE — FROM THE MEDIA OFFICE

## ....INTERNET: AN ISSUE.....



**Rellysdom Aaron Malakana**  
Catholic Media Office Gizo

One of our Catholic Magazine, "World Mission", published on August 2023 highlighted Fr. Shay Cullen's article "The Internet: A Power for Good and Evil".

His article also reminds us of what is internet, which millions of computers and devices are linked together, he

stated that it is a tool of communication.

Fr. Shay Cullen reminds us that it is deplorably and disgustingly abused and used for crimes of the worst kind.

The use of internet today has become one of the major issues worldwide. It is widely used to sexually exploitation, hurt, harm and abuse, seduce, groom, and hurt children, women and men.

He warned us that criminals exploit and bully the vulnerable and post hate speech, sexually abusive material, and pornography on websites and platforms like Facebook and Instagram are contributed to, these worst kinds.

One should know that criminals use it to con/scam and steal or threaten people. In some other countries, it is a tool for trafficking, to encoded messages and conversations via the internet.

Many users in our country are keen to learn and committed to be part of these criminal activities. In some cases, we heard many in our communities whose access to these devices transmit live images. As Fr. Shay stated, "The worst form of internet abuse is when corrupt people use it to transmit live images of heinous crimes" This is a kind of live streaming, or is known as online sexual exploitation through mobile phones connected to the internet.

The message from Fr. Shay Cullen also focuses on the experiences that other countries are confronted, in particular human trafficking.

It has been about forty years now that mobile phones are widespread for the first time. These devices, which are often called mobile phones, have developed more since then and have completely changed the way people communicate.

At first, mobile phones could only make calls, but over time, more and more advanced functions and technologies have been added, which made them mini-computer, cameras and organizers.

Here are some of the disadvantages of mobile phone here in our communities.

1. Social Problems or Safety Concerns It can be difficult for parents and guardians to control who the child is in contact with and the nature of the interactions. Problems can be exposed to sexual predators to bullying through other children as well as pornography and violence.

2. Distraction Mobile phones are status symbols. As children enter puberty and head towards their teenage years, they come under social pressure to demand phones that are more expensive and fashionable, increasing emotional and financial strain on parents and guardians.

3. Sleep Deprivation Children tend to use their phones to text, chat, watch, or surf at night. This can considerably reduce or disrupt their sleeping patterns. Over time, your health and mental and physical development can be affected.

4. They Cause Accidents People get engrossed by their phones when they walk around. They collide with things, bump into people, or, even worse, step into the road without looking.

The effects of distraction caused to drivers are even worse, as making or receiving calls or texts or using the phone's other functions can all result in drivers not paying attention to the road and result in serious accidents.

One should understand that the mobile phone can harm our health.

Scientists are continuing to study the possible health effects of cell phone use. For example, the World Health Organization (WHO) is currently looking into how cell phones may affect: Some types of tumors, our eyes, sleep, memory, headaches, etc.



## BISHOP EMERITUS & OTHER NEWS

### Bishop Emeritus visits again after 2 Years.



Bishop Emeritus Luciano Capelli SDB visited again after his retirement 2 years ago.

Upon arriving at Nusatupe airport on Friday, February 14, warriors traditionally welcomed him. He was then escorted to St. Peter's compound, where he was warmly received by diocesan and parish staff, workers, and friends.

Bishop Emeritus, who still looks fresh with many smiles, has made the long journey from Italy to Gizo. He visited Don Bosco Canlubang in the Philippines, where his Salesian vocation was nurtured over six decades ago.

He then traveled to Solomon Island, visited Tere parish, and traveled here in the Diocese of Gizo.

On Sunday Holy Mass during the announcement, when allowed him to say something, he said, he loves us and feels at home.

### Emeritus Bishop Celebrate Wonderful Time.



Emeritus Bishop Luciano Capelli SDB had a wonderful time with the Nusabaruku community on Saturday, February 22.

A welcoming ceremony for him was a highlight of their Eucharistic Mass celebration, where they expressed their gratitude for his return after two years.

As Sr. Alice Salas described, it was a beautiful day of celebration, thanking all the communities from Nusabaruku, the fishing village, Lire, and Kongu Lavata for their love for the Bishop Emeritus, who is dedicated to building their schools with support from benefactors in Italy.

Following the Holy Mass, the celebration continued with speeches, a meal, and entertainment

### 30 Participants Participate Parish Council Meeting.

Thirty participants from St. Dominic parish Sirovanga have completed their parish council meeting.

Since Sirovanga parish has 5 zone boundaries, some participants were selected to represent their zone and to have firsthand information, including those from the pastoral sectors.

A well-prepared meeting where charts are put out to illustrate some of the 2024 fundraising and its expenditures, etc.

The meeting, which commenced on the 18 to 21 February has included an evaluation and their plan for the year 2025 mainly based on the theme "Participation brings Unity and Hope"

The meeting was facilitated by their parish coordinator Mr. Chris Leuku. He thanked Fr. Ben Rivichibatu OP and Sr. Leonie Megoqole for their presence. And finally, he thanked the parish leaders and the community.





**TARO, MOLI & NILA NEWS****Thanksgiving Mass for CBPSS Catholics.**

Choiseul Bay Provincial Secondary Catholic Students are privileged to have Fr. Jacob for their Thanksgiving Mass on Satur-

day, the 8th of February purposely to thank God for their academic year, asking God to help their learning and their friendships with other students and teachers. Moreover, they ask God to give them hope when they are looking forward to enthusiasm and courage to go together.

The excellent liturgy was prepared and led by these students from first form to form 6.

After the Mass, each student and staff received the blessing from their parish priest, Fr. Jacob, who then encouraged all students to engage in their prayer life, to study, and to be well disciplined students of CHY PSS

**Nila Parish Elect New Parish Council.**

Holy Rosary Parish Nila has elected their new Parish Council this year 2025.

The election has been praised by many from that parish who they longing to have them plan for their parish.

Their role is to promote their mission to live, communicate, and make decisions on behalf of the people in the parish; have overall responsibility for the well-being of the local community, and work together with parishioners to provide support for their efforts to live as followers of Christ.

Many people thanked Fr. Henry Paroi who headed the election.

**Moli Parish Farewell Fr. Qelo.**

The parishioners and students of St Joseph Moli farewell Fr Benedict Qelo on Friday 17th February, reported by Anthony Telo. Anthony said that on behalf of the parish, Fr. Timothy thanked him for his time serving the parishioners for the last 3 years.

He said it was an emotional gathering for them to miss someone who served the people of their parish, and they wished him the best and asked our good Lord to continue to guide and protect him.

Fr. Benedict Qelo was an assistant parish priest and a principal of St. Joseph Catholic Secondary School. His next assignment is to Holy Rosary Parish Nila. He will serve as a school chaplain for St. John Bosco Senior School.



**ABDOMIN PAIN****APPENDICITIS.***continue from last issue*

.....The site of the pain may vary, depending on age and the position of the appendix. In pregnancy, the pain may seem to come from the upper belly because the appendix is higher during pregnancy.

**Causes**

A blockage in the lining of the appendix, called the lumen, is the likely cause of appendicitis. This blockage can cause an infection. The bacteria then multiply quickly, causing the appendix to become inflamed, swollen and filled with pus. If not treated right away, the appendix may burst or break open.

**Risk factors**

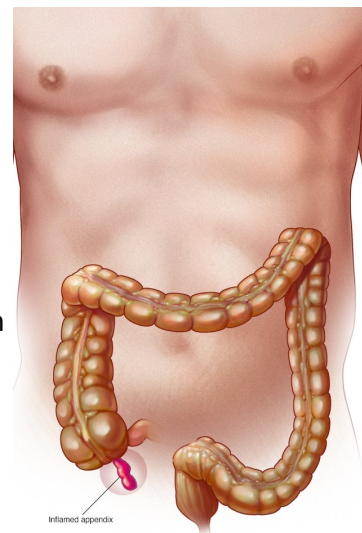
Risk factors for appendicitis include:

- Age. Anyone can develop appendicitis, but it most often happens in people between the ages of 10 and 30.
- Your sex. Men have a slightly higher risk of appendicitis than do women.

**Complications**

Appendicitis may cause serious complications, such as:

- **A burst appendix.** A burst appendix, also called ruptured appendix, spreads infection throughout the abdomen, a condition called peritonitis. Possibly life-threatening, this condition requires immediate surgery to remove the appendix and clean the abdominal cavity.
- **A pocket of pus that forms in the abdomen.** If the appendix bursts, a pocket of infection may develop. This is called an abscess. In most cases, a surgeon drains the abscess by placing a tube through the abdominal wall into the abscess. The tube is left in place for about two weeks, and antibiotics are prescribed to clear the infection.
- Once the infection is clear, the appendix can be removed surgically. In some people, the abscess is drained, and the appendix is removed immediately.....


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**▪ UPCOMMING FEAST DAYS FOR APRIL 2025 ▪****PALM SUNDAY****(Sunday 13 April)**

John 12:13



They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!"

**GOOD FRIDAY & EASTER SUNDAY**