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OCEANIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - The National Day of Catholic schools has been established

Port Moresby (Agenzia Fides) - It will be an initiative to help strengthen the identity of Catholic schools in the country: the "National Day of Catholic Schools", recently approved by the Episcopal Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, will be held annually on May 15, on the occasion of the feast of St. John Baptist De La Salle, Patron of teachers around the world. As Fides learns from the local Church, it will be a day off school, but students and teachers will organize religious activities, social and educational activities in their respective schools. In communities of Papua and the Solomon Islands preparations for the next Day have already started, which involves the whole Church, as the mission in these countries is mainly through the education service.
In Papua New Guinea, there are three types of schools: public governmental ones; those under the patronage of the Catholic Church, those run by the Protestant Church. The institutes run by the Churches give a crucial contribution to society, especially for the development of new generations. The illiteracy rate is still very high: it touches 28.6% of men and 44% of women older than 15. The Christian churches now run 70% of education imparted in the country and their contribution to social development and cultural nation is widely recognized.
In particular, the Brothers of Christian Schools (followers of John the Baptist De La Salle), present in 84 countries around the world, arrived in Papua New Guinea in 1946. Currently the run the "Hohola Youth Development Center" in Port Moresby, the Mainohana Secondary School in the central province of the island, and teach at the Saint Trinity Teachers College in Mount Hagen. The Catholic community in Papua is well established and now has about 1.6 million faithful. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 02/05/2011)

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