



OCEANIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - The Church in Papua committed to the new evangelization

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - "The main focus of the Church in Papua New Guinea is the new evangelization." This is what His Exc. Mgr. Stephen Joseph Reichert, OFM Cap, Archbishop of Madang says in an interview with Fides, at the conclusion of the ad limina visit of the Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. "Many of the Dioceses of Papua have been gifted with an old evangelization: the Christian population has grown and has received an excellent education. Today, in the new social and cultural context, opportunities to transmit the faith have decreased and new roads and new ways to bring the Gospel to children, youth and families are needed," explains the Archbishop. Mgr. Reichert notes "a great change across our country at an economic, social, cultural, religious level, which is especially noticeable in the younger population." In this phase of change, "There is much to be done, the Church is involved in many challenges, especially in relation to young people." One of the key areas, notes the Archbishop is education: "The Church is very committed and, with our schools, we are the main protagonists of the work of education, alongside the government. This is heavy work and also expensive, but we consider it crucial in order to be able to talk and keep a close contact with new generations."

To pursue her mission, he continues, "the Church needs new vocations: Today we still need missionaries who brought the seed of faith in Papua. We must focus on the formation of the existing clergy and on the promotion of vocations to priesthood and religious life. Today, because of the context in which we live, for a young man who hears the call of God, it is hard to take care of that inner voice of the spirit, make it grow, make the necessary discernment so that the path will end happily." From the ad limina visit, the Archbishop concludes, "We have received encouragement, support from all the dicasteries and by the Holy Father: we express our profound thanks." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 11/6/2012)