



OCEANIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - The Church looks at the Blessed Peter To Rot to re-launch the value of family

Rabaul (Agenzia Fides) - A long period of preparation, marked by monthly catechesis to reflect on the theme of family and life; the "peregrinatio" of the relics of the Blessed in the parishes of the diocese of Rabaul; the pilgrimage of the Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in Rakunai, birthplace of the Blessed: with this path behind, the Christian community in Papua New Guinea celebrate today, July 7, the 100th anniversary since the birth of the Blessed Peter To Rot, a layman and martyr, at the peak of the Year dedicated to him (July 2011 - December 2012).

To mark the occasion, the Bishop of Rabaul, Mgr. Francesco Panfilo, SDB in recent days issued a pastoral letter entitled "The Blessed To Rot, a sample of family life." In the text of the letter, sent to Fides Agency, the Bishop points out: "The sanctity of this simple and humble layman and reminds all the faithful Catholics of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, the importance of the institution of the family and Christian marriage."

The Bishop hopes that "the celebrations in honor of the Blessed bring more holiness into our families and especially, for young people to discover the importance of the sacrament of marriage." Even Pope Benedict XVI in his message to the Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, at the end of the visit 'ad limina' in Rome on June 9, 2012, encouraged all married couples "to look at his example of courage and to help others see the family as a gift." Pope Benedict XVI sent Cardinal Joseph Zen of Hong Kong to Papua New Guinea as his special envoy for the celebration of the centenary, remembering that the Blessed "gave his life to Christ as a husband and father."

Peter To Rot is a catechist from Papua New Guinea, killed in 1945 for his opposition to polygamy. During the Second World War, his village, Rakunai, was occupied by the Japanese, the missionaries ended up imprisoned, but To Rot assumed responsibility for the spiritual life of his fellow citizens. When the authorities legalized polygamy, Blessed Peter refused it. He was killed with an injection in July 1945 by a Japanese doctor. He is the first blessed of Papua, raised to the glory of the altars on January 17, 1995 by John Paul II. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 07/07/2012)