



ASIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - Maria Goretti, Patron of the youth in Papua

Rabaul (Agenzia Fides) - The young people of Papua New Guinea love St. Maria Goretti, they worship her as their special patron and consider her as a reference point for their lives. This is what priests, nuns and missionaries in Papua, involved in youth ministry told Fides. Since 2006, they note, the youth representatives of the Diocese of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, gathered in Goroka, chose the young Saint as their patron, and then the Bishops approved it.

To witness this special love, the Feast of St. Maria Goretti, July 6, was solemnly celebrated in the diocese in Papua New Guinea. The Missionaries of Charity in the Diocese of Wewak prayed for the young, with a solemn Eucharistic celebration, in honor of Saint Maria Goretti, presided by Fr. Shanthi Puthussery, PIME, national coordinator of the youth Pastoral. Fr. Puthussery cited the homily of Pope Pius XII on the occasion of the canonization of St. Maria Goretti, on 24 June 1950: "Not all of us are called to die as martyrs, but we are all called to the pursuit of Christian virtues."

In the diocese of Bereina, young people made a pilgrimage from two different places, meeting at the Shrine of Blessed Peter To Rot, where they heard a catechesis given by the Bishop, Mgr. Rochus Tatamai; in the previous days some groups experienced a spiritual retreat, reflecting on the martyrdom of St. Maria Goretti. In the diocese of Vanimo Fr. Joseph Bijish, diocesan coordinator of the youth pastoral, organized a party with all young people, dedicated to the Saint, and prepared with a three-day convention in the different parishes. In the local Church of the Diocese of Bouganville the young leaders of youth groups lived a two-day retreat with Fr. Dominic Kiaku, while in Kundiawa a Holy Mass was celebrated at the Don Bosco Technical Schol. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 11/7/2012)