



## **OCEANIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - File - The Church, a precious resource for society**

(Rabaul) - The Catholic Church is a valuable resource for the society of Papua New Guinea. Over the past 165 years it has contributed to the development of Papua New Guinea by providing basic services to the population in the field of education and health, but also putting in place programs for youth, women, families and the community in general, all aimed at integral human development of every person.

According to official statistics by the Episcopal Conference, there are 1.9 million Catholics in Papua New Guinea, about 27% of the population.

In the education field, the Catholic Church runs 2,915 institutions at all levels, serving 329,735 students. The Catholic Church is also the largest provider of health services in Papua, with a total of 310 health centers of care, only 233 of which are funded by the government. The Church has also activated a service for people with HIV/AIDS, which reaches more than 5 million people in 136 centers located throughout the country. The Bishops reiterate, however, that the Church is not only a "service provider", but has a vital mission of evangelization through the Word and works of charity. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 12/04/2013)