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OCEANIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - Pilgrimage on foot for the 80th anniversary of evangelization in the highlands of Papua

Mount Hagen (Agenzia Fides) - A 15-day pilgrimage to thank God for the arrival of the Good News in the central highlands of Papua New Guinea: this is how the Archdiocese of Mount Hagen recalled the arrival of the first missionaries of the Divine Word (SVD), which in 1934 arrived in the territories of central Papua, establishing the first missions in the area. After 80 years since the arrival of the first pioneers, the faithful of the Archdiocese are experiencing a time of thanksgiving and gratitude "for all the blessings received from God through the missionaries", says a note sent to Fides by the Archdiocese. With this spirit, over 500 faithful, 3 priests and 9 seminarians made a pilgrimage on foot from Madang to Mount Hagen, following the same path of the early missionaries. Those who went on the pilgrimage visited the memorial site of the first two missionaries, Fr. Carl Morschheuser and Fr. Eugene Frank, who were killed by the local indigenous.
The Archbishop of Mt Hagen, Douglas Young, welcomed and encouraged the pilgrims stating that "the pilgrimage is a sign of a family who walks together and shares the Gospel".
During the second week the pilgrims moved from Mount Hagen and visited other churches and missions in the territory of the highlands, renewing the spirit of faith, hope and charity of the first preachers of the Gospel.
The Religious of the Divine Word are also involved in schools and health services that have developed since then: today 40% of health and education services in the highlands is provided by the Catholic Church. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 24/04/2014)

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