

Drumbeat

Newsletter of the St. John of God Brothers Papua New Guinea



To Brothers make Final Profession

Pictured is the Archbishop of Madang giving a blessing to Brothers Richard Taumana and Larry Wambl who have just made their final Professions. The ceremony took place in March in Madang, Papua New Guinea. Present were members of the Brothers' families as well as a large number of friends, other Brothers and members of the local Church and civil community.

Br. Richard who is a Community Health Nurse has spent most of his apostolic career as a Brother working among poor people in a remote area of Papua New Guinea. He states that it has always been his desire to help people who live in the "bush" and have inadequate health services.

Br. Larry has an interest in helping young people with drug and alcohol addictions. He has been involved with the addiction program that the Brothers conduct in Wewak. Much of his work has been to do with drug education with groups and in the wider community.

Motoring in PNG

If you were to look at a map of Papua New Guinea you would see a highway marked that goes from Wewak to Aitape. In fact this is not a highway, as you would understand it. The road is pot holed for long stretches and in some places resembles a goat track. Not all the rivers have bridges, with segments of the road washed away by flooding. In the rainy season the road resembles a mud lake.

The state of the roads takes a terrible toll on vehicles. The Brothers in Aitape have a Toyota single cab that has been using these roads for close to 25 years. It still goes quite well although the body suffers from wear and tear.

The local people have named the vehicle "Sticky Tape Face Car." Because some of the repairs have been mended with sticky tape.



Contact us at....St. John of God Brothers

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Papua New Guinea Brothers in the Philippines.

For the last few years a number of Papua New Guinean Brothers have been going to the Philippines for formation and other studies. At the same time they have been working with the Philippine Brothers in their works and various other activities.



Pictured are Brothers Tommy and Nevol who have been involved in a youth camp. This youth camp was held on the island of Palawan where little happens to encourage young people. The population of this island also suffers from the neglect of government institutions.

Br. Richard Reports

Br. Richard along with several other Papua New Guinea Brothers has been attending a number of courses at a seminary in Bagio City, Philippines.

Br. Richard reports that he has been involved with an international group from all over Asia studying Psycho-spiritual development. Some of the subjects studied included Life Experience, Spiritual Direction and involved psychological testing. On his return to PNG Br. Richard will become a formator for the Order. He says that these studies will prepare him well for his future tasks.

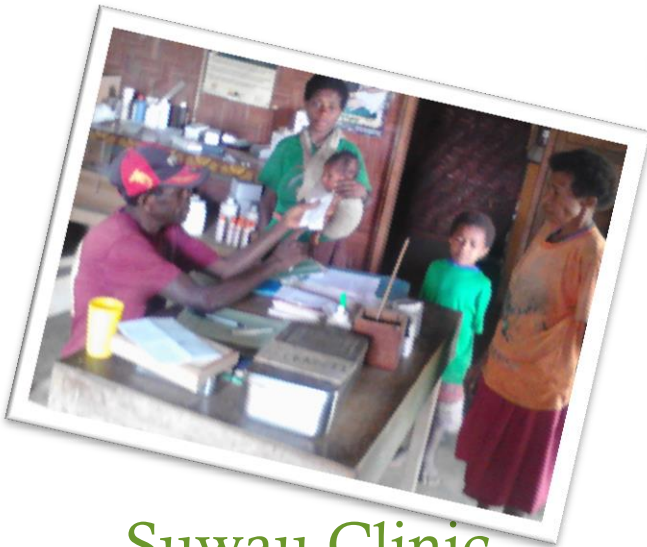


Did you know?

Papua New Guinea has the world's only poisonous bird. The Hooded Pitohui is native to Papua New Guinea. It has black and orange plumage.

This bird has a neurotoxin on its skin that causes numbness and tingling in those touching it. The poison may be acquired due to its diet of a type of beetle





Suwau Clinic

The Brothers in Walamu in the Nuku District of PNG have for many years been responsible for a satellite clinic at Suwau Village higher up the mountains. The people who live in this village are poor subsistence farmers. When they get sick it is very difficult for them to make the arduous journey to Walamu. Hence the importance of maintaining a clinic at Suwau.

The brothers have a medical aid worker at Suwau permanently who they support with updated training and medical supplies. Brothers visit several times a week to make sure the clinic is conducted efficiently and has the necessary equipment and medicines.



Walamu Clinic

The St. John of God Brothers have been responsible for the operation of Walamu Clinic for many years. Among others one of their main responsibilities has been the care of the students at the close by St. Francis High School.

The Brothers have a number of nursing staff to help them deliver the kind of service that is needed. Above is one such nurse, Joyce Kombakor. Joyce is attending to the medical needs of some of the school students. The Brothers have been able to greatly improve the health of the students and much of this has had to do with improving hygiene among the school population. Previously tropical ulcers and skin ailments were rife.

More from Walamu

One of the major problems being treated in the “bush” of Papua New Guinea is grille. This is a fungal skin condition that effects a large proportion of the population especially children.

From the very beginning the Brothers have attempted to reduce the incidence of grille among the local population at Walamu and surrounding districts.

Thanks to the generous donation of supporters the Brothers have been able to easily treat grille with a simple course of tablets. Above Brother Chris is distributing tablets outside the clinic. He is also instructing the people on methods of simple hygiene that will help to prevent an occurrence of this nasty condition.



More on the “Sticky Tape Face Car.”



Br. Philip writes from Aitape that in the past months the Brothers have been helping a young man named Cyril to attend the Raihu Hospital for morphine injections for sever pain.

I met Cyril’s mother at the local bank where she is a teller. I was asked if I knew of somewhere she could rent near the hospital so that her son could easily access his much needed injections. As I could not think of any place that was available I offered to drive Cyril to hospital and gave her my mobile phone number.

I did not hear from Cyril’s mother until some time later. A neighbor had been carrying Cyril on a motorbike to the hospital some eight miles from where he lived and had an accident. Both riders were hurt as a result of the accident. From that day Cyril’s mother realized the importance of getting her son safely to hospital for his injection and so made use of my original offer.

Cyril reminded me of St. John of God who would carry the sick on his shoulders to hospital but these days we use the “Sticky Tape Face Car.” Philip added that this was just one of the little services that the Brothers offer to the local community.

Some facts about Grille



The correct name for “Grille” is “tinea imbricata.” The term *imbricata* is derived from the Latin word *imbrex* meaning overlapping tiles. This condition causes lesions that are composed of concentric annular plaques that have thick peripheral rims of scale. Within each ring of scale is a circle of hypo-pigmented skin, inside of which is normally pigmented skin. In the Sepik area of PNG this condition is known as grille and is generally treated with a 4-week course of griseofulven. Even with the proper treatment remission is only sustained for up to 8 weeks with a high relapse rate. Because tinea imbricata can be spread through close family contact it is important to make sure that sufferers maintain a high standard of personal hygiene.

This is why the Brothers put emphasis on making sure people wash regularly with soap. In some cases special soap is supplied with a course of treatment.

Pictured is a child with grille.

