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Bishop Peter Houhou

BELOVED BROTHERS AND SISTERS, BEFORE WE DIVE INTO THE REFLECTION FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY, AS THE SPIRITUAL FATHER OF OUR DIOCESE, HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026, AND MAY THE PEACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHOM WE HAVE JUST CELEBRATED HIS BIRTH ON CHRISTMAS EVE AND DAY, BE WITH YOU ALL.

MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS IS OUR MOTHER TOO.

Before we begin, firstly, I want to thank all our beloved Diocesan and Religious Priests, Brothers and Sisters who served tirelessly in all our parishes taking care of the Spiritual wellbeing of our beloved Laity, while others taught in schools, and still others served in clinics, taking care of the health wellbeing of those who are sick in our communities. As they are preparing themselves to enter the New Year 2026, to begin their work of service, may God's Blessing be showered upon each one of them and may the Spirit of the Lord guide and strengthen them.

Also, on behalf of everyone in the diocese, I want to extend my words of appreciation and acknowledgement to all our beloved workers of the diocese. As we know that without them our diocese cannot move forward to reach this far. But because of their commitment, love, professionalism and expertise, and work experiences, our Ship MV Gizo is sailing smoothly in stormy weather. GROUP ONE (1): Chancery Staff: a) Property Manager (PM); b) Diocesan Secretary (DS), c) Project Manager (PM), d) Finance Administrator (FA), e) Diocesan Pastoral Coordinator (DPC), f) Education Provider (EP), g) Diocesan IT,

h) Diocesan Media (DM). GROUP TWO (2): Auxiliary Staff: a) Maintenance. b) Mechanic, c) Electrician, d) Plumber, e) Housekeeping (HK). May God bless you and your families.

GROUP THREE (3): Ship MV. Galilee: a) Captains: First Captain, Second Captain, b) Engineer, c) Crew Member. I also want to thank each one of them for the great job well done in serving our diocese, building bridges between our islands to transport goods for all our canteens and shops. I assured you of my prayers as you are preparing for the sailing schedules for this New Year. May God bless you and your families.

On this first day of the first month of the year, we are celebrating two very beautiful occasions: the Solemnity Feast of Mary the Mother of God and the beginning of the New Year 2026. Late Pope Francis said, and I quote: "As we begin this New Year, entrust your journey to Mother Mary, entrust your plans to her, entrust your struggles, worries, questions, joys and all the concerns you bear in your hearts to your Mother Mary".

Celebrating the Solemnity,.....

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BISHOP PASTORAL MESSAGE CONTINUE

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Photo's & articles from the parish media volunteers, Chris L—St. Dominic parish, Anthony Telovae—St. Joseph parish, Fr. Tomas—Christ the King parish Voruvoru, Fr. Jacob— St. John Bosco Taro, Fr. Charles—St. Eugebiu Noro, Fr. Qello— Holy Rosary parish, and The Catholic Media office- Rellysdom Aaron Malakana

Bp's PM cont'

..... Feast of the Motherhood of Mary, the mother of God, Mother of the Savior of humanity, reminds us of the important role a mother plays in our lives, Family, Community, Parish, Diocese, Province, and Nation of Solomon Islands. We should thank God for the great gift of our own biological Mothers. Their motherhood began from "Day ONE" at the moment of our conception until now.

After birth, they are still journeying with us, guiding, caring, and loving us unconditionally. When they see us following the wrong path in life, tears rolled down their eyes just like St Monica, shedding tears for his beloved son Augustine. Also, as a mother, their hearts are in great pain, even to the point of bleeding, just like our Mother Mary, weeping in silence for his only beloved Son Jesus Christ as he carries the Cross from within Jerusalem to Calvary. Our mothers are our companions from womb to womb. Along this journey, our biological mothers have been forming and molding us to be who we are now. Mary, the mother of Jesus and our Spiritual Mother, is also journeying with us. As a Christian, especially as a Catholic, it is good and beautiful to begin this New Year with Mary, our beloved Mother, as our companion on the journey.

According to (Bible Diary) for this year, and I quote: "At Christmas our attention is centered on the child, but today, as we begin the New Year, our focus shifts to the mother. While the world rejoices in the arrival of the New Year, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God."

The Gospel reading for the solemnity Feast of Mary, Mother of God, recounts the visit of the shepherds to Bethlehem, where they found Mary, Joseph, and the child Jesus. Notably, Luke names Mary first because, in Semitic culture, the one listed first holds social significance. It is striking that in a male-dominated culture, Luke attributed that importance to Mary. However, what we celebrate on the solemnity of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is the significance that God gives to Mary. As the mother of Jesus, she receives God's immense blessings. She is graced by God as the "highly favored one" and recognized by humans as the "most blessed among all women." Mary, the mother of God and model of constant discernment, teaches us to acknowledge our blessings as we, too, are gifted with the arrival of a new year.

Brothers and Sisters, as we have just celebrated the Birth of our Newborn King on the 25th of December 2025 and the Solemnity Feast of Mary, the Mother of God, on the 1st day of January, let us welcome the gift of the arrival of the New Year 2026. As you continue to celebrate this beautiful new year, you must remember that you are not only celebrating a day, week, month, and a year, but something more than just a mere celebration. As you are welcoming the new year, you should have time to make a good reflection on your journey last year, 2025, which will help you to "RENEW" and to "HEAL" the "WOUNDS" of the year to make this New Year 2026 a good, successful, and fruitful one.

The Lord be with you. Through the intercession of our beloved Mother Mary, may Almighty God Bless you as you journey throughout this New Year 2026, in the Name of the Father, Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

Servant Bishop Peter HOUHOU



VATICAN NEWS (POPES NEW YEAR MESSAGES)



VATICAN NEWS

The Popes and the new year: a time for thanksgiving and hope

As 2026 approaches, Vatican News revisits some reflections by the Popes on this transitional period between the end of 2025 and the arrival of the new year. (By Amedeo)

As the year comes to an end and a new one is set to begin, the Church’s perspective on this “chronological relay,” between two distinct but closely connected timeframes is always linked to the Gospel.

It extends along a dual horizon: gratitude to God and trust in the Lord. Thanksgiving and hope become the keys to understanding the past year and also to welcoming the future, with its opportunities and uncertainties.

St. Paul VI: The meaning of time

The moment of “transition” from one page almost finished to a new one about to begin is an invitation to reflect on time. During his Angelus message on January 2, 1972, Pope Paul VI urged the faithful consider the value of time. “Before we venture into the new year, it's time to dedicate some reflection to it,” he said.

“Time is the measure, so to speak, of events that follow one another. It is the measure of our present life. A measure that instills fear, because it makes us see that yesterday no longer exists, that tomorrow does not yet exist; only today exists, or rather, only the present moment exists for us: we live only on a moving point, a single fleeting moment.... And this teaches us to live this present moment with reasonable intensity, a moment over which we alone have control, and which constitutes our only experience of the present life. In other words, it teaches us the value of time.”

Pope Benedict XVI: Don’t end the year without thanking the Lord



The words of the Popes at this time of year especially accompany the Te Deum hymn of giving thanks. Pope Benedict XVI, on December 31, 2011, during the celebration of the

First Vespers of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, spoke precisely about this temporal space: “Another year is drawing to a close, as we await the start of a new one.” The anticipation, desires, and hopes cannot be separated from praise to the Lord: *“The Church suggests that we should not end the year without expressing our thanks to the Lord for all his benefits. It is in God that our last hour must come to a close, the last hour of time and history. To overlook this goal of our lives would be to fall into the void, to live without meaning.*

Hence the Church places on our lips the ancient hymn Te Deum. It is a hymn filled with the wisdom of many Christian generations, who feel the need to address on high their heart’s desires, knowing that all of us are in the Lord’s merciful hands.”

Pope Leo XIV: Continue being Pilgrims of Hope



The beginning of 2026 also marks the conclusion of the Holy Year centered on hope. This virtue is not a door that closes, as hope does not

die, and it is “generative,” emphasized Pope Leo XIV during the Jubilee audience on December 20, 2025:

.....

Continue next page

POPES NEW YEAR MESSAGES CONTINUE

Continue from page 3*“The Jubilee is coming to an end; however, the hope that this Year has given us does not finish: we will continue to be pilgrims of hope! We heard from Saint Paul: “For in this hope we were saved” (Rm 8:24). Without hope, we are dead; with hope, we come to the light. Hope is generative. Indeed, it is a theological virtue, that is, a strength of God, and as such it does not kill, but gives birth and rebirth. This is true strength. What threatens and kills is not strength: it is arrogance, it is aggressive fear, it is evil that does not generate anything. The strength of God gives birth. This is why I would like to say to you, finally: to hope is to generate.”*

St. John Paul II: A blank page



The new year, now before us, appears as an unknown. On January 1, 1986, Pope John Paul II invited the faithful to offer to the Lord “this new stage and

this still blank page”:

“The New Year appears before us as a great unknown, as a space that we will need to fill with content, as a perspective of unknown events and decisions to be made. It is like a new stage and a new space for the struggle between good and evil, both at the level of each human being and, together, at the level of the family, society, nations, and the entire humanity.”

Pope Francis: Recovering kindness



To write on this blank page, we must first draw from the treasury of virtues.

One of these virtues, highlighted by Pope Francis on December 31, 2022,

has the power to humanize relationships and dissolve indifference:

“Dear brothers and sisters, I think that retrieving kindness as a personal and civic virtue might help a

great deal to improve life within families, communities and cities. For this reason, as we look to the new year as the City of Rome, my wish for all of us who live here is that we might grow in this virtue: kindness.

Experience teaches that kindness, if it becomes a style of life, can create a healthy living together, it can humanize social relationships, diffusing aggression and indifference.”

St. John XXIII: Building a house that does not collapse



Turning one’s gaze to the future also means looking at those who accompany our existence: family, colleagues in the workplace, our neighbors. Pope John XXIII expressed a special wish for the new year in his message to Christian families on the Feast of the Holy Family on January 10, 1960.

“A spirit of prudence and sacrifice in the thoughtful education of children: and always, in every circumstance, a concern to help, forgive, sympathize, and grant others the trust that we would like to be granted ourselves. This is how a house that does not collapse is built.

The peaceful wish for this security, which is a guarantee of lasting peace, comes from our heart to reach each of you, to accompany you during the new year: it is supported by a special prayer, which we fervently raise to Heaven for the family of each one of you who listen to us, especially for those who, due to lack of means, work, or health, are exposed to painful privations.”

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From these different reflections by the Popes, a hope emerges as we draw near to 2026: may the new year be a time for all to build a “house that does not collapse,” despite the wounds and uncertainties of life, despite the horrors of war that still shake the human family, in various and too many regions of the world.

PRIESTHOOD OF DEACON. MATHEW & PRIEST SEMINAR

**About a Thousand Witness
Deacon Mathew Lamana OP
Priesthood Ordination.**



Approximately one thousand people from the Holy Rosary Parish, Shortland Island, the Choiseul Parishes, and even from the Piano Par-

ish in Bougainville gathered to witness the ordination of Rev. Mathew Lamana, OP, in Gamoae, Shortland Island.

We extend our gratitude to our Most Rev. Bishop Peter Houhou, who officiated the consecration of this newly ordained priest on Saturday, December 20, 2025.

Reporting on that event, Patere Jacob Qetobachu stated that the celebration commenced with a canoe procession alongside his parents, which was welcomed by the Gaomae Catholic Community. They subsequently entrusted him to his family and relatives from the Piano Parish, who carried on the procession to the Church as a mark of respect for him as the new chief (new priest).

Many of his friends and relatives are extending their congratulations, particularly from his immediate family members, expressing that Fr. Mathew Lamana is a significant blessing to both the family and the people of Shortland Island.

Ten Priests Attend 2 Day Formation Seminar.

Ten priests, and with their bishop from the Catholic Diocese of Gizo, are commencing a two-day formation seminar, Thursday, December 11th.



The purpose of the seminar is to provide Protocols for Right Relationship in Ministry and the Child Protection Policy, which has been introduced by the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

This initiative is centered on establishing general principles and guidelines to address cases of sexual abuse as they occur. Additionally, it aims to assist Church leaders in understanding the issues surrounding sexual abuse and the procedures for handling complaints related to it.

During the introductory session, Sr. Ancy John, from the Catholic Bishops' Conference PNGSI, elaborated on some of the objectives that the RRM imparts.

And Sr. Ancy discussed various holistic approaches to addressing individuals who may hinder the path to holiness and emphasized the responsibilities of church leaders.

Sister also referenced Pope Francis in his apostolic message regarding the call to Holiness in the contemporary world, as well as Archbishop Socrates' pastoral message urging self-reflection on our weaknesses.

In her remarks during the introduction session, she underscored the necessity for suitable formation and rehabilitation for those impacted, which is crucial for the seminarians, clergy, and religious.

The seminar is being attended by priests from Taro, Sirovanga, Moli, Nila, Wagina, Gizo, and Noro.

A similar seminar was also held for our Religious Sisters for another 2 days.



DIVINE MERCY CONGRESS

National Divine Mercy Congress Ends Successfully.



The Divine Mercy group representing our six parishes—Nila, Moli, Taro, Sirovanga, Voruvoru, and Noro—has now returned from the Tangarare parish after a week at the National DM Congress, held from December 16 to 21.

According to a report issued by the Archdiocese of Honiara, over 1,000 participants took part in this week-long spiritual event. During the congress, formation talks were presented, Holy Masses were celebrated, Eucharistic Adoration was held, testimonies and sharing sessions were conducted, and numerous faithful received the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Fr. Mark Misiwasi emphasized that the congress was a profound moment of spiritual renewal for attendees, particularly in rekindling devotion to Divine Mercy within families, parishes, and communities. He noted that the robust participation and the prayerful environment indicated a growing desire for God's mercy and healing, especially during a period when many individuals face social, economic, and spiritual difficulties. Fr. Mark expressed his ap-

preciation to the host parish, clergy, religious leaders, and volunteers, whose commitment and collaboration were vital to the congress's success.

The report said the congress was further enhanced by the enthusiastic involvement of the youth. A significant portrayal of the life of St. Faustina was showcased, accompanied by a Stations of the Cross led by the Tangarare youth. The Stations began at Tulahi, where the first missionaries introduced the Gospel, which subsequently spread throughout the Solomon Islands.

The formation sessions were conducted by Fr. Lawrence Samani, Fr. James Erai, Fr. Manscent Kavaliliu, Fr. Peter Chele, Fr. Mark Misiwasi, Fr. John Galvin, and Fr. Paul Cheka, along with church leaders who supported the initiative.

The theme of the Congress is "Living the Divine Mercy Message of Faith, Hope, and Love." This congress, held biennially, united the faithful from the three dioceses of the Solomon Islands.

The upcoming National Divine Mercy Congress will be hosted by the Diocese of Auki at Takwa Parish in 2027.

NEW YEAR QUOTATION

"As we step into this New Year, let us walk in faith, knowing that God's mercies are new every morning and His plans for us are filled with peace and purpose."

(Inspired by Lamentations 3:22-23 and Jeremiah 29:11)



SOUTHERN DEANERY NEWS IN BITS**Eight Receive First Holy Communion, Ranogga Island.**

An isolated Catholic community from Kongu village, Ranogga Island, has the honor of having Fr. Dominic Soloko celebrate the Eucharistic Mass for them.

The Mass was particularly significant as eight individuals received their first Holy Communion on that day, the 7th of December last year.

They expressed their gratitude to Mary Dolores, who prepared them for this momentous occasion, as well as to Fr. Dominic Soloko for his pastoral visit.

Disables Commemorate their Day, St Eusebius, Noro.

The theme, "Hope in God, Strength in All," signifies the successful commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 6, 2025.

Everyone who attended the event expressed their appreciation to the Guanellian missionary priests, especially Fr. Anil, for conveying gratitude to God for the success of the event and for the opportunity to present meaningful gifts that honor our cherished individuals with disabilities.

"Our heartfelt thanks to everyone for your incredible cooperation!"

**Kongu, Ranogga Island, Celebrate with Diocese, Christmas, 2025.**

The Ranogga Catholic Community boasts a considerable membership that is partaking in their Christmas celebration this year.

This event presents another significant opportunity for the families in Kongu village to serve as the host venue.

The celebration has provided the small community with a reason to seek out additional members who may be residing in that area of the island.

During the celebration, 10 infants and toddlers were baptized.

The community expresses gratitude to Fr. Dominic Soloko for commemorating the birth of Jesus (Mass), which serves as a reminder of the mystery surrounding Christ's birth, symbolizing His arrival into the world and the hope of salvation for everyone.



NORTHERN DEANERY NEWS IN BITS

Moli and Taro, End Year Retreat.



St. Joseph, Moli parish, along with St. John Bosco, Taro parish, concluded their Spiritual Retreat on December 6th, 2025.

Reporting was Fr. Jacob Qetobachu, who serves as the spiritual director for the retreat.

The purpose of the retreat is to foster a sense of tranquility and comfort, providing a structured setting for self-exploration, contemplation, and spiritual development, enabling participants to disconnect from everyday distractions and concentrate on the birth of Jesus Christ this Christmas.

The topics discussed included “BE VIGILANT AND PREPARED and LIFE OF THE SAINTS,” and the event was attended by Catechists and Prayer Leaders.

Special appreciation is extended to CWC, COUPLE FOR CHRIST, and DIVINE MERCY for their contributions to charity.

The Retreat Director is Fr. Jacob Qetobachu.

Holy Rosary Parish, Nila Excel in their End-of-Year Events.



Young children from various institutions of the Holy Rosary Parish in Nila excelled in their end-of-year events as they commemorated their closing program.

The closing program provided an opportunity for their assistant parish priest, Fr. Ben Qelo, to celebrate Holy Mass for the children, and having spent time with them.

The program encompasses the conclusion of the academic year for Toumoa, Aleang, Nila, and Koliai, and it is thought to include other schools within the parish as well.

Some children have the opportunity to engage in seasonal Advent reflections while they anticipate the birth of our Lord, as noted by Fr. Ben Qelo, “We wait for light, but Advent reminds us that the first flicker usually begins in darkness. Hope often starts small: a whispered prayer, a renewed intention, a moment of stillness we didn’t think we had time for. God enters our lives the same way Christ first entered the world—unexpectedly, tenderly, humbly”.

Nineteen also participated in their First Holy Communion on the first Sunday of Advent.

JANUARY SOLEMNITY (FEAST DAY)

News in Bits, ND Cont'

Taro Conclude, End Year Program for Women & Children.



Taro and Supisae Women, along with the Sunday School Children, successfully completed their year-long program in 2025.

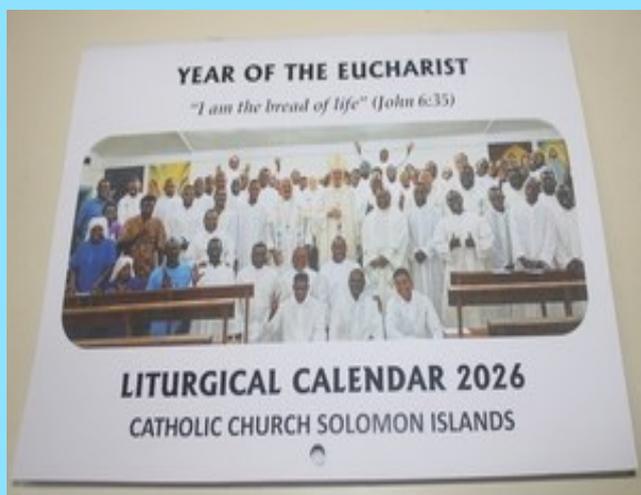
Fr. Jacob reported that the program com-

menced with the Thanksgiving Mass on the first Sunday of Lent, which enabled the Parish Priest to bestow blessings upon them for their participation throughout the year.

As is usual, the celebration featured a feast, entertainment, and a concluding prayer.

Liturgical Calendar 2026.

Available at your Parish Station!



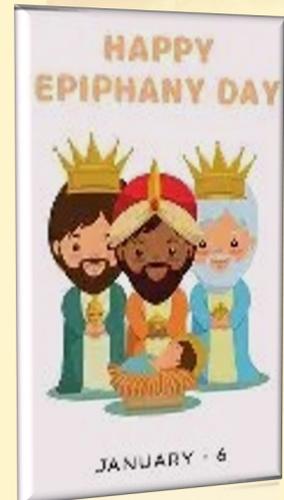
January 1 (Thursday) – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Holy Day of Obligation)

The Solemnity of Mama Mary, is a Holy Day of Obligation in the Roman Catholic, Meaning that Catholics are required to attend Mass on this day. It is also the Octave Day of Christmas, celebrating Mary's role in the Incarnation. The feast day honors Mary's motherhood of Jesus Christ and is significant for its historical and theological importance.



January 6 (Tuesday) – Epiphany of the Lord

The Epiphany, also known as 3 kings Day, commemorates the visit of the Magi (Wise Men) to the infant Jesus, symbolizing the revelation of Christ to the World. This feast is significant in the Christian tradition as it highlights several key events.



January 11 (Sunday) – Baptism of the Lord

The Baptism of the Lord is a significant event in the Church calendar, commemorating the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. This event is observed annually on January 11, the Sunday after January 6, and is known as "Theophany" in some traditions. It's a feast day celebrated in the Roman Catholic Church.



KIDNEY STONES

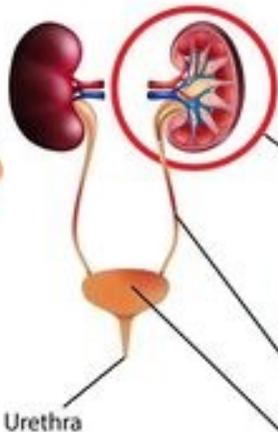
Kidney stones continue

[Kidney stones - treatment, symptoms and diagnosis | healthdirect](#)

What causes kidney stones?

Your kidneys are part of your [urinary system](#).

Kidney stones



They remove waste products from your blood to form urine (wee).

Urine contains many waste chemicals which can clump together into hard crystals. These hard crystals are kidney

stones.

You're more likely to get kidney stones if:

- you are often [dehydrated](#)
- you have a diet that's high in [salt](#) and meat
- you drink a lot of carbonated soft drinks (soft drinks)
- you've had a kidney stone before

kidney stones [run in your family](#)

- you take certain medicines
- you are overweight or [obese](#)

Some kidney stones are caused by a [urinary tract infection](#) or a rare inherited condition.

When should I see my doctor?

See your doctor as soon as possible if you have symptoms of renal colic. If the pain is very severe, go to your nearest emergency department.

Also see your doctor straight away or go to your nearest hospital emergency department if you have renal colic and signs of infection, such as a [fever](#).

How are kidney stones diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask about your symptoms and do a [physical examination](#). They may do a urine dipstick test in the clinic, as well as order tests, such as:

- [blood tests](#)
- [urine tests](#)
- imaging tests such as a [CT scan](#), [ultrasound](#) scan or [x-ray](#)

Your doctor may refer you to a [urologist](#) for treatment.

To be continue next issue

UPCOMING SOLEMNITY FOR FEBRUARY 2026

2nd of February 2026

The Presentation of the Lord

The presentation of the Lord, celebrated on February 2, commemorates the event when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple, fulfilling Jewish law and recognizing Him as the Light of the World.



18th of February

The Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday 2026 marks the first day of the Lenten season. Lent is the liturgical time before Easter when Catholics prepare to commemorate Jesus's Resurrection through prayer, penance, and fasting.

