

MELANESIA NEWS

HOLISTIC MISSION

PRAYER, PEOPLE, GIVING



ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Lambeth Conference Hospitality

Festival Day



‘WE’RE GONNA NEED A BIGGER BOAT’

I wonder if you have seen the 1975 film, ‘Jaws’? In it, an old, weathered and much-loved fishing boat, the Orca, finally meets her match. When the monster shark comes out of the water – open jaw, sharp teeth – Chief Brady backs away from the stern of the boat and utters those famous words to the skipper: ‘You’re gonna need a bigger boat.’

The Southern Cross has been a vital and symbolic part of the mission and life of the Church in Melanesia. Enabling the bishops and missionary teams to reach more isolated parts of their dioceses and helping to convey valuable supplies and resources to those in need, the ninth Southern Cross has been invaluable in sharing the Gospel and in strengthening the relationships of God’s family across the Province. After many years of wonderful service, she has been sold. Now, together with our Mission

Partners in New Zealand, we need to raise the funds to buy the tenth Southern Cross; and to undertake the Mission requirements for the present and the future...we are going to need a bigger boat!

In the gospels, the boat is often used as a picture of the early church – in the storm, in danger of drowning or out fishing with no success – utterly dependent on the help and direction of Jesus. It is no different today as the Church of Melanesia faces many challenges which are highlighted in this issue of the MMUK magazine:

The pandemic is now striking the islands with the force we felt in Europe 18 months ago. As the Sisters of the Church set about celebrating their 50th Anniversary, Sr Veronica speaks about the virus coming to TNK; also, the concerns that the bishops and those on the Chaplaincy Team have in

travelling away to the UK for the Lambeth Conference while the pandemic is virulent back home. Fr Wilfred Kekea gives a vivid account of the difficulties he and his family met in undergoing 42 days of quarantine when they moved to Guadalcanal for his new posting. Schools have been shut since January and are only just opening up now. In his interview with John Pinder, the new bishop of Huanuato'o tells how COVID is the biggest challenge facing his Diocese with all programs and services suspended.

We expect climate change to remain a major challenge for Solomons and Vanuatu in the long term. MMUK have recently appointed Marie Schlenker to the role of Care for Creation Officer. Her work both here amongst MMUK supporters and with the Green Apostles and the team in Honiara is having a transformative effect.



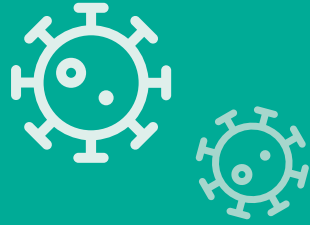
In a period of isolation and economic hardship, good contact and communication becomes even more important than usual. In response, Katie Drew is continuing her Coffee Mornings and Cocoa Nights via the internet between MMUK and ACoM. UK parishes, Associates and Companions to the Melanesian Brothers and Sisters have also been hosting regular online events. Friendships, trust and prayer remain at the heart of our raison d'etre as a Mission Agency.

The MMUK Trustees aim to both increase and broaden our base of supporters. When it becomes possible to travel, we would like more people to experience the life and witness of the Church in Melanesia and, under Archbishop Leonard's direction, we hope to establish Melanesian Brothers and Sisters houses here in UK. We can learn so much from one another. In particular, we are looking for a new Trustee with a skill for fundraising. If you know a person with the right gifts and attitude, please be bold enough to contact them or me. We need your help, please. We want to build a bigger boat to make a bigger difference! May God guide and bless us in his work.

+Mark Rylands
Chair of MMUK



COVID APPEAL



Tragically this year, community transmissions of COVID have reached Melanesia. As we in the UK come out of this pandemic, our brothers & sisters in Melanesia are facing their first waves with limited resources.

We are raising funds to send to the Anglican Church of Melanesia, to help with:

- ♥ Supplying handwashing facilities for schools, churches and isolated communities
- ♥ Training and equipping community groups to make face masks
- ♥ A social media campaign to encourage uptake of the COVID vaccine and to tackle false news
- ♥ Isolation units in boarding schools for staff and pupils with COVID
- ♥ Hardship funds for families struggling with food price increases
- ♥ Ensuring human rights and climate justice programmes continue

Please pray for the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu as they face this ordeal:

Lord, we bring to You our concerns for the people of Melanesia, as they face their first wave of COVID infections.

We pray for the medical staff with limited facilities, as they treat the infected and continue to look after all in their care.

We pray for those who are fearful of the coming days and those who are afraid of having the vaccine.

We remember the children missing out on the beginning of their school year and for businesses that have to shut during the lockdown.

Lord, bring Your healing to the people of Melanesia, so that they may weather this pandemic.

Amen

DONATE NOW

Online: mmuk.net/give

Phone: 01404 851656

Please reference your donations 'COVID Appeal'

Bank: **The Melanesian Mission**

20-39-53

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Your support during our urgent COVID Appeal is greatly appreciated.

The charity will continue posting updates on the COVID situation in Melanesia on its social media channels.



COFFEE MORNINGS COCOA NIGHTS

Our online supporter events have been running monthly for over 18 months and are providing a useful forum for keeping in touch with our sisters and brothers in Melanesia.

Some months we have guest speakers from Melanesia and at other time, MMUK's Executive Officer Katie Drew, shares news

from the region and answers supporters' questions. We try to run two time slots each month at 10am and repeating the session again at 7pm on the same day, keeping the sessions to an hour, and finishing in prayer.

In March, MMUK's Care of Creation Officer, Marie Schlenker spoke about her new role, and in April, the Archbishop of Melanesia was interviewed by Revd Richard Carter. Both recording can be found on the charity's website www.mmuk.net.

As well as the MMUK hosted events, UK parishes and Associates and Companions to the Melanesian Brothers and Sisters have also been hosting regular events.

If you would like to attend an MMUK event or host your own online event with guests from Melanesia, please contact the charity.



LAMBETH CONFERENCE HOSPITALITY

We are delighted to be welcoming the Archbishop of Melanesia, and all of the Melanesian Bishops and some of their wives to the Lambeth Conference from 27th July to 8th August. Convened by The Archbishop of Canterbury, the 15th Lambeth Conference is a gathering of bishops from across the Anglican Communion for prayer and reflection, fellowship and dialogue on church and world affairs.

With the theme of 'God's Church for God's World - walking, listening and witnessing together,' the conference will explore what it means for the Anglican Communion to be responsive to the needs of a 21st Century world.

The Archbishop of Canterbury writes -

"It's my prayer that, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Lambeth Conference will reinvigorate the Communion with the vision and resources to bring the

transforming love of Jesus Christ to every level of society across the world. It will be a time of addressing hurts and concerns; of deepening existing relationships and building new ones; of grappling with issues that face the Church and the world. We will listen to each other; we will seek God's wisdom to find ways to walk together; we will build each other up as leaders."

After the Conference, our guests will make visits to various Dioceses, meeting supporters and friends. For some of the Bishops and wives, this will be their first visit to the UK. The programme of visits will be announced in June.

MMUK FESTIVAL

On Saturday 13th August Archbishop Leonard, his Bishops and their wives will be the guests of honour at MMUK's Festival Day at St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square London. The day will begin with a Eucharist at 11am in the church, followed by a bookable lunch and presentations in the afternoon from our guests. Please register your place with the charity.

Melanesian Spirituality part of the Lambeth Chaplaincy

Revd Sr Veronica CSC, Solomons Provincial Sister of the Community of the Sisters of the Church and Revd Br Nelson, Secretary to the Melanesian Brothers, will be part of the Lambeth Chaplaincy Team. Both Sr Veronica and Br Nelson have been part of the Lambeth preparations for the last few years and contributed to Listening Together – Global Anglican Perspectives on Renewal of Prayer & the Religious Life, one of the Conference's preparatory books.

We are hoping that Sr Veronica and Br Nelson will also have time after the conference to make some visits before returning to Solomon Islands.

The charity's AGM will be held online on Monday 19th September at 7pm.

Please register your place with the charity to attend.

VOICES FROM MELANESIA

Back in February, MMUK Trustee Revd John Pinder interviewed Bishop Arthur



Rt.Revd Arthur Abui
Bishop of Hanuato'o

Good morning Bishop. It's very good to have this chance to talk to you via Zoom. First of all, how is the covid situation on Makira?

There are about 60 cases at present in the Kira Kira area. Some of the infections have been caused by people coming to market to sell produce. Everything is closed down at present including churches, schools and the diocesan office. Students have not returned to school since the end of the Christmas holidays.

There was a photo in yesterday's paper of an Australian air force plane bringing medical supplies to Kira Kira, which was encouraging. I was surprised such a big plane was able to land on the airstrip.

Yes especially as the landing strip is being rebuilt at present.

As you know we are currently fundraising for the girls' dormitories at Pamua School and will soon be sending you £20,000. Roughly how many students are there?

There are about 500 in total, of whom about 170 are girls. They are in four small dormitories and are very overcrowded.

I was last in KiraKira in the year 2000. I guess it has grown a lot since then?

Well actually not so much because the local landowners won't sell their land for development. There is still no wharf – only a ramp for landing barges.

I remember going from the airstrip into KiraKira by tractor and trailer through several rivers.

Yes most of those have bridges now, except the river near Pamua.

What are the biggest challenges facing you as bishop?

Covid is the biggest challenge. All diocesan programs and services are suspended so the diocese is at a standstill at present. Most of my clergy are quite young and it hasn't been easy for them to adjust to the fact that I am now their bishop. I have only been bishop for ten months. Before that I was the mission secretary for the diocese and before that I was the chaplain at Pamua School.

How have you been preparing for the Lambeth Conference?

We have been meeting in small groups of bishops from around the Anglican Communion by zoom. So I have been meeting up with bishops from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and India. We have been having Bible studies on 1 Peter and having discussions about discipleship and leadership.

What are you looking forward to at the conference?

I am looking forward to seeing some of the historic sites in England and making connections with our shared heritage. I am looking forward to being in Canterbury Cathedral as it is the spiritual home of the Anglican Communion. It will be very interesting to share experiences with people from different cultures and to find what we have in common with bishops from very different backgrounds. It will also be interesting to have discussions about climate change and how the big countries can do more to help small countries like ours that are already suffering from climate change. I want to listen to other people and learn from their experiences.

Thank you very much for our time together this morning (this evening your time). I hope we can meet up again for further discussions.

Thank you for inviting me to the zoom meeting and please convey my greetings to all our friends in England.

Rev'd John Pinder has also interviewed the Bishop of Guadalcanal and this interview can be found on the charity's website www.mmuk.net/news

IN THE NEWS

Latest news round up from MMUK

Bishop Willie Preaches at Merton College

Bishop Willie was recently invited to preach at Evensong at Merton College's Chapel. Bishop John Coleridge Patteson, first Bishop of Melanesia, was a former student of the College.

With COVID restrictions lifted, please contact the charity if you would like a guest speaker for your church or school.



Fundraising Trustee Vacancy

As the work and reach of the charity expands, the Melanesian Mission is looking to fill a Trustee vacancy coming up in September 2022, with a person who has a gift for fundraising.

The Fundraising Trustee will provide strategic oversight of The Melanesian Mission's fundraising and communications campaigns, oversee fundraising and ensure it is carried out in legal, honest, and accountable ways.

The term of office is three years and the Board of Trustees meets four times a year, with two of these meetings online. For more information about this role, please contact the Hon Treasurer Steve Scoffield steve.scoffield@mmuk.net



Southern Cross Mission Boat Sold

Earlier this year the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACoM) sold the ninth Southern Cross to the Guadalcanal Provincial Government. The ship has been renamed the Southern Coast.

ACoM is hoping to replace the boat with a larger ship, once funding has been secured.

Coffee Mornings and Cocoa Nights

Our online supporter events have been running monthly for over 18 months now, and are providing a useful forum for keeping in touch with our sisters and brothers in Melanesia.

Some months we have guest speakers from Melanesia and at other times, MMUK's Executive Officer Katie Drew, shares news from the region and answers supporters' questions. We try to run two time slots each month at 10am and repeating the session again at 7pm on the same day, keeping the sessions to an hour, and finishing in prayer.

Two recent sessions were recorded and can be watched on the charity's website www.mmuk.net

As well as the MMUK hosted events, UK parishes and Associates and Companions to the Melanesian Brothers and Sisters have also been holding regular events,



PRAYER DIARY

WEEK 1

Sunday

Pray for the Anglican Church of Melanesia and all the staff at the Provincial Head Office in Honiara. For Dr Abraham Hauriasi, the General Secretary. For the discussions and decisions to come out of ACoM's General Synod in late November.

For the New Zealand Trust Board and its directors, as they support the Anglican Church in Melanesia. For the work of the Melanesian Mission UK in Prayer, People and Giving.

Monday

For the Diocese of Temotu and for Bishop Willie Tungale and all the staff working at the Headquarters at Lata.

For the chaplain to seafarers, the Revd Bobby Chuchuni and his mission to visit, pray and share the Good News.

Tuesday

The Community of the Sisters of Melanesia and their work with women throughout the islands. For Head Sister Annie, Assistant Head Sister Alice and Administrator Flory.

We pray for the fundraising efforts to enable the Community to complete the rebuild their chapel at Verana'aso, and give thanks for the generosity of donors.

Wednesday

For the Diocese of Ysabel, Bishop Ellison Quity and the staff at the diocesan headquarters at Jejevo, Buala.

We give thanks for all those who give their companionship, time and financial help to support the Anglican Church of Melanesia, the religious orders and the Mothers' Union.

Thursday

For the diocese of Vanuatu & New Caledonia, Bishop James Tama and the staff at the diocesan headquarters in Luganville on the island of Santo.

We pray for the COVID awareness programmes and a good uptake of the vaccines across Melanesia.

Friday

For the Society of St Francis throughout the world, including Melanesia and for their Minister Provincial Br Worrick Marako. We pray for the Brothers mission drawing attention to the human rights concerns of unregulated, illegal and unsustainable logging.

For communities affected by climate change and for the work the church is undertaking in monitoring weather patterns, coastal erosion, and other environmental changes.

Saturday

The diocese of Malaita, diocesan Bishop Sam Sahu and assistant Bishop Rickson Maomaoru.

For church schools, rural training centres, the theological colleges and John Coleridge Patteson University, staff and pupils.



**THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
OF MELANESIA**

WEEK 2

Sunday

For the Archbishop, the Most Reverend Leonard Dawea and all his staff in the diocese of Central Melanesia, including the new Assistant Bishop Rt Revd Othnielson Gamutu.

For ACoM's Acting Mission Secretary Fr Wilfred Kekea and his team at PHQ, and their outreach work in hospitals, Rove Prison, climate change programmes, women's and youth work.

Monday

For the diocese of Guadalcanal, and their Bishop the Rt Revd Benedict Loe. We pray for the Provincial Cathedral of St Barnabas, Honiara, and for Dean Philip Rongotha, and all who minister and worship there.

Tuesday

For the Community of the Sisters of the Church, and for Sr Veronica, Provincial Sister for the Solomon Islands Pacific Region. We give thanks for the Community's mission work with families and children around TNK and their retreat ministry.

For the Christian Care Centre outside Honiara and in Auki on Malaita. For the work on gender-based violence with police and community leaders.

Wednesday

For the diocese of Central Solomons, Bishop Steven Koete and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters in Tulagi.

For the shipyard at Taroaniara and all those who travel by sea around Melanesia, including

those who work and go on missions aboard the Southern Cross. For the printing press in Honiara.

Thursday

For the diocese of Banks and Torres, Bishop Patteson Alfred Worek and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters in Sola.

For the Mothers' Union in the Province, their President Pamela Abana and for their work with satellite churches, literacy programmes, couples counselling, the Girls Friendly Society, savings clubs and the Positive Parenting programme.

Friday

For the Melanesian Brotherhood in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, PNG, Philippines, Australia and Canada and for the companions worldwide supporting this community.

For ACoM schools, school chaplains, teachers and pupils and for school partnerships linking children and teachers in the UK and Melanesia.

Saturday

For the Diocese of Hanuato'o, Bishop Arthur Stanley Abui, and the staff at the Diocesan Headquarters.

For closer diocesan links bringing Christians around the world together in Christian unity. For all those called to be missionaries in the past, now and in the future. For those who have given their life in service to God.



JOURNEY OF FAITH

TRUSTEE KATE PWAISIHO WRITES ABOUT HER MELANESIA SPIRITUALITY

I spend the first 14 years of my life in the Solomon Islands before coming over to the UK in August 1997 with my parents and two siblings.

Life in the Pacific was very different. Besides our different way of culture, warm climate, population of 600,000, 70 languages, there is a richness of community life and Christian faith. Hence as a teenager, it wasn't an easy transition. But nonetheless, I thank God for the Call he had on my parents' life to come and serve in the UK as missionaries.

Arriving in the UK, I soon realised the lack of Christian faith in young people and young adults. This triggered my faith and belief in God. And I started to ask myself "does God truly exist?" Even though I was brought up in a Christian home, I did not know at that time my identity as a believer in Christ

Jesus. At the age of 19, I re-dedicated my life to God after reading the book 'Victory Over Darkness' by Dr Neil Anderson. I began to learn and understand my identity in Christ Jesus, find growth, meaning and fulfilment as a Christian and started to seek God for his purpose in my life.

It was then, I had the desire to do biblical studies which I did at Cliff College, Calver in Derbyshire for 2 years. After 2 years of Bible College, I did a Christian gap year with Careforce organisation in Hoylake, Wirral. This was my first experience of Christian ministry. After that I went to serve and did 3 years of youth ministry at St Pancras church in Plymouth. Following that, I did 1 Year of youth ministry in Bolton and my recent post was 5 years of youth ministry at All Saints parish, in Coventry.

It was during my early years of youth ministry that several people in the church mentioned the idea of wider context of ministry which I had ignored over the years.

However, in spring of 2017 when I was serving at All Saints church, Coventry, several people mentioned the same idea again. And I began to ponder and asked people to pray for me for God's wisdom and discernment. The desire to serve the wider church/body of Christ started to take root in my life.

And so, I took the step of faith and spoke to the vicar and gave my resignation letter to the PCC of Allesley parish, Coventry in 2018.

I moved back to Macclesfield, spending the next couple of months attending leadership conferences, exploring different styles of worship at different parishes and denominations. I was invited to be a Speaker for the Mothers Union in Chester diocese and became a Trustee for Melanesian Mission UK.

Additionally in January 2019, I assisted my parents' removal to their retirement home and was the carer for my mother until she lost her battle with kidney failure in July. In spite of the sad passing of my dear mother I experienced God's inner healing of his love and peace during my bereavement.

Following a period of 6 months in the Solomon Islands, I returned to the UK and began a discernment placement with St Philip & St James, Alderley Edge in September 2020.

And in September 2021 I began my theological training at Emmanuel Theological College, North West.

I would sincerely appreciate your prayers as I continue to seek God's Call.

Yours in Christ, Kate Pwaisiho





NEWS FROM THE SISTERS OF THE CHURCH

The Community of the Sisters of the Church will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year. It has been delayed, due to the global pandemic. However, despite the coronavirus on the rise in the Solomon Islands, we press on with the preparations. The official opening will be on 29th September 2022 and the day for the main celebration will be on 2nd October 2022. We are inviting Associates, families, friends and supporters of the Community to this celebration. Do come and join us to celebrate the life, work and ministry of the Sisters of the Church in the Solomon Islands.

As part of the preparation, we have built a new classroom for Mother Emily's Kindergarten with the help of friends, supporters, associates, Churches, ACOM and fundraising drives. This is to assist us with the accommodation, as we are expecting a big crowd to the celebration. Furthermore, we are addressing the Covid 19, because children cannot learn well when

they are sick and so social distancing is an expectation and must be practised at all times.

The second project that we have been working on and have yet to complete is the extension to the Chapel. The Chapel at TNK is really insufficient for major occasions and even worse, when social distancing is expected at this time. The current Chapel is too small for the Community during this



pandemic time. TNK is badly affected by the second wave and almost everyone is affected by it, although, we practise the protocols. The work is in progress as you will see in the picture. A 'big thank you' to many who supported us and more especially to our builders, our Associates Sam and his boys.

I hope to complete these projects before leaving for the Lambeth Conference in July 2022. I am part of the Chaplaincy team to the Conference and I am looking forward to meeting up with my Sisters, friends, school mates, MMUK and the congregation of St Andrew's Church in the U.K. I will be spending some time in the U.K and then travelling to Karlsruhe, Germany for the World Council of Churches Assembly from 31st August – 8th September 2022. This is another wonderful opportunity for me to make new friends, to extend my knowledge and to experience the network of the World Council of Churches. There will be 28 of us as participants from the Pacific not including our advisors. The 'theme' for the 11th Assembly is: 'Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity'. Reconciliation and unity are certainly needed in the world at this time.



I am quite hesitant to travel during these times of uncertainty, but I hope the Lord

will protect me from hidden dangers and problems.

During Holy Week, the Sisters went out to the nearby communities and spent that week with the local people. They were doing teaching, Bible Studies and leading the Services on Good Friday up to the Easter Vigil. The communities were



grateful for our mission, as they needed encouragement and to hear the re-telling of the story of Holy Week. That was the first time that we had gone out since Covid 19 reached the Solomons. Most of them were affected. They needed our mission and pastoral visits to them, but now we are in the second wave of the virus, we have to stop and be aware of the pandemic. The message of Easter is very powerful, and Christians are longing to hear it, although they have heard it year after year. God speaks and inspires people day by day and draws them to himself in an amazing way. We also teach the people the protocols of the Covid 19. However, some of the Sisters contracted the virus from the local people and then came and spread it at TNK.

Revd Sr Veronica CSC

MMUK HAS APPOINTED A CARE FOR CREATION OFFICER

The Melanesian Mission (MMUK) is upholding the 5th mark of mission – to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth – with the appointment of its first Care for Creation Officer.

One of Melanesia's biggest challenges is climate change and environmental degradation, such as logging, mining and increasing pollution levels. The Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACoM) has frequently voiced its concerns about the effects of environmental change on the islands, including increased flooding, shoreline erosion, changing weather patterns and more frequent extreme events impacting food and water security.

In response to this need, the Melanesian Mission has increasingly become involved with climate research, adaptation and advocacy, working with researchers and scientists from the University of Southampton and Selwyn College, Cambridge, and documentary maker Alex Leger. To support this ongoing work, the charity is delighted to announce the appointment from February of Marie Schlenker as part-time Care for Creation Officer.

Marie has previously volunteered with MMUK and helped to develop Care for Creation online courses with HeartEdge. With a background in science, Marie is currently undertaking the final year of PhD studies at the University of Southampton, researching climate change impacts and community relocations in Solomon Islands. With the support of MMUK and





ACoM, she conducted research in remote communities in Solomon Islands in 2019, visiting the Provinces of Guadalcanal and Malaita. Marie is also involved in the design and implementation of a citizen-based environmental monitoring programme, ACoM's Environment Observatories.

In her role as Care for Creation Officer, Marie will take the lead in developing a climate change course for ACoM, which will equip priests and members of the religious orders with the necessary skills to incorporate climate change into their teachings and set up environment observatories in their local communities. Marie will also focus on increasing opportunities for communities in Melanesia and in the UK to get involved in practical climate action.

On her appointment, Marie said: "Despite having studied geosciences and environmental physics at university, it was only when I travelled to Melanesia in 2019 that I actually saw and understood how closely some communities are reliant on their natural environment, and what environmental degradation and climate

change mean for people's everyday lives.

"It was a wake-up call, which made me realise that I did not just want to study environmental change, but actively prevent further damage, help people adapt to changes and motivate others to join me on this path.

"I am very excited to start my new role as Care for Creation Officer with MMUK and hope to engage with parishes in the UK and Melanesia to work towards a more sustainable future, in which caring for people includes caring for the environment," said Marie.

Bishop Mark Rylands, Chair of MMUK, commented: "Marie has a heart and passion for this work; she has crucial experience of the situation on the ground in Melanesia and she has the organisational skill, intelligence and ability to make a difference. We are delighted to appoint Marie as our Care for Creation Officer."

If you would like more information about Marie's work, please contact the charity mission@mmuk.net (01404) 851491.

42 Days in Quarantine: A personal reflection

Revd Fr. Wilfred Kekea returned with his family from training in Fiji to take up the role of ACOM's Acting Mission Secretary in Honiara at the end of last year. All returning Solomon islanders had to quarantine at the time. Fr Wilfed's quarantine lasted over 40 days, as unbeknown to him, his family had COVID. He writes about their experience here.

FLIGHT DAY - 22ND DECEMBER 2021

"Why are most international flights operated by the National carrier arriving in Honiara at night?" was a question prior to departure from Fiji. Upon landing I realized that it would have been very, very uncomfortable for the handful of officials whose work is to check us into the country in their PPE; on a typical Honiara afternoon.

DAY 1

Trying to figure out where our quarantine camp is, thanks to Google maps, we are right next to the Honiara International Airport. Should have figured that out last night with the very short drive. Xavinago had a slight fever.

DAY 3 (SATURDAY 25TH DECEMBER 2021)

Merry Christmas. Family eucharist this morning and we had our first swab in the afternoon. I think the health workers decided to do a collective swab, together with the passengers from Bristane who arrived yesterday. Or maybe, the allowances get tripled on a public holiday, who knows, it is anybody's wild guess as we were not informed of the reasons for this delay.

DAY 4

Our results come back negative except for our youngest, Xavinago, who is 10 years old. He got a scolding from his elder sibling and mother; had to defuse. Did not hear the Prime Minister's official announcement, but a member of my family has been officially entered onto the database as Solomon Islands COVID 19 case number 21.

According to the Solomon Islands Ministry of Health's COVID19 protocols, this means that the whole family need to be swabbed again and that Xavi will need to go into isolation. How can we maintain social distancing or isolate a 10-year-old?

DAY 9

Each of us was given a sprayer of diluted bleach with the advice that we are to spray everywhere we go. The squishing sound of the sprayer reminds me of a leper's bell in ancient times announcing 'unclean, unclean'.

DAY 15

Xavi's new swab result came back still positive, next test in 7 days. Not good news when we celebrate the Epiphany today. We will need three negatives for discharge.

Anika, Hara and I also had our swab this afternoon. Started noticing that something is not quite right. Our swab samples, in a small cooler, were left on the grass beside the locked gate for about 3 hours. Heard on the news that some of the frontliners are complaining of receiving half pay. Hmm.

DAY 16

The Solomon Islands Prime Minister made another special announcement today. The sister of the 10-year-old boy who returned from Fiji has returned a positive COVID 19 test result. Anika has entered the database as Solomon Islands Covid 19 case number 25. Why were we not informed prior to the nationwide address?

Spent some time today on the phone responding to family and friends, assuring them that we are all asymptomatic and enjoying the food.

DAY 20

As instructed, there are some areas which are restricted to us marked out by lines on the floor. Our meals are usually brought in by the nursing staff and placed on a table bordering our territory and the nurses' territory.

A new staff brought in lunch and mistakenly placed it on a table in the restricted area at around 1:45pm. After a couple of polite but angry phone calls, we had lunch at 3:30pm. Another nursing staff profusely apologized for the mistake and unfortunately, received a piece of my mind. Lord, we pray for patience and understanding.



DOCAM Clergy undergoing COVID-19 safety trainings from Solomon Islands Health professionals.

DAY 25

In the ACoM cycle of prayer, this week, we are asked to pray for our schools as they anticipate the beginning of a new academic year. Reminds me that I have not yet arranged any school for the children, but I put my trust in Gcd for directions.

Swab day for Anika. Something is definitely not right, or something is happening in Honiara that we are not aware of. We have not been contacted by health authorities to let us know of our swab results.

DAY 27

We are still waiting for our results, which is not normal as we usually have them the day after swabs. There are rumours (from calls to wantoks and on social media) that there is now suspected community transmission in Honiara. The Prime Minister in his address this afternoon stated that there are two new cases. A call from the nurse station at 11pm advised us to remain in our cubicles as a new patient was being brought in.

DAY 29

Transferred to another quarantine facility (Honiara Hotel). At least we are not being monitored 24/7 on CCTV. Prime Minister announced that there is now community transmission with 48 persons tested positive.

DAY 34

The past days after the announcement of community transmission have seen a huge turnout for vaccination at vaccination sites. Some who openly spoke against vaccination were seen in the queue for vaccination; a comparison to Paul's conversion as we remember the Biblical event today.

Medical authorities advise the public in Honiara to go into home isolation if they have flu like symptoms and to remain in isolation for a further 3



ACoM Health Coordinator decontaminating ACoM headoffice.

days once recovered, approximately 2 weeks. A typical home in Honiara may house 3 generations with shared kitchen, shower room and toilet. I cannot imagine how it will be possible to isolate someone in such an environment.

DAY 37

Received an SMS from the Head Clinician at the National Referral Hospital informing us that we are recommended to NHEOC for discharge tomorrow. We will be 2 days short of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness.

DAY 40

We are still at the Honiara Hotel as there is a back log of swab samples at the lab and many sick patients at National referral Hospital tested positive.

Finally, we hear that someone will be coming to discharge us tomorrow. Being well versed with the Solomon cultural etiquette; 'tomorrow' this could be any time from the next day to any day in the future.

Someone also called today for confession, my first ever to be conducted through mobile phone. Welcome to the world of technology, I think this is the safest mode in this pandemic.

DAY 42 (WEDNESDAY 2ND FEBRUARY 2022)

At last, as we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, we are discharged. Praise God.

READ FR WILFRED'S FULL ACCOUNT OF HIS 42 DAYS IN QUARANTINE
ON THE CHARITY'S WEBSITE WWW.MMUK.NET

The Melanesian Mission (MMUK) is an Anglican Mission agency that provides support to the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACoM), through prayer, people and giving.

Please visit our website for the latest news and prayer requests from MMUK and ACoM. Our extensive film archive includes an introduction to the charity narrated by the Charity's President, the Most Revd & Right Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, films on the religious orders and first-hand accounts of climate change.

To receive the charity's regular email newsletter subscribe at www.mmuk.net/subscribe. You can also follow the charity on Twitter www.twitter.com/melanesianm and Facebook www.facebook.com/melanesianmission

If you would like more copies of this magazine, leaflets on the work of the charity or would like to book a speaker for when restrictions are lifted for public gatherings, please contact the charity.

Many thanks to all who have contributed articles and photographs for this edition of the magazine.


**O Jesus,
Be the canoe that holds me up in the sea of life;
Be the rudder that keeps me in the straight road;
Be the outrigger that supports me in times of temptation.
Let your Spirit be my sail that carries me through each day.
Keep my body strong so I can paddle steadfastly
on in the voyage of life. Amen**



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