

### Interview with Fr. Cosmas Kombla, SVD (Paraguay)



**Q:** Tell me a short background about yourself.

**A:** I am Fr. Cosmas Kombla, from Yaremol, Ambullua Parish in Jiwaka Province, Papua New Guinea. I come from a big family: we are 3 brothers and 2 sisters and my parents adopted 3 more boys. So, that makes us 8 children in the family.

My parents were active Catholics and we were born into a good Catholic family. Two of my elder brothers were catechists. The young ones too were raised in Catholic faith.

**Q:** How long have you been a priest and a missionary?

**A:** I have served the Lord for four years & nine months as a priest and four years & four months as a missionary.

**Q:** Where is your mission country?

**A:** Paraguay.

**Q:** When did you arrive in Paraguay and what was your first impression of the country?

**A:** I arrived at Silvio Petirosi International Airport in Paraguay at midnight on 19 September 2012 and a Vietnamese SVD missionary, Fr. Anthony Tran, was there to pick me up. The first impression of Paraguay was for me at that time "the hottest country in the world".

The people are good and kind and I see it as another Papua New Guinea. People are white but there is no difference in relating to them very well.

**Q:** Describe your first months in Paraguay.

**A:** In the first four months I was stationed at the Postulancy and Novitiate houses to study Spanish, which began four days after my arrival. After that, for another four months I went to practice speaking Spanish in a parish called Juan Leo Malloquin of Alto Parana Province. Then I went back for another two months in class.

After my studies, I had a short introduction with a

priest from Spain in Limoy Parish, Alto Parana. In this parish people speak Spanish, Portuguese and Guarani. Then I was sent to Curuguaty, Province of Canediyu. From there I started working with what they called the "Indios" (Indigenous people).

**Q:** Can you speak Spanish fluently?

**A:** I can say that I am not really that fluent in Spanish but I can speak very well and communicate with the people.

**Q:** Can you give us a glimpse of the Catholic Church in Paraguay as well as the society in general?

**A:** The general view of the Catholic Church in Paraguay depends on the location and situation. In the place where I am assigned the people come to church when they want to come; if they feel like not going then they won't come.

The people of Paraguay were colonized by the Spaniards and they love feasts (fiestas). They really want big celebrations.

**Q:** Describe the traditional food and drink of Paraguay.

**A:** There are four particular and traditional food in Paraguay that I find unique.

The "mate"- hot drink infused with any kind of leaves and the "terere" = hot drink infused with any kind of leaves. Both drinks are believed to bring healing based on what kind of leaves you infuse into it.

There is the "chipa" strong bread and the 'sopa' a kind of cake; both have corn and milk as the main ingredients .

**Q:** Where are you assigned now? What is the scope of your missionary work?

**A:** I am assigned in Nuestra Señora de Caacupe Sta. Fe Parish, Ciudad Del Este, Paraguay as assistant parish priest. I work full time with the "indigenous" and the poor people.

I am working with four groups of people:

1. The Paraguayos – people from the city;
2. The Campesinos – people from the village;
3. Brazileros – the immigrants or they identify themselves as "brazilguayos" and finally
4. Indigenous "Indios" – the native people.

## Interview with Fr. Cosmas Kombla, SVD (Paraguay)

continuation from page 1...

These “Indios” to whom my mission is concentrated on has accepted me and trusted me. They know that I am a Catholic priest. They talk to me and are very open to me. The prime purpose of the mission is to support and preserve the culture, the language, the traditional religion . At the same time we take care of the health, education and the land. Indios have their own religion, ritual and priest. The good news is they worship God, not some cult or image. Their priest is called “oporai’va”. This kind of culture and way of worship is what we can call in PNG Language “traditional religion” worshipping the same God as Christians. I have already worked for more than 3 years with them.

**Q:** How do you rate your missionary work in Paraguay?

**A:** Although I have encountered some difficulties in my missionary work in Paraguay especially in the language and the culture, I can say that I have no regrets. In fact I really liked it. Working with them gives meaning to my priestly life.

**Q:** What will be your message to young Papua New Guineans who want to become a missionary like you?

**A:** God calls a person in a particular way. Look for it in your heart. Don’t go just because of ‘peer pressure’ but follow the calling of your heart. If you are true enough to follow the calling of your heart even the most difficult situation in the missionary life will become easy.

Dear Fr Provincial,

Blessings and greetings from Misiones, Argentina. Hope our confreres are all in good health.

It was a tragedy and of course sad to hear about the untimely passing of our brother Fr Gregory Jehanus, SVD. I have good memories of him as he was once my district superior during my regency year in Dirima (2007), and also he was a good companion. Sure, we will always miss him. I thank God for the life and service of Fr Gregory in PNG and for his companionship always. He was a down-to-earth, simple priest whose lifestyle provided some inspiration on us young ones. May he rest in the peace of our Lord.

After three months of being alone, trying to take care of the parish, finally my parish priest, Fr Juan Vargas returned from his home-leave in Hungary last Nov. 01st. At least I feel a bit relieved and relaxed now from the pressures. But we are still preparing for the Confirmation of the young ones this coming Nov. 26.

All is well and good here as the climate is getting warmer and we are near the summer season on December 21st. Thanks be to God, so far I'm in

good health and still playing soccer - hehehehe. Our seminarian, John Sine visited me and stayed with me for a week and returned back to his parish in another province. He said he was doing fine with the people although his parish priest was not taking good care of him. John has a strong survival instinct and I guess he is getting over his difficulties, accepting challenges and learning. Let us keep him in our prayers.

We have elected a new Provincial Superior, Fr Fernando Reis. He is a local man, from Misiones. He was working in Congo, Africa for so many years before returning to Argentina. He will take over the office from Fr John Rajimon this coming January, 2017. We hope and pray that under his leadership there would be some structural changes in the province. We all look forward to working with him.

That's all about some news updates from ARE. Until then, I hope to hear from you soon. Blessings and best wishes from Argentina to you and all our confreres in PNG.

In the Divine Word,

Padre Vicente Guawi svd

# DWU Missioning ceremony



Fr provincial Jozef Maciolek and sister Luise Mary



Bp Jozef Roszynski with Isaac

Dear Fr. Provincial,

Greetings from USA!

I am still in Bay St. Louis SVD Central House fixing my papers to be legal in this country. So far so good, I am done with all my medical check-ups , got my insurance and medicare done and I was able to get my social security card. Now I am secured legally to live and work here in the USA.

This morning I got the news from the Provincial that I will move to Epworth in the state of Iowa to take a few courses to learn about American culture and also take few courses at Iowa state collage on USA accounting for my future. I was told it will take me the whole year to get all those programs done. I am looking forward to it and will move to Iowa when the date is set any time this month. By the way, it will be my first time to see snow and feel the effect of it in December.

Greetings to the community.

Br. David Nikins, SVD

Our dearest friends in Christ,

Peace be with you!

We, the seventeen SVD novices of the Santatlo Class, have come to the highest point of our Novitiate formation where we encounter God in our 30-day Retreat or Ignatian Retreat.

We heartily request your prayers to help us experience the presence of God. This retreat (November 1-30, 2016), as our formators would emphasize, helps us not only in discerning our vocation to the religious life but most importantly, in deepening our relationship with God. We believe that as we grow deeper in our relationship with Him, He will lead us to the path He wants us to go.



Thank you so much for being with us in this journey of ours to know God, to serve Him more, and to follow wherever He wants us to go.

Gratefully yours, SVD Novitiate Community  
Salong, Calapan, Oriental Mindoro



# SACRED HEART FEAST DAY

The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in almost every parish is always marked with special solemnity. Parishes named after the Sacred Heart of Jesus have a deep love for and devotion to this great feast of the Church. For us in Sacred Heart Parish, Ulupu, Wewak Diocese, our parish feast day this year was a memorable one.

Prior to the feast day, there was a three-day volley tournament for the youth. There were twelve teams all together from all the three outstations and the main parish. The centre of attention was the Sunshine Team made of little boys and girls which I trained. Nothing much was expected of us, but emotions were very deep



especially from the Mama Group each time we were losing. Some mothers even shed tears and would shout on the big boys and girls to play easy. It was all fun but emotional. However, the tournament was won by Holy Cross, one of the outstations of the parish.

Bishop Jozef Roszynski arrived on Saturday afternoon for the celebration on Sunday. On his arrival, the primary school students welcomed him from the school premises to the parish premises and the mama group welcomed him from the premises to the haus patre with tumbuna singsing. There was a very big crowd to welcome the bishop.

Sunday was a bright day. The silence was broken by the church bells. The first bell was at 7:00am. The rising sun also adorned the morning with its mild and golden colour. On this feast day of the parish, with the permission of the bishop, the 'Door of Mercy' was opened in the parish. Bishop Jozef opened it for us. It was a moment of great joy when the door was opened and everyone coming in signed themselves with the sign of the cross and also put some salt on the tongue. After this, the Bishop and two of us concelebrating priests sprinkled the people with Holy water.

The celebration began on time. As usual, there were all the singsings and bilas to be expected. The parish ground was packed to capacity. It was a joyful day. Everyone has been waiting for this very day, especially those who prepared for confirmation. There were smiles on everyone's faces. Almost everyone was in their parish colours which are red and white. The centre of attention for the celebration was the catechumen for confirmation. There were about one hundred candidates for confirmation. They were a mixed group of old and young ones.

After the homily, all the candidates for confirmation came to the front, knelt before the Bishop and one after another they were confirmed by the Bishop. The mass continued as usual after the confirmations. The joy and enthusiasm for the celebration was nothing new or something to be surprised about; however, it was the energy and power that the people put into the celebration. On this special day for the parish, some groups and individuals had made a request for special blessing from the Bishop for the ministries and particular apostolate they are involved in the parish, like the Intercessor Group. These groups and individuals came forward for the Bishop's blessing before the final blessing and dismissal.

Everyone gathered together again at the grand stand for the second part of the celebration. The leaders of Ulupu, as well as the Bishop, were given turns to make a speech. Among the leaders was the Honourable Member for Maprik, Hon. John Saimon, MP. He graced the day by making cash presentation for the first four teams of the volley ball tournament. After all the speeches, the gathering was ended by a closing praying and a blessing from the Bishop. It was a day of blessing and everyone went home happy and blessed.



## November

02	Fr. Risco Batbual	(1979)
03	Fr. Marsianus Bei	(1968)
	Fr. Martin Goi Mangi	(1969)
13	Fr. Tarsisius Nardi	(1979)
14	Fr. Yosafat Jayakira	(1972)
21	Fr. Bao The Nguyen	(1968)
28	Fr. Zdzislaw Mlak	(1953)
	Fr. Yohanes Krisantus	(1984)
29	Fr. John Sine	(1983)

## December

02	Fr. Romel Porillo	(1975)
04	Fr. Vincent Wasaring	(1973)
09	Fr. Tony Somhorst	(1933)
11	Fr. Zenon Szablowinski	(1965)
12	Fr. Ryszard Wajda	(1958)
15	Fr. Zygmund Szmidt	(1954)

## The death Anniversary

### November

01	Fr. Jan Wewersowicz	(2008)
02	Br. Balthasar Merkl	(2005)
03	Fr. John Lipperts	(1931)
	Br. William Schroer	2005)
04	Fr. Alois Valtiner	(2000)
05	Fr. Rudi Stodden	(2009)
07	Fr. Cornelius van Baar	(1985)
	Fr. Alois Blasl	(2014)
08	Fr. Emil Jerome	(1938)
09	Br. Beatus Schingler	(1972)
	Fr. Geoff Brumm	(2009)
10	Fr. Jacob Noss	(1980)
11	Br. Dan Kelly	(1987)
	Br. Wenceslaus Klus	(1987)
	Br. Bernhard Noster	(2009)
13	Br. Priscil Marcinek	(1972)
14	Br. Serenus Lindemann	(1999)
15	Br. Tobias Bertels	(1910)
	Fr. Karl Laumann	(1980)
	Fr. Anthony Patik	(1999)
17	Br. Roland Kraemer	(2003)
18	Fr. Louis Welling	(1991)
	Br. Paul Broekman	(1993)
	Br. Karl Schuetz	(2010)
20	Fr. Joseph Knoebel	(1990)
21	Br. Fridolin Schlierenzauer	(2000)
	Br. Vinzenz Sagan	(1989)
	Fr. Hubert Fautsch	(2001)
	Fr. Joseph Forstner	(2009)
	Br. Wolfrid Hovestadt	(1931)
26	Fr. Gerard Mulholland	(2014)

### December

01	Br. Symmachus Stiller	(1932)
04	Fr. John Gehberger	(1931)
	Fr. Ferruccio Zuccolo	(2009)
06	Fr. Ralph Wiltgen	(2007)
08	Fr. Elmer Elsbernd	(2001)
	Fr. Frank Mihalic	(2001)
10	Fr. Ivo Ruiter	(1991)
12	Br. Firmatus Weddeling	(1943)
	Fr. Patrick Murphy	(1978)
	Bp. Raymond Kalisz	(2010)
14	Fr. Jacob Ziegler	(1956)
	Fr. Claire Risse	(1998)
	Br. Amandus van Neerven	(2008)
15	Fr. Joseph Erdweg	(1925)
16	Fr. Karl Morschheuser	(1934)
	Fr. Nikolaus Kuhn	(1998)
17	Fr. Anton Roesler	(1980)
20	Br. Heribert Stimmler	(1961)
21	Abp. George Bernarding	(1987)
	Fr. Alois Siegel	(1997)
22	Fr. Theo Tersteeg	(2012)
23	Br. Cunibert Cebulla	(1966)
	Fr. Clarence Howard	(1985)
	Fr. Frederick Girards	(1935)
	Br. Edelfried Pohl	(1965)
	Fr. William Kemmerling	(1989)
	Fr. Francis Scherer	(1911)
	Fr. Steve Palinkas	(1995)

## Health, church to work together

The National, October 07, 2016

## Man escapes sorcery torture

Post Courier, October 14, 2016

## Australia halts maternal child health initiative in PNG

Post Courier, October 17, 2016

# SOCIAL CONCERN

THE Health Department and the Catholic Church health services signed an agreement to work together to deliver services. CCHS board chairman Archbishop Stephen Reichert said the agreement would allow the department to provide funding to provide better health services, with more transparency and accountability. He said the church had parishes in all parts of the country and it would be easier to use their connections to provide service directly to the people. "By having a direct responsibility for funding from the government and the national office and CCHS, we believe that we can introduce our financial governance that will ensure accountability, more responsible use of resources and better outcome,"

TEN rural health centres run by the Catholic Church in Chimbu have scaled down operations. That has put pressure on the healthcare system in the province, the chief executive officer of the Kundiawa General Hospital, Mathew Kaluvia, says. Kaluvia told The National yesterday that Catholic Health Services secretary Sr Elizabeth Koai advised KGH in a letter that the shutting down of 10 rural health centres was due to lack of resources and funding from the Government. Koai said they could not continue to provide health services because there was no funds to pay staff and no money to sustain operations.

AUSTRALIA has pulled the plug on one of its most successful health programs in PNG which helped to reduce infant mortality rates since 2011. This follows the announcement last Friday of the cessation of AusAID's partnership with the Government's maternal child health initiative program. Papua New Guinea Midwifery Society president and Port Moresby General Hospital maternal unit co-ordinator Jennifer Pyakalyia revealed this during the 13th PNG Nurses Research Symposium in Lae last Friday.

Mrs Pyakalyia said there are 73,000 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in PNG, and this has been the stepping stone for the PNG Government to the MCHI program commencing with AusAid support in collaboration with the Health Department in 2011.

She said the MCHI initiative had brought 11 overseas midwives, two obstetricians and in 2015 a New Zealand midwife to further coach and train midwives and nurses at PMGH, including the building of five midwifery schools that train more

he said. Reichert said they wanted to strengthen governance and financial management to allow closer adherence to department and CCHS standards. "Catholic Church Health Service has a long history of providing health care to people and the majority of health care offered in remote rural areas and we already mentioned that we are committed to continue. If possible, we can expand to those areas if funding is available in future."

Department's strategy policy executive manager Ken Wai said since the passing of the public-private partnership policy in 2014, they had gone into partnership with churches, non-governmental organisations and other industries to deliver services.

She said they tried to continue to operate with limited resources available until they were exhausted.

Kaluvia is concerned about the impact it was going to have and has requested urgent intervention from the Health Department and the Government. "All the patients in these rural health centres are seeking medical treatment at the hospital and we are now running out of medicines," he said.

"Our medical personnel are also becoming exhausted and it's a very tough situation for us here on the ground.

than 400 midwives with an average of 80 a year.

She said however, the program ceased this year and she is appealing to the Australian Government to reconsider its decision in ceasing this partnership and continue the relationship with midwives in PNG to work collaboratively in reducing the high mortality rate in the country.

Mrs Pyakalyia said to date, Papua New Guinea tops the list for maternal mortality rates in the Pacific, and is second in the world. She said high mortality rates still remain a challenge in PNG's health care system currently seen with 800 midwives attending to 250,000 delivery cases annually, which is not good.

Mrs Pyakalyia said the high child mortality rates can only be reduced if there are enough midwifery nurses at all health facilities in PNG.

She said the focus now to reduce infant mortality rates is to develop competent and autonomous clinical midwives to be available in all 89 districts of PNG with the vision of ensuring all pregnant women have access to a safe supervised delivery.