

## Call to make catechist a saint

MANUS Province leaders have asked the Catholic Church hierarchy to make the province's first catechist Joseph Pominis Posing a saint.

Governor Dr Jacob Jumogot made the call after the Vatican City representative to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, Archbishop Francisco Padilla, celebrated mass with close to 2000 Catholic faithful to mark the church's 100 years in the province.

"I would like to request that the late Joseph Pominis Posing be recognised and recommended to the Catholic Church higher authorities to be considered for consecration into sainthood for his work and involvement in bringing the Catholic Church and the good news of Jesus Christ to our people in Manus," he said.

The request drew applause from the crowd, who gathered at Papitalai village on Saturday to celebrate the centenary, not far from the site where French Archbishop Louis Couppe led the first Catholic mass to be celebrated on Manus soil on January 13, 1907.

Archbishop Couppe was considered the father of the Catholic Church in New Britain, New Ireland when he became bishop of New Britain and the adjacent islands in 1890.

He was responsible for establishing, administering and directing the progress of the mission work from his headquarters in Vunapope near Kokopo and became interested in Manus when he came into contact with Joseph Po Minis and others at Vunapope in 1905.

The first Catholic mass was celebrated over 100 years ago at Joseph Pominis Posing's house in Papitalai village.

# Catholics celebrate



PONAM Island dancers welcome Apostolic Nuncio of PNG and Solomon Islands Archbishop Francisco Padilla at Manus Island's Momote Airport on Friday when he arrived in the province to lead Catholics to celebrate the church's 100 years.

By ALEX RHEENEY

CLOSE to 2000 people joined Vatican City representative Archbishop Francisco Padilla in a secluded village to celebrate the Catholic Church's 100 years in Manus Province.

A special church service was held in Papitalai village, Los Negros Island on Saturday, exactly 100 years to the day when the first mass was celebrated by French Archbishop Louis Couppe.

Saturday's mass was a culmination of two weeks of celebrations which began late last month when a cross and a light were blessed at Vunapope and sent over to Manus' five parishes before arriving in Papitalai on Friday. East New Britain Province, which Archbishop Couppe called home more than

100 years ago, was represented at the celebrations by members of the clergy as well as Tolai traditional dances that led a procession during the mass.

Archbishop Padilla on several occasions publicly thanked the Manus people for the warm hospitality and said the province was blessed by God.

Kavieng-Lorengau diocese Bishop Ambrose Kiapseni earlier on Friday led a regatta of canoes from the PNG Defence Force's Lombrum naval base to Papitalai village, to re-enact Archbishop Couppe's arrival at the Los Negros village over a century ago. Thousands participated in the two-week celebrations to confirm that the church had 46 per cent of the province's 41,600 Christians — the largest of any church.

## Manus wants own diocese

THE Catholic Bishops Conference has been asked to make Manus a separate diocese from Kavieng.

Manus Province is currently part of the Kavieng-Lorengau diocese and is looked after by a bishop based in Kavieng, currently Bishop Ambrose Kiapseni.

But Manus Governor Dr Jacob Jumogot on Saturday put the church hierarchy on notice when giving a speech to mark 100 years of the Catholic Church in Manus Province. "I want to reiterate my call for the church to recognise that 100 years is long enough a time for Manus to exist as a deanery. I am now calling on the Catholic Church hierarchy on the occasion of the centenary celebration to seriously consider making

Manus a diocese of its own," he said. Directly addressing Archbishop Francisco Padilla, Vatican City representative to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, the MP said he had written to the CBC on the issue in 2004 and had yet to hear from the Catholic Church's highest decision-making body in PNG.

"I believe it is fitting that after 100 years of the Catholic Church's work in Manus under different dioceses, including now under Kavieng diocese, Manus should be considered now to establish our own diocese." Hundreds of people who attended the special mass on Saturday had hoped that the clergy would officially announce Manus being a diocese of its own.



the bottom line ►  
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