



# Papua New Guinea



The Independent State of Papua New Guinea occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and many outlying, smaller islands in the Pacific ocean off the northeast coast of Australia. It covers an area that is just a bit larger than the state of California and its population is roughly a fifth of California's. The capital city is Port Moresby.



Papua New Guinea is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world with hundreds of different ethnic groups indigenous to the country. There are 852 known languages in the country and of them, twelve now have no known speakers as some ethnic groups die out.

Most Papua New Guineans (about 80%) live in the rural, mountainous areas of the country which are very difficult to reach. With few roads, most people travel by airplane or by foot. Researchers believe that it is home to the most uncontacted groups of people and undiscovered plants and species on our planet.

Papua New Guinea sits in a geographic area known as the "Pacific Ring of Fire" and so is subject to frequent volcano eruptions and earthquakes. This picture is from earthquaketrack.com on March 15, 2018 and shows seismic activity over two days.



A quake on February 25, 2018 measured 7.5 on the Richter scale and killed over one hundred people, injured over five hundred and displaced at least 17,000 people from their homes, according to the Red Cross.

## MCA in Papua New Guinea

Most citizens of Papua New Guinea are Christian and of them about 27% of them are Roman Catholic. Many religious orders—the Marists, Divine Word Missionaries, Capuchin Franciscans, the Vincentians, and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart—are still at work planting the seeds of faith among the people of this remote and beautiful country.

Father PJ Alindogan, Director of the Missionary Childhood Association in the Diocese of Trenton, New Jersey took a mission trip to the island country and visited to Diocese of Alotau-Sideia. It was not an easy trip and it took four plane rides to get to there! First, he took a 12-hour flight from JFK Airport in New York to Tokyo, Japan, then flew from Tokyo to Manila in the Philippines. After a layover in Manila, he had a five-hour flight to Port Moresby (with another four-hour layover) and then another hour flight to Alotau. Father PJ left the States at noontime on Feb.1 and arrived in Alotau close to noontime on Feb. 4!

In the Diocese of Alotau-Sideia, there are about 60,000 Catholics served by just 20 priests spread out over an area about the size of Massachusetts. Because most supplies arrive by boat, islanders live frugally. Father PJ told his local newspaper, the Trenton Monitor, “They sleep on the floor. They don’t have electricity, even the professionals walk barefoot by choice. They live in the present moment.” He continued, “The basic virtue I observed was patience. They are patient with what the Lord has given them.”

Father PJ met many children along the way and shared his pictures with us.



These children are happy to attend a mission school.

Father PJ also was able to meet many children who represented the different cultures of Papua New Guinea. They showed him how they paint their faces and dress in traditional ways.



Missionary Childhood members worldwide have been hard at work helping the children of Papua New Guinea—at last report, \$50,020 was sent to the Diocese of Alotau-Sideia to build new classrooms for students. A total of \$224,300 went to children’s aid projects across the country funding education, health programs, and orphanages. The children of Papua New Guinea sacrificed \$14,021.50 to Missionary Childhood’s general Solidarity Fund so that other children around the world may benefit from the love and care of missionaries.