

THANK YOU - FROM THE PROVINCE OF OCEANIA on the occasion of the Ordination Reception for Vincent Manehoua CM on Saturday, 30th November 2013 at John Bosco Technical School, Henderson, Honiara, Solomon Islands at 12.30 pm. Fr Philip Robson CM representing the Acting Provincial, Fr Gregory Brett CM, with a vote of thanks to various groups.

Distinguished Guests, the Manehoua Family, Ladies and Gentleman.

As has already been mentioned I am representing the Province of Oceania of the Congregation of the Mission – the Vincentian Fathers & Brothers – and have come to the Solomon Islands offer our sincere thanks to so many people.

Our first prayer of thanksgiving is of course to Almighty God who has led Vincent on this journey to ordination which has given us all the opportunity to celebrate the wonderful liturgy of ordination this morning and join this celebration this afternoon.

I thank Bishop John Dvaninoel SM, the ordaining prelate, whose first ordination to the priesthood is of course Vincent Manehoua CM. Also Fr Herman Tige, the Administrator of Holy Cross Cathedral for his facilitation of this morning's celebration such occasions as this just do not happen by themselves.

The Province of Oceania is delighted to congratulate Vincent, who I am informed displayed a genuine Vincentian vocation from the beginning of his training as a priest with his heavy involvement in the Vincent de Paul Society at Holy Cross Parish and who then applied to join the Congregation of the Mission as early as he was able in his seminary formation and training.

To Vincent's immediate family – we know his Mum is with God though we have been very privileged to have the presence of his elderly father with us this morning at the celebration of his ordination. The Vincentians express our sincere thanks to you all for your role in Vincent's journey to ordination as a priest of the Congregation of the Mission – no one makes this journey alone.

To his extended family of uncles, aunts and cousins in Honiara, Rohinai and elsewhere who have generously supported Vincent in his vocation to the Congregation of the Mission and a priesthood expressing the charism of our founder St Vincent de Paul, we offer you all our sincere thanks and appreciation for everything you have done for this good man on his journey to ordination.

To all the family members who have made the significant sea voyages to be here today – thank you very much. Thank you also to the members of Vincent's family in Honiara for being so active in the preparation and organisation for this celebration. To those of Vincent's family in Rohinari, especially those in the southern part of the island we also include you all in this declaration of our thankful appreciation. Vincent, we pray that your coming home celebrations in your local Church communities will be both prayerful and joyous celebrations of your Vincentian vocation as a priest of the Mission.

To the many people who helped Vincent up until he commenced his seminary training and formation – his teachers, his friends and those who guided, helped and inspired him in these important formative years – thank you all very much. As I have already remarked – no one makes this journey to priestly ordination alone.

I must include too in this declaration of the thanks and appreciation of the Province of Oceania, the formation communities of *Nazareth Apostolic Centre (NAC)* and *Holy Name of Mary Seminary* who assisted Vincent in his pre-seminary and early seminary years as a candidate for the Catholic Diocese of Auki. A significant contribution in this regard was that of Fr Joseva Tuimavule CM, present with us this afternoon and who at *NAC* provided hospitality, welcome and inspiration to Vincent and several other young people, who felt an attraction to the Vincentian charism as expressed in the apostolate of the Congregation of the Mission.

Particular thanks must also be given to Bishop Christopher Cordone OP *[Cardon]* who readily agreed that Vincent could transfer to become a student of the Congregation of the Mission when this was appropriate.

I also take this opportunity to thank Bishop Chris for his wonderful and continual support to the Vincentians Fathers and Brothers in the Solomon Islands this has and will always be very much appreciated.

The Province of Oceania is also very grateful for all those people who enabled Vincent to go to the Fiji Islands to begin the special Vincentian part of his seminary formation.

The Province owes a great debt of gratitude to many people in the Fiji Islands who formed, helped and supported Vincent for a lengthy period, and I would particularly wish to acknowledge the contribution of Fr Joji Bilowalu CM, who is also with us this afternoon. Our thanks also to our other confreres, all the staff and Vincent's fellow students at our House of Formation at Wailoku, so too his teachers, staff and classmates at the *Pacific Regional Seminary*. There are also significant parishes and other pastoral placement locations in Fiji who have contributed to Vincent's preparation leading to this day – and as I keep saying, no one makes this journey to ordination alone.

Now regarding the celebrations of today, there are so many people who have contributed to these wonderful occasions. I would like to thank in a particular way. Gideon Harps Houanitau, Francis Nori and their team who made all things liturgical happen this morning at *Holy Name Cathedral*. Congratulations and our sincere thanks for all your efforts in this regard!

I thank the Sisters of Charity who made the significant journey from Buma to be here with us all today. I also thank the other members of the wider Vincentian Family for joining us for these celebrations today and those in the weeks to come who will celebrate with Vincent when he returns to his local home church communities.

I believe it is appropriate that we appreciate and acknowledge some of the early Vincentian involvement in the Solomon Islands and in this regard I must mention some of the Vincentians responsible such as Frs Bob Maloney, Victor Bieler and of course the early staff of *Holy Name of Mary Seminary*, namely Frs Marcello and Tom the founding missionaries and of course to all those who have followed them over the past years of our involvement here in the Solomons.

Finally, our Province thanks our own Congregational leaders of the Province of Oceania and in particular Frs Greg Cooney, Michael Walsh and their Provincial leadership teams who have always been very interested and concerned regarding the International Vincentian apostolate here in the Solomon Islands.

Well Vincent, we your brothers in the Congregation and particularly those of the Province of Oceania - congratulate you and warmly welcome you into the ministry of priesthood within the Congregation. Of course you joined us definitively some months ago when you pronounced your vows but today is a very significant step in what will become your ministry within the Congregation.

So we all pray that Vincent will be an example to all to whom he ministers and that through his ministry people may experience the charism of St Vincent de Paul our founder.

Province of Oceania thanks you all very sincerely!
