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**WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?  
IN THE CONTEXT OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA,  
CHALLENGED BY THE ENCYCLICAL *FRATELLI TUTTI***

*The question Who is my neighbor? in the context of Papua New Guinea (PNG) aims to focus on those “excluded,” those from the margins of society who in fact should be at the center of our love and attention in the country and to let the ray of light from the encyclical inspire the situation. The author will demonstrate how the answer to the question in the reality of PNG context can be inspired and challenged by the encyclical. — The author identifies those excluded in PNG starting from sanguma victims (accused of practicing sorcery or witchcraft) such as widows, settlers, unemployed youth and drug addicts, who are deprived of human rights such as justice, human dignity, respect and right to live. — The commentaries on FT, existing reports of the researches done mainly by Melanesian Institute and Fr. Philip Gibbs on sanguma, as well as a small case research of 2021 (34 staff and 36 students of DWU) where one of the questions related to “those excluded” in our society formed the materials for this article. Analyzing the findings in the light of FT, the article proposes concrete responses that disturb “the routines that often are taken as normal” and invites to broaden the so called “cultural perspectives” to view a world without borders with a new culture of fraternity and social friendship.*

The article *Who is my neighbor?* is an attempt of reading Pope Francis’ reflection on Jesus’ parable of the *Good Samaritan* (Luke 10:25-37) in the Encyclical Letter “Fratelli tutti” on Fraternity and Social Friendship in the cultural context of PNG. Before presenting his ex-

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tended reflection on the parable Pope Francis brings an overview of the world situation today by applying again the “see, judge, act” method as he did in his previous documents as well. He names some of the trends of the world today that are visible obstacles in building universal fraternity. By naming a few issues, such as the loss of historical consciousness, the throwaway culture, the stalled expansion of human rights, fear of immigrants and the superficiality of digital connections leading to aggression and division, the Pope shows “how these issues are all connected by an elevation of the individual over concern for the whole of humanity.”<sup>1</sup>

The situation of the world reality presented in the first chapter of the encyclical becomes a real concern for the world, which is our common home. However, for the economic powers constantly pressing for the quick profit, it is not a concern at all. The situation shows also clearly that the first victims are those pushed into the margins of society: the poor, unwanted people with disabilities who are not considered useful to this global economy, unborn children who are not yet included, and the elderly who have become a burden.<sup>2</sup> Yet, each country names their own groups of “excluded” and the following pages discuss those most frequently named by participants in PNG context.

The Good Samaritan story situated in today’s social reality of PNG calls for the change of our attitudes towards those “abandoned on the wayside” and those who are looked at as “strangers,” by giving a new vision of fraternity that should not remain on the level of words but it calls to “walk the talk,” not just “talk the talk” and to view every person on God’s earth as brother and sister (FT 2). Pope Francis invites us all to build and promote fraternity and social friendship in our concrete world today.

Papua New Guinea has been seen as a highly segmented society, where groups need each other’s support for survival and for the well-being in their lives. Consequently, the whole of life has been oriented towards life-giving relationships with the entire clan community, well-guarded by traditional laws. The country has been open to the outside world over the last century and has experienced rapid change from relative isolation to the mobility, complexity and advanced technology of today. In the process of these changes, new values, beliefs, and behaviors have been introduced. Yet, despite all the changes some tradi-

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<sup>1</sup> Brendan Gottschall, SJ, An Overview of Fratelli Tutti, <https://thejesuitpost.org/2020/10/an-overview-of-fratelli-tutti/> [accessed July 5, 2021].

<sup>2</sup> Rene Stockman, “Fratelli Tutti,” <https://brothersofcharity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Fratelli-Tutti-EN-summary-Bro.-Stockman-1.pdf> [accessed July 5, 2021].

tional cultural traits are still strong; some of them are good, some indifferent, and others evoke problems, over which neither traditional law nor the law of modern judiciary procedures seem to have authority. Sorcery and witchcraft, known as “sanguma” in the highlands of PNG, for example, represent an important aspect of traditional culture. The sanguma victims (accused) to which also belong widows, settlers, unemployed youth, drug addicts, prisoners, etc.<sup>3</sup> are on the top of the list of “those excluded” in today’s PNG cultural context. According to the respondents these are only *a few* of the long list of “excluded,” who are pushed into the margins of society and who actually should be at the center of our love. Instead, they are very often deprived of human rights for justice and at times even a right to live. In the following pages the author tries to demonstrate how the lawyer’s question in Jesus’ parable: “Who is my neighbor?” can be answered in the cultural context of PNG; thus, inspired and challenged by the Pope’s reflection.

### *The Context*

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.” But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:25-29)

The answer to the question “Who is my neighbor?” in the traditional cultural context of PNG is clear and straightforward: “It is ‘my *wantok*,’ the one who belongs to my language group, my tribe, my blood-related extended family or further widened by the exchange system. Anyone from this group of people that strengthens my identity and my sense of belonging deserves my care, loving attention, my contribution and

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<sup>3</sup> The Catholic Bishops of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (CBC PNGSI) in their reflection on Pope Francis’ encyclical and reading the parable of the Good Samaritan through the lenses of our mission in PNG came up with the list of those excluded and marginalized that should become the focus of our search for reaching out, embracing and integrating them to the community (Homily by Archbishop Douglas Young, SVD, 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2021 – DWU Missioning Celebration). I have chosen some of those listed by CBCPNGSI and confirmed by 36 students and 34 lecturers of the DWU Madang campus.

my life, in case of a tribal fight” (DWU male student, 22 years old). Consequently, any “other” person who belongs to another tribe, province or who does not work towards the common good of the community is at least a potential enemy. The traditional definition given by one of the students summarizes the conviction of many and is supported by the literature. Nanau defines the wantok system in an anthropological view as a societal structure that guarantees the safety and livelihood of a group of people. It encourages reciprocal networks and the support for one another in times of need.<sup>4</sup> The positive side of the wantok system is that it knows no limits in care and support, yet, it blocks the development of individuals and is known as nepotism in job distribution. This definition of the “neighbor” is actually very close to the earlier Jewish traditions, where the imperative to love and care for others has been limited to the members of the same nation; “love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:18).

In his encyclical letter the Pope challenges such a definition and approach. The title of FT quotes the expression used by St. Francis of Assisi when he proposed to his brothers and sisters a way of life shown by the Gospel. Thus, Pope Francis focuses the counsel of love that crosses the barrier of geography and distance demonstrating the essence of fraternal openness. St. Francis felt himself a brother not only to every human person but to the sun and moon, the sea and the wind and to every creature of God’s earth (FT 2). He saw the seed of peace everywhere, *including every person* whether the poor, or sick, the abandoned or outcast, the least of his brothers and sisters. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) is Jesus’ answer to the lawyer’s question: “Who is my neighbor?”

In reading Jesus’ parable in the context of PNG culture today, we will identify some of those “excluded” as the abandoned at the side of the road, robbed of their dignity, good name, possessions and killed or left to die. Like in the gospel story, those “excluded” experience the passers-by looking the other way or passing by to the other side, ignoring the situation for different reasons.

### ***Abandoned on the Wayside — Victims of Sanguma Accusations***

Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped

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<sup>4</sup> G. L. Nanau, The wantok system as a socio-economic and political network in Melanesia: *OMNES: The Journal of Multicultural Society* 2 (1.2011) 31-55.

him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead”  
(Luke 10:30).

Any victim of *sanguma*—witchcraft-related accusations—in the highlands of PNG is an example of those “strangers” or “excluded” Pope Francis talks about in his reflection on Jesus’ parable. Witchcraft and sorcery beliefs and practices have always existed in PNG although their forms vary from province to province. In recent decades many researches have been carried out in various parts of PNG since it became clear that this aspect of the culture did not fade away as it has been hoped; it even seems to be undergoing a revival.<sup>5</sup> Gibbs in his article explains that in the PNG Highlands, witchcraft, called *sanguma*, is believed to involve a malevolent power taking the form of a rat, bat, frog, or flying fox, with the power to kill people. The spirit-creature dwells in the chosen body, sometimes taking another form and roaming around searching mainly for human vital organs like the heart or liver. Witches are believed to hide vital organs removed from a victim for later feasting. So, when a person (usually a woman) is accused of being a witch and of stealing a victim’s heart, while being brutally questioned and tortured, her accusers urge her to show the place where she has hidden the victim’s heart and return it so that the victim might be restored to life.<sup>6</sup>

The Melanesian Institute (MI) research team has studied sorcery and witchcraft in many parts of PNG and Gibbs has done extensive study in Enga Province, in the Highlands of PNG.<sup>7</sup> There have been many cases in Enga recently where women accused of being a witch were brutally tortured and executed (usually burned) before any formal investigations could be made to prove the truth of accusations. In one of his articles, Gibbs presents the story of a *sanguma* victim from Enga Province. In 2013, after a death of a man in the village the *sanguma* talk went around saying that there was a telephone from the dead man naming one of the women who took out his heart, causing his death. Consequently, two women were accused and brutally tortured with hot iron rods and bush knives; they were forced to confess where they had hidden the heart and demand was made to return it.

<sup>5</sup> Nick Schwarz, *Thinking Critically about Sorcery and Witchcraft. A Handbook for Christians in Papua New Guinea* (Occasional Paper No. 14), Melanesian Institute 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Philip Gibbs, Beyond the Fence: Confronting Witchcraft Accusations in the Papua New Guinea Highlands: *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39 (1.2015) 8-11.

<sup>7</sup> While in the Enga Province most of the victims are women, in Jiwaka and Chimbu Province, other parts of the Highlands, whole families have been accused and killed or chased away from their place.

One of them died in the process of torture and the other one, Maria, who in the process of brutal tortures had admitted to being a witch, managed to escape and find a place where she was helped, cared for and looked after till she became well enough to walk and talk about what happened. In such cases the victims are left alone, pushed out from their community. Even if they survive, wounded and broken, their possessions are taken away, their good name is ruined without any right to a just investigation. Most of such traumas take place in the Christian community which stays confused and indecisive, although the accusers and interrogators are usually non-Christians.

Reading about or hearing from the eye witnesses of similar stories as the one quoted above, a question is raised as we turn to Jesus' parable: *What can the Christian community, confronted with sanguma accusations, learn from the reflection on the parable? How does the Pope's reflection challenge the Christian community in the context of sanguma accusations?* Similar to Jesus' story there are not many who stop and bend down to take care of the accused one who was abandoned on the wayside while being moved with compassion (Luke 10:33). Even though some people are convinced of the innocence of the accused, they are afraid to take a stand and go against the accusers, they rather become passersby. What are they afraid of? First of all, according to the respondents of Gibbs' research, they are afraid of being identified with the victim and accused of *sanguma* practice as well. Secondly, in Maria's case, she had admitted (under torture) to being a witch, therefore, they do not want to appear as supporting "an evil person."<sup>8</sup> There are many cases in which the victims admit to being a witch under the brutal tortures and later they share that they hoped to be killed after the confession and escape prolonged tortures and suffering.<sup>9</sup>

Let us note in the Pope's reflection on the parable the change of the different characters in Jesus' story once they spot the poor, wounded person on the roadside. It is no longer significant who they are. Pope Francis is saying without a compromise in his reflection:

The distinctions between the Judean and Samaritan, priest and merchant fades away into insignificance. Now there are only two kinds of people: those who care for someone who is hurting and those who pass by; those who bend down to help and those who look the other way and hurry off. Here, all our distinctions, labels and masks fall

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<sup>8</sup> Gibbs, *Beyond the Fence*.

<sup>9</sup> Schwartz notes that some people confess their guilt, hoping that their assailants will simply kill them and thus relieve them of the hell of prolonged torture: Schwartz, *Thinking Critically*, 51.

away: it is the moment of truth. Will we bend down to touch and heal the wounds of others? Will we bend down and help another to get up? (FT 70)

For generations the Good Samaritan became an example in his action that shows: “the existence of each individual is deeply tied to that of others: life is not simply time that passes; life is a time for interactions” (FT 66). The quotation above throws light at and becomes a challenge for the communities in “confusing situations” in Enga and other provinces of PNG. Each person is to choose whether to bend down and follow the example of the Good Samaritan or to join those passing by... Yet, the sorcery and witchcraft victims remain a complex issue where action of many joined hands, hearts and minds is needed. In the same way, the Good Samaritan was not acting alone but sought the help of the others (the innkeeper).

During the International Conference on Sorcery Accusations and Related Violence (SARV) in PNG at DWU<sup>10</sup> many of those who have been actively involved in sorcery victims’ defense and protection in different provinces of PNG and from abroad, shared their experiences on the steps taken. In Chimbu, Jiwaka, Enga, and Southern Highlands Provinces, some of the victims were successfully saved and secured. However, there was usually a team consisting of a Police Officer, Village Court Magistrate, Medical Doctor, Priest or Religious Sister and many dedicated lay people. Those involved in defining the ways for justice to be provided following incidents of SARV shared how difficult it is to identify team members who take a clear stand and have the courage to bend over those suffering unjust accusations and defend their right to live. The awareness programs that arose have been conducted on village level. Since the problem is often associated with non-acceptance of a natural cause of a death for the people in PNG, they search for someone who can be accused as responsible for the death. Some awareness programs from the medical perspectives should also be conducted for the people who will not be so easily manipulated by the “glass-man” who is the one to pronounce accusation.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The Conference was fully online via ZOOM (22-23 of June, 2021) chaired by the DWU President Prof. Phil Gibbs, SVD. The aim of this Conference was to take stock of what changes have occurred in addressing Sorcery Accusation Related Violence since the last conference on this topic in 2013. What have been the accomplishments and limitations of the National Action Plan? What have we learned from the activism and research done in PNG in recent times? What can PNG learn from initiatives overseas? What new insights reveal a path for the future? The participants aimed to explore human rights issues, and social, legal and practical plans for the future.

<sup>11</sup> The “glassman” is a so-called diviner. “If a diviner points to a person, that person is automatically presumed guilty. Such persons, once they have

### *Unemployed Youths*

But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend" (Luke 10:33-35).

The parable, through the Pope's reflection, brings a clear and straightforward invitation to be aware of the everyday decisions we make to exclude or to include those lying wounded along the roadside. In Papua New Guinea today such decision, as Pope Francis suggests, can serve "as a criterion for judging every economic, political, social and religious project" (FT 69).

In PNG, the youth represent almost half of the population. Often, those who do not complete their education or do not have employable skills face poverty, inequality and are more likely to become involved in illegal activities, in crime and violence. Therefore, the unemployed youths belong to those "excluded" in the PNG society who are pushed into the margins of the community with low self-esteem and no sense of belonging. Relatives, sometimes members of the extended family, pay their education fees, taking for granted that it will be "paid back" once the young person graduates and gets a job. In 2020 in PNG out of 72,000 grade 12 students only 18,000 were guaranteed a place in tertiary institutions, which comes to 75% of the often capable young people who are denied further education. The study carried out in Africa found that the youth unemployment increases violent crime in the society,<sup>12</sup> which is also true for PNG. The relationship between crime and

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been accused, tortured, or expelled from the community, have little chance of successfully defending their innocence. When Catholic sisters came to intervene in the case of a woman being tortured near Mendi in the Southern Highlands Province in 2012, some people called out, "Sanguma i kam" (witches are coming). Fortunately, even though they were frightened, the sisters were not deterred by such accusations. For most people, however, it is a terrifying thought that, if they defend the accused, people might point to them—and then how would they prove their innocence?" (Gibbs, *Beyond the Fence*, 10).

<sup>12</sup> Adenuga Fabian Adekoya, *Youth Unemployment and Violent Crime: Evidence from Developing Countries in Africa*, Universiti Utara Malaysia, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347973524\\_YOUTH\\_UNEMPLOYMENT\\_AND\\_VIOLENT\\_CRIME\\_EVIDENCE\\_FROM\\_DEVELOPING\\_COUNTRIES\\_IN\\_AFRICA](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347973524_YOUTH_UNEMPLOYMENT_AND_VIOLENT_CRIME_EVIDENCE_FROM_DEVELOPING_COUNTRIES_IN_AFRICA), December 2020 [accessed July 5, 2021].



unemployment in PNG should be a central point of debate for politicians today. An increasing number of street children is an indication of future increase in criminal activities, drugs and alcohol addiction and other social problems that will have impact on the future of this nation.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, all those young people who often seek their survival means through illegal activities are often deprived of human rights for justice and even the right to live once caught. One of the respondents told the story of a young 17-year-old boy who belonged to the local gang that had many crime activities on their account:

When one day the young boy was caught by police, the Police Officer wanted to shoot him on the spot. Yet, the boy pleaded the Police Officer to be allowed to say good bye and apologize to his mother. The permission was granted and once at his home area, he called his Mum who came out of the house and was shocked at what she saw. The young boy said, "Mum, forgive me please, you do not know anything about all my activities that I have been involved in and you have never known how much evil I have done, please, pray for me that God forgives me and please, forgive me too. You wanted me to be a good boy but I have chosen the wrong way... Mum, I have always loved you." As soon as the boy finished speaking and his Mum with tears running down her face, assured him of her forgiveness and prayer, he was shot on the spot, in the presence of his mother (F, 45 years old).

The story above is sadly not unique in its sort. Thus, we ponder, what has gone wrong in the life of the young boy who showed in the last moments of his life that deep in his heart he was aware of the wrong choices he made? Why was he deprived of human rights for justice, proper court and investigation? Why was his mother not spared the cruel reality of her son's death?

Bro. René Stockman in his reflection on the encyclical says: "It seems that human rights are not the same for all people in the world. One cannot turn a blind eye to the gross discrimination that keeps rearing its ugly head time and again. If the dignity of human beings

<sup>13</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Priorities of the Poor in Papua New Guinea*. The various forms of work the children are engaged in on the street include begging, street vending, selling stolen goods, stealing, and prostitution. The children were often sent by their parents, or senior peers, to earn their living. These children should be provided with better options for their life and should be offered education opportunities to be removed from the street. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29745/hardship-png.pdf> [accessed July 5, 2021].

were respected and the rights of all were recognized, fresh and creative initiatives would emerge that would further the common good.”<sup>14</sup>

Examining the traditional law of Melanesian cultures, we learn that those who contribute and participate in community life deserve the community support and identity that give community members the sense of belonging.<sup>15</sup> There is also a common understanding that what is good for the life of one’s community is ethically good, what is harmful for the community is ethically wrong.<sup>16</sup> Is this why, as Gibbs states in the context of the witchcraft accusation that: “Those cruelly killing the accused often think they are doing their duty, in the sense that they feel they have to defend the clan from a malicious power that has killed and could kill again?”<sup>17</sup> Is the case of the young boy and many others who shared a similar fate<sup>18</sup> driven by the same motive? Although the example given is different than the cases related to witchcraft accusations who are innocent, the human rights call for juridical protocols and this is the right of every human being. The Pope’s encyclical letter that encourages us “to create a different culture, in which we resolve our conflicts and care for one another” (FT 57) is a challenge that should be taken seriously since it opens us up to Jesus’ definition of a “neighbor without border.”

In fact, the hot debates on rascals’ cruelty in PNG appear often on the front page of *The National* (local newspaper) and the issue is “complex” to which no single solution can be offered. However, much could be done to show loving care, gestures of reaching out and some concrete steps have in fact been taken towards inclusion and integration to the community of such youths.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Stockman, “Fratelli Tutti,” 2.

<sup>15</sup> E. Mantovani, Traditional and Present Day Melanesian Values and Ethics: *Catalyst* 21 (1.1991) 65-81.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Gibbs, *Beyond the Fence*, 8.

<sup>18</sup> *Priorities of the Poor*. A poor woman from Port Moresby settlement shares: “Shortly after moving here, I met my husband who was then a Fletcher Morobe apprentice. We had five children. My eldest son is dead; the police shot him at the dump site last year...”

<sup>19</sup> World Bank Group, *Papua New Guinea: Giving Urban Youth a Second Chance* (2019). Since 2010, Papua New Guinea’s Urban Youth Employment Project has been working to build employment skills and opportunities in the nation’s capital, Port Moresby, and more than 18,500 young Papua New Guineans have received training and work placement. The project, co-financed by Australia’s DFAT, will expand beyond Port Moresby to include Lae City, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2019/06/18/papua-new-guinea-giving-urban-youth-a-second-chance> [accessed July 5, 2021].

Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan in response to the lawyer's question: Who is my neighbor? The understanding of the word "neighbor" in Jewish society was similar to the Engan people's understanding. It means those closest ones to whom help should be given first of all, explicitly, those of one's tribe group. The Jews of that time looked down upon Samaritans and considered them impure, excluded from the group "of neighbors." Jesus, being a Jew himself, challenges the culture and transforms this approach encouraging us to be a neighbor to all, showing His followers that His tribe has no borders and includes everyone (FT 80). The New Testament offers the command that is universal in scope, embracing every person of the human family, since our Father in heaven "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good" (Matt 5:45).

### *Widows and Their Uncertain Future*

In some provinces of Papua New Guinea, widows belong to the group of those "excluded," as defined above. While there are no accurate statistics available about widows in PNG, the national Widows Association claims that most have been in widowhood for five to 30 years.<sup>20</sup> In PNG, there is a diversity of widows' experiences. Some have completed secondary or tertiary education and are in a strong socio-economic position, with their own source of income that allows them to cater for themselves and their children. However, over 80 percent of the population live in rural areas where many women have no education and no employment. For women in the highlands, the risk of losing a husband is higher due to the frequency of tribal warfare. Families in PNG are traditionally large, even with 8 to 10 children, therefore, paying for children's school fee to complete their education becomes a real struggle. Modernity creates a need for cash. The traditional social values and kin-based society that focused on taking care for those in need is breaking up. In many communities even those "who have more" do not have enough to share. Consequently, widow-headed households are much more likely to experience extreme poverty.<sup>21</sup> The widow and children usually have the right to stay on the husband's land and property after his death but the situation changes when AIDS has been the cause of death. AIDS is accompanied by social stigma still today. While

<sup>20</sup> Catherine Wilson, *Widowhood in PNG Brings an Uncertain Future*, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2015/08/widowhood-in-papua-new-guinea-brings-an-uncertain-future/> [accessed July 5, 2021].

<sup>21</sup> Lisa Kircher Lumbao & Stephen Pollard, *Priorities of the Poor in Papua New Guinea*, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29745/hardship-png.pdf> [accessed July 5, 2021].

traditionally extended families were protective of widows, today it happens very often that brothers of the deceased husband come to claim the land. When the husband's brothers or other relatives come in to share the properties, the widow and her children have little chance of getting a just share.<sup>22</sup> When a widow has a grown-up son the situation is much easier for her because her son is her supporter. It becomes very difficult for the widows, especially, when they have small children. They often keep just a little garden to grow their own food to care for their children and themselves, just enough to survive, to live a life of struggle in this modern world.

In such situations the widows stay often alone without support of the closest ones who should defend their rights and claim justice. The encyclical clearly states that we should not be indifferent to the suffering around us and we should not allow brothers and sisters, whether young or old, to go through life as an outcast. Instead, the contact with a concrete suffering of our neighbor should challenge, change and transform us (FT 68).

Furthermore, as we reflect on the life of widows in PNG, the respondents clearly stated that the greatest threats to a widow's well-being is the risk of being accused of sorcery. In the Highlands of PNG, women aged 40 to 65 are in much higher risk than men to be blamed for using witchcraft to cause misfortune in the community or to kill a community member. According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Rashida Manjoo (2013): "There is growing concern that sorcery accusations that lead to killings, injuries or exile are often economically or personally motivated and used to deprive women of their land or property."<sup>23</sup>

The pain of those who suffer around us should wake us up and make us realize that it is not only the government that should do something to bring the change about. The Pope sends his message of hope showing that each day is a new opportunity for us to join hands with those who like the Good Samaritan bend over the wounded, abandoned on the wayside, and "was moved with compassion when he saw him" (Luke 10:33-34). Each day offers us a new opportunity and space to express our co-responsibility (FT 77) in creating a society governed by the spirit of fraternity and social friendship. We need government, NGOs, church and everyone to be involved in forming a community of Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people's suffering rather than remain on the level of gossip, resentment and complaint. The constant

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<sup>22</sup> Wilson, *Widowhood in PNG*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

effort “to include, integrate and lift up the fallen” (FT 77) will help us to build trust while standing for truth and justice.

The widows pointed out the need to address the issues related to the sorcery and witchcraft accusations, where the victims are left alone since no one has courage to get into conflict with the real “evil doers,” the accusers and perpetrators. Again, the strength and hope come from being a community that stands for life while bending over the suffering.

### *The Characters of the Story*

Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him (Luke 10:31-34).

Reflecting on the characters involved in Jesus’ parable, those turning towards and bending over the robbed and the wounded one, it becomes clear that all those indifferent passersby asked themselves a wrong question. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech, on the day before his death, says about the story of the Good Samaritan: “... the first question that the priest and the first question that the Levite asked was, ‘If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?’ ... But then the Good Samaritan came by, and he reversed the question: ‘If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?’”<sup>24</sup>

Pope Francis points out one specific detail about the passers by which stands out, namely, that they were religious people, people consecrated to God: a priest and a Levite. It shows, therefore, that our faith and worship of God are not enough to ensure that we are choosing God’s ways in our life.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, our faith, if not authentic, will

<sup>24</sup> Martin Luther King, I’ve Been on the Mountaintop, <https://www.afscme.org/about/history/mlk/mountaintop> [accessed July 5, 2021].

<sup>25</sup> Rebeka Kuku, “Prayer Warriors Allegedly Identifying ‘Sangumas’ in Homes”: *Post-Courier* July 8, 2021, 1-2. National Research Institute—the recent study on “The role of *Glasman/Glasmeri* as Catalyst of Accusation and Violence” highlighted that in certain instances “pastors” were de-

not open us up towards our brothers and sisters, especially those naked and robbed, wounded, abused and numbed with cold (FT 74). St. Chrysostom's challenging words quoted in the encyclical fit well into this context: "Do you wish to honor the body of the Savior? Do not despise it when it is naked. Do not honor it in church with silk vestments while outside it is naked and numb with cold" (FT 74) *Sometimes we get surprised by the deeds of "unbelievers" who reach out and respond to the cry of the poor.*

The parable describes a sharp contrast between those who do things according to the "letter" and continue on their way undisturbed and the Samaritan who is moved by the stranger on the roadside. Jesus' question here, which one wants to identify, is a challenging one: "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:36-37).

Viewing the world today and seeing the socio-economic changes in PNG, we must recognize we have made great progress in many areas, "but often remain illiterate when it comes to the concrete care of our neighbors in need."<sup>26</sup> Many people choose not to be disturbed by other people's problems. However, the path taken by the Samaritan is the one that opens us up to our suffering neighbors, "preventing ourselves from evolving into a society in which the weak are excluded."<sup>27</sup>

The Sorcery Accusations and Related Violence in PNG, the problems of unemployed youth, widows and many others are still hot topics in the news. People can find themselves suddenly accused of murder, brutally tortured, or caught in illegal activities and executed without any legal investigation to confirm the truth of the accusation. However, there are some people who ask themselves the right question which gives enough determination "to cross the boundary of the natural love we experience for family members and intentionally extend it to those who are recognized as strangers among us" (cf. FT 62). The further questions to be answered are: how to guide a Christian community challenged by the outbreak of witchcraft-related violence in their area? How to support and guide the young people who are on the wrong path? This question is important because as Pope Francis states in his encyclical letter: This care for the strangers in need is to be expressed both on the personal level and the communitarian level, united as a family so much so that each new day should be seen as an opportunity

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scribed as *glasman* (temporary role as diviner) and women prayer group leaders as *glasmeri*, in temporary role as diviner.

<sup>26</sup> Stockman, "Fratelli Tutti," 5.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

to “include, integrate, and lift up the fallen” (FT 77). The Pope provides in this encyclical a profound and serious content and it should not leave us unmoved. While reading we can examine our conscience as “how do we build our lives in community: do we do it as individuals, enveloping ourselves in devastating indifference or competition with one another, or do we do it as brothers and sisters in love for one another?”<sup>28</sup>

### *Conclusion*

We have just touched some of the real issues of the PNG Highlands provinces which also reflect any other province in PNG and listening to the call coming through the pages of the Pope’s encyclical “Fratelli tutti” we realize that we cannot stay indifferent to that call.

The profound encyclical is an invitation to broaden our horizons to view a “world without borders” (not just the geographical borders) and to view every person on God’s planet and the planet itself as brother and sister (FT 2). As Jesus, when answering the question of the lawyer, invites everyone to be “a neighbor” to every person, so Pope Francis does by putting into the center of all-embracing love every person, especially those who have been pushed out from the center into the margins of society. The Pope’s message is loud and clear; by showing the world of today that has already lost its focus, he demonstrates clearly that it is not just about changing our behavior and being more charitable but it is about “re-reading and living the Gospel for our times.”<sup>29</sup> As Irwin expresses it, the two social encyclicals “Laudato si” and “Fratelli tutti” invite us to look and see the true reality of the world that we live in today. The glasses are not pink, the glasses are “tinted with the virtue of hope,”<sup>30</sup> so uniquely important and necessary today. The title of the Pope’s encyclical “Fratelli tutti” could in fact have a subtitle as a strong reminder after viewing and touching the pain of our world today, we realize that “we are in this together.”<sup>31</sup> The encyclical “Fratelli tutti” is a profound reflection of Jesus’ parable re-read in the world situation and it can be one avenue “to renew the face of the earth”<sup>32</sup> for the particular situations in Papua New Guinea reflected upon above it

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Kevin W. Irwin, “Fratelli Tutti: Don’t just Read It, Pray It,” <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-10/fratelli-tutti-encyclical-kevin-irwin-commentary.html> 4th of October 2020 [accessed July 5, 2021].

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

can be an avenue to renew the face of this particular piece of God's earth.

#### ABSTRACTS

La pregunta *¿quién es mi prójimo?* en el contexto de Papúa Nueva Guinea pretende centrarse en los "excluidos", los de los márgenes de la sociedad que, de hecho, deberían ser el centro de nuestro amor y atención en el país, y dejar que el rayo de luz de la encíclica inspire la situación. La autora demostrará cómo la respuesta a la pregunta en la realidad del contexto de PNG puede ser inspirada y desafiada por la encíclica. – La autora identifica a los excluidos en Papúa Nueva Guinea, empezando por las víctimas de *sanguma* (acusadas de practicar brujería o hechicería), como las viudas, los colonos, los jóvenes desempleados y los drogadictos, que se ven privados de derechos humanos como la justicia, la dignidad humana, el respeto y hasta el derecho a vivir. – Los comentarios sobre el FT, los informes existentes de las investigaciones realizadas principalmente por el Instituto Melanesio y el Padre Philip Gibbs sobre *sanguma*, así como una pequeña investigación de caso de 2021 (34 empleados y 36 estudiantes de DWU) en la que una de las preguntas estaba relacionada con "los excluidos" en nuestra sociedad, formaron los materiales para este artículo. Analizando los hallazgos a la luz de FT, el artículo propone respuestas concretas que perturban "las rutinas que a menudo se toman como normales" e invita a ampliar las llamadas "perspectivas culturales" para ver un mundo sin fronteras con una nueva cultura de fraternidad y amistad social.

Die Frage „*Wer ist mein Nächster?*“ im Kontext von Papua-Neuguinea zielt darauf ab, den Blick auf die „Ausgeschlossenen“ zu richten, auf diejenigen am Rande der Gesellschaft, die eigentlich im Mittelpunkt unserer Liebe und Aufmerksamkeit im Land stehen sollten, und sich vom Lichtstrahl der Enzyklika inspirieren zu lassen. Die Autorin wird aufzeigen, wie die Antwort auf die Frage in der Realität des PNG-Kontextes durch die Enzyklika inspiriert und herausgefordert werden kann. – Die Autorin identifiziert die Ausgeschlossenen in PNG, angefangen von *Sanguma*-Opfern (die der Ausübung von Zauberei oder Hexerei beschuldigt werden), wie Witwen, Siedler, arbeitslose Jugendliche und Drogenabhängige, denen Menschenrechte wie Gerechtigkeit, Menschenwürde, Respekt und selbst das Recht auf Leben vorenthalten werden. – Die Kommentare zu FT, die vorhandenen Berichte über die Forschungen, die hauptsächlich vom Melanesian Institute und von P. Philip Gibbs über *Sanguma* durchgeführt wurden, sowie eine kleine Fallstudie von 2021 (34 Mitarbeiter und 36 Studenten der DWU), bei der sich eine der Fragen auf die „Ausgeschlossenen“ in unserer Gesellschaft bezog, bildeten das Material für diesen Artikel. Der Artikel analysiert die Ergebnisse im Lichte von FT und schlägt konkrete Antworten vor, die „die Routinen, die oft als normal angesehen werden“ stören, und lädt dazu ein, die so genannten „kulturellen Perspektiven“ zu erweitern, um eine Welt ohne Grenzen mit einer neuen Kultur der Brüderlichkeit und der sozialen Freundschaft zu betrachten.

La question « *Qui est mon prochain ?* » dans le contexte de la Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée cherche à se focaliser sur ceux qui sont « exclus », sur ceux qui, aux marges de la société, devraient en fait être au centre de notre amour et de notre attention dans le pays et à laisser un rayon de lumière jaillissant



de l'Encyclique inspirer la situation. L'auteur démontre comment la réponse à cette question, dans la réalité du contexte de Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée, peut être inspirée et stimulée par l'Encyclique. – L'auteur identifie les exclus de Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée, à commencer par les victimes de *sanguma* (accusées de pratiquer la sorcellerie et la magie noire) telles que les veuves, les colons, les jeunes désœuvrés et les drogués, qui sont privés de leurs droits tels que la justice, la dignité humaine, le respect et le droit de vivre. – Les commentaires sur FT, les rapports existants sur les recherches faites principalement par l'Institut mélanésien et le Père Philip Gibbs sur le *sanguma*, ainsi qu'un petit groupe de recherche pratique (34 chercheurs et 36 étudiants de la DWU) où l'une des questions concernant les « exclus » dans notre société forment la matière de cet article. Analysant les résultats à la lumière de FT, l'article propose des réponses concrètes qui troublent « les faits habituels considérés comme normaux » et invitent à élargir les dites « perspectives culturelles » pour envisager un monde sans frontière, avec une nouvelle culture de fraternité et d'amitié sociale.