

# SMbulletin

Friday, 21 January 2022

## VOLCANIC ERUPTION IN TONGA



The provincial from Oceania, Fr Setefano Mataele, reports: “The huge undersea eruption of the Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha’apai volcano on 15 January 2022, with loud thunder sounds heard 800 km away in Fiji, and with a huge, 20km high mushroom cloud of smoke and toxic ash, and the subsequent tsunami waves that hit Tonga’s main island, Tongatapu, and the ‘Eua and Ha’apai Islands, and severed all communication, caused an unprecedented disaster never experienced before by the 100,000 population of the Islands of Tonga. There are three confirmed fatalities so far, and the damages to infrastructures, residences and properties are extensive. The critical immediate priority is securing safe drinking water, as the water sources have been polluted by the widespread salt water and the thick ash layer covering the land. The race to deliver the necessary aid is spearheaded by the government and the prompt assistance from New Zealand, Australia and the USA. We have not heard from our Marist confreres in Tonga but we are confident that they are safe”. During the General Audience this week, Pope Francis expressed his closeness to the people in Tonga and said: “I am spiritually close to all those who are sorely tried, and I implore from God relief in their suffering. I invite everyone to join me in prayer for these our brothers and sisters”.



## A NEW CHURCH IN DALA

The old church of the Marist parish in Dala, Solomon Islands, which was built in the 1950s, was deteriorated and became too small for the more than four thousand parishioners. A project for a new building was set up by Parish Priest, Fr Peter Puamae, and thanks to a co-funding from parishioners, the Marist Mission Centre in Australia and a UK legacy, a new church was built to serve better the large parish community.



On 27 December, on its patronal feast, the St. John the Evangelist church was officially opened by Bishop Peter Houhou of Auki with a festive celebration.

## VOCATIONS SEMINAR

In the context of the Marist Vocations Year, an online seminar on vocations will take place on 28 January, at 8.00 pm Roman time. Some relators will reflect on how we can enrich, encourage and assist Marist vocations. All those interested are most welcome to participate. There will be simultaneous translation in English, French and Spanish.

If you wish to participate in the meeting, please send an email before 25 January to Fr Dani Fernández, [dfernandezsm@gmail.com](mailto:dfernandezsm@gmail.com) to register, indicating your name and the languages in which you can work.