

'From the Heart'

*Loloma Foundation assists Solomon Islands
- Fr. Ambrose Pereira sdb*

'Do not smoke, do not chew betel nut, do not drink' is what Dr. Alexis repeats to all his patients. 'If they avoid betel nut, smoking and alcohol, half their medical problems will be solved', he said.



For the past two weeks 24 doctors, nurses and supporting personnel have been running clinics at Tulagi, Peava, Munda, Don Bosco, Henderson and Good Samaritan Hospital, Tetere. They have examined, identified and operated on several hundred patients in different places of the Solomon Islands. They arrived in the country on 25th August, 2009, spent the next weeks distributing, arranging medicines and other medical supplies that arrived in a 20 foot container and then commenced their task to protect, enhance and save life.

'Doing plastic surgery, separating joined fingers, and operating an appendix on a pregnant mother, have been life changing. These are what we can be really proud about', says Dr. Eileen Natuzzi, one of the surgeons who together with a team of several doctors have done over a hundred operations during their stay in the Solomons.

The Don Bosco students and staff had the unique opportunity to have a medical check up on 11th September, 2009. The ones with eye problems were called to the ophthalmologist on Saturday, 12th September, 2009. On Monday, 14th September, 2009, the boys and girls were given health talks.

"In the light of the H1N1 virus, swine flu and the dramatic spread of HIV/AIDS, it is important that our youth are constantly reminded about how they can respect themselves, enhance their lives and care for the lives of others', stated Fr. Ambrose Pereira sdb, Rector. "We are happy that our students have received these instructions and we do hope they will do the simple things that will save their lives".

"Awareness about domestic violence is much needed in Solomon Islands", said Sr. Doreen Agasia, from the Church of Melanesia. She addressed the doctors and nurses at a farewell dinner held at the Heritage on Sunday, 13th September, 2009. She shared with them her experience of working with women and the need for giving them a safe place where they can share their stories and get help in time of need.

People from all walks of life have come to them to get examined and they are grateful for all that they have received. The Loloma Foundation (Loloma – means from the heart) is a non profit medical organization reaching out to people in the pacific. This is the second time they have come to the Solomon Islands. The programme has been organized and coordinated by Linda Kwasny, Dr Lance Hendricks and Dr. Eileen Natuzzi together with several others in the US and in the Solomons.

They are grateful to Ms. Keithie Saunders, US Counsel, for assisting in many ways. Thanks to: the Ministry of Health, Mr and Mrs Reggie Douglas, Dalgro; Mr and Mrs Jaun Porras, BJS Agencies and the many people who assisted in different ways to ensure that the entire programme went on smoothly.