

Progress and Development in Education

- *Sr. Margaret Tisch smsm*

Sr. Margaret Tisch smsm, known affectionately as the 'Dragon Lady' of BECS, taught in Bishop Epalle Catholic School for 10 years. She left Solomon Islands nearly four and a half years ago. She is now back for a few months in the Solomon Islands. She shares her thoughts on education and life:

After being away from the Solomon Islands for four and a half years, it is great to be back here for a couple of months to note the progress and development in Education and catch up with so many wonderful friends. The biggest joy has been to meet so many of my ex-students from Bishop Epalle Catholic School. The 'coconut bush line' had let some ex-students know that I am here. To see the expressions on the faces of those not expecting me was a real thrill – surprise, shock, hesitation and then their wonderful smiles and hugs.



The solid building projects that have continued at Bishop Epalle Catholic School, Rove, made me feel a real pride in the parents and administration of the school. I hope a proper library for the secondary and primary students, plus a permanent staff room for the secondary teachers will be a reality in the very near future. It saddened me to find the lack of teacher for Form 6 students. I reiterate what I said before I left the Solomon Islands. There should be a Senior Secondary School for Forms 6 and 7. These students are young adults and should be given that dignity as students. This would be a much better way, in my opinion, of using the resources of teachers with the qualifications and the skills to teach Senior High School students in Forms 6 and 7. To see Pauline Kwalea, an ex-student of BECS, as the woman representative of Solomon Islands in China for the Olympic Games is another big thrill.

My prayer is that Solomon Islands will continue to grow spiritually, socially and economically. Hard times are being experienced in all countries of the world because of the high price of oil which affects the cost of so many things including transport and food. In order for success in Solomon Island everyone must pull together as Solomon Islanders. Corruption must be weeded out, so that the beautiful, good spiritual people of this Nation can be proud to be Solomon Islanders first, then a Province, a family and individuals.

God bless you all and thank you for your very warm welcome.