

Department of the President & BEC

**Office of the President**

**Minister Responsible for Inter-Governmental Relations & Media and Communications**

SOLIDARITY IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Address to the Public Servants

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President

Autonomous Region of Bougainville

January 11, 2019

My fellow public servants:

The opportunity to once again address you at the start of the year 2019 is a great honour bestowed upon me your leader. We are gathered together not only to renew our commitment to be the best we can be as public servants but more importantly to stand in solidarity with the aspirations of our people in Bougainville.

We are about to embark and write the history of this island. The eyes of the world and the region are trained on us as we prepare for a historical and political exercise that will be our legacy to the next generation. Gearing for the referendum in June of this year is not only preparing the people but more significantly preparing the very structure that will hold the outcome of the referendum—public service. The past months we hankered to speed up awareness campaign. Precious funds have been spent and long man hours have been sacrificed. And so from the north to the south, from Buka to Buin, from the Atolls to Suir our people, many with little learnings but with tremendous love for Bougainville did their part to make sure their villages are weapons free. They have displayed courage and sincerity to pave the way for a better future. I ask, have we done the same in public service? As public servants, have we exhibited the same fervour as they did? It is embarrassing that lately we have to submit to the scrutiny of the Anti-Fraud Division because we fell short of that expectation to exercise and embrace accountability and responsibility.

I have been in public service longer than many of you here present. For decades I have survived the convolutions of bureaucracy and the political arena. Why is that? Let me share with you my perspectives why I stayed this long and persisted in serving the people.

**DIGNITY OF WORK**

*“From the beginning therefore he [man] is called to work. Work is one of the characteristics that distinguish man from the rest of creatures, whose activity for sustaining their lives cannot be called work. Only man is capable of work, and only man works, at the same time by work occupying his existence on earth. Thus work bears a particular mark of man and of humanity, the mark of a person operating within a community of persons. And this mark decides its interior characteristics; in a sense it constitutes its very nature.”*

Nothing offers a fuller sense of satisfaction than a task well-performed. It doesn’t matter if that task is washing the kitchen floor, finding the best bargains at the market or grocery store, or fermenting cacao or smoking copra or fish. Inherent in who we are as humans, as St. John Paul II points out, is the need for a person to contribute to his or her family or neighbourhood or culture in a discernible way. This is what separates us from the animals but also is what gives us dignity.

Do you see your work as public servants in the same way? Do you give dignity to yourselves and the job you carry? Consider yourselves fortunate because there are many wanting to be in your position right now. Appreciate your work, do ordinary things extraordinarily well, find fulfilment in the daily routine that drags you from the comforts of your beds, be thankful, yes be grateful you have a job. To “work” is our way to participate in God’s plan for man on earth and to elevate each day’s work in such a way that it actually becomes divine.

To work and to work especially for government is to recognize that we are designed by our Creator for work that may be demanding and difficult, it may be boring or strenuous; but whatever it is, it is also an opportunity to unite with God and give glory and honour to His kingdom.

**INTEGRITY**

*“It is concept of consistency of actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations, and outcomes. In ethics, integrity is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one’s actions.”*

It is about who you really are even when no one is watching. It is about consistency, honesty and accuracy.

From day one, you all know where I stand. I can stand the scrutiny of anyone in so far as my integrity. I have always remained consistent and firm in my positions in governing the affairs of Bougainville under the pain of criticism by those who do not understand the dynamics of governance. I remained consistent in my position against everything Waigani represents. Consistency is about being the same regardless of the situation. Consistency is a choice every public servant must make.

Honesty or accuracy of one’s actions requires intentionality and thought. How honest or accurate are your behaviours, actions, and words with other people that you lead? In public service, the temptation to be dishonest is always there, like tinkering with the payroll system, taking 10% from projects, coming late for work and leaving early, taking bribes under the table, over the table including the table.

Integrity stems from the Latin word ‘integer’ which means whole and complete. So integrity requires an inner sense of ‘wholeness’ and consistency of character. When you are in integrity, people should be able to visibly see it through your actions, words, decisions, methods, and outcomes. When you are ‘whole’ and consistent, there is only one you. You bring that same you wherever you are, regardless of the circumstance. You don’t leave parts of yourself behind. You don’t have a ‘work you,’ a ‘family you,’ and a ‘social you.’ You are YOU all the time.

It is not easy but the key words I want you all to take to heart are **consciousness** and **choice**. Each waking hour and spending my time in church I always offer to God that today I make the right choice and decisions, that I remain conscious that I lead and hold in my hand the future of every Bougainvillean.

**FIND YOUR PURPOSE**

*“Every man, every woman who has to take up the service of government, must ask themselves two questions: ‘Do I love my people in order to serve them better? Am I humble and do I listen to everybody, to diverse opinions in order to choose the best path?’ If you don’t ask those questions, your governance will not be good.” – Pope Francis*

My life is an open book to everyone. The driving force that drove me to shift to public service is because of a connection larger than me as priest. Later on in my career, I gave up a promising career as a diplomat because I feel the need to be with the people of Bougainville. The rest is history.

To a greater sense, having found my purpose guided my life’s decisions, influenced my behaviour, shaped my goals, offered me a sense of direction, and above all created meaning to what I do.

Search your inner selves and look for that purpose why you are in public service. I firmly believe that each one of you here has a sense of purpose; without it we lose our way and become demotivated, depressed and prone to the temptations. Without purpose we succumb to procrastination, inefficiency, absenteeism, and all the ills that beset government bureaucracy.

My dear fellow workers: the dignity for work, integrity and finding purpose are the core values we must uphold as we begin this New Year. These are the anchors that will hold us from being carried away by the upcoming events in the history of Bougainville. On these anchors lies our solidarity as public servants.

My term is less than two years away; the referendum is a few months away, I say, let us this time keep our acts together. Whether you occupy a lowly job as a utility worker or a lofty position as Minister we all have an obligation to our people. Service to the public ‐ helping people in trouble, making Bougainville safer and cleaner, helping our children learn and prosper, literally going where others would not go leaving the comforts of our offices ‐ is our job and our calling. When you sit down at the start of the day, put a face in the document in front of you; a sick child seeking to be admitted to a hospital, a poor villager seeking for justice, farmers pleading for the construction of a farm to market road or children asking for bridges they can safely cross to get to school.

Our time now calls for smart, compassionate, loyal, ethical, committed public servants. Now is the time to stand together serving our people who have been neglected for many years because of our failure to act and behave like true and real public servants. It is not too late to bring back the glory days of Bougainville envied by the other provinces in Papua New Guinea. The window of opportunity for us to show to the world what we are made of is closing on us. Let us not allow this to slip from our grip. It can be done if we all want it badly enough.

We have just celebrated Christmas, the festive season which marks the incarnation of the Son of God who pitched his tent amongst us. The all powerful Creator becomes one of us and thus empowers us by virtue of our baptismal right and thanks to the Paschal Mystery- namely the passion, death , resurrection and ascension of Jesus, to create God’s kingdom in our midst .

Thus man is not only created as the Crown of the created world (universe and cosmos) but also co-creator of the world. We are therefore highly favoured. By our actions, and specially during this juncture of our journey of discovery and self – determination we give glory to God.

Let us give our people the government they deserve. Thank you and God bless Bougainville.