



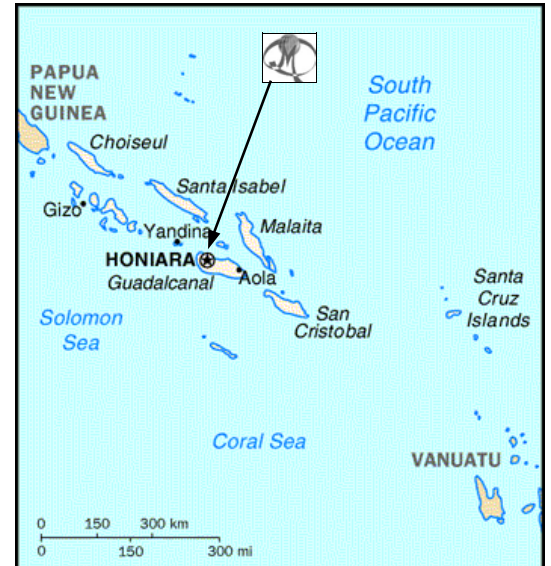
SOLOMON ISLANDS

St. Joseph's Secondary School, Tenaru

St Joseph's educates students from Form 1 to 7 (years 8 to 13). It was begun in the late 1940s as a boys school then became co-educational in 1972.

The school is one of seven National Secondary Schools. Students travel from all over the Solomons to board there. Their families are usually subsistence farmers from coastal and rural areas, who work and live off the land. The majority of students are Melanesians, with some Polynesians and Micronesians. This reflects the immense cultural diversity of the Solomon Islands.

Students study subjects such as maths, social sciences and English, as well as traditional culture and agriculture. There is a strong academic focus - many students will continue to study at university. But this is balanced by practical skills, keeping students in touch with traditional gardening and farming techniques. Even university graduates will eventually return to their homes and need to provide for their families on the farms.



There are three Marist Brothers in the school: one Solomon Islander, one Papua New Guinean and one Australian, as well as a staff of 30.

Currently in the Solomons there is an unsettled political climate and an economic crisis made worse by Government tensions and cultural differences. Farmers who once were able to survive by selling their produce are unable to do so because of a general shortage of income, so for a period of time, supplementary forms of financial assistance are required.



St Joseph's relies on the financial support of Government grants and school fees, and now, because of Government tensions, even more heavily on the support of the wider Marist family. Marist students and teachers at the school do not wish to be seen as dependent. They all have food gardens and spend time in the cocoa plantations and therefore support their own education. It is for the education materials and resources that they ask our help.