

austraLasia #2665

Ultra-light evangelization--or the flying bishop!

GIZO (Solomon Is.): 23 June 2010 -- The "Flying Bishop" (not the Anglican variety) Luciano Capelli is missing just one small item at the moment--the ultra light plane that he has just received his license for. But his many friends and supporters in Europe are working on resolving that problem in the near future.

Our indomitable "don Luciano," as he prefers among friends, took advantage of an extended stay in Italy, not only to attend the Rector Major's invitation to another 100+ of his kind (Salesian bishops) at Valdocco, but to catch up with his aging mother, raise some funds for various diocesan projects "back home" in Gizo--and get his pilot's license!

He had tossed the idea around "as a bit of a joke" while back home in Valtellina (Italy), and some friends promptly brought him down to the Aeroclub at Caiolo. "Go on, climb up in, let's go for a test spin," a young instructor said. "And I said to myself, bringing the Gospel from on high would make things easier. So here I am now, promoted to pilot."

Up until now--and for the moment he must continue this way--Bishop Capelli has a motorboat for moving around his far-flung diocese. Ten hours and 500 liters of fuel later he is likely to arrive at his destination. Now he figures he can do the job in an hour, hour and a half.

The local Lions Club in the Valtellina area saw this as a worthy project--paying the initial training, and they and a few others are now working on the other part of the deal. Not much use being a "flying bishop" if you have nothing to fly in!

The instructor admitted that his new pupil was "not an easy pupil" to work with, but added that this was partly because his pupil is no longer a spring chicken, and that the area they were training in is pretty testing for atmospheric conditions. No doubt it will be no less testing around Gizo!