

# Carmel Contact



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*from the Australian Carmelites*



## CHANDRA the lost one

Chandra came from a poor family in Zumalai in East Timor. Her parents were not able to educate her, as is still the case with many parents today.

When Chandra was ten, Father Domingos, from the next parish of Suai, took her into a hostel he had for children wanting an education. Chandra completed her primary and then her secondary schooling. She was very active in church activities and enjoyed being an altar server and singing in the choir. In all, Chandra lived in Suai for nine years.

In 1999 the Indonesian Government offered two choices to the Timorese people. The first choice was to be part of Indonesia and enjoy special status. The second choice was independence.

The referendum took place on 30 August 1999. More than 80% of the people voted for independence. This made the Indonesian military and the pro-Indonesian militia very angry and they destroyed everything and killed many people.

In Suai Catholic church the militia killed more than 200 people including three priests. They took many others across the border into West Timor and one of them was Chandra.

Meanwhile Chandra's family in Zumalai had fled into the forest to save their lives. They had no contact with her and did not know whether she was still alive. Her mother cried and prayed every day, thinking she may have been killed in the Suai massacre.

When the peace-keeping forces arrived, the people felt

safe to go back to their villages. Chandra's family walked 35 kilometres from Zumalai to Suai to look for her but in vain.

Then after one month they got news from neighbours returning from Betun in West Timor that they had met Chandra. She had been taken to Betun by a militia family who would not let her contact her family.

I visited West Timor and talked to the refugees in each camp. When I asked about Chandra they took me to a secret location to meet Chandra because her 'adopting father' would not allow her to meet anyone from East Timor. I was able to speak to her and tell her about her family in Zumalai.

A month later when I went back to Betun I was able to celebrate Mass. Chandra got permission from her 'father' to take part in the Mass. However her 'mother' accompanied her everywhere. Before Mass I offered everyone the opportunity to go to confession. Chandra used the opportunity to talk with me. She said that she desperately wanted to go back to East Timor but her 'father' from the militia would never allow it. I said I could help her to escape from Betun to East Timor but she was afraid of her 'father'. She said that if he found out he might kill her. She gave me a letter for her family in Zumalai. She hoped that she would meet them again.

I then tried to negotiate formally with Chandra's militia family but they were determined never to let her go. I offered to take her back to her parents for a visit, promising to return her, but all my efforts failed.

# Therese's Test

**You look at a photograph of Therese Martin in her Carmelite habit and white cloak. The young woman seems so serene, so settled, so untroubled.**

If you are having a bad day or going through a hard time you may think to yourself, 'It's all right for you Therese Martin, you had it easy. A comfortable home, a father who adored you, sisters who looked after you. A short life, yes, but you had your way and got into a convent ahead of time and you were always pretty well removed from the everydayness and the struggle of what life is about.'

But even as you say that, you know it's not the whole story.

Therese was four and a half when her mother died. The impact on her was profound. Two older sisters entered the convent. At eight and a half she was sent to boarding school.

*I have often heard it said, she wrote later, that the time spent at school is the best and happiest years of your life. It wasn't that way for me. The five years I spent in school were the saddest in my life.*

Such things leave their mark.

Can a child suffer depression? In recent years we have come to a

new awareness of this widespread sickness in its many forms. Australian poet Les Murray spoke recently of the 'black dog' which held him captive for almost a decade, and the demons which beset him.

Therese was ten when she suddenly became sick. She said later that the sickness came 'from the demon.' No one was sure what it was. She began to have headaches. A severe trembling overtook her. She cried easily. Her family feared she might die.

What Therese wrote is significant:

*I can't describe this strange sickness but I'm now convinced it was the work of the devil.*

And she goes on:

*For a long time after my cure, I believed I had become ill on purpose and this was a real martyrdom for my soul.*

If there is one thing the black dog can do, doctors say, it is distort your thinking.

Therese wrote: *I said and did things that were not in my mind. I said things that had no meaning. Often I appeared to have fainted, yet I heard everything that was being said around me.*



It troubled her when friends of the family came and sat around her bed. You can sense her untypical and illogical anger when she describes them as 'a row of onions, looking at me as though I were a strange beast.'

Fortunately Therese came through her illness. She and the family attributed her return to good health to the intercession of Our Lady of Victories, the lady with the 'ravishing smile.' Towards the end of her life Therese wrote, 'my soul has matured in the crucible of exterior and interior trials.'

Sickness can seem like the end. Sometimes it is a beginning.

**Fr Frank Shortis O.Carm**  
Associate Pastor, Coorparoo Parish

## CHANDRA the lost one *(Cont from Pg 1)*

I went back three times. Each time Chandra told me how she missed her family. When she spoke of them she was filled with sadness and her tears fell.

The last time I met Chandra she asked me, 'Father Augusto, do you love me?' I replied, 'Why do you ask a question like that?' She replied, 'This may be our last meeting. The next time you come you will only see my grave.'

I embraced her and said, 'For the love of Christ, my daughter, do not speak like that,' and she cried. Her last words to me were, 'Father Augusto, my body may not return to East Timor but my soul will go back to be with my family. I need their true love.'

Two months later word came that Chandra had died. Her family never saw her again. She was eighteen years old.

Chandra's mother died a year later. Her father still lives in Zumalai, a lonely man.

**Fr Augusto Sampaio da Costa O.Carm**  
Currently studying in Brisbane

***Lord, we pray for Chandra, for her mother and all the mothers who have waited helplessly when their children have been in danger, and for all mothers who have lost a child.***

# Timor-Leste Tim

## Dealing with youth depression



▲ Many youth - What Future?

Freedom came to East Timor in 1999 after the 25 year nightmare of occupation by Indonesian forces. Independence followed in 2002 - a time of euphoria and great expectations. Among the youth, many had risked their lives to help the resistance, and some died leaving survivors traumatised. Those who had sacrificed their education to struggle for freedom hoped for a new society that would give them greater opportunities.

However the priority of the new nation is towards educating a new generation rather than salvaging a neglected one. Many youth, with few skills and fewer opportunities to fit into their new society, now feel depressed, abandoned by their leaders, and resentful that they cannot share in the new order.

Karate clubs had been a social activity for young men, but with militaristic overtones in Indonesian times. They still exist, in theory recreational, but in practice frustrations sometimes cause fights between members of rival clubs.

Church groups are trying to provide healthy activity for youth, especially in sport. Some youth act as guides for younger children, helping them with sports and with education in faith. Prayer groups are flourishing, and they provide social as well as spiritual activity.

Training courses are still limited, and mostly cater for those with some education. Government, NGOs and religious orders provide such courses. Girls can attend courses giving them the basics in cooking, sewing, language, computer and secretarial skills, as well as good work habits. Boys can attend courses in carpentry, mechanics, computing and

bookkeeping skills. The few who get employment soon after completing their course are likely to succeed, but the effect is soon lost if they can only return home to work within the family.

There is a rather haphazard approach to dealing with youth who are depressed and in trouble in East Timor. This is because they only have the Indonesian model to follow. The focus of police tends to be in punishing wrongdoing rather than addressing its causes. Some groups, especially associated with churches, assist by counselling.

I know of one example where an individual had fuel stolen, during which a motorbike caught fire and was destroyed. He gathered the group responsible, many of them secondary school students, and through discussion with the youth was able to get them to recognise the harmful path they were on and adopt better planning for their lives.

That this was successful isn't surprising, because the youth are aware of the great achievement they are part of, in forming a new nation. But they feel they cannot share the rewards of the struggle without help.

### **Manecas Belo**

Catholic Teachers' College, Baucau, East Timor  
& youth worker

### **Br Chris Poppelwell fms**

Deputy Director, Catholic Teachers' College,  
Baucau, East Timor

*In the Carmelite Parish of Zumalai, there is a strong emphasis on youth. Sporting activities including volley ball, basketball and soccer are organised along with singing and instrumental activities. Scout training sessions teach leadership skills to young people and the Zumalai church is also used to host youth conferences.*



# Timor-Leste Timor-

## Progress Report

### Formation House in Hera, Dili

Our new formation house for young Carmelites in training will be known as 'St Elijah Carmelite Novitiate'.

During their recent visit to East Timor, Fr Wayne Stanhope and Fr Bruce Clark visited the site of the new Novitiate. They were delighted with the progress being made. After many delays, work commenced at the beginning of February and is on track for completion in October.

"This is a major undertaking for the Order in East Timor", Fr Wayne said. "Apart from providing accommodation and teaching facilities for twenty Carmelite Novices, it will be a centre where the local people can share in the use of the chapel and some recreational facilities" he added.

Already, the local economy is benefiting from the project as local people have been employed by the builder and local farmers have the use of the new bridge and road which has been constructed to give access to the site. Local people will also use the facilities to collect water.

Work completed so far includes the sinking of a bore to a depth of 60 meters and connection of the electricity supply. The brick work for most of the living and learning areas has been completed and work on the chapel and hall is well underway.

Funds for the building have been generously donated by our supporters in Australia, Carmelites in Australia, Ireland, England, and the United States, as well as by the Carmelite Curia in Rome and an international church charity based in Holland.

All that remains now is to raise funds for the furnishing of the Novitiate, the construction of the hall, the water tower and sporting facilities and such 'extras' as installation of solar hot water and a stand-by generator.



## Mass Celebrations

We will gather as a Carmelite family to celebrate the following:

**Mothers Mass on the feast day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel**

**Mass of Love & Hope on the feast day of St Therese**

**Middle Park (Vic)** – National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Cnr Wright & Richardson Streets,  
Mothers' Mass – Sunday 16 July 10.30am.

Mass of Love & Hope – Sunday 3 October 10.30am.

**Coorparoo (Qld)** – Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 312 Cavendish Road,  
Mothers' Mass – Sunday 16 July 9.30am.

Mass of Love & Hope – Sunday 3 October 9.30am.

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**Wentworthville (NSW)** - Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 4 Bennett Street,  
50th Anniversary of Carmelite presence at Wentworthville – Sunday 16 July 10.30am



# Nine days with Mary

*Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing at the foot of the cross.  
Jesus said to his mother,  
"Here is your Child!"*

*Then Jesus said to his friend, "She is your Mother!"  
(John 19: 26-27)*

Mary, our spiritual mother, has held a special place in the hearts of all Carmelites. Her life has been a model for our lives. Her ability to listen to and reflect on the Word of God, her ability to accept whatever God asked of her and to give of herself to others are qualities we try to make our own.

As we prepare to celebrate together Mary's feast, I would like to present some qualities of motherhood that we can reflect on – qualities which can help us to support one another.

**July 7 - Nurturing** – Our ability to support those who are hurting and to cultivate the goodness of those around us.

Mary, please help me be more aware of those around me who need my support in a special way today.

**July 8 – Diplomacy** – Our ability to work toward a common harmony rather than allowing our individual selfishness to get in the way.

Mary, please help me hold my tongue when I am going to make the situation worse and to speak up when I can make the situation better.

**July 9 – Vision** – Our ability to look beyond the present and give life to others' dreams.

Mary, please help me see the 'big picture' so that I am better able to encourage others to move forward from traps of near-sightedness.

**July 10 – Patience** – Our ability to work with others as they make mistakes. To use unsuccessful experiences as a time of growth rather than a time of failure.

Mary, please help me hold off from getting upset with others and to use the experience to move toward something better.

**July 11 – Resilience** – Our ability to cope and move forward even in times of hurt, loss, and disappointment.

Mary, help me deal with those people and situations where I'm not sure if it is worth the effort, even though I know the outcome is important.

**July 12 – Availability** - Our ability to allow others into our busy lives when they need to share with us.

Mary, I know that there are many things that can get in my way today. Help me to be more aware of what is really important and give me time and energy to be open to these.

**July 13 – Persistence** – Our ability to work toward those goals that are important to us even when we encounter reasons, excuses, and negativity which try to block our way.

Mary, help me to work toward what is important even when the struggle is uphill the whole way.

**July 14 – Reflection** – Our ability to put into perspective our strengths and weaknesses and to appreciate how to best live each day.

Mary, help me take time out today to realise all of the good things that I do and the many gifts and people that I have in my life.

**July 15 – Listening** – Our ability to keep quiet and observe what the other is really saying.

Mary, help me to keep my mouth shut and to give my speaking time over to my ears so that I can hear from others who really need to be heard.

**Br Sean Keefe O.Carm**  
Faith Development Coordinator  
Whitefriars College