



Carmelite Friars of Australia and Timor-Leste

MISSION COORDINATOR UPDATE 14.03.06

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Welcome to a new year where the Lenten season has already begun and the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne are ready to begin.

While life in Australia continues to move at a rapid pace, life in Timor-Leste moves at a very slow pace. I believe that I need to find a balance between the fast and slow pace of life in order to have the time to meet with people. Relating with people is a priority for the East Timorese.

As the Carmelite Timor-Leste focus has now moved to education of the East Timorese people, the education of westerners in learning how to walk with and beside the East Timorese people is also happening. The East Timorese are beginning to take ownership of some of their projects. It is a privilege to experience them doing this.

The following is a short update on some of the present happenings:

1. At long last the Hera project has started !



This project, a house for the training of Carmelites, has been over two years in planning and preparation. Ever since I began working for the Carmelites I have heard about the Hera Project. There have been numerous difficulties. Some of these include problems with land titles, which were destroyed or didn't exist during the Indonesian occupation, others have been cultural. That is, learning to understand how life operate in Timor-Leste.



Blessing the Foundation Stone

The water tower for this project is being supported by Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Coorparoo in Queensland. It will provide water for the Carmelites and neighbouring people.

The Sporting complex and open air hall are being supported by Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Wentworthville. Both of these facilities will be used for community purposes.

2. Mobile Health Clinic

The next mobile clinic is being organized by the East Timorese to take place at Easter. The Carmelite sisters run these clinics. With the help of the friars they travel to the rural and remote villages of the Zumalai parish. The sisters are mainly nurses, who when visiting the parish villages take medical supplies to treat patients, visit the schools to give them worm tablets and run education sessions for the women and children. The Carmelite friars and sisters support each other in their work. Corpus Christi Cranbrook are supporting this clinic.

3. Zumalai Catholic Primary School

Brother Antonio has sent the plan for the refurbishment of three classrooms at the school. He has conferred with the Principal of the school and worked hard to send a western standards proposal. A further proposal for the building of three new classrooms will be sent next month. Our Lady of Mount Carmel Primary School Coorparoo are supporting this project.

4. Foster Project

The parish mission support group of Foster in Victoria, together with St Mary's school Yarram presented a cheque to Father Wayne in January for a hand tractor/ plough for Belako village in the Zumalai parish. The group's next interest is to learn and understand more about Timor-Leste.

5. Jamberoo/Kiama

The Parish Support Group have been supporting the painting and refurbishment of one of the houses on the compound at Zumalai. This group continues to find new places in New South Wales to sell coffee

6. Tetun Story Books and Dictionaries

Two Catholic Primary Schools in Melbourne have donated money for educational resources to be bought for the village primary schools in the Carmelite Zumalai Parish of Timor-Leste.

Photo of Educational Resources



7. Augusto Sampaio da Costa O.Carm.

Augusto completed the ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) in December 2005. This year he began a Graduate Diploma in Ministry. He will do two courses each semester and a practicum in Pastoral Ministry which runs all the year. For the practicum, he will work with the East Timorese Community in Brisbane.

The two Courses that Augusto is studying this semester are: Communication and Process and Power and Authority and Leadership. He is being given individual support from one of the lecturers each month. Father Frank Shortis is his supervisor and meets with him each week as well as a weekly meeting with his peers.

Port Melbourne and Middle Park parish are supporting this initiative by helping to meet the cost of Augusto's studies.

Commission's 2,500 Page Report

The UN's Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CAVR) of Timor-Leste have completed their five years of research and interviews and have now published a 2,500 page report. For those who are interested, the full report can be downloaded from the website of the International Center for Transitional Justice at <http://www.ictj.org>

The report, is based on 8,000 interviews collected across Timor-Leste from its 13 districts and 65 sub-districts. It estimates that 18,600 East Timorese civilians were killed or disappeared and at least 84,000 more died as a result of displacement policies during Indonesia's occupation.

It also contains evidence of massive, widespread and systematic rape and torture by the Indonesian military. The Indonesian security forces "consciously decided to use starvation of East Timorese civilians as a weapon of war" the report says. It documents a litany of massacres and thousands of summary executions of civilians.

Every East Timorese person has been traumatized and suffered in some way as a result of the 25 year Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste. They were supported by nobody and therefore it is very difficult to learn to trust again. It will take many years for the East Timorese to learn to trust, to be empowered to run their own country and to believe in themselves.

Could the updates be photocopied and given to each person in the parish mission support teams or other friends. Thank you

Rosemary Patterson

Rosemary Patterson, RSM
Timor-Leste Mission Coordinator