



Carmelite Friars of Australia and East Timor

MISSION COORDINATOR UPDATE

01.07.05

Greetings to each person in the Carmelite Mission Support Groups around Australia.

The following Update is mainly about my visit to East Timor during the month of May. Returning to East Timor after 12 months in Australia, I made the following observations. Firstly, progress and changes in Dili could be visually seen. The city was much cleaner, there were many new shops that had been renovated from old buildings, infrastructure such as roads had been improved. White lines were now being painted down the middle of roads even though cars and motorbikes still traveled from one side of the road to the other!! The East Timorese Police Force was much more confident.

Life in the country or rural areas though had regressed. There was no work, only 20% of the people in East Timor have paid work or jobs, the young people all want to live in Dili where they believe they can find work. Life in the country is focused on survival. Each day is spent in the pursuit of food and water, especially after experiencing a drought.

The following are some of the happenings, I shared during my visit to East Timor and also which various mission support teams, Whitefriars College Donvale, a number of schools and many individual people have donated money:

Nando

It was wonderful to see Nando and travel with him to Zumalai where we stopped at his village Bee Mean. Nando is the little boy who had a severe case of tuberculosis and moved to the Carmelite Sisters home at Maubara to be treated. He is now completely cured. He was diagnosed by one of the sisters when the mobile medical clinic visited his village. He will continue to live with the Carmelite Sisters at Maubara where he now attends school. Nando's mother and father have both died. Previously he lived with his grandparents in Bee Mean, part of the Zumalai Parish, but they are very poor and cannot afford to have him educated. Nando is a very bright child and as there is no school at

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Bee Mean, he would have to walk 5 kilometers to school and another 5 kilometers to return home. Nando's grandparents were very emotional when they saw that Nando was completely cured and very grateful. To show their gratitude, they gave the Carmelite sisters a sack of corn and peanuts from their precious stock of food.



Nando with his uncle and grandfather

School Resources

I had the opportunity when I visited the Zumalai Parish to deliver large Tetun Picture Dictionaries with matching sets of word cards and number cards for the junior primary students. These were all laminated, very colourful and illustrated with items from the East Timorese culture. I also took Tetun dictionaries to the senior primary children. These resources were produced by the Josephite Sisters and I was able to purchase them in Dili. Sr Tess Ward OLSH, who is a linguist and teacher educator has been traveling all over the Dili diocese inservicing teachers on how to use these materials. I took the materials to five schools in the following Zumalai parish villages: Bulo, Raimea, Zumalai, Pelat 2 and Belako and



Rosemary, showing the Principal at Bulo the Tetun educational resources

showed the teachers in the schools different ways of using these educational resources. Very few teachers have had any teacher training and the hours that students attend school is very limited. There are many holidays. When Sr Tess visited the Zumalai area earlier in the year, she was not able to visit Raimea because the river was in flood. On two of the other days teachers were not at school because they were learning Portuguese and there was a village “festa”.

Zumalai Catholic Primary School



Above is a photo of class 3 students at OLMC Zumalai standing in front of the banner presented to them by OLMC Coorparoo. One of the purposes of my visit was to strengthen relationships with the schools. It was a fulfilling experience to meet with teachers that knew me. The school now has a school uniform. Many of the primary schools in East Timor have this same uniform. The people love wearing uniforms to school and work.

Rice Harvesting

A new experience for which I am very grateful was taking part in harvesting the rice. The fields that were being harvested were at Belako, one of the parish villages. It was such a joyous occasion and such a family affair. There would have been about 40 people who took part. It was labour intensive work but everyone including the children had a role. The Carmelites took their big truck to the rice paddies in order to carry the people, the sacks of rice and forty gallon drums used for harvesting the grains. This was an experience of a non cash society for me where labour, goods and produce are shared.

East Timorese Coffee



Girl Picking Coffee

This will be available to be purchased from the Provincial Office in Middle Park from mid September.

The purpose of selling the coffee is twofold:

- **as an education tool about the Carmelite work in East Timor** (a brochure will be attached to the coffee)

- **as a fundraiser** (The coffee would be purchased by us for \$4.50 and the retail price would be \$7.00)

East Timor coffee is organically grown; artificial fertilizers and pesticides have traditionally not been used

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