TIMOR-LESTE MISSION CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE
14.11.12

As the Carmelite Timor-Leste Mission continues to grow and develop its educational focus has strengthened. It has been a delightful and educative experience to listen to some of the stories of the various visitors to Timor-Leste and numerous fundraising events both large and small that have taken place this year.

Whitefriars College First Student Visit to Timor-Leste

Br Sean, Jeremy Freeman, a teacher and three Whitefriars students visited Zumalai in Timor-Leste during the October school holidays. It was an overwhelming experience for each of them as they experienced the poverty of the people in Zumalai in contrast to the enthusiasm and drive of the Timorese people to make their lives better. Jeremy Freeman wrote: “Zumalai was a terrific experience. The hospitality of Br. Antonio was first class and I enjoyed the many conversations we had. I was also grateful for the experience he provided the Whitefriars’ students and myself when he set up the opportunity for us to teach some of the local Year 7 students.

To be able to teach English to these kids was an absolute joy. The boys and myself were able to set up some fun learning activities but more importantly, we were able to get to know the kids. The relationships we formed with them was fulfilling as we learnt that those 12/13 year olds were incredibly bright, motivated, patient and filled with a sense of fun”.

Coorparoo, Brisbane Parish High Tea

Congratulations to the Friends of Zumalai East Timor Committee in Coorparoo, Brisbane who held a very successful High Tea Fundraiser in October.

Participants at the Coorparoo Parish High Tea

There were 150 people who attended the High Tea which was fully catered for by the committee. It was a most enjoyable, wonderful afternoon and all who attended were overwhelmed by the hospitality, delicious food and wonderful entertainment.

There was also a huge team of helpers who worked tirelessly and attended to everyone’s needs. All the funds raised will go towards the new Boarding House in Zumalai.

Connor O’Brien with children from Zumalai town
A Gala Evening of Hope for the Children of Timor-Leste

This was a major event organised by the Fundraising and Development Office and held at St Kilda Town Hall in Melbourne during October. The focus again was education and highlighted the need of children to be able to get the best start in life. The evening had a dinner with fine food and wine, entertainment and both a silent and live auction.

Ramos Horta was the special guest for this fundraising evening. The issue of education in East Timor, according to Ramos Horta, is vital considering almost 50% of the population is under 20, poverty continues to be rife and unemployment of young people is estimated at 40%. Ramos Horta echoed the belief of the Carmelites that education is the future for the East Timorese: "Without education young East Timorese have no future, which means East Timor has no future." The funds raised will go towards the following projects: building a block of 3 classrooms in one of the villages, providing tertiary scholarships so young adults can attend technical college or university in Dili and Indonesia and towards the new Boarding House in Zumalai.

Visitor’s Centre Completed

The Visitor’s Centre on the Carmelite Compound in Zumalai town is now completed. It is the most impressive building on the compound and highlights how the skills of the trade people have now improved. The first visitor to stay in the building was the bishop of the diocese. Fr Denis and Nancy Mercurio were the second group to stay there and the Whitefriars party of five also had the opportunity to experience this new building. All Carmelite supporters can now look forward to seeing the completed Boarding House.

Solemn Profession and Christmas in Timor-Leste

Martinho da Costa and Angelino Dos Santos our two Timorese Students living at Middle Park in Melbourne have now completed their 2nd year of study at Yarra Theological Union in Melbourne. They are now in their seventh year of seminary training and will return to Timor-Leste to make their Solemn Profession as Carmelite Friars on the 14th Dec. While in Timor-Leste they will visit their families, celebrate Christmas and visit Zumalai in order to update themselves on the Carmelite Development projects that have been completed and those that are still in progress. Matthew Tonini will also accompany Martinho and Angelino. Matthew began living in community with the Carmelites at Middle Park this year. He has done some study at Yarra Theological Union and also some voluntary ministry work.

Martinho, Matthew & Agusto

May the simplicity, faith and musical talent of the Timorese people be a source of peace and love to Martinho, Angelino and Matthew and to each of you this Christmas season.

A very special thanks to all the friends and supporters of the Carmelites during 2012.

Rosemary Patterson rsm
CarmeliteTimor-Leste Mission Coordinator