We rejoice in the promise of Spring as the garden of our Creator God is now ready to burst into new life, growth and fruitfulness.

Last Spring on September 20th new life came to the Australian Carmelites when two young Timorese Carmelite students came to Australia to begin theological studies in Melbourne.

Martinho da Costa and Angelino dos Santos are presently in their seventh year of Carmelite life. After arriving in Australia they began 6 months of English study at ACU commencing with General English for IELTS test preparation and then a 12 week English for Academic Purposes Course.

Both men are finding the study very demanding especially the theology that they are presently studying. They often express their appreciation though of being able to use the internet as a resource, living next door to the Carmelite Library in Middle Park and having people who have volunteered to mentor them.

Martinho and Angelino waiting for a tram

May they continue to always greet everyone with the big smile, that I experience when I meet them each day.

May their desire to learn and achieve remain strong.

May they be blessed with many more new skills that they can take back with them and share with the people of East Timor.
Unrest in Zumalai

In mid August terrible news was reported when there was an incident of civil unrest in one of the outlying villages in the Zumalai sub-district that led to the stabbing murder of a policeman and the burning of many homes.

Many families went to the Carmelite Church and school in Zumalai town for a safe haven and shelter. Calm has now been restored in the village where the trouble occurred.

The trouble was caused by a martial arts group. These groups are common in East Timor. Those who caused the trouble are now in police custody and there is a large police presence in the area.

Families from the main village where the trouble occurred have been left without their homes and their belongings. Some shelter has been set up with tents and sheets of plastic for roofing tied to trees. Funding is needed for housing, food, clothing, medicine, pens and paper for children going to school.

The Carmelites and the Friends of Zumalai-Kiama Council NSW have sent donations to help the situation. Other donations would be much appreciated.

New Zumalai Bridge

I have been driven across the Mola Bridge and then through the river in Zumalai twice a year for the last eight years. On my next visit I will be driven across the Mola Bridge only and not through the river as a new bridge has been built.

The bridge is 216 meters long, cost about nine million dollars and was constructed by the Japanese company Dai Nippon Construction (DNC). The work began in January 2010 and was completed in July 2011.

The Head of State, José Ramos-Horta, accompanied by the Prime Minister, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, the Minister of Infrastructure, the President of the National Parliament, the Ambassador of Japan to Timor-Leste inaugurated the Mola bridge, in the Zumalai sub-district, Covalima, on July 29. The bridge also received a special blessing from Fr Anciceto O.Carm. who is the parish priest of Zumalai sub-district.

New Mola Bridge March 2011

"The bridge is a strategic tool for development and industry and will benefit the communities of Timor-Leste and the neighboring Nation, Indonesia. If our economy is dynamic and stable, our friends who live in Atambua, Indonesia, will also benefit because trade among neighbouring communities can be developed. The relationship between Timor-Leste and Indonesia will improve as well the border policy. Therefore, the inauguration of the Mola Bridge is a positive step towards the normalization of economic activities in this district." said President José Ramos-Horta, in his speech at the opening of the bridge.

The Ambassador of Japan in Timor-Leste, considered that "the construction of Mola Bridge is one more symbol of friendship between the peoples of Timor-Leste and Japan. The Government and people of Japan have provided nine million dollars for the construction of Mola Bridge."

Crossing the last section of the Mola River by car in 2007

Rosemary Patterson rsm
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