Soon afterwards Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. (Lk 39-40)

The Timorese Carmelites have been very busy this year displaying their wonderful Carmelite hospitality to many new visitors to their country. They are now being assisted with this hospitality by Fr Bruce, from Middle Park Community, as he is spending most of the year in Timor-Leste. He has the role of Prior and Novice Master at Hera.

Communication has become a little easier in Timor-Leste with more telephone towers being built and USB internet dongles being able to be purchased.

Fr Denis Andrew, the Prior Provincial of the Carmelites has visited Timor-Leste 3 times this year, Fr Kevin Melody, a Carmelite from the English Province visited Timor-Leste for 3 months and worked with the men studying to be Carmelites at Hera.

Fr Paul Cahill and Br Sean Keefe visited Timor-Leste in September with the purpose of planning a trip for some of the students at Whitefriars College to visit in 2012.

Marita Molloy, from the Carmelite parish of Port Melbourne and Middle Park and I, visited Timor-Leste in March of this year to run an English Programme for the Carmelite students.

George Bilotta, the Director of Formation Consultation Services in the United States, visited Timor-Leste in September. It was ideal for George to be able to work with the young Carmelite men in their own country and amidst their own culture. Cross-culture communication is a challenge. George appreciated this challenge especially as he simplified the language that needed to be used for translators.

Two other groups of people visited Zumalai sub-district in October and November in order to see and work on the Carmelite Development Projects. The first group were two Sisters of Mount Carmel from the Philippines. Their Congregation is based in the USA with communities also in the Philippines. They would like to have a mission in a developing country and would like to work with Carmelites as they have the same spirituality.
During their visit the sisters visited the schools and villages where the Carmelites minister in the Zumalai sub-district. They also spent time discussing and gauging what the needs of the people in Zumalai are in order to assess whether they could respond to some of the needs. The sisters were very excited about their visit to Timor-Leste and thoroughly enjoyed meeting the Timorese people. They coped very well with the weather conditions and also the environment because both are similar to the rural areas in the Philippines.

The second group of visitors to Zumalai were Dean and Simon from McCorkell Construction who worked on a major Water Project with the help of some of the local Timorese young men. Trenches had been dug by the Timorese in preparation for the laying of pipes. The laying of pipes covered a large area. There were also many connector pipes that needed to be fitted with various pipe sizes, connecting downpipes and guttering. It is great that workers from McCorkell Construction are able to help with the Water Project in Zumalai and have taught many of their skills to the Timorese.

Timor-Leste Presidential and Parliamentary elections will be held in East Timor during 2012
* The President is elected by absolute majority vote through a two-round system to serve a 5-year term.
* The Prime Minister is appointed by the president
* In the National Parliament 65 members are elected through a closed-list proportional representation system to serve 5-year terms.

No announcement on the election dates have been made although it is still anticipated that the first round of the Presidential elections will be held in March and the Parliamentary elections in late June.

Project Focus — 2012-214
Over the next three years the Carmelites will be targeting “Education” as their focus. In the past educational opportunities were not given to the Timorese. It is only now therefore that the Timorese people are coming to know that it is by educating their children and young adults in tertiary/vocational training and life skills that Timor-Leste will advance as a nation in the future.

Many of the Zumalai sub-district school students have achieved good results while others have struggled. The Carmelites see it as very important that some of these students have the opportunity to further advance their skills and abilities in order to deepen their knowledge and put their skills into wider practical use.

May the Christmas star of light continue to be a constant source of hope to the people of Timor-Leste and to each of you this Christmas season. Special Thanks to all the friends and supporters of the Carmelites during 2011.

Rosemary Patterson rsm
CarmeliteTimor-Leste Mission Coordinator