

# Ba Ami Nia Belun Sira

*Newsletter for Friends and Benefactors*



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## Training Teachers in East Timor

Although the Mary MacKillop Institute's literacy program is produced for the Diocese of Dili, the Government Ministry of Education is very interested in it and has requested workshops in the method for its teachers. Sister Tess Ward has just finished seven weeks of intensive training for the Ministry.

So during their visit to East Timor in September and October, Sisters Rosita and Irene joined with teachers from the Teachers' College in Baucau as facilitators to run teacher training workshops for Government school teachers. The emphasis was on helping people to train as trainers, and then to assist them as they passed on to other teachers what they had learned.

The main workshop held at Balide involved 20 trainers and nearly 100 teachers. The process included four days during which the facilitators presented the material to the trainers followed by a further four days during which the trainers presented the material to the teachers under the supervision of the facilitators. The work covered included child development, classroom management, programming for integrated units of work, timetabling, student assessment and evaluation of the programme used.

The trainers were then rostered to attend workshops in country areas for the following two months. Rosita and Irene accompanied three of the trainers along with Milca (translator) to the workshop at Mantane in the Aileu District. This workshop ran over four days and included teachers and parents from the surrounding district. Each trainer was required to present one session each day, with Rosita and Irene supervising the work covered and assisting as facilitators when required. The remaining sessions each day were presented by Rosita and Irene with the trainers participating in the group activities.

As each of the workshops was run over four days the trainers would meet with the facilitator/s prior to the commencement of the workshop so that they could be well prepared for what they were required to do. At the conclusion of each workshop a report was submitted to the Ministry for Education on the work presented by the trainers.

Sr Tess facilitated the workshops at Acanunu, Ainaro, Likisa, Maliana, Ermera and Farol while the team from Baucau ran the workshops in Lique DOE, Same, Manututu, Suai, Baucau, Viqueque and Lospalos.

Whenever they were not involved with the government workshops, Rosita and Irene visited the Catholic Schools at Ainaro, Bedois, Bemori, Rainha Da Paz, Delta and Besilau. Their task was to run one day workshops with the teachers who were not involved with the government workshop at Balide. Programming and basic literacy skills were the main topics covered. Some of the teachers asked to have more training, because they liked the way the program was run.



*Teachers intent on learning new skills at a workshop in Balide, September, 2004*

At Bedois the principal asked that they return to demonstrate some art techniques with the upper primary children. This was a most rewarding and satisfying exercise as the children were so excited and eager to participate.

Inside:

Sister Joan making a difference

Meditation in East Timor

NEW...Coffee Corner

Life in Turiskai

The Timor Sea Oil dispute - what do you think?

## Christian Meditation

Meditation is found in most religions in various forms, usually involving silence, stillness of body and mind and the repetition of a word or phrase, called a mantra. John Main, an English Benedictine, rediscovered the ancient Christian practice of this form of prayer, making it his life's work to present it to anyone who sought a way of contemplation and compassion. The world-wide Christian Meditation Community continues his work, supporting and encouraging each other in the numerous meditation groups now existing.

Three meditators from Sydney went to East Timor in July of this year, giving talks on the practice and joining with the people as they began to meditate. They met with various groups of people in Dili and Aileu and were met with interest and enthusiasm from old and young alike.

It was through the enthusiasm of the late Dr Andrew McNaughtan that meditation has begun to make its way to East Timor. The gift of meditation is something which the people value highly and could be a means of bringing some to greater peace after the horrors they have suffered.

The staff at the Mary MacKillop Institute meditate together on Mondays at 12 noon. Other groups exist throughout Australia. For further information contact [palmy@ozemail.com.au](mailto:palmy@ozemail.com.au)

## Turiskai

Fr Paul Marshall of the Luddenham/Warragamba Parish in NSW recently spent some time in East Timor where he met Fr. Guilhermino, the parish priest of Turiskai. Father Paul's parish has been delighted to assist the poverty stricken Turiskai people. Sr Tess and Sr Mary were in Turiskai in November 2004, and were appalled at the poverty there. The drought is making a difficult life even harder and the people are finding it nearly impossible to scratch a living from the barren, rock solid earth. As with many areas in East Timor, a car or 4wd is useless to get into the villages. The sisters walked in to some areas, taking 3, 4 and even 6 hours to reach settlements.

An obvious feature was the hardness of the drought affected ground. There were cracks in the earth 10-15 cm wide. Usually crops last until October and then life is pretty lean for a few months until the next harvest, but this year hunger came long before October, and the meagre crop of corn and beans won't last long. The people survive on *ai-farina*, which is like cassava, a fairly tasteless vegetable which has the capacity to fill the stomach at least. Its nutritional value is low.

The people's gardens can be quite a long way from their houses because of the constant search for arable land. Their energy is used up getting to the gardens, often hours away. Food for a few meals is picked and then carried home, up and down the almost vertical hillsides. The sisters asked one family why they didn't fix their roof and were told that the trip to get the materials would take at least two days there and back and they simply could not afford to be away from their gardens for that long.

# Maranatha

## Cost of Resources

*distributed between Oct. 2003 & July 2004*

Thanks to the generous and consistent support of our many donors we have been able to supply children and teachers in East Timor with Tetun books and resources for literacy education and to give other educational support.

**Donations: July 2003 – June 2004 = \$356,473.00**

Number of Primary school students receiving books =17,286 in 79 schools and kindergartens.

The amounts below are in Australian dollars and show printing and production costs only. They do not reflect contributed services e.g. devising of books and materials, art work, administration or transportation.

### Mai Hatene Tetun Literacy Program

*Klase 1,2,3 comprises 81 small books, 10 big books*

Klase 1	\$26 438.00	
Klase 2	\$29 664.00	
Klase 3	\$28 360.00	
Klase 4	\$36 540.00 (books 1,2,3)	
Big Books	\$15 860.00	
Tetun-Tetun Dictionary	\$13 954.00	
Eng-Tetun Dictionary	\$13 750.00	
Writing books	\$ 7 851.00	
Laminated charts	\$ 1 650.00	
Kindergarten books and resources	\$15 650.00	
Adult literacy group	\$ 1 830.00	
<b>Sub-total literacy</b>		<b>\$191 547.00</b>
School requisites and equipment	\$20 565.00	
Teacher Training	\$10 485.00	
Teachers' wages	\$ 7 124.00	
Children's school fees	\$ 5 000.00	
Schools buildings	\$33 183.00	
Other assistance (nutrition, health,	\$28 620.00	
Family, orphan support	\$ 4 660.00	
<b>Sub-total education support</b>		<b>\$109 637.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$301 184.00</b>
<b>Balance brought forward 2005</b>	<b>\$ 55 289.00</b>	

## Coffee Corner ~ ~ ~

You may have noticed that Starbucks, the world's largest coffee shop chain, is selling Timorese coffee. Turiskai villagers told Sister Tess and Sister Mary that they receive 14 US cents a kilo for coffee beans. At this rate, even one hundred kilos would not bring in enough revenue to buy one bag of rice. There are promises that the Starbucks Coffee chain will boost the current price to impoverished growers by up to 150 percent. Let's hope. See "Coffee Corner" in the next newsletter – we'll keep you posted. In the meantime, Starbucks' quarterly net profit rose 47 percent in November 2004. Net income has climbed to \$US103 million.

# Making a Difference

By Carla Robinson

Reprinted from "Together-in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga"

As well as bearing the unique title "The Verandah Town", Lockhart can be truly proud of being the birthplace of Sr Joan Westblade. Sr Joan grew up in Lockhart and joined the Little Company of Mary in 1952. Through them she worked in hospitals all around Australia.

In 1997 she began working with the Mary MacKillop Institute of East Timorese Studies. Almost immediately the Institute asked Sr Joan to go over to East Timor and do an assessment of the clinics in Dili, run by the Carmelite Sisters.

When she arrived, Sr Joan was horrified. It was her first experience of going to a country where the military was the only law – they had absolute power. The state of the clinics was heartbreaking. The Carmelite Sisters were doing a brilliant job considering the lack of both equipment and support.

So Sr Joan decided that the best way to help them was to come back to Australia and "beg, borrow or steal" as many supplies as she could.

However, when Sr Joan and her helpers had gathered all the supplies (especially basic necessities such as dressings, syringes, swabs etc.), they couldn't send them back to East Timor because they wouldn't have reached the clinics.

So Sr Joan and her companions had to pack everything up and take it over themselves, carrying enough supplies for four or five clinics for six months.

Once there they would distribute everything, stay for three or four weeks in the clinics to make sure the local staff knew how to use the materials, then come back to Australia and start again. Sr Joan made these trips to East Timor twice a year.

In 1999 Caritas asked for Religious to go over and stand in solidarity with the East Timorese people. Sr Joan and the others who went had a first hand experience of the terrible brutality that the people were suffering.

It was election time, and to vote from freedom from the oppression by the Indonesian military and the local militias meant the East Timorese would suffer. But the general opinion amongst the locals was that "We are voting for our children, not for ourselves."

In November 1999, Sr Joan was one of the first Australians back into Timor and was appalled at the utter devastation. There had been horrific massacres.

The people had paid dearly for their decision to vote for independence. People who had fled their villages came back to nothing – homes burnt down, animals slaughtered and entire villages devastated.

So where is East Timor now? The oppression and brutality have gone but the country is still a mess.

Forty-nine percent of the population is under the age of 14 years, so education is a huge challenge. The health system needs a great deal of work.

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*"We are voting for our children..."*

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The East Timorese people do not have the same sense of materialism as Western society does, and they are satisfied with a simple lifestyle. Decent health and education systems are all they ask for. Primary health care, clean water, good sanitation and a balanced diet would wipe out 70 per cent of the diseases they are currently suffering.



Sr Joan is supporting the re-establishment of the Catholic hospital in Suai which is run by the Sisters of St Paul de Chartres.

In 1999 the Sisters were driven out of the hospital and everything was destroyed. The UN were using the hospital building as barracks until last year when they handed it back to the sisters in an extremely poor state, and there is much to be done.

As for nutrition, Sr Joan says that a balanced diet is more likely to be achieved by helping the people to acquire seeds rather than just giving them rice. Chickens for breeding and seeds for crops like soya beans, corn and chick peas compliment the fruit and vegetables the people already grow.

The problem is so massive you can't help thinking, "Where do I start?" But Sr Joan says that starting one little project can make a world of difference.

The Mary MacKillop Institute of East Timorese Studies believes that education and health are the priority. What better things to give people who have nothing?

## Buka Matenek (Seeking Wisdom) Student Support Scheme

In the last two years we have assisted 46 students in the tertiary sector through University fee assistance and for some, a living allowance, totalling \$AU20,300.00. Grateful thanks to the generous donors who make this possible.

*Ba ami nia  
belun sira tomak:*



*Na'i Nia Oan Mane  
hato'o  
Kmanek no Klosok  
ba ita tomak  
iha Nia loron Moris Natal.  
Loke matan no simu  
buat nebe Na'i fo.*

*To all our friends  
God's son gives peace  
and happiness  
to all on the day of his birth.  
Open your eyes  
and receive what God gives.*

## The Timor Sea Resources - East Timor seeks a fair go

Talks in Canberra and Dili recently between the Governments of East Timor and Australia were aimed at finding a way to resolve dispute over maritime boundary claims in the Timor Sea, and therefore to create a positive environment for the Greater Sunrise oil and gas field to be developed.

Greater Sunrise is much closer to East Timor than to Australia, but the Timorese stand to gain only 18 per cent of the "upstream" royalty and tax revenue, and nothing from the "downstream" revenues, e.g. onshore processing plants and related jobs and development. If all the gas is piped to Darwin, Australia would get all these long-term benefits, leaving East Timor out of the resource sharing altogether.

The East Timorese put a number of possible means of resource sharing on the table for discussion but were told that none of their ideas could be contemplated.

"We were talking about East Timorese participation in the development of the disputed resources;" said the East Timorese Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, "the Australians, unfortunately, only wanted to talk about money."

Under the interim arrangements negotiated for the Bayu-Undan field, the East Timorese people receive a much fairer 90 per cent of the revenue from oil and gas from the field, but get nothing from the onshore processing. A 500-kilometre pipeline and an LNG plant in Darwin are being built. Darwin is doing very well as a result of the thousands of jobs created by the construction of this plant.

Processing the Greater Sunrise gas in Darwin would bring benefits of around \$22 billion to the region and its 100,000 inhabitants .

The East Timorese are not looking for hand-outs, but want participation in the development of the resources which they consider are theirs. The destruction of their country and the endemic problems of malnutrition and disease in their population of 900,000 require sure-footed and long-term treatment.

One element of a fair settlement suggested by the Timorese is to pipe the Greater Sunrise gas the much shorter distance to a processing plant on East Timor's shores. Woodside Petroleum estimates the distance to East Timor at 150 kilometres, compared with 500 kilometres to Australia. The technology is available for such a project.

The resource sharing which East Timor suggests therefore involves a pipeline and an LNG plant. Construction of these alone would help to create thousands of jobs, and new businesses would arise.

The East Timorese Government maintains that it is perfectly reasonable for one of the world's poorest nations to seek an outcome that directly tackles its great need for economic development. Darwin already has one LNG plant to process gas from the Timor Sea, which is why one fair outcome would be to put the second LNG plant in East Timor.

*What do you think?*

### DONATIONS / SUBSCRIPTION TO NEWSLETTER

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I wish to donate reading books to children in East Timorese schools \$.....

I wish to subscribe to "Ba Ami Nia Belun Sira" @ \$5.00 per year \$.....

I wish to contribute to the work of the Institute  
by making a donation. I enclose cheque/ money order: \$ .....

(Make out to Mary MacKillop Institute of East Timorese Studies)

I wish to claim tax deductibility:

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