

NEWS from

the Jesuits in Timor-Leste

April-May 2016



An update on our education apostolate

Every day is a unique day for those working in the schools even if we have the same students and teachers in the classroom. New concerns surface each day even though our routine looks familiar and predictable year in and year out. In as much as we desire continuity, movements of personnel, both Jesuit and lay, are inevitable. This school year, our education works in Timor-Leste have to deal with more movement of our Jesuit personnel, on top of the adjustments we continue to make to our administration systems and management procedures.



Support our work

The Jesuits in Timor-Leste rely on the generous support of our friends, donors and collaborators to carry out our work in the service of faith and promotion of justice. Through this newsletter we share with you news and updates of our many projects and activities, particularly those for which continued support is needed in various ways.

If you wish to know more about our work or donate to a project, please email: etr.development@gmail.com or visit <https://timor-leste-jesuits.org>.



At Colégio de Santo Inácio de Lóiola (CSIL), the present Director, Fr Joseph Raymund Patrick (Weyms) Sanchez SJ, is scheduled to return to the Philippines in June, after almost one and a half years of service. He took over from Fr Plinio do Rosario Gusmão dos Reis Martins SJ who was the school's first director. On May 14, I was installed as the third Director of CSIL. We anticipate that this constant movement of Jesuit personnel, Director and Scholastics doing their Regency in the school will continue as we build up the school to its full complement of students in years 7 to 12 in 2018. Every year is a challenge. New teachers come but they have to be trained. With each year level opened, we have to secure the books and familiarize ourselves with the curriculum. More and more students are coming. More and more parents are insisting. The demand is high but we have to operate within the available spaces and resources.



After some delays, Instituto São João de Brito (ISJB), the teacher training institute, finally had its soft opening in January with initial intake of 23 students, mostly Religious and Jesuit candidates. Fr Robert Exequiel Rivera SJ worked hard to organize the first days of ISJB at its temporary location in the Jesuit Candidacy House "Casa Gonzaga" before he returned to the Philippines on April 30. Deacon Sidelizio Ornai Pereira SJ has taken over ISJB Rector and Sr Jo Brady of the Josephite Congregation, a seasoned educator, continues to help make sure that daily operations and the academic programs are up and going, but we still have more to do on the licensing process and accreditation. We are also deep in discussion on the transfer of ISJB to Kasait. We have still to secure the funding needed to finally erect the first ISJB building so ISJB will borrow some rooms at CSIL in 2017. Good secondary school teachers are urgently needed in the country and ISJB was conceived to help meet this need.

In Railaco, Escola Secundária Católica Nossa Senhora de Fátima Railaco is finally experiencing some degree of normalcy after almost three years of Jesuit administration and management. I led the team of three Jesuits that formally took over the running of the school in January 2014. Thanks to Sr Rita Hayes, a Good Samaritan Sister from Australia, there were enough financial resources to effectively introduce Ignatian Pedagogy and Spirituality. Systems and procedures were put in place, intensive formation and professional development for teachers were prioritized, integral formation of the students was introduced, and careful study of the school's financial and human resources was undertaken. All this softened the initial resistance of the teachers to the Jesuit takeover.



With my move to CSIL, Fr Martin Antonio Abad Santos SJ has taken over as NOSSEF Director. Fr Bong, as everyone calls him, will be closely assisted by a lay Vice-Director, because he continues the Mobile Clinic and Feeding Program, a work he has been doing for 12 years. The school survives on the subsidy from St Canice parish in Australia. This is because about 59 percent of NOSSEF's 247 students are on scholarship even though the tuition and fees are very low. The students also receive a subsidized lunch daily. In addition, the teachers are paid salaries comparable to those in Dili. However, school facilities are sprouting because of donations. Although the school looks simple physically, it has more learning resources than any of the other schools in the area. However, should the Jesuits exit, the school will mostly likely return to its earlier situation.



Our education works in Timor-Leste are very promising, but we are so dependent on the generosity of donors, benefactors and friends of the Society of Jesus, who are convinced of the quality of Jesuit education. We are also limited in number and we need more people to join us on the ground in order to sustain our fragile efforts to contribute to the development of this young nation.

Blessings,

Fr Roberto (Bert) Boholst SJ
Education Delegate