

NEWS from the Jesuits in Timor-Leste

March 2017



Breaking Bread

In his address to the members of the 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, Pope Francis emphasized the need to discern and practice more proactively the wisdom of St Ignatius and his companions when the Formula of the Institute was drafted. He pointed out the unique concept of “aprovechamiento” which literally means “benefit”. He said, “The end of the Society of Jesus is to devote itself with God’s grace ... to labor strenuously in giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of the souls of their neighbors.”

The Pope highlighted that works of mercy are taken for granted in the Formula of the Society. “The works of mercy – the care of the sick in the hospital, alms and their distribution, the teaching of the young, bearing hardships patiently – these were the milieus of life in which Ignatius and his first companions moved and existed. These were their daily bread. They took great pains to prevent anything from getting in the way of these!” he said.

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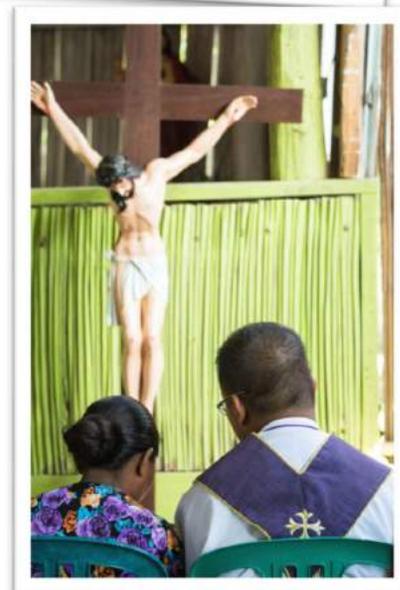
The Jesuits in Timor-Leste rely on the generous support of our friends, donors and collaborators to carry out our work in the service of faith and promotion of justice. Through this newsletter we share with you news and updates of our many projects and activities, particularly those for which continued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



The Jesuit community in Kasait can attest that there is greater *aprovechamiento* in helping souls, although this is not without struggle. It is a frontier for us. We have been breaking bread with the people in Ulmera and it has given us the chance to see the ups and downs of their faith life. We are making a small yet significant impact in opening their minds to see the mystery of God working in their daily lives.



We have our hands full with the school and social work. But we have also made a commitment to the local parish for the care of the souls of the people in Kasait. Upon the invitation of the former parish priest of Liquiça, the Jesuit priests in Kasait have been missioned to say the Sunday Masses in the stations in Neran and Lanumate. As the number of priests in the Diocese of Maliana is also small, our pastoral ministry has expanded to include Caiteho, Bogoro, Bazartete, Aipelo, Leorema, Metahu and the main parish in Liquiça. The three Jesuit priests living in Kasait – Frs Bert Boholst, Yoshitaka Ura and Side Pereira – take turns in ministering the sacraments in the eight chapels and the main parish church. Their pastoral activities also include a wide range of sacraments and informal spiritual accompaniment.



Before the Jesuits came to Kasait, the pastoral care of the people had been taken care of by Salesian priests. However, due to the expansion of the Salesian mission in far-flung areas, they had to let go of Kasait as a pastoral station. “When they left, we were haunted by thoughts of once again having to bear the inconveniences of the old days, when the 2,000 plus baptized Catholics in Kasait including children had to go to Liquiça, about 7 kilometers away, in order to attend Sunday Mass,” recounted Vitorino Corriea, the local chapel coordinator.



Until the Salesians had come, the scarcity of priests had made it difficult for the people to have Masses in the chapels in Neran and Lanumate. They were lucky to have Mass once a year. The lack of pastors and provisions for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist by the diocese also made it more difficult to find a priest or minister of the Word and Communion, to minister to the dead, hear confessions, attend to the sacramentals of the church and provide crucial catechetical instruction to the faithful.

The people in Kasait are fortunate to have active lay catechists addressing their catechetical needs especially in preparations for baptism, confirmation and marriage. But in Ulmera, there is a lone catechist who needs support and encouragement because the sheer number of people means his ministry can be very demanding.

I think the presence of the Jesuits has somehow empowered the local people spiritually. They see the Jesuit pastors as companions in their faith journey as they work together in their Masses and other liturgies. Now they do not have to worry as much as before where to get a priest when someone is sick or dying. When couples want to get married or parents want to get their children baptized, the Jesuits are always ready to assist.

“We are grateful to the Jesuits because they are working with us in our chapel activities,” Vitorino said. “Our people have seen the dedication and hard work of the Jesuits when it comes to celebrating Masses on Sundays and whenever needed. They usually have two Masses and sometimes three or four. They have made themselves available not only in our area but they go also to the mountains of Bazartete, Leorema and Metahu. They are passionate pastors; they go even if the road is very difficult.”



This is our own way of breaking bread with the local people, our own witnessing of *aprovechiamiento*.

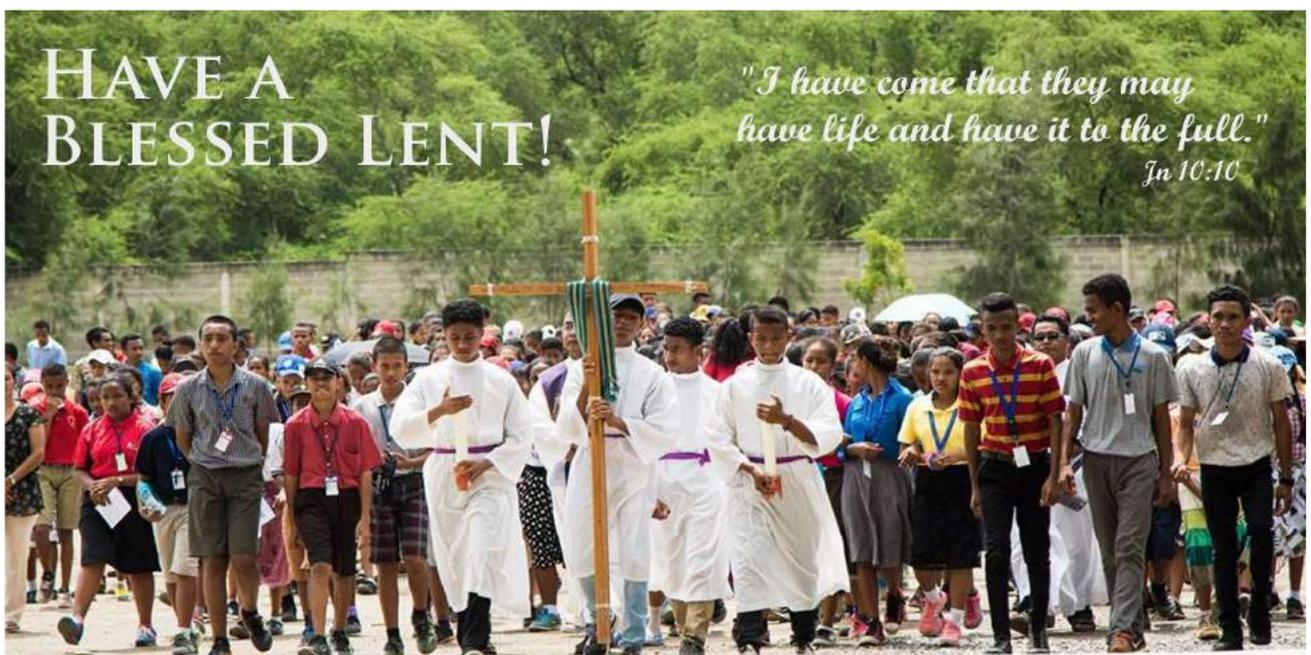
There are other pressing needs in the local community. A regular Sunday class on Catechism and Faith development is needed and the chapels in Neran and Lanumate need some major work in order to be conducive for worship. Although the Jesuits do not have a free hand to address these needs, the Parish Priest, Fr Ernesto Barreto, is supportive of the initiatives the Jesuits have taken in the service of faith.

With our humble contributions, the local church is growing, and in this environment our other works can take root and grow as well.

Fr Erik John Gerilla SJ

HAVE A
BLESSED LENT!

*"I have come that they may
have life and have it to the full."
Jn 10:10*



Students of CSIL making the Way of the Cross