



# ESCOLA SECUNDÁRIA CATÓLICA

## NOSSA SENHORA DE FÁTIMA - RAILACO (NOSSEF)

### Latest Updates 2021 May-Aug



To our Friends and Benefactors,

The whole world is still facing difficult times due to the pandemic and is further complicated by new variants of the coronavirus. In Timor-Leste there are fewer cases of COVID-19 symptoms than in other countries, but more attention needs to be paid. Under these circumstances, we remember our collaborators and supporters who have helped teachers and students in different ways through scholarships, teacher salary grants, and generous donations of supplies and prayer messages. We'd like to express our sincere gratitude to all of you.

Last April NOSSEF high school had to suspend all school activities for one month due to the increase of COVID-19 cases in neighboring regions. At that time, we were just on the second day of first trimester exam week but had to stop and stay quiet for a month. The day before we were going to reopen, one of our teachers tested positive in the PCR test. We had to wait one more week to confirm that there was no virus spreading among us.

From May 24 to July 29, NOSSEF High School was able to continue its regular classes and campus activities. Students regained their study habits by coming to school every day. In spite of many obstacles (lack of sufficient transportation, less working opportunities for parents, financial difficulties, etc.), the students showed their lively joy and desire to study.

However, at the end of July, Ermera municipality, where NOSSEF is located, declared all school activities would be suspended due to the large number of new COVID cases. The health officials visited us on July 29 and told us that two NOSSEF students had tested positive. It was the day just before the final day of the school festival. We had to stop all activities immediately. A few days later, 3 teachers (including me) and 48 students (mostly boarders) also tested positive and were transferred to a quarantine facility in Tasi-tolu, Dili. We are waiting and looking forward to the day we can start the second semester exam and face-to-face lessons.

Please pray for us.



ESCOLA SECUNDÁRIA CATÓLICA  
RAILACO, ERMEIRA FÁTIMA

Fr Hyoe Murayama SJ

## NOSSEF ANNUAL TUITION FEE (2021):

<i>Tuition fee details</i>	<i>Year 10</i>	<i>Year 11</i>	<i>Year 12</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
<b>Matriculation/enrollment fee</b>	\$3.00	\$2.50	\$2.50	
<b>Student activities fee</b>	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	
<b>Monthly tuition fee (\$6 per month)*</b>	\$72.00	\$72.00	\$72.00	Scholarship students are exempt.
<b>Library fee</b>	\$5.00	---	---	
<b>Exam fee</b>	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$9.00	
<b>Uniform fee</b>	\$35.00	---	---	
<b>School building fee</b>	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	Scholarship students are exempt.
<b>1 year total</b>	\$137.00	\$96.50	\$96.50	

\* The school was closed in May and August 2021, so the students will be exempt from the monthly tuition fee (at least \$12.00 off).

## Campus Life and Activities

### May

From April 14 to May 16, NOSSEF had to be closed due to the cerca sanitária (sanitary fence/inter municipality border crossing restrictions) in Ermera. During that time, only a few teachers and staff members worked at school. Teachers prepared a two to four page summary of their subject for the coming trimester. Once the summary was ready, we informed students on Facebook. The students came to school and got the summary (5 cents for 1 photocopy). Even though we hadn't yet finished the first trimester exam, we prepared for the second trimester so that students could continue to study at home and quickly adapt when the lockdown would end. On May 14 teachers gathered for a meeting to prepare for reopening the school. We finally created a WhatsApp group for teachers. However, two days later one of the teachers tested positive in the PCR test, so we had to wait another week until we could confirm that there were no infections among us. Finally, on May 24, NOSSEF resumed. We had an assembly, homeroom class, and general cleaning. Students took the first trimester exams for the remaining subjects from May 25 to 29. After the exams, we immediately started second trimester lessons.



## June

On May 31, Br Marcos Apu SJ finished his 2-year teaching experience and moved to Dili for his theological studies. On June 25 we had his farewell party including Mass, gift-giving and some cultural performances from his beloved students. Br Herculano Pereira Moniz SJ joined NOSSEF, replacing Br Apu as school/dorm moderator and teaching English to Year 11.

In June, we started three new attempts. First, we started a new system of garbage bins. At each corridor and toilet, we relocated the dust bins and baskets and placed them two by two to segregate waste. One is for wastepaper, and the other is for plastic waste. Through this experience, the students will become more aware of environmental issues. Secondly, we started a new system of school cleaning. The classes take turn in after-school clean-up duty of the garbage bins and toilets. Each class will be in charge of cleaning at least once a week and will learn how to keep our school facilities clean. Thirdly, we have set a homeroom period for each class twice a week, 12:00~12:15, to facilitate communication between the class advisors and their students.



We have also begun to think about a new classroom building for Year 10 students. The current simple building is dilapidated. In the future, other buildings will also need to be expanded, renovated, or rebuilt, so we envision a two-story building (4 classrooms on the first floor, a PC room and a Library on the second).

## July

Since last February, the school has used Saturdays for School Festival Sports competition games intermittently. In July, we used Saturdays to hold activities of dance, singing, chorus, traditional fashion show, gardening, and quiz competitions. It was a miracle to be able to hold so many activities and events during this pandemic, albeit with masks, hand washing, and physical distance in mind. Students regained their study habits and regular lifestyle which they had lost during the lockdown period. Our teachers and staff also seemed to regain the joy of work and the purpose of life as educators.



Zelio in class 11 CT was selected as one of the eight Timorese representants to attend *the EducationUSA Academy*, six-week online pre-college academic enrichment program for international high school students from July to mid-August, sponsored by the US Embassy in Dili.



Every Monday, after lunch, the class leaders (students) and I have a short meeting to learn about the issues and needs of each class. Some class leaders requested to repair old study desks and to make considerations for left-handed students because almost all desks were right-handed. In the middle of this month, Fr Joseph Phuong SJ procured materials, and Fr Joseph Thong SJ and Mr Viet re-made 35 wooden study desks for the left-handed students. The left-handed students were so delighted with their remodeled study desks.



On July 21, containers from the Rotary Club (AUS) arrived in Railaco containing piano, bassoon with reeds, kitchen supplies, bath towels/bed linen/blankets, crockery, tarps, balls, chain saw, welder, projector, extension cord, water purifier, etc. We welcomed with gratitude the gifts from our generous donors and collaborators.

As the feast of St Ignatius of Loyola on July 31 approached, we created opportunities to know more about Jesuit-Ignatian spirituality. In our 90-minute students' group-sharing time on one Friday, students and teachers shared their experiences related to "Ignatian discernment." And the following Friday, July 23, a formation seminar on the life and conversion experience of St Ignatius was held for NOSSEF students and teachers at the Railaco Parish church.





## August

The final day of the school festival had been set for July 30, followed by the second trimester exams starting on August 1. Due to the increase of COVID cases, inter-municipality border crossing restrictions were announced in Ermera on July 28. The following day a local clinic informed us that two of our sick students tested positive in the PCR test. So we decided to cancel our school activity for the next day and weeks (Exams also). The next day, all the dorm students and Jesuits in Railaco underwent a PCR test, and 46 students and I (Fr Hyoe) tested positive. About 50 of us were transferred to the quarantine facility in Tasi-tolu, Dili, on Aug 1. Fortunately, there were no patients with serious symptoms among us. Some of us were discharged on Aug 17, but our last student group had to wait until August 22.



It was sad and shocking when we were transferred to the quarantine camp in Dili by police escorts. We also struggled in the quarantine facility with very little instructions and insufficient security and housekeeping. However, we organized rosary prayers together and group bible reflections, sharing before and after dinner every evening. Students themselves undertook the initiative for cleaning services of trash cans and shower rooms. They checked one another's health, and their leaders (boys and girls) reported to me every time. On Aug 6, Herculano SJ was ordained a deacon at the Dili Cathedral. He is also our dorm moderator, so our dorm students in the quarantine prayed for him and sent him congratulations on video call.

During the quarantine, students prepared for public speaking, and each one delivered a 3-minute talk in front of others. We also organized a student debate. There was no classroom, no textbook, no projector. But we still had something to share, something to talk about from the heart. They seemed to have gotten ideas from the bible sharing.

Now Railaco is still in lockdown. We don't know when we can resume school. However, we continue to find ways to accompany and support our students under these trying situations with the help of God and in solidarity with our generous collaborators and benefactors.

Railaco, Timor-Leste, August 31, 2021

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Competição  
Folclore



