



SISTERS OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN RAILACO SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



Newsletter 12

JULY 2022



Dear Friends and Supporters,

Introduction

It is a long time, 'Covid time' since I last wrote to you about our SGS Scholarship Programme. My previous visit had been in November, 2019. It was with a little trepidation that Mrs Catherine Cresswell, Executive Director of the Good Samaritan Foundation and I planned, and then set forth, on a visit to Timor Leste. The trepidation was mainly due to the presence of the Covid viruses and the seemingly fluid state of the Qantas time tables. Fortunately, we escaped the Covid danger but the flights fulfilled our worst expectations of cancellations, etc. Darwin airport, where passengers from at least five overseas trips

spent seven hours waiting for an ongoing flight was something to try to forget.

I now write this letter in a spirit of exhilaration after meeting with the many students who have graduated since my last visit. We were so thrilled to see what has been achieved by the Good Samaritan Scholarship Programme. Please accept this letter as a most sincere thank you to all our donors for your prayers and donations. It also conveys the thanks of the students expressed to us when we had a meeting with this whole cohort. They are the living witness to your care and generosity.

Day 1: Meeting with Alola representatives

Our visit, due to other work commitments, was a short one. We arrived on Tuesday and left on Friday. However, all went smoothly and we accomplished what we had intended to do. On the Tuesday we had our arranged meeting with the members of the Alola Foundation situated in Dili. These are our people, on the ground, attending to the payment of the semester fees to our Scholarship recipients; checking their attendance at the Universities and receiving their semester reports. Alola had also asked any students, free on that morning from their Uni classes, to join our meeting.

This meeting went very well and we were able to get firsthand reports of the process we had established for disbursing our Scholarship funds. Nuni and Triponio, the two Alola representatives, were able to make helpful suggestions and we were also able to clarify procedures with them. Several of our students attended and it was a joy to meet them. They were mainly students in their first year of studies and were living in Dili. While this makes it easier for them to attend Uni, they have to cope with living away from their homes in the mountain villages. As with our students in Australia, the Timorese had great difficulties trying to access classes during the pandemic. Some Classes were online but the available internet is very spasmodic. In addition, the students don't have computers nor do they have access to them. They accessed their online classes via their telephones! We are not talking about the latest iPhones or Samsungs. Those who have phones have the basic, cheap editions from Indonesia. When they described the process as 'difficult' we thought it was a major understatement. This is the reality of life for village students trying to fulfil their educational

ambitions in Timor. Catherine was able to take videos on her phone of these students individually relating their experience of Uni study in present day Timor. My admiration for these young people grows every time I meet with them. Their brilliant smiles always bely a life of struggle and hardship.



Return to Railaco

On Tuesday afternoon, Fr Bong SJ having finished his mobile clinic for the day, drove down to Dili and we travelled back with him to Railaco. Winter, which is now affecting Timor, is the best time of the year for us to travel. There are quite cold mornings and evenings that bookend brilliant sunny days of glorious, warm sunshine. As we approached the mountain area we were revitalized by the fresh breeze that welcomed us to the sub-district of Railaco.

The Jesuit community welcomed us to their residence, took our bags etc and we were elevated to new status: Catherine was lodged in the room reserved for the Provincial and I had, what was reserved, for the Bishop! Wonderful improvements had been made to the residence: Fr Phuong had designed an excellent glassed-in enclosure between the existing dining room and the former church. It is a tiled area, beautifully light and airy that forms a great gathering area

and/or eating area. Fr Phuong had the services of a Vietnamese refugee staying at the residence. His building prowess was the equivalent of Fr Phuong's own and the evidence was clearly seen. They had also made a large outdoor eating area that is reminiscent of a Balinese structure.

The above area was a great addition and was presently being used by an extended community. Not only were Catherine and I additions to the community but the residence had been accommodating a group of volunteer dentists. The leader, Peter was from Adelaide and he led a team of four Timorese assistants. They had just returned from an outer village as we arrived. Hence a quite large community met for the evening meal. These volunteer dentists provide excellent and free dentist service to many of the Timorese villages. We witnessed generosity in action.

Day 2: Visit to NOSSEF

On Wednesday we were invited to NOSSEF for a welcome ceremony headed by Fr Hyoe Murayama SJ, School Principal, staff and students. We were greeted at the school gates by students dressed in traditional tais; dancing and singing, they led us to the outdoor covered area to be officially welcomed. Fr Murayama's welcome address included his gratitude to the SGS Scholarship donors. I have included his address with this letter. We were very pleased to hear also a representative group of students who conveyed to us, in English, their gratitude and explained why this assistance is so important not only to them but to the family. Catherine and I were invited to speak and then followed a happy photo session. Fr Murayama has included this in his comprehensive post on Facebook. F/B "NOSSEF, Railaco".

The staff had prepared a delightful Timorese lunch for us, which of course included Timorese coffee, the best coffee in the world! Thus



refreshed, and having spoken with the staff, we were ready for Fr Murayama's tour of the College. It was heartening to see the school so well cared for and creative gardens, a testimony to many 'green' fingers, evident everywhere. It is now looking like the well established school that it truly is. During this tour we were very happy to meet students in St Benedict's Class and Mater Christi Class, so named as a gesture to the Good Samaritan charism and the support received from these Colleges.



A new addition, since my building programme, is a splendid dormitory for the boys. There is also a dormitory for girls and this is situated in the grounds of the SPC Sisters a little further, but not too far distant from NOSSEF. These dormitories make it possible for students from distant

mountain villages to access the excellent secondary education provided by NOSSEF. Many of these students are able to attend the daily 7 am Mass in the beautiful, new, Railaco church and we benefited from the enthusiastic and harmonious singing they provide.

Day 3: (a) Meeting with individual Scholarship students

Not long after breakfast we had our first Scholarship visitor and she was followed by a number of others. These were students who had either completed their studies, or were still studying at University. Among them were former students who were now employed and it gave us great joy to see the practical benefits of the Scholarship Programme.

(b) Meeting with the newly Graduated and, the soon to be, graduated scholars.

We are very grateful to an ex-Scholarship student and now teacher at NOSSEF, Daniel de Araujo and Parish Priest, Fr Eric Gerilla SJ for arranging this meeting for us. Both give us a great deal of help with the Scholarship Programme.

It was a wonderful occasion as we marveled at the number of students who had graduated since our last visit in November 2019. During this Covid time these students had variously tried to attend classes, struggled to receive lessons on-line, sat for exams and wrote a thesis. They also contended with a pandemic and a severe flood. To escape the flood some had to return to their home villages, thus study was extremely difficult. There is no internet available in most villages. The Timorese continue to amaze me and I am in awe of their ambition and their resilience. They truly deserve any assistance we can give them.

As well as being a great photo opportunity this meeting, with the invaluable assistance of Fr Gerilla, enabled us to hear first hand of their difficulties and their hopes. We believe that being able to speak openly to us and among their confreres, was of benefit to them and some problems were solved regarding the whole process. We were able to re-iterate our hope that they continue to pray for their donors and to fulfil the one practical thing we ask: to provide us with a photocopy of their Diploma, and, if possible, a Graduation photo. These are all placed in an album, and also digitally stored, so that we have practical evidence for all to see what has, and is, being achieved through our Scholarship funds.



Graduates at our meeting



Catherine, Cosme, Me Rita, Simean

Day 4: Visits from Scholarship Students:

This was a very pleasant morning with visits from students both currently studying and others who have graduated and the fortunate ones now working. Employment continues to be a problem in Timor but there is no doubt that gaining a qualification is a distinct advantage. Education, Health and Engineering seem to give the best chance of employment at present. An important result of all their studies is the self-esteem engendered and the confidence to participate as young adults in various aspects of community life. Not only the students but the families and wider community benefit from their years of study.

Students who have graduated since my last letter:

Student Name

Faculty

Adelaide Moniz Mone	Education: Biology
Celeste de Jesus Maia	Public Health
Cezar Tiga Soares da Cruz	Health Science
Cirilio Carvalho Babo	Education: English
Elzito dos Santos Babo	Education: Maths
Geralda da Conceição	Economics
Ismael Babo Correia	ChemicalEngineering
Jerico Alves	Architecture
Julião Carvalho de Jesus	Public Health
Leandro de Jesus Martin	Education: English
Melquiades Soares Tjong	Education: Physics
Nelson Cesar Amaral	Education: English
Olga Soares da Silva	Health Sc: Nursing
Rainata Widi Aprilianai	Eco. Tourism
Samuel Fatima da Cruz	Civil Construction
Tomas da Silva	Education: Portug.



Manuela, Rosa. And Anna all graduates now working



With Julião Carvalho

Our Scholarship students frequently stated their gratitude throughout our visit, and I express it again here with deep sincerity,

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND DONATIONS!

Rita Hayes SGS

[Click here](#) for Fr Murayama's Welcome Speech and Thank You to donors.



RAILACO SCHOLARHIP PROGRAMME

A tax deductible receipt will be sent

Name of Account: Good Samaritan Foundation Ltd

Bank: Commonwealth Bank Australia

Account Number: 15865169

Cheques post to: P.O. Box 1076, Glebe, NSW 2037

Donate online using a credit card: <http://goodsamsfoundation.org.au/donate-today/>

N.B. PLEASE INDICATE MONEY IS FOR SR RITA'S WORK IN EAST TIMOR

IF YOU DONATE VIA A DEPOSIT TO THE BANK ACCOUNT, PLEASE EMAIL CATHERINE CRESSWELL WITH THE ADDRESS YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR RECEIPT SENT TO AND NOTING THAT THE GIFT IS FOR SR RITA'S WORK IN EAST TIMOR. THE EMAIL ADDRESS IS info@goodsamsfoundation.org.au

