

THE EASTERN STAR

TIMOR-LESTE & CAMBODIA

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2024

ISSUE 01



MARIST PRESENCE IN
TIMOR-LESTE & CAMBODIA

Welcome! Benvindu! សូមស្វាគមន៍



Welcome to the inaugural edition of The Eastern Star, our newsletter from Timor-Leste and Cambodia! We are delighted to share with you some snippets of the mission that we, the Marists of Champagnat of the Star of the Sea Province, are undertaking in these two wonderful Southeast Asian countries. Despite their share of challenges and crises, Timor-Leste and Cambodia continue to inspire through the qualities of resilience, hope, and determination that characterise the beautiful peoples of these lands.

In this inaugural newsletter, we want to celebrate the growth of the Marist presence in these two countries, especially through the Marist initial formation program, and the transformative power of education and social initiatives that are happening in the lives of children and young people, as envisioned by St Marcellin Champagnat.

We hope you enjoy the first edition of our newsletter as much as we did putting it together!

Br Greg McDonald, FMS,
Provincial Delegate,
Timor-Leste and Cambodia

Br Brian Kinsella, FMS,
Chair, Lavalla Project,
Marist Solidarity Cambodia



Official Name

Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

President

José Ramos-Horta

Prime Minister

Xanana Gusmão

Population

1,341,737 (2022 census)

Official Languages

Portuguese and Tetun

English and Indonesian Bahasa (working languages)

Independence from -

Portugal (16th Century-1975)

Independence declared -

28 November 1975

Annexed by Indonesia -

December 1975

Administered by

United Nations, October 1999

Independence restored -

May 2002

Capital city

Dili

Catholic Dioceses - 3

(Baucau, Dili, Maliana)

Head of Agency

Cardinal Virgilio do Carmo da Silva, SDB

ABOUT TIMOR-LESTE

THE MARISTS IN TIMOR-LESTE

Following the 1999 independence referendum in Timor-Leste, Brothers from the Melbourne Province arrived in 2000 at the request of Bishop Dom Basilio do Nascimento of the Diocese of Baucau to commence a teacher training college under the leadership of Br Mark Paul, FMS. Since that time, with successive Brother directors, the College, officially Instituto Católico Para Formação de Professores (ICFP), has developed and grown in stature and reputation. The ICFP is regarded as one of the top performing tertiary Institutions in the country, under the Governance of Bishop Dom Leandro Maria Alves, Bishop of Baucau.

Currently Br Peter Corr, FMS, is the President and Br Paul Gilchrist, FMS, is the Director. Over the past 24 years, Marist connections with Timor-Leste have grown and deepened. Australian Marist Solidarity (AMS) has provided funding for a range of projects, including reconstruction of schools, post-school skilling, social support, and inclusion opportunities.

The Marist Brothers, through its local agency Fundação Marista Timor-Leste, or FMTL, are currently building the first Marist school in Lautem in the Baucau Diocese.

Br James Jolley, FMS, then Provincial of Melbourne, meeting with Bishop Basilio do Nascimento in Baucau in 2001.



Baucau Community



Presently, the Marist Brothers community in Baucau comprises four residences. These are

- Teulale residence – Postulancy (3 Brothers and 8 postulants)
- Wainiki Scholasticate residence (7 Brothers)
- Kai Laki Scholasticate residence (6 Brothers)

Tirilolo Residence (ICFP - 3 Brothers)

A Community Council comprising the Community Leader, Assistant Community Leader, Ministry Leader, Bursar and three Timorese Brothers meet regularly to discuss and implement the Community life plan and organise events and gatherings.

Bishop Leandro visits ICFP



Bishop Leandro Maria Alves, the newly appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Baucau recently visited ICFP and met with Brothers, staff and students, in his role as Governor of the College. Br Paul Gilchrist, FMS, Director of ICFP showed Bishop Leandro around the facilities. We look forward to deepening our relationship with Bishop Leandro and the Diocese of Baucau as we continue our commitment to providing excellent graduate Catholic teachers for Timor-Leste.

Congratulations, Br Isac!



Congratulations to Br Isac de Jesus Quintao, FMS, who has been elected ICFP Student President by his peers for the 2024 academic year.

Br Isac is responsible for the Student Senate which plan various college events during the academic year, including the ICFP graduation.

PJM – Faith in action!



PJM (Pastoral Juventude Marista) is a faith and action group operating out of ICFP and comprises students, student Brothers and professors. The group meets every month for prayer, formation in youth ministry and Marist spirituality and participates in outreach to needy families and vulnerable people in the Baucau District. Similar to Marists Youth Ministry and Young Marists in Australia, PJM was begun by Brothers and Lay Marists from the Brazilian Provinces, who have appointed several of their members to work in Timor-Leste over the past many years.

SOTS welcomes our newly professed Brothers!



Seven young men from three different countries professed their first vows as Marist Brothers on 16 March at the Marist Novitiate in Tudella, Sri Lanka. Other religious members, local Marist Brothers and community, and friends joined in for the celebration.

It was a truly international affair with Brothers and novices from Sri Lanka, Brazil, Australia, Spain, French Canada, Cambodia, Timor Leste, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, and Bangladesh in attendance.



Br Darren Burge, FMS, SOTS Vice-Provincial received the vows of the SOTS Brothers; Br Dedimo Soares, Br Edgar da Costa Salgueiro, Br Manecas dos Santos and Br Simon Mendonça Maia, on behalf of the Superior General, Br Ernesto Sanchez. Br Canisio Willrich, FMS, District Superior of the Marist District of Asia, received the vows of Br Pech, the first Cambodian brother in the history of the Institute, as well as Br Cuong and Br Key from Vietnam.

The seven newly professed Brothers aim to positively impact their home countries, while remaining open to serving in other regions of the Institute and being available for mission in 'all the dioceses of the world'.

Our heartfelt gratitude to the Novitiate Formation Team who has guided our young Brothers during these critical years of formation - Br Paco Garcia, FMS, Director, Br Réal Sauvageau, FMS and Br Rod Thomson, FMS.

Renewal of vows at Baucau



Congratulations to Brothers Jacinto, Adelino, Gaspar, Isac and Ronaldo who recently renewed their annual vows in the presence of Brothers, family and friends at Casa Marista residence, Teulale. They are pictured here with Br Tony Caddy, FMS, Coordinator of Scholastics and Br Robert Speare, FMS, Assistant Community Leader.

Renewal of vows at MAPAC



At MAPAC in the Philippines, Brothers Damiao, Feliciano, Jefriano, Joel and Norberto recently renewed their vows for one year in the presence of the Community.

Our five Timorese Brothers are currently undertaking post-novitiate studies at MAPAC and the Institute for Formation and Religious Studies (IFRS) in Manila.



MARCELLIN

CHAMPAGNAT



Congratulations, Brothers and thank you for your commitment to following Jesus Christ in the way of Mary and St Marcellin Champagnat.



Congratulations, Br Jacinto!



Br Jacinto Anacletho Fuli Falo, FMS, is our first Brother to graduate from ICFP in March with a Bachelor of Teaching. He is currently doing a four-month teaching practice before returning to ICFP to complete his Licenciatura which will lead to his Bachelor of Education.

We wish Br Jacinto the best as he now prepares his research paper on an educational topic he explored during his teaching training.

Br Jacinto with his family from Oe-Cusse District.



Marist School in Lautem inches towards completion!



Br Filomeno, Br Dionisio, Br Julio, Br Jacinto and Br Adelino at the Marist School Lautem construction site.

Our first Marist school, located in the District of Lautem in the eastern end of Timor-Leste, is past the halfway point of construction. Commencing in 2025, Marist College Lautem will cater to primary students from local and remote families in the mountains and gradually build up to a full primary and secondary college. A community of Brothers and teachers will reside there. Unfortunately, the pandemic has significantly hampered the work on the project with a shortage of materials and skilled workers in the country.

Triloka Development continues



Br Peter Corr, FMS, is overseeing the construction.

Construction of a new Marist formation centre continues at Triloka, approximately 10 kms west of Baucau. This will become the residences for the Scholastic Brothers and the Postulancy program. Br Peter Corr, FMS, is overseeing the construction.

It is anticipated that the new formation centre will be completed by the end of the year.

Triloka is about 10 kms from Baucau.



Way of the Cross at Kai Laki



On Good Friday the Scholastics (student Brothers at ICFP) organised a simple Way of the Cross for the local families in their neighbourhood who couldn't travel to the Parish. The prayer comprised reflecting on the life of Jesus Christ in his last hours accompanied by music and silence.

As part of their pastoral ministry in the local area, the Scholastic Brothers continue to reach out to the neighbouring families by offering opportunities for prayer, companionship and hospitality.

Intercultural Living with Br Jeff Crowe

For most active Marist Communities throughout the Institute today, intercultural living is the new norm. The Baucau community was delighted to have Br Jeff Crowe, FMS, visit for a week during April to present three workshops to the formators, community and Scholastic Brothers on intercultural living.



Br Jeff's presentation allowed the Timorese and Australian Brothers to share their experiences, joys and challenges of communal living. The workshop provided a greater awareness of listening to each other and appreciating moments of silence and non-verbal communication. We hope that Br Jeff's enthusiasm and input will continue to build greater fraternity and trust in our residences as we continue to grow and live together as Brothers.



It has been five years since COVID put an abrupt end to school immersions for students and staff from Marist Schools Australia. The Brothers were delighted to welcome back Galen Catholic College, Wangaratta, and St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, Sydney, during the recent Term 1 school holidays.

Both groups visited various local communities, participated in partnership-building projects and connected with the Brothers' communities.

We look forward to welcoming more Marist schools this year.

Marist School Immersions resume



Marist Postulancy Program



Casa Marista Teulale is the formation house for the SOTS Postulancy program. Currently, there are eight Timorese postulants, with a further two postulants from Pasifika anticipated in August.

Stage 1 of the Postulancy focuses on intensive English learning with formation, apostolic ministry, and accompaniment. Stage 2 provides more in-depth study in prayer, vocational discernment, and spiritual and human formation.

The Postulancy formation team comprises Br Matthew Green, FMS, (coordinator) and Br Paul Kane, FMS (formator).

ICFP receives an excellent Report Card

Every five years, tertiary institutes in Timor-Leste are evaluated by a national accreditation agency, ANAAA (Agência Nacional Para A Avaliação Académica).

ICFP was due for an evaluation in 2021, but the COVID pandemic put things on hold and the appraisal was delayed by two years. The Institute was formally inspected through the period July-October 2023.

The inspecting panel included a Professor from Indonesia, a local academic from another Institute and two representatives from ANAAA. The process was extremely thorough and looked at ten different aspects of the Institute's program, including governance and leadership, actual curriculum and learning experiences for the students, human resources, finance structures, community engagement and stakeholder feedback.

Due to a backlog of work caused by the pandemic, ANAAA arranged for eight tertiary institutes to be inspected during 2023, led by international panellists from Indonesia and Malaysia. On 9 February 2024, the Directors of the eight institutes were summoned to Dili to meet with the Minister of Higher Education, Dr José Honorio da Costa, the Chairman of ANAAA, Dr Azevedo Marçal, and the Director of ANAAA, Dr Nilton Paiva to receive the results of the accreditation program.

ICFP received an A grading, with the category of Excellent and a score of 91%, the highest mark in the 2023 group. The status of this A grading lasts for a period of five years, until the next formal inspection.



History of Marist Solidarity Cambodia and Lavalla School



MARIST SOLIDARITY CAMBODIA

MSC aims to support young Cambodians with physical disabilities by way of furthering their education and assisting them into employment.



MARIST SOLIDARITY CAMBODIA

Marist Solidarity Cambodia (MSC) is an international non-governmental organisation that encompasses the LaValla Project - LaValla School, Villa Maria Hostel, LaValla Village Hostel, and an Outreach Program. MSC is an integral part of the mission of the Marist Brothers, whose founder, St Marcellin Champagnat, was committed to providing schooling for poor children from marginalised families.

That commitment and dream are being realised here in Cambodia as MSC works with underprivileged young people, especially those with disabilities. The organisation empowers these individuals by offering new and better opportunities, hoping that formal education will prove decisive in transforming their circumstances.

LaValla School, established by the Marist Brothers from Australia in Phnom Penh in 1998, is a government-approved school in Cambodia providing a full elementary school education for children and young people with physical disabilities.

An outreach program of the LaValla Project assists approximately 100 young Cambodians with physical disabilities who live at home and attend their local schools. Many of MSC's students come from rural provinces of Cambodia, and due to difficulties with travel, they are residential students.

In 2010, MSC was established to integrate various programs and sites into one entity, which we now call the **LaValla Project**, with its own Board of Directors under the aegis of the Marist Brothers' Star of the Sea Province.

MSC Board



Marist Solidarity Cambodia is an international non-governmental organisation governed by a Board of Directors on behalf of the SOTS Provincial and Council. Br Brian Kinsella is the Board Chair, and Dr Sothun Nop is the Executive Director.

The Board, including Br Allen Sherry, FMS, meets six times per year to discuss matters related to the governance of the LaValla Project.

CELEBRATING MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT

On 6 June every year, the LaValla Project community in Cambodia joins tens of thousands of Champagnat Marists in more than 80 countries around the world to celebrate the legacy of St Marcellin Champagnat. The stories of some of the significant parts of Marcellin's life and the forming of the Marist Brothers are retold to the younger students.





FRI-YAY! PLAY DAY!



For the students and staff at LaValla School, each week starts and finishes with an assembly. The week commences in a more formal manner, with the Cambodian flag being raised, accompanied by the students singing the national anthem. One LaValla tradition for the Friday afternoon assembly is a short play performed by the members of one grade. The students eagerly involve themselves in these short plays, and the audience always anticipates a humorous end to the week.

Welcome, Br Melquiano!



Br Melquiano Obe, FMS, a Timorese Marist Brother has joined Br Brian Kinsella, FMS, and Br Tony Burrows, FMS, in the Lavalla Community, Cambodia for a year-long volunteer ministry, taking a sabbatical from his studies in Baucau.

Br Melquiano has begun by spending time supporting the LaValla music program, teaching guitar to the students. Additionally, he is also practicing basic Khmer language.

Recently, the Community celebrated Br Melquiano's renewal of vows in a simple Mass at the Community residence. His vows were received by Br Greg McDonald, FMS, Provincial Delegate for Timor-Leste and Cambodia, on behalf of the Superior General.

Congratulations, Br Melquiano!

Providing quality Health Care



As the LaValla project is like a home for all our students, their health and well-being are our highest priorities. Every aspect of their health is attended to, including regular check-ups with dentists, specialist doctors, and optometrists.

The kids also get weekly adjustments and replacements of prosthetics with a local orthopedic NGO, a doctor on-site one day every week throughout the year, as well as daily health care provided by the MSC healthcare team, MSC staff, the Brothers, and volunteers.

FESTIVE CAMBODIA!



There are three major cultural events remembered at LaValla each year. Khmer New Year in April, Pchhum Ben in September/October and Bon Om Touk in November.



Bon Om Touk is a tradition that is deeply rooted in Khmer culture and dates back to the 12th century.

It marks the reversal of the flow between the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers, the end of the wet season and seeks good luck for the rice and fish harvests in the coming year.



On the evening of the second day of Bon Om Touk (Og Ambok) the LaValla community gathers to make offerings, share traditional treats of fruit, coconuts and special rice, and dance!



AVE MARIA

Traditional hymn in Tetun.

Ave Maria, Kreda nia Inan,
Santa Maria, Inan doben.

Ita Oan mak naroman, it'Oan
mak lialos
Nia ami nia dalan,
lori ba lalehan.

Haraik fiar metin
ba ami nia juventude;
fo paz, neon metin,
dalan moris kmanek.

Ita ba moris nudar maun alin;
ba mundu tomak ho ksolok
fo liman ba malu.

Hail Mary Mother of the
Church.

Holy Mary our dear Mother.
Your son is the light and the
truth.
He is our way,
guide us to heaven.

Grant us strong faith
To our young people;
give them peace and confidence,
to live the way of a beautiful life.

We live joyfully as brothers and
sisters, for the whole world,
giving one another a hand.

PSALM 127

“If the Lord does not build the House, then in vain do the builders labour.”

Marist Solidarity Cambodia

http://



Marist Solidarity Cambodia



Irmaos Marista Timor-Leste



Star of the Sea

