

Reflections

Our actions in review

Issue #636 Summer 2026



Jesuit
Mission



75
YEARS
of service

Your generosity is
enriching lives and inspiring hope

From our CEO



Dear Friends,

As we celebrate Christmas and the beginning of a new year, I hope this season has brought moments of joy, renewal and time with loved ones. This year holds special meaning as Jesuit Mission marks 75 years since our beginnings in Hazaribag in 1951, a legacy of faith in action that has grown across South East Asia and beyond.

Every project, partnership and person we accompany is like fruit growing from the same vine of Christ's compassion and justice. The vine reminds us that we do not work alone, but are nourished by God's grace and connected through global solidarity.

Thank you for your generosity and faithfulness over so many years. As we celebrate this milestone, I invite you to journey with us through our upcoming communications, where we will share stories from our 75-year history and the ways our mission continues to bear fruit in communities today.

With blessings for the year ahead,

Helen Forde
Chief Executive Officer

Sharing smiles in Timor-Leste



Patrick, Year 8 student at Saint Ignatius' College Riverview, with Maria, who runs a dental clinic in Dili.

Orthodontist Jean, a supporter of Jesuit Mission, first travelled to Timor-Leste in 2017 as part of an Australian initiative providing orthodontic care to rural communities.

Originally from Ireland, Jean was educated by the Loreto Sisters, who instilled in her the importance of service and compassion. Today, her son Patrick attends Saint Ignatius' College Riverview.

In September last year, Jean and Patrick spent five days visiting the oral health clinic in Dili, where they were welcomed by our local Jesuit partner providing vital community health services. Working alongside the clinic's team, they supported free dental check-ups for students from the Jesuit-run NOSSEF School in Railaco, part of Jesuit Mission's commitment to holistic development and *cura personalis*, care for the whole person.

For Jean, witnessing the students' spirit reaffirmed the impact of Jesuit education in even the most remote settings.

"Our visit brought these values to life for my son, as he saw students learning in simple classrooms with an incredible thirst for knowledge and deep gratitude for education."



Jean (left) and her son Patrick being welcomed by students at NOSSEF in Railaco.



Wassana in the school library, at Xavier Learning Community in northern Thailand.

A future takes flight in Thailand

At Xavier Learning Community (XLC) in Chiang Rai, northern Thailand, 24-year-old Wassana found opportunity and community.

"The Jesuits, teachers, and students at XLC are very kind," she says. "They welcomed me and encouraged me to learn here. That's why I came to love this place."

Born in a small Lanna Thai village, Wassana's parents are farmers who grow sticky rice to eat and sell. When her father became ill, her family struggled to support her education. "Before I came here, my family had many problems. My father was sick, and my mother worked alone," she recalls. "So studying here has been an amazing opportunity for me. Everything at XLC is free, the food, the dormitory, and the study, which eases the stress on my family."

Since joining XLC in 2020, Wassana has gained skills and confidence and found purpose. She has learnt English, and grown independence. "We live together like a family. We cook together, farm together, and help each other. Even though we come from different tribes, we understand and learn from one another."

Her favourite part of XLC is meeting international volunteers. "We learn new cultures and languages together from Australians, Koreans,

Japanese and Indonesians. It's really broadened my global perspective."

In 2023, Wassana was chosen to represent XLC at World Youth Day in Lisbon - the first in her family to travel overseas. "I am so lucky to study here," she says. "Now I can speak English, and I have a chance for my future."

Today, that future has already taken flight. Having just finished her studies, Wassana is now an Intensive English Program teacher for kindergarten and primary students in Lampang, Thailand.

Thanks to your generosity, XLC provides free, holistic education to nearly 100 students each year, empowering young people like Wassana to build sustainable futures for themselves, their families and their communities.



Wassana (back right) with her peers.



Hon Lei with her granddaughter.

Honouring dignity in Cambodia

At the Metta Karuna Reflection Centre in Cambodia, the Jubilee of Empowerment and Inclusion program is transforming lives for people with disabilities and their families.

Hon Lei is a 58-year-old mother of four who lives in rural Cambodia with her husband, youngest son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. Eleven years ago, she lost her sight, ending her ability to farm and forcing her to depend on others. *"It happened so quickly,"* she recalls. *"The doctor said surgery could help, but it was too expensive for me. Later they told me it was too late."*

Once a farmer who grew watermelon and beans, Hon Lei had to give up fieldwork after going blind.

When village leaders referred her to the program, Hon Lei joined a meeting at the centre where people with disabilities shared experiences and explored livelihood opportunities. *"I learnt about my rights and that there is still opportunity for me,"* she says. *"It made me want to try something again."*

With support from the program, Hon Lei chose to raise pigs, an activity she knew from before her vision loss. Staff helped her buy her first pig, and she has rediscovered her independence and the dignity of contributing to her family again. *"The pig is now pregnant,"* she says proudly. *"I hope I can grow this into a small business to help my family."*

Hon Lei's story reflects the program's impact and a wider movement of hope. Over recent months, 215 people living with a disability have gained mobility with new and repaired wheelchairs, rebuilt homes, improved sanitation, and new livelihoods.

Thanks to your generosity, this program continues to provide skills training, livelihood support and community inclusion, equipping people with disabilities, like Hon Lei, to build sustainable livelihoods.



Hon Lei feeding her newly pregnant pig.



Healing with heart in Timor-Leste

At the Centro de Saúde Daniel Ornelas (CSDO) clinic in Kasait, Timor-Leste, Dr Eva plays a vital role in providing compassionate healthcare to the Ulmera community.

Thanks to compassionate supporters like you, and our project partner Jesuit Social Service Timor-Leste, the CSDO clinic and its mobile outreach provide essential free medical care and medicines to families who might otherwise go without.

Raised in Dili, Dr Eva now travels each day by motorbike to the clinic. Since joining CSDO in 2024, she has grown both personally and spiritually through her work, becoming closer to God and finding a deep sense of peace and fulfilment.

Alongside her team, Dr Eva visits remote communities to provide checkups, home visits

and health education. The journeys are long and the challenges real, but her compassion and grace never fade. *"The smile of the people we support is the most valuable thing in the world."*

"As doctors, we are called to be mirrors for others to treat people with love, humility, and equality," she reflects. "Medicine is not only about healing the body; it is about touching lives with compassion and seeing each person as a creation of God."

Beyond her patients, Dr Eva extends her healthcare and health education to students, teachers and families of the neighbouring Jesuit schools, Colégio Santo Inácio de Loiola (CSIL) and Instituto São João de Brito (ISJB).

Thanks to your ongoing support, Dr Eva and her team have provided medical care to nearly 5,000 people in 2025 in rural Timor-Leste.



With your generosity, David (left) and his family are able to start rebuilding their lives after fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

Finding Safety and Hope in the Midst of War

When war reached their home in Myrnohrad, eastern Ukraine, the lives of 12-year-old David and his family changed forever. A boy who loved maths, astronomy, and computer games, David now lives under the constant threat of air raids and reality of displacement.

"One day, my father and I were stacking firewood in the garden," David recalls. "We stopped to watch the sunset when we heard a plane overhead. Suddenly, two missiles were fired, one exploded nearby, and the other landed just above us. My father shielded me on the ground. When we stood up, a piece of metal had landed only a few metres away. That night, I couldn't sleep for a long time."

As the front lines moved closer, David's family made the painful decision to flee to Lviv in search of safety. Leaving behind their home, friends and community, they arrived with few belongings. The journey was long and uncertain, but they were met with kindness and compassion from people who understood their loss and fear.

With the support of Jesuit Refugee Service Europe, David now studies online while his family receives accommodation, healthcare and counselling support. The experience has not dimmed his curiosity or determination to learn. Despite the hardship, he dreams of a peaceful future where he can use his education to help rebuild his country and care for others. Through the One Proposal project, more than 144,000 refugees fleeing the crisis in Ukraine, like David, have received vital assistance.

Thanks to your support of Jesuit Mission's Emergency Action Fund, since 2021 we have provided emergency assistance to more than 820,000 women, men and children in 12 countries affected by conflict, natural disasters and displacement.

For families like David's, your generosity provides safety, shelter and the stability to continue their education and rewrite their futures.



Students and teachers at the Campion Institute.

Lighting the Way Through Education

In a nation scarred by conflict, education has become a quiet beacon of hope. Since the military coup in 2021, more than 3.5 million people in Myanmar have been displaced.

Many live in fear and instability, as communities endure ongoing violence, natural disasters and economic hardship. Amid these challenges, the Campion Institute in Yangon continues to accompany young people, offering them the tools to rebuild their lives through English education and skills training.

For 23-year-old Elisabeth, that opportunity has transformed everything. Growing up in a large family of nine, her days once revolved around working on the family farm. *"Before joining Campion, my life was limited to staying at home and working all day,"* she recalls. *"I used to dream of going abroad just to earn money."*

Through the Campion Scholarship Program, supported by Jesuit Mission Australia, Elisabeth has studied English since primary school and is now at the Advanced Level, the highest offered at the institute. Her confidence has grown alongside her skills. Her mother's pride is evident every time she hears her daughter speak English. *"Campion has given me a better life,"* Elisabeth says. *"I am happy and satisfied because I can now see my potential."*

Elisabeth dreams of becoming an English teacher to help others find their own voices.

"Education has changed my life," she says. *"I want to inspire others to dream big, uplift one another, and use education to build a better future."*

In times of fear and displacement, Elisabeth's journey is a powerful reminder of the resilience of Myanmar's youth and how education continues to light the path forward, one student at a time.



As part of her journey at Campion, Elisabeth teaches English to children in her community.

Raising a Glass to 75 Years of Mission

To celebrate 75 years of faith in action, Jesuit Mission has partnered with our friends at Sevenhill Cellars, the birthplace of the Jesuit presence in Australia, to craft two special limited 75th Anniversary Wines – a Riesling and a Cabernet Sauvignon. These commemorative wines are more than a toast; they symbolise the enduring legacy of Jesuit Mission.

Rooted in faith and nourished by partnership, this collaboration with Sevenhill Cellars celebrates a living mission that continues to grow and bear fruit around the world, thanks to your generosity. All proceeds from these anniversary wines will support Jesuit Mission's life changing programs.

Raise a glass to 75 years of our faith in action. Order your limited edition wines today at jesuitmission.org.au/wine.



Fr Bob 1975



Fr Bob saying mass in Hazaribag



Photo credit: David McMahon

Rooted in Mission: Fr Bob's Fifty Years in Hazaribag

As Jesuit Mission celebrates 75 years of faith in action, we reflect on the missionaries who became living branches of hope, rooted in Christ and bearing fruit through humble service. Since 1951, fifty-five Australian Jesuits have been missioned to Hazaribag, rural India, responding to the call to accompany communities with humility and compassion. Today, just three Australian missionaries remain — among them Fr Bob Billings SJ.

Fr Bob first felt called to mission through the Catholic magazines that arrived at his family home such as *The Far East* and *News from India* and through his time in the Mission Group as a student at Xavier College in Melbourne. A retreat during his final year of school helped him “discern the yearning of my heart,” and that discernment led him to India.

Since moving to India in 1974, Fr Bob has walked alongside tribal communities, become fluent in Hindi and immersed in their daily lives. “Everything has changed in fifty years,” he says.

Yet for Fr Bob, mission was never one-sided. “The people have always had a living faith that mattered. It was quite humbling to see.”

Today, more than 25,000 students are educated each year in Jesuit schools developed in partnership with our Australian Jesuit Mission family across Hazaribag. What began as a single mission has since become a flourishing Province, with 12 parishes supporting nearly 700 villages through healthcare, livelihood programs, emergency assistance and education. “You can't give without receiving,” Fr Bob reflects. “I believe I have received the hundredfold at the hands of such.”

“It is my hope that Jesuit Mission continues to be such a resource that fosters the spiritual growth of people here, there and everywhere.”

If you would like to support this life changing work into the future, you may wish to consider leaving a Gift in your Will to Jesuit Mission. To learn more, please contact bequest@jesuitmission.org.au or phone **02 8918 4109**.

Upcoming Events

One Foot Raised • All year
Maytime Fair, Melbourne • 2 May

Melbourne Golf Day & Dinner • 20 February
Jesuit Mission Bazaar, Sydney • 12 September



A 75th anniversary photo reflection on the history of the Hazaribag Jesuits in India and their wonderful contributions to serve the outcast since 1951.



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