

Reflections

Our actions in review

Issue #624 Summer 2020

Your generosity is
enriching lives and inspiring hope.



Jesuit
Mission



Hello dear friends,

In my role at Jesuit Mission, I have the great privilege to see first-hand how your faith is helping to create real change for our sisters and brothers living in the margins.

In May 2019, I visited our program participants and partners in Indonesia and Timor-Lesté. I witnessed people accessing clean water for the first time, and refugees taking steps to establish new lives in a foreign place. Being a part of these life-changing moments was humbling, and all the while I felt your presence by my side.

My heart is full of gratitude to you, and all of our generous supporters. Your thoughts, prayers and actions make our work possible. Without you, people like Alita and her eight children in Timor, would still live without access to clean water.

Please enjoy this edition of Reflections, and read more about how your support is empowering young people in the Philippines; providing new opportunities in Myanmar; and building a better future for communities in Timor-Lesté.

Jesuit Mission is truly blessed to walk with such kind and passionate companions.

With thanks,

Helen Forde
Chief Executive Officer

Clean water, *changing*



At the water
inauguration of
Fatunero village

Access to clean water is a basic human right, but for people living in the remote village of Fatunero in Timor-Lesté, water was a source of poverty.

Often it was the children of the village who had to fetch the water. Every day they'd spend up to three hours bringing heavy containers of water from the valley floor, up 500m to their families. As a result, children would often miss school, and worse still, the dirty water frequently made them sick.

But now, thanks to the wonderful support of people like you, families in Fatunero have access to clean water, just metres from their homes.

A water project that began in 2018 in collaboration with Jesuit Social Service in Timor, helped the village to install a new water tank and infrastructure that allows every household to access clean water.

Water systems will be installed in 10 villages by the end of the project, providing water to 3,000 people living in remote villages.

Having access to clean water, is transforming the lives of people in Fatunero, especially the most vulnerable – the women and children. Now, children don't get sick as often, and instead of fetching water they can spend their time in school. With their children in school, women are now able to work more and increase their family income. And, they no longer have to experience the indignity of showering at the open water spring.

lives



Alita with two of her grandchildren at the water tank

Alita, a farmer and mother who lives with her eight children in Fatunero described the changes this way:

"If there was no queue to collect water, it used to take an hour. But if there was a line-up of people, it took two to three hours. Now, it's just 10 metres to get water. It takes five minutes! I'm very grateful that our children can now enjoy their education. Before they struggled fetching water. Now all my children want to fetch the water!"

"I harvest coffee, and before I used to wash the coffee at the stream and often had to sleep at the stream while it dried," says Alita. "Now, it's easy to wash and dry near my house. We can now plant vegetables and other produce too."

Alita can now see a better future ahead for her family – and the whole village. *"I'm very grateful for our Australian donors and everyone who helped," Alita beams.*

2020

vision, clear and focused

After many months of discernment, in 2019 the Society of Jesus declared its Universal Apostolic Preferences for the next 10 years.

Soon after, the Society of Jesus in Australia also came out with its Province Apostolic Priorities. In both documents, there is a preference/priority *"to walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice"*.

From the beginning, Jesuit Mission has always been committed to walking with the excluded and promoting justice. The Universal Apostolic Preferences reaffirm our mission and give us renewed energy, hope, and commitment to carry on our mission of love and service.

Ultimately, I believe that the mission of Jesuit Mission is to promote peace, justice, and reconciliation. The first step is reconciliation. There is a great need to be reconciled, with oneself, with one's neighbour, with creation, and with our God. The result of this is justice. Only when justice and reconciliation are achieved, can peace truly reign in our heart and on earth.

In 2020, trusting in God's mercy and goodness, I would like to wish all of you justice, reconciliation, and true peace.

With gratitude and blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trung'.

Fr Trung Nguyen SJ
Rector of Jesuit Mission



Youth, the Now of God

“Dear young people, you are not the future but the now of God, and He invites you and calls you in your communities and cities to go out and find your grandparents and elders; to stand up and with them, to speak out and realise the dream that the Lord has dreamed for you.”

This is the powerful wake-up call Pope Francis issued to thousands of young people at the closing Mass of World Youth Day 2019 in Panama.



“I can say that Magis is different from other youth camps. It has a great hope in the power of youth by sending us to the world. Thank you for trusting us,” **Maria San May, one of the Magis Myanmar 2019 participants.**

Taking heed of Pope Francis' words, 130 young women and men of Myanmar took action. In April 2019, these inspiring young people came together at the second National Magis Myanmar gathering. Magis is a Jesuit program to foster Ignatian spirituality in young people, and thanks to the generosity of people like you, Jesuit Mission was able to support Magis in Myanmar in 2019. The 130 young people spent a week together to pray, share and serve in solidarity. They put their prayers into action by going on a 95km pilgrimage. On their journey, they experienced life as rag pickers, and spent time with vulnerable children, people living with disabilities and others with leprosy.



“We have ignored and neglected the rag pickers in our society. We thought that they were dirty people. Indeed, we are the dirty people polluting the environment.”

Emily Khon San, a participant.

“Seeing differently abled people helping one another taught me that we have to share our talents for others. I was given the graces of generosity and empathy.”

Rosemary Mouk Saing Sey, a participant.



Reaching high

like the bamboo trees

In the indigenous communities of the Upper Pulangi, on Mindanao Island in the Philippines, basic education is a luxury many villagers simply can't afford.

As a consequence, many vulnerable young people leave their homes to go in search of work, and often end up with high risk, low paying jobs.

To help stop this outmigration and provide young people in the region with better opportunities, the Apu Palamguwan Cultural Education Centre (APC) recently established the Hulas Program. Run by our local Jesuit partner, this innovative Program provides vocational training in bamboo production, processing and construction to young people. This empowers them with in-demand skills, new confidence and the knowledge they need to use this highly versatile building material.

Thanks to supporters like you, in April 2019, sixteen students graduated from the inaugural Hulas Program and received a National Certificate in carpentry and masonry. With this qualification, some graduates will go on to be hired by the local government, while others have decided to continue their studies to finish high school.



Initial stage of the bamboo processing facility built by the students with the help of skilled workers



16 proud Graduates who now have unique skills to secure jobs

Sonn Mark, is one of the proud graduates who has decided to go back to school to continue his education. With your compassionate support, Sonn has gained the confidence he needs to complete school, realise his potential and build a brighter future for himself and his family.



Sonn confidently speaking at the School Strike 4 Climate

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The real cost of a cuppa

There's no doubt tea is one of Australia's favourite beverages. On average, Australian consumers spend around \$70 a year on tea, and drink 1.3 cups a day – that's almost 500 cups of tea a year. But how often do we stop to think: 'What is the real price of a cup of tea?'

Michael Finnane QC, a former Judge of the District Court of NSW, and long-time supporter of Jesuit Mission, is someone who's devoted much of his life to uncovering the real cost of a cup of tea, and improving the lives of tea workers in Sri Lanka. In the 1840s when the English established large numbers of tea plantations in Sri Lanka, they brought in many low caste Tamil workers from India as indentured labourers. This was the beginning of their tragedy. These labourers were not recognised by the government and for a long time received no education or healthcare. In 1958, the Sinhalese Government removed citizenship from all the tea plantation workers, leaving them as the largest stateless population in the world.

Knowing this history, Michael first travelled to Sri Lanka in 1982 as a member of the World Development Tea Cooperative

(WDTC). This group of ordinary people wanted to show that international trade could provide decent work, adequate pay and improve quality of life for tea producing communities. These days, WDTC operates as Tradewinds Tea and Coffee Pty Ltd, selling teas and coffees from East Timor to support Sri Lanka.



Tea pickers gaining independence through the support of Satyodaya Centre



Teenage girls and boys at Satyodaya Centre learning to collaborate and lead at youth leadership program



Michael Finnane, front row middle, and his wife Jill, to his left, with Satyodaya Centre staff

Since that first visit, Michael has travelled to Sri Lanka more than 30 times. During his early trips, he met the late Fr Paul Caspersz SJ, founder of the Jesuit Satyodaya Centre for Social Research and Encounter in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Like Michael and WDTC, Fr Paul was trying to lift the tea pickers out of semi-slavery. And thus began a long friendship, and Michael's involvement in the Centre.

"Satyodaya was the first inter-racial, inter-religious community in Sri Lanka," reflects Michael. "Through Fr Paul [Caspersz SJ] I met Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim people all working together in harmony."

Today, the Satyodaya Centre continues to support disadvantaged tea plantation workers and their families. The Centre, provides a wide range of community development programs that empower vulnerable people working in the plantations. This vital work is made possible by kind Jesuit Mission supporters like Michael.

If you'd like to read more about Michael's experiences in Sri Lanka and the Satyodaya Centre, you can find his essay on our website jesuitmission.org.au/cost-of-a-cuppa

Thank you

A huge thanks to the wonderful communities and friends of Jesuit Mission who made both the Maytime Fair in Melbourne, and the Indian Bazaar in Sydney a huge success. Together these events raised over \$300,000 which will support important Jesuit Mission projects in over 13 countries.

Hundreds of volunteers in Sydney and Melbourne, worked passionately and with much joy to make these events possible. We are so grateful for all our volunteers who truly represent St Ignatius' call to be men and women for others.

Thank also to Xavier College, Kew and St Ignatius' College, Riverview for hosting our events on their grounds.

We look forward to seeing many of you again at this year's 69th annual Maytime Fair and Indian Bazaar.



Fr Barry
O'Loughlin SJ
(1939 – 2019)



Fr Gavin
O'Sullivan SJ
(1923 – 2019)

Vale Fr Barry and Fr Gavin

In August 2019, Fr Barry O'Loughlin SJ and Fr Gavin O'Sullivan SJ, left us to be with God in eternity.

Early Australian Jesuits who missioned to India back in the 1950s and 1960s, both were pioneers who established remote stations in India. Devoted pastors and educators, they changed the lives of many they met on their journey.

We remember their passion and love for others as we continue to pray for their souls and their families. We also remember their missionary spirit, and hope that may they intercede for all of us so that we can follow in their footsteps.

Save these dates

Melbourne Golf Day

Friday 13 March 2020

Melbourne Golf Day 2020 will be held on Friday 13 March. It will be another great day of golf and dinner held at Greenacres Golf Club, Kew. Even if you're not a keen golfer, you're most welcome to join us for drinks and dinner. More information will be available on our website, or email us your enquiries to golfday@jesuitmission.org.au



Maytime Fair

Saturday 2 May 2020

The 69th Maytime Fair will be held on Saturday 2 May at Xavier College, Kew.

With rides, international cuisines and music, you won't want to miss this great day out with your family and friends.

All proceeds go to support life-changing Jesuit Mission projects in over 13 countries.



Front cover picture

Thanks to Jesuit Mission supporters, the children of Fatunero village in Timor-Lesté can now enjoy access to clean water, right outside their homes.

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