

Reflections

Our actions in review

Issue #629 Winter 2022



Jesuit
Mission

Your generosity is
enriching lives and inspiring hope.

From our CEO



Dear Friends,

Firstly, it was uplifting to see the community back together for the Maytime Fair in Melbourne, a cherished 70-year tradition of fundraising, games, food, laughter and many happy reunions with long-time friends and volunteers. Thank you to our Committee and hundreds of volunteers who gave up their time preparing for this special day and ensuring that the community spirit was so high.

Unfortunately, devastating challenges continue to arise in the communities where our Jesuit partners serve overseas and they need your support now more than ever.

The crisis in Ukraine has displaced millions of people into neighbouring countries. Refugees arrive at the borders exhausted and traumatised,

having escaped conflict and leaving their loved ones behind.

In Myanmar, violence has severed peace after the military seized power over the democratically elected government in a shocking coup in 2021. Many innocent people peacefully protesting have been killed by security forces.

Yet, our Jesuit partners continue to stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers around the world and are constantly adapting to the needs of the most vulnerable.

I truly thank you for your support of our programs overseas. Your heartfelt generosity guides our work and enables our project partners to provide life-giving support to those who need it most.

Your compassion empowers those living on the margins to live full and free lives.

With thanks,

Helen Forde
Chief Executive Officer

Discerning a new strategic plan

Dear Friends,

Throughout the first half of 2022, Jesuit Mission has been undertaking a process of discernment for a new strategic plan to begin in 2023. Based on the fundamental principles of Ignatian discernment, the process began with a Gratitude weekend where members of the Board and Team learnt more about the history of Jesuit Mission.

We reviewed our performance against our current strategic plan and shared how the pandemic had impacted our work.

Since the Gratitude weekend, we have engaged with many stakeholders including program partners, Jesuits in Australia and overseas, volunteers; as well as our sister ministry

leaders through speaker panels, interviews and questionnaires. We also explored further the Jesuit Universal Apostolic Preferences and Apostolic Plans for Australia and the Jesuit Conference of Asia-Pacific.

A discernment weekend will take place in early August, where Board and Team will gather to sift through the material, listening to the voice of the Spirit through the material and speaking through those gathered. The fruit of which will guide our future endeavours for God's greater glory.

With thanks,

Isaac Demase SJ
Companion in Mission



Art therapy for Ukrainian children

As the war in Ukraine continues, millions of refugees are fleeing the nation's borders looking for safety and the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

Fortunately for Olena and her 7-year-old daughter, our partner Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Romania welcomed them with open hearts, offering accommodation and safety.

Now, they are staying at a hotel rented by JRS Romania, where Olena runs art therapy sessions for Ukrainian children and their mothers.

"Drawings express the emotions of a child. When we see that a child is using dark colours that express fear, we talk about it. We re-imagine the drawing using brighter colours," she said.

For both Olena and the children in her classes, art therapy has been vital in helping process the trauma of fleeing the conflict, saying goodbye to their loved ones, and starting life in an unfamiliar country.

"(In Ukraine) Alarms sounded. At first, we were hearing (bomb) sirens 3-4 times a day, then every hour, then every 30 minutes," she said.

Once the conflict quickly escalated, Olena and her children left their home in Ukraine and fled for Romania, but her 18-year-old son was stopped by soldiers who did not allow him to leave.

Shaken from their difficult goodbye and their journey to Romania, Olena was lost for words when she arrived with her daughter at the Romanian border.

"At first we didn't eat or drink, we sat and didn't understand what was happening," she said.

Yet she was determined to take control of her life once again. Since receiving accommodation and support from JRS Romania, Olena has dramatically changed for the better.

She feels empowered by offering art therapy sessions to support other Ukrainian refugees and is grateful for the opportunity to make a difference.



It's amazing to see such courage from people overcoming immense hardship, who still extend their support to one another in a time of crisis.

Thanks to your vital support, our Emergency Action Fund has been providing emergency shelter, food and essential items, medical escorts, translation, psycho-social support and accompaniment to Ukrainian people in desperate need.



Empowering village women through sewing

Despite this being one of the most challenging historical periods for our Jesuit partners and the people they serve in Myanmar, a three month sewing course is empowering young women in Nanhlaing parish.

The course has made a huge difference to the lives of 14 students from ethnic minority groups, thanks to support from the Australian Jesuit Mission community and particularly through Nanhlaing's relationship with Sevenhill-Riverton/Manoora Jesuit Parishes in South Australia.

"All these efforts are integrated into local women's empowerment. This sewing course has helped them focus and learn a new skill and the two teachers are from Nanhlaing village too," says Fr Paul Tu Ja, the Assistant Parish Priest.

The dedication of these 14 young women to take on new opportunities is bringing light to a dark period in Myanmar's history.

During the three month course, these women committed to learning theory as well as practical sewing work. Even the uniforms that they are wearing in the image above were made by themselves. This is the third skills training program run in the parish and a fourth course is now commencing for a new batch of young women.

"Most of them are supposed to be in their normal and formal education classrooms, but the classes are still suspended due to COVID-19 and the military coup," says Fr Paul Tu Ja.

As Myanmar was already suffering the devastating effects of COVID-19 and the impact of lockdowns on education and the economy, the military violently overthrew the democratically elected government in February 2021.

More than 1,500 people have since been killed by security forces, the majority of whom were peacefully protesting for a return to democracy and the release of political leaders.

With the current political instability and schools remaining closed since the outbreak of COVID-19, Myanmar's younger generation are grateful for support, some of whom are otherwise at risk of being trafficked to demeaning work in neighbouring countries.

"The skill of sewing gives them more confidence and hope in life," says Fr Paul Tu Ja.

It's a long road to peace for Myanmar and our Jesuit partners continue to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable ethnic groups during this difficult time.

Please continue to pray for peace in Myanmar.



Shining in her scholarship

For Cambodian Year 11 student Vy, the Xavier Jesuit School (XJS) hostel scholarship has given her the confidence to dream of a brighter future.

In her third year of the program, Vy is thriving in the hostel school community, where she has developed life-long friendships and a passion to further her education.

"I see many changes in my life. Before there was little talking and few friendships. Now, I approach other students and help them with their work, we help each other," she says.

While staying in the hostel, she came to learn the importance of collaboration and became empowered by the support of her peers.

Thanks to the supportive XJS community, Vy is no longer the shy student that arrived at the school three years ago and is now one of the top performing students in her class.

From Malai district, her previous school was 8km away from her home and she would ride to school every day alone by bicycle. Since she was a quiet and shy person, she preferred to keep to herself, yet she always had a yearning to improve her family situation.

These scholarships target students who display a willingness to learn and who may not otherwise be able to access education due to factors such as living in a remote village or poverty.

With your generosity, the scholarship program covers costs such as food, hostel accommodation, school fees, uniforms and the costs of carers at the hostel accommodation.

"The best part of life in the hostel is living together – living with others helps me to put myself in their shoes and not just think about myself," says Vy.



Vy (right) with her friend outside the hostel.

Of the 72 students that are a part of the scholarship program, over 60% are girls.

"I am so grateful to them (XJS) for allowing students from poor families like me to dare to dream of a brighter future, and I want to show my sincere gratitude towards them," she says.

Vy has her own dream for the future. She wants to become a lawyer so that she can help defend the rights of the vulnerable.

Clean water for Hong Ky village in Vietnam

For the villagers residing in the mountains of Hong Ky Village, Nghe An Province, Vietnam, the installation of a new water filter station will transform the health of the community.

Approximately 100km from Vinh city, this population of 1,200 people largely comprises of rural farmers who labour day to day to make ends meet.

“Due to chemical farming, the water sources in this village and their neighbouring areas are highly contaminated. Currently there are 60 villagers who got cancer due to using polluted water,” said Fr Peter Truong Van Phuc, SJ of The Social Ministry Committee of Jesuit Vietnam Province.



Thanks to your support, our partner, the Jesuit Province in Vietnam, has installed 12 RO UV water stations ('Reverse Osmosis Ultraviolet') this year. These units sterilise and filter contaminated water, across four coastal districts in Vietnam.

When a village gains access to clean water, the community hygiene level drastically improves. It is life-changing and life-saving!

Constructing sanitary facilities in Timor-Leste

Four families in Biluli, Timor-Leste, now have bathrooms and toilets right beside each of their houses.

Before building these sanitary facilities, our project partner Jesuit Social Service (JSS) Timor-Leste had already established a clean water facility in Biluli, which the community has been using to wash, drink and to water their plants and crops.

This project represents the next stage in JSS's focus on the provision of water and sanitation facilities to remote communities in Timor-Leste.

“This project is an initiative to remind us all on the importance of sanitary facilities for these



communities. This year we plan to build 15 toilet and bathroom facilities,” said Fr Júlio Sousa SJ, Director of JSS Timor-Leste.

For Mario, these new facilities bring hope to him and his six children.

“It is a privilege for us to receive this support. We do not have anything to offer you in return, we can only show you our happiness,” said Mario.

Another joyful Maytime Fair

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers, supporters and Committee members who made the Maytime Fair so special this year. It was great to be back as one Jesuit Mission family at Xavier College after a two-year fair hiatus.

Together, schools, parishes, teachers, students, parents and long-time supporters came together for a fantastic day of community spirit, to uplift vulnerable communities overseas.

The commitment from both the Maytime Fair Committee and the wider Jesuit community revived the enthusiasm and energy of a 70-year tradition, and the result was a joyful day full of

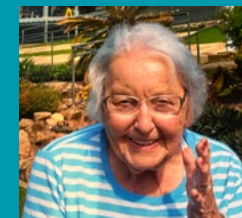


games and entertainment for children of all ages, their parents, grandparents and friends.

The Maytime Fair has been held at Xavier College on the first Saturday in May since 1952, raising funds to support at-risk communities in over 10 countries in Asia and Africa. This year the Maytime Fair raised over \$120,000!

See you next year!

Kathleen Lock (1919-2022)



We were deeply saddened when Kathleen (Kath) Lock, one of Jesuit Mission's longest volunteers of 40 years, passed away on 1 April this year.

At 102 years old, Kath leaves a legacy of service, volunteering week in and week out to support our social and educational outreach projects overseas.

She would commute by train weekly from Woy Woy, where you could find her deep into solving the day's cryptic crossword.

For four decades, Kath would collect and pack goods for the White Elephant (Bric-a-Brac) stall at the Jesuit Mission Bazaar.

We pray for Kath, her family and friends, may she rest in peace. We are incredibly grateful to our volunteers who give their time to support those in desperate need.

Fr Tony Ryan SJ (1939-2022)



We are also saddened to inform you that Fr Tony Ryan SJ passed away on 5 June at the age of 82.

Fr Tony was born in New Zealand and spent most

of his life as a missionary in Hazaribag, India, serving in finance and treasury roles across the Province and the Diocese of Daltonganj.

Tony was described as private, down-to-earth and matter of fact. His generosity was unmatched – he had a large heart.

He was known for giving time and competent counsel to anybody who needed guidance. His Jesuit brothers, family and friends will affectionately remember his deadpan humour and unique ability to pantomime any situation.

Tony enjoyed life and his brothers liked being in his company. May you rest in peace, Tony.

Win a \$5,000 shopping spree

Your support in purchasing tickets in our annual raffle prize draw will help our vulnerable brothers and sisters overseas who are living in the margins, suffering the indignity of poverty and injustice. Enter for your chance to win:

- **1st prize: \$5,000 Coles Myer gift cards**
- **2nd prize: \$1,000 Coles Myer gift cards**
- **3rd prize: \$500 Coles Myer gift cards**



Tickets are now available online at:
jesuitmission.org.au/raffle or call us on
02 8918 4109.

Entry is open to residents of NSW, VIC, WA and NT only.
Raffle closes 15 September 2022 and the winners' names will be drawn on 19 September 2022.

One Foot Raised

We invite you to follow in the footsteps of St Ignatius the Pilgrim, to walk with One Foot Raised.

One Foot Raised is Jesuit Mission's new supporter event, where participants will be challenged to walk and raise funds for Jesuit Mission using a peer-to-peer online platform.

You can take part as a school, a parish, a group of friends or you can take on the challenge personally and set your own pace.

You can walk your goal distance in one day to coincide with St Ignatius Day on 31 July, or spread it out over one week or one month.

This is an opportunity to draw further inspiration from St Ignatius the Pilgrim.

St Ignatius himself described the ideal leader as living with "one foot raised," moving always



into new lands and new cultures, ready to step forward and respond to human need and suffering in the world.

We walk because Ignatius walked, we walk because Jesuit Missionaries walk alongside the marginalised and we walk because many children in Jesuit Mission supported schools walk long distances each day to gain a quality education.

It's easy to sign up, visit
onefootraised.org.au



Upcoming Events

- Jesuit Mission Bazaar - Saturday 10 September 2022
- Sydney Golf Day - Thursday 10 November 2022



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Thanks to your generosity, families fleeing Ukraine are receiving food, shelter and accompaniment.