

Reflections

Our actions in review

Issue #637 Winter 2026



Your generosity is
enriching lives and inspiring hope

From our CEO



Helen presents our 75th anniversary wine to Fr Paul Horan SJ, whose missionary service included 45 years in Hazaribag, India, followed by Myanmar and Nepal.

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate 75 years of Jesuit Mission, my heart is full of gratitude for every supporter, volunteer, partner, Jesuit and friend who has journeyed with us over the years. Throughout this special anniversary year, it has been a joy to come together at our Golf Day, Maytime Fair and Thanksgiving events to celebrate all that we have achieved together.

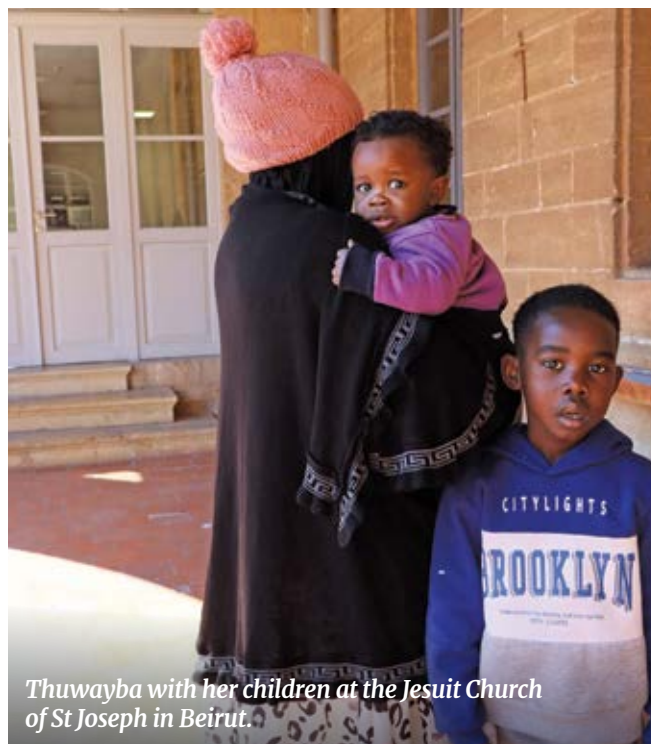
Seventy-five years ago, the first Jesuit missionaries journeyed to Hazaribag, India, with courage and faith, accompanying those on the margins. Their pioneering spirit laid the foundations for a mission that continues to bring hope today.

This extended edition of Reflections shares more stories from our community here in Australia, whose generosity, faith and commitment continue to make this mission possible. I extend my deepest gratitude with you for walking with the communities we serve and making this mission of hope possible.

With blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Forde".

Helen Forde
Chief Executive Officer



Thuwayba with her children at the Jesuit Church of St Joseph in Beirut.

Seeking safety once again

In the darkness of night, Thuwayba woke to the sound of bombing.

As explosions echoed around her home in southern Lebanon, the Sudanese mother of two gathered her children and fled.

"We fled on a motorcycle, not knowing where to go," she recalls. Remembering a place where her family had found safety before, Thuwayba made her way to a Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) safe space in Beirut.

Today, Thuwayba and her children are displaced by renewed violence. Their home in Lebanon has been bombed, and returning to Sudan is not possible while conflict continues there.

Through our partner, JRS Lebanon, families affected by conflict are receiving emergency shelter, meals and psychosocial support. Since March, JRS has supported more than 2,200 displaced people through emergency distributions and shelter assistance.

"Even if the violence stops now, I don't know where my family will go."

Thanks to your generosity, we can stand alongside families like Thuwayba's, helping provide safety, dignity and hope.



Sisters Mary, Kate and Liz at the 2026 Maytime Fair at Xavier College.

Three sisters, one mission

From the earliest days of Jesuit Mission's 75 year history, the families of missionaries played a vital role in supporting the mission and inspiring others to join them. Among them are sisters Mary Brabenec, Liz Fitzgerald and Kate Maclurcan, nieces of Fr Lou Lachal SJ, one of the first Jesuit missionaries sent to Hazaribag, India, in 1951.

"I was about five or six when a huge crowd gathered at Port Melbourne to farewell Lou, who was a big part of Richmond Parish and a great supporter of the Tigers Football Club," Liz recalls.

As children, every evening, their family prayers ended with the words: *"God bless the Jesuits in India."*

Their mother Jeanette helped organise the first Maytime Fair fundraiser at their house, while Mary and Liz later ran the Fair's bric a brac stall for more than 30 years. Kate volunteered at the Jesuit Mission Bazaar in Sydney for decades and later helped process donations at the Jesuit Mission office until about seven years ago.

"We've been involved all our lives because mum was involved and so proud of her brother Lou," Mary says.

When Fr Lou returned to Australia, his Richmond Football Club connections, including appearances on World of Sport on T.V. and ties to Saint

Ignatius' College Riverview, where he had taught, helped bring attention to his work in India.

"He was an incredibly charismatic man," Mary says.

The sisters remember watching footage of Fr Lou's funeral procession in India in 1991, where "hundreds and hundreds" of people gathered to farewell him, with some walking for two or three days to attend.

Visiting India throughout their lives, including recently in 2022, the sisters have seen firsthand the impact of all the Jesuits' work made possible by the generosity of Australian supporters.

Their annual afternoon tea fundraiser, now in its twelfth year, raised \$4,000 this year.

"It's been an absolute privilege to work with Jesuit Mission all these years," Kate says. "There's a wonderful camaraderie amongst co-missionaries."



Liz, Mary and Kate outside Mary's house in Melbourne.



Fr Lou Lachal SJ.



Hugh (seated right) assisting villagers in Thailand with their strawberry harvest.

The flame that shaped generations

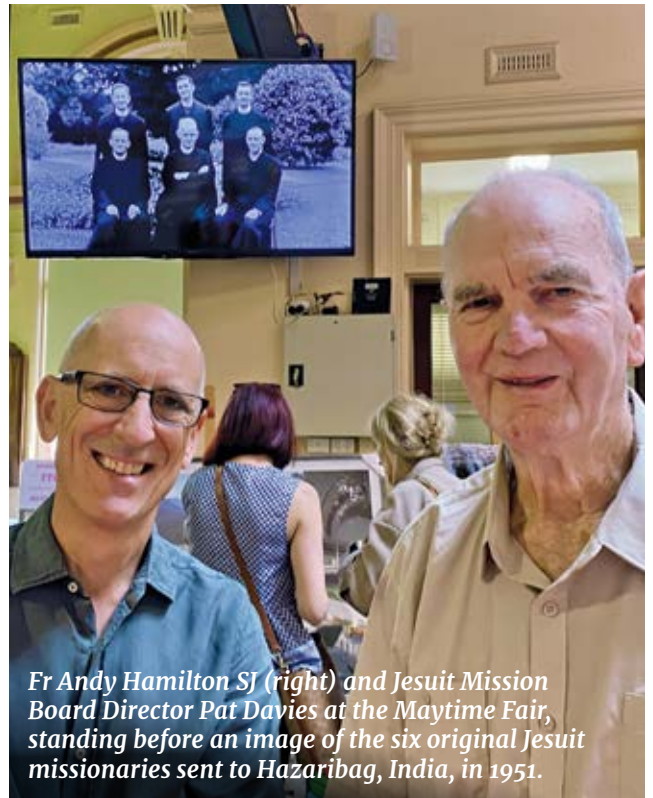
For Hugh Lachal, Jesuit Mission's 75 year legacy of service is deeply personal. His Great-Great Uncle, Fr Lou Lachal SJ, lived in Hazaribag and became "a bit of folklore" in the family. Through stories passed down by his grandfather, Hugh came to understand both Fr Lou's remarkable life and his legacy. *"I attribute much of who I am today to Fr Lou."*

A Xavier College alumnus, Xavier's motto, Sursum Corda ("Lift up your hearts"), shaped the way Hugh sees the world. *"This idea of offering ourselves for something greater"* guided both his Jesuit education and his recent experience volunteering as a teacher in Thailand through the Cardoner Network. Living in Dinkhaw village taught Hugh the *"deeply relational nature of service,"* and a generosity *"which I will try to replicate for the rest of my life."*

"The mission which was on fire in Lou has carried on through generations and many more to come."



Hugh teaching primary school tribal students in Thailand.



Fr Andy Hamilton SJ (right) and Jesuit Mission Board Director Pat Davies at the Maytime Fair, standing before an image of the six original Jesuit missionaries sent to Hazaribag, India, in 1951.

Memories of the Maytime Fair – Fr Andy Hamilton SJ

"I was a twelve-year-old from Kostka Hall at Xavier College. I do remember the sending of the first group of Australian Jesuits to India, among whom was Fr Phil McInerney SJ. I had spent two very happy years at Kostka where he was the gentle headmaster."

Its sounds remain with me more vividly than the sights: the buzzing of wall-to-wall raffle wheels, the shuffling of people fighting their way through the Hall, the spruikers at the wheels, and the Jesuit Parish food stalls talking up their groceries. The Fair was most crowded in the evening, often until midnight, offering barbeques and other food and a dance in the Bellarmine Room. I also remember the first car raffle, mainly because it was won by Fr Jim Collins SJ, one of the first Jesuits sent to India!

For me the Maytime Fair was part of a dramatic Jesuit world that I would later want to join."



Maureen and Caroline (left and middle) at the Bazaar in 2018.

Passing on the spirit of service

On the eve of her 87th birthday, Maureen Punch reflects on a lifetime of service to Jesuit Mission, a journey that began as a Loreto Kirribilli schoolgirl volunteering at one of the first Jesuit Mission Bazaars at Saint Ignatius' College Riverview.

For more than six decades, Maureen and her family have been at the heart of Jesuit Mission's fundraising efforts, with the Bazaar serving as a constant thread connecting generations of service.

Inspired by meeting her father's cousin, the pioneering missionary Fr Lou Lachal SJ, Maureen says she was "hooked for life".

"He seemed to have an aura around him which drew you and others to help," she recalls. "I have been blessed to have done whatever I could and proud to be a co-missionary."

Maureen has witnessed firsthand the impact of Jesuit Mission's outreach and development programs.

"Visiting Hazaribag and seeing what has been achieved was incredibly inspiring," she says. "If only more young people could go there, they could not fail to be inspired."

Back in Australia as a mother of five, Maureen coordinated the much-loved Bazaar cake stall,

where dozens of mothers produced thousands of lamingtons before the annual event. Later, she established the Bazaar Boutique and spent decades raising funds through local markets.

For her daughter Caroline Loneragan, volunteering was simply part of growing up.

"Mum and Dad have always been on committees, running events and assisting as volunteers," she says. "Their example, I automatically continued as I grew up."

Today, Caroline carries on the family's commitment through the annual Jesuit Mission Bazaar.

Looking to the future, Caroline hopes younger generations embrace the spirit of service.

"Walking the walk and talking the talk, telling stories and being an example is very important," she says.



Caroline and her friend Regina selling clothes at the Bazaar Boutique stall in 2022.

You Are the Backbone of Our History



Thank you to everyone who shared a memory through our recent supporter survey. The reflections featured here are just a small selection of the many stories received, each helping bring our 75 year history to life and celebrating the friendships, faith and generosity that have shaped Jesuit Mission since 1951.

"Our family started supporting the mission in India in the first year, 1951, as my brother went to St Ignatius Norwood."

"I remember the first Jesuit Mission Bazaar at Riverview in 1952 and I won three hams on the Chocolate Wheel! Have been contributing every since."

"My late mother was a supporter of the mission in India. I started reading the mission magazine early in life. It made an impression that has stayed with me for seven decades."

"My father contributed to missionary work in India in the 1950s. His witness influenced my life as a Catholic in assisting migrants and refugees."

"My mother always supported Jesuit Mission. That is why I have continued in memory of her and her wonderful example for the less fortunate."

"My parents never drove and my father pushed me in my pusher up the hill in Power Street Hawthorn to Xavier College to attend the first Maytime Fair."

"Having grown up in India, I studied in a Jesuit school and college and spent four years living in the Jesuit community. Their dedication and service left a lasting impression."

"Very fond memories of being taught at St Patrick's, East Melbourne, by pioneering Jesuit Fr Lou Lachal SJ. Oh dear, so many years ago."

"At school in Hawthorn, we would hear from the Jesuit missionaries visiting from India and support Jesuit Mission through fundraising and mission boxes."

"I participated as a volunteer teacher in Bokaro Steel City from 1973-1978 and worked with Jesuits John Moore, Tom Keogh, Phil Crotty and many others."

"Visiting the Jesuits in Hazaribag was life defining. The people, the stories and the legacy of the Australian Jesuits continue to inspire me today."

"I visited the mission in India in 1968 and helped out at Hazaribag and Bokaro Steel City. I am also familiar with the Jesuit Centre in Battambang, Cambodia. Years ago, I spent time at the Asian Bureau established by Fr Mark Raper SJ."

To learn more about our 75th anniversary, scan the QR code.





"I want to serve children from rural areas so they can receive an education and a better life." – Birbal, teacher at Tenuahi.

A legacy continued

From humble beginnings in Hazaribag 75 years ago, Jesuit Mission's commitment to education and opportunity continues today through young leaders like Birbal.

At 28 years old, Birbal is helping bring education and opportunity to children in rural Hazaribag through his work as a teacher at Tenuahi School. Originally from Garhwa district, Birbal completed his teacher training in Hazaribag before joining the school when it first opened in 2023. In 2025, thanks to your generosity, the school supported 270 students from Korwa and other marginalised communities.

Since arriving at Tenuahi School three years ago, Birbal has seen significant change in both the students and the wider community. Families are increasingly prioritising education, and students are becoming more confident both inside and outside the classroom.

"After spending time with them, they are taking interest not only in their studies, but also in cultural activities. Their confidence is growing and their vision for the future is widening," Birbal said.

Birbal teaches English, maths and science across multiple year levels, from kindergarten to year 7. Students are also encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities including sports and cultural programs, where they

sing and dance in their native language, alongside tree planting and caring for the school environment.

Some students walk between five and ten kilometres each day to reach school, while during the rainy season others must travel by boat when flooding from a nearby reservoir cuts off road access. Poverty, remoteness and limited infrastructure continue to create challenges for many families seeking education for their children.

Despite these barriers, teachers and staff regularly visit villages and meet with families and community leaders to encourage school attendance and build trust in education.

"Thank you. It is because of this help from Australia that these children are able to live with greater dignity and purpose," Birbal said.



Birbal teaching maths to year 3 students.



"Thank you to everyone in Australia for your compassion." – Min (middle) with his peers.

Dreaming beyond borders

Fourteen-year-old Min fled Myanmar with his family in search of safety and education after conflict forced them from their home. Now living in a refugee camp on the Thai-Myanmar border, Min dreams of continuing his studies and one day becoming a priest to help others facing hardship.

Min is the youngest of seven boys. After his father's passing, some of his older brothers left the camp to work and support the family, while two continue their studies. His mother continues to encourage Min to focus on his education and stay in the boarding house where he can study in a safe and quiet environment.

"I am determined to study hard to build a better life. Right now my favourite subject is English."

"If I didn't go to school, I would be working at home or going to the forest to collect bamboo," he said.



For sports day students wear different coloured headbands in the camp.

Since the military coup in Myanmar, millions like Min have been forced to flee violence and compulsory military recruitment, with families continuing to seek safety and education across the border.

Despite the uncertainty, Min remains hopeful for the future and dreams of attending university after finishing Grade 12.

"My dream is to become a priest because I want to share my beliefs and help vulnerable people, especially those fleeing from their villages and hiding in the forest," he said.

"I still worry for my relatives in Myanmar who remain affected by the conflict," he said.

Through Jesuit Mission's *Sustaining Education for Burmese Refugees Project*, our partner KnED provides quality basic education in two border refugee camps. In 2025 alone, nearly 11,000 people were supported through the program.

"Thank you to everyone in Australia for your compassion. You give me hope and the opportunity to help bring positive change to my people," Min said.

To learn more about the ongoing crisis in Myanmar and the action needed to support displaced communities, scan the QR code to read the full joint statement from Jesuit Mission Australia and Jesuit Refugee Service Australia.





A special needs teacher continues to support Saomean (right) with daily chores at home.

A future once thought impossible

At just nine years old, Saomean from Cambodia has already overcome challenges that once seemed impossible.

Born with an intellectual disability and cerebral palsy, Saomean spent much of her early childhood unable to sit, walk, speak or communicate her basic needs. Her parents, struggling with poverty and unstable living conditions, worried deeply about her future. When her parents separated, Saomean became increasingly withdrawn and depressed.

Everything began to change in 2019 when Saomean joined the *Community Based Rehabilitation Program* run by our Jesuit partner Karuna Battambang Organisation. In 2025, thanks to supporters like you, this project reached over 3,200 people across Battambang, Kampong Chhnang and Banteay Meanchey provinces.

Through special education classes, speech therapy, physical exercises and daily living activities, Saomean slowly developed confidence and independence. Her mother also received guidance on how to support her daughter's development at home.

Today, Saomean can walk, run and ride a bicycle to school. She writes letters from A to Z, recognises money and independently manages daily activities such as toileting, cooking rice and washing clothes. Now a Grade 2 student at

Chak Primary School, she actively participates in class and ranks 12th among 21 students.

Mr Anngara, Saomean's teacher, said her progress has been remarkable. He recalled that in Grade 1 she struggled with "speech, walking, posture, and social interaction" and "was afraid to learn or play with classmates". Today, he says, *"she attends school regularly, participates actively in class, reads, writes, and spells better than some of her classmates"*.

Saomean's mother now hopes her daughter *"will gain knowledge and become a teacher so she can support herself and contribute to society"*.

She is deeply grateful for the support her family received, Saomean's mother says, "Thanks to your generosity, my daughter's life has changed."



Saomean is very happy to participate in her school activities with her classmates.



Through training and community engagement, farmers in Timor-Leste are boosting harvests and inspiring neighbouring communities to adopt sustainable farming practices.

Where seeds of hope take root

In Timor-Leste, average household incomes are just \$2.40 per day and almost half of all children under five suffer from malnutrition. Thanks to your generosity, communities are now strengthening food security and creating new opportunities for future generations through the *Food Security Project* led by our project partner, Jesuit Social Service Timor-Leste.

In 2025, the program directly reached over 1,300 women, men and children across four communities and three schools.

In Darema sub-village, farmers who once relied on traditional planting methods are now using seedlings, terracing and organic fertiliser to grow healthier vegetables for family consumption and local sale. Participants spoke with pride about the visible transformation in their gardens and the sense of empowerment that came with it. Many described the project's swift implementation as "a dream come true,"



Community leaders of the Food Security Project are ensuring a better future for their people.

especially compared to the long delays often associated with government support.

Community leader Ismael Martins said the project has changed not only farming practices but also confidence within the community. *"Before, we just planted and hoped something would grow. Now we know how to prepare, plan, and see real results,"* he shared.

Training sessions on composting, irrigation and land preparation have encouraged families to work together and share knowledge with neighbouring villages. Women now lead planting and maintenance, while students are increasingly involved in community gardens and farming activities.

The spirit of collaboration is also growing at EBC School in Railaco where 46 students help grow vegetables as part of the school's nutrition and environmental learning program.

Vice Principal Domingos Soares said the project is teaching students valuable life skills while bringing the wider community together. *"The garden teaches children responsibility and farming, and the community has been amazing in supporting it,"* he said.

Thanks to your generosity, and the longstanding support of St Canice's Parish in Sydney, we have accompanied the people of Railaco for more than 20 years.



Young students in Myanmar enjoying a dancing activity in the classroom.

Helping children find their voice

For seven years, 35-year-old preschool teacher Sue has dedicated her career to helping young children learn and grow in her village in Myanmar.

Today, she is a trusted educator and source of support for children and families navigating the challenges of conflict and displacement.

Myanmar remains in the grip of a humanitarian crisis, with more than 3.7 million people internally displaced by ongoing conflict. For children, the disruption to education and daily life can have lasting impacts.

"Before, I taught mainly based on my experience," Sue recalls. "Sometimes I felt unsure how to respond when children were emotional or withdrawn."

Thanks to your generosity and our Jesuit partners in Myanmar, Sue participated in teacher training, parenting education sessions and school committee workshops. These opportunities strengthened her understanding of child development, emotional wellbeing and child-centred learning.

Where children had once been shy and hesitant to participate, they now confidently tell stories, sing songs and share their ideas. Activities focused on peace-building, social and emotional learning, and mental health support have helped create a safe and nurturing learning environment.

"Children are no longer afraid to speak," Sue says. "They enjoy leading activities by themselves, and that makes learning more joyful."

"Some children come to me when they feel scared or sad," she explains. "They trust me the same way they trust their parents."

Parents have also noticed the difference, becoming more engaged with the school and more confident in supporting their children's learning.

In 2025, thanks to supporters like you, this project reached over 18,000 people, improving access to safe, quality education for children and young people affected by the Myanmar emergency.

For Sue, teaching is more than a job. It is an opportunity to give back to the community that raised her and help children build a brighter future despite the challenges around them.



Sue teaching her students.

Raising a Glass to 75 Years of Mission

Our sincere thanks to everyone who has already purchased our limited edition 75th Anniversary wines. If you haven't yet ordered yours, there's still time to secure a bottle of our commemorative Riesling or Cabernet Sauvignon, created in partnership with Sevenhill Cellars.



Every purchase supports Jesuit Mission's life changing programs alongside vulnerable and marginalised communities across Asia.

Order today at
jesuitmission.org.au/wine



Win a \$6,000 Shopping Voucher

Raffle (NSW and VIC only)

Every raffle ticket helps empower marginalised communities around the world.

1st Prize **\$6,000**
Coles, Myer Voucher

2nd Prize **\$3,000**
Coles, Myer Voucher

3rd Prize **\$1,500**
Coles, Myer Voucher



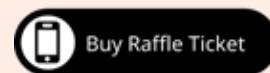
Raffle Tickets – \$10 each



Please note: entry is open to residents of NSW and VIC only.

Tickets are available online at jesuitmission.org.au/raffle or call (02) 8918 4109

Maximum number of tickets available: 6,300. Raffle closes at 3pm, 18 September 2026. Winners' names will be published on the Jesuit Mission website on 29 September 2026. See full terms and conditions.



Upcoming Events

One Foot Raised • All year

Jesuit Mission Bazaar, Sydney • 12 September



A 75th anniversary photo reflection on the history of Jesuit Mission around the world since 1951.



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