

Talk at all weekend Masses at St Canice's 13/14 July

MICHAEL MUSGRAVE - 13 July 2024

Twenty-two years after gaining independence, East Timor is still one of the poorest countries in Asia and suffers from a lack of diversification in its economic structure.

Back in 2004, a group from St Canice's travelled up there. The situation was desperate; the country was just emerging from years of guerilla warfare, and a traumatised people were still recovering from living under oppressive Indonesian occupation.

A sister parish relationship with the Railaco Jesuit Mission was formed. We launched a children's feeding program to provide nutritious meals for malnourished and stunted pre-school children. We acquired an old Toyota 4WD from the Australian Defence Forces for a mobile medical clinic. And one generous donor gave us \$10,000 to build the first two classrooms for a secondary school, Our Lady of Fatima, Nossef.

Hopefully today, we can inspire YOU to continue the good work.

Since those early days, we in *this little Jesuit parish of St Canice's* have raised over \$1.1 million. Our friends and neighbours in Railaco are so grateful.

21 years on, this long-standing relationship is evolving.

In the coming year, we will continue to fund the children's feeding Program for the little children from low-income families in three remote communities around Railaco.

Our major efforts will be focussed on providing a good *secondary education in our parish secondary school Nossef for Railaco's rural youth.*

Education is a big challenge in Timor-Leste. Students come to school with dreams and hopes. They expect something from the school and their teachers.

Some are eager to learn but are struggling with their poor basic education from early years. Some have a strong thirst for affection and support from their family because they feel abandoned. Some work hard every day before and after school to support their aged or handicapped parents. Others are thinking to give up education because food and money are more important for them. Most students are worried about their financial situation because they have many siblings but very little income from their parents' work.

We are successful in overcoming so much of this disadvantage not only with pursuit of academic excellence, but ensuring the benefits of a holistic Jesuit education that cares for each student's personal development and promotion of their human dignity.

In this, formation of teachers is critical!

St Canice's provides salaries for 16 specially trained teachers . . . with remarkable results – Last year, all 99 students in Year 12 at NOSSEF passed the national exams. 60% were girls!

Empowering women transforms communities across generations . . . It's immense social change – transitional.

You can be part of this wonderful work to transform the future lives of these rural Catholic families.

39 St Canice parishioners already support Railaco with a **monthly recurring donation**. These donations underwrite more than half the money we send to Railaco each year.

The Australian dollar goes such a long way up there in Timor.

A **monthly gift** of \$10 will cover tuition fees for one student for six months at our parish secondary school, NOSSEF. \$20 a month covers tuition for a whole year!

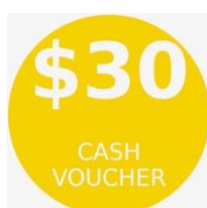
If you prefer to give a **one-off donation**, \$25 for example will pay for 15 meals for pre-school children in our **Children's Nutrition Program**.

I make this appeal to you on behalf of St Canice's. You are entrusting your money to Jesuit Mission Australia. They issue the official tax-deductible receipt and ensure the money goes straight to Railaco.

There's a Donate form in your Bulletin. **ACT NOW!** We'll assist you to complete the form at the **table outside after Mass today**, and we'll answer any questions.

Alternatively, Go online or bring the form to our St Ignatius Feast Day celebration on Sunday August 4th.

Incentive



As 'recurring' donations are so important, when you sign-up, we offer you not one but two gifts.

A \$30 FREE CASH VOUCHER for a coffee and sandwich at Juno & Sons neighbourhood café in Roslyn Gardens.

Plus, a Timorese tais purse, made in a crafts class by women in Gleno prison, whom we visit as part of the community engagement in our Railaco parish.

(If you're already making a recurring monthly donation, we'd like to shout you a cup of coffee and a sandwich at Juno and Sons too!)

But this is not simply about money.

We're inviting you to become part of our Railaco family, connected in mutual friendship and mission.

Our big annual celebration for Railaco will be on the Feast Day of St Ignatius Sunday 4th August, at the 10 am Mass. After Mass, please stay for the 'Festa', hosted by our community-building parish group, 'Curious Grace'. Mingle with others in our community; enjoy the sausage sizzle, cakes and chicken sandwiches.

SAVE THE DATE! Sunday August 4th, 10 AM MASS

To make a donation to Railaco Jesuit Mission, visit jesuitmission.org.au/donate-railaco