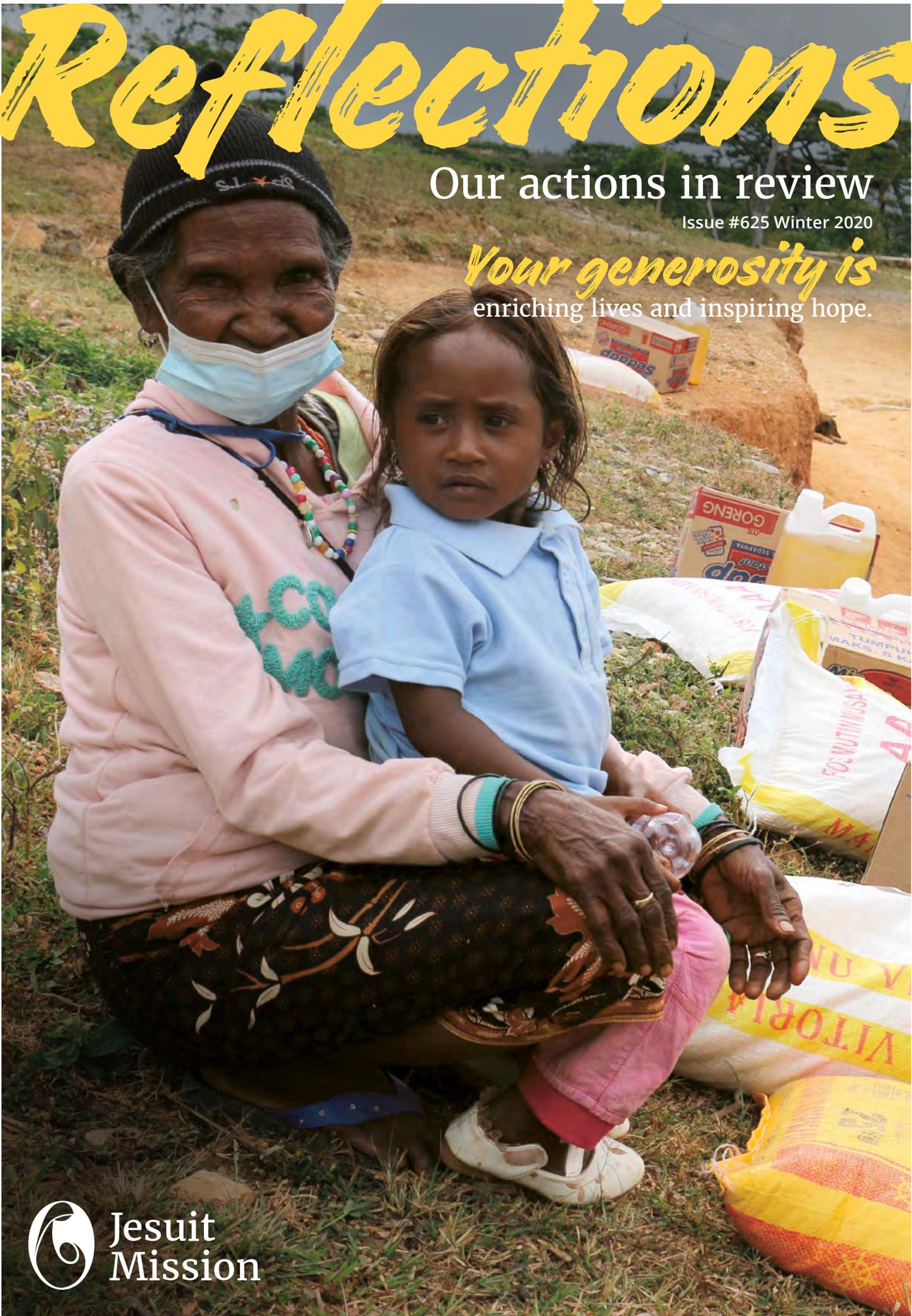


# Reflections

Our actions in review

Issue #625 Winter 2020

*Your generosity is*  
enriching lives and inspiring hope.



Jesuit  
Mission

# Tears of



Hello dear friends,

As we move through these extremely challenging times, my thoughts and prayers are with you and every member of our Jesuit Mission family.

COVID-19 has had a massive impact that's rippled across the world. Over the past few months, restrictions in Australia have seen our wonderful team working from home, but this has not hindered our focus on supporting the work of our Jesuit partners overseas.

I'm deeply grateful to you and all of our generous supporters who've contributed to the Jesuit Mission Emergency Action Fund. It's with your help that our partners have been able to respond so swiftly and effectively to the new challenges arising – every day.

Although it's difficult to see hope in these terrible times, our Jesuit partners are showing us hope. They're providing a lifeline for people who may not otherwise survive. As lockdowns take away livelihoods, and cramped conditions put vulnerable people even further at risk, our partners are there as beacons of hope providing essential food, supplies, masks and education.

These are testing times, but as your generosity and kindness show, they're also providing us with an opportunity to rise up, to see hope and to help.

With thanks,

**Helen Forde**  
Chief Executive Officer



Simple and joyful. While COVID-19 restrictions limited the size of the Mass and celebrations, Bonifacio was able to share the important occasion with his parents and Fr Joaquim Sarmento SJ, Regional Superior of Timor-Leste.

**For Bonifacio Ribeiro, April 27 2020 is a day he'll never forget. After two years of formation as a Jesuit Novice in Manresa Jesuit Novitiate House, in Dili, Timor-Leste, Bonifacio professed his First Vows as a Jesuit. "Before the Eucharist began, a lot of tears came down my face; during the Mass, the same happened," he says. "The tears were surely tears of joy and consolation. I thank everyone who prayed for me on this special occasion. With your support, I gained the strength to follow the will of God".**

Bonifacio attended NOSSEF-Railaco, a Jesuit Secondary School in Timor-Leste, kindly supported by people like you. He graduated in 2014, and became the first Jesuit scholastic from Railaco to continue his First Studies in formation for the priesthood.

He has fond memories of the school that helped to shape his future, and is delighted that the construction of a new boys dormitory at NOSSEF-Railaco is now complete.

Until now there hasn't been adequate space or facilities for the 40 male students who come from distant villages to study at the school.

# fjoy



**BELOW:** Male students are delighted with the newly completed dormitory building which provides ample space to live and learn.



But, thanks to the generous support of people like you, the boys now have a new dedicated dormitory building, which has enough space for them to sleep, study, cook and do their everyday activities.

Recently, due to COVID-19, most of the boys have returned to their home villages, except for 12 who were unable to return. These young men have been busy helping plant vegetables and harvesting the school's crops.

Both staff and students look forward to the school reopening as soon as possible, in accordance with safety and government guidelines.

## Healing wounds, Warming hearts

Last year, the First Spiritual Exercises (FSE) Program Team and Jesuit Mission created a program that enables everyone in the Jesuit Mission family to participate in a shared experience of prayer, storytelling and relationship.

When COVID-19 forced a new era of social distancing and isolation, the need for shared prayer and solidarity grew even greater. So, to accompany our Jesuit Mission family through this difficult time, the FSE team developed a program called the FSE Field Hospital.

At the Field Hospital we came together in prayer, using St Ignatius' First Spiritual Exercises which were tailored to bring hope and consolation, healing and peace, during the most challenging of times.

While I pray for this pandemic to pass quickly, I am grateful that it has brought our Jesuit Mission family closer together spiritually, seeking comfort in God and one another, and raising awareness of the interconnectedness of our world. It is my great hope that we'll continue this healing journey together beyond the current crisis and into the future.

With gratitude and blessings,

**Fr Trung Nguyen SJ**  
**Rector of Jesuit Mission**

**Please join us to participate in shared prayer and storytelling at: [jesuitmission.org.au/fse/](https://jesuitmission.org.au/fse/)**



# Practical help and *extraordinary hope* during COVID-19

**The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted life in almost every part of the world. Amidst the fear, lockdowns, isolation and pain, it's been truly inspiring to see how our community has risen up in solidarity to help the most vulnerable members of our global family.**

We look with full hearts and enormous gratitude to our Jesuit partners around the world. As this crisis unfolds, they are continuing to bring both practical help and extraordinary hope to people in need.

There's no denying the terrible impact of COVID-19. Fr Bob Slattery SJ, one of the Australian Jesuits missioned to India in the 1950s, says he has seen nothing quite as devastating as this pandemic. *"At the time of the famine in 1966, it was very bad. But it was nothing like this. We've never seen this, and we hope never to see it again,"* he says.

In vulnerable parts of the world, crippling poverty and lack of resources have amplified the catastrophe. But, with the support of people like you, Jesuits are drawing on their deep well of experience to serve our brothers and sisters in disadvantaged communities. Working hand-in-hand with local communities, they are identifying the poor, educating them about social distancing and distributing dry rations and vital sanitation items.

Through your prayers and your support of the Jesuit Mission Emergency Action Fund, you are standing with our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, working to ensure that together we survive this crisis.

**The following photo update gives you an insight into our ongoing efforts.**



**MYANMAR:** Jesuit community and North Okkalapa Slum Project staff delivered food packages and messages of love to 660 families living in the slums.



**TIMOR-LESTE:** Packages including essential items like rice, oil, noodles and soap were distributed to 480 vulnerable families by local Jesuit partners in Ulmera, Railaco and Dili.



**INDIA (ABOVE):** Working with local NGOs and government officials, Jesuit Communities in Hazaribag and Mahuadanr in India have distributed over 1,000 masks and fed over 3,500 people with food packages.

**ANGOLA (LEFT):** The Jesuit Refugee Service team is working to provide health checks and distribute food packages to refugee families.



**CAMBODIA:** Bishop Kike Figaredo, the Apostolic Prefect of Battambang, has been helping to distribute emergency food and protective supplies to vulnerable families in the Battambang province.

Bumper rice crops,

# changing lives

Mrs Soun proudly standing in front of her rice field



## For families depending on rice farming for their livelihoods, a good crop yield is vital for survival.

Mrs Soun Moeurn (61) is a rice farmer living in Pursat province, Cambodia. She and her husband, Thuy Ny (59), have four adult children. Three are currently working in garment factories in Phnom Penh, while their youngest son, who's living with a disability, lives at home with them.

Until 2018, Mrs Soun Moeurn was using conventional methods of rice planting, with poor results. Her crop yields were low, and to survive she had to borrow money at exorbitant interest rates to pay for extra seed, fertilisers and pesticides.

But thanks to your support, Mrs Soun Moeurn's life has changed.

Your generosity is helping to fund our local partner, Karuna Battambang Organisation (KBO) to train farmers like Mrs Soun Moeurn in the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). Already, over 300 farmers have

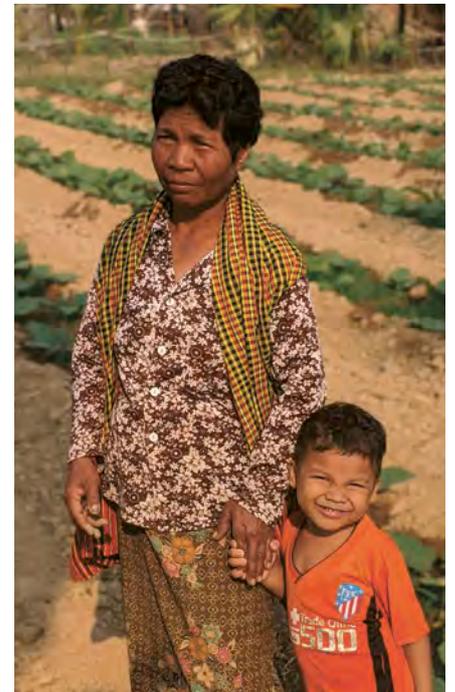
been trained in this simple yet effective method of farming that helps farmers dramatically increase crop yields, while reducing costs by around 75%, and producing rice that's pesticide free.

Mrs Soun Moeurn joined the SRI farmers group after seeing how successful the method was for her neighbour. She diligently learned and followed the seven step SRI method, and in her first year harvested over 2.5 times more rice than in previous years – with far fewer expenses. She joyfully explains it's the first year she hasn't had to borrow money to cover the costs of her farming.

Mrs Soun Moeurn is now helping other farmers to learn the SRI method in the hope that they too will have the opportunity to enjoy the life-changing benefits.

KBO is also teaching the SRI method to people who are

returning to their home villages after losing their jobs due to COVID-19 lockdowns. These new skills will help them make a living and survive the pandemic.



*"At first, my husband complained to me. He had to help me to prepare the land and also in transplanting. But when he saw the field of rice after 45 days, he had nothing more to say and was very pleased," says Mrs Soun.*

# Reason for celebration

**The Australian Jesuits have a long history of serving the people of Hazaribag, India. Since 1958, the Primary Teaching Training Institute has been training marginalised young women and men to become teachers in their communities. Beginning with just 15 students, the course now offers 100 places to students each year.**

Now, alongside its primary teacher training program, Xavier College of Education is expanding to offer a Bachelor of Education program which will train secondary school teachers.

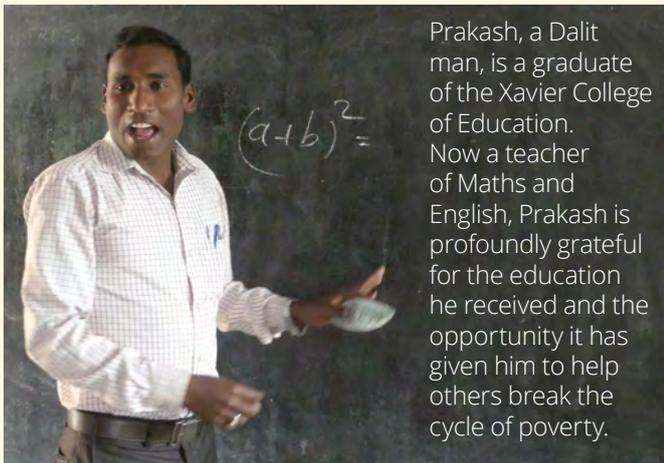
Thanks to a very generous gift from an Estate, construction was

completed on a new building which will accommodate the expanding cohort of students.

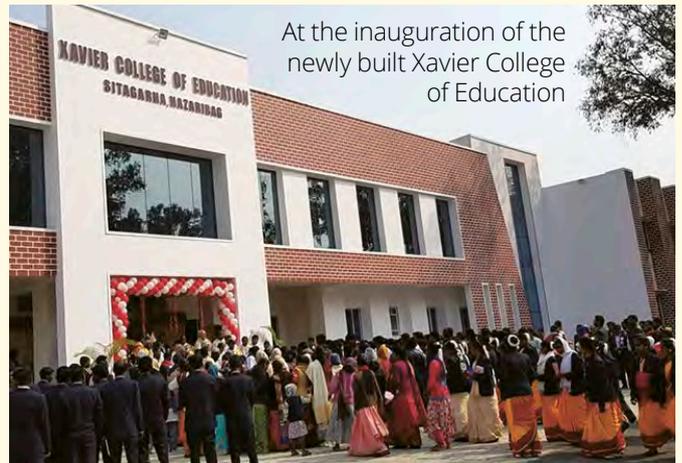
An inauguration celebration was held in January this year, however, due to COVID-19 restrictions the college closed in mid-March. But the future is bright! In line with

government instructions, the college will reopen and classes in the new building will commence for primary teaching students in September. Students in the highly sought-after secondary teaching course will begin next year.

**In years to come, there will be 2,200 students studying in the new building, with around 85% of students being people from marginalised tribes, Dalits and Christians.**



Prakash, a Dalit man, is a graduate of the Xavier College of Education. Now a teacher of Maths and English, Prakash is profoundly grateful for the education he received and the opportunity it has given him to help others break the cycle of poverty.



At the inauguration of the newly built Xavier College of Education

# Thank You

**Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, you – our wonderful community of Jesuit Mission supporters – have continued to show your unerring commitment to helping our vulnerable brothers and sisters living in the margins of the world. Please accept our sincere thanks for all that you do.**

A huge thanks also to Jesuit schools raising money to

support Jesuit Mission programs. St Ignatius' College Adelaide raised over \$20,000 at their Mission Fete Day, while students from Xavier College in Melbourne and St Ignatius' College in Riverview, have been walking in solidarity to raise vital funds.

And, thanks to everyone who participated in Melbourne Golf Day. This fantastic event raised \$45,000.



St Ignatius' College Adelaide Students raise funds to support Jesuit Mission programs at their annual Mission Fete Day.

# Upcoming events

**Every year the Jesuit Mission Bazaar brings together communities and friends of Jesuit Mission. So, it's with heavy hearts that we announce the postponement of our 69th Jesuit Mission Bazaar, due to COVID-19.**

However, we're exploring the possibility of a Virtual Bazaar! We hope to announce details on this very soon!

Likewise, it's uncertain whether this year's Sydney Golf Day will go ahead.

We'll provide updates via email and our website on both events in the near future.

**But even a pandemic can't stop our...**



## ...Raffle

You can continue supporting our vulnerable brothers and sisters overseas by purchasing tickets to our annual prize draw.

Enter the raffle for your chance to win:

**1st prize is:  
\$5,000 shopping voucher at a store of your choice**

**2nd prize is:  
\$1,000 shopping voucher**

**3rd prize is:  
\$500 shopping voucher**

Tickets are now available online at: [raffletix.com.au/jesuitmission](http://raffletix.com.au/jesuitmission) or call us on 02 8918 4109.

Raffle closes 27th November. Winner drawn 1st Dec. NSW, VIC, TAS and NT residents only.



### Front cover picture

Thanks to Jesuit Mission supporters, people living in poverty in Timor-Leste have emergency food to get through COVID-19

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 **Jesuit  
Mission**

*Faith creating change*