

Formation and Hope for Novices in Timor-Leste

As the Church begins its Lenten journey with Ash Wednesday, we are reminded that mission takes many forms and continues to grow within communities around the world. Lent invites us to renew our hearts, reflect on God's love and sacrifice, and respond with generosity and compassion. Wherever hope exists, mission can take root and flourish. Even in challenging circumstances, the hope carried by a community can shine through, strengthening relationships and enabling people to face difficulties together.

Together, we have the opportunity to nurture this shared hope and support communities as it takes root and grows. In celebrating the unity of the universal Church, we stand with the community at St Joseph Novitiate in Dili, Timor-Leste, supporting the dreams and aspirations of young novices and the wider community they serve.

In Timor-Leste, ongoing economic hardship continues to shape daily life. Many communities face limited access to education, medical care and sustainable employment, leaving families and young people uncertain about the future. Poor quality schooling and high unemployment weigh heavily on a generation still carrying the trauma of a violent history, as they navigate poverty, instability and restricted opportunity.

Yet faith remains strong. In the midst of these challenges, the Sisters walk closely alongside their communities, offering both pastoral presence and practical support. Through teaching, counselling and compassionate care, they provide stability and encouragement where hope can feel fragile. Their presence is not only a source of comfort but a vital pillar of community life.

This is why the formation of novices is so important. By nurturing new generations of Sisters, the Church ensures that this life-giving ministry continues, strengthening communities and sustaining hope where it is needed most.

As Pope Leo XIV reminds us, "God found not one, but many strong and courageous women who did not hesitate to take risks and confront problems in order to embrace his plans and respond 'yes' to his call."

Lent is a season of prayer, sacrifice and solidarity. It calls us to stand with the people who carry heavy burdens and to become instruments of hope in practical and meaningful ways. By supporting the formation of these young women, we invest in the future of communities in Timor-Leste. Their dedication and service will help address the pressing challenges faced by young people, offering education, guidance and renewed hope.

As we begin this sacred season, may we journey together in faith and generosity, ensuring that hope continues to flourish in Timor-Leste and in communities around the world.

Learn more at www.catholicmission.org.au/faith

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About Catholic Mission

Catholic Mission is the Australian agency of the Pontifical Mission Societies – the Catholic Church’s global organisation dedicated to continuing Jesus Christ’s mission in the world: that all may have life to the full. Catholic Mission contributes funding and project support to critical church-run initiatives in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America. These include spiritual formation, pastoral care, education, health, sanitation, and agricultural programs. Here in Australia, we form people to go out and be missionary in their professional and personal lives; to pray, advocate and act for those on the margins. Catholic Mission has offices in 27 Australian dioceses.