

**The Inauguration of
Colégio de Santo Inácio de Loiola (CSIL) and
Instituto São João de Brito (ISJB)
25th January, 2014**

This could have been a serious conversation between a person whom I had invited for the “Inauguration ceremony of CSIL” and myself. For obvious reasons I give him the name Thomas.

I picked up Thomas early in the morning on 25th January, 2014, as I had wanted to reach the school early, so as to have a feel of what was going on there. I had told Thomas a lot about the eagerness of our students to be in the school as early as possible. Thomas, as usual could never believe it.

On the way to the school Thomas said: “Well, Kasait is pretty far away from Dili. I am sure that it was really tough for the team to convince parents to send their children to your new Jesuit school! He would not believe me when I told him that parents were still coming after admissions were closed. When other schools in town close at 1.00 p.m. why will they come to your school which closes daily at 3.30 in the afternoon and that too every day?”

Come and see was all that I could say to this doubting Thomas.



And then, when we came to this spot I said to Thomas: “Well, there we are. That’s the wall of the school!”

“Where is the school?” he asked.
“Wait a bit Thomas, we have to turn left where you see that car ahead”.



“OK. Let’s wait and see!” he said quite sure that I had bluffed him all along. He could see not buildings even when we passed this gate. His sarcastic smile was evident.

When we turned left he saw this sign far away but saw no buildings!. That smile on his face became a bit more twisted now. But as soon as we passed under the sign and passed by the wall of the school, he got the first glimpse of Colégio de Santo Inácio de Loiola.



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He suddenly saw what you could not see from the main road.



“Wow” he said aloud. “You do have some buildings after all”. We then passed by the IHS symbol and I could hear another “Wow!” from him. He seemed surprised!!

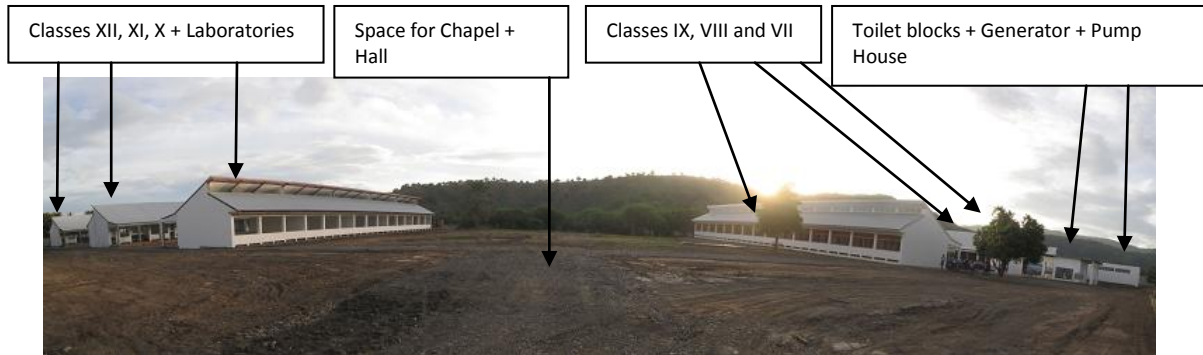
We then entered through the second gate. Through the trees that had been planted just a

year ago by the first batch of students. We could see the children busy giving last minute touches to the area where the program was to take place. A slight drizzle in the night had left many of the plastic chairs a bit wet. The weather for the rest of the day, however, was just perfect.



Thomas had not believed me when I had told him that the children of CSIL loved to be in the school and did not look forward to long holidays. Well, there they were; well before 7.00 in the morning. I could sense him still playing with his doubts.

This panoramic view below shows you the 6 buildings that form part of the CSIL complex. It seemed a bit much for the doubting Thomas to swallow but he did say a loud "Wow" again. I had to tell him that much more has been planned, as far as construction goes. In that big vacant space in the centre the Chapel and the Open Hall are to be constructed.



We then walked about a bit and kept seeing parents coming in to be present for the celebration which was to begin at 08.30. We have some photographs below of some of those whose presence was special to us. Besides confronting tired looking children, Thomas had imagined that only a few parents would be present. He was in for a really big shock!



Not only did he see all the chairs occupied but also saw Scholastic Isaias and Ms. Cinta (both in traditional dress) out there as Masters of Ceremony.



Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, our General + Fr. Danny Huang and the Bishop of Dili are being welcomed. Fr. Lucio Norberto de Deus, the Vicar General of the Maliana Diocese

represented the Bishop of Maliana.



The Minister of Education and the Minister of Solidarity are receiving a warm welcome. We were especially privileged to have the Provincials of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific and Fr. Alberto Brito, Provincial of

Portugal, present for this celebration.

The program began with a welcome address by Fr. Mark Raper. Speaking in Portuguese, he said that this Education Centre is meant to address the country's needs and expectations, by giving the students the chance to excel. The Jesuits are committed to form citizens who are proud of their Timorese culture and nation and of whom their nation is proud.



Fr. General stressed the fact that the Jesuits were not putting up Institutes to live up to their past reputation but to meet the present and future needs of the country. It is not only the "brains" of the children but the whole person i.e. the brains, heart, body and spirit.

The Minister of Education, Bendito Dos Santos Freitas praised the Jesuits for their contribution to the country. Many of the present leaders of the country were educated by the Jesuits. It is their Ignatian Spirituality that has enabled them to find a deeper way of thinking and acting, which has enabled them to become available to serve the country. Fr. Lucio Norberto de Deus, the Vicar General of Maliana Diocese while expressing his happiness at being present at the inauguration of this important institution in the Maliana Diocese, has requested for a closer pastoral collaboration of the Jesuits with the Diocese.



Schol. Rui was there leading the children in singing the National Anthem and the School Anthem. The children of our parish school in Railaco were there to present us with a traditional dance, while our own students also performed another traditional dance.



It was now time for Fr. General to put his signature on the plaque which had been prepared and then cut the ribbon to symbolise the inauguration of the school.

Then came the planting of trees by all the special invitees. Not wanting to be in any of the photographs were Neville Harpman and Peter Mayoh, who had come all the way from Australia to be present for this occasion. They have been guiding the construction process from the beginning. They stayed on a few days to help us with further planning for the Instituto São João de Brito (for teacher training) and a dormitory of female students of that Institute. We are truly grateful to Karen Goh and Tata Cadiz for being with us for this occasion.



After a row of trees had been planted by our special guests, Thomas sat and listened to Fr. General answering a few questions that were raised. I realised that something was happening to his doubts.

Then, snacks and soft drinks were served to all present. Fr. General then went up to Montserrat for a short break before proceeding to the airport for his flight back.



After Fr. General and the other guests had gone, the children were busy cleaning up. I took Thomas to the parking lot to see the means of transport used daily by many of the students to come to school. They have to get up very early to catch this truck and come to school.



Thomas had experienced the enthusiasm of the students. He had felt one with the joy on the faces of all the students during the whole inauguration program. He now saw the students

getting on to the trucks that would take them home. He could no longer doubt that there is something special about Colégio de Santo Inácio de Loiola!

He has asked me to convey to Frs. Plinio, Quyen and Ura, Scholastics Isaias, Rui and Sidelizio, and Cinta, Filomena, Verónica, Yustinus, Inácio, Gil, Paulo, João, Cipriano and Nicolau as also Srs. Selma and Mary, his admiration for what he saw and experienced. He thanks them not only for what they had done to make this inauguration ceremony something special, but for what they have done to the children. They have sown the seeds of those who are going to make a great difference in the lives of all in their country of Timor-Leste.





In gratitude to all those who have been supporting this project over so many years.

- Noel Oliver, S.J. -