

PEACE and RECONCILIATION

In his keynote address at the International Conference on Peace and Reconciliation that was held in Dili in April 2012, His Excellency Xanana Gusmão, the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste said that:

“for the Timorese people, peace meant living free from hatred, revenge and distrust.

Peace meant living in harmony with our enemies, and especially with ourselves, both individually and as a whole.”

He believed that “the character of the Timorese People was forged in this desire to live in peace.”

We at Colégio de Santo Inácio de Loiola had the chance to experience this process in a small way.

Welcome again to Colégio de Santo Inácio de Loiola



This is how C S I L looked on 27th February.

Let us go back a few days now.....

A number of parents from villages close by and further away, who had not heard of the school before, approached us.

Since we had a few places free, Frs. Plinio, Bert and Quyen called 9 of these parents with their children for an interview.

Eight of these children were finally admitted.

In the photograph we see one of them.



The journey to school and back:

Parents had been informed, from the start, that transport would not be provided by the school.

They would need to come together to find a solution.



The arrangement made by the parents:

The owner of this truck agreed to bring about 25 children to school and take them back to their homes in Dili every day. The expenses will be borne by the individual parents. Today about 40 children use this bus.

It was Ash Wednesday, 13th February. Sr. Selma Sr. Mary and I accompanied Fr. Quyen and Fr. Ura to the school. We wanted to attend the Ash Wednesday services to be held for the children after school.



After Mass and the application of the ashes, the students left for home. Those in the truck were having their scenic drive back home.

Usually Fr. Quyen follows this truck till they reach the town. Today we were a bit late.



**When we reached the Dili-Railaco junction
at Tibar, we found the truck halted there!!**

**Fr. Plinio in his cassock had parked his car behind the
stationary truck and was out settling some problem.
Scholastic Isaias was out there as well.**

**What were they doing
or looking for ?...??...???**

**Apparently some of the youth of the
village had thrown stones at the children
in the truck !!**

**Fr. Plinio wanted the matter settled immediately.
He had already met some of the parents and the
local Policeman was also there.**

Fr. Plinio, who had met some of the parents the previous evening, had explained to the Principal of the local Primary School what had happened.

It was a situation that needed immediate attention.

Not only did Fr. Plinio want the Principal to do something, he himself had to speak to our students.

... at the Assembly the next morning

Fr. Plinio and then Fr. Quien

**explained to the children
the rules they should
follow...**

**when incidents like
that of the previous
day occurred.**

= what they should do

= and what they should not do.



They did not want such incidents repeated !!!

.....and then..

a few days after the incident !!

**the youth
who had thrown
the stones,
came with their parents to CSIL.**

**They came to say sorry and
shake hands with the
children affected by their
stone-throwing!**

**This was one more step
forward for Peace and
Reconciliation.**



**We want to be close to the communities around.
It is their children who will come to our school.**

Those of us, who have not experienced what the Timorese People have had to go through during the years of occupation and their struggle for independence, cannot easily understand all that happens inside of them.

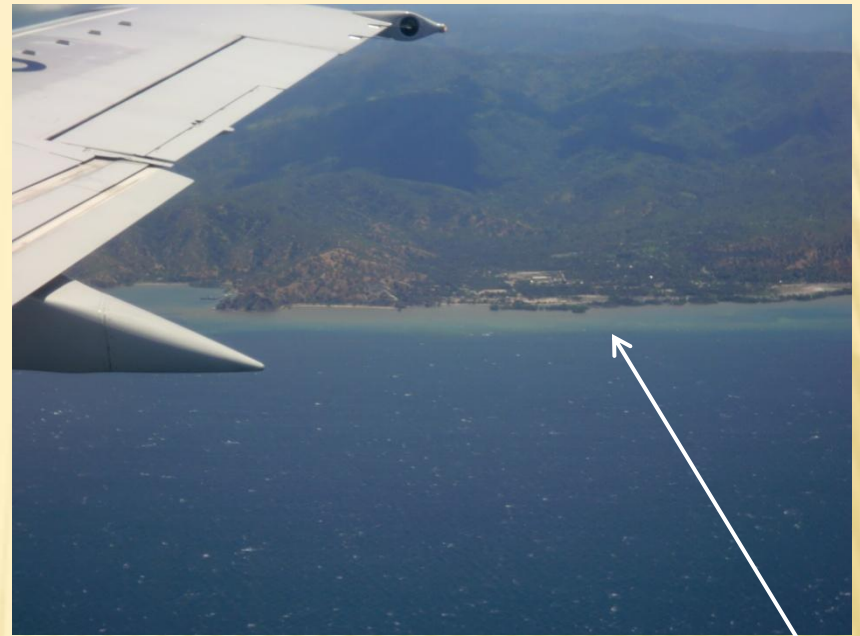
Well, the incident which we have reported is one small incident.

I was speaking with Fr. Quyen who told me, that a few years ago, they were finding it difficult to conduct friendly football matches between two schools especially because of the attitude of the onlookers. If things did not go according to what they would have liked ... things could happen! The situation has changed.

This process of working towards peace and reconciliation is one of the important tasks ahead of us.



Once again, the children in the bus can enjoy their scenic rides to and from the school in peace.



At a later date they can see CSIL from above ...

Ad

Maiorem

Dei

Gloriam