



Issue 121 | Autumn 2025

## Message from the Prior Provincial *Journeying together in hope*

The recently passed Pope Francis reminds us in his Message for Lent, that, “Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is the heart of our faith and the pledge of our hope in the Father’s great promise, already fulfilled in His beloved Son: life eternal.”

In the context of the Jubilee year theme, “Pilgrims of Hope” Pope Francis offers a few thoughts about what it means to journey together in hope. He highlights each of these words, “journey”, “together” and “in hope”. These strike me as also very important themes in our Carmelite tradition.

**As members of the Carmelite Family, we are doubly on a journey, as Carmelites and as Christians.**

Our first Carmelites were pilgrims on a journey to follow *in allegiance to Jesus Christ*. This was a journey of hope and transformation. Fr John Welch O.Carm reminds us, that “the first group of people to be called Carmelites made...a journey to a place apart.” Our pilgrim way as Carmelites has been described in our spiritual tradition as climbing the mountain, Mount Carmel. From our origins we have gathered together to journey together as brothers and sisters.

**Any journey, any pilgrimage, speaks to us of something that is incomplete, a void to be filled.**

Our Carmelite ancestors have shared their intimate stories with us; they have climbed the mountain, endured even darkness. Their journey is now ours, rooted in a profound

experience of love while reminding us that any journey is a pathway through Calvary and beyond. We are not afraid, we have faith, holding firm to the hope of eternal life.

In Timor-Leste, the people are pilgrims of hope, they are proud of their faith in Jesus Christ and they showed this abundantly in large numbers when Pope Francis visited Timor-Leste last September. They also hope and work for a better future for their children and for their country.

This includes the many young people in Timor-Leste who continue to choose vocations as religious women and men and as seminarians. We are blessed this year to have ten young men begin their Pre-Novitiate with us in Saint Elijah Carmelite Community in Hera, with another eleven participating in our preliminary “live-out” program.

**As a popular hymn reminds us, we are companions on a journey, and we are also Pilgrims of Hope, so I thank you very much for your journeying with us and for all the love and real support you generously assist us with, so that we may in our particular way as members of the Carmelite Family bring hope to others.**

Yours in Carmel,

Fr Bruce Clark O.Carm  
Prior Provincial



### *Carmelite Chapter*

The Carmelites have recently concluded their triennial Chapter gathering – a time of reflection and election. At the Chapter Fr Bruce Clark was re-elected as Prior Provincial, and the following Carmelites were elected as Provincial Councillors: Fr Paul Cahill, Fr Martinho Da Costa, Fr David Hofman, Fr Januario Pinto. They are shown with Fr Miceal O’Neill (Prior-General) and Fr Robert Puthussery (Regional Councilor) who also attended the Chapter.



# Growing the Carmelite Mission in Timor-Leste

In 2023 the Provincial Council took the decision to re-open our initial formation program to new candidates who wanted to become Carmelite friars. Cost and accommodation concerns had led to the closure of new student intakes about four years earlier.

After further planning and consideration, and with the encouragement from our wider Carmelite Family, the Province decided to purchase a new property in central Dili to support our projected growth in young men studying to become Carmelite priests and brothers.

This new property in Comoro (a suburb of Dili), already has some existing buildings which we can use almost immediately to accommodate our Carmelite students studying Theology at the nearby Institute

of Philosophy and Theology. This will reduce their daily travel time by about 80 minutes per day (each way). The transfer of some students to Comoro will enable our main community in Hera to accept more candidates into initial formation and will also free up further capacity to host visitors and retreat programs (more news on these programs soon).

The buildings at Comoro are a little tired, and there is much work to be done. But it is an exciting moment and we are filled with hope for the future!

The Provincial Council and the local formation team will now begin a period of consideration as to what changes are required to support our long-term intentions on the site. We look forward to sharing more about Comoro with you in the coming months and years.



There are two existing residences, around 50 years old and renovated several times, on the Comoro site. Along with these residences is a separate school building containing classrooms and bathrooms. The school ceased to operate at the end of 2024. There is also a well which supplies water along with “town” (piped) water. There are many established trees especially mangoes and coconuts, and a large grassed area. Lastly, there is significant room for further expansion via new buildings as required (without disrupting existing facilities, or losing the lush green space).

# Celebrating 35 Years of Carmel Contact

Today, we're commemorating 35 years of connection and celebrating the dedication with which our supporters have responded to the Carmelite call. Please enjoy this special edition of Carmel Contact!

## However, did you know there was a time when Carmel Contact did not exist?

As the director of 'Society of Our Lady of Mt Carmel' at the time of the publication's inception, Fr David Hofman was initially hesitant to engage in direct fundraising in general, uncertain if it aligned with the Carmelite charism. However, with underfunded parishes lacking financial support, he realized that "what you don't ask for, you don't get."

With that, Carmel Contact was created as a means of fostering engagement amongst those in support of the Carmelite cause, both in Australia and Timor Leste. Its purpose was to facilitate communication and connection, not only to share where assistance was needed but to share stories of hope, news

updates, prayer requests and the spiritual reflections which have become a hallmark of the Carmelite Order.

The name for 'Carmel Contact' was inspired by the German Carmelite Province's newsletter, Karmel Kontakt, and was originally published using 'Ventura'. This software from the 1980's required manual coding that was time consuming and limited creative design options, yet Fr David was able to make it work for the needs of the publication. Over the years, Carmel Contact has evolved through many iterations to the current version you now hold in your hands.

Here are a number of versions you may remember...



1999



2000



2003



2009



2017



2021

Today, we're celebrating 35 years of connection and commemorating our community's dedication to living out the Carmelite call. Please enjoy this special edition of Carmel Contact!

# Introducing our new Community Development Coordinator - Aida Da Costa

In February this year, the Province Office hired its first local Timorese staff member. Aida Da Costa has taken over from Mayra Walsh and will manage all of our development programs on the ground in Timor-Leste. Welcome Aida!



My name is Aida Da Costa, and I am from Timor-Leste, a small yet culturally rich island nation. Despite the challenges my country faces as a developing nation, I take great pride in calling it home.

As the eldest of six siblings, I was raised in a family that instilled in me the values of empathy, perseverance, and a strong sense of community. These values, along with my studies in community, humanity, and development, have shaped my commitment to building a brighter future for Timor-Leste.

Growing up in a family with limited financial means, accessing education was a significant challenge. I attended a Catholic school in Dili that offered quality education at a low cost. Nonetheless, I was always mindful of my family's financial pressures, as I knew that my parents had to support six children.

In Timor-Leste, societal norms often dictate that women do not need higher education. However, I was determined to continue my studies to the highest level and always thought of the scholarship as the key to me achieving my dream.

Although I was not the best student in class, I was actively involved in school and extracurricular activities, especially those related to church and youth movements. These experiences honed my leadership skills and fueled my ambition to study abroad. I was awarded a scholarship to study in China, where I completed a Bachelor degree in Agribusiness and later a Masters in Community and Rural Development.

Beyond my studies, my passion has always been working at the community level to create meaningful change. I have worked with various organisations that focus on enhancing rural livelihoods, improving agricultural productivity, and fostering self-reliance among marginalised groups. Witnessing firsthand the resilience and potential within these communities has only strengthened my dedication to this field.

After reading about Carmel Impact's mission and vision in Timor-Leste, I immediately felt that I wanted to join this organisation. It was exactly what I had been searching for since my teenage years. I know firsthand what it feels like to struggle, to see a future or to aspire to higher education when opportunities seem scarce. That is why working at Carmel Impact is deeply personal to me - I see myself helping the younger version of me, giving hope and a better future to those who, like I once did, feel uncertain about what lies ahead.

Today, as the Coordinator of Development Programs and Communications for Carmel Impact in Dili, I have the privilege of working closely with communities and witnessing the tangible differences we are making in children's lives. I am inspired by the hope in a child's eyes when they receive an education they once thought unattainable. Every scholarship awarded, every rebuilt water supply, and every meal provided is an investment in the future of Timor-Leste.

I look forward to keeping you updated on what we are achieving together in Timor-Leste!

Aida



# A life well lived - saying farewell to Pope Francis

With the sad news of Pope Francis' passing, the Carmelites wish to pay tribute to the Pope, remembering his pontificate marked by mercy, humility, and the transformative power of God's love.

Born Jorge Mario Bergoglio, Pope Francis' early years were distinguished by political upheaval in his home nation of Argentina, which undoubtedly impacted his ministry. This was evident in how the Pope was dedicated to creating an inclusive and compassionate church, one that provided a bold witness to the world at large. Pope Francis led the way in facilitating international and interreligious dialogue, all in a bid to encourage peaceful relations and goodwill amongst political and faith leaders.

His papacy also provided invaluable support to the causes of special interest groups such as those with disabilities, the poor and marginalised. This was exemplified with his visit to Timor Leste in 2024, a landmark event that resulted in thousands of faithful Timorese Catholics experiencing renewed hope in their faith and a great sense that despite being a small nation miles away from the Vatican, they were valued members of the Body of Christ and our Lord's church at large.

While we are extremely saddened by the Pope's passing, we at the Carmelites are grateful to have been under the leadership of such an accomplished and empathetic spiritual father who embodied many of the Carmelite values we uphold to this day. We seek to better live in deeper union with God, following his inspiring example of Christlike humility and compassion.

Please join us as we place Pope Francis under the care of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, seeking her intercession to guide his soul towards eternal rest in the heart of Our Lord and saviour.



Pope Francis with Fr Bruce

# Learning today to serve you tomorrow -

This year we celebrated a milestone for the Carmelite Family with the priestly ordination of Deacon Anacleto Guterres Da Costa. Having recently graduated with a Master of Theological studies in March, Anacleto is now ministering in the parishes of OLMC Coorparoo and Regina Caeli, Coorparoo Heights.

Some of our donors may remember Anacleto's story from our 2024 Theology Appeal which captured a distinct characteristic of the heart of God - the mysterious way in which He raises those who respond to his call out of the most adverse of circumstances.

Having joined the Carmelites in 2010, Anacleto made his first profession of vows in 2014 and began a Bachelor of Philosophy degree at the Carmelite formation house in Timor-Leste.

Having spent the last 15 years in formation, on Saturday 3 May, in the presence of Carmelites, parishioners, family and friends, Anacleto was ordained priest at Our Lady of Mt Carmel Church, Middle Park (VIC) by Bishop Anthony Ireland (Auxiliary, Melbourne). Congratulations Fr Anacleto!



## Carmelite Student Journey Timeline

01

**CANDIDATES  
(1 YEAR)**

Introductory phase where candidates live at their own homes and meet monthly for weekend sessions with the formation team.

02

**PRE-NOVITIATE  
(1 YEAR)**

Candidates move into the community for a year, with the possibility of an additional year based on readiness. The focus is on communal living, theological courses, prayer and spirituality.

03

**NOVITIATE  
(1 YEAR)**

A more intensive stage of discernment, deepening of Carmelite charism and history under the guidance of the Novice Director.



**The Carmelites**  
Australia & Timor-Leste  
PRAYER • COMMUNITY • SERVICE

# Our Order continues to grow

As they prepare to become the next generation of Carmelites, each one of our students embodies communal living, service to the poor and a life of prayer. One day, they will go on to provide comfort to communities near and far.

## Leading the way for future generations

Anacleto's journey exemplifies this year's theology appeal slogan, "one heart, many journeys."

Our students live out the heart of the Carmelite charism of contemplative prayer and service to those in need. Through their time of study and volunteer work they are then equipped to step out and into the unique journey God has set for them, engaging in parish life or working in other ministries such as community development or education.

It has been a great blessing to have had such an abundance of vocations in previous years.

Currently, both formation houses in Hera and Fatuhada are full, with the formation house accommodating 12 young Timorese as pre-Novices. Now beginning their second year of their Carmelite journey, they were admitted to the pre-Novitiate by Fr Bruce Clark, OCarm (Prior Provincial) on 30 January.



We warmly welcome: Tósio João Guterres Rangel, Jeferino José Carvalho, Hajetelino Sanches Simões, Celestino Exposto, Domingos dos Santos Martins, Emilio dos Santos Ribeiro, Erçio Manuel Freitas, Ricardo C. Saldanha, João Martinho Falo and Lorenzo Colo. Our thoughts and prayers are with them as they begin their Carmelite journey.

04

### SIMPLE PROFESSION (4 to 9 YEARS)

The first official commitment to the Carmelite life, taking temporary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience according to the Rule of the Order. Other responsibilities include a year of practical ministry in parishes to gain hands-on experience before taking solemn vows.

05

### SOLEMN PROFESSION

Novices make a lifelong commitment to the Carmelite Order, often pursuing priesthood or undergoing preparation for Diaconate and Priestly Ordination.

# Can You Guess Who!

Can you guess the familiar Carmelite faces in these images? Answers at the bottom of the page.



## Significant Carmelite Milestones in 2025

We acknowledge some of the significant milestones, and many years of service, being celebrated by members of the Province this year:

Fr Marius Dawson	70th years a Carmelite (11 Feb)
Fr Hugh Brown	55 years a Carmelite (12 Feb) and 50 years a priest (29 Aug)
Fr Paul Chandler	55 years a Carmelite (12 Feb) and 50 years a priest (29 Aug)
Br Leo Richmond	60 years a Carmelite (15 Feb)
Fr David Hofman	50 years a Carmelite (15 Feb) and 45 years a priest (01 Feb)
Fr Bruce Clark	45 years a Carmelite (04 Feb) and 40 years a priest (01 Jun)
Fr Roque Soares De Cruz	10 years a priest (30 Jan)
Fr Carlito Da Silva	10 years a priest (30 Jan)



*Did you guess correctly? Here are the answers to 'Guess Who':*

Fr Denis Andrew, Fr Paul Cahill, Fr Paul Chandler, Fr Wayne Stanhope, Fr David Hofman, Br Daryl Moresco and Fr Bruce Clark.

# Celebrating 80 Years of Mothers' Mass

With the middle of 2025 already drawing near, the Carmelites annual Mothers' Mass is on the horizon. But did you know how this milestone Mass came to be a part of the Carmelite calendar?

## History of the Mothers' Mass

What we now call the Mothers' Mass began towards the end of the Second World War in 1945 as the 'Warriors' Mass'. It was a way of entrusting service men and women to Mary's maternal protection, especially those who had lost their lives in the fighting. At the end of the war, the Warriors' Mass became the Mothers' Mass, entrusting all mothers, living and deceased, to Mary's maternal care.

## The Jubilee Year: A symbol of Hope and Renewal

Whether in war or peaceful times, mothers provide a sense of hope and immense support to those in their care. This also echoes the sentiments of the Jubilee year as mothers are a gift that reflect God's love and mercy for humanity. The Mothers' Mass honours the power of a mother's faith and prayer in shaping a peaceful and compassionate society reflecting the kingdom of God.

As per the wisdom of the recently deceased Pope Francis, *"A society without mothers would be a dehumanised society, for mothers are always, even in the worst moments, witnesses of tenderness, dedication and moral strength."* – Pope Francis

## The Mothers' Mass now

The Mothers' Mass has changed over the years, but it still delivers a very important message of enduring hope, love and the power of intercessory prayer. We continue to remember mothers in a very particular and special way on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 16 July.

During our mass, we will remember and give thanks for those mothers (both living and passed) who are a part of Carmelite family. We also affirm the Carmelite devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus (Our Lady of Mount Carmel) and acknowledge her role in our own personal faith journeys.

*"And the Church is mother, with all of this, she is our mother! We are not orphans, we have a mother! Our Lady, mother Church, is our mom. We are not orphans, we are children of the Church, we are children of Our Lady, and we are children of our mothers."* – Pope Francis



# Volunteering to Change Lives

Last year the young Carmelites in formation at Hera (outside Dili) were blessed to have their own 'live-in' English teacher on-site for three months. Rose Harland, from Perth (Western Australia), has been an English teacher for most of her life, having taught abroad in Poland, India, Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

**When a volunteering position came about to teach in Timor-Leste, she was excited to return and we were grateful to have her.**

Upon landing in Timor Leste, Rose quickly made a new 'home away from home' with the Carmelites, participating in shared meals during the morning, preparing lessons and encouraging conversations in English.

Rose recalls how thoughtful and sincere the students were and how their warmth and eagerness to learn truly impacted her.

"I found all the teaching very rewarding because all the Carmelite students were incredibly motivated. Even though the classes weren't compulsory, they chose to come and they all realised how important



English is. I think a highlight for me during my time volunteering here has been the spontaneous enthusiasm of the students."

English language skills are particularly important for our Timorese Carmelites, as it allows them to participate more fully in the broader international Order, as well as to serve in other ministries outside of Timor-Leste.

**We thank Rose once again for her commitment to her students and her generous contribution.**

# From Rome with Hope

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, I joined Carmelite communications representatives from around the world in Rome. Rooted in fraternity and prayer, our conversations centred on a shared desire to communicate Christ's presence more effectively in today's world.

**At the heart of it all was a deep sense of Carmelite communion and mission.**

We also attended various events organised around the theme of communications for the Jubilee year. Our Prior General, Fr Mícheál O'Neill, recently wrote that we live "in allegiance to Jesus Christ" through prayer, fraternity, and service. He reminded us that the Jubilee is a time to set things right — to heal, restore, and see one another as brothers and sisters.



Whilst in Rome, we were also able to attend an international forum for Catholic Communicators, the highlight of which was a presentation from Pope Francis. We watched the Swiss Guards march in — a sign that he was near. After much anticipation, the Pope appeared and simply said, "I had prepared a speech...but you must be hungry." And that was it. I couldn't help but smile — we were hoping for more! But perhaps that too was a reminder: sometimes, it's enough just to be present.

We left Rome with fresh energy — committed to collaboration, creative projects, and even a youth-led initiative around the Scapular. In this Jubilee Year, may we walk as pilgrims of hope, speaking always with the voice of the Gospel.

Fr David Hofman, O.Carm

## New Leadership at the Carmelite Centre

The Province is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Luke Edwards as the new leader of The Carmelite Centre and Br Daryl Moresco as the Carmelite Delegate for the Centre.

Luke comes with a background in education, spirituality and psychology. He has been responsible for designing creative responses in developing various formation and pastoral care programs in schools, hospitals and other church entities.

Daryl, recently returned to Australia after 25 years in the US, has worked in education, formation and spirituality ministries. Most recently he served as Managing Director of the Centre of Carmelite Studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

The mission of the Carmelite Centre is to bring the essence of the Carmelite tradition of contemplation, service and hospitality to the community through a range of spirituality-based programs and experiences. The Carmelite tradition honours the individual, embraces community and welcomes people who seek spiritual and personal enrichment.

The Carmelite Centre offers a variety of programs including Lectio Divina, Prayer Meditation, Centering Prayer, Carmelite Conversations, Eco-Spirituality Reading Group, Scripture Study Circle as well as opportunities for Spiritual Direction and Pastoral Supervision.

Learn more about The Carmelite Centre by visiting [www.thecarmelitecentremelbourne.org](http://www.thecarmelitecentremelbourne.org).

**We wish Luke and Daryl well in their ministry at The Carmelite Centre.**



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# A Legacy of a Lifetime - Des McGrath

**Des McGrath** was a humble man, grounded in deep faith and a lifelong commitment to social justice. Born in January 1954, his life began in heartbreak, his father having passed away in an accident six months before Des was born.

Though he never had the chance to know his father, Des was lovingly raised by his mother and grandmother, surrounded by the steadfast support of family and friends. Sadly, Des's own life was cut short by a rare cancer, and he passed away in November 2023.

Growing up in the Brisbane suburb of Camp Hill, Des began his education at just four years old at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School. He later completed both his primary and secondary schooling at St Laurence's Christian Brothers College in South Brisbane.

His Catholic education, together with a strong spiritual upbringing, laid the foundation for the life he would lead. For Des, faith was not just a belief—it was a way of being. It shaped how he saw the world, how he treated others, and how he dedicated himself to making a difference.

To his family and friends, Des was a private, softly spoken, and deeply humble man. You would never hear it from him, but he was a renowned plant breeding scientist whose work left a lasting impact on the agricultural industry in Australia and protected the \$55 million tomato and \$45 million capsicum industries from disease.

In 1989 Des was awarded an Australia Day Achievement Medal for this work. Yet in his own words, he was simply “a humble public servant.”

But Des's quiet nature belied the depth of his contributions—not only in science but also in service to others. His legacy extends far beyond the laboratory and the field.

A devoted supporter of the Carmelites, Des was committed to their mission to support children, families, and young people in Timor-Leste. What began as regular donations twenty years earlier became something even more generous: a Bequest in his Will that will continue to impact lives long into the future.

**His belief in justice, dignity, and compassion lives on in the legacy of a lifetime – to continue the work of the Carmelites among those in need.**



If you wish to create your own 'legacy of a lifetime' it would be a privilege for the Carmelites to be considered in your Will. Bequests allow the Carmelites to continue their work supporting the spiritual, intellectual and physical wellbeing of people in Australia and Timor-Leste.

If you wish to talk with our Philanthropy Coordinator Helen Cridland about your intentions, please call mobile 0420 456 229 or email [philanthropy@carmelites.org.au](mailto:philanthropy@carmelites.org.au)

Carmel Contact is produced to keep the broader Carmelite family of Australia and Timor-Leste in touch with what has been happening with our friars, parishes and ministries.



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