New On-going Social Justice Initiative for St. Peter's

As you are aware Social Justice is integral to our Catholic faith through its teachings and practice and a crucial issue in our local and global communities. At St. Peter’s we endeavour to give all students the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities that touch the lives of real people both locally and globally.

This year we have decided as a school to undertake an on-going Social justice project involving the sponsorship of 5 children with the East Timor Children’s Fund. You can find out more about this organisation and its great work by going online at www.EastTimorChildrensFund.org. Our aim for this year is to raise $500 which will be sent to the Children’s Fund and distributed to help with the education of orphaned children by the Dominican Sisters, who run several orphanages in Dili and surrounding areas.

Throughout its history the small country of East Timor has gone through a lot from war and invasion through to independence.

The people have all suffered, and are still suffering greatly but none more so than the children who, throughout their struggles have remained happy and friendly with a ready smile.

The poverty surrounding the families in East Timor is so great that half the children under five are stunted. Sixty per cent of the population has no safe source of drinking water and three-quarters have no access to electricity.

Education has been highlighted as a serious priority as half the country’s population cannot read. It is for these children that the East Timor Children’s Fund was formed. It was formed to give back to the children some hope for the future.

Without the continued generosity and support from sponsors the East Timor Children’s Fund would not be in a position to help these wonderful children who have been through so much hardship.

(courtesy of East Timor Children’s Fund website)

Life in East Timor

The living conditions in East Timor are very poor.

People outside the cities tend to grow food crops or fish and sell what they do not need in order to get money to support their families.

Half the population both adults and children are illiterate. They do not have access to on-going education.
The Dominican Orphanage in Bidau

The orphanage is home to about 45 children. Many of these children are not orphans, but the orphanage provides a home, education and opportunities for the children, who are sent in from remote areas. Their parents are very poor and believe that this is the only way their child will be able to access education and therefore have a future to look forward to.

As mentioned before St. Peter’s in undertaking an on-going commitment to sponsor 5 children through this fund. Each level will be holding a fund raiser in the first week of November. We are hoping to raise at least $500 from across the school. The money raised will be sent directly to the East Timor Children’s Fund and will be used to support the educational and community programs which it has initiated and manages. The money will help not only our 5 sponsored children but their communities also.

Soon we will be receiving some photos and information about our sponsored children, our hope is that as a school we will be able to have some on-going communication with the Dominican Sisters, who run the orphanage and school, if not with the individual children. We will also be able to access information about what is happening by checking the updates on the website.

We believe this will be a great way of raising the student’s awareness of some issues faced by one of our closest Asian neighbours (East Timor is 640km from Darwin, that is closer to Darwin than Melbourne) and provide us with a tangible action which we can take every year to answer God’s call for compassion and justice in our world.