

EAST TIMOR VISIT 5.3.11-12.3.11



The Water Tank



Craft Group Atauro



Dr Albert—ENT specialist



Young fishermen



Audiology



School visit



New Island Taxi

Everything seemed so familiar as we drove down the streets of Dili! You can see the improvements taking shape. Our curiosity was to see how things may have changed on Atauro.

The first day however saw us driving to Atabae (this is where Margaret and David Hall, Palms Volunteers and our companions, live). We visited Atabae in 2009, so it was a wonderful opportunity to visit friends made then and see what changes had taken place.

To reach Atabae, one must drive through Liquisar Parish which is now the Sister parish to our friends at Grovely Parish here in Brisbane. Sporting clothes were delivered on their behalf for use by the local school children.



There are a lot of road works taking place and unlike here, one must drive through the heavy machinery to get to the other side! It is all such a novelty to the local people, that they even play in the vicinity of the machinery—just slightly different to our WPH&S methods.



Due to heavy rainfalls, the major bridge between Dili and the western border has suffered structural damage and a limited number of cars now travel this bridge. All trucks stop at either side of the bridge and the local people have made a business out of unloading the trucks at one side and carting the many and varied goods across the bridge to the other side in home made carts—very enterprising!

We visited the FPET health centre in Atabae and the kindly. The kindly now operates on the verandah of the convent after a tree fell on the small structure which was their kindly building. Sister was so happy to receive our gift for the children, that she blessed our journey.



We celebrated Mass with the people of Atabae and it was a beautiful experience to hear the singing and to be so warmly welcomed into their parish. At the end of Mass the greetings, shaking of hands and attempts at conversations made us feel very privileged.



Leper and her family. Her son Sozinho was gravely ill last year, but is now full of life.

ATAURO

Time seems to stand still on Atauro in terms of simplicity, but yet there have been many changes. The craft group has grown, they have improved the resource centre in Vila and created a new one at Makadade, as well as added to the parish centre.

Some things have not changed—the usual ferry to the island has been out of action for over two months and there has been no power to Atauro

either for the last two months, so generators are in use where possible (when fuel is available).

We landed at what is a local tourist village run by Barry and his wife (Barry is a PALMS co-ordinator) and were greeted by the new form of taxi to the

island (see picture bottom left) - quite impressive!

After a 10 minute (one could say bumpy) journey to the settlement of Vila, we noticed that there were two new buildings, one being the art school and shop, and the other being accommodation for visitors to the island.



Leaving Ash Wednesday Mass

CONTACT:
Parish Office 3264 8283
Meetings held with MMT
Third Tuesday of the month

ENT ASSESSMENTS (Ear Nose & Throat)

We were accompanied by Dr Albert (an ENT specialist) and Matthew (an audiologist), both from Darwin. These highly experienced gentlemen volunteered their services to assess the hearing difficulties found on Atauro.

A makeshift clinic was set up in the Casa do Mare, using a generator to power the audiology equipment. Even without any language skills Matthew managed to communicate to his patients (all of whom were hearing impaired) what they needed to do—when you hear the sound, press this button. All the visitors that day, were amazed to see the laptop and on it a picture of inside someone's ear (us too!).

The ages of patients varied and one group that came for an assessment was a whole family. The father and four of the five children are all hearing impaired (see picture to the right)

While some conditions are genetic, others were not and this has sparked the interest of the two specialists who will be returning to Atauro in a few months time to undertake further assessments to try to understand the types of problems faced.

On their next visit, they will travel around the island (taking a generator with them), as past assessments have found around 95 people with hearing difficulties from various villages.

They are hoping to obtain donations of hearing aids from manufacturers, but may need assistance with the continued supply of batteries.



How do we send things to Atauro?

Everything we send to Atauro takes a long journey:

- Australia Post to Darwin—sponsored cost (truck)
- PDL Toll to Dili—free of charge (plane)
- Margaret & David collect the item from Dili—free of charge (land rover)
- Ferry or water taxi across to Atauro—free of charge (boat)
- Local taxi to Padre Chico —free of charge (truck or motor cycle)

If the goods are going to the outlying villages, then they take a further trip either by truck or boat.

MEDICINES FOR ATAURO

During the past year we have sent to the people of Atauro three boxes full of medicines. Some of which were donated and some purchased, using the funds from the Year 7 students of 2010.

Why do we buy the medicines here?

We are fortunate that we can purchase the medicines at discounted prices here in Australia and the medicines we purchase tend to be of a higher quality than the medicines that can be purchased in the pharmacies in Dili. A comparison was done while we were in Dili and we are paying equivalent, if not less than what would be paid in Dili for a inferior product.

How are medicines distributed?

Margaret Hall (PALMS volunteer / FPET) visits the island to make assessments. She issues medications where needed at the time and then leaves Padre Chico with a list of people to follow up (all ages) and what they will require. Padre Chico has a number of catechists that assist him with this.

VEGETABLE PATCHES

Due to the increased water supply available with the new water tank 15 pilot vegetable patches have been started and are tended by the community.



There is a natural medicines group at the community of San Paolo that are making medicines from local products to sell at the markets.



We recently sent US\$150 to assist these women in their work.

MONEY FOR ATAURO

Padre Chico and the fishermen of Atauro Island are passionate about creating a new story for the young fishermen.

Over the last 18 months, we have raised money through various avenues and the sum of US\$3,500 was recently transferred to Atauro to fund the building of a new boat by a local boat maker on Atauro, as well as the purchase of a motor and some nets, lanterns and other equipment.

Padre Chico assures us that the boat maker is very experienced and will do an excellent job. It is wonderful to know that the money is being used to create employment for local people both in the building of the boat, as well as its use in the future.

It will be constructed of timber in a traditional style, so that it is easy for the fishermen to use.

Visitors to the island will be taken out to the reef surrounding the island. It is also hoped to use the boat to conduct training programs for the preservation of the reef.

The boat will be community owned and the fishermen that use the boat will visit outlying villages, helping with training programs as well as teaching better fishing methods.

Facts about Atauro

28 nautical miles from Dili

9km wide / 25kms in length / 104 km² in area

From the mountains and at the narrowest part of the island one can see both sides of the island at once.

20 small hamlets, divided into five main villages—Makadade, Makili, Bikili, Vila, Beloi

Population—approx. 10,000

Religion—Catholic and Protestant

Pineapples—3,000 grown last year!

FISHERMEN'S FESTIVAL (The week of the fishermen) - June



Held annually, this festival is a celebration and is a very important event in the lives of the people on the island of Atauro. Fishermen from around the island come together to fish and reap the harvest of the sea to share amongst the community.

It is Padre Chico's aim to have completed prior to this festival a mechanic's workshop where the fishermen may work on the motors for their boats.

As an extension to this, they will also require a generator. We are hoping to raise some money to be able to assist with the purchase of this generator.



Born with a cleft pallet, last year this

little girl had an operation (on the USA naval ship 'Mercy') to have her cleft pallet rectified and while we were unable to obtain a current photo of her, Margaret and Padre Chico tell us that her circumstances have improved and her life has been made easier because of the operation.

SCHOOL RESOURCES

With the hundreds of children living on Atauro Island, school resources are extremely limited (or non-existent).

The teachers on Atauro do the best they can with what they have. And while the schools are very basic (many classrooms have holes in the ceilings, paint peeling off the walls, and no playground or sporting fields) the children love to be there.

At present we are arranging with our parish school for the children to be involved in the creation of resources for the schools on Atauro eg flash cards for numbers, letters, various games using English, Tetun and Portugese (the three languages taught in school). Teachers at All Saints are looking at how this project will fit into the school curriculum.

This should begin in Term 2.

Once the children have created the resources, we will hold a 'working bee' to laminate and cut out all the pieces.

Parishioners are invited to participate in this activity and we will let you know a date as soon as we can.

DIVING MASKS

The image tells the story. The traditional diving mask is made from mangrove roots (or similar timber) and the lenses are from any form of glass that is available (eg old bottles). The new masks are a big change for the fishermen, but the young fishermen are embracing this change.



As a parting gift, Padre Chico gave a letter to us. In it he talks of the future for Atauro and the hopes they have.

1. To build small community networks starting from Bible studies and social education, giving a voice to those that are not listened to.
2. Organise ongoing learning programs (Bible studies, history of the Church, education of the CAVR, welcome and hospitality, new potential, truth and reconciliation)
3. Full support of the fishermen. To be able to prepare a new story for them, with priority attention to the young fishermen.
4. Find and assist those with a disability (the deaf, the paralysed etc).
5. Support the communities producing Biojoia art, 80% of whom are deaf/mute. 'A beautiful community'
6. Start up some work that really helps with the presence and reflection, for those women who live in patriarchal situations and are culturally oppressed, eg, young women with children, maternal health, natural health groups, women tending to pilot vegetable patches.
7. Permanent support for young people living off the sea.
8. Monthly organisation of missionary education graduates and visiting missions.

PALMS Australia—we keep mentioning PALMS. Who are they? This organization started in Sydney in 1956. Their vision is to participate in and develop networks that link and engage people across cultures in order to cooperate in reducing poverty and achieve a just, sustainable, interdependent and peaceful world.

PALMS has volunteers all over the world. If you think you would be interested in volunteering a year to assist those in need, contact PALMS today to discuss this further: 02 9518 9551 or visit their website. www.palms.org.au

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE 300 YOUNG PEOPLE ON ATAURO ISLAND THAT WILL RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION IN TWO WEEKS.

THANKS TO ALL SAINTS PARISH SCHOOL CHILDREN

Each year the Year 7s of All Saints hold a Market Day to raise money for Mission work.

During the past two years, Atauro Island has been blessed to be the recipient of some of those funds.

The Year 7s of 2009 contributed \$1,500 which has been used towards the boat and medical supplies (incl. infant needs).

The Year 7s of 2010 contributed \$1,800, which was used for the purchase of medicines, baby formula and bottles, baby clothes and nappies, toys, diving masks, sporting equipment (soccer balls & volley ball nets and balls).

A member of our team visited the Year 7s in 2009 and will once again visit with the current Year 7s later this year, as part of their Social Justice module, to talk to them about the children of Atauro and the benefits of this gifting.



PARTNERING — ATAURO

WHERE IS ATAURO ISLAND?



SECONDHAND PENS, PENCILS, SHARPENERS, RUBBERS, RULERS, EXERCISE BOOKS

Thank you to everyone who sent in unwanted items for this. These items were distributed to the schools (Vila Kindergarten, Primary School, Junior High School and Senior High School, Makadade Kindergarten, Primary School, Adult Education and Resource Centre). Parents are required to purchase one book and one pen for each child attending school, however there are many parents who cannot afford to do this.

When we first looked at the mountain of items that were donated, we thought that we had more than enough, but it has only scratched the surface. If you were meaning to send items in, but didn't get a chance, it's not too late, this can be done at any time. Just leave them in the parish office marked for Atauro.

"Believe in the people that work and believe in the young people who are not yet fully set out in life". Padre Chico



WHERE TO FROM HERE:

- First**—The building of the boat, purchase of the motor and supply of equipment. Sponsorship of Art Group 'Biojoia' and Natural Health Womens Group. (money already sent)
- Second**—Shortly, we are holding a raffle to raise money to fund the completion of a mechanic's workshop, the purchase of a generator, sponsorship of the ladies craft group and catechists.
- Third**—Involving our parish school children in the creation of school resources. And in turn parishioners via the working bee.
- Fourth**—Secondhand pens, pencils etc, as well as old readers and resource books for the resource centre.
- Fifth, Sixth.....**—there is much more we can do to continue working with the people of Atauro. More to come!

Always remember It's not just about money. It's about praying, sharing and supporting.

Please pray that we as a community may be drawn closer to our fellow sister parishioners. Pray that some of our parishioners may travel to Atauro to spend time with the people to help grow our relationship with them and make us real to them. Wouldn't it be wonderful if someone from Atauro could also come to Australia one day!

Some questions to ponder:
Do you have any ideas you would like to share with our Sister Parish team?
Do you want to visit Atauro?

Talk to a member of the Mission Ministry Team

"We try to practice a welcoming community for everyone. Here, it is not easy. New paths only exist with admiration and a sense of support."
 Padre Chico

MASS—how does it differ?

- Catechist prays with parishioners prior to Mass
- Collection is taken to the altar as a gift
- About 12 or so altar servers/choir members process in with Padre
- Church Clerk or Catechist reads the news items prior to the end of Mass

STORIES TO SHARE

Throughout Mass the music was beautiful and it was thought that this must have been a recording, but it wasn't. We noticed a young man sitting on a small plastic stool with an electric keyboard balancing on another two plastic stools (his knees were up past the keyboard it was that low). This young man played all the music for the Mass without a hint of sheet music in front of him! How when there are no music lessons on Atauro?

Two young women volunteered to help us deliver the items to the schools and at the end we gifted to them 4 biros, 5 coloured pencils, 1 sharpener, 1 ruler, 1 rubber and a pencil case. As the girls came from a family of nine girls, this meant either one pen or one pencil per person. Their reaction was priceless and you would have thought we had given them \$100 each, they were so grateful.

Ways you can contribute:

***Prayer**

*** Buy a Gift Card**
(your choice of Maternal Health, Fishing Industry, Education, Water Provision, General)

***Make a donation**
(leave this at the parish office marked for Atauro Island— let us know if you want to support a special area)

***Commit to a monthly contribution by way of Direct Deposit to assist any particular area you are passionate about (any amount).**

A RAFFLE OF ITEMS FROM THE ATAURO CRAFT GROUP WILL BE HELD SOMETIME SHORTLY. KEEP AN EYE OUT IN THE PARISH NEWSLETTER FOR A DATE. PLEASE SUPPORT THIS, AS ALL THE MONEY RAISED WILL GO DIRECTLY TO ATAURO.