



In Myanmar alone, around a million people are suffering from the effects of heavy flooding – many houses, supplies and crops were destroyed. Photo: Valeria Turisi/Malteser International

# MONSOON FLOODING IN SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA: DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

The long awaited rainy season has finally arrived, leading to terrible flooding in many countries of South and South East Asia. The situation in Myanmar is especially dramatic, where unusually strong monsoon rains have triggered the most severe flooding for decades and affecting around a million people. In Malteser International's project regions in and around Sittwe – the capital of the severely affected Rakhine state – however, no dead or wounded were reported thanks to a successful Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) training program for the villagers.

"Our early warning system worked here," reported Malteser International Country Coordinator in Myanmar, Johannes Kaltenbach, "when we called the villages that have DRR teams trained by us, we found that everybody was already prepared and informed. They either had brought themselves to safety in good time, or been evacuated. The teams were also able to keep us up to date by mobile phone with what aid they needed." Malteser International has been training the villagers in and around Sittwe in DRR since 2005, as well as creating DRR teams and undertaking training sessions for local officials.

Although they may have survived the disaster relatively unscathed, the people affected by the flooding are now in urgent need of food, drinking water, medication and a roof over their heads. Following a rapid assessment in 80 villages in Rakhine state, Malteser International provided flood relief in Sittwe, as well as in the two northern rural districts of Maungdaw and Butthidaung in collaboration with local partners. In Pakistan, Malteser International is assisting local health officials to deal with flooding in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In and around Sittwe, Malteser International has provided local residents

with essential aid material such as clothing, cooking equipment, water filters, blankets, sleeping mats, mosquito nets and hygiene articles – thanks to financial support from the Swiss embassy. In the coming weeks, food and drinking water will also be distributed to around 10,000 people. Malteser International is actively treating the sick and wounded with nine medical teams in Maungdaw and Butthidaung. Malteser International has also begun the process of draining and cleaning reservoirs of drinking water. Around 3,500 affected women will receive kits containing clothing and hygiene articles.

Unusually strong monsoon rains, flooding and landslides have affected millions of people in other South and South East Asian countries. In Pakistan, Malteser International: one of the few international aid organizations working in the especially hard-hit Chitral district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, is supporting local health officials by providing medication, hygiene and baby kits, as well as mosquito nets, water purification tablets, information material and medical personnel. At present, 90% of the district is cut off from the outside world, and many villages are only reachable by helicopter. In Nepal, where Malteser International has been providing emergency relief since the severe earthquake in April, helping the population in the painful process of rebuilding their lives, the monsoon rains have made a bad situation even worse. Countless numbers of people who lost their homes in the earthquake have been left with nothing but tarpaulins for shelter.

**Malteser International is the relief agency of the Order of Malta for humanitarian aid**

# TIMOR PLAZA ORDER OF MALTA MEDICAL CLINIC

In the October 2014 newsletter we reported on an agreement with the owners of Timor Plaza, the largest shopping centre in Timor-Leste, who generously agreed to build a new medical clinic for the Order of Malta.

The Order of Malta Jape Alem Memorial Clinic will be provided rent free for a period of 9 years and is located on the ground floor of a new building at the edge of Timor Plaza and is not far from a very poor area of Dili.



Construction is now well underway and completion is expected in April 2016. The clinic and its services have been designed in accordance with "best practice" Australian medical standards following the guidelines of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Services will be provided free to those who cannot afford to pay.

The Clinic, which will be managed and funded by the Order of Malta, will consist of 3 main consultation rooms, medically trained staff and modern medical equipment. It is expected receive up to 200-300 patients a day. It will also incorporate an up-skilling program for locally trained Timorese doctors and nurses.

Our current focus is to source funding and donations for the necessary equipment and medical supplies. We are also in the early stages of establishing a Volunteer Program with various Medical Institutions in Australia that will enable fully qualified Doctors and Nurses to volunteer their professional skills at the clinic.

**If you would like to support the Timor Plaza Clinic you can make a donation on page 5.**



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- Download: a copy of the Australian Hospitaller 2014 – an Annual Review of the Australian Association of the Order of Malta
- Gallery: 2015 Order of Malta Annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes
- Regular Updates on the activities of Malteser International

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# OCTOBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

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## LECTURE SERIES: SAME-SEX 'MARRIAGE': EVOLUTION OR DECONSTRUCTION OF MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY?

On 22 July at St Mary's Cathedral School Hall, the Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher OP was the speaker to a full house in the latest lecture in the NSW Branch's 'Defence of the Faith Lecture Series'.

Over 500 people listened intently as the Archbishop examined five common slogans in the current debate: "that it's all about justice, that sexual differences don't matter, that it's all about love, that it's all about the numbers and that it doesn't affect me."

**"I want to offer some reasons – not decrees from on high or from the past, not expressions of hatred or prejudice – but reasons I hope anyone can understand".**

Throughout the lecture the Archbishop stressed his respect for the dignity of people with same-sex attraction and compassion for why they would want to express their love publicly;

*"We recognise that people of the same sex can love each other, sometimes deeply; that they express this in ways that seem similar to the ways married men and women express their love; and that some people want to commit to this in a public ceremony."*

He added: "They are usually good-willed people, who feel they are missing out on something precious. Because we want the best for them, we feel the tug of the view that everything that makes opposite-sex

couples happy should be open to them too.

*"We want no more of the discriminatory or violent treatment that such people often suffered in the past and sometimes still suffer."*

But marriage was an institution intimately bound to the well-being of children and was a natural institution ordained to enable the union of husband and wife to be more than the sum of its parts, the Archbishop said.

*"If we are not as good at entertaining and sustaining marriages as we were in the past, it is surely significantly because we are at least ambivalent about the defining dimensions of marriage as faithful, fruitful and final."*

*"So, too, the notion of marriage as a sacred act has been abandoned by many. And now another dimension, the sexual complementarity of marriage – the very thing which points beyond the union itself towards family life – is also being questioned."*

*"All that may be left at the end of this half-century-long unpicking of marriage will be an emotional-sexual bond that places the wishes of adults for long-lived intimacy above all else."*

The Archbishop told the crowd that appeals to polling numbers and to not being 'on the wrong side of history' were simply ephemeral and no substitute for reason.

*"If marriage is a natural institution that pre-exists Church and state why should governments get involved at all? For one reason only: because the 'marital acts' that bring children into the world also seal and express the 'marital unions' that provide for the long-term nurture of those children."*

*"Marriage binds those whose love-making was life-making both to each other as husband and wife and to those children as mother and father. The benefits to children of having the contributions of both a Mum and a Dad, committed to each other and to them over the long haul, are well-established in human experience and social science research."*

*"In that sense, marriage is the best Department of Population, Health, Education, Welfare and Crime Prevention we've ever come up with. Other friendships may do other good things and be worthy of support; but only marriage unites a man and a woman and directs their complementary sexual-reproductive natures to the having and rearing of children. And that is why, uniquely of all human relationships, states have an interest in their success."*

**Missed the lecture? Visit [www.orderofmalta.org.au](http://www.orderofmalta.org.au) to watch it online and read Archbishop Fisher's full notes.**

Photos: Giovanni Portelli

## NURSE VOLUNTEER IN TIMOR-LESTE ACCOUNT BY CARLY HYLAND

My sister, Sammy and I are both registered nurses who work within the cardiothoracic intensive care unit for St Vincents hospital Sydney.

Nursing is a profession that can take you all around the world, giving you the ability to broaden your care to other countries and nations in need.

My sister and I were both fortunate to be given the chance to accompany Ambassador David Scarf and fellow members of the Order of Malta to Timor-Leste, an opportunity that we were both very excited about.

Our experience in the country of East Timor consisted of travelling around visiting numerous clinics and hospitals. We helped where was needed and most of all learnt a great deal about the current state of health of the country.

During our short stays in such clinics and hospitals it was more than apparent that the health system lacked most things that would be of critical value in order to run



The Jesuit Clinic at Raiaco. From left Dr Robert Costa, Sammy Hyland RN, Rev Dr Bong SJ, Carly Hyland RN, Dr Ian Marshall AM and Sister Bibianne Prado SPC

and serve the people with both adequate and acceptable in health care systems within Australia. Essential things such as life saving medication and diagnostic instruments were often non-existent in most clinics. These clinics worked extremely hard to make do with what was made available for them.

In contrast to the health care environment, the country of Timor-Leste is as picturesque and inspiring country as I've ever visited. The Timorese we encountered were both loving and caring, and willing to take time out of their lives to educate my sister and I of the countries rich history and beautiful culture. It is these qualities that provide the strong foundations for their health care system, which helps to supplement the

deficiencies previously outlined.

Upon reflection of our trip to Timor-Leste, this is a country in need of many things in order to have a health system that provides a level of care which one would hope for in a country of their population size. The Order of Malta provides an excellent avenue for individuals all over the world who have the expertise and passion to assist those in need, and we are thankful to have been able to experience the above through their assistance.

It isn't a matter of how much you can help, or how much you can give, because even the smallest contribution will help this country build a health care system it deserves.

*heartened that I still see those on the street, wearing them in this cold weather. This fresh batch of coats will keep many of them warm."*

Brian Tierney, Director, Shopfront WA

*"Thank you so much for the coats we received for our homeless persons."*

*With the very cold days we have had lately the coats will keep our people lovely and warm. We were delighted to have so many and we will be able to share them around to our many homeless persons, the numbers are growing each day".*

Shirley Kelynack, President of Waitara, St Vincent de Paul

*"These coats are highly valued by our clients, they do the job of providing basic protection against the elements and give a sense of security. One man returned his coat when he obtained housing so that another person sleeping rough could have the benefit of it as he had."*

Ian Cox, Director of the Hutt Street Centre for the Homeless, Adelaide

*"Our St Vincent de Paul Conference Centre would sincerely like to thank you for organising the donation of Coats from The Knights of Malta. As in previous years these have been gratefully accepted by us and the same goes for this year. We wish to advise the coats that have been given to our clients, who are in need, are most appreciative of them. We decided we would also like to share the donation with Glen Innes and Armidale St Vincent de Paul Centre's, as it was a most generous donation, they have been forwarded on."*

Pat Yeo, President, St Brigid's Conference, Dubbo and Dan Sullivan, St Jude's Conference, Dubbo

*"We took delivery of 11 boxes of Homeless coats, so please sincerely thank all those involved in raising funds for these and organising their delivery. I had finished giving out the left over coats from last year about a month ago and have been*



## 2015 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN ADELAIDE

In July over 130 members converged on the Hilton Hotel Adelaide for the 2015 National Assembly of the Australian Association of the Order of Malta.

At the opening, the Australian Association's President, Dr Ian Marshall welcomed everyone. He was followed by an address from Keynote Speaker, Fr Denis Edwards, who guided those present through the

key messages and themes of the Pope's Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium. Attendees then broke into small discussion groups to consider the parts of the Pope's Exhortation that most resonated with them and what reflections these prompted in their personal lives as Christians and Members of the Order.

After a casual lunch, several representatives from local Catholic charities addressed the Assembly, bringing home how Catholic charities can be an expression of the Pope's Exhortation and in the evening a Vigil Ceremony was held at the historic Dominican Church of St Laurence's, North Adelaide. Day 1 then concluded with a more casual evening of food, wine and convivial fellowship at the National Wine Centre in North Adelaide

Day 2 comprised the more formal business of the Association, including reports from Office Bearers to the Membership and a Solemn High Mass during which Confere Dr Ian Marshall invested 19 new Members. The Mass was held at St Patrick's Cathedral and was concelebrated by Archbishop Coleridge. The day concluded with a Formal Gala Dinner in the evening, where the Keynote Speaker, His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AO Governor of South Australia was invested with the Grand Cross of Merit.

The final day was celebrated at Solemn High Mass at St Ignatius Church, Norwood.

Special thanks must go to the SA Organising Committee on such a successful and inspiring Assembly.



## INVITATION: LOURDES DAY MASS CELEBRATIONS IN MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY

The Order of Malta invites you to the Lourdes Day Mass, a mass for the sick and fragile in our community. A blessing of the sick will follow the celebration of the Liturgy with water brought from the spring at the shrine of Lourdes.

It is a manifestation of the Order's commitment to fulfil their mission to nurture, witness and protect the faith and serve the Lord's poor and sick.

### Melbourne Mass:

- \* Date: Saturday, 5 December 2015
- \* Time: 10.30am
- \* Location: St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne

### Sydney Mass:

- \* Date: Saturday, 5 December 2015
- \* Time: 10.15am
- \* Location: St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney
- \* Wheelchair access is by the side pedestrian gate in St Mary's Road (near College St corner)
- \* Parking access: Paid, secure parking is available at the Cook and Phillip Park Aquatic & Fitness Centre carpark (entrance from Cathedral Street).

## COATS FOR THE HOMELESS 2015 DISTRIBUTION

Letters of Thanks from those we serve



\$100 will buy three specially designed, warm shower-proof coats for people who find themselves without a home next winter.

*"On behalf of St Jude's and St. Brigid's Conference members we would appreciate if you could convey our appreciation to your fellow Knights of Malta for the donation of 9 overcoats."*

*The homeless sleep in a variety of places in our Dubbo community. People who have received these coats appreciate the warmth the coats provide."*

Pat Yeo, President, St Brigid's Conference, Dubbo and Dan Sullivan, St Jude's Conference, Dubbo

*"We took delivery of 11 boxes of Homeless coats, so please sincerely thank all those involved in raising funds for these and organising their delivery. I had finished giving out the left over coats from last year about a month ago and have been*



Practical Charity: Judge Rackemann, Councillor Paul Tully and Derek Pingel at a BBQ at The Diggers Rest Park, Goodna. Picture: Catholic Leader

Special thanks to Simon National Carriers who have again supported the Coats project by providing subsidised freight services. Particular mention must be made of Michael Hogno and company owner David Simon for their ongoing commitment to our coats program. Their support has meant that the money we have saved on freight will enable us to purchase more Coats for people who need them in 2016.

Thank you to everyone who supported the 2015 Campaign. We are already in the planning stages of the 2016 distribution. Please support our efforts.



Go to page 5 to make a donation to support the Coats for the Homeless 2016 distribution.

## Q&A COMMUNITY CARE VAN VOLUNTEER



Lilo R: Volunteer Paul Bettar, Nurse, Erin Longbottom and Member of the Order, Dunstan de Souza

In the July 2015 Newsletter we reported a new project - the NSW Branch Community Care Van. The project has been running since June and provides healthcare and the Order's Coats for the Homeless to Sydney's poor, sick and homeless on a weekly basis.

Regular volunteer, Paul Bettar, provides some insight into the project.

**Q:** How did you learn about the volunteer program?

**A:** I was introduced to the program by a Member of the Order - Dunstan de Souza

**Q:** Why did it interest you?

**A:** For me personally it was a great opportunity to be at the coal face helping people. Volunteering to assist with this program was a realistic experience, highlighting the basic things that we take for granted daily, such as security of a home, sharing a meal with family, having facilities to maintain hygiene etc. We all donate to good causes but participating in this program is more than just making a monetary donation.

**Q:** Describe what a Community Care Van 'run' involves.

**A:** The run commences at St Vincent's Hospital. All Volunteers meet at the Van (St Vincent's Car Park) and together with one of the Nurses from St Vincent's we leave the Hospital generally by 5.15pm. Each week will be to different locations; Central Station, Belmore Park, Wentworth Park etc. The "Run" usually will be finished by 7.00pm.

**Q:** Has anything in particular surprised you about the runs?

**A:** It really hasn't taken long for the people to recognise the Order. The most interesting thing I found is those who had their own jackets declined our offer (didn't take a jacket because they were free) and how very thankful those who took the jackets were....What we offer does go a long way.



If you are interested in learning more about being a volunteer driver for the Community Care Van, please email info@smom.org.au

The Community Care Van will also run through spring and summer. It will continue to provide healthcare from a qualified Nurse and will offer the homeless sun protection items and water. If you would like to donate to support this project, you can do so on page 5.

## I WANT TO HELP

You can make a donation by completing this form and returning it in the reply paid envelope provided.

I am happy for the Order to allocate my donation to where the need is greatest; or

Please accept a gift towards the:

- Timor-Leste Humanitarian Projects
- Coats for the Homeless
- NSW Community Care Van

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Send me information about leaving the Order a bequest

Please remove me from your mailing list.

Name

Address

State  Postcode  Telephone

Please find enclosed a Cheque/ Money Order

(payable to 'The Order of Malta') for \$  or;

Please debit my credit card the amount of \$

Frequency  Once only  Monthly Card Type  Visa  MasterCard

Credit Card Number

Expiry Date  Cardholder name

Signature