



## **ASIA/EAST TIMOR-The missionaries working in the country have been recognized as "heroes" by Parliament**

Dili (Agenzia Fides) - On the occasion of the National Day of the Country, the President of East Timor, Jose Ramos Horta, has praised the work of many Catholic missionaries who lived and worked with the local population before independence from Indonesia. In his speech, reported by "Province Express", biweekly Australian Catholic Jesuit publication, Horta described them as "heroes". In particular, he recalled an Italian Salesian priest, some Canossian nuns, three Portuguese Jesuit missionaries in addition to another German Jesuit, who was assassinated in 1999. Parliament has proposed to give citizenship to a group of these missionaries, delivering the first Timorese passport during the 90 th birthday of Father João Felgueiras. The 3 Portuguese missionaries, Father João Felgueiras, Father Jose Martins and brother Daniel de Ornelas (deceased), arrived in the country in the early '70s and remained there for over 24 years during the Indonesian invasion of the island. Thanking the Prime Minister for granting citizenship, father Felgueiras stressed the need to "encourage other religious men and women religious to leave for Timor, to evangelize a growing number of children, so they themselves can take on the role of leaders in faith in this far corner of the world". The Jesuits have always been involved with the people of East Timor, both before and after the independence of the country, particularly through education at San Jose High School in Dili, entrusted to them in 1993 and will return to the diocese at the end 2011. The commitment of the religious in the sector will continue with a new project already in the starting phase in the west of Dili. The Jesuits are also present in the parish of Railaco and a community center in Suai, and are also responsible for the pastoral and health care and education of children in the village. Many young people of East Timor have entered the novitiate and are currently studying in the country to continue the mission of the Society of Jesus (PA) (Agenzia Fides 22/06/2011)

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For more details on the commitment of the Jesuits in East Timor: [www.jesuitmission.org.au](http://www.jesuitmission.org.au):