

Jakarta, 19 November 1981.

Mgr. J.J. Gerry D.D.
Secretary
Australian Episcopal Conference

Your Excellency,

I was indeed very delighted with your kind letter addressed to us, as the Secretary of the Australian Bishop's Conference in order to help the people of East Timor and to encourage us in the present circumstances. Therefore many thanks to Your Excellency.

I have been here in Jakarta a couple of days to attend the Indonesian Bishop's Conference, as an observer and not as a full member of MAWI, because the Diocese of Dili has been under the Holy See, through the Nunciature of Indonesia in Jakarta.

I will do my best to answer your questions you proposed to me:

1. At present, the social and political situation in East Timor is indeed tragic. With the military operation of cleaning PRETELIN during July, August and September 1981 many Timorese people were killed, including the innocent children, the pregnant women and the defenceless people without any crime except the willing to be independent from all oppression. Therefore, the Catholic Church, running all risks, had to denounce to the world the atrocities committed during four days of the siege near the famous rock of S. Anthony in Lacluta, where more than five hundred Timorese were killed.

2. In my private opinion the support we need very much at the present moment is money with which we can get in Dilly some food, rice and corn for the survival of the people. Of course you could send money to me, to the Diocese of Dili through "The Chase Manhattan Bank Jakarta, R.C. K.W.I No. 665-0-00450-7-179 with the destination to the Diocese of Dili. The number is the account of MAWI.

3. The reaction was negatif and perhaps emotional in the first moment, but afterwards... it will be also positif.

4. From Australian Church Agencies we hope, if possible, the food assistance, as well as money.

5. About the answer, it would be better to have before a good connection with the Central Government in Jakarta.

6. In the case of the expected famine the most available channels of communication will be by sea with ship from Australia to Dilly.

With my best regards to Your Excellency,

I remain Yours in J.C.

P.S. Please send the letter to me
Through the Nunciature of Jakarta
where I have been as a guest.
The Nunciature will take care of
my correspondence and send to Dilly.

+ *[Signature]*
+ *[Signature]*
Apostolic Administrator

Thanks.