

Pertapaan Trappist Lamanabi, Indonesia



The Trappist community of Lamanabi, Indonesia

Our monastery is located in a remote place: Lamanabi, Tanjung Bunga on the very eastern tip of the island Flores, east of Bali and west of Timor in the Indonesian string of islands. Both Pertapaan and Biara mean monastery among the Indonesian Catholics but Pertapaan, derived from the Japanese word for asceticism, is reserved for monastic or contemplative religious houses.

Since our foundation in 1995 by four monks from Pertapaan Rawa-seneng in Indonesia, we have had 20 observers come to the monastery to learn about our life. Presently we have 12 monks in our community: seven solemnly professed, one in first profession, one local priest who is

transferring into the community, two novices and one postulant.

About one kilometer from the monastery there is a compound of 37 families, predominantly Catholic, with a total of 185 adults and many children. Our presence has allowed a better liturgy for the people. Many attend Mass every evening and on Sundays they all attend, participate in choir and do the Scripture readings.

There has been very much interaction between the monks and the local people ever since we came here. When the bishop of Larantuka invited us into his diocese, he offered us over 100 hectares of land, a gift from the people. In October 2001 the people built for us a huge traditional hall where we celebrated the ordination of one of our brothers—a hall that could hold over 250 guests and 50 priests. The women did the cooking for this celebration, donating a pig and rice. They also arranged for a choir.

On our side, besides the liturgies, we provide some limited scholarship money to better education. We also helped in financing and building a multi-purpose hall for the villagers' meetings and occasional Mass. We have also been able to bring them fresh water via pipes from a rock in the local mountain. Water gushes out of the rock—almost like the



The "road" leading to the monastery

Water of Meribah.



The monks are practicing a dance for Brother Simon's Silver Jubilee celebration

We are trying to sustain ourselves by cultivating cocoa, coffee and some fruit-bearing trees. We grow bananas, pineapples, corn and other vegetables for our own consumption. Sometimes we have enough to sell in the nearest towns.

Our guest house was completed just recently and it joins our chapel and simple monastery with novitiate and dining room attached. We hope to build a church but for now we must concentrate on developing a road and improving our communication and accessibility. Of primary concern is our community formation and nurturing our means of livelihood.

Much work has to be done with the barely-explored plot of land entrusted to us in order to develop it as we should. But, we firmly believe that it is the grace of God that brought us here to this unique flower island, Flores, among the very simple and kind-hearted people of Lamanabi.

Written by David Santo, OSCO