

## OFFICIAL NOTICE FROM THE BISHOP OF DILI

As is public knowledge by means of TVRI in its broadcast "DUNIA DALAM BERITA" (an Indonesian news interview programme) on the 28th October, an official communique was released related to the sad events of the early morning of the 28th October 1991 which took place at the entrance of the Church at Montael and in the surrounding area. For the good of the Church and of the Timorese people, there must be no repetition of these events.

The greater part of this official communique, released widely in the press (Angkatan Bersenjata, Kompas, Jawa Pos, Surya, Suara Jawa Timur....) seems to indicate that the end justifies the means!

Be aware, then, of the following:

1. From November 1991, a group of young people had taken refuge in the buildings around the Church at Motael for the alleged reason of personal security.
2. Contacts had been established between the civil and military authorities and the Apostolic Administrator, the Bishop of Dili, and the parish priest of Motael, for a solution to the situation of these youngsters.
3. The military authorities, above all, had taken every interest in clearing the presbytery of these young people, before the visit of the Portuguese Parliamentarians and the United Nations Delegation.
4. In these last few weeks, and more intensely during the week of 21-28 October, up to the final point of the assault in the early morning of 28th October, some movement beyond the usual was noticed - individuals on motor cycles checking on the Church, generally after the dead hours in the city.
5. In this official release, we mean by "dead hours" the time from midnight until four in the morning when, for all practical purposes, the city is without life. Ordinarily, at this time, only police, military, INTEL agents and one or other late-night citizens are on the move.
6. In the early morning of the 28th October, a group of individuals on motorcycles began to encircle the Presbytery yard as well as the Church of Motael, shouting insults. This time, the words became actions, and they began to throw stones at the front of the Church and down one side (the area called "Taman Mini"), and they went in towards the entrance of the Church. A physical encounter was inevitable (at 2.00 a.m. precisely). Meanwhile, there were some other individuals who also began to advance on the scene, holding pistols. These came from the beach area and entered through

the gate at the front of the Church where the young man Sebastian was eventually found dead, bullet-ridden. He met his death 18 metres from the gate in the fence around the Church, at the edge of the road on the other side. The other victim, Afonso, lay 23 metres away from Sebastian's body. However, following the traces of blood along the path, there was a pool of blood 57 metres away from Afonso's body. He had died from a stab wound and had also been shot. (Translator's note: "ferido com arma branca" literally means "wounded by a white gun". I do not know what this reference means).

7. Then towards morning (6.00 a.m.) the police began a search of the presbytery and its various buildings - the clinic, sacristy, and a house where caretakers and other helpers live, and where in fact the young people had been gathered. The search in the Church itself took place eight hours later and with the permission of the Bishop who accompanied those police permitted entry, but in a number not more than four.

8. During these searches, anti-Indonesian pamphlets were seized, along with Fretilin and Portuguese flags, and a number of other objects in the caretaker's house and outside the sacristy - knives, sticks and iron bars. But not inside the Church as had been tendentiously said. In the Church, yes, three individuals were found...two in the Church itself and one in the tower, where they had fled in the middle of the confusion.

9. Finally, after the Bishop spoke to the people who had gathered around at the sound of the Church bells (at 2.00 a.m.), people went back to their homes (9.00 a.m.) going in groups to the suburbs. The Bishop himself took those living furthest away in his own car. Of those who stayed behind, 16 were taken by the police in their truck. Those taken to the police station numbered 18 in all. The other three had been accompanied by the parish priest of Motael as far as the police station a little more than an hour before.

These are the facts that the Diocese wants to offer for public awareness.

Given at Dili on 2nd November 1991.

Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo SDB

Titular Bishop of Lorium

Apostolic Administrator of Dili

(Signature and Diocesan seal appended to Portuguese original)

(N.B. This translation was offered by Fr. Julian Fox SDB, Australian Salesian Provincial, who was in Dili shortly after the events referred to above. Bishop Belo gave this official release to Fr. Fox on Tuesday 5th November).