

## A Parish Picnic

Seasonal workers at Port Augusta have had a difficult year. Their 6-months rotation began in September 2019 and March 2020. They have been here working for more than two years without a holiday and without seeing their spouses and children, except on the phone screen.

This year, COVID-19 went through their overcrowded cabin accommodation (3 to a bedroom, 9 to a cabin) followed by a string of deaths of close relatives - young and old, back home in Timor. They worry about their future as some were being offered four-year contracts by tomato farm owners and others are stuck on two-month contracts.

All Saints Parish Pastoral Council wondered what we could do for our friends to cheer them up. We thought of a Parish Picnic at Adrian and Naomi Maloney's farm "Nowhere Else", located at Willochra Plain.

Mass was celebrated at the shearing shed and offered the intentions of Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, Hindus and agnostics. Twelve nationalities in all. The Mass was followed by lunch where you are back for seconds and thirds. Vietnamese orange balls were a culinary hit, as were the lamb chops and bawans.

As the main event, Adrian lined up to shear the first sheep. The jostling for position was fierce. More photos and videos than the Platinum Jubilee. Joe from the NET team "had a go" but seems to be staying with his current job. Young Lachlan tossed the fleece on the classing table for Naomi to explain the wool classer's art. Adrian described the major shortage of shearers, as the rate is \$4 per sheep. Shearers who can do between 120 and 200 sheep a day are provided with meals. Everyone was doing the math. \$800 a day versus \$20.97 an hour in a hothouse? We need a Shearer's Training Visa. There's no shortage of interested Timorese.

Thank God for the simplicity of hospitality, friendship and kindness. Local communities *can* make seasonal workers feel special and get a good feeling at the same time. Thank to the Holy Spirit who continually move ACMRO and ACRATH to help make life more dignified for the people who come across the sea to keep our primary industries afloat.



