A group of four students, three teachers and one ex student from Ave Maria College, Aberfeldie, recently spent a week at St Maria Mazzarello School in Veniale, Timor-Leste, with whom they have a special bond.

Student Molly Kennedy reflected about her experience.

I never thought one week could change a group of four Ave Maria students, three teachers and one ex Ave girl lives forever – in the best way possible. On 20 September we embarked on a journey full of laughs, smiles, memories and a large amount of reflection.

Veniale, Timor-Leste, has left an imprint in our hearts. This little village has so much beauty, love and faith. I saw faith each minute, hour and day whether it be through an exchange of a joke, the continuous question ‘do you have a boyfriend?’ or the way each and every person treated one or another.

The Salesian sisters are now classified as the coolest nuns ever-from awesome dance moves to riding motorbikes wearing converse and a baseball cap – I’ll forever love these ladies.

By us giving the students the chance to increase their English skills through role plays, conversations or a drawing, in return they gave us an insight into true happiness.

When reflecting upon that week it's hard for me to not shed a tear. These tears are full of gratitude for the people I met, the memories we shared but also for the hope I re-discovered, hope that we are able to make a difference.

'I’ll never forget you’ they said. That is one thing we will never do. I cannot express in words our experience, but the one thing I can say, every time I think of that week, I smile and say ‘I now have over 170 sisters and brothers’.

Obrigada Veniale.
Molly Kennedy