



PRIME
MINISTER

**SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION CEREMONY OF THE
PAPA FRANCISCO BUILDING AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF
TIMOR**

Papa Francisco Building
Catholic University of Timor

19 March 2025

Grand Chancellor, His Eminence Virgílio Cardinal do Carmo da Silva

Esteemed President of the São Paulo Foundation, Most Reverend
Father Augusto do Carmo Martins

Distinguished Rector of the Catholic University of Timor, Professor Joel
Casimiro Pinto

Honourable Members of the Academic Senate and University Council,
Faculty Members, and Students

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great satisfaction that I take part in this inauguration ceremony of a new building at the Catholic University of Timor (UCT), which represents not only further progress for this esteemed academic institution but also for the higher education system of Timor-Leste.

I am delighted with the choice of name for this building: *Papa Francisco Building!*

I cannot miss this opportunity to once again extend my prayers for His Holiness Pope Francis, wishing him continued improvements in his health.

I fondly recall that, in September last year, we had the privilege of welcoming His Holiness Pope Francis to Dili. I believe this was an unforgettable moment for our people, and I hope it remains an enduring source of inspiration, particularly for our youth.

Pope Francis, among his many fundamental teachings, reminds us of the importance of *Human Fraternity*. Timor-Leste embraces unity and the values of peace, including interfaith harmony, which are crucial in addressing the violence and wars that afflict the world.

Regardless of different faiths and beliefs, the religion of all must be the practice of good!

I believe this is one of the values instilled by this institution of learning, which gives us hope and confidence in a better future, built through the conscious and qualified participation of our young people.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen
Dear Students,

The Catholic University of Timor, founded less than four years ago, has already established itself as a leading institution for education and research in the country, providing not only quality education to our young people and future national leaders but also intellectual and spiritual development rooted in strong moral, ethical, and Christian values.

It is, therefore, an additional privilege to also celebrate today, alongside this dedicated and committed leadership and faculty, the institutional accreditation of excellence awarded to this University by the National Agency for Academic Assessment and Accreditation (ANAAA).

Congratulations to all on this recent achievement, and I wish you continued success in working towards providing quality academic education to Timorese youth.

It is essential that our human resources have the appropriate tools for our reality so that they can contribute to the country's development while also being competitive with other universities, including international institutions.

The national leaders that Timor-Leste needs to consolidate its independence and sustainable development are those who understand their responsibilities because they have had greater access to knowledge, science, technology, and the development of their critical, personal, and interpersonal skills.

I hope you embrace your fundamental mission in Timorese society, just as your parents and grandparents have fulfilled theirs over the past 50 years – liberating and developing the country by placing collective needs above individual interests.

True leaders do not *lead* the people; rather, they are *led* by the people. And it is this collective that must be heard and respected for Timor-Leste to progress.

Once again, I recall the teachings of the Holy Pope, after whom this building is named, to reaffirm that it is essential “*to rehabilitate the sense of service and the sense of the common good.*”.

In conclusion, I encourage everyone to shift from a mentality of submission to superficial well-being towards a mentality that is worthy of Timorese identity: to continue fighting for the freedom, dignity and well-being of all, with faith in God and a readiness to serve the Nation.

I wish success to the professors and students at the Catholic University of Timor, and may you continue to make us proud as a nation.

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão