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NEWS AND VIEWS

SUMMER 2010

School walks the talk

Fr Gary Walker spoke with one of the teachers after her return from Lima.

Renae Gentile and Anna Tonini are teachers at St Christopher's Primary School in Airport West, Melbourne. The school is committed to educating the students in social justice and Renae and Anna wanted to 'walk the talk'. They were looking for a project in some part of the world, Renae thought of Vietnam, Anna of the Philippines.

specifically the Manuel Duato School for children with special needs and disabilities of various kinds.

The whole school, principal, board and parents got behind the project to buy a bus to transport the children to the school. The Manuel Duato School is an initiative of the Columban Fathers who

have worked in the area for 60 years, especially among the people who have left the countryside looking for a better life in the city.

The fundraising at St Christopher's was concentrated on the Peru project and when Renae and Anna went to visit Manuel Duato in September, the primary school and friends had raised \$28,000.



Parents and children at the Manuel Duato school.

When they approached the Principal Gary Trainor with the idea, he told them that the school already had a connection with Peru through Columban Fr Bernie Lane originally from Essendon, Melbourne.

Fr Bernie had been to St Christopher's school in 2006 and spoken to the students about the Millennium Development Goals and the promise of the rich nations of the world to reduce poverty by 2015.

He had made a strong impression on the teachers and children and this had turned into support for his mission in Lima,

The generosity of the children, parents and those associated with the project has been extraordinary.

We hope to send two more teachers to Lima in 2012, hopefully with a similar amount of money.

Visiting, seeing and experiencing is the only way to understand in some small way how the Peruvian people live.

For further information contact Claire Griffin on 9375 9420 or cgriffin@columban.org.au

The Far East turns 90



Souvenir insert in *The Far East*, October 2010.

The Far East magazine turned 90 in October. The first group of Columbans from Ireland went to China in August 1920 and *The Far East* magazine for Australia and New Zealand began publication two months later.

The Far East started with missionaries writing letters home to their families about their missionary work and the people they met in distant places.

The October 2010 issue of *The Far East* featured a 4 page souvenir pullout featuring the first cover the *The Far East*, photos of Columban Martyrs and other significant events.

There have only been 6 Editors of *The Far East* including the current Editor Fr Gary Walker.

Celebrating 40 years

On July 4, 1970 Fr Warren Kinne, Fr Robert McCulloch and I were ordained. It happens to all of us who stay around! It is not that we are celebrating our achievements. Who knows what they are? However, it does provide me with a vantage point to look back over the terrain that we have covered so far.

I am very conscious of being carried by a strong current called the Columbans. I would never have found myself in such deep water or in such interesting places if I had not been caught up in this flood!

Out of the 14 young men who started spiritual Year at Sassafras on March 1, 1964, we had 12 gather at St Columbans in Essendon for a Mass and a meal on the August 1.

The intermingling of our lives cannot be undone. We are who we are now because of all those we have known. It is a wonderful thing.

Fr Trevor Trotter is the Vicar General of St Columbans Mission Society.



Fr Robert McCulloch, Fr Trevor Trotter, Fr Ron McFarlane & Fr Warren Kinne celebrate at the Columban house in Essendon.

Columban visits ‘Camp Hope’

During the rescue effort to free 33 miners in the San José mine near Copiapó in Northern Chile, Columban Fr Alvaro Martinez went to ‘Camp Hope’ with a television crew to do a report for the program, *‘The Paths of the Church’*.



This plaque lists the names of the trapped miners.

He spoke with the families of the miners about how their religious faith helped them deal with waiting and hoping for the rescue of the miners. On the streets of the mining ‘Camp Hope’, he said that one could feel the anxiety of just waiting for the rescue. Each person, relatives and miners, could feel the hammering of the machines that broke the rock in search of the trapped men. This banging provoked both anxiety and hope. It also created tension between people, as did a variety of circumstances of this temporary living arrangement.

Fr Alvaro asked Alonso Contreras, cousin of Carlos, one of the trapped miners – “What happened in the mine? How have those men united and kept themselves going through their faith in God?” He told me that there was one miner who was a man of faith and piety, who had been a messenger of hope for all the trapped men. He awakened the desire to look at God in the darkness 700 metres down and find the light of the Risen One. One of the trapped miners did not believe in God, but in one of the first telephone conversations he told his cousin, “I have found God and believe God exists”.

The miners were rescued on October 12 and 13.

Fr Alvaro Martinez SSC has been a missionary in Chile since 2003.

Subanens say thank you

Dear Staff and Supporters

I would like to thank the staff at Columban Mission Centre for their help in selling the Subanen Christmas Cards.

Please pass on our thanks to the benefactors who continue to support us and make a difference in our lives.



*Blessings
Fr Vincent Busch*

Creating community in Negros



Fr Brian Gore with members of the co-op.

Last year I visited Fr Brian Gore in Bantolinao in the mountains of Negros Occidental in the Visayas, Philippines. Brian recently returned to Negros where he is implementing the work of the Negros Nine Human Development Foundation (NNHDF).

The Negros Nine were three priests and six lay workers who were imprisoned in 1983 during the Marcos regime and sentenced to death on trumped up murder charges. Brian and Lydio (Boy) Mangao are two of the nine who have helped begin the NNHDF.

Their purpose is to help form and strengthen Christian Communities, organic cooperatives and people's organizations. The people who live in the mountains live a very frugal existence. The children walk seven kilometers to Oringao for primary school or stay in town during the week for high school. Among the farmers living a subsistence lifestyle with few farming skills, there has been limited food production.

The NNHDF purchased land on the side of the mountain, then began an organic demonstration farm with a multi-purpose building. The farm was developed with contouring, pasture grasses, fish ponds, food crops, a worm farm, a plant nursery, livestock and carabao which are hired out for ploughing. Local farmers came and learned about biodiversity and organic farming and pretty soon, a co-operative was formed.

The co-op now has 114 members from communities around the farm. They meet there to plan income generating projects. Farmers gain individual benefits, but the communal benefits stay in the co-operative to continue improvements on the farm.

Anne Lanyon works at the Columban Mission Institute Centre for Peace Ecology and Justice in Strathfield, NSW.

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Columban News



Fr Chris Baker

Fr Chris Baker celebrated his 60th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood on September 23 at the Columban House in Essendon. Among the guests were his brothers Fr Leo Baker who resides in Essendon and Fr Pat Baker who returned to Australia from the Philippines for the event.



Fr John Colgan

We congratulate Fr John Colgan on the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. He was ordained in St Columbans chapel in Dalgan Park, Navan, Ireland on December 21, 1960 by Bishop Henry Byrne. The major part of his missionary life has been spent in Chile and Australia where he was previous Editor of *The Far East*.



Fr Vincent Batchelor

St Columbans Mission Society would like to congratulate Fr Vincent (Vinnie) Batchelor on his 90th Birthday. Fr Vinnie now lives in retirement at the Columban Mission House in Essendon.



Fr Cyril Hally

Fr Cyril Hally died at Mercy Place, Parkville on May 18. He was 90 years old. As Director of the Pacific Mission Institute at St Columbans, North Turrumurra, he prepared religious, priests and lay people from all parts of the world for cross-cultural missions.



Fr Hubert Hunter

Fr Hubert (Hub) Hunter died at the Little Sisters of the Poor Nursing Home, Northcote on September 5. He was 85 years old. Fr Hub was a gentleman like his brother Frank whom he admired greatly. He was a 'gentle giant' who many people felt comfortable with and with whom he remained friends for years.

Ten Things Everyone Needs To Know About Islam

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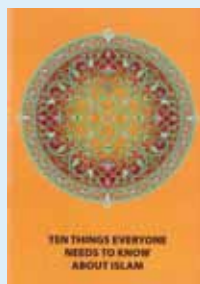
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In the 29 page booklet, the nearly one hundred questions and answers are whittled down to ten core questions and answers. For those who need to start with the basics, these are answers to the top ten most urgent questions about Islam that are on everyone's mind.

Written by Professor Esposito

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St Columban became 'A Wanderer for Christ'. One of his greatest sayings summarises his life and his work, 'Let us be of Christ not of ourselves'.