

MISSION

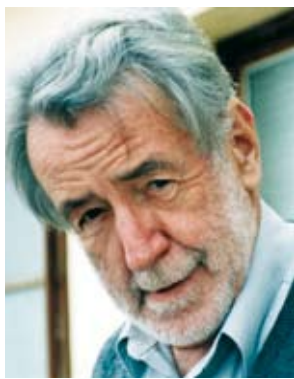


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SUMMER 2008

NEWS AND VIEWS

Why go back?



FR LEO
DONNELLY

Staying with them, dying and being buried with them is a proven powerful witness. It denies we are there for some motive of our own. It affirms we see them as persons, as equals. The kingdom of God is about being equal in dignity as persons.

Anyone reading the life of Christ in the gospels does so out of their own life experience. Jesus Christ consciously and deliberately identified himself with 'ritually unclean' people who were ostracised and therefore, on the edge of their culture.

This identification with them became the story of his success; it also led to his seeming failure on the Cross. He reached out to people who were denied 'personhood' and gave them a sense of importance that allowed them to accept themselves as persons.

People knew, know today, that as 'nobodies' in society they are going nowhere. My experience as a missionary has been almost exclusively with such people. I see a value in being with them. Shared presence teaches us that we need one another. Exclude people – then what meaning does priesthood have?

Our people in Peru see missionaries as persons, just as the 'ritually unclean' saw Jesus. Being prepared to spend our lives with and for them is a beginning; most of their own experience of life is of being betrayed. To help annul this suspicion, our identification has to be confirmed in death and burial shared with them – for some of us at least.

Staying with them, dying and being buried with them is a proven powerful witness. It denies we are there for some motive of our own. It affirms we see them as persons, as equals. The kingdom of God is about being equal in dignity. ♦

FR LEO DONNELLY

Fr Leo Donnelly SSC is retired in Peru after spending the last 50 years there.



On the Border

An update from El Paso/Juarez.

All is not well and calm in Ciudad Juarez! There have been 820 drug-related murders this year in our city. A drug rehabilitation center was attacked by paid assassins last week, and nine people executed. Last Saturday fourteen people were massacred outside a bar just south of here.

By now many of you are familiar with the vagaries of the supply and demand of the US/Mexican/Colombian drug trade; suffice to say that there is a palpable sense of fear and insecurity in our city and here in our parish.

The parish community is still participating in our Wednesday evening missionary assemblies that are held out on the streets, the alley ways and football fields of our Colonia.

Soon we will take part in a Charismatic Congress including a three-night Parish Prayer Marathon and an intensive weekend Retreat.

Keep us in your prayers. We have found "the pearl of great price" among the friendly and committed folk of Rancho Anapra, my parish. Peace to you all. ♦

Fr Kevin Mullins has spent many years in Chile before moving to the Border between Mexico and the U.S.A.

My Chinese Mother

Excerpt from Warren Kinne's diary,
21st October 2008

Today's paper highlights the fact that China is "choking on smoking". "More than 350 million Chinese smoke and nearly 1 million Chinese die of tobacco-related ailments every year." (Shanghai Daily, 21/10/08).

My old Chinese mother however is still going strong on one lung and has recently ceased smoking. Her daughter had a shock this week. She was asked to pay for the past seven years of electricity use. Bills hadn't been delivered and they hadn't bothered to follow up on them. There was something of a shouting match at the electricity company office over the nearly 4,000 RMB in arrears. Meanwhile my "lao ma" is bed-ridden, on a cylinder of oxygen, delivered every couple of days as the oxygen company is afraid to put too much pressure into the ancient cylinder.

My eye falls on a couple of anecdotes from the papers this week, both on the same page. One is of the slaughtering of a new-born calf in a residential area much to the horror of on-lookers. This was apropos of a Chinese cure for asthma. The paper adds that this is not an offence although they admit that it was somewhat "shocking" for the onlookers. And the other anecdote is about an "ex-wife's revenge". She and her friends threw two 20 kilo buckets of excrement onto the door and exterior walls of



Fr Warren Kinne with his Chinese mother and sister

her husband's apartment, twice in the one day. He made the mistake the second time of showing his head and was "beaten badly" as well. "The excrement trickled down the stairwell from the sixth floor to the first, and the entire building was filled with a horrible stench". The final sentence of the piece reads: "Police said no charges have been filed, but they are trying to mediate with the couple".

Nothing too exciting happens around here where I am. ♦

Fr Warren Kinne lectures at Fudan University in Shanghai.

Second coming

The only surviving priest of the famed Negros Nine, Fr Brian Gore, has returned to his old stamping ground of Kabankalan, Negros Occidental, in the Philippines, 21 years after he and two other priests, together with six lay Church workers were arrested in 1982 on charges of inciting rebellion, illegal possession of arms and ammunition and the murder of a local mayor.

The trial dominated world headlines for over two years until their case was dismissed due to lack of evidence in 1984. The six laypeople and local priest, Fr Vincent Dungan, who died in 1995, went back to work in the local area, while Australian Fr Brian Gore and Irish Fr Niall O'Brien, who succumbed to cancer in 2003, agreed to go into voluntary exile.

Blacklisted for several years, Fr Gore returned to the Philippines in 1989, but worked mostly in the Manila area.



The Negros Nine

The only surviving priest from the group, now 64-year-old Fr Gore said he would be involved in programmes involving anti-human trafficking and child labour, as well as sustainable agriculture. "Take a look at the condition of the people. Hunger is a basic human rights concern; people's access to food is a problem, so I believe its one of the biggest issues

that needs to be addressed," he said.

"We need to be much more pro-active and aggressive in the protection of the rights of the people," Fr Gore stressed.

Fr Brian Gore is working in the Philippines and preparing to return to the Island of Negros.

Published in Sunday Examiner, August 31, 2008.

Theatre at World Youth Day

Columban Youth Theatre of the Oppressed brought together three groups of young people: Cena Um from Brazil, Preda Akbay from the Philippines and St Peter's Catholic College from Tuggerah on the New South Wales Central Coast to form one theatrical group which performed at World Youth Day.

In the spirit of Augusto Boal, founder of Theatre of the Oppressed, the dance and drama depicted the exploitation of many young people globally, and here in Australia, showing how theatre can be used as a medium for hope, empowerment and truth-telling.

Cena Um's energetic dance told the story of their African slave ancestry. In a confronting musical drama, Preda Akbay presented the situation of children trafficked and exploited for sexual purposes, then called on the audiences to become advocates

for such young people. The performances of the students from St Peter's Catholic College, depicted the more covert exploitation of youth in an affluent, materialistic society: image, drugs, sex, money, and sects.

The unifying symbolic figure of the production was a shuffling cloaked figure weighed down by a heavy burden. After each act some of the load was lifted. Finally, to the beautiful a cappella voices of the Latavao sisters singing "Stand Up for Life", the cloak was lifted off to reveal Jesus saying, "And the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will be my witnesses". ♦

Anne Lanyon is on the staff of the Columban Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice.



World Youth Day Brazilian Dancers

Columban Calendars in Custody

Columban Calendars are donated each year to prisons in Victoria. Below is an excerpt from a letter sent by Sister Mary O'Shannassy S.G.S. Director of Catholic Prison Ministry Victoria.

The calendars are treasured by the women and men in custody.

A simple item such as a calendar means just so much to these people.

For people who are preparing for court hearings they are able to mark off their court days, work out how much time that they have for preparation of their documents, make sure that they apply within the time frame for access to clothes to wear to their court hearing.

Having a calendar assists them greatly and takes away much stress associated with trying to remember to attend to do all this when one day is much the same as the next one.

As well as this the beautiful coloured art work is so uplifting. In places such as prison there is very little colour. To have a beautiful calendar with so much colour for each month offers to the women and men the opportunity to gaze upon quality art work that can lift their spirits...and this it does. ♦

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Columban News



SHAY CULLEN

The International Person of the Year award in Ireland was given to Fr Shay Cullen from the People's Recovery, Empowerment Development Assistance (PREDA) in recognition for his work with street children and juvenile justice in the Philippines.



TONY COX

Fr Tony Cox has completed his two year contract in the Parish of Boronia and is going to Chicago to attend the Catholic Theological Union's Sabbatical Program early next year. We wish him well.



WARREN KINNE

Father Warren Kinne was in Brisbane this year to attend the funeral of his father who had been ill for many months. Warren made a brief trip to Essendon and spoke to the staff about his work in China.



DOMINIC NOLAN

Fr Dominic Nolan returned from the Philippines for his sister Carmel's funeral. Dominic continues to divide his time between the Mission office in Manila and the Center for Ecozoic Living and Learning (CELL).



RAY SCANLON

Fr Ray Scanlon was in Melbourne on two occasions this year for a family wedding and for his mother's funeral at which he officiated. He has returned to Korea to continue his work in student formation.



COLIN MCLEAN

Fr Colin McLean accompanied a group of dancers from Brazil who attended World Youth Day in Sydney. They also came to Melbourne where they performed at several schools. Colin has returned to his parish in Brazil.

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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'*.