

# MISSION



## NEWS AND VIEWS

### Step through China

*Columban Fr Kevin O'Neill tells about his work in China.*

Fr Kevin O'Neill visited the Columban Mission Centre (CMC) in Essendon recently to speak to the staff about his work in China.

Born and raised in Geelong, Fr Kevin was home visiting family and friends, he also had the opportunity to watch his beloved 'Cats' win a couple of footy matches.

As Columban Vocations Director in China, Fr Kevin has visited 20 Diocese in the last 12 months. Twenty three young men have contacted him to talk further about their call to mission.

He said these are young men with a strong faith who wish to contribute to the International Mission of the Church. They see now that China is opening up to the world and perhaps they could one day be seen as a good face of China.

Part of Fr Kevin's role is to accompany students for up to two years. If they apply and are found suitable they will come to Wuhan to study English.

This provides an opportunity for them to get to know more about Columbans. It becomes part of the pre-formation program. If they are able to manage English they will be sent to the Philippines for their formation and theology studies.

Fr Kevin said that when some of the young men find out that they will have to leave China to work as missionaries they will often

say, "thank you - it's not for me, I don't want to leave China." Fr Kevin directs them to the Jesuits, Dominicans or Passionists whose priests work in China.

The staff were engaged by all the stories Fr Kevin had to share and in particular about the number of children who are left at the church gates. In most cases these children have a disability and are placed in orphanages run by the Sisters.



Orphanages do not exist in Fr Kevin's Diocese because they do not have Government approval. The Sisters would love to establish orphanages to cope with the need for these children who will never know the love of a father or mother.

Fr Kevin concluded by thanking Columban benefactors for their continued generosity.

*Janette Mentha*



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MAY 2010

### Please listen to me

On Thursday, March 4, Fr Alvaro Martinez visited his sister who had lost her house in the devastating earthquake in Chile.

The mass destruction of homes, businesses, dreams, and hopes was unbelievable.

People were living outside simply because their homes no longer existed.

He came across a woman who cried out, "I don't want any help. Thanks to God, I am alive and have something to survive on. What I want is that you listen to me."

Who wouldn't be moved at hearing of women coming to blows over some food, or about men and women crushed by walls falling on top of them; or when hearing children crying out: "We need help over here too."

Finally, the quake is past and the sea has returned to its normal place. The emotional aftermath can be felt everywhere. People are still shaken up and afraid.

With the generosity of our benefactors, Columbans in Chile can help in building homes and lives.



*Fr. Alvaro Martinez*  
SSC

# A dream for others

Columban Missionary, Fr Vinnie Busch, had worked with poor communities on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines for 25 years when he was inspired to develop a livelihood project to help women of the Subanen tribe. Through his association with the Subanen people, Fr Vinnie witnessed their impoverished living conditions, poor diet and inadequate access to educational and health services. Their lives were harsh especially for the women and the children.



Creation Mandala woven by the Subanen women.



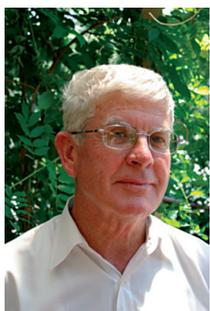
Subanen women

In co-ordination with the Columban Sisters who have been working with the Subanen people in their mountain villages Fr Vinnie set up a handcrafts workshop. Young Subanen women come to Ozamis to attend high school or university. The women stay in a hostel beside the workshop, working four hours a day making handcrafts to cover the cost of their board and food, they then attend to their studies.

When asked what their dreams were for the future, it was clear that the harsh economic circumstances of the poor will oblige these young women to dig deep to make real their hopes and dreams, as seemingly unambitious as they may be.

*Fr Peter Woodruff SSC*

## Fr Robert McCulloch Pakistan



Fr Robert McCulloch has worked in Pakistan since 1978.

Apart from his pastoral duties, Fr Robert sits on the administrative board for St Elizabeth's Hospital, a 75 bed health care facility with a School of Midwifery in Hyderabad. The School of Midwifery has been instrumental in reducing infant mortality and has given Christian women an opportunity of professional employment.

Fr McCulloch has established a mobile medical program to provide vaccinations for infants and children, medical care for their mothers, and diagnosis and care of tuberculosis patients.

Fr Robert has also developed schools in Pakistan that are now attended by more than 550 children. He chairs the board of directors for the Centre of Academic Excellence, a project he initiated in 2006 to provide educational, spiritual, moral and personal formation for 40 Catholic boys.

### Did you know? In Pakistan

**\$1.25**

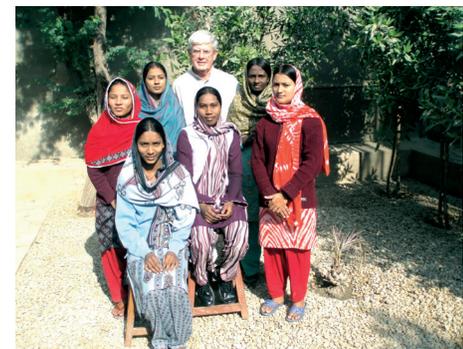
Can provide a patient's daily hospital fee, including: meals, nursing and linen.

**\$1.50**

Can provide a child's primary school fee for a month, including: books, uniform and school fees.

**\$5.00**

Can provide a secondary school fee for a month, including: books and uniforms.



Qualified midwives. Women in Pakistan pay \$300, for two years of studies to become fully qualified midwives. The cost of the course is \$3000 and is subsidised.



Students from the School of Academic Excellence in Pakistan.

## All in a days work

In an Andean parish, training catechists, preparing material for the communities and celebrating with them are all priorities. Recently, we finished a week of catechetical courses, five days with adults and two with youth.

Three of the young catechists decided to stay on for a few more days to help out in the gardens. While they were here, a truckload of wood arrived so we turned immediately to chopping wood. Why on earth would you be chopping wood, you might ask?

Many years, even centuries ago, elderly people without children who were interested in staying on the land, donated a few hectares to the parish to finance fiestas and other parish activities.



Here in Combapata, we have six lands between one and two hectares and these are planted in potatoes, maize, broad beans and wheat and all go to the parish "comedor" (kitchen) to provide nutritious meals for school children and the neglected elderly.

The people said, "We are happy because we cut much wood which will help to give good meals to the "niños" and "ancianos" (children and adults).

*Fr Donald Hornsey has been in Peru since 1991*

## You came back



Members of the Columban Partnership Programme from Torquay parish.

When the group from St Therese's parish, Torquay, visited the parish community of Christ the King in Ba, Fiji they were warmly welcomed. However their Fijian hosts did not expect to see them again, being accustomed to visitors showing lots of interest and then leaving, never to return. The Fijians realised their visitors were serious about developing a partnership when they returned for a second, third and fourth visit.

Fr Greg Trythall, Parish Priest in Torquay for the past 18 years, has consistently supported the Partnership Programme. He is there for the core group that is making the partnership happen.

Greg and parishioners Katherine, Martin, Dick and Marie shared their insights and feelings related to this seven year old partnership venture. Martin and Katherine spoke about their 17 year old son, Greg who accompanied them to Fiji. Greg contacted local youth groups and spent time with them. He commented later: "They've got nothing but they're happy".

From prior visits Martin learned that Fijians have a lot to offer their Australian partners. He remarked that before Mass the people gather outside and chat while the kids run about and play. It's as if coming together to celebrate their faith is a moment of shared joy and a feeling of hope touches the visitors.

Joining with the Fijians in worship is more than fulfilling the Sunday obligation. Seeing people of all ages arrive, dressed in their bright coloured finery and take off their shoes before entering the church makes the visitor wonder whether the casual dress code of Australian church goes misses an opportunity to say: "We are here to celebrate something important".



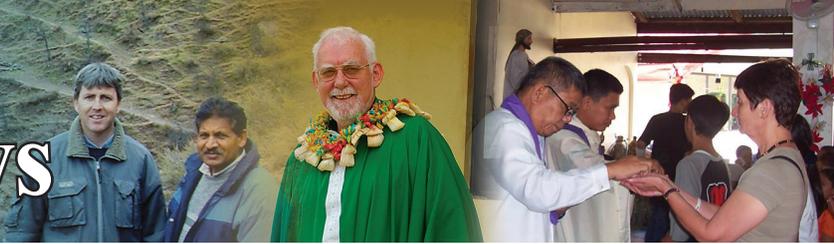
Fijian hosts.

Each year St Therese's Primary School, Torquay, supports a project such as adding reading resources to St Teresa's, Ba.

Members of the core group have always reported back to their parish community and have their support. The next challenge in their partnership will be hosting some members of the Ba parish community, including a group of teachers to visit Torquay.

*Fr Peter Woodruff SSC*

# Columban News



## Fr Gary Walker

Fr Gary Walker, the Editor of The Far East recently visited Pakistan to gather stories and photos for The Far East. He spent time with Columbans in Lahore and Karachi. He accompanied Fr Robert McCulloch to St Elizabeth's Hospital in Hyderabad and School of Academic Excellence in Karachi.



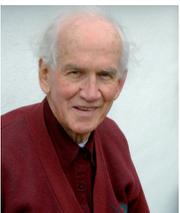
## Fr Chris Baker

Fr Chris Baker has worked on mission in Peru for many years and celebrates 60 years of ordination to the priesthood later this year. We congratulate Fr Chris.



## Fr Maurice O'Connor

Fr Maurice O'Connor, from New Zealand spent time in Essendon early this year to catch up with friends. This year he celebrates 50 years of ordination to the priesthood. We congratulate Fr Maurice on such an achievement.



## Fr John Griffin

Fr John Griffin is living in Lower Hutt, New Zealand and celebrates 60 years of ordination to the priesthood this year. We congratulate Fr John on this milestone.

## 90th Birthday's



FR CYRIL HALLY



FR KEITH GORMAN

St Columbans Mission Society would like to congratulate Fr Cyril Hally & Fr Keith Gorman on their 90th Birthdays.



**ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY**

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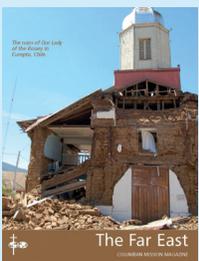
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