

# The Far East

COLUMBAN MISSION MAGAZINE

September 2014



**Abuse at the karaoke bar**  
The story of Siti

**Reflection - Extracts from Social  
Justice Statement 2014-2015**

**Vatican cricket team thanks  
Pakistan**



**ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY**

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# The Far East

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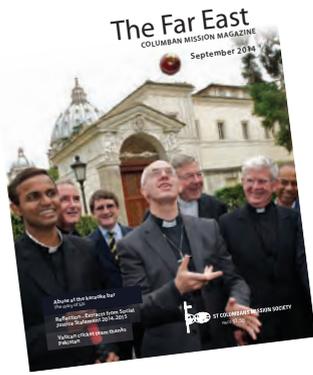
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Visiting Rome, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, tosses a cricket ball into the air. He is accompanied by Cardinal George Pell, Columban Fr Robert McCulloch, and priest members of the Vatican XI, set to play against the Anglican XI in England in September. (See article page 10)

Photo: Chris Warde-Jones



# From the Editor

## Taking Action on Social Justice Issues

Every year on *Social Justice Sunday*, the last Sunday in September, the Australian Bishops issue an important statement on a justice issue for the coming 12 months. The statement to be issued this year on September 28 deals with the role of sports in Australian society. It is entitled, *"A Crown for Australia: Striving for the best in our sporting nation"*.

*"Social Justice Week"* in New Zealand this year will be held from September 14-20. The theme chosen by the New Zealand Bishops is *"Catholic Social Justice Teaching"*. They focus on the Seven Catholic Social Justice Principles: Human Dignity; Solidarity; Subsidiarity; Stewardship; Common Good; Participation and the Preferential Option for the Poor.

The stories published in our September issue of *The Far East* are stories of Social Justice. Some are connected with sport. We have the story of the Vatican Cricket Team which is to play the Anglican Church team of the Archbishop of Canterbury in England. Sporting matches such as this are a way to build good relations and friendship between people of different races and religions. Fr Robert McCulloch, the Columban Procurator General in Rome, has been

instrumental in gaining the support of the Pakistan Government and the participation of an excellent batsman and wicket keeper, Aamir Bhatti, who is a Pakistani seminarian studying for the priesthood in Rome.

On a similar note, Pope Francis has been instrumental in organizing an important Soccer Match in Rome on September 1. This match will involve important international players who will represent different religions. The idea of the match is to build friendship and good relations between people of different religions and races. All proceeds will go to charity.

There are two stories from Fr Peter O'Neill whose work in Taiwan brings him into contact with abused and exploited migrant workers and victims of human trafficking. Fr Peter works tirelessly to bring justice to such victims.

Fr Chris Saenz writes from Chile the story of Ronnie, a chronic alcoholic who through the grace of God, the intercession of St Alberto Hurtado, his doctor and others, was able to turn his life around and recover his human dignity. Mr Paul Kaye writes about his and his wife, Marlyn's experience in the Philippines with "CELL" (Centre for Ecozoic Living and

Learning). This Columban-developed Centre educates people to live in a sustainable and self-sufficient way.

At the Columban Mission Centre here in Melbourne we thought it was important to recognize the presence in a formal manner of the existence of the Wurundjeri, who were the Aboriginal people in the greater Melbourne area for tens of thousands of years before European colonization.

A liturgy was therefore organized at the beginning of August with invited guests to unveil a plaque acknowledging the Wurundjeri as the traditional owners of this land and giving thanks to God for their wisdom and stewardship of the land. Sherry Balcombe, the Secretary of the Victorian Aboriginal Catholic Council, began the liturgy with an Acknowledgement of Country.

September is a time for all of us to grow in our awareness of Catholic Social Justice Teaching and Principles and to seek ways to take action in this area.

*Fr Daniel Harding*

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Photos: bigstockphoto.com

*Columban Fr Peter O'Neill works with migrant workers, immigrants and victims of human trafficking at a centre run by the Diocese of Hsinchu, Taiwan. He shares with us the story of some of the victims he meets in his work.*

Listen to: Abuse at the Karaoke bar

# Abuse at the Karaoke bar

FR PETER O'NEILL

*Here is Siti's story.*

*S*iti (not her real name) comes from a very poor family in Indonesia. Her family managed to send her to primary school but could not afford secondary education for her. Siti's family own a small plot of land on which they barely support themselves by growing rice.

When Siti turned 18 a man from the village came to her home offering her

a job as a carer of elderly people in Taiwan. This man works as a recruiter for a labour agency. Siti was told that she would be able to earn a lot of money that she could send home to her family.

Siti accepted the job offer. She was then sent to the agency's office in Jakarta where for several months she learnt Mandarin Chinese, Chinese

cooking and how to use modern utensils, unknown in Siti's village, such as microwave ovens, electric irons and washing machines. She also learnt the different skills necessary to be a carer of the elderly.

A few days before Siti was due to leave for Taiwan, she was told by the Agency to take out a loan from the local bank at an interest rate of



*When Siti began work, she soon discovered she was forced to wear "suggestive" clothing which made her feel uncomfortable. She was told by the mamasan that if a customer wanted "extra service", she had to provide it.*

18%. This loan and the interest rate added up to \$3000 that was to be deducted from her first year's salary. Siti's parent's home and small plot of land were offered as collateral to the bank, in case she could not pay back the loan.

Siti then flew to Taiwan. She was met at the airport by the Taiwanese agent and taken to the family where she was to care for the elderly. The family that received Siti live on the second floor of a two-storey building. They own a restaurant located on the ground floor. Siti soon discovered that she had to rise at 4:00am every morning to go to the market to buy ingredients for use in the restaurant.

She then had a full day ahead of her, working in the restaurant. She prepared and served meals, cleaned tables and washed dishes.

Throughout the day, Siti constantly had to check on the elderly members of the family on the second floor. When the restaurant closed at 9:00pm she then had to spend the next three hours cleaning, washing and ironing for the family on the second floor.

Siti's salary was \$600 per month. At the end of her first month, however, she only received \$40. She had to repay her bank loan back \$300 per month for 10 months. Another \$200 went to pay for her visa and her medical certificate and \$60 went to the labour agency.

After six months of working like this, Siti was sleep deprived and in a totally exhausted state. When she complained to the labour agent he threatened to send her home which she greatly feared due to the need to continue her bank loan repayments. As time went on Siti started suffering severe stress and the beginnings of a mental breakdown.

It was in this weakened state that Siti fell prey to the promises of an illegal labour agent who offered her an illegal job in a karaoke bar. She accepted and ran away from the family where she was working. She had to pay this agent \$300 to get this job which would be deducted from her salary.

She was introduced to the mamasan (the female manager) of the karaoke bar who told her all she had to do was to serve the customers (all male) and sing karaoke songs. She would live with the other women at the bar.

*It was in this weakened state that Siti fell prey to the promises of an illegal labour agent who offered her an illegal job in a karaoke bar. She accepted and ran away from the family where she was working. She had to pay this agent \$300 to get this job which would be deducted from her salary.*

When Siti began work, she soon discovered she was forced to wear "suggestive" clothing which made her feel uncomfortable. She was told by the mamasan that if a customer wanted "extra service", she had to provide it. Siti told the mamasan that she did not want to work as a prostitute.

The mamasan threatened her that if she did not, she would inform the police of her illegal situation and she would be sent to prison. Siti was terrified that her family would lose their home and land. She and the other girls were locked in the bar after it closed each night. They had no means of escape.

Unknown to Siti, the local Taiwanese police had received a tip off about the karaoke bar and it was raided. Siti and four other Indonesian women were rescued by the police and sent to the Hsinchu Diocesan "Shelter for Abused Migrant Workers and Victims of Human Trafficking".

The Shelter offered Siti and the other victims legal aid and helped them find another job while their case was being processed through the courts. In this way, Siti could continue to repay her bank loan. The Shelter offers victims a variety of support such as counselling, Chinese classes, computer lessons, arts and crafts, dance lessons and workshops of personal development.

Siti remained at the Shelter for one and a half years until a court decision was made about her case. The mamasan and the owner of the karaoke bar were sent to prison. But although Siti had been a victim of abuse, the fact that she had run away from the family where she first worked meant that Siti could not remain in Taiwan and would have to return home. This was the end of her opportunity to earn money to support her family.

We, at the Diocesan Migrant Workers Centre, continue to lobby the Taiwanese government to protect victims like Siti.

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*Columban Fr Peter O'Neill first went to Taiwan in 1991.*

*Columban Fr Peter O'Neill shares the story of Dodik, another victim of human trafficking in Taiwan on pages 6-7.*



Photo: bigstockphoto.com

Migrant fisherman on a Taiwanese fishing boat.

# Eating fish - at whose expense?

FR PETER O'NEILL

*Here is Dodik's story.*

**F**ish is a part of the Taiwan staple diet. It is eaten regularly and is always a part of the sumptuous meal at any banquet, either steamed or fried. All kinds of fish can be bought at a very cheap price at fish markets, local markets and supermarkets. Who catches the fish that is sold in truck loads at our markets all over Taiwan?

There are over 20,000 migrant fishermen working on Taiwan-owned

offshore long-haul fishing vessels in international waters and nearly 10,000 land-based migrant fishermen working in Taiwan.

On one of my weekly visits to the detention centre in Hsinchu City I met Dodik Utomo, a young Indonesian fisherman. I was shocked and horrified when he shared with me his traumatic experience of labour trafficking and forced labour on a Taiwan-owned long-haul fishing vessel.

Like most of the Indonesian workers in the detention centre, Dodik Utomo is not able to speak Chinese so he gave me permission to ask one of the Indonesian workers who speaks Chinese to be my translator.

Dodik comes from a very poor family in Java, Indonesia. After finishing primary school he began working with his father on a friend's fishing boat to help support his family. Two years ago he decided to try his luck



working as a migrant fisherman. He applied for a job as a fisherman at an Indonesian recruitment agency in Jakarta. The agency informed him he would earn \$170 per month and would work for three years.

After signing his contract and obtaining his visa and passport he flew to Hong Kong. An agent met him at the airport and took him by ferry to the "floating hotel" outside the Hong Kong harbour where hundreds of migrant fishermen were housed waiting to be employed on fishing vessels.

After waiting patiently for a couple of months on the "floating hotel" Dodik thought his luck had changed when he was employed to work on a Taiwan-owned long-haul fishing vessel. He quickly packed the few belongings he had and boarded the vessel. Little did he know of the horror that was awaiting him.

With the look of despair in his eyes Dodik shared with me how he worked 18 hours a day throwing out the nets, hauling in the catch, cleaning and storing the fish below deck. No matter what the weather conditions were like he was forced to work every day. Often the huge waves came crashing over the boat and he feared for his life. The vessel travelled to Singapore, Japan and Hawaii and even as far as Argentina and South Africa.

Dodik Utomo had been slaving away for 18 months when finally the vessel docked in Kaoshiong, the southern port of Taiwan. He waited in anxious anticipation to receive his salary of \$3,060 for his 18 months' work. Until that point he had not received any salary. To his utter shock and disbelief his Taiwan captain only gave him \$700. When he asked his captain where was the other \$2,360 he was told it was given to his Taiwan agent for his fee.

He complained furiously to his captain and agent to no avail. Because of his filial commitment to his struggling family he sent most of his salary home to his parents and kept a few dollars for his own use.

Utterly devastated and not knowing who to turn to for help, Dodik Utomo decided to jump ship and become an undocumented migrant worker in Taiwan.

*...we will continue to have the luxury of buying cheap fish in Taiwan and sit down to a sumptuous platter of fish this Lunar New Year. And at what expense? At the expense of the human rights of migrant fishermen.*

Like many undocumented Indonesian fishermen he fled to the mountains of central Taiwan to pick fruit for a couple of months, receiving a meagre \$1.70 per hour and working 12 hours a day as a day labourer. When the fruit picking season was over he travelled to the lower plains of Taiwan to search for a job in a factory.

For a couple of months he was unemployed living with other undocumented migrant workers in a rented apartment keeping well clear of the police. Finally he managed to secure a job in a factory.

However his job was short lived when the police raided the factory and arrested him. Once again his life came crashing down. The little he had saved after several months of arduous labour was just enough to pay his \$330 penalty to the Taiwan Immigration Police for violating the immigration law by being undocumented and to pay for his plane ticket home to Indonesia.

Listening to Dodik Utomo, and the many other Indonesian fishermen I have met at the detention centre, angers me immensely. I have discussed many of these human trafficking cases with Taiwan authorities and they keep saying it is too difficult to prosecute the cases without any evidence. The evidence is in the fishermen's story.

The trafficking of migrant fishermen working on Taiwan-owned vessels has been endemic for many years and the Taiwan government continues to turn a blind eye to this modern day slavery.

Taiwan wants to desperately re-enter the United Nations (UN) and the ILO (International Labour Organisation) but it hasn't signed any of the UN and ILO Conventions with regards to the protection of fishermen and seafarers. It has yet to sign and ratify the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), nor the 2007 ILO Work in Fishing Convention (No.188) and the 2006 ILO Maritime Labour Convention.

While Taiwan authorities continue to shirk their responsibilities in combatting labour trafficking and forced labour on Taiwan-owned long-haul fishing vessels, we will continue to have the luxury of buying cheap fish in Taiwan and sit down to a sumptuous platter of fish this Lunar New Year. And at what expense? At the expense of the human rights of migrant fishermen.

In the meanwhile Dodik Utomo awaits his flight back to Indonesia with no money after working for more than two years as an exploited migrant fisherman, fruit picker and factory worker.

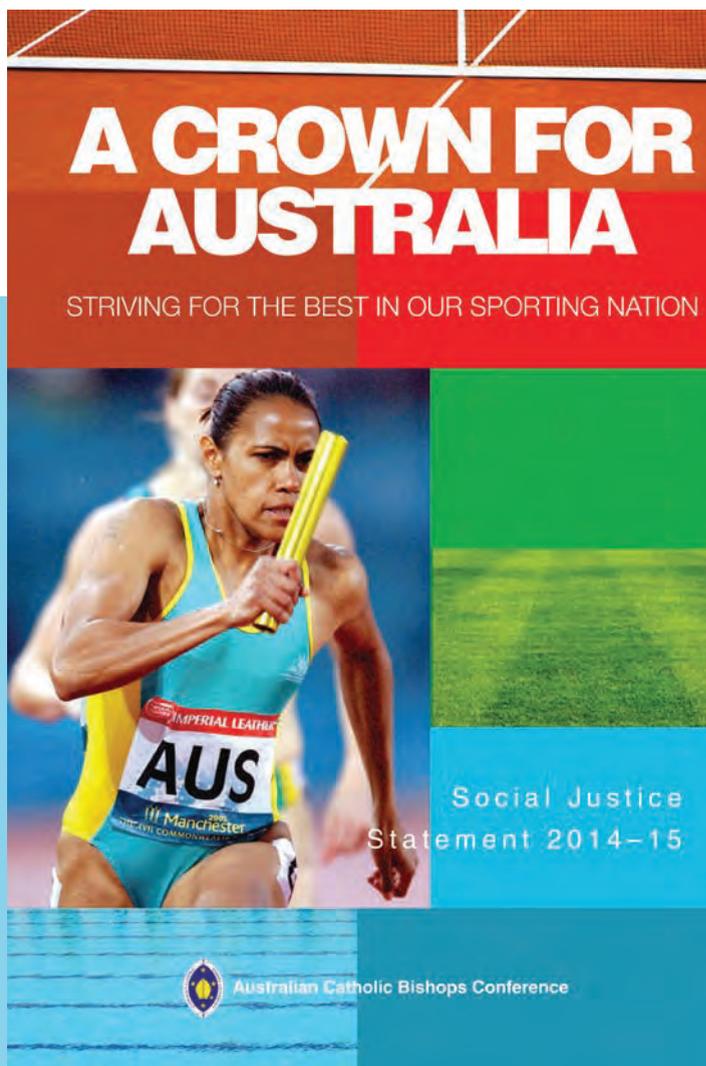
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*Columban Fr Peter O'Neill first went to Taiwan in 1991.*

# A Crown for Australia - Striving for the best in our sporting nation

*The 2014-2015 Social Justice Statement by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.*

*Here is a brief introduction with several extracts from the 2014-2015 Social Justice Statement.*



The Australian Bishops in their 2014-2015 Social Justice Statement, "A Crown for Australia - Striving for the best in our sporting nation" points out the important role of sport in our society. It highlights the community and spiritual benefits it can bring while warning of the dangers inherent in the increasing commercialisation of sport and the "win-at-all-costs" mentality that can produce abuses and exclusion.

*"At its best, sport offers a safe and nurturing space where rich and poor, men and women, people of all colours and creeds can meet with a common goal; a place where human dignity is more important than winning the game."*

On the downside, the Statement describes the ways sport can also reflect the worst in us.

*"It can be like a crown of thorns. Sometimes it shows things that make us ashamed. When sport loses sight of human good, we need to think hard about it. What do those failures tell us about ourselves as individuals and as a society?"*

*"The joy of sport is lost when players are placed under this pressure. It becomes unpleasant, if not damaging. For this reason, we acknowledge the work of many schools in introducing codes of behaviour concerning the conduct of players, parents and other spectators."*

Another challenge confronting players and administrators is the increasing use of performance and image-enhancing drugs.

*"However much we can understand the pressures that might lead athletes to consider using performance-enhancing drugs, we can never condone that use."*

*"Drugs damage the player, undermine the sport and expose individuals, teams and entire codes to criminal exploitation."*

The other area of growing concern is the increasing commercialisation of sport.

*"Modern professional sports require enormous investments – both personally, from athletes themselves, and from governments and corporations to build venues and support the enterprises that sports have become. The face of sport has been altered by big money."*



Photo: bigstockphoto.com

*"Most recently, there has been a public outcry over the dramatic rise of sports betting, particularly the intrusion of advertisements for online bookmakers. The impact and language of betting are reaching a wider public than ever before – and affecting the young. It is commonplace to hear children predicting the outcome of a match by quoting odds rather than analysing players' form."*

And one of the most confronting forms of exclusion is the racism witnessed on and off the field, across sporting codes and at professional and amateur levels.

*"We think particularly of the racist taunts against Indigenous players by players and spectators."*

*"Many have shown enormous courage in confronting racist attitudes, advocating for Indigenous rights and working for the betterment of their codes and communities. While they have suffered the indignity of racism, they have worked admirably to change their sport and their society."*

*The full version of the Social Justice Statement will be released September 2014.  
Copies will be available at [www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/)*

### Social Justice Week, New Zealand - September 14-20

This year's theme is *Catholic Social Teaching* (CST) which provide us with key ethical principles through which we can interpret social issues around us and take action to seek justice.

Seven of the principles are brought to life through video: human dignity; solidarity; subsidiarity; stewardship; common good; participation; and preferential option for the poor. The Videos are prepared by Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand which is the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Agency for Justice, Peace and Development.

See [www.caritas.org.nz](http://www.caritas.org.nz) for Resources for parishes and schools.



NEW ZEALAND



# Vatican cricket team thanks Pakistan



Photo: Fr Robert McCulloch

Governor Ishrat ul Ebad, Governor of Sindh Province, Pakistan made the presentation to Columban Fr Robert McCulloch and Aamir Bhatti, a Pakistani seminarian who has been selected for the touring Vatican cricket team.

The Vatican's Pontifical Council for Culture has thanked Dr Ishrat ul Ebad Khan, Governor of Sindh Province in Pakistan for his support of the Vatican Cricket Club which is about to tour England. The Governor presented a cheque with six Test-quality, made-in-Pakistan, cricket bats and offered them as *"a gift for our friends in the Vatican as a token of friendship."*

Governor Ishrat ul Ebad made the presentation to Columban Fr Robert McCulloch and Aamir Bhatti, a Pakistani seminarian who has been selected for the touring Vatican cricket team.

Columban Fr McCulloch worked in Pakistan as a missionary priest for 34 years and is now Procurator-General of the Columban Fathers in Rome. Fr McCulloch is a committee member of St Peter's Cricket Club and arrived in Karachi for the presentation ceremony that took place at Government House on July 8.

The official club name is St Peter's Cricket Club but is also popularly called the Vatican XI. Papal colours of white and gold, with the crossed-key emblem of the Vatican, make up the uniform design. The cricket team is sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Culture, the Vatican's department for sport. The Vatican's cricket team is an international group of

Catholic priests and seminarians in Rome and is made up of eight Indians, two Sri Lankans and one each from Pakistan, England and Ireland. The team's wicket-keeper is Pakistani seminarian, Aamir Bhatti (from Karachi) who has been studying in Rome for three years as a part of his seminary formation to become a Catholic priest. His selection as wicket-keeper and batsman is due to his consistent hard work in the training sessions and his ability to integrate with other members of the multi-cultural team.

The Vatican team will travel from Rome to England in September and play against the Archbishop of Canterbury's XI, the Royal Household at Windsor Castle, and other teams. Pope Francis will farewell the team before they leave for England. Proceeds from the matches will go to the Global Freedom Network, the joint Anglican-Roman Catholic-Muslim anti-trafficking charity.



During the presentation, Governor Ishrat ul Ebad expressed his happiness that a Pakistani from Karachi has been selected for the Vatican cricket team and wished the team every success for its upcoming tour of England. The Governor further announced that Pakistan will continue to provide support to help the Vatican develop its cricket team and will arrange to send a leading Pakistani Test Cricketer to Rome to coach the team in October.

Governor Ishrat ul Ebad is a leading advocate in promoting interfaith harmony and dialogue in Pakistan. He is a cricketer and has proposed that a Tri-team Tournament be held in 2015 between Governor of Sindh's XI, the Vatican XI and the Archbishop of Canterbury's XI as a way of manifesting friendship and harmony through sport.

Fr Robert McCulloch

# Soccer players play in "Match for Peace" in Rome



The Vatican has invited some of the world's most famous soccer players to participate in a soccer match aimed at uniting people of different religions. Proceeds from the match will be donated to charity. The match involves international players and coaches such as Lionel Messi, Gianluigi Buffon, Zinedine Zidane, Javier Zanetti, Roberto Baggio, Andrea Pirlo, Yuto Nagatomo and Samuel Eto'o who represent different religions.

The match was organized to celebrate sporting excellence and fraternity as a symbolic gesture of peace in the world as well as to fundraise for charity.

The idea for the match developed during a private audience at the Vatican last year between Pope Francis and Inter Milan Captain Javier Zanetti.

Source: ZENIT

*Pope Francis receives a soccer jersey from Inter Milan Captain Javier Zanetti during a private audience at the Vatican last year. From this meeting the "Inter-religious Match for Peace" was organized for September 1 in Rome.*



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## Here we are, Lord, at the World Cup - Brazil 2014



CHILE



Photo: bigstockphoto.com

*The National Liturgical Commission of the Episcopal Conference of Chile prepared the following prayer to be said in all churches before and during the recent World Cup Matches in Brazil.*

Lord Jesus Christ, Redeemer and Saviour,  
You embrace with open arms at this event  
the men and women who have come from all over the world  
to meet up as brothers and sisters.  
You offer us something much bigger than the World Cup:  
A fruitful and happy life.

We ask You in these days of the World Cup,  
that You teach us to be Your disciples, to follow You all our  
lives and to play in Your team.  
And so to be able to live with fraternal love, to know how to  
listen, to understand, to pardon, to welcome, to help others  
without exclusion or discrimination,  
Therefore to train and stay in shape in order to face life with  
faith and happiness,  
and to play the game forward as protagonists of history and  
builders of a better world.

We pray that in these days, violence and discord will cease,  
and dialogue and respect will grow.  
We pray that our players and supporters who travel to Brazil,  
will turn out to be free from becoming disheartened and  
despondent,  
free from injustice and from egoism.

You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen

# Stopped cold turkey

FR CHRIS SAENZ

*Columban Fr Chris Saenz asks Ronnie what happened.*



Photo: Fr. Chris Saenz

*Ronald Daniel Perez Arbazua, or "Ronnie", as he is known, is a 69-year-old man who was born and raised in Puerto Saavedra in southern Chile. At the age of 15, Ronnie entered the Chilean Navy and served for eight years. Later, he went to Santiago to work in a pharmaceutical factory. There he lived and worked for 23 years. In 1983 Ronnie returned to Puerto Saavedra upon the death of his mother.*

*In 1995, when I was a seminarian, I was sent to Puerto Saavedra which was a Columban parish at that time. There I first met Ronnie as a chronic alcoholic. The few times I saw him sober he was timid and shy. The drink always made him aggressive and belligerent.*

*Often, after drinking, Ronnie would enter the church. Sometimes he would cause a disturbance. Twice I had to*

*physically help him out of the church. I left Puerto Saavedra in 1997 convinced that Ronnie would never change and would die on the streets.*

*In 2001 I returned to Puerto Saavedra as a priest. When I celebrated my first Mass in the town I was surprised to see Ronnie stand up and walk to the altar to proclaim the First Reading. He was clean-shaven and wearing a suit and tie, and sober! I was shocked by this miraculous change. He had stopped drinking completely, reformed his life and was an active participant in the church. For years I talked about Ronnie in my homilies but I had never actually sat down and talked to him about his conversion, until now. Ronnie agreed to be interviewed.*

***R**onnie, how did you begin your road to alcoholism?*

Previously, I drank but nothing heavy, just on some social occasions. In 1983, at the age of 38, I returned to Puerto Saavedra when my mother died. I was an only child, my father had died when I was 23-years-old, and my mother was really the only family I had. When she died I went into depression. That is when I began to drink heavily and continued to drink every day for 18 years.

***What was the worst thing about alcoholism?***

The moments when I was sober I had visions of demons pursuing me. I drank so the visions would stop. Later I would wake up on the street and not remember what had happened before. It was terrible.

***So what happened? What made you stop?***

I remember the day precisely. It was March 26, 2001. I drank so much that I passed out on the street. Somebody rushed me to hospital. It was the first time in 18 years that I had been in a hospital. Previously I had passed out on the street but never taken to the hospital. This time was different. While there I thought I had died but then suddenly I returned to myself.

When I woke up I saw Columban Fr Mike Howe, parish priest at that time, standing over me, praying and anointing me. I did not recognize him. Then the doctor entered the room. He informed me that I had alcohol poisoning and that I had been in the hospital for three days!

***What more did the doctor say?***

He said if I continued to drink I would go directly to the cemetery. The



medical tests showed the damage of my drinking. The doctor made me swear to never drink again. I did so and also promised to Padre Hurtado that I would never drink again. I put myself under Padre Hurtado's protection. (Padre Hurtado refers to Saint Alberto Hurtado, a Chilean saint who was a Jesuit priest known for his work with the poor during the 1930s and 40s).

***And from that moment you never drank again? You stopped "cold turkey?"***

Yes, I never had a drop since.

***After the hospital what happened next?***

I was taken to "Hogar de Cristo" ("Home of Christ," an organization founded by Padre Hurtado to help homeless elderly and youth) to begin rehabilitation. There I discovered I had a place to go to. There was a community to share food and life. It was a family that I hadn't had. They all prayed for Padre Hurtado to protect and help me. And it worked!

In November 2001, I returned to the doctor for a check-up. The doctor returned with the results and asked me, "What did you do?" I didn't know what he was talking about. He showed me the results and said 98% of my body was completely healed. "It's nothing short of a miracle," he said. I then knew it was a miracle from Padre Hurtado.

***What more did Padre Hurtado do for you?***

Because of Padre Hurtado I was able to participate in his canonization in Rome in 2005.

***How did that happen?***

There was a lottery for "Hogar de Cristo" to send 36 persons from

around the country. There were seven places for volunteers/workers of "Hogar de Cristo" and 29 places for those who received aid like me. Different names were submitted to the lottery around the country and my name was submitted from the ninth Region, (there are 15 Regions or "States" in Chile) with a few others.

When the national lottery was held and the first spot was drawn, my name was on the ticket. I knew then it was Padre Hurtado's hand again. In fact, I was the only one from our Region to go.

***So what was the experience like going to Rome and attending the canonization?***

First, in Puerto Saavedra, the town raised money for me and gave me a farewell ceremony. I then went to Santiago and joined the group that was going. We had a week of talks, workshops and retreats with the Jesuits. Then we flew to Rome on a military plane accompanied by the President of Chile, Ricardo Lagos, ministers and other VIPs. But the highlight of it all was the canonization ceremony.

It was beautiful. I got to shake the hand of Pope Benedict XVI. For me it was a great privilege to receive after surviving the hell of alcoholism. But, somehow I knew something like this would happen to me.

***What do you mean?***

Well, before all of this I had a dream. In the dream I was in a large church filled

with people. Suddenly Padre Hurtado arrived wearing a black soutane. He came up to me and handed me the collection plate and told me to collect the money from the people. I did, going around all the church and the people gave, then I went to Padre Hurtado to give him the collection.

He said, "Give it to him," and pointed to a person dressed in white sitting on the altar, a pope-like figure. Padre Hurtado added, "Give all to him. Not a cent is to go to you because it all belongs to the Church." And I did. From this dream I understood I was to serve.

***How do you serve the Church?***

In "Hogar de Cristo" I am a volunteer who takes food to the bed-ridden poor. I participate in all the activities of "Hogar de Cristo." I even began collecting funds for "Hogar de Cristo". I have since retired from that.

In the Church, I am a lector and participate in the choir. I always help out in the Month of Mary. Fr Ulrich (a diocesan priest who was in Puerto Saavedra after the Columbans) once gave me a watch as a gift for being





the "best lector". Many times the priests will ask if I could participate in the parish council and other meetings.

**What can you say about the Columbans?**

I admire their work. They are missionaries that leave their culture and proclaim Christ in other lands. They take a big risk of being rejected and maybe even losing their life. Also, I admire how they have to learn other languages.

**For you, what makes Columbans different from other priests?**

Columbans are very close to the people. They share with all, as the song says "ni importa la raza, ni el color de la piel" (a popular religious hymn that says "race doesn't matter, nor the colour of the skin"). They share with the whole world. They can't be just in one place; but go where they are sent.

**You know several Columbans. Who do you remember the most?**

Fr Mike Howe. He was my confessor before I went to Rome. He always said to me, "Don't change. Don't return to drinking, maintain your faith in God." Also, apart from the Columban



*No one has to feel abandoned; God always gives a helping hand. Also, you don't have to live in the past, or go back to what was before.*

Photo: bigstockphoto.com

charisma of "being close with the people", Fr Mike is a very mystical, spiritual person. He prays a lot.

**What message do you have for our readers?**

No one has to feel abandoned; God always gives a helping hand. Also, you don't have to live in the past, or go back to what was before.

Columban Fr Chris Saenz was ordained in 2000 and has worked in Chile since then.

*End Note: Ronnie is happily retired. He continues to help the church and at the end of each Sunday Mass, he collects money for church renovations. As a priest, I am blessed to have known Ronnie. I am happy to say I was wrong about Ronnie, "that he would never change and die in the streets". God proved me wrong and showed me an instant conversion, like that of Saint Paul.*

**Saint Alberto Hurtado S.J. - Padre Hurtado**



Saint Alberto Hurtado Cruchaga, S.J.

Born Luis Alberto Hurtado Cruchaga on January 22, 1901, Viña del Mar, Chile. Died August 18, 1952, Santiago, Chile.

He is popularly known in Chile as Padre Hurtado (Spanish: Fr Hurtado).

He was a Chilean Jesuit Priest, Lawyer, Social Worker and Social Justice Advocate. He wrote several books on the Catholic faith and the need to take action on social injustices. He founded the monthly Chilean social commentary magazine, *Mensaje*, that still operates today. He also founded the *Hogar de Cristo* Foundation for the poor and dispossessed.

He was canonized on October 23, 2005, by Pope Benedict XVI, becoming Chile's second canonized saint.

# 2015 Columban Art Calendar

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# Mission World

**We ask your prayers:** *The prayers of our readers are requested for the repose of the souls of friends and benefactors of the Missionary Society of St Columban who died recently and for the spiritual and the temporal welfare of all our readers, their families and friends.*

## Organ trafficking and sexual exploitation

*About 45,000 children and young people missing and abducted in Mexico*



*Young children in Mexico are victims of organ trafficking.*

are mainly active in the Federal District (Mexico City) and in the Mexican states of Veracruz, Tijuana, Monterrey, Guadalajara and also in the border areas in the north and south of the country. Often young people are lured by criminal networks with enticing offers.

According to American and French authorities that observe the phenomenon in Mexico, the victims are operated on in American hospitals, where their organs are removed by corrupt doctors. The age group of these children who are kidnapped range between 7 to 10. Younger children are often kidnapped for adoption.

In order to face this serious problem, the *Foundation for the Research of Missing and Abducted Children* has developed a campaign on the phenomenon of child abduction to be used in the schools of the Mexico City and the States of Veracruz and Puebla.

According to UNICEF, 1.2 million children go missing Worldwide each year.

*M*exico City (FIDES) - In Mexico, approximately 45,000 children and young people have been abducted and are victims of

sexual exploitation and trafficking in organs. This is the claim made by the *Foundation for the Research of Missing and Abducted Children*. Criminal gangs

*(Agenzia Fides - Rome 12/08/2014)  
Information service of the Pontifical  
Mission Societies*

## Mission Intention for September

That Christians, inspired by the Word of God, may serve the poor and suffering



# From the Director

## *Finding the human face*

Last week I bought a copy of the *Big Issue* from a vendor on a street corner in the city. (The *Big Issue* is an independent and excellent magazine sold on the streets by homeless or marginalised people. For every magazine sold, the vendor gets half. It has helped many people get back on their feet).

He was a young man in his 20s and he carried his experience of the world on his young face. It didn't look like he was winning the battles.

As I stood at an intersection waiting to cross, a woman's raised voice said, "Get a job!" She came and stood beside me, her face tight and her body tense, an ordinary woman being rude to the vendor of the *Big Issue*. It is easily done.

Somehow this confrontation reminded me of another incident that took place in Jamaica over 20 years ago. A young French family invited me to their hotel to share lunch after the Sunday Eucharist. The husband was an economist and during the meal made the comment that the austerity measures put in place by the International Monetary Fund would bring Jamaica out of crippling debt.

*Jesus identifies the least of people with himself and we, followers of Christ, will be judged by our actions in regard to the least of our brothers and sisters. This is the game plan for us, not to lose 'the human face' of our brothers and sisters.*

I mentioned that it was good to be out of debt but it also meant that fewer children would go to school, that fewer children would start school, the health clinics would have less medicine and fewer services because these were the areas where the cuts would be made. People who once bought chicken flesh, would now buy 'chicken back' - the

bony part of the chicken you boil to get all the sustenance you can since now the price of chicken would be beyond their means.

The Frenchman, who was an intelligent good man looked at me with a lack of comprehension on his face. My perspective on the crippling debt issue had left him silent. He did not agree or disagree. He seemed to be thinking about what I said. People are not units of data, but once we dehumanise them, we can do anything to them.

St Matthew's gospel has the famous Last Judgement scene in *Chapter 25:31-46*. The criterion for getting into the Kingdom is given twice.

*"In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers (and sisters) of mine, you did it to me,"* (verse 40).

*"In truth I tell you, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me,"* (verse 45).

Jesus identifies the least of people with himself and we, followers of Christ, will be judged by our actions in regard to the least of our brothers and sisters. This is the game plan for us, not to lose 'the human face' of our brothers and sisters.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr Gary Walker  
director@columban.org.au

# Pilgrimage 2015

# In the footsteps of St Columban



Photo: bigstockphoto.com

Roman built bridge into Bobbio, Italy, near the resting place of St Columban.

DUBLIN

LUXEUIL

BREGENZ

DISENTIS

OLIVONE

BOBBIO

ROME

## Pilgrimage 2015

**Begins:** August 17, 2015

**Ends:** September 5, 2015

A 20-day pilgrimage

**Cost:** Approx AUD\$8000

**Single Supplement:** \$1,695.00

**All inclusive:** Air fares from Australia and Auckland (NZ), accommodation, breakfast and lunch, internal flights.

**Land package only:**

AUD\$6000 includes internal flights. It does not include flights to and from Australia or New Zealand. This leaves an option for doing some travel prior to or after the pilgrimage.

### *Pilgrimage leaders and Chaplains*

**Fr Tommy Murphy** was the Superior General of the Missionary Society of St Columban from 2006-2012. He is an acclaimed scholar of the Celtic heritage of Ireland and an expert on St Columban. He is the founder of the Columban Pilgrimage Walk to Croagh Patrick, County Mayo. He has served as a Columban Missionary in Korea, Taiwan and China.

**Fr Gary Walker** is the Regional Director of the Columban Region of Australia and New Zealand. He has served as a member of the General Council of the Columbans in Ireland from 1994 to 2000. He has a great interest in St Columban and Celtic Spirituality. He served as a Columban Missionary in Fiji, Jamaica and in Australia.

**Janette Mentha** has worked at the Columban Mission Centre in Melbourne for the past seven years. She is the Head of the Programmes Department. She is responsible for the Columban programmes such as The Far East Magazine, the Columban Calendar, E-News and other activities such as the World Youth Day Chile Experience 2013.

Janette lives in Melbourne with her husband Harry. They have six children. She is a member of St Bede's parish North Balwyn. She has a great interest in learning more about St Columban.

**For information:**

**Contact: Janette Mentha at**  
[info@columban.org.au](mailto:info@columban.org.au)

**Aus: (03) 9375 9475**  
**NZ: 61-3-9375-9475**

# Subanen Christmas Cards 2014

Get in early to order your cards

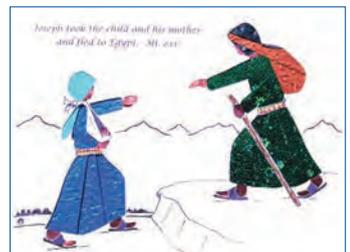
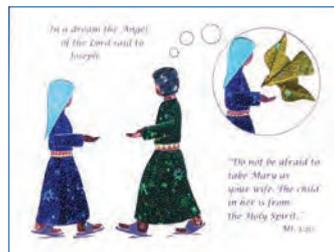
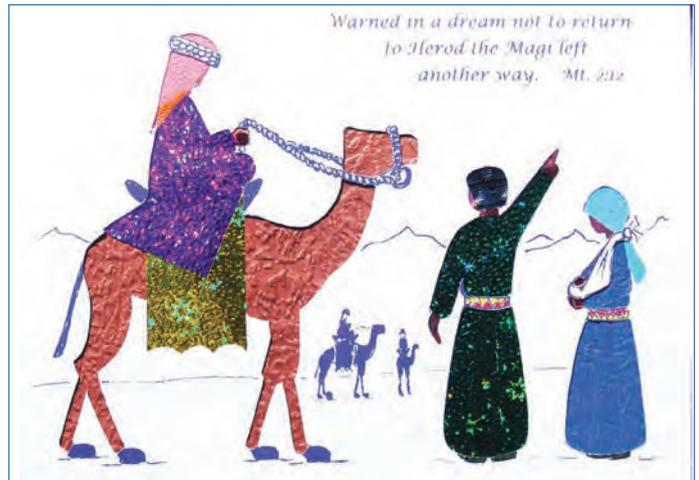
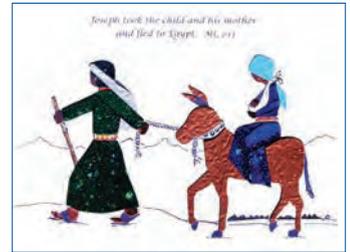
This year, Subanen crafters have produced Christmas cards with passages from the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew calls our attention to the fears and dangers that accompanied the Birth of Jesus especially the danger posed by Herod who sought to kill the Christ Child. The Holy Family fled to Egypt to escape Herod.

The Subanen people can identify with the Flight of the Holy Family. Over the years, forest-dwelling Subanen families were repeatedly forced to flee as logging operations and new settlers appropriated the land where they were living.

These Christmas cards honour the Holy Family and all families who are refugees in our dangerous world. Income from the sale of these cards helps Subanen crafters care for their families and their habitat.

To order:

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- Email: [info@columban.org.au](mailto:info@columban.org.au)



\$20 per pack of 10



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Subanen Christmas Cards Order Form

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TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Photo: Paul Kaye

# Under a bamboo roof

PAUL KAYE

*And it is our intent to ensure that our young son is also educated with the wisdom that we absorbed from the genuine people that make CELL. For it is the next generation and all that follow who will ultimately carry the burden of sustainability.*

Within the Republic of the Philippines, on Luzon Island, to the south of Manila, there is a Province called Cavite. Within the boundaries of Cavite and to the eastern portion of the Province there is a town known as Silang. My wife Marlyn and I had the privilege of living within the boundaries of Silang, Cavite Province, for a period of three full and enjoyable years. We had moved from the riotous mayhem of Cubao, Quezon City, National Capital Region, to the relative peace and quiet of a small *barangay* (village) within the eastern portion of Cavite Province.

This move from concrete to soil was jointly decided as we both came from what is termed 'Provincial Areas' in our respective first home centres, me - Australia - Marlyn - the Philippines. With a modicum of an agricultural bent and a willingness to learn, we both were looking for an element of self-sufficiency in our new home. So after our move I drew upon my connection with Columban Fr Shay Cullen of PREDA (Olongapo, Philippines) looking for an introduction to some like-minded folk in our 'new' region.

Fr Shay pointed me in the direction of Fr Dominic Nolan and Fr Francis Carey, both long term Columban Missionaries to the Philippines and both from Victoria, Australia. As I am an Aussie, although from Queensland, I jumped at the chance to introduce myself to these men. We met Fr Dom and Fr Frank in late 2010 and found, to our surprise, that they operated (amongst other commitments to Columban Missionary work) a centre known as CELL (Centre for Ecozoic

Living and Learning) within the confines of Silang, Cavite. We found CELL to be an oasis of green vibrant natural growth and beauty only a hop, skip and a jump from our new home.

So in the early part of 2011 my wife and I attended a seminar at CELL on Sustainable Agriculture which was geared towards the Philippines. Over a week we were introduced to some significant options for produce production, organic farming, recycling, composting, worm farming and small plot agriculture. Additionally, the seminar incorporated a daily spiritual element to our activities.

My personal favourites over the week were the Chicken Tractor and Worm Farming. Marlyn, who definitely has a far greener thumb than me, was more into Square Foot Gardening and the Recycled Water Fish Pond and Vegetable Garden Combo.

The education at CELL is open to one and all who have an interest. Even on our seminar we had a range of attendees that included Philippine farmers, Local Government Officers, a professional singer, remote villagers and university students. CELL has a full calendar and every month a consistent and busy schedule educating the people of the Philippines and in particular the students of today.

Schools, Universities, Religious Missionary Orders, interested and aware locals from all over the Philippine farming community plus government officials form the steady stream of CELL trainees, all educated in Sustainable



*And it is our intent to ensure that our young son is also educated with the wisdom that we absorbed from the genuine people that make CELL. For it is the next generation and all that follow who will ultimately carry the gift of sustainability.*

Agriculture. A local private school (The Cavite Institute) is incorporating CELL training into the school curriculum. CELL is alive and well but naturally could do with a greater level of support from the wider international community.

To me, the whole environment that is CELL encapsulates recognition of the beauty of our world and the need for humanity to sustain, nurture and grow with nature. CELL acknowledges the requirements of the human population to survive but encourages, trains and exposes all who care to visit or attend the essence of sustainability. I believe we humans are one of many elements that make our world and we as the dominant species, with God's help, are responsible for the gifts that we have been given. In my assessment of the CELL experience, CELL recognises these issues and works to educate or, in many cases, re-educate all who care to hear the message that is spiritual sustainability.

The inspiration, knowledge and skills that Marlyn and I gained from that one seminar continues to this day to strengthen our attitudes and beliefs regarding Sustainable Agriculture. The learning we underwent has promoted and confirmed a personal change in our attitudes so that in our own small way we may be assisting in the reduction of environmental damage.

And it is our intent to ensure that our young son is also educated with the wisdom that we absorbed from the genuine people that make CELL. For it is the next generation and all that follow who will ultimately carry the gift of sustainability.

The CELL Staff, in particular Riza T. Gemanil and Benido A. Corotan, CELL Patron, Elin Mondejar, along with Fr Dom

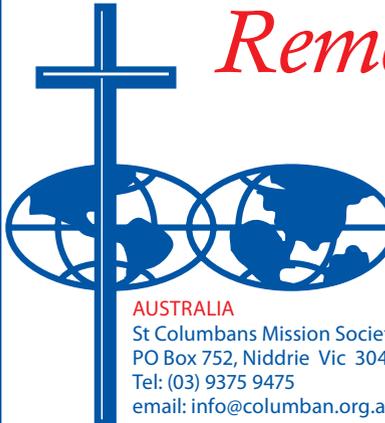
and Fr Frank not only became friends but co-conspirators in spreading the word on CELL and the spiritual steps that can be incorporated into Sustainable Agriculture. We regularly visited CELL over those three years when we were near neighbours, not only to remain abreast of progress and changes within CELL and the updated training but to purchase some of the organic vegetables produced there. A thriving healthy garden is kept in trim by the skilled hands of Benni and assistants. The worm castings provided an incredible boost to our own vegetable garden. Many times on our visits we also had the privilege to interact with Elin who is not only the Patron of CELL but the owner of the rent-free land that is CELL. The continued support of Elin provides a very significant and critical part of the framework that enables the concept and the reality of CELL to survive. CELL may appear as a small cog in the wheel of life, but let it be known that CELL punches well above its recognised weight. For CELL quietly, yet persistently, since 1999 has opened the minds of many to the options that are available for sustainable environmentally protective agriculture and in so doing has combined spirituality with agriculture. It is people like Fr Dom, Fr Frank, Elin, Riza and Benni, to name but a few of the tireless workers and supporters, who are opening the doors in the minds of humanity to the world that is Sustainable Agriculture.

And it is all done under a bamboo roof.

---

*Paul Kaye and Marlyn now live in Queensland. We thank them for this article on CELL.*

*Find CELL at: [www.cellsilang.awardspace.com/](http://www.cellsilang.awardspace.com/)*



## Remember the Missions

### in your WILL

*We cannot take our earthly possessions with us, but we can so dispose of them that our good works will continue after we are gone.*

*A bequest to help missionaries being God's saving message to non-Christians is a practical way of showing our love for Christ.*

*Why not speak to your lawyer about it?*

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**FORM OF WILL**  
I give devise and bequeath to the Superior for the time being of St Columban's Mission Society (see local address) the sum of \$..... for the use of the said Society.

# Wurundjeri Acknowledged

FR DAN HARDING



AUSTRALIA

ABORIGINAL

TORRES STRAIT



*The Wurundjeri Plaque in the garden at the Columban Mission Centre, Essendon.*

On Monday August 4, an open air Liturgy was celebrated at the Columban Mission Centre at Essendon, Melbourne, to give thanks to God for the presence of Aboriginal people in the Melbourne area and right across Australia for tens of thousands of years up to the present time.

In particular the Wurundjeri people were acknowledged as the Traditional Owners of the land of the greater Melbourne area. During this Liturgy an acknowledgement plaque was unveiled by the Columban Fathers' Regional Director in Australia and New Zealand, Fr Gary Walker and the Columban Superior General, Fr Kevin O'Neill.

Sherry Balcombe, the Secretary of the Victorian Aboriginal Catholic Council, represented Aboriginal people at the Liturgy. She opened the ceremony with an Acknowledgement of Country. This was followed by special

prayers from the participants giving thanks to God for the many millenniums of living presence of Wurundjeri and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia, for their gifts, knowledge and friendship.

Prayers were also offered asking forgiveness for injustices, the discrimination and dispossession they have suffered and continue to suffer.

Nine members of the Social Justice Group from St Vincent de Paul Primary School, Strathmore, and four Grade 4 students studying Aboriginal Culture, attended the Liturgy and participated in the prayers. They were accompanied by the School Principal, Mr John Grant, and Religious Education Coordinator, Mrs Anne-Maree Milne.

A large number of Columban priests and staff members from the Columban Mission Centre participated in the Liturgy, which was followed by an enjoyable morning tea.

# Securing a safe home

Subanen Crafter Marcelita Balido lives with her family in the hills of Mindanao, Philippines.

Marcelita's work with the Subanen Crafts Project has helped her to fulfil a dream to educate her children and give them a safe house and home.

Columban Fr Vincent Busch works with these Subanen women. By purchasing the 2014 Christmas Cards you can assist the Subanen women support their families.

To order fill out coupon on page 19.

The Subanen women thank you.



Photo: Mercy Gawason

Your **kindness** and **support** make it possible for Columbans to meet and minister to many people. Your "stringless" gift helps us to respond with flexibility to the most **urgent needs** of people.



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

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TFE Sept 2014

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Special offers and order form  
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