



The Far East

COLUMBAN MISSION MAGAZINE



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2011

PRICE \$1

The Far East

September 2011

Vol 93, No. 8

THE FAR EAST is devoted to furthering the missionary apostolate of the church and is published by St Columban's Mission Society.

THE SOCIETY was founded in 1918 as a society of secular priests dedicated to the evangelisation of the Chinese and other overseas people. It is an exclusively missionary society.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$10 per year (AUSTRALIA)

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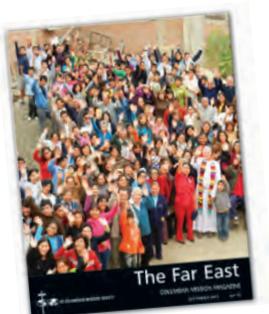
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Cover: Fr John Hegerty with people of 'Christ the Saviour' chapel (see pages 18-19).

Photo: Fr John Hegerty

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From the Director

The Church in the modern world



Evangelisation is a major thrust in the Church today. Most Dioceses have established Offices for Evangelisation and the next Synod is to be on New Evangelisation. We have recaptured the missionary spirit and feel compelled, as Paul was, to proclaim the Gospel. However, there are important lessons from Vatican II's *The Church in the Modern World* that we need to remember if we want to be effective missionaries.

This document was a revolution. It changed us from being a world-rejecting to a world-affirming people. We tried to share "the joy and hope, the grief and anxiety" of our contemporaries. We saw ourselves as a pilgrim people searching and learning along with all men and women of good will.

We do not like authoritarian figures and we are intolerant of "God's police". Australians are suspicious of "Bible bashers" and preachers with all the answers.

Historically the Church finds it difficult to relate to the modern world, especially the pluralist, secular, post-Christian Western world. We regret being moved from the centre to the margins, from being a privileged to being one among many voices. We yearn for the supportive culture and plausibility structures of Christendom. Our normal reaction is to be defensive, critical and condemnatory. Vatican II was an important break, an attempt to be positive, to dialogue with the modern world and to abandon the prophecies of doom.

In mission theology there are three principles that we need to remember. 1] All cultures, even post-modern Western culture, are places to encounter God. The Spirit is active in all cultures. We have to have open and expectant minds to keep asking how is God present in this culture? What in this culture can we celebrate and build on? What have we to learn? One thing we should be humble about is that we are not preaching to a people devoid of a saving relationship with God. They know God. The Spirit has been there before us. As missionaries, our job is not to "pump" religion into

people but to draw it out. We will not be attractive and credible missionaries if we give the impression of being superior, separate and always critical.

2] All cultures are also human creations and so are ambiguous. They contain both good and evil. Missionaries are prophetic dialoguers. We dialogue with respect but as prophets we must also unmask evil. However, we must be balanced and condemn out of love and respect. We all find it easier to accept criticism from someone we know cares for us.

3] The Gospel can only be received, believed, celebrated and lived within a people's culture. As missionaries we must learn to speak to the sufferings and joys of the people in their culture otherwise they will not hear us and certainly will not feel called to conversion.

Paul VI in his exhortation on Evangelisation in the Modern World reinforced these points when he emphasised that the Church has much to learn. It not only evangelises but is in constant need of being evangelised itself. He also taught us, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." Educationalists also insist that students learn best from teachers who are learning with them.

This is particularly true in Australia. Our relationship with organised religion has often been fraught but some modern sociologists, historians and theologians would claim that we are not without serious religious aspirations and feelings. However, we do not like authoritarian figures and we are intolerant of "God's police". Australians are suspicious of "Bible bashers" and preachers with all the answers. Our "mateship" is grounded in shared experience. We want a conversation more than a sermon. We like our religion with its sleeves rolled up, practical religious leaders who share our lot.

Fr Noel Connolly
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Standing with our people

PETER NGUYEN VAN HUNG

Immigrant workers are an easy mark but they get help to fight back.



Fr Hung (right) holds banner that reads: "Protest against Taiwan discriminatory labour policy"

Nguyen Van Phuc died on May 20, 2007 in an accident on a construction site in Taiwan. He paid US\$7,000 as a broker fee to a broker agency in Vietnam for the chance to be a migrant worker in Taiwan for three years. His work contract bonded him to an employer for a specific job for an initial period of two years, with the option of renewing his contract for another year.

Taiwanese law requires migrants to leave the country for at least one day, so making them ineligible for a working resident's visa. The workers may re-apply for two more renewals of the original visa, which would allow them to remain in Taiwan for a maximum of nine years. The system is open to abuse and exploitation in both Vietnam and Taiwan. Each time migrant workers apply for a working visa, they

have to pay another huge broker fee, ranging from US\$5,000-US\$7,000.

Last December, I accompanied Nguyen Van Phuc's 26 year old widow, Nguyen Thi Thuy, to court. I acted as her translator and her father-in-law's representative. Our Centre had helped her obtain a visa to enter Taiwan to help with the claim for compensation from the company that had employed her husband.

The deceased's father is a Catholic and knew about the work of our Centre. He contacted us after his son's fatal accident and came to Taiwan for three months to begin legal proceedings for compensation. Labour insurance, plus the cost of the funeral is paid by the government and is

45 times the basic wage (45 x 570 = US\$25,650. Our Centre helped seek compensation from the employer claiming negligence that caused death. In this case the family was awarded US\$15,000. We also helped the family of the deceased apply for a condolence gift of US\$3,000 from the local Labour Bureau.

When workers can no longer endure the exploitation they run away from their job and become 'undocumented'; we don't use the term, 'illegal'.

This is just one of hundreds of tragic cases brought to our attention each year. There are nearly 80,000 Vietnamese migrant workers in Taiwan. With the support of the Columban Taiwan Mission Unit and the local bishop, in 2004 I set up the Vietnamese Migrant Workers and Brides Office. The office now is situated in the buildings of the parish complex in which I work in Taoyuan city, a little south of the capital, Taipei. Then I began to put organisational shape on work with abused Vietnamese migrant workers and Vietnamese brides in which I had been engaged since 1988.

So many aspects of the international migrant worker life are viciously unjust. Initially those who help him/her organise their trip to another country put both the worker and their family into debt, with the family property being collateral. On arrival, the worker is often assigned to work in a dangerous situation where the worker has no freedom to choose his/her job for fear of being repatriated.

When workers can no longer endure the abuse and exploitation they often run away from their job and become 'undocumented', we don't use the term, illegal. In this situation the worker receives no government help for a workplace accident; with the permission of the local National Immigrant Agency (NIA) we take them into our shelter on a humanitarian basis.

We finance this work from other funding and donations. We offer shelter and counselling, accompaniment and translation service in court, and we request government permission for the worker to remain in our shelter legally. Our Centre helps identify victims of human trafficking, sexual abuse and workplace accident. We also offer lodging and support for pregnant women and women with a small child.

At the International Conference on Strategies for Combating Human Trafficking from Southeast Asia to Taiwan, held in Taipei in November 2005, I met the representative from the USA and invited him to our Centre to meet migrant workers and so hear the real story of abuse and exploitation. The Taiwanese Law against Human Trafficking was passed in January 2010 and applies as from June 2010.

A co-ordinated local and international campaign helped this happen. This law provides us with a legal basis with which to challenge employers and the government in court. To be fair, I must say that we have a good relationship with the Taiwanese Government authority that deals with migrant worker affairs.

Initially our Centre received funding from the St Columban's Mission Society but we also receive help from Vietnamese in the USA, Canada, Australia, Europe and other countries. We continue to look for private donations but now most of our funding comes from the Taiwanese Government which gives us a fixed amount per day per person receiving shelter. The Taiwan Legal Aid Foundation, which is financed by the State and private donations, provides lawyers for migrant workers in litigation.

I have a great team of collaborators who run the services that our Centre plans to offer migrant workers assistance for as long as necessary.

The Vietnamese Migrant Workers and Brides Office was established in 2004. Columban Fr Peter Van Hung has worked in Taiwan for 20 years.



The office staff of the Vietnamese Migrant Workers and Brides Office.



Photos: Fr. John Boles

Night at the riots

JOHN BOLES

Tear gas clouds seen from the parish centre.

Columban priest John Boles defends his church during September disturbances in Chile.

Ever think you might get tear-gassed? Here are a few survival tips: Have a wet hankie or surgical mask handy, to cover your nose and mouth; smear a little toothpaste under your eyes - it helps; don't rub your eyes after being gassed, it's better to let them stream; once you've reached safety, suck a lemon. Its recuperative qualities are remarkable.

I never imagined that overseas mission might involve getting caught up in riots, but that was before I took up an appointment in a parish on the outskirts of Santiago, the capital of Chile. Santo Tomás parish is located in an area called *La Pintana*, and *La Pintana* has "history".

In many ways, Chile is a vibrant, modern nation, probably the wealthiest and best-ordered in South America. It displays moments of great national solidarity - we witnessed the rescue of 33 miners from the now world-famous San José Mine in October, 2010. Nevertheless, beneath the veneer of unity lie certain tensions, many of which stem from the military coup of September 11, 1973 when General Augusto Pinochet overthrew the parliamentary democracy headed by left-wing President Salvador Allende.

Nowadays, most of the world remembers September 11 - "9/11" - as date of the terrorist attacks on the

Twin Towers in New York. In Chile, however, it is still known as, "*The Day of the Coup*".

Since then, Chilean society has been divided between those who sympathized with Pinochet, and those who opposed him. Even though democracy was restored in 1991, the anniversary of the coup is still marked by protests against the security forces. My area of *La Pintana*, a working-class stronghold, was a hotbed of resistance to military rule, and disturbances occur here every 11th September.

Our problem is that they tend to happen right in front of our parish centre and, at times, spill over into it!

Hence, each September 11th the priest and parish council get kitted out and prepare to defend our church property. Opposite the entrance to the church lies a supermarket, often the target of looters. (Most of today's protesters are youngsters who weren't even born at the time of the coup. Many probably couldn't even tell you what it was all about. They use the unrest as an excuse for vandalism and robbery).

The danger for us lies in the fact that, sometimes, the repulsed would-be looters have turned on the parish centre instead, venting their frustration on our property.

The supermarket is always guarded by armed police, hunkered down behind concrete barricades. The rioters gather at nightfall, on the sports ground on the other side of the church. And so the action begins.

César, a parish stalwart, is a veteran of the event, with many years of guard duty on this night behind him. "It's the same every year, just like a ritual," he assured me... Apparently, the confrontation follows a well-established pattern. We have a grandstand view of proceedings standing on the roof of the parish hall, and sure enough, things began to work out just as César had predicted.

First, the electricity transformers were sabotaged, plunging the area into darkness. Next, roads were sealed off by erecting barriers of wood and tyres, which were then set alight. Finally, the insurgents moved towards the fortified supermarket, throwing stones and bottles.

The police replied with tear gas shells. The rioters withdrew behind their lines - and both sides took a rest, before

the whole process began again. And so it would continue, until late into the night.

The danger for us lies in the fact that, sometimes, the repulsed would-be looters have turned on the parish centre instead, venting their frustration on our property or looking to the church for easy pickings.

Once, they ransacked the parish office. Two years ago, they burnt down a wooden outbuilding. So, whenever they got too close for comfort, we don our masks and wet handkerchiefs and make a show of force around the perimeter of the parish centre. We take it in turns to dash for cover in a meeting-room, where we rest our eyes and suck our lemons before sallying forth once more.

Last year we got off lightly. The damage was limited to a few smashed windows and a badly scratched font-

door. Maybe the general sense of national unity brought on by the February 2010 earthquake, and the plight of the trapped miners in the north of the country (not to be rescued for another month), had a moderating effect on the combatants. Or the wounds of a conflict going back decades are, with God's help, finally healing.

In that case, maybe César won't have to "man the barricades" to defend his church for many more Septembers. Instead, he'll be able to rest easy... and his parish priest as well.

Fr John Boles is from England and is currently Rector of Student Formation and Parish Priest of Santo Tomás Parish in Santiago, Chile.



The parish anti-riot squad with Fr John Boles (right).

The stepping horse

LEO DONNELLY



Fr Leo Donnelly uses the training of the stepping horse to explain how to do mission work.

and constant re-adjustment of the straps to make it tread on sand. Racing "trotters" and "pacers" would be a coherent parallel in an Australia/New Zealand context.

"The stepping horse" learns to walk at a steady pace by throwing forward each leg one at a time in a rounded movement, a bit like us 'dog-paddling' in water in our first attempts to swim.

At this steady constant pace it can walk across sand carrying a rider or baggage.

On occasion "the stepping horse" has been suggested as a symbol for us as missionaries. We are meant to cross 'deserts' too but it's easy to flounder powerless, in the unknown terrain of another culture.

On occasion "the stepping horse" has been suggested as a symbol for us as missionaries. We are meant to cross 'deserts' too but it is easy to flounder powerless, in the unknown terrain of another culture.

We bear important *Good News* from afar; granted it is not capable of obliterating the desert of economic poverty we find ourselves half-buried in, but, it is News well-measured to restore a sense of human dignity to people deprived over generations of any sense of self-worth.

People deliberately treated in this manner are left with a sense of being only chattels.

The "*Good News*" is quite strong in its emphasis: you are as good as anyone else, you are a person, you are a child of the same loving Father. "*And the king will answer, 'Truly I tell you: anything you did for one of my brothers (sisters) here, however insignificant, you did for me. (Matt 25..40)* Though various 'desert contexts' may appear to deny it, we all share the same dignity.

Once trained, the stepping horse was invaluable for coastal transport prior to roads linking the valleys.

Young missionaries arriving in Peru are confronted with a similar problem. (I think of myself many years ago). We can't step into the 'desert' of another culture and gallop as we would in our own.

Aspects like language and its nuances, acceptable manners within the culture, food, clothing, music, and perhaps most important of all 'a sense of humour to be shared' takes time to learn and accommodate. I feel that nearly all migrants and their children, to some extent, can relate well to this. For myself, I would suspect that the poverty our family knew during the economic depression of the 1930s was in my own case one of the 'straps' that prepared me for the poverty in Peru.

Learning new ways of living in another culture are the straps through which the new missionaries are taught to walk, to relate, to be accepted, to share faith, to be part of the adopted culture as a missionary of the Gospel.

Fr Leo Donnelly first went to Peru in 1958. He is retired and living in Lima, Peru.

*M*odern roads and transport have relegated "the stepping horse" to a prized animal of beauty and a big tourist attraction in Peru.

Peru's Pacific coastline stretches from Ecuador down to Chile and is close to 3,000kms of desert. This is broken about every 180kms by a fertile river valley coming off the Andes. The coastal population has always inhabited these valleys.

Intercommunication along the coast gave "the stepping horse" its role. A galloping horse flounders in sand, quickly placing its life at risk.

Someone, somewhere, watching a horse step gingerly into sand must have had the insight to strap its forelegs to force it to continue to step that way. After that it would have been a matter of time and patience

Walk in the light

SR REDEMPTA TWOMEY

Let us give thanks for the people whose inner light is beautiful.

Anyone who has been cut off from light or, like those miners, trapped in a dark place, will know the deep hunger that rises within for this most taken-for-granted gift.

Photo: iStockphoto.com

The amazing rescue of the 33 miners from deep below the earth's surface in Chile last year had us riveted to the television. As each day passed, each week, tension mounted. How could they possibly survive in the darkness of that underground cave? When, after 33 days, they stepped out into the light the world rejoiced. Each man wore a pair of dark glasses to shield his eyes from the sudden brightness. After weeks in darkness it would take time to adjust to the light.

"Let there be light," God said, his first creation. Before the sun or moon, he created light, a blessing for all that was to follow. A blessing given us every day though oftentimes we seem to be unaware of it. Anyone who has been cut off from light or, like those miners, trapped in a dark place, will know the deep hunger that rises within for this most taken-for-granted gift.

"You are the light of the world," Jesus tells us (*Matt 5:14*), a light that is a blessing, helping others to see, healing their wounds. A light that uplifts and brings joy, stirs up hope, encourages goodness. "Light dawns for the righteous and joy for the upright in heart" (*Ps 97*).

Jesus himself of course, is the true light. He is "the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it" (*Prologue, St John*).

Darkness will never get the upper hand though many times it seems to quench the light. Have we not sometimes felt that all is lost, our hearts quaking with fear and dread, our

life a bleak canvas stretched out before us? But this is the very time to say with faith and courage, even if it be only a thimble-full, "Though I walk in the valley of darkness I fear no evil for you are with me" (*Ps 23*). Because there is nowhere God's light does not shine. It enlightens everyone (*Jn 1:9*).

But, as Jesus pointed out, "Those who do evil hate the light" (*Jn 3:19*). Their choice is for darkness which they think will hide them. Those who walk in the light spread it and by their lives invite others to join them, to come to the source of this light, Jesus. They know that even people who have deliberately chosen to live in darkness can never extinguish this light.

Many say we are going through dark times now, in the Church, in society, bleak, dream-shattering times. But, like those miners in Chile, we are given a way out of the darkness into the light which can reach into the deepest, darkest cave of the heart.

"Lord, kindle our lamps that we may always shine in your presence and always receive light from you, the Light Perpetual, so that our own darkness may be overcome and the world's darkness driven from us." St Columban

Sr Redempta Twomey is the Assistant Editor of the Far East in Ireland.



(L to R), Rafael, John, Jorge, Gonzalo, Fr John Boles.

Providence and Google

CHARLES DUSTER

The ways of Providence are unusual and wonderful.

*I*t started with a simple question over the dinner table at the Columban House on the north side of Chicago. "Rafa, what was your first contact with the Columban Fathers?"

Rafael (Rafa) Ramirez is a Columban seminarian from Chile who was completing a 10 month English language study program at De Paul University and returned to Chile in January 2010. He is continuing his theological studies at Catholic University, Santiago in preparation for his first missionary assignment next year as a Columban missionary.

Rafa, age 32, was staying with us for two weeks while on pastoral experience working with the homeless at a food kitchen and shelter. His response was a fascinating story of amazing "coincidences" which could fill a chapter of a book. Let me share with you the opening pages.

"Six years ago, some companions and I were on a short holiday in Puerto

Saavedra on the southern coast of Chile. One of my friends in our group, Angelica Soldado, had previously spent time with the Franciscan Sisters on the nearby island of Wapi where the Sisters worked with the indigenous Mapuche people. While there, she met two Columban lay missionaries from Fiji, Lusi Lutua and Monika Lewatikana who were also working with the Mapuche on the island."

That was the first time I heard the name 'Columban'", Rafa concluded. "It stuck in my mind.... I went on line and googled it to find out more about these people."

Rafa continued, "Angelica and I were strolling down the main street in Puerto Saavedra on our way to buy bread and some groceries for lunch when a bus came along heading for

Wapi Island. Angelica spotted the Fijian girls riding in the bus and they spotted her. They started waving frantically at each other. At the next corner, the bus stopped and the two girls got off and ran toward us."

"There were big hugs and kisses, Chilean style and greetings like they were long lost sisters. I couldn't get over the scene - those two tall Fijian girls so friendly, so warm, animated and enthusiastic getting off their bus to greet my friend. They even started all singing together some opening bars from a Fijian song they had taught Angelica earlier 'tulu tulu lu...' all this on the main street in the middle of Puerto Saavedra."

"I was totally amazed and taken aback. The next moment the bus driver blew the horn and the two girls ran back and boarded the bus to continue back to the mission on the island. It was over in a few minutes, but what an encounter.

Afterwards, Angelica told me more about the two girls, how she had met them, something about their personalities, and how they happened to be living, working and obviously enjoying life as Columban lay missionaries so far from home. That was the first time I heard the name 'Columban', Rafa concluded. "It stuck in my mind. When I got back to Temuco, I went on line and Googled it to find out more about these people."

The rest, as they say, is history. Rafael spent several months finding out more about the Columbans, who first came to Chile in 1952. I was mesmerized by his account of how many "coincidences" occurred which led him five years ago to join the Columban formation program for priesthood. I'm no expert but it seemed obvious to me that the Holy Spirit was involved.

Fiji, Southern Chile, Chicago, lots of miles between them but they all seemed to come together that evening at our dinner table.

For six years I was the Coordinator of the Columban Lay Missionary Program in Fiji. During that time, Lusi and Monika were recruited, trained and missioned to Chile. I saw them off at Nadi Airport and was privileged to visit them in their mission in Wapi. Little

did they dream that their just being themselves, being Fijian and getting off the bus, the most natural thing in the world for them to do, would be an instrument in a Chilean joining the Columbans.

Can anyone doubt that the Lord is in control? Indeed, the rings formed by the pebble dropped in Fiji extended many miles.

Fr Charles Duster is currently working in Chicago, Il, USA.

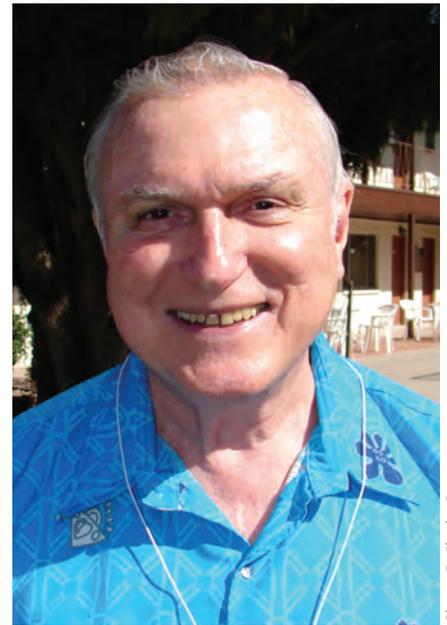


Photo: Fr Charles Duster

The author, Fr Charles Duster.



Monika Lewatikana with Chilean youth.



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 bring 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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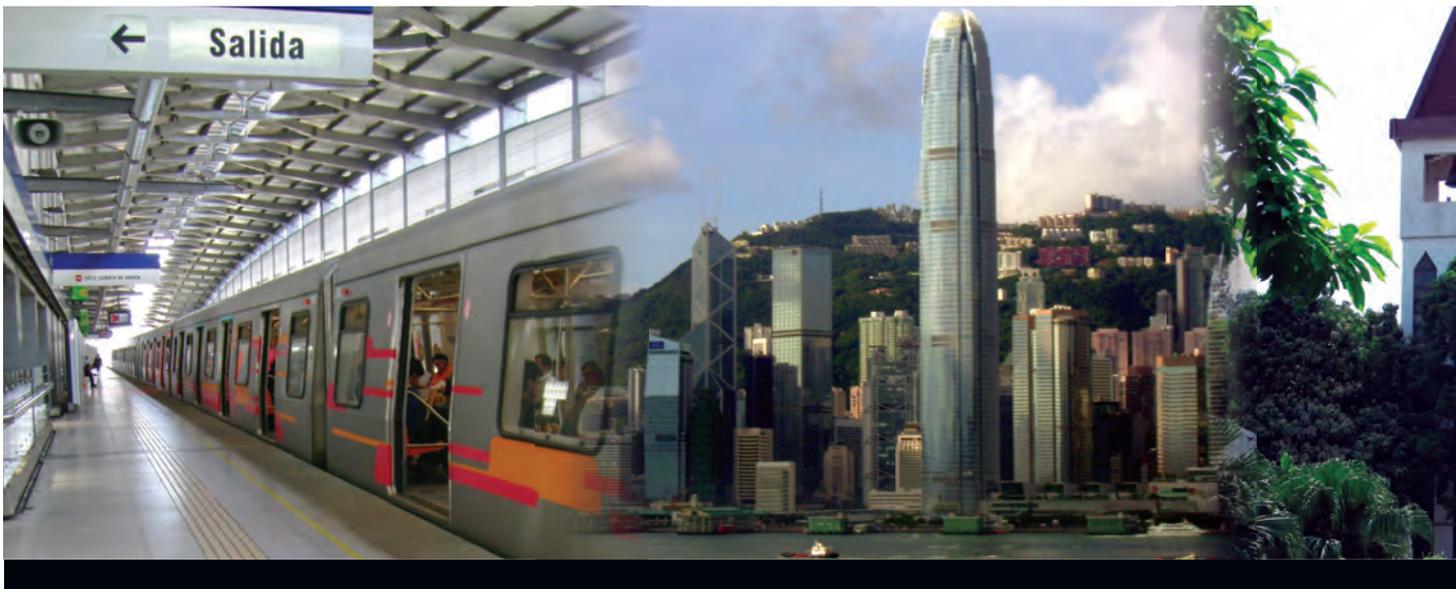
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FORM OF WILL

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.

Border control

JOHN BURGER



Photos: Fr. John Burger

The Shenzhen border control has a place in Columban history.

The Hong Kong MTR (Mass Transit Railway) map shows two places where a rail line comes to an end and where another line begins in just a short distance. This is an accurate portrayal of the situation at the border between Hong Kong and Shenzhen. Under China's 'One Country Two Systems' policy, although Hong Kong is part of China, there is still a border.

One who intends to cross the border must go through the usual border controls: presentation of travel document and pass through customs. This formality seems to say that the emphasis is more on 'two systems' than on 'one country' but the real emphasis at the border remains on control.

Shenzhen is a city in China's Guangdong province. Situated immediately north of the border it shares with what is now the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong. Owing to China's economic liberalization under the policies of former Chairman the late, Deng Xiaoping, and preparations for the 1997 reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty the area became China's first - and arguably the most successful of special economic zones.

Shenzhen is a boom town, reputed to be one of the fastest growing cities in the world. People, some with official permission to live there and some without that important document have poured into the city from poorer regions to the north and west. Officially, even Chinese citizens are not free to seek a better life by just moving to a more prosperous part of the country.

Shenzhen's modern, if somewhat sterile, cityscape is the result of the vibrant economy made possible by an influx of foreign investment since the late 1970s, when it was a small fishing village. Since then, foreign nations have invested more than \$30 billion for building factories and forming joint ventures.

Shenzhen and its environs were a different place in the early 1950s... when Bishop Edward Galvin ... was deported from China and crossed the border into Lo Wu on the Hong Kong side.

Like Shanghai and despite being in a country that continues to have Chairman Mao's portrait on its currency, Shenzhen is home to a stock exchange as well as the headquarters of numerous high-tech companies. Shenzhen is the second busiest port in mainland China after Shanghai. Despite the worldwide economic downturn, huge container ships can still be seen heading down the Pearl River delta for the open ocean and distant ports.

This international trade has brought many foreigners to Shenzhen. As a measure of just how cosmopolitan it has become, there is an international school in Shenzhen that was originally set up by four oil companies with operations in the South China Sea. The school presently has over 500 students representing 34 different countries.



Among them 28% are American, 55% are Asian and 17% are European. The faculty consists of over 75 teachers coming from the United States, Canada, U.K., New Zealand, India, the Philippines, Guatemala, and China. Catholics, who live in the vicinity of the school, have formed a club to help them support each other in their faith.

By about 2004, Shenzhen had seven churches or legal meeting places for Chinese Catholics. And with more and more expatriates investing, working, studying and living in Shenzhen, there began to be a demand for English Masses. For about the last five years, Shenzhen's largest Catholic churches have provided English services.

These communities are close to Hong Kong where Columban and other religious communities are operating freely, because of 'One Country Two Systems.' But discretion limits what we can do for any Catholics in Shenzhen, or what we can say about it in print.

Shenzhen and its environs were a different place in the early 1950s. It was just a dusty village when Bishop Edward Galvin, the founder of the Columbans, was deported from China and crossed the border into Lo Wu on the Hong Kong side.

Columban Fr Aedan McGrath, who was in prison in China from September, 1951 until May of 1954 also tasted freedom upon crossing the border from what is now Shenzhen. He described the scene: *"Then we approached the border, a little barbed wire fence. Two or three British*

policemen, very smart, were on the other side.... A crowd came along, poor women carrying babies and dragging things.

Only the poorer type of person would be let into Hong Kong – I mean would be let out of communist China – and possibly, a great number of them were doing spy work. Then we went across Lo Wu Bridge. It was a Sunday afternoon, the first Sunday in May, and I heard the first, after three years, decent word of kindness.

"Welcome, Father!" said the British policeman. He brought us into his room, into the beautiful fresh free air and gave us a glass of beer each." Fr Ambrose Poletti PIME was called from the nearby village of Fanling in Hong Kong's New Territories. "He came in and gave us coffee and chocolate, a royal welcome. That was the beginning of our freedom."

Bishop Galvin died in 1956 when Chairman Mao was still consolidating his power. But Fr McGrath lived till 2000. But it is easy to imagine both of them shaking their heads at the glitzy shopping malls on the Shenzhen side of the border but having a certain joyful satisfaction that there are vibrant Catholic communities in the new Shenzhen.

Fr John Burger is on the Columban General Council in Hong Kong.

Palliative care in Pakistan

ROBERT McCULLOCH



Photo: Fr Robert McCulloch

Fr Robert McCulloch and Patras Inayat in Melbourne.

*P*alliative care in Australia and New Zealand provides good medical treatment and the support of compassionate health carers to people who are diagnosed with a terminal illness.

In Pakistan terminally-ill patients are treated as sources of income by the medical profession and the hospital culture. If their illness is not relieved, the financial situation of their families is wrecked as they seek for a cure or for pain relief.

In Pakistan terminally-ill patients are treated as sources of income by the medical profession and the hospital culture. If their illness is not relieved the financial situation of their families is wrecked...

I came to know of home-based palliative care in 1997 when my family cared for our mother after she was diagnosed with advanced cancer. We became part of a caring team of nurses, doctors and family. We learnt from one another and leaned on one another. It was a sad but consoling 10 months. I had seen many terminally-ill people in Pakistan without hope, without care and in great pain. My personal experience of palliative care helped me to see there was a way to respond with care and compassion to their needs.

In 2005, the administrative council of St Elizabeth Hospital in Pakistan of which I am Chairman began discussing the possibility of commencing a home-based palliative care for the terminally-ill at Hyderabad, a city of 4,000,000.

We understood that it was a powerful way of expressing our Catholic commitment to the dignity of life even in the presence of the reality of death.

Fr Robert McCulloch's own experience has inspired him to help the terminally-ill in Pakistan.

Its introduction will enable the hospital to continue to offer in a new way the best possible care at the lowest possible cost to those in need and to manifest compassion and mercy in a practical and outstanding way in Pakistan where society is fragmented by violence and mistrust and where medical care is profit-oriented.

An important benefit of the home-based palliative care service is that it will facilitate inter-faith harmony on a rich personal level through the caring ministry of committed Christian nurses, male and female, in the homes of people of different faiths, and through the meeting and mutual support of the religious ministers of Muslim, Christian and Hindu patients.

In preparation for beginning the palliative care at St Elizabeth Hospital, one of the male nurses, Patras Inayat, is doing the year-long Certificate in Palliative Care Nursing at Calvary-Bethlehem Hospital, Caulfield. Members of St Vincent de Paul conferences in Melbourne and office staff at the Columban Mission Centre welcomed Patras and helped him settle into his studies. He will return to Pakistan in November.

The home-based palliative care that is starting at St Elizabeth Hospital is a first in Pakistan so we don't have local expertise to fall back on. However, a group of four senior Catholic nurses with academic positions in universities and schools of nursing in Karachi have come together as the Nursing Advisory Service for planning and implementing the palliative care at St Elizabeth. We plan to begin in 2012 with 10 terminally-ill patients being visited at home in the morning and evening.

We have already begun sourcing and purchasing the necessary equipment. Some of the equipment such as syringe drivers for continuous pain-management medication is expensive, made more so by the refusal of the Pakistan government to grant any sort of sales tax concession to St Elizabeth Hospital.

We also need to purchase a small 4-door car for the palliative care nurses to get in and out of narrow streets in Hyderabad. It will cost \$10,600 but is a one-off purchase.

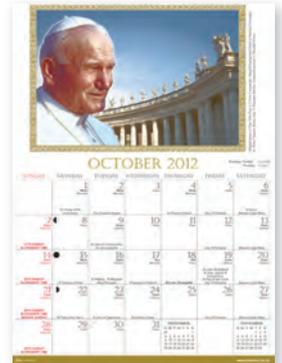
Fr Robert McCulloch has been a missionary in Pakistan since 1978.

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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 St Columbans who died recently: also for the spiritual and the temporal welfare of all our readers, their families and friends.*

After one year of devastating rains, the situation remains alarming and dramatic

Islamabad (FIDES) - One year after the floods that devastated the country between July and August 2010, the proportions of the disaster still require a lot of work. The involvement of children in child labor has increased by over 30%, as well as cases of child abuse and early marriage.

Because of the dramatic emergency caused by the prolonged and devastating rains, children have been forced to work in hazardous places and because their parents do not have the possibility to earn enough to live on. According to the report, "Pakistan, a year after", carried out by the NGO Save the Children in eight districts affected by floods, almost 1,200 cases of abuse have been recorded and an increase in early marriages even among children of 9-10 years of age, to "protect" young girls from the risk of being abused and therefore dishonored."

The report also documents the strong weakening of the education system, 47% of parents were interviewed and said that there are no teachers in their children's school, the collapse of household income, has decreased to 70% and the impossibility for more

than 30 % of those interviewed to rebuild their homes. Many of the 10 million children affected still struggle to survive: in some of the most stricken areas 23% of children are malnourished. Almost half of the parents interviewed said that their children have phobias, nightmares and other symptoms of distress and psychological trauma.

In a district of Punjab one family out of 10 admits that their children have started to take hashish or glue to soften the emotional burden. The NGOs in Pakistan is helping four million people,

including 1.8 million children, and taking care of 25,000 malnourished children.

Food, shelter, health care, nutritional treatments, the creation of 200 "safe and secure play areas" for children, support to schools, work programs in exchange for money are among the main activities and interventions carried out so far.

"One navigates in the dark, it is difficult to predict the evolution of Egypt", says a missionary from Cairo

Cairo (Egypt) - "One navigates in the dark, we do not know where Egypt will go" says Fr Luciano Verdoscia to Fides, a Comboni missionary in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, where tens of thousands of demonstrators gathered in Tahrir Square, in response to an appeal launched by the Muslim Brotherhood. Fifteen lay political formations as well as Coptic joined in the demonstration.

Among the slogans in the square, there was "Islam, Islam, we do not want a liberal State," "the people want the Sharia," "Islamic not Western or Eastern" to which are added those of political demands, as for example that to judge former President Hosni Mubarak (a request also put forward by opponents



A family with a new home

Mission Intention for September

That the Christian communities spread throughout the Asian continent may proclaim the Gospel with fervour, bearing witness to beauty with the joy of the faith.

Editorial



of the lay transitional government protected by the military).

"In recent days there were clashes between the young revolutionaries and members of the Muslim Brotherhood," recalled Fr Luciano.

"The young protagonists of the revolution in previous months (who forced the resignation of President Mubarak) would like a more democratic government," said Fr Luciano.

"These young people are from cities and are able to handle the most modern means of communication, such as social network."

"On the other hand-continued Fr Luciano - the Muslim Brotherhood has a considerable organizational capacity and especially appeal to religious identity. One must keep in mind that a good part of the Egyptian population lives in rural areas. These people have no culture and their identity is only religious."

"The revolution was able to overthrow the authoritarian system of Mubarak, but we do not yet have a clear idea of what Egypt will become, one navigates in the dark," concluded Fr Luciano.

People live with uncertainty

*T*here is a theme of uncertainty running through this issue of *The Far East* in the specific sense of 'subject to change'.

China and Chile have been volatile countries; who knows if their trouble is over? Pakistan is viewed as an unstable country at the present time. Our Columban history is one of uncertainty too in these countries that have suffered upheavals from nature and the clash of opposing political and social systems.

Taiwan is a prosperous country today but living in the shadow of China. Overseas workers come to Taiwan not to seek their fortune but to find work in order to send money home to their families. Columban Worker Centres have worked hard on their behalf for just wages and conditions. How long will it last as the world's financial markets start to convulse again?

A young Chilean man moves towards ordination as a Columban missionary; hearing-impaired children will, we hope, continue to escape from a silent world; the chapel of *Christ the Saviour* moves to completion, brick by brick. None of these goals are assured.

Our own lives are subject to change brought on by our own decisions as well as influences beyond our control. What is not subject to change is the confidence of the risen Lord who has been 'through it all' and who said that he would be with us 'through it all'.

Gary Walker

TFE@columban.org.au

Brick by brick

JOHN HEGERTY

'Christ the Saviour' chapel will be built brick by brick, tile by tile.



Photos: Fr. Peter Woodruff

Charito, Adela, Martha, Doris and Jorge

The parish of 'Our Lady of the Missions' began when Fr John Hegerty challenged the existing Columban parishes to send volunteers from among their parishioners to go on mission in an area called "Puente Camote," which means "Sweet Potato Bridge." Some 10,000 families had set up home in that area and had no parish or priest to serve them.

These parishioners from the eight Columban parishes got their first taste of being missionaries, when after three months of preparation, they were sent out to knock on the doors of the flimsy houses to invite the owners to start a Christian community. The first step was an invitation to come along to a meeting to prepare next Sunday's liturgy.

Twenty three small groups eventually developed into 12 Christian communities; and the mission territory became the parish of 'Our Lady of the Missions.'

Two basic conditions for continuing were that the people would be willing to meet once a week to prepare the Sunday liturgy and also obtain land from their housing cooperative to build a chapel and a hall.

So it is full steam ahead once more. Doris and Adela and Peter are fundraising again and soon will be knocking on doors to ask for cement, bricks and roof tiling.

"Christ the Saviour" community started to build their hall for catechetical classes and to serve as a temporary chapel.

Fr Hegerty who is now the parish priest said, "The housing association donated 900 square metres of land to our

parish. We have slowly built a parish hall, half the walls of the chapel, a few rooms in which we run our parish meetings and programs. We have a well organized and active local parish community. We run two or three fundraising activities each year, from which we raise between \$500 and \$1,000 each time. We ask local residents to donate money or material towards our chapel project. To date we have been able to find the resources to get the building materials but the parish looks for funds to help with the cost of building, especially major sections such as the roof, plans and builders' wages. I have always believed that this parish community project deserves our time, effort and financial support.

I asked a few 'pillars' of our community what belonging to the local parish community had contributed to their lives and what, in their opinion, did the community contribute to the life of the broader civic community."

Doris told me that she used to be like the prophet Amos - slow to hear the call of God. She said, "Now I like going to Mass and have gradually come to understand better what it's all about. I also feel that I have become more tolerant." She believes that the parish community has been able to instill a certain joy into the life of the local civic community. She remarked, "All of us have something to complain about but that does not have to be our main agenda."

Adela was not active in the parish when she first came to live here but, thanks to an invitation from Doris, she came along to the first communion program for her daughter, felt

welcomed and began to want to participate. She said, "When Fr John invited me with my husband to be guides for the adults in the first communion program I felt a deep joy." Her husband does not participate and, at one stage, put pressure on her to pull out of parish activities but she put her foot down, so now according to Adela, "He does not participate but he does support me and I feel so happy to see the joy of others as they become part of our community."

Peter, another community member says, "I am concerned about the children and the youth growing up in an increasingly violent and valueless society. We need to offer them a place where they, and we, can worship together; the hall is not big enough now. The community can support them through our catechetical programs to gain a sense of self worth and dignity for themselves and for their relationships with others."

So it is full steam ahead once more. Doris and Adela and Peter are fundraising again and soon will be knocking on doors to ask for cement, bricks and roof tiling, so that they can finish the foundations of the chapel and put the roof on. Can you help us help Doris, Adela and Peter's dreams come true?

Fr John Hegerty has been in Peru since 1971.



Discussing plans for the chapel.



Peter, a parishioner with Fr John Hegerty.



No longer hidden

SEÁN O'DONNELL

Where there was shame, now there is choice.



Salving Tinsay Valderrama works with the deaf.

*I*f you had asked me after three or four years whether there were any deaf people in my parish I would have responded that, 'No, there were none.'

The thing is that for cultural reasons these special people were hidden away. Having a deaf person in the home was seen a shame on the family. If you visited a home where there was a deaf person they would be kept out of sight in the back room. You'd never find out that they were even there.

My inspiration for becoming involved with the deaf came through a friend and fellow-Columban, the late Joe Coyle. His sister happened to be deaf and he had a great interest in people who were suffering from deafness and consequently could not speak.

Joe was from my hometown, Derry, in Ireland and when he went home on vacation he would go around and ask people if they had any old hearing aids, because, as well as those who are totally deaf, there are those who can hear with some help.

I was visiting him one time and he had an old hearing aid. He was with a little girl who had never heard in her life and Joe put the hearing aid into her ear and all of a sudden she began to jump up and down with joy. I will never forget her reaction, for her it was like a miracle.

What I saw of Joe's involvement inspired me to do something myself. One day I was in the parish office and a deaf child came in and I decided to do something about it.

There was a fine young woman in the parish called Neeni and I asked her whether she would be interested in learning sign language. She said she would. Neeni took to signing quickly and learnt to use it well.

Even the younger members of the family would treat a deaf aunt with disrespect. I remember a woman crying with remorse that she had been taught to regard her aunt as stupid and used to beat her.

Then I decided to put up a notice advertising our intention to help deaf people and inviting the families to bring their deaf to us in the parish. If I remember rightly, two or three came and that changed everything. Neeni taught them sign language and it was just a revelation to me to see the change in these poor people who had spent their lives hidden away. Then of course, the numbers grew.

As the classes for the deaf gradually developed, we got the families involved and helped them see beyond

their cultural prejudices regarding the deaf. Some even thought that the deafness was a punishment for some great sin and treated their deaf as pariahs.

Even the younger members of the family would treat a deaf aunt with disrespect. I remember a woman crying with remorse that she had been taught to regard her aunt as stupid and used to beat her.

Salving Tinsay Valderrama came from a well-known family in Bacolod. She really helped us. She was gifted with empathy and skill in working with the deaf. For Salving the deaf were not just special children, they were special children of God. She began to organise a month-long summer session in a house on her family's estate in Bukidnon, inland from our parish.

From then on the work with the deaf developed. Now it's very much part of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Care Programme. Today five parishes are working with the deaf.

Fr Seán O'Donnell SSC worked in the Philippines from 1962 until 2010. He is now retired in Dalgan Park, Ireland.

Closed gates

PAKISTAN

PATRICK McINERNEY



Photos: Fr Patrick McInerney

Sand bag protection at church for the guards.

A church under siege in Pakistan.

The gates to the Cathedral grounds were closed and bolted from the inside. No casual visitor could gain access. A security guard peered through a metal grille and having identified me as a bone fide visitor, he drew the bolts. As the gates swung open they revealed a guard post surrounded by sandbags, behind which the security guards could take refuge if fired upon.

Next was a series of metre-high heavy concrete barriers that traversed the driveway. No one could simply drive straight through. Everyone had to zigzag, reduced to a crawling pace, under close scrutiny from the armed guards - under gunfire if warranted! Vehicles had to park at a distance from the building.

Such was the security that confronted me when I visited the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Lahore in April this year. I was attending the Memorial Service for Mr Shahbaz Bhatti, the Federal Minister for Minorities, who had been assassinated in Islamabad on March 2.

The increased security is a sad testament to the religious extremism that is gripping Pakistan. The Cathedral has twice suffered damage from bomb blasts targeting police buildings nearby.

Even though the Christians take common sense precautions, they are not intimidated. The Rector of the Cathedral, Fr Andrew Nisari, assured me that the people came in droves for the Lenten services. They identify with the suffering Messiah.

Even though the Christians take common sense precautions, they are not intimidated. The Rector of the Cathedral, Fr Andrew Nisari, assured me that the people came in droves for the Lenten services. They identify with the suffering Messiah. Their faith in the 'Crucified One' enables them to overcome the fear and anxiety.

The closed gates, the armed guards and the concrete barriers witness to the prevailing atmosphere of fear and anxiety, but the Christians break through those man-made barriers.

Gathered in big numbers in the churches, they witness to the presence of the Risen Christ in their midst. They are consoled and comforted by his words and pray that they will soon be fulfilled for all the people of Pakistan, Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh: "Peace be with you."

"When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." (Jn 20:19)

Fr Patrick McInerney is the Director of Columban Mission Institute, Co-ordinator of the Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations and Columban Vocations Advisor in Strathfield, NSW.

God created Heaven and Earth

SEAN McDONAGH

The first line of the Bible affirms that the world is created by a loving, personal God.



Photo: istockphoto.com

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1).

The Bible teaches that the world is good in itself. God contemplates his creation and repeats four times that what he saw was good (*Gen 1:10,13, 18, 21 and 25*). This perspective on creation is both important and revolutionary.

The people of Israel grew up with cultures which maintained that the world of spirit was created by a 'good spirit', while matter came from an 'evil spirit'. From the beginning the Bible rejects this radical dualism. In the Hebrew world, unlike the Greek world, there is no unbridgeable dichotomy between spirit and matter; both are essential and, more importantly under God's dominion.

Down through the centuries movements which denigrated the natural world have surfaced. While the Church has never succumbed to these heretical teachings it has sometimes strayed from the clear affirmation about the world being good as we find in Genesis.

Many of the early Fathers of the Church elaborated their theology of creation in opposition to the prevailing teaching of Gnosticism and Manichaeism. The Gnostics believed that salvation was reserved to a select minority of the elect who had access to secret knowledge. They also tended to despise the material world and basic bodily functions like eating, and especially, sexuality.

Manichaeism, on the other hand, emerged from the writings of a second century native of Persia called Mani (c. 216-276). He believed in

absolute dualism between good and evil. A good spirit created spirits, while the world came from the hands of an equally powerful evil spirit. The task of the believer was to liberate the spirit which emanates from the good creator, from the body that was the creation of an evil spirit. This could be achieved only through prayer and asceticism.

In the Hebrew world, unlike the Greek world, there is no unbridgeable dichotomy between spirit and matter; both are essential and, more importantly under God's dominion.

Though many of the Fathers affirmed the fundamental goodness of creation and the human body, their teaching was sometimes tinged with some of the currents of the time, especially neo-Platonism. The neo-Platonists believed in a hierarchical view of the world and the divine. The world and even the human body was seen as inferior to the spiritual world.

The goal of the spiritual person was to move away from being concerned with the material world and contemplate the truly real spiritual world. This could be achieved through inner illumination, fasting and prayer. In such a tradition one could not be expected to find God in the natural world. Neo-Platonists would have squirmed at the final stanza of Patrick Kavanagh's poem - *The One* - where the poet finds God in the mundane realities of the natural world:

*That Beautiful, Beautiful God.
Was breathing His love by a
cut-away bog.*

Even someone as original in his teaching as St Augustine was affected by neo-Platonism. In his youth he had been attracted to Manichaeism and spent eight to 10 years as a member of that sect. On conversion to Christianity he adopted some of the elements of neo-Platonism. He seemed to abandon some of the more optimistic elements of neo-Platonism in relationship to human goodness when he witnessed the greed and avarice of people. This led him to teach that the natural world was so damaged by original sin that it was almost worthless unless redeemed by grace.

For Augustine redemption meant taking people away from the natural world - the earthly kingdom - and transferring them to the heavenly kingdom. The Irish moral theologian, Fr James Good, believes that the negative anti-body and anti-sex attitude, which was deeply rooted in the Christian psyche right up to the time of the Second Vatican Council, owes much to the teaching of Augustine.

In the light of this dualism which has been so prevalent and distorting down through the ages, the assertion in Genesis that God saw it is good is so important and it must become the fundamental basis of our religious life.

Fr Sean McDonagh is a researcher on justice and peace issues and more recently ecological challenge.

A life worth living

Fr John Hegerty celebrated 40 years of missionary priesthood recently in Lima, Peru. Family travelled from Australia and he celebrated this milestone in Our Lady of the Missions parish with family, other Columbans, friends and parishioners. It has been a life worth living. Please support Columban missionary work, God's work, with your prayers and generosity.



Photo: Fr Peter Woodruff

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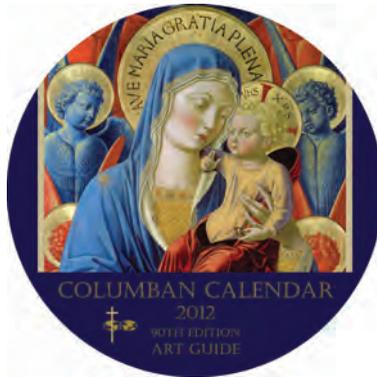
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