



Enter the temple beautiful, the house not made with hands
Rainwashed and green, windswept and clean
Beneath the blue it stands
And no cathedral anywhere
Seemeth so lovely and so fair.

The Far East



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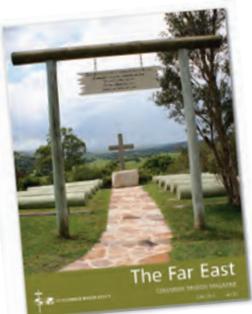
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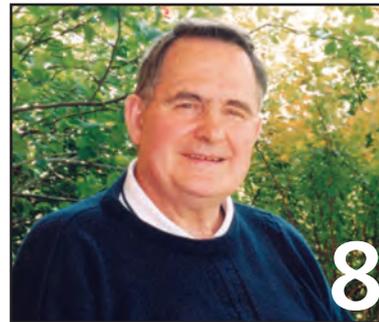
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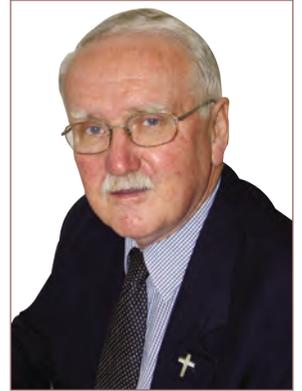
Cover: 'Open Air Cathedral' outside Bexel in northern New South Wales. (see pages 6-7)



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From the Director

A mission to be positive



Our mission as Christians is to offer the world a positive, hopeful vision of human history. We are not to be prophets of gloom, a holy huddle of 'the saved' looking out with disdain on the world and the sad events of secular, human history.

A basic theme of our Scriptures is that God acts in and through history. The biblical God is discovered in historical events and human politics and institutions. The story includes the emigration of Abraham and his clan out of Mesopotamia, the exodus from Egypt, the development of legal codes, the evolution of monarchy and its constant battles with the prophets, the Assyrian invasion, the trauma and pain of exile, the poetry of Isaiah, the life of Jesus, the struggles of the early Christians to discover who they were and to resolve their relationship with the Jews - to mention a few things.

The final word will be life not death, good not evil, despite our present divisions, our selfishness and inability to resolve even the most obvious political disputes, despite natural disasters, wars and the power of some to wreak evil on those weaker than themselves.

And an important feature of this history is that it is not confined to explicitly religious events and persons. The history of salvation ruptures the wall between the sacred and the secular. It demands a broader horizon that can recognise the presence of God outside the zone of the sacred or the confines of Israel or the church.

In the Old Testament and more especially in Jesus and his preaching of the Kingdom of God we have a positive view of history. We are not blind believers in relentless progress. We recognise the power of evil. But we do believe that history is moving towards fulfilment, completion and salvation. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection we believe that at the end of history evil and death will be defeated, creation renewed,

reconciliation achieved and justice and peace realized. The final word will be life not death, good not evil, despite our present divisions, our selfishness and inability to resolve even the most obvious political disputes, despite natural disasters, wars and the power of some to wreak evil on those weaker than themselves.

The second thing we believe is that the history of salvation is precisely that, a history over a long period of time. The significance of Abraham's faith was not known until Jesus and even then not fully. We are making perfect the faith of all those who went before us. We are all part of one story, one act of salvation. God seemed to be in no hurry over the Incarnation. Christ built on millennia of creation and redemption history and the church is still completing the work of Christ two millennia after his resurrection. (Eph 1: 19-23).

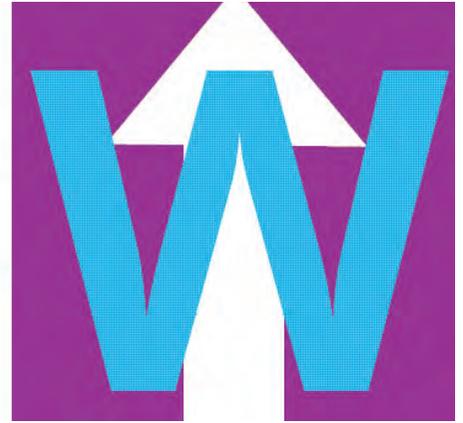
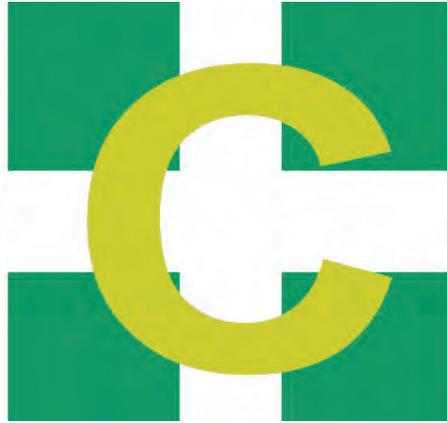
We must be 'ancestor' conscious. Christianity is cross-generational. It is not completed in one generation and probably will not be in ours. We must also be 'future' conscious. Conscious of our real, if limited, role in history. It is not our job to save the world. God will save the world. It is our role to be faithful to our ancestors, to play our part, to be relevant and involved in building the Kingdom of God and to remain hopeful and positive.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Noel Connolly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Fr Noel Connolly
director@columban.org.au

The strong influence of YCW

CHARLES RUE



I am grateful to the YCW for the insights it has given me and the courageous example of people systematically applying faith to their real life situations.

*M*y first memory of the YCW (Young Christian Workers) was in the 1950s when the curate in our rural parish proposed to us young men who had just left school to establish a local branch. The YCW and the YCS (Students) was the alive Catholic action of the day that applied faith to life. We discussed the idea but decided that we would rather join the local Junior Farmers. That group was seen as Protestant (later proved to be wrong), but we saw it as more related to our lives as budding farmers.

My next encounter was a YCW information camp for seminarians run by Fr Frank Marriott in the 1960s. A vivid memory was hearing the story of a young worker who could not read well. Rather than give him some spiritual book, he was first given a 'western'. We were informed that there had to be some immediate interest in reading for him. I thought this was a very practical approach.

In South Korea in the 1970's I was assigned to be chaplain to a YCW group of girls working in a cloth factory. At each meeting they described their life as workers in the

factory, reflected on it in the light of faith and then decided on an action to try. They reported back on the action at the next meeting.

See-Judge-Act Method

This is the tried and tested YCW method: See-Judge-Act. They described the lack of heaters in the factory leading to fights among the workers. Their action in 'turning the other cheek' was to stand back from the heaters. They reported that they were too cold; the fights continued.

They then decided to ask management for more heaters (ask and you shall receive). They were brushed off so they decided to role play in preparation for asking again (be wise as serpents). They eventually got the heaters and went on to get women supervisors. This tackled the more serious problem of male supervisors wanting sexual favours from girls assigned the best machines in a piece-work system.

The local young men's YCW was less successful. Young males tended to work in multiple separate small workshops so that the work conditions they described were disparate and little common action could be taken.

Fun and creativity was part of YCW life. They adapted traditional Korean mask dancing to highlight workers' social issues which were developed as a national campaign. It was so effective that hundreds of police surrounded the Seoul cathedral to stop people attending a performance.

Social Analysis Techniques

The YCW method was deepened by 'social analysis' techniques. It is really an analysis of power structures who has it and how it can be counted. The *INODEP Foundation (Ecumenical Institute for the Development of Peoples founded by Paulo Freire)* from France had spread this tool to Asia and many missionaries studied it. I later used it with farmers in Victoria who were worried that their sons were wild and not interested in the farm. Analysis showed that their sons had no skills other than farming but there was no way that they would ever have the capital to own a farm. This led to much of their sons' frustration and behaviour.

Used in sermons, mission work

See-Judge-Act became a method not only for my sermons but for other

SEE - JUDGE - ACT METHOD

parts of my mission work. When helping develop a new adult catechism our method did not look first to the Gospel. We began by describing the felt needs of people and only then ordering a catechism in response. The result was magical. None of the Gospel or church tradition was left out but the catechism was ordered and presented so that the listener had a better chance of hearing the message. Lives were transformed.

Method used with faith and ecology

In more recent times much of my evangelizing work has been on showing the integral connection between Catholic faith and ecological issues. When I wrote a book, *Let the sun shine*, last year, on a faith response to climate change, the YCW method formed the framework.

The climate change theory and implications were described; the Catholic resources available in response was recalled as rich, starting with the incarnation where the divine and material are joined; and the varied action choices open to all believers was explored.

On my ordination card I quoted words from Chapter 10 of Vatican II's document *The Church in the Modern World*, 'to shed the light of faith on the major issues of the times'. It still sounds good. I am ever grateful to the YCW for the insights it has given me and the courageous example of people systematically applying faith to their real life situations.

Fr Charles Rue is on the staff of the Columban Mission Institute in Strathfield, NSW.

SEE

During the YCW meeting members of the group help one another to explore the details of these events/facts/situations to gain a greater understanding and to assess the causes and consequences of what has happened.

Questions to ask:

- Where did it take place?
- Who was involved?
- What actually happened?
- How often does this occur?
- How did the situation affect those involved?
- What was said? Why did this happen?
- Why did people act as they did?
- What are the causes and consequences of what happened?

JUDGE

The group discusses the rights and wrongs relevant to the situations and experiences shared, taking note of what has been discovered in the "See" part.

Questions to ask:

- Should this situation be happening?
- Do you think this is right? What makes it right or wrong?
- Is there anything that we can do to change the situation?

ACT

The group discusses possible ways of responding to the situations described in the "See" part. Actions can be carried out by individuals within the group or by the group as a whole.

Questions to ask:

- Is there anything you/we can do, no matter how small, to improve the situation?
- Is there anything more we need to find out?
- How can we do this?
- Is there anyone we can influence to improve things?
- What action are we going to take?

REVIEW

More often it's the process we go through on the way to action that's important. It is always essential to review our actions to see if it was success and what we learned from working together.

Questions to ask:

- Did we carry out the action?
- Did we achieve the original purpose? Did it change the situation of the person(s) who originally brought the situation to our attention?
- What difficulties did we come up against?
- What effect did our action have on us and on others?
- What did we learn from the action?
- How did we feel before? During? After?
- Is there anything we would do differently?
- Is there any further action we can take?



Ecumenical living

PETER WOODRUFF



The sign above the entrance reads:

*Enter the temple beautiful,
the house not made with hands,
Rainwashed and green, windswept
and clean.
Beneath the blue it stands
And no cathedral anywhere
Seemeth so lovely and so fair.*

On the front cover is a photograph taken outside Bexel in northern New South Wales of an 'Open Air Cathedral' which all Christian denominations are free to use with a registered minister. In an increasingly secular society, it is a sign of collaboration between the Churches. The following article reflects the same challenge in parts of the West.

According to Fr Rod MacGinley, the former parish priest in Cunnamulla (now of Clifton) and former associate priest with the Columbians in Chile, "Australian pragmatism has driven the move towards a more collaborative approach among the Anglican, Uniting and Catholic Churches in Cunnamulla.

Due to massive reduction (at least 50%) in the international wool trade over the course of the past 60 years and long periods of drought many residents were obliged to look for a livelihood elsewhere. Paralleling this social phenomenon has been a steady drop-off in numbers attending the regular services of the Christian Churches."

New options

As a result the Churches cannot function as they did in the past and so they began to look for ways of helping each other. There is no longer a resident Anglican priest in the town; a laywoman leads the Sunday service but, in the case of funerals or baptisms, the Catholic priest or Uniting Church minister holds the service in the church chosen by the family. When the Catholic priest or the Uniting Church minister is absent the other looks after the funerals of any family who may want a Christian burial service.

All are aware of differences between the three main Christian denominations in the town but they also acknowledge that they have much more in common. An openness to collaborate, acceptance of difference and a willingness to serve, no matter what church a person may attend or not attend, attracts residents to the church leaders.

A Uniting Church perspective

Dennis Cousens and his wife, Sally, were for years active in the Uniting

Church in Tasmania, where Dennis was for a period, moderator of the Church. Dennis said, "When we have a church service it may be held in the Uniting Church building at Cunnamulla, but it could just as easily be in the Catholic or Anglican Church in Eulo, Thagomindah or Wyandra. I may officiate on my own, with a congregation member, with the Catholic priest to 60 people or two."

Dennis says, "We celebrate the fact that distance and traditions have no restrictions on the love of Christ."

When the Catholic priest or the Uniting Church minister is absent the other looks after the funerals of any family who may want a Christian burial service.

An Anglican/Catholic perspective

Lorna Thompson came to Cunnamulla in 1950. Brought up a Catholic, she decided for a variety of reasons to marry in the Anglican Church.

We challenge ourselves personally to think, live and nurture an ecumenical heart.

When the Anglican priest in Cunnamulla told her she would be reading at the following Sunday's service she protested that she could not do that, to which the priest replied that there would be no reading in that case. Lorna went home, and practiced aloud the reading. Eventually she led the Sunday service in the absence of the priest.

She made friends with the "Bush Brothers," a group of celibate Anglo-Catholic priests, who in time became part of the Brotherhood of St Paul. Through them Lorna joined the Oratory of the Good Shepherd as a companion. In them she found support for the practice of her faith as they insisted on regular attendance at Mass, confession and an annual retreat.

In 1982, when she was taking services in the Anglican church due to the absence of a priest, the local Catholic priest, invited her to come to weekday Mass as she was missing not having the opportunity to receive Holy Communion. After attending the Catholic church on weekdays for about two months and leading the service in the Anglican church on Sundays, a member of the local Anglican community put pressure on Lorna to choose one or the other. Lorna decided to go back to the religious practice of her upbringing and was welcomed back into the Catholic Church at Easter.

Many collaborative initiatives in rural Queensland were given impetus and direction by a 1996 inter-church declaration, "Being Church in Rural Queensland", which proposed a framework for action based on the following common statement of belief:

We affirm our faith in God as Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This

faith allows us to celebrate our unity while recognising our diversity. In our diversity we are united by baptism. This baptism incorporates us into the one Body of Christ. Christ calls and empowers us to continue his mission in the world. Our calling is to proclaim Jesus as Lord and Saviour in word and action, in order that the Kingdom of God may be manifest.

In 2009, another meeting of Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran and Uniting Churches in Queensland, affirmed and developed the position taken by the previous meeting and published their conclusions in the document, "Living Church in Rural Queensland," The participants conclude with a statement that might challenge all Christians to look beyond what we may have become comfortable with:

We challenge ourselves personally to think, live and nurture an ecumenical heart. We are called to be prophetic in the Spirit within our particular denominations and to journey in love, joy and hope in our ecumenical Living Church in rural Queensland.

Fr Peter Woodruff is currently at St Columbans, Essendon.

Editors Note:

The diocese of Toowoomba in western Queensland is 488,000 sq kms. It is larger than the land mass of Italy at 301,338 sq kms and 72% of the area of France.



Fr Rod MacGinley.

Photos: Fr Peter Woodruff



Dennis Cousens and his wife, Sally, represent the Uniting Church.



Mrs Lorna Thompson has represented the Anglican/Catholic Churches.

A thoroughly good man

NOEL CONNOLLY



Former Superior General, Fr Nicholas Murray.

It is a great privilege in life is to know a man who is thoroughly good. It expands your spirit and gives you great confidence. For me, Columban Fr Nicholas Murray (1938-2011) was above all, a thoroughly good man. I got to know him well because for the 12 years he was Superior General, I was his Vicar and friend. We shared good times and testing times and I never found him small-minded or malicious.

Nicholas was a big man physically. Actually there was nothing small about him. He also had a big mind and heart. He wasn't an intellectual or academic. His intelligence was powered by his natural virtues. He was a generous man, a man of integrity and a hard worker who had few prejudices and piles of common sense. His intelligence was freed and enabled by the fact that he didn't take himself seriously. He would often say, "Noel, I have received the blame for things I had nothing to do with but also the credit for things I had nothing to do with". With that spirit he wore authority easily. As one of his class mates has said "he never felt superior or inferior to anyone".

Nicholas was a "man's man" and enjoyed being with people. He was happiest when visiting Columbans in our various mission countries. He was a good judge of

Fr Connolly pays tribute to a friend and former Superior General of the Columban Fathers.

character, although his natural tendency was to trust you. I found this his greatest strength as a leader. His trust encouraged trust and confidence in others. He was our leader at a time of change, and to that time he brought stability, confidence, direction, good humour and energy.

He would often say, "Noel, I have received the blame for things I had nothing to do with but also the credit for things I had nothing to do with". With that spirit he wore authority easily.

As Superior General he introduced the Society to planning for the future.

He encouraged our efforts at justice and peace. He opened a Common Theologate. He put the Columban Lay Missionary movement on a sound basis. He oversaw the development of a new retirement home for Irish Columban priests and built up the fund to ensure our elderly retired priests would be looked after. He established the China Mission Unit and after finishing his 12 years as Superior General he volunteered for China. For two years he taught English at the Sichuan International Studies University in Chongqing.

Although Nicholas spent most of his life in leadership, he enjoyed working as a pastor and student chaplain. He spent 22 years in the Philippines, a lot of that time as Chaplain to Student Catholic Action. His natural instincts and preferences were always pastoral.

In 2008 he was diagnosed with leukaemia and for three years he endured many kinds of therapy without success or complaint. I used to ring him occasionally and although I often wondered what I would say to cheer him up there never was any problem. We would chat about all kinds of things. It was the same on my last call just before he was transferred to the Hospice.

He died peacefully and confidently on Holy Thursday having travelled his own way of the Cross with Jesus.

A good man is always missed but the good they do does live on and their memory continues to sustain and inspire us.

Fr Noel Connolly is Regional Director of St Columban's Mission Society in Australia and New Zealand.

Where is the energy of the good news

SR REDEMPTA TWOMEY

How those Athenians in the first century would have relished the communication explosion we experience today. The ancient Greeks Paul met, who 'used their time for nothing else but telling or hearing something new' (Acts 17:21) would be quite at home in this 21st century when news can be had not only 'on the hour, every hour' but almost every minute if one so wishes. Would they spend their time surfing the net or phoning friends on their mobiles to speculate on the latest headline?

Maybe we are not so very different from those people of ancient Athens. Our appetite for novelty is being constantly stimulated and we embrace the latest information technology with unbounded enthusiasm. St Paul himself would surely have rejoiced at the opportunities now available for spreading the Word, opportunities for reaching out to peoples of other faiths and cultures.

Yet there is a danger and we see it in what happened to those Athenians. A cultured people, they were open to hearing new ideas, new stories. So, on hearing Paul speak, they voiced an interest to learn more. They took him to the Aeropagus, where they met in council, to give him the chance to tell them of these new things. "You bring some strange notions to our ears; we should like to know what these things

mean" (17:20). Paul rose to the challenge and spoke to them in their own language, even quoting one of their poets. He had observed, he told them, that they were a very religious people who, among the many statues in their city, even had an altar to an unknown God. He was going to name this God for them. And he began to tell them of Jesus.

Did they miss the greatest news of all because they were so caught up in the transient happenings of everyday life in Athens? Or did Paul's message come across simply as foolishness?

This was new, it was interesting but in the end the 'strange notions' were really too much to take on board and were dismissed by his listeners. Some laughed, others said condescendingly one thinks, "We should like to hear you on this another time" and they wandered off. Only a small number of people joined Paul and came to believe in Jesus.

Did they miss the greatest news of all because they were so caught up in the transient happenings of everyday life in Athens? Or did Paul's message come across simply as foolishness? Even though they invited Paul to speak to them, they dismissed him in

the end; the resurrection of Jesus was the last straw.

Unlike those peoples of Athens, we pay little attention, not because the story is 'strange' but because it is so familiar. We think we know all about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and so what? How is it that the extraordinary freshness and beauty of the Christian story so often palls beside the glittering narrative of the modern age? As Pope Paul VI asked, "Where is the energy of the good news in our time?" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*).

Finding the balance between words and silence has always been a challenge but never more so than today. Unless we 'come apart' as Jesus urged, and take time to sit in silence and prayer we are in danger of not hearing the essential. As Ben Okri writes, "We need more love, more silence, more deep listening, more deep giving." In the stillness of our hearts we will hear the word that changes us, that gives us life and hope and the courage to move with love and compassion among the 'Athenians' of our times.

The feast of St Paul is June 29.

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

Mission begins

CHRIS BAKER

Faith on a hillside



How many people do we need to spread 'the faith'?

Photos: Fr Chris Baker

Parishioners carve the Chapel space out of the hillside.

Lima is a city which has grown rapidly over the last 50 years from around 1,000,000 inhabitants to nearly 9,000,000. Thousands of new families are still coming in from the country or moving out from overcrowded inner suburbs. There has been no overall city planning, with the result that the newcomers quickly buy or simply squat on empty lands, no matter how barren, sandy, rocky or sloping they may be.

Almost overnight hundreds of new reed matting huts spring up and a new human settlement has begun. Often it is beyond previous settlements, so at first it has no water, sewerage, lighting or roads, let alone a school, medical centre, community centre or chapel.

For more than 50 years Columban missionaries and Associate priests have been devoting their time to these new and poor settlers. Great emphasis has

been placed on inviting the newcomers to share actively in forming a new Christian community.

Over the past 10 years the Columbans have encouraged committed youths and adults to go out each Sunday from their own parishes to new fringe settlements. Formation courses on the Scriptures, theology of God's kingdom and daily living have been provided for these people, who are known as "Columban missionary fellow-workers." They have become truly missionary disciples. The word of God as proclaimed through the Scriptures and enriched by Catholic tradition is at the heart of their mission.

Usually they gather the people in the open air or in some provisional shelter, where they can lead the liturgy of the word of life, explain it as applied to daily life, and distribute the Bread of Life. Others may start up classes of preparation for baptism, first

communion and confirmation, inviting local people as well to get involved in that ongoing mission. As Paul says to the Corinthians, the body of Christ has all kinds of different members with different ministries entrusted to them.

Three years ago I was happy to be invited to celebrate a monthly Mass in one of those little emerging communities at Las Laderas just north of Lima city. Las Laderas means "the hillsides," an accurate name for the sides of some Andean foothills where these newcomers have set up their new homes. The Christian community there had been started by a Columban fellow-worker, Genaro Choque.

Genaro went from door to door inviting the locals to come along each Sunday for a liturgy of the Word and Communion. Later another fellow-worker, Laura Marqez, from a parish where Columban Fr Dermot Carthy is pastor, joined Genaro each Sunday to

share her faith with the children. I found that they had gathered about 30 people in a flimsy temporary chapel on borrowed land. Within a year I was thrilled to find that they had managed to obtain a few hundred square yards of a rocky hillside, on which they had already erected a light wooden chapel.

Some of the local people were also involved in organising a Bible group, liturgies, baptisms and a choir. One strong grandpa, Augustino, was devoting much of his week to belting away with a sledge hammer at the rocky hillside to level more ground for an extended chapel.

His son Augusto with wife Marilyn are also constantly helping to strengthen the new community in line with their local parish organisations.

Of great importance is their ability to involve these Catholics in the wider community projects to work

together to have roads, light, water and sewerage, schools and health services, established.

Some of the youth just confirmed want to become pastoral agents among their local community. The Sunday congregation has grown to around 70 people, with fresh enthusiasm to raise funds to extend their chapel.

Genaro kept going to that community until a few weeks before he died of cancer. His apostolate was continued by another two fellow-workers, Victor Araoz and Georgina Barrientos. They prepare children for First Communion and the youth for Confirmation. In early December their efforts were

rewarded as the groups received those sacraments in the presence of many relatives and friends. Fr Bernie Lane had the joy of conferring Confirmation on behalf of the bishop.

Some of the youth just confirmed want to become pastoral agents among their local community. The Sunday congregation has grown to around 70 people, with fresh enthusiasm to raise funds to extend their chapel. We are confident of being able to hand over full responsibility to this vibrant "faith community" and their local pastor.

Our little team of fellow-workers will then be free to move on and accompany some other group of newcomers on the outskirts of Lima.

Fr Chris Baker first went to Peru in 1977.



Children attend outdoor religious classes where the Chapel will be.

Mission accomplished

JOHN O'CONNELL

Left in safe hands



Fr John O'Connell with some members of his congregation.

Columbans hand over a parish to the local Church in Lima, Peru

Over the past 60 years Columban missionaries and their Diocesan Associates have established and developed 24 parishes on the north side of Lima, which has grown from about 50,000 to over 2,000,000 residents since 1950. This rapid growth resulted mainly from the massive internal migration from towns and villages all over Peru.

"San Pedro y San Pablo" (St Peter and St Paul) is one of these 24 parishes and we have been there longer than in any other - 44 years. The following

Columbans took up appointments to this parish: Tom O'Brien (Australia), Richard Prescott (US), Peter Woodruff (Australia), Noel Kerins (Ireland), Rolando Aniscal (Philippines) and John O'Connell (Ireland); as did also the following Diocesan Associates: Gerry Hanlon (England), Charles Byrne (Ireland), Pat Ward (Ireland), Thomas Park (Korea) and Marino Nanjha (Myanmar).

In each parish we have established and developed our mission in the spirit of our Constitutions which spell out our

roles: (a) help Churches mature until they are able to evangelize their own and other peoples, (b) foster in local Churches an awareness of their missionary responsibility. We have striven to do this through witness, ministry and dialogue from the standpoint of solidarity with the poor.

The Diocese of Carabayllo, which includes 42 parishes located on the north side of Lima, was formed on February 14, 1996. Lino Panizza, a Capuchin Friar who had worked in various parts of Peru, was named

bishop. He continued the push for more local priests and we have now handed over 20 of our parishes to direct diocesan control. This would have been impossible in the early years as there was only one Peruvian diocesan priest in the north in the late 1950s and now there are nearly 50.

I have been working in this parish since 1983. I feel sad at the thought of leaving but I can see that it is the right thing to do at this stage.

My younger companion, Marino from Myanmar and I have talked the matter over with the Columban Director, Fr Tony Coney, who has also had conversations with the bishop. We are proposing that the handover date will be June 29, 2011, the parish feast day.

For Columbans and Associates it has been a great privilege, joy and blessing to have worked in this parish. We have witnessed and supported the complex tasks of community development in the areas of housing, installation of water and sewerage infrastructure, connection to the electricity grid, roads and footpaths, health and education.

We recognise and congratulate the Sisters of Mercy who have done so much to develop healthcare services in the area, helped in the grassroots work of accompanying basic ecclesial communities, supported the formation of communal kitchens in times of economic crisis, established handcraft workshops and organised marketing outlets, and so provided work for many women for the past 30 years.

We will never adequately acknowledge our debt to so many lay men and women of all ages who have promoted and run a variety of parish catechetical programs; nor can we fail to acknowledge our benefactors who have made all of this possible.

All faith formation has been in the hands of parish groups composed entirely of lay volunteers who have

participated in summer training programs in our local deanery and, in more recent years, in the Columban Centre for Mission Studies.

We have now handed over 20 of our parishes to direct diocesan control. In the early years there was only one Peruvian diocesan priest in the north and now there are nearly 50.

The hundreds of committed laity with whom we have worked over the years understand that we would like to continue accompanying them. However, they, like us, have become aware that the understanding of Christian mission has developed over the years. They no longer see themselves as a relatively passive faithful to be served and led by priests and religious. They strive to live their Christian faith in the spirit that Pope Benedict described in his address to

the assembled Latin American bishops at their continental conference in Aparecida, Brazil, in 2007:

'The Church has the great task of guarding and nourishing the faith of the People of God, and reminding the faithful of this Continent that, by virtue of their Baptism, they are called to be disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ. ...Every baptized person receives from Christ, like the Apostles, the missionary mandate: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized, will be saved" (Mk 16:15).

We leave hoping and trusting that the Peruvian diocesan priests, who will take over the reins of parish leadership from us, might continue to help our parish communities - all six of them - discover and live out their missionary vocation.

Fr John O'Connell has been a missionary in Peru since 1957.



Fr John O'Connell with two of his younger parishioners.

Photos: Fr. John O'Connell

Grave sweeping day

Photo: Fr. John Burger



Frs John McGrath and Trevor Trotter (far right) pays their respects to Columban missionaries.

This important day is also known as 'Remembrance of Ancestor's Day'.

The Ching Ming Festival fell on April 5 this year and the normally crowded Hong Kong metro trains were crowded with people heading to some of the many cemeteries that are located in the New Territories. MTR routes toward Tsuen Wan or towards Diamond Hill were crowded too. Traffic police were directing traffic near the cemeteries in Happy Valley.

Ching Ming is also known as "Remembrance of Ancestors Day" or 'Grave Sweeping Day' and is a public holiday in Hong Kong. On Ching Ming, Chinese families will visit their graves; it's a day of remembrance. The Chinese carry incense sticks, paper offerings like paper money and even paper versions of luxury goods. All the paper offerings will be burnt in the belief that the relatives can receive the goods and even 'money' in this way. It's not a good day for hill walking on the trails on the islands or in the New Territories where there May hill fires started from all the burning paper.

"The church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her

own community. The penetration of the Gospel into a socio-cultural milieu "gives inner fruitfulness to the spiritual qualities and gifts proper to each people..., strengthens these qualities, perfects them and restores them in Christ." says an official Church document.

They brought flowers, prayed and swapped stories about their memories of the four Columban Sisters and two Columban priests who died while on mission in Hong Kong.

As missionaries, Columbans grow in appreciation of the customs of the people they live among and are also influenced by some of their ways of thinking and their values. So on *Ching Ming* this year, at the invitation of the Columban Fathers Superior General, Fr Tommy Murphy, 16 Columban Missionaries, Priests and Sisters gathered at St Michael's Cemetery in Happy Valley, Hong Kong. They brought flowers, prayed and swapped stories about their memories of the

four Columban Sisters and two Columban priests who died while on mission in Hong Kong.

The family gathers at the grave and clean away any dust or debris. There always seem to be a few enterprising individuals offering weeding services around the grave stones.

Fr Tom Glennon, visiting from the USA, was asked to lead the prayers. As one would expect the grave is decorated with flowers. Chrysanthemums are the flower of choice on these occasions. But the locals don't stop there; foods like roasted suckling pig, steamed chicken, fruit and wine are also offered during the prayers at the grave. Then the family share it after the worship is over.

Columban Sr Fintan had arranged for the actual sweeping and brought flowers for all the graves, but the Columbans did not picnic at the cemetery, but instead headed for lunch in a nearby restaurant, a Columban 'family' meal.

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

Look to the Child

PATRICK COLGAN



Photo: Fr. Patrick Colgan

Procession on the feast of St Anthony of Padua.

Each year in the small cane farming community of Ravi Ravi, half way between the towns of Lautoka and Ba in Fiji, a unique and important ceremony takes place. It's the Feast of St Anthony, June 13. The little church becomes the centre of attraction for the festival which these days can be a bridge between peoples.

The feast is transferred to the nearest Sunday and celebrated in much the same way as it was when brought to Fiji by the present community's South Indian forefathers over 100 years ago.

After Sunday Mass the statue of St Anthony is reverently carried around the church compound three times, attended now in huge numbers by people of all races and religions in the area. In a country divided and wounded by coups and their aftermath, this day is a rare sign of hope and unity.

After the procession, family groups come to perform *arti* (a traditional gesture of reverence), touch the feet

of the statue or leave money before it, in either supplication or thanksgiving for favours received from the Saint over the last year.

In a country divided and wounded by coups and their aftermath, this day is a rare sign of hope and unity.

How devotion to a Portuguese friar of the 12th century who exercised his preaching ministry within the confines of France and Italy, ever got as far as South India and from there on the *girmit* boats to Fiji, remains shrouded in mystery.

No doubt the influence of the early European missionaries to India played a part. But the tenacity of the Indians' devotion to the saint has developed to a new level here in Fiji.

The Columban priests who serve in the nearby Ba parish, officiate at this

The feast of St Anthony of Padua in Raviravi, Fiji attracts many races.

ceremony each year and are familiar with the cultural touches of *'shenai'*- South Indian dancing and playing that occasionally accompanies the procession. Over the years, we have tried to give space to Fijians and other cultures to present their prayers in their own appropriate ways at this feast which touches a chord in all the people of Fiji.

Famed for his ability to find lost objects, surely the greatest gift St Anthony would want us to have on this day is to "find" and never lose the Child in his arms, the one in whom "there is no more Jew or Greek, no more slave or free-born, but we all drink of his one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13). This is the message Fiji, the Pacific and the whole world dare not ever lose!

But this hope has to be fleshed out in our lives and actions for Fiji to move forward. As the Saint said so powerfully in a homily for the Feast of Pentecost:

"Language comes alive when it speaks by deeds! Enough of talking; let actions speak! We are bloated with words and empty of works!" (Sermons 1: 226)

Fr Patrick Colgan has been a missionary in Fiji since 1994 and works with the ethnic Indo-Fijian community.



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.*



Columban receives Global Justice Award

We are delighted to announce that Columban Fr Sean McDonagh has been given a prestigious international award in recognition of his long years of work of advocacy and education around ecological issues. The Partnership for Global Justice announced the news in the press release below:

Fr Sean McDonagh, SCC received the Eighth Annual Partnership for Global

Justice Award on Sunday, May 1, 2011. Fr McDonagh accepted the award and delivered a keynote address. The luncheon and award ceremony was followed by an orientation symposium in preparation for the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development that will take place at the United Nations from May 2–14, 2011.

The luncheon, award ceremony and orientation, which were open to the public, was held at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle at 60th St. and Ninth Avenue in New York City at 1:00pm.

“We are honoured to present this award to Fr. McDonagh, a man who has so elucidated our understanding of environmental justice and whose passion and dedication challenges us all to hear the cries of the poor and the cry of the Earth,” said Sr. Lucianne Siers, OP, Director of the Partnership. “He represents the legacy and spirit of our annual Justice Award by his life-long work as a faithful steward,” she added.

The Partnership for Global Justice is a network of religious congregations, social justice groups and individuals seeking to foster equitable global systems, strategies for ecological sustainability and a respect for the diversity of cultures and traditions through educational programs, advocacy and participation with the United Nations as a non-governmental organization.

Two Catholics appointed to new Pakistan Ministry by the Executive

Islamabad (FIDES) – The Department of Religious Minorities in Pakistan has a new title becoming the “Federal Ministry for Inter-faith Harmony and Minorities.” Two Catholics have been confirmed as heads of department, Paul Bhatti, brother of the Minister killed, with the position “Special Advisor

Mission Intention for June

That the Holy Spirit may bring forth from our communities numerous missionary vocations, willing to fully consecrate themselves to spreading the Kingdom of God.

Editorial



Is it that time already?

to the Prime Minister” and Akram Masih Gill, a lawyer with the position of “Minister of State” who may soon receive the official designation of “Federal Minister”.

The Christian community in Pakistan hopes that this is the final structure of the Ministry. Adding a reference to inter-faith harmony strengthens the work begun by Shabbaz Bhatti who had obtained a system of funding from the U.S. government to promote inter-faith harmony in Pakistan.

Akram Gill said, “It is my intention to work for the protection of religious minorities which are 5% of the population, including the Christians in Pakistan. It is well-known that in this country the religious minorities do not feel safe. It will be my task to keep attention in government and politics of their conditions and the need to protect and promote their rights.”

With regard to the change of name of the Ministry Gill said, “The Executive has now realised that inter-religious dialogue is an urgent need for society which cannot be left only in the hands of men of good will. It is necessary for the State to promote respect and equality of all religions. At the beginning of my mandate I would like to thank the Pope for his words and his commitment to defending international religious freedom and Christian communities in Pakistan.

“Holiness is a process, a continual movement towards God,” writes Philip Sheldrake, English theologian and writer.

The two stories of Catholic communities in Lima are a good example of this quote. The first story by Fr Chris Baker describes a new Catholic community getting started on a barren hillside where the people are literally clearing their chapel space from the side of the Andean foothills so they can worship God there as a Christian community; they are ‘grounding’ God there in the community.

In the second story Fr John O’Connell reflects on handing over the parish of Sts Peter and Paul where he has resided since 1983. The Columbans know it is time to move on after 44 years, to let go, having built up the parish.

‘It’s time to go!’ comes God’s call. God invites us and we reply, ‘Is it that time already?’ Every change or movement involves a death, big or small, of some kind. But the scriptures explain to us that this is God’s idea of adventure for us, letting go, taking a new direction bringing us closer to the Mystery of God. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to think we were leaving a trail of holiness behind us by a full- hearted response?

Gary Walker

TFE@columban.org.au

Building God's Kingdom

MANNY VARGAS

"Holy Child" Clinic offers services to disabled children of Anapra, in Mexico.

*F*or the past 20 years, Isidra Sánchez has been a hero. Every day she takes care of her duties as a homemaker, wife, mother and factory worker. On top of all this, she also has the roles of nurse, special education teacher, and even physical therapist.

Her son Ángel was born with cerebral palsy and since then she has had to come up with the time, patience and love to deal with all those roles.

For several years, Isidra used to take Ángel to a government hospital to receive specialized care until the day they refused to continue treating him.

With the 450 pesos (about AUD\$37) that she earns every week, she cannot afford to send her son to a special school or to a therapist.

Thanks to a neighbor, Isidra got some of the help she badly needs. She learned of the services offered by the "Santo Niño" (Holy Child) Clinic, founded by the Columban Missionaries and the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati.

The clinic provides care to children with special needs in Isidra's neighborhood. She and her family live in Anapra, a poor community of Juárez, Mexico, where most of the families do not have the necessary material resources or information to care properly for their children.

Marginalized Zone

Anapra is located right at the Mexican border with the United States of America, in the City of Juarez, across from El Paso, Texas.

This zone does not have basic services like public sewage or paved streets. Although tap water was just recently brought in, it is believed to be contaminated with lead.

Most of its residents are people who



Photos: Fr Bill Morton

Dr/Sr Janet Gildea is a family medical doctor and is one of the nuns working at Clínica Guadalupana, Mexico.

originally came from central and southern Mexico looking for a job. They usually work as factory employees earning US\$40 (AUD\$37) dollars a week and don't have access to specialized medical services.

Seeing these conditions Columban Fr William Morton fostered the creation of a clinic and a specialized attention centre for children and young people with disabilities. He got in touch with the Sisters of Charity who had been working in El Paso, Texas over 13 years.

"We came to Anapra because Fr William brought us here." said

Dr/Sr Janet Gildea. She is a family medical doctor and is one of the nuns working at Clínica Guadalupana.

"We see a big difference in the children and at the same time in us and in the parents. They seem more at ease and happy to see their children getting everyone's love" she said.

"At the beginning, the clinic was in Fr William's kitchen, but thanks to the donations of benefactors we were able to increase the space and now it is

better. Initially, we focused on pre-natal care and thereafter we started caring for many special children," Dr/Sr Gildea added.

Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati

Working at the clinic are Peggy Deneweth, a nurse; Carol Wirtz, massage therapist; and Ana Dorenbusch, teacher and specialist in pastoral work, all of whom are nuns too and who use their skills and gifts to help the poor.

"We work in education, health care and social service. We look for places with great need," Dr/Sr Gildea said.

Great Need

In Anapra they found a serious situation: there were many children

and young people with disabilities that were not getting the care they required.

"What we want is to give hope to families who are told that their children cannot have a normal life," Sr Janet said.

Sr Ana visits her patients' home to administer therapy. "I love this work. What amazes me most is the mothers, the way they fight for their children, she said.

"Coming here has been a spiritual experience because I see that miracles happen. Many times I don't know what to do with the children, but things happen on their own and all of a sudden the miracle materializes," Sr Carol said. She is in charge of the patients' massage therapy.

"We see a big difference in the children and at the same time in us

and in the parents. They seem more at ease and happy to see their children getting everyone's love" she said.

Both Clínica Guadalupana and Clínica "Santo Niño" support themselves through donations collected by Columban priests or by the Sisters of Charity.

Medical and therapy services are given free of charge, but parents are encouraged to contribute 15 pesos (AUD\$.10) per appointment that also includes medication, if they can afford to do so.

Manny Vargas is the Editor of the Spanish language Columban magazine.



Two of the Sisters with a young patient.

A course in atonement

VINCENT YOUNGKAMP

Atonement is a pre-eminently Christian concept and its foundation is the death of Jesus.

Photo: bigstockphoto.com

Recently our chaplains group had its monthly meeting down at the prison. As usual things were rather routine and dull until one of the Buddhist priests was asked to give a talk about his experience of prison chaplaincy work here.

He described briefly his problems and successes at the individual interview with inmates and his guidance talks to groups of prisoners. From there he moved on to the difficulty he had experienced with a recent type of correctional or rehabilitation method which has been tried in our prison.

The method is called "*shokuzai kyouiku*" which in prison usage means "a course on atonement for crime." He went on to explain that the term "*shokuzai*" and its concept were not in

Buddhism and he felt that the rather limited explanation we were given by the prison's education department wasn't sufficient to understand the programme and how to engage in it. The other Buddhist chaplains supported him in his view.

At this point, the only other Christian chaplain in our organisation, Rev Takakura Kasumi, a devout Lutheran minister with 30 years of chaplaincy experience, explained that atonement is pre-eminently a Christian concept and its foundation is the death of Jesus on the cross whereby the reparation for all sin has been made.

As I observed the other chaplains, I felt they understood the meaning of pastor Takakura's brief explanation. To what extent they grasped how we

sinner and/or criminals carry out our part in the full scope of the atonement process is another matter.

Meanwhile, to get back to the "method" itself, a few years ago the juvenile reformatories in Japan were growing overcrowded with repeat offenders. To solve the problem the prison authorities introduced this new method whereby the inmate is brought to realise the wrong of his misdemeanour and affirm his resolution not to repeat the offence.

It worked! According to statistics, the number of repeaters fell by about 40% in facilities where the method was employed. Naturally it was only a matter of time until the method was used in other prisons including ours in Kumamoto where most of the inmates



Photo: iStockphoto.com

I found it a painful assignment. Time went slowly. In a way, it was a bit like a long and exhaustive examen of conscience before receiving the sacrament of reconciliation.

are held for long or life-term sentences; about 60% are here for some degree of manslaughter.

I received a phone call from the prison education department to take one session in the new programme. The programme lasts for five months. One member of the education department, three Buddhist chaplains and I each took a monthly session with a fixed group of six men who are serving time for murder.

Each session lasted one hour. The inmates sat in row in complete silence. At the rear of the small room were two guards. The inmates appeared to be in their 40s or 50s. All were rather sober strong looking men. I had a feeling they might be nearing the end of a 20 year or so sentence. There were no questions or clarifications asked for.

In this method, for the full hour the prisoners were guided in recalling their crime in all its detail. Following the lead of the chaplain, one by one, the

sufferings and consequences of the crime for everyone immediately or remotely involved, were recalled and reflected upon.

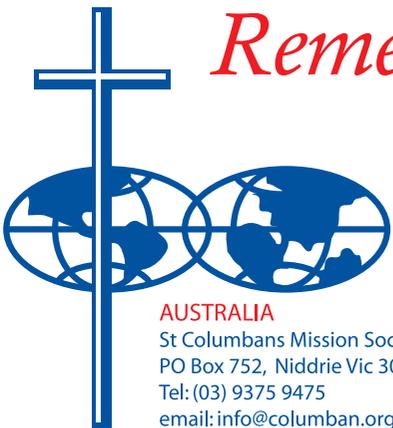
In this method, for the full hour the prisoners were guided in recalling their crime in all its detail. Following the lead of the chaplain, one by one, the sufferings and consequences of the crime for everyone immediately or remotely involved, were recalled and reflected upon.

I found it a painful assignment. Time went slowly. In a way, it was a bit like a long and exhaustive examen of conscience before receiving the sacrament of reconciliation. We moved from reflecting on the moment of fear, pain and death of the murdered

victim, on to the burden of guilt, loneliness and loss of self respect the criminal himself had to live with and then on again to the pain and humiliation of all the other members of the convicted man's family.

The sound of low sobbing from the men became audible and continued. Although probably not a part of the usual method, I also spoke about the sacrament of forgiveness and the faith we, Christians have in the infinite love and mercy of God who forgives any sin, when we turn to God seeking pardon. I left the room in the same silence as I entered. I have received no feedback from anyone. I hope the men were somewhat helped.

Fr Vincent Youngkamp has been a missionary in Japan since 1960.



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Blaming the Bible

SEAN McDONAGH

A good summary of an old argument.

In a lecture to the American Association for the Advancement of Science on December 26, 1966, historian Lynn White, in his lecture *'Historical roots of our ecological crisis'*, claimed that the Christian tradition must take a lot of the blame for the worsening ecological crisis.

According to White, we shall continue to have a worsening ecological crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence but to serve man... Both our present science and technology are so tinctured with orthodox Christian arrogance towards nature that no solution for our ecological crisis can be expected from them alone.

This talk which was published the following year in, *Science*, has created a huge amount of controversy. The renowned microbiologist and ecologist, Rene Dubos disputed White's charge in a book called, *Wooing the Earth*. He pointed out that extensive environmental degradation began long before the biblical era had an influence on Western thought.

He maintained that almost every civilization, Chinese, Greek, Roman, Aztec, Hindu India and Buddhist Southeast Asia, had abused their environment to some degree or other. This often happened through deforestation, or over grazing which caused significant soil erosion. He noted that Plato in *Critias* compared the land of Attica to the bones of a wasted body.

Other commentators on White's article feel that national, cultural or philosophical factors may have been the primary determinants in spurring the development of science and technology in Western Europe, since in the east, Christianity had been

more mystical and liturgical. While this might be true, it seems more reasonable to assume that a confluence of influences, cultural and religious, set that stage for the rapid development of science in Europe from the 16th century onwards.

In the 15th century, for example, Chinese science was more advanced than Western science. The Chinese had discovered printing, the principle of magnetism, explosives, advanced technologies for metal casting and a vast array of medical and astronomical knowledge; yet their scientific thrust stagnated while Western science advanced.

According to White, we shall continue to have a worsening ecological crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence but to serve man...

Some commentators attribute the advance in empirical science in western Europe to a notion which is central to a Newtonian view of the world - that the laws governing the physical universe are independent of the realities themselves or the irascible gods.

Fundamentally, this is a religious idea. The roots of this conception can be traced back to the Bible. There God is seen as the supreme lawgiver who places all reality in the universe in its proper place. The order, structure and intelligibility of nature means that the laws of nature can be known through observation and experiment and then used to transform nature herself.

Francis Bacon scientist and philosopher (1561-1626) in his book *The Advancement of Learning*,

Novum Organum Scientiarum held this view. He was one of the leading philosophers in the period of transition from the Renaissance to the early modern era.

Pope Benedict in No. 25 of his encyclical *Spe Salvi*, criticizes Francis Bacon and those who followed in the intellectual current of modernity that he inspired. He stated they were wrong to believe that man could be redeemed through science. This position was certainly adopted by Bacon's followers in the 18th century, but it is hardly fair to Bacon himself.

As Alister McGrath points out in his, *Reenchantment of Nature*, despite his general endorsement of subduing and exploiting nature, Bacon regarded religion as setting quite definite limits to what can and ought to take place through human advancement. Bacon was quite clear that there were boundaries imposed upon human knowledge and power over nature by God, and he regularly added qualifying clauses like, *'as far as God Almighty in goodness may permit,'* to his statements concerning the limits of science.

It is completely legitimate to argue that science and technology arose, at least in part, from the religious well-springs of the European Christian experience. However, White overstates his case. For a historian to label something 'Christian orthodoxy', without qualification, shows little understanding of the rich and varied strands that co-exist and often supplant each other in both the Bible itself and the subsequent history of the Church in different cultures and historical periods.

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

Let us celebrate

Fr John O'Connell celebrates Mass in a chapel of the parish of Sts Peter and Paul. After 44 years the Columbans are handing over the parish to the local bishop and clergy. A Church is not bricks and mortar but we thank the benefactors for their part in supporting the local people to worship God in their chapels and church.



Photo: Malachy Smyth

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