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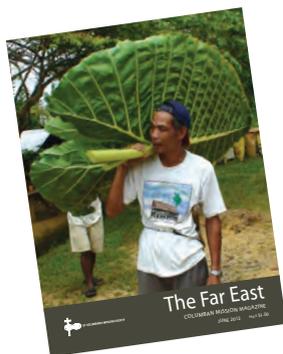
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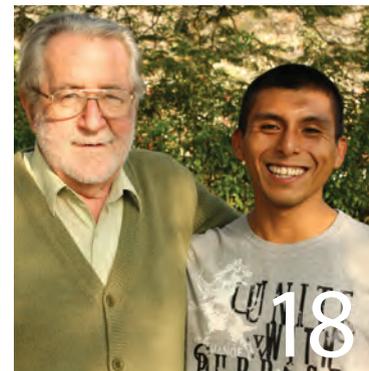
Cover: A farmer prepares to cultivate native plants at the ecological centre in the Philippines (see pages 11-14).

Photo: Fr Brian Gore

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From the Director

There are heroes among us



*I*n 1927 Max Ehrmann wrote 'Desiderata' which became a popular meditation in the 1970s. 'Go placidly amid the noise and haste and remember what peace there may be in silence...' In the middle of his text he also wrote, '...many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism...'

As I reflect on the stories in this issue of *The Far East* magazine, I am conscious of the heroism of people, the known heroes who have a moment of fame and the unknown heroes who do not. The Fr Brian Gore story on Negros Island in the Philippines is a far cry from his days in prison on a charge of murder and the international media interest which followed.

Today he is working with poor uneducated farmers to keep their land. They cannot pay for fertilisers for their crops and have to use alternative methods or leave the land for a worse life than what they have now.

Life is full of heroism and I am reminded not only of these Columbans but of the unsung heroes that we know in our lives. The people who give life as Jesus did to others by what they do, and who, often enough, live quietly just down the street.

Fr Donald Hornsey who lives 3481 metres above sea level in the Andes Mountains in Peru is on the same course. The people have farming knowledge but they do not have education. Together they are moving forward, battling forces that are beyond the control of these farming communities. An integral part of this work is that the priests live close to the people to understand what their needs and aspirations are. The battle to survive is a war the people know well.

Australian, Fr Philip Crosbie is recalled in this issue. A Columban priest who was caught up in the Korean War and endured a death march into North Korea where to fall behind was to be killed by the guards. He helped many

a U.S. serviceman to keep going because he was strong physically, mentally and spiritually.

For this reason, he was more of a hero in the United States than in Australia. His book, *March Till They Die* or in Australia, *Pencilling Prisoner*, is a moving account of that ordeal. He never seemed interested in being a hero and after recuperating in Australia he returned to Korea. Fr Crosbie died in Melbourne on Holy Thursday night, 2005, the night that we celebrate the institution of the priesthood. He died with a Korean couple and a Columban priest by his bedside. It seemed appropriate.

Columban Frs Martin Ryan and Sean Conneely work in the ministry of alcoholic addiction and drug dependency. They are well qualified in the field as they are alcoholic priests. St Paul wrote famously about strength in weakness, that God often works powerfully through those who are weak but have learned to give their lives over to God, sometimes learning this on the edge of the abyss. Anyone who has stayed sober is a hero.

Life is full of heroism and I am reminded not only of these Columbans but of the unsung heroes that we know in our lives. The people who give life as Jesus did to others by what they do, and who, often enough, live quietly just down the street. They are all called by the Holy Spirit and have responded to that call by their lives lived in the pattern of Jesus Christ himself.

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

Fr Gary Walker
director@columban.org.au



Photos: Fr Peter Woodruff

Doing it my way

DONALD HORNSEY

Fr Hornsey tells us about sharing his life with the Quechua people in Peru.

I am the parish priest of Combapata which is located at 3481 metres about sea level in a high valley in the Andes mountains in southern Peru. I also have administrative responsibility for two neighbouring parishes that do not have resident priests. I am a native of New Zealand. I am now 72 years old and, against my will, am having to slow down a bit.

What keeps me living here with the indigenous Quechua people at the age of 72? As a Columban missionary, I have the privilege of sharing my life with them in Combapata. While Spanish is the main language spoken in the towns, Quechua is the language of the people in the countryside.

I revel in the natural beauty of the countryside. I have always enjoyed

bush walking. I see so much of God's beauty reflected in all that I see, hear and feel in the mountains, valleys, rivers, fields and forests where our parish is located.

Have I a lot to do as a parish priest? Yes, I do. I have pastoral responsibility for over 50 communities spread throughout the area and regularly visit them for meetings and celebrations. Weekly meetings are held in each community. Each community has someone in charge.

Nothing can happen in a community without us dialoguing first and coordinating with the leader. There are people prepared to lead the religious services as I cannot always be present. No community ever feels paralysed in its religious services due to the absence of the parish priest.

As the position of community leader rotates, special preparation courses are needed for the on-going personal and faith development of the leaders. The parish has a catechetical centre with facilities to cater for up to 80 men and women who come from the rural areas for a few days seminars.

As these days most of the community leaders and catechists are literate in both Quechua and Spanish, it's now easier to provide short biblical and sacramental courses for them. The formation of our community leaders at the Catechetical Centre is very important as it helps them grow in faith, ability and confidence as they lead their communities.

Our Catechetical Centre includes a recently completed bright and warm chapel which can seat 80 people.

Perhaps, most importantly I am constantly moved by their rugged toughness and straight forward, matter of fact approach to life. There is little comfort in their lives but I don't hear complaints.

PERU

Benefactors from Australia, New Zealand and the United States helped to build the Centre.

In order to help me better prepare the catechetical course material, I have been doing an online biblical course for the past three years run by an Argentinean layman Marcelo Murua.

This course is necessary to help me discover how to make the biblical passages and themes relevant to the lives and context of our Quechua parishioners. I have written a series of booklets from this course for local use. All our basic courses for the community leaders from rural areas are run in the Quechua language while the same courses are offered in Spanish for the community leaders from town areas.

I believe that it is very important for our parish to reach out and relate to the Quechua society around us. How do we do this? I would say that we do this in four basic ways.

Firstly, we run the parish First Aid Post. It is run by trained nurse, Sabina. She has a lot of pastoral experience and makes a point of spending time

listening to and counselling those who come to the First Aid Post.

Secondly, I attend the local meetings of the various government and civic authorities and am on a first name basis with all the local civic leaders.

I see this as a way of encouraging and supporting them in their responsibilities. It also makes it easier to collaborate in the service of the community. I am a member of the committee in charge of organizing the town's centenary.

Thirdly, we have an ecological garden project to help improve the diet of the local people, which you can read about on page 13.

Finally, I want this parish to be an oasis in the desert, maybe mirroring characteristics of some of the monasteries of medieval Europe. In a sense I feel like a monk. I have a habit of regular study. I want individuals, parish groups and communities to feel free to come here and use our gardens, Centre and chapel.

I invite them to rest, to find peace in their hearts, to have an opportunity

for quiet conversation with Our Lord, to study and reflect on the Bible and to share the joy of being a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ. I want the stranger to feel welcome in our parish centre.

I enjoy and feel privileged to share my life with the Quechua people of the Andes mountains. I feel that we mutually enrich each other. Perhaps, most importantly I am constantly moved by their rugged toughness and straight forward matter of fact approach to life. There is little comfort in their lives but I don't hear complaints.

Often I see them suffering injustice at the hands of their own or from outsiders, but they find ways of working together to solve their problems. Above all, they are a joyous people whose lives are imbued with celebration.

Fr Donald Hornsey has been a missionary in Peru since 1999.

Fr Donald Hornsey blessing the cattle.



Sabina runs and assists people at the First Aid Post.



The man, the priest, the missionary

CORNELIUS MURPHY

This is the remarkable story of Fr Philip Crosbie, a Columban missionary priest who spent over 50 years as a missionary in Korea. He died on the evening of Holy Thursday 2005 in Melbourne. This story is told by his friend, Fr Cornelius Murphy who is another long-term Columban missionary priest in Korea. He says his story is an attempt to express the gratitude and appreciation that he and others feel for Fr Philip Crosbie.

*F*r Philip Crosbie was born in Ballarat, Victoria in 1915. He was the eldest of five children. His father died at 38 years. His mother continued to care for her children. She died aged 40 when Phil was just 15 years of age. Phil worked on the farm by day and went to night school to finish his studies. The circumstances of his early life taught him to be tough and resilient. He did not do anything by halves and was totally committed to whatever happened to be his responsibility.

After finishing his secondary studies in Ballarat, Phil joined the Columbans. He was ordained in 1939 and posted to Korea in 1940 and began working in Hong Chon parish. After the attack on Pearl Harbour, he was put under house arrest by the Japanese for six

months before being repatriated to Australia in 1942. He returned to the same parish in Korea in 1947.

Fr Phil's parish ministry was once again interrupted by the Korean War in 1950. The day the war started (25/06/1950), Fr Phil walked for four hours to Chuncheon to see Bishop Quinlan, a fellow Columban and diocesan bishop. He then walked back the same day. He was arrested by the North Koreans the following day and taken to Chuncheon and then to Seoul.

Soon after, Fr Phil and Bishop Quinlan along with 750 other prisoners were taken north on an eight day forced death march as the North Korean army was retreating. Only 250 prisoners survived the death march.

In 1953 Fr Phil and Bishop Quinlan were released through Moscow. Until then they had been presumed dead. Upon his return to Australia, Fr Phil wrote of his extraordinary experiences as a prisoner and the death march in his book, "*Pencilling Prisoner.*"

In 1954, Fr Phil again returned to Hong Chon where he remained until 1968. He gave himself totally to building up the parish centre and the outstations. He largely financed his projects with donations from overseas benefactors, especially from Australia. Every night he would type a few letters to those who wrote to him. He was tireless and totally focused.

The war had ravaged the country, torn apart families and killed millions. Most families in the countryside lived in dire

Fr Phil Crosbie met with war, hardship and the love of the Korean people.



While Fr Phil was hard on himself, he could never do enough for others. He had experienced great cold, hunger and deprivation in prison in North Korea. Because of this it helped him be sensitive to the needs of the poor whom he saw enduring something similar.

poverty. Tuberculosis was rampant. A poor diet, freezing weather, lack of adequate housing and heating as well as the displacement of thousands made life extremely tough for most of Fr Phil's parishioners.

While Fr Phil was hard on himself, he could never do enough for others. He had experienced great cold, hunger and deprivation in prison in North Korea. This helped him be sensitive to the needs of the poor whom he saw enduring something similar.

Fr Phil, like all the early missionaries in Korea, never had the chance to do formal Korean language study. It is a difficult language and he struggled with it. This, however, never stopped him communicating with the Korean people. His love for people came through and as he was in Hong Chon for over 20 years, his parishioners learned to pick up whatever he wanted to say.

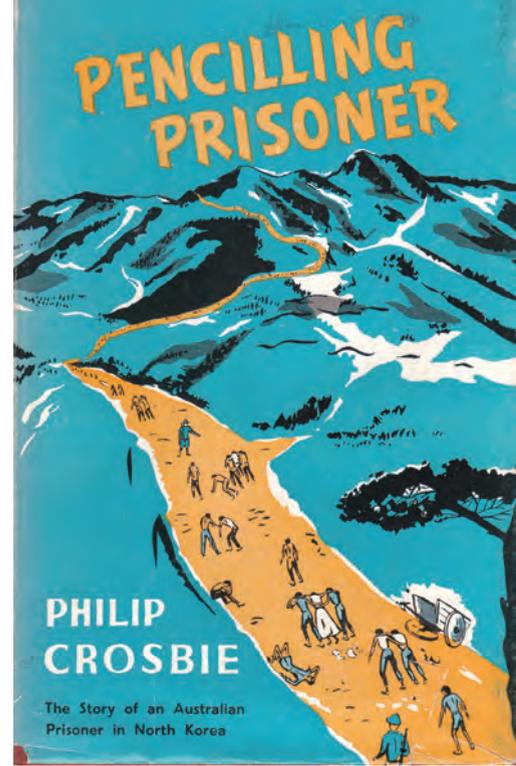
Fr Phil never got used to spicy Korean food, but did not complain. He would travel to the outstations and

ate whatever his hosts gave him and returned to base quite tired.

The parish consisted of the main centre and the 17 outstations. Fr Phil wanted all Catholics in the parish to have Mass once a month, including those in the outstations, often four hours away by jeep. From Tuesday to Thursday, Fr Phil visited the outstations for Mass and baptism. Unpaved roads and destroyed bridges made travelling difficult, even with a 4WD jeep in chains and a pick and shovel to break ice.

I eventually took over Hong Chon parish in 1968 when Fr Phil moved to another parish. I was touched by the fruits of his labours. I came to have much respect for the man, the priest and the missionary. Fr Phil had no phony airs about him. He was serious-minded, worked hard and was fully committed to whatever he took on. He was a man of prayer.

During his time in Korea, Fr Phil worked in a number of parishes and in retirement he set up a house of prayer



Fr Philip Crosbie's book "Pencil Prisoner" was first published in 1954. It was republished and edited as "March Till They Die" in 1982.

and penance. The extreme cold and sickness endured during the three years in a North Korean prison made Fr Phil leave Korea in 1998. He said as he prepared to depart, "I leave half my soul in Korea." He died in Melbourne in 2005, aged 89.

Fr Cornelius Murphy has been a missionary in Korea since 1961.



Celebrating 40 years

Three Columban priests with friends and family came together at St Columban's, Essendon, in May, to celebrate a thanksgiving Eucharist to mark the 40th anniversary of their ordination to priesthood. Due to the missionary nature of Columban priestly life, this was the first time that all three had been together since ordination.

Fr Gary Walker

Gary Walker was born in Brisbane and is the youngest of three children. After leaving school he worked for a short period in the Public Service. Answering the call to priesthood, Gary became a seminarian for the Brisbane Archdiocese at Pius XII Seminary at Banyo. While there he felt the call to be a missionary priest. He therefore joined St Columban's Missionary Society and finished his preparation for priesthood at the Columban Seminary at Turramurra, NSW.

Gary was ordained at St Peter and Paul's Church, Bulimba, Brisbane on the May 19, 1972 by Archbishop Patrick O'Donnell. After his ordination, Fr Gary was assigned to Fiji. He later returned to work in Brisbane and seminary formation at Turramurra.

In 1988 he was appointed to Jamaica where he was parish priest in several parishes. In 1994 at the Columban General Assembly, he was elected onto the General Council in Ireland for six years.

Finishing that assignment, he became Editor of *The Far East* magazine in Melbourne. He is currently the Regional Director of the Australia/New Zealand Region.



Fr Francis (Frank) McKay

Francis (Frank) McKay was born in Melbourne and is the eldest of four children. Upon finishing school, he decided to become a Columban missionary priest. He prepared with Spiritual Year at Sassafras, Victoria and then academic studies at Turramurra, NSW.

Francis was ordained in St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne on May 20, 1972 by Archbishop Knox. In 1973, Fr Francis was appointed to Japan where he worked in a variety of ministries including Charismatic Renewal, the Marian Movement for Priests, healing and deliverance ministries, the Billings Method, retreat work as well as the usual parish ministry.



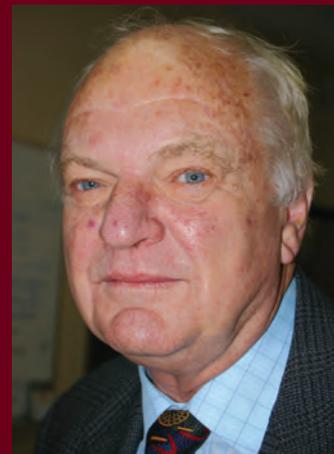
Fr James (Jim) Mulroney

James (Jim) Mulroney was born in Adelaide. He has two older sisters and a younger brother. After leaving school, Jim felt the call to the Columban missionary priesthood. He prepared with Spiritual Year at Sassafras, Victoria and then academic studies at Turramurra, NSW.

Jim was ordained in the Church of St Anthony, Edwardstown, SA by Archbishop Beovich on May 20, 1972. He was appointed to Japan in 1973 where he worked until 1981.

While in Japan, Fr Jim worked in a youth and family apostolate, catechetical programmes and ministry to Vietnamese refugees. In 1983, he was reappointed to the Australia/New Zealand Region where he worked until 2002. During this time he worked in many different areas such as vocations, mission education and awareness and regional administration.

In 2002, Fr Jim was appointed to Hong Kong to become the Editor of the "*Sunday Examiner*," the English language Catholic Newspaper in Hong Kong. This is the position he continues to hold until today.



Building closer bonds

PATRICK O'SHEA

Recently there have been new headaches for the Catholic Community in Wellington. Most people are aware of the severe damage to the iconic Anglican Cathedral by the earthquake in Christchurch in 2011. Many other churches were also badly affected.

This has prompted an assessment of how the churches in Wellington would fare in a major quake. A big earthquake is expected here at some point. The last big one was on January 23, 1855 registering 8.2 on the richter scale. That is a long time ago for a city that sits on the conjuncture of three fault lines.

Many of the churches examined were found to be far below the minimum level required to be used safely by the public and have already closed. A similar fate awaits others. Further studies will be done to see if any of these churches that are closed can be made safe enough to reopen. In the meantime a number of communities have had to make alternative arrangements for their liturgies. Sts Peter and Paul Church, Lower Hutt, was closed just as Holy Week was beginning. We celebrated these most sacred days of the Church's year in the gym of St Bernard's school.

The people were upset to lose their church. The sense of grief and loss they were feeling brought them to a different kind of identification with the celebration of the passion.



The iconic Anglican Cathedral was destroyed by the earthquake.

Certainly the reverence with which the community venerated the cross on Good Friday was extraordinary.

Setbacks and adversity bring out the best in people as they rally around each other in hard times. This was evident over the course of the week as people helped with setting up new worship spaces.

Other communities, including St James Anglican Church and the nearby Catholic parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, have offered their churches and this has helped build even greater cooperation and closer bonds between different communities and traditions.

I think the most important outcome might be the renewed realization that the community rather than the building constitutes the church, the pilgrim people of God. They might not have a permanent place in which to worship but circumstances, which they didn't want or choose, bring them to see that they carry in themselves the presence of Christ.

When people have a special place dedicated for worship, it can

unconsciously reinforce the dividing line between the profane and sacred. Liturgy and life can get separated into different realms that seem to have little to do with one another.

I believe that the more we can help people to bring what happens in liturgy into the everyday and the everyday into liturgy the more responsive we become to the grace of God and are able to recognise it. Not having a church pushes us into a different sense of how God is present to us.

The 1855 earthquake created new building practices, dictated the future layout of the city and changed its social history. Perhaps what is happening to the church buildings now will see the emergence of a stronger and more resilient faith community.

Fr Patrick O'Shea lives at St Columbans Lower Hutt, New Zealand.



Pray to keep people on their land

BRIAN GORE, OLIVER MCCROSSAN AND DONALD HORNSEY

Columbans serving in rural areas in different countries are concerned about the viability of small subsistent farms. They see that many of them are falling into debt, suffer unhealthy diets and malnutrition, are losing their traditional farming methods and experience increasing environmental degradation. As these problems accumulate, the only option then becomes migration to the slum areas of the large cities. These are the stories of three Columbans and their work in rural areas in the Philippines and in Peru. They work alongside their people to help create a viable way to remain on the land and to revitalize their rural communities. They seek to increase local income, while trying to protect the native environment and its bio-diversity.

Story One - (The Island of Negros, Philippines) - Fr Brian Gore and "The Negros Nine Human Development Foundation"

Australian Fr Brian Gore was parish priest of Oringao on the island of Negros, Philippines from 1975-1984. During the 1970s the price of sugar began to rise. This prompted large scale sugar growers to move onto the small plots of land of subsistence farmers in the foothills of the mountains. Local parishes that had

been organized into Basic Christian Communities (BCC) supported the subsistence farmers through non-violent protest tactics.

In 1983, three priests including Columbans Fr Brian Gore and Fr Niall O'Brien and six lay workers were arrested on false charges for the murder of the local mayor and four others with him. These false charges were an attempt to weaken the work of parishes and their Basic Christian Communities in their efforts to defend

the rights of the poor farmers. The nine people arrested became known as the *Negros Nine*. In 1984, after 14 months in jail, the *Negros Nine* were exonerated of all charges and released from prison. Fr Gore and Fr O'Brien were forced to leave the country.

In order to keep alive the memory of all those who suffered and died during the struggles for justice in Negros, *The Negros Nine Human Development Foundation* (NNHDF) was set up in 2000, the year of the Great





Jubilee. Its aim was to continue the work of the BCCs by the non-violent transformation of Negros society through promoting total human development.

In 2007, Fr Gore returned to work in the same area of Negros where he had been forced to leave in 1984. One of the first things he realized upon returning was that the poor farmers were worse off than before. The focus of the Pastoral Ministry of the Filipino Church in Negros was to help poor farmers remain on their land.

This meant two things in particular. One, was the development of sustainable farming methods and second, the development of a Farmers' Cooperative. Since his return Fr Gore has dedicated his time to these goals as part of *The Negros Nine Human Development Foundation* which works in partnership with Columban missionaries.

In order to develop sustainable farming methods, the Negros Nine

Demo Farm was set up. With financial help from Australia and Ireland, 12 hectares of land was bought in the mountains as an experimental farm.

Much of the land in the surrounding communities had become eroded due to bad farming practices. Not being able to make a living on this degraded land, many of the farmers are forced to sell their land to those with sufficient capital to plant sugarcane and buy the chemical fertilizer it requires.

The original owners then migrate to the slum areas of the big cities. The Demo Farm was set up to show the local farmers how to recuperate the fertility of their soils through the use of organic and sustainable methods. It uses contour farming to control the erosion of the soil and rejuvenates the soil's fertility by crop rotation and various forms of composting and organic pest control. This frees the farmers from the cycle of debt due to having to buy seeds, chemical fertilizers and chemical pesticides.

The Demo Farm has successfully shown the local farmers how to grow organic rice, corn, peanuts, vegetables, fruits and pasture grasses for animals. Other projects include a worm culture project, a plant nursery and a pond with edible fish. Farmers using these methods grow a wide variety of food for their families and for cash sales. They are not overly dependent on any single crop.

In the foothills above the Demo Farm was a large area of mostly cleared and degraded land that was not suitable for cultivation. With support from Ireland, 20 hectares of this land was bought with the idea to reforest this area with vegetation entirely native to this area. This project is important as the Philippines is one of the worst countries in Asia in terms of forest degradation.

Indigenous hardwood varieties, local to this area are being planted to recreate the rainforest on the 20 hectares. This will help prevent erosion, protect the water sources





and bring back the native species of plants, birds and animals that have all but disappeared in the area. The Demo Farm offers seminars to the local farmers on agro-forestry and the importance of protecting the bio-diversity of the area. The locals are encouraged to plant native trees on their own farm lots both for their personal use and for the environment.

The importance of The Farmers Cooperative allows the local farmers to have some control over the marketing of their produce. This gives them the power to negotiate prices for their produce, thus freeing them from middlemen who control the buying and selling of their produce. In this way, the subsistence farmers can generate income and progress economically.

Story Two - (The Island of Mindanao, Philippines) - Fr Oliver McCrossan and the Masipag Organisation

Fr Oliver McCrossan from Ireland is an advisor to the Masipag Organisation on the island of Mindanao. Masipag is an Organisation that exists throughout the Philippines. It was set up to develop a partnership between agricultural scientists and farmers through the use of sustainable agriculture.

The Masipag Biodiversity Centre in Mindanao is partly financed by the Columbans. It conserves and cultivates over 1000 varieties of native rice collected from all over the Philippines and 45 varieties of maize as well as other traditional varieties of fruit and vegetables. They also conserve and breed native chickens, pigs, ducks and other animals.

This centre helps train small farmers to farm in a sustainable, organic and a viable manner. This means changing from the conventional method of farming with its heavy reliance on bank loans to buy seeds, chemical

fertilizers and pesticides from big companies. Not only does this method pollute the environment and degrade the soil, but it can also leave the farmers with huge debts. When this happens, many farming families have to leave their land to eke out a living in the slums of the big cities.

Small farmers who use the Masipag organic methods grow two or three lines of rice with legumes as well as companion plants such as marigolds and lemongrass. They have vegetable plots, fruit trees, chickens, pigs and other animals and if they have enough water, a fish pond with edible tilapia fish.

The organic system uses organic fertilizer made from farm waste, alternate pest management and the integration of livestock into the system. They promote the cultivation of native vegetables, fruit trees, medicinal herbs and spices.

Fr Brian Gore has been a missionary in the Philippines since 1969.

Fr Oliver McCrossan has worked for many years in the Philippines and is currently working at St Columbans, Navan, Ireland.





Story Three - (The Andes Mountains, Peru) - Fr Donald Hornsey talks about recovering what has been lost

New Zealander Fr Donald Hornsey lives and serves in his parish in the valleys of the Andes Mountains in the south of Peru. Malnutrition is quite common in his parish. This is common in small children and expectant mothers. Up to 40% of children under six are undernourished. There are high levels of gastric infection in the population.

Over the years there has been an unhealthy change in dietary habits due to the ever-increasing dependence on processed foods such as rice and pasta and on fried foods.

Even in the parish where subsidized communal kitchens have operated for many years to help poor families, food aids also come from outside the area in the form of processed foods such as powdered milk, wheat flour and rice.

Fr Don realised that the recovery of local produce and trade between different geographic zones was needed to offer a balanced nutritious

diet. While he recognized the need for emergency food-aid programmes to continue to serve the poor as in the communal kitchens, he has come to realize that a new vision of social development was needed.

This new vision would help educate the poor farmers in recovering ancient knowledge and habits relating to food production that had been lost over time. It would mean helping to re-educate families on the value of a balanced diet and how to prepare tasty meals with cereals, vegetables and fruit with less dependence on fried foods, rice and pasta.

How does it work? Fr Don received help from an expert, Faustino Arminta, to set up a sustainable agricultural project in his parish. A plot of land was divided into lots of ten by two metres. Different families became responsible for a plot.

The project provided the families with a wide variety of seeds or seedlings to cultivate. The families are taught to cultivate their lots organically, without the use of chemical fertilizers and through the use of compost.

One important part of the project is the use of small greenhouses on the family plots made of light transparent plastic sheeting. As night temperatures can go down to below minus 8° due to the high altitude, the greenhouse means that crops that would not otherwise grow in the area are now doing well.

The project has been successful in helping educate subsistence farmers to cultivate a much wider range of vegetables, even more than the traditional diet of potatoes, maize and broad beans. This provides them with a healthy balanced diet. The project runs courses on how to cook with the different vegetables in a variety of dishes.

The farmers become convinced that changing to a more balanced diet is both possible, good for their health and quite tasty as well.

Fr Donald Hornsey has been a missionary in Peru since 1999.



Our Lady of the umbrella

SR MARIA ZAMBONI

"KASA NO MARIA SAMA"
傘の MARIA 様



Some years ago Columban Fr Eamonn Hogan was given a small stone statue of *Our Blessed Lady* as a gift when he was leaving a parish. When he came to Minamata parish he gave us Canossian Sisters the small statue of *Our Blessed Lady* as he could never find a suitable setting for it.

Recently we found a place for it. The statue now stands in what was once a small, uncared-for weedy area of the kindergarten grounds that we sisters run. By clearing all the weeds and moving the small rocks around, we managed to create a garden which we could finally call "beautiful."

When we set it on a large stone plinth, the rather small insignificant statue stood out clearly. Since it is of a light-coloured stone the children can easily see it from the corridor of the kindergarten. As they pass along the corridor, it comes naturally to them to call out "Ave Maria." On fine days the stone seems to shine but when it rains, it appears to be streaked with stains. One wet day, a little girl who always plays nearby said, "Maria Sama (*Our Blessed Lady*) is getting wet; she needs an umbrella."

The little girl was not satisfied and would not settle down until she put up her own pink umbrella over "Maria Sama" to protect her from the rain.

As I looked at *Our Blessed Lady* with the pink umbrella over her head, I couldn't help thinking that she comes down to the same level as the children and speaks to their hearts; somehow this reminds me that I, too, am called to become a child and see things as they do.

Sr Maria Zamboni is an Italian Canossian Sister working in the kindergarten ministry in Japan.



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.*

400 million children around the world live in conditions of slavery

Rome (FIDES) – On April 16th, the *World Day against Child Slavery*, was celebrated. According to the Spanish Confederation of Religious Orders (CONFER), there are about 400 million children worldwide living in conditions of slavery. Many work for the manufacture of products which are then sold in Europe and the rest of the West.

In their statement, they highlighted how "indirectly, this slavery becomes

part of our daily lives, the bananas we eat or the coffee we drink might have been produced by the sweat of Latin American and African children."

"It may well happen that the carpets on which we walk have been woven by little Pakistani slaves; curtains, t-shirts, jewellery and many other things could be the result of illegal forced labour using Indian children" continues CONFER. For this reason, they invite everyone not to "spare any effort to

solicit civil authorities to fulfil their responsibility to fight against these injustices and to give all children the legal protection they deserve."

The date of the celebration of this day is not random. It dates back to the killing of Iqbal Masih, a 12-year-old Pakistani Christian boy, killed on April 16, 1995 by his country's textile mafia because he had denounced this exploitation. Iqbal had worked as a slave in the textile industry since the age of 4.

After he escaped at the age of 10, he gave a testimony of his experience speaking in parliaments and universities in the United States and the European Union. Despite the years of struggle, international legislation, complaints and support programmes for the young in precarious situations, slavery continues to spread.

CONFER denounces that the phenomenon is particularly widespread in India and Afghanistan, where boys and girls work in the construction industry. In Brazil, these small slaves produce the coal used for the manufacture of steel for cars and other mechanical parts.



Mission Intention for June

That Christians in Europe may discover their true identity and participate with greater enthusiasm in the proclamation of the Gospel.

From the Editor



Inviting people to live the Year of Grace

In Myanmar children are exploited for the collection of sugarcane and other agricultural products. In China they prepare explosives and fireworks used for pyrotechnics.

In Sierra Leone they are exploited for the extraction of diamonds from the mines. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, thousands of children are enslaved for the extraction of essential minerals used for computers, mp3s, mobile phones and many other tools that are used every day in the so-called first world.

In Benin and Egypt, it is estimated that one million children are forced to work in the cotton industry because they cost less and are more obedient than adults, as well as having the right size to nestle between the trees.

Finally, the report by the religious says, in Cote d'Ivoire, about 12,000 children collect cocoa seeds that are exported for the elaboration of chocolate.

Recently I asked a friend when was the last time she had been on a retreat. "I hardly have time to pray each day, let alone going on retreat," was her reply. Yes indeed, modern life can be so busy that spending time with God in prayer just does not get onto our daily agenda.

Starting at Pentecost 2012, the Bishops of Australia invited the Catholic people of Australia to live a *Year of Grace*. This means committing ourselves to start afresh in our lives with Christ. It is about conversion, reconnecting and deepening our faith in Jesus Christ, getting to know Him and not just about Him. Our New Zealand readers may also like to make use of this valuable opportunity.

If we want the Word of God, the Eucharist, Reconciliation and concerns for justice, peace and ecology to nourish our prayer life, it depends on us. The ball is in our court. The Holy Spirit has been sent to kindle in us the fire of God's love. Maybe we can start by turning off the TV or internet at some time during the day, using that time to make a start. It might mean making visits to churches to pray, joining bible study or prayer groups and participating in justice and peace groups.

This issue of *The Far East* offers us stories of several Columban priests in different countries living out their faith in Christ and witness to Him through a missionary vocation amongst groups such as the rural poor, those suffering from addictions, people of different religions and situations of war.

Let us make a year long retreat, the *Year of Grace*, taking time here and there each day, to spend with the Lord in prayer and so grow closer to Him.

You can learn more about the *Year of Grace*: www.yearofgrace.catholic.org.au

Dan Harding

Fr Dan Harding
TFE@columban.org.au



Fr Leo Donnelly with Ronald Tasayco who has overcome great challenges.

Addiction, family and God

RONALD TASAYCO

I was about 15 or 16 years of age and at high school when I began to smoke marihuana. I was in it for the fun with a few friends and within three years I was addicted. Some years prior my younger sister had a serious injury and for years required constant treatment. Eventually she was diagnosed with schizophrenia, which put a lot of pressure on our family's resources.

As my parents had to work around the clock to help cover costs, I didn't see much of them. My dad was a policeman who did not earn a lot. He needed to get a second and third job to help cover all the costs. With my parents so caught up working, I was free to go my own way but clearly I got lost.

To pay for my addiction I began to steal from home and from others. I had begun university studies but soon dropped out and just hung about with my friends who were also into drugs. I didn't study, had no job and had given up on life, including on my family.

Eventually, on seeing the suffering that I was putting my parents through, I began to take stock of what I was doing. I was 22 and my only constant activity had become

smoking marihuana. I saw mum crying; she pleaded with me to stop. She had to hide anything of value in the house. I wanted to stop the marihuana habit but could not do it alone. I desperately needed help and knew my parents were there for me. If it weren't for their patient and determined insistence that I reform my life, I doubt I'd ever have beaten the drug habit.

Because of the marihuana I stopped participating in the parish youth group where I was a catechist in the first communion programme. My dad tells me how I used to cry and promise him that I'd change but, at the same time, he was finding little packets of marihuana in my room. Mum would buy me clothes because all I had was old but I sold what she had bought me. Mum didn't ask me what I got up to away from home but friends and neighbours told her; I know it hurt her so much.

We didn't have a close family life due to the pressures of work. I know that dad later felt that maybe, if he could have been around more, then things would have been different. However, I don't want to blame him for anything; I feel he did the best he could.

I saw what their faith in God had led them to. I saw how happy they were with their renewed lives. I began to read the Bible and to pray the rosary.

PERU

Dad became concerned after I had stolen his police revolver to go out and commit a robbery with my friends. The stress and worry caused him partial paralysis of the face. If I had done any harm or been caught with the weapon, he would have been punished severely by the police for being irresponsible with his pistol. Dad got a real fright and that also frightened me; I realised the gravity of the situation I had caused.

Not long after, my parents finally got through to me and with the help of Columban Fr Leo Donnelly (Padre Leo), I started rehabilitation at a nearby hospital.

Around that time some women from our small parish community came to the house to invite my dad to a retreat and he persuaded them to invite me. Of course, he told them about the problem I was dealing with. That invitation came at just the right time for me.

During the weekend retreat things changed for me in a major way. I met others who had been through a similar struggle. I saw what their faith in God had led them to. I saw how happy they were with their renewed lives. I began to read the Bible and to pray the rosary. I'd already broken with the drug habit thanks to the support of my parents and Padre Leo, but I needed something more to keep going

with my life, to be hopeful and happy about myself. I found it through involvement with these weekend retreats. I had returned to my family and the retreat helped me return to God.

Things began to change for me. I got a job. In consultation with my parents I moved out of home in order to put some distance between me and my marijuana-smoking friends. I made friends at work and lived by myself nearby. I feel so grateful to God for all that I have been able to change in my life. Prayer and faith have given me so much inner strength to face up to this terrible addiction that I'd allowed bury me alive when I should have been pushing ahead with my life.

Dad has become a real friend to me. He is an honest man and a man of God; he would always go to his Bible study meeting in the parish. We are very close due to sharing the trauma of my drug addiction.

I am now 27 years of age and have a good job selling financial products in a credit union. I feel so grateful to my parents for hanging in there with me and for Padre Leo who in supporting my parents, helped make my recovery possible.

Ronald Tasayco is a parishioner in Fr Leo Donnelly's parish.



Ronald's parents, Gilberto & Enriqueta were a great support to him in his recovery.



Responding to addictions

MARTIN RYAN

*A*lcoholism is a terrible scourge to Filipino families. Many wives, mothers and their children have experienced bitter suffering because of an alcoholic husband or father.

I started working with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) in Cagayan de Oro City in 1987. At that time there were no treatment centres on this southern island of Mindanao, Philippines.

It took six years to get AA firmly established there. In 1993, I moved to the Ozamis area and started AA there where we have opened a live-in treatment centre.

The inspiration and moving force behind the centre is Sr Navarro, the founder of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Triumph. Last year, she came to me and said, "As I was raised in a slum, the suffering of the people from the terrible violence that ensued from alcohol and drugs has always been deep in my mind. Something must be done to help those who suffer."

As a result a centre in Ozamis was set up called "IT WORKS" to treat drug and alcohol addictions.

From the beginning, we decided to specifically target *Trisecads* (pedal bike drivers with a sidecar attached for passengers) as alcoholism is high among them.

There are 3000 Trisecads among the 100,000 people of Ozamis. They can earn about \$5.00 a day pedalling passengers around the city.

These men and their families live in one-room houses in the slums. Poverty stares them in the face everyday of their lives. The future for their children is gloomy. In their despair they have recourse to alcohol and drugs.

The treatment the patients receive involves individual and group therapy sessions as well as therapy sessions for their families, according to AA programmes.

Pedro is a trisecad driver, married with two young children. "When I was drinking, I had no money and I wouldn't come home at night. Now I am home ever night and there's peace in my family." His wife Nina says, "AA has changed not only Pedro's life, but also has brought peace and joy to my own life. Our children are no longer afraid of their father."

Another trisecad driver, Todo, says, "AA has given me a new life, happiness and freedom. I am now a responsible father. Sunday Mass and Holy Hour give new meaning to my life." Success has bred success, giving rise to more requests than we can handle for other centres in other areas of the Philippines.

Fr Martin Ryan first went to the Philippines in 1954 and is currently living in retirement in Kilkenny, Ireland.

Growth and missionary journey

SEAN CONNEELY

Columban Fr Sean Conneely works in the area of addictions in Korea. This is his story.

I grew up in a poor part of the west of Ireland. At the age of 13 when I went to boarding school, I was made to feel ashamed of the way I spoke English. This left deep wounds that took a long time to heal. After finishing school in 1962, I entered the Columbans. I was ordained a priest in 1969 and was appointed to Korea.

A little over 20 years later, I needed to leave Korea to go to an alcohol rehabilitation centre in the United States. On March 16, 1992, I took my last drink with close friends in Mexico City on the way to the rehabilitation centre. I have been involved in the area of addictions ever since.

I now help others deal with deep, personal problems, which are having major negative repercussions on the relationships that matter to them.

I know the 12-Step Programme intimately as I have been through it myself. I do group and one on one sessions. These programmes help participants recover power over aspects of their lives that have run rampant. They can empower addicts to retake their lives.

I work with teams of married couples who run weekends for couples who are trying to put their marriage back together. The programme we use, Retrovaille (rediscovery), was developed in Canada. We try to help each person who comes to these weekends to look deep into themselves and bring what they have discovered and owned to the conversation with their spouse.

I work with addicts of various kinds in 12-Step Programmes for alcoholics, drug addicts, food addicts, sex addicts, etc. I know the 12-Step Programme intimately as I have been through it myself. I do group and one on one sessions. These programmes help participants recover power over aspects of their lives that have run rampant. They can empower addicts to retake their lives.

I also offer spiritual accompaniment to people, mostly religious sisters, who seek such support for their life journey. The issues are very personal as those I accompany grapple with inner turmoil in regard to their own calling



Fr Sean Conneely blesses baptismal water at Easter in Korea.

and in terms of how to relate with the members of their community.

Looking back over the past 70 years of my life, I feel that at times I have allowed myself to be carried by the current and then with the help of God and remaining close to Him, I have a better chance of being my own navigator.

Fr Sean Conneely had been a missionary in Korea since 1969.

Mini-Parliament of World's Religions

PATRICK MCINERNEY

*O*n March 21, 2012, the Columban Mission Institute and the Catholic Institute of Sydney co-hosted a *Mini-Parliament of the World's Religions*. This promotion of Interreligious Dialogue between the members of different religions and spiritualities is an important ministry of the Columbans in several countries. At the Sydney Mini-Parliament, representatives of eight different spiritualities came together - *Aboriginal, Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh*. As many of these representatives were national, state and local leaders of their respective religious communities, together they formed a high quality panel.

I was emcee for the event. I am the Director of the Columban Mission Institute in Sydney and the Coordinator of its Centre for Mission Studies and the Coordinator of Missiology at the Catholic Institute of Sydney where I currently teach the course of Interreligious Dialogue, ([see www.columban.org.au](http://www.columban.org.au)).

Mrs Elsie Heiss from the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry began the formal proceedings with an acknowledgment of country. Rev Dr Gerard Kelly, the President of the Catholic Institute of Sydney, welcomed all those present, particularly the guests from other religions and their companions, along with other visitors to the Institute.

I then invited each of the panellists to present interreligious dialogue from their religion's point of view. It was fascinating to hear each one sharing from the wealth of his/her different tradition. Many points in common soon

emerged with love of neighbour and serving the common good being the most prominent.

Differences remained as well without these being a cause of contention or strife. This was not religious relativism or religious indifferentism. Each of the panellists spoke passionately from within their respective religious commitment. They did not necessarily agree with each other on all that was said, but they could all agree on the importance of dialogue and cooperation in a globalised world.

Then I conducted a brief Questions and Answers session. This modelled dialogue in action, as each one responded to the various questions about their inspiration for dialogue, models of dialogue and favourite scriptural texts that promote dialogue. Then the session was opened up to all the participants who now had the chance to engage with the panellists and ask their question. It was a very stimulating engagement, including the panellists addressing each other as well as the audience.

The evening concluded with a vote of thanks from Columban Fr Brian Vale and gifts from the students undertaking the Interreligious Dialogue course presented to each of the panellists. The final moment was a beautiful blessing song, "*You are the face of God.*"

Fr Patrick McInerney is the Director of the Columban Mission Institute in Sydney, NSW.



Being there for others in need

When the son of a family in his parish in Lima, Peru, was suffering from a grave problem of drug addiction, their parish priest, Fr Leo Donnelly, encouraged the young man to go into rehabilitation. Through the support of Columban benefactors, Fr Leo was able to finance this rehabilitation. Now this young man is free from drug addiction.

Columbans around the world are involved in similar ministries of support and healing to those who suffer.



Photo: Fr Peter Woodruff

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



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