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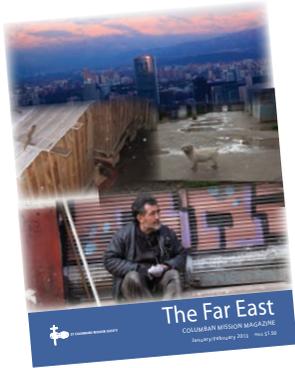
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Contents



- 3** From the Editor
Living in an adopted country.
- 4-5** Migrants, refugees and Columban's
World Day of Migrants and Refugees.
- 6-7** Ordinary people doing extraordinary things
The story of Nancy Orellana.
- 8-9** Reflection - Suicides in Japan and God's gentleness
"Itsukushimi" in all its meaning.
- 10-11** Returning home to Lima
Fr Leo Donnelly tells us about his retirement in Lima.
- 12-13** Rosa's story
Rosa is a sign of hope for others.
- 14-15** Solidarity with people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS
Lay missionaries working at 'Harmony Home' in Taiwan.
- 16** Mission World
- 17** From the Director
- 18-19** Angels in Japan
Fr Joe Joyce's experiences in Japan.
- 20-21** Transformation
Columban's are human too.
- 22** Columban presents Urdu translation
The Catechism of the Catholic Church in Urdu.
- 23** Support Columban Mission



Cover: Different aspects of life in Santiago, Chile (see pages 6-7).

Photos: iStockphoto.com & Janette Mentha



From the Editor

Living in an adopted country

*O*n December 28th each year, we remember in the liturgy the Feast of the Holy Innocents and how the Holy Family became refugees. We remember how they had to quickly pack up their things and flee across the desert to safety in another country, Egypt. They were escaping the persecution of King Herod.

For more than 90 years, Columban missionaries have encountered many migrants and refugees across the world. As missionaries in foreign countries, Columbans themselves are a special type of migrant who often spend the best part of their lives living in a different country from the one where they were born.

In this issue of *The Far East*, we read about Australian Columban, Fr Leo Donnelly who has spent most of his life working as a missionary priest in Peru and is now retired there. He recently spent his holidays in Melbourne and has now returned "home" to Lima, Peru where he intends to spend the rest of his life.

Across the globe, other Columban missionaries, like Fr Tom Tehan in Japan are living out their lives in their adopted countries, some becoming ill as they get older.

Fr Michael Hoban in Chile and Sr Mary McGuinness in Peru introduce us to some extraordinary local people in their adopted countries. Fr Joe Joyce who works in Pakistan, travelled to Japan on sabbatical and tells us about "angels" he met in unexpected places.

Living in one's adopted country as a missionary, means responding to the important pastoral needs of that country.

Living in one's adopted country as a missionary, means responding to the important pastoral needs of that country. We read Fr Barry Cairns reflection from Japan and the story of Columban Lay Missionaries Jhoanna Resari and Kim Kung Woong in Taiwan who are responding to the pastoral needs of their countries.

Another important missionary task is the translation of sacred text into local languages. This is the task that Fr Robert McCulloch has undertaken in Pakistan.

January 13, 2013 marked the 99th *World Day of Migrants and Refugees*. This was a time for all of us to pray for and remember all of those who have left their own countries to seek a better life in another country.

We can also remember the Columban missionaries who have left their own countries to become adopted members of another society, another people.

Dan Harding

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Migrants, refugees and Columbans

World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

FR DAN HARDING

"Why don't these people stay in their own countries? They've messed up their own countries and now they are coming here to mess up ours," said an angry young woman to me recently.

Both Australia and New Zealand are countries that have always had a high level of immigration. The 2011 Australian Census showed that over a quarter (26%) of Australia's population was born overseas and another 20% had at least one parent born overseas. Figures for 2005 show that almost 20% of New Zealanders were born overseas.

Since 1914, the Catholic Church has celebrated the *World Day of Migrants and Refugees* in January each year. It was instituted by Pope Pius X in 1914. *January 13, 2013 marks the 99th World Day of Migrants and Refugees.* This day provides us with an opportunity to familiarize ourselves with the reality of migration.

Another important day to remember with regards to refugees is. This is the feast of the slaughter of the Holy Innocents and the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, as refugees escaping persecution.

Columban work with refugees in the past

The World Day of Migrants and Refugees is also an opportunity to familiarize ourselves with the work of Columban Missionaries with migrants and refugees both in the past and today. Columban Co-Founder Bishop Galvin and his fellow missionaries worked in China with refugees from floods, famines and wars during the three decades leading up to their expulsion from China in 1952.

Columban Fr Tom Ellis died of typhoid in Nancheng, China, in 1945 as a result of his dedicated care of refugees fleeing from war.

The Second World War caused enormous numbers of refugees in countries such as China, Japan and the Philippines as well as later in Korea during the Korean War. In all of these countries, Columban missionaries worked to alleviate the suffering of people displaced by war and other disasters. Columbans have also worked with political refugees in times of oppression in these countries as well as in Chile and Peru. Cyclones in Fiji and the Philippines, earthquakes

and tsunamis in Chile, Peru and Japan, all create refugees, many of whom have been helped by Columban efforts. Columban Sisters before the second world war worked in Shanghai, China, with White Russian refugees from the Russian Revolution.

Pope Benedict XVI's Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees

The right to migrate and to seek better opportunities is, according to the Pope's Message, a fundamental human right.

Statistics show that there are an estimate 214 million international migrants in the world and around 740 million internal migrants. This means that around one billion people or one in seven of the world's population have felt compelled for economic, political, social, religious reasons or reasons of natural disasters to begin the journey of migration, either across borders to another country or within their own country.

For Australians and New Zealanders, unless one is of Indigenous descent, all of our families came to our countries as migrants. It is important for us to try to stand in the shoes of



migrants. The Pope's Message speaks of, *"The vast multitude of people, (who) finding themselves in a situation of despair over the impossibility to build a future and the desire for a better life, feel compelled to begin their journey of faith and hope for a better life somewhere else."*

The Church has the duty to help migrants integrate into society and to feel at home and to share their gifts in their new land. Migrants also have duties to their new countries. While governments have the right to regulate migration, they must also respect the dignity of each human being and seek to end human trafficking and the exploitation of migrants.

Columbans work with migrants and refugees today

In Taiwan Columbans have set up Migrant Worker Centres to provide support and legal aid for migrant workers.

In Ireland Columbans work with migrant rights groups. There are an estimated 30,000 migrants including children and families living undocumented in Ireland.

In Britain Columban priests and lay missionaries live and work in cities

with large immigrant communities. They work in organizations to support migrant's rights.

In Chile and Peru, Columban parishes are located in poor areas largely made up of internal migrants, people from poor rural areas who have come to the big cities of Santiago and Lima hoping for a better life. International migrants from other Latin American countries are also present in Columban parishes in Chile.

In Peru many families live from the remittances sent by Peruvian migrant workers in other countries such as Japan and Chile.

In Japan Columbans work with different migrant worker groups.

In Fiji Columbans work with internal migrants displaced by discriminatory policies.

In the Philippines Columbans have worked with internal migrants who migrate to the big cities like Manila seeking a better life. Many Filipinos go overseas as migrant workers and send remittances back to their families at home.

In Korea Columbans have worked with migrants and supported Overseas Migrant Worker Centres.

In the United States, Columbans have staffed parishes for various immigrant groups such as the Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Filipino and Latin Americans. The Columban parish in the City of Juárez in Mexico on the border with the United States is largely made of internal migrants seeking a better life. Many wish to migrate to the United States.

In Australia and New Zealand, several Columbans visit migrant and refugee centres, including Detention Centres. Columbans have also worked with the various migrant communities such as the Koreans, Chinese, Filipinos and Latin Americans.

During this *World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, let us remember the tragedy of refugee and asylum seekers boats arriving in Australian waters.

The 2012 Australian *Catholic Bishops Social Justice Statement*, called on the Government to implement policies whereby asylum seekers would have the shortest possible time in detention and would live in the community until their status has been determined.

Columban Fr Dan Harding is the Editor of The Far East.

Ordinary people doing extraordinary things...

FR MICHAEL HOBAN

One of the great rewards of being a missionary priest is the opportunity to meet and work with extraordinary people. Since I was appointed the Episcopal Vicar of the Southern Zone of the Archdiocese of Santiago, Chile, I have been privileged to meet dozens of extraordinary people: laymen and lay women, deacons, sisters and priests.

They are ordinary people who are inspired by their faith to do extraordinary things in some of the most dangerous neighbourhoods of the city. Over the past several decades, there has been an explosion of violence in the poorer "poblaciones" (housing complexes) fuelled by drug trafficking.

Twenty years ago, José Agustin was returning to his home on a Sunday morning when he was attacked and murdered. He was killed right in front of his home in Lo Espejo, one of the poorest municipalities of the city of Santiago.

For Señora Nancy Orellana and her husband the loss of their son murdered so tragically brought them to the brink of despair. She decided that her faith in the Risen Christ could not allow her to be submerged in her own loss nor live the rest of her life condemning the people who commit such horrible crimes.

For many years she had worked as a volunteer with Sr Roset Garriga, a missionary Sister trying to rehabilitate men and women who suffer from the disease of alcoholism. She knew that a high percentage of crimes are committed by people who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. She knew that the only way forward was to do whatever she could to help them recover sobriety. So in the year 2000 she founded the *Casa de Rehabilitación* (House of Rehabilitation) "*Jesús de Nazaret*"



which is located in Las Turbinas, one of the biggest shantytowns in the city of Santiago. Columban missionaries have pastoral responsibility for this area.

The facilities of the *Casa de Rehabilitación* are very basic: a couple of dormitories with bunk beds, several individual bedrooms, showers and bathrooms, kitchen and dining room, laundry, a living/recreation room, a meeting room, office, storeroom and patio. The entire structure is built with wood and in constant need of repair.

They are ordinary people who are inspired by their faith to do extraordinary things in some of the most dangerous neighbourhoods of the city.

Recently the kitchen nearly burnt down. There was no gas to cook with, so a wooden stove was being used to cook dinner. Too much fuel ignited the back wall, but fortunately the fire was quickly extinguished.

Men of all ages live at the *Casa de Rehabilitación* but their therapy is conducted outside the home at the *Rehabilitation Clinic Monseñor Enrique Alvear*. Nancy works closely with Fr Sergio Naser, the Director of the Clinic. He is the founder of the Clinic and has worked for more than 40 years rescuing several thousand men and women from the diseases of alcoholism and drug addiction.

The men go each day to the Clinic where they take part in individual and group therapy. They are supervised by a professional staff of doctors, psychologists and social workers.

When they return from the Clinic, their time is spent in doing the various domestic chores in the *Casa*.

For many of the men, assuming responsibility for these domestic chores is an important part of their recovery. Many of them have lived on the streets and lost the basic habits of personal hygiene and care. Any repairs to the buildings are also done by the men. The men are encouraged to look after one another. If one of them is sick, another member of the "family" will look after him; take him to the doctor and ensure that his "brother" gets proper care. On the weekends, family members are encouraged to visit the men.

There are not many rules in the *Casa de Rehabilitación*. No alcohol or drugs are permitted on the grounds and the men are not allowed in the home if they have consumed alcohol or drugs. They can return when they are sober. The normal period of residence at the *Casa* is nine months. Nancy says, "if it takes nine months to be born, it also takes nine months to be born again".

A deeply religious woman who has read the entire Bible several times, she believes that restoring faith in God is an essential ingredient in therapy. All the men are required to attend Mass each Sunday and they must do a three-day retreat known as the Conversion Retreat. I have been privileged to hear the confessions of many of the men in rehabilitation during this retreat. I am always struck by the desire of the men to be reconciled with their families and with God.

When a man has been sober for several months, he is allowed to visit his home if he has one. After six or seven months, he is encouraged to look for work. For the last few months, he will go off to work during the day and return to the home in the evenings. Nancy knows that not all the men are capable of rehabilitation.

For that reason, she has never put a limit on the number of times a man can return to the *Casa de Rehabilitación*. When I visited her she brought me to the room where one member of the family is suffering from chronic cirrhosis. "He will die here", Nancy said and then added, "he will die sober here".

I asked her if she was discouraged because some of the men would not achieve sobriety. Her answer was a definite "no". She pointed out with pride that most of her "sons" have returned to their homes and are working and taking care of their families. A few even have returned to school and among her "graduates" are teachers, lab technicians and other professionals.

Nancy may have lost her son but she continues to be a real mother for many men who are lost. Even though she herself has been close to death on numerous occasions due to her own advanced cancer, she says that she will continue to work for the rehabilitation of these men for as long as the Lord grants her life.

Fr Michael Hoban first went to Chile in 1973.



Suicides in Japan and



Japanese life is very busy.

Fr Barry Cairns from New Zealand has been a missionary in Japan since 1956. He offers us this reflection, written from the heart, on the tragedy of suicide and the closeness and gentleness of God.

I have just come from a very emotional funeral of a young girl of 18 who committed suicide. I write this after sharing with the distraught parents and realize that I too need to share with someone.

Both parents are indeed devastated. Their sorrow was not only the sadness and loneliness of loss, but also had a background of deep felt guilt.

"Could we have prevented our daughter's death? Should we have listened more and been more supportive?"

I feel that these post-event questionings are in so many cases not valid. The parents are very human and did their best with someone already an adult.

I will explain how my personal spiritual life has been affected by suicides. I have come to believe more deeply

in God's gentle understanding of the human heart and its frailty, and in his loving-kindness and acceptance. The word in Japanese for this attitude of God towards his frail children is *"Itsukushimi"*.

Sometimes a new and strange word helps to bring back meaning to a much used one. *"Itsukushimi"* is used in the Japanese Bible and liturgy and is a word full of feeling, atmosphere and nuance. It is used to translate the Hebrew word *"chesed"*.

God's *"Itsukushimi"* is a combination of gentleness, understanding, love, mercy, compassion, warmth and that wonderful ability to feel with a person. For me *"Itsukushimi"* is the principle trait of Abba, my Father-God, to each of us, his very frail children. But rather than use words, *"Itsukushimi"* is seen in the concrete in Jesus, who is divine

love in a human heart. Jesus cried in front of the grave of his friend Lazarus. Jesus felt deeply with Lazarus's sisters, Martha and Mary, and cried with them.

Again Jesus reached out in gentleness to the grieving young widowed mother of Naim whose only child had died. Jesus felt with her. The scriptures have an eternal present tense. We today too have a God who cries with us. That *"Itsukushimi"*.

So it is, at funerals, especially of suicides, do I speak of God's understanding and gentleness. I believe myself and tell my people that God's *"Itsukushimi"* is stronger than human frailty.

In one special case of a school teacher mother in her 50s where everyone knew she had taken her own life, I spoke on suicide, itself. I borrowed words from the yearly article on suicide by Fr Ronald Rolheiser available on the internet. Nowadays when someone dies of cancer, it is publicly mentioned. It is recognized as a sickness which brings death.

God's "Itsukushimi" is a combination of gentleness, understanding, love, mercy, compassion, warmth and that wonderful ability to feel with a person.

So too is the very real sickness of depression which also sometimes brings death. Let us accept it as a sickness. Do not let us go into self-incrimination - "if only I did this".

There are nearly 100 suicides a day in Japan. The sad rate for Australia is six per day and New Zealand has 547 suicides a year. In a Japanese Government report published in April 2012, 30% of Japanese in their 20s have seriously considered committing suicide. But 37% of the total suicides are men in their 60s.

Depression is given as the main cause of suicide including a relatively newly coined Japanese word *"Karoshi"* which means fatigue from overwork resulting in death.

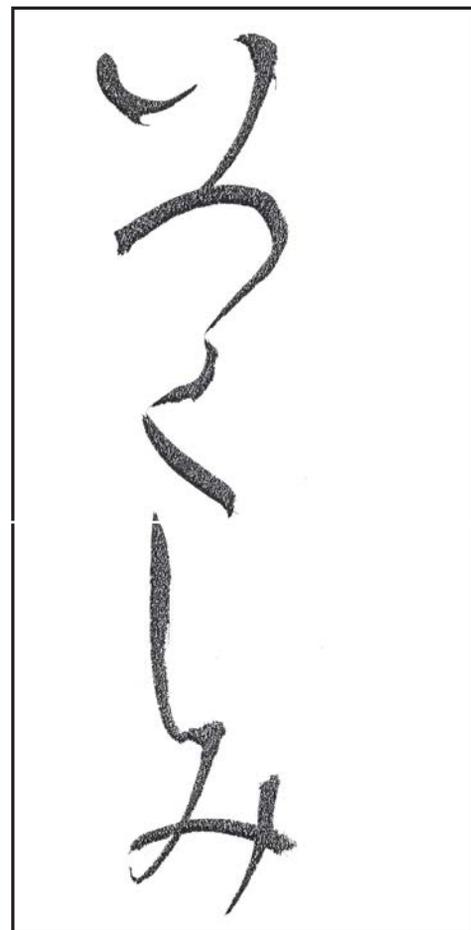
Debt is the second biggest cause due mainly from the easily borrowed but high interest system of the loan sharks. The recent increase of school children who have been bullied and committed suicide has received a high profile in the media.

These personal experiences and reports in the media make my mission in Japan more meaningful. The Nobel Laureate Kenzaburo Oe speaking of his own Japanese people has said in an interview: *"We Japanese are a society that has lost hope."* I consciously try to be Christ's instrument of hope.

At the funeral of a mother who took her own life amidst depression I spoke on God's tender loving kindness - Abba's *"Itsukushimi"*. The son who was an architect student designed his mother's grave stone. In the marble column was engraved deeply just one word, *"Itsukushimi"*.

May God's gentle compassion be engraved deeply in our hearts. Let us share God's *"Itsukushimi"* with others.

Fr Barry Cairns has been a Columban missionary priest in Japan since 1956.



"Itsukushimi" written in Japanese script.

Returning home to Lima

At the beginning of November, 2012, an 80-year-old man boarded the Qantas flight to return home to Lima, Peru. After spending several months of holidays in Melbourne and in his native city of Ballarat, it was now time for Fr Leo Donnelly to return home to Lima, Peru where he has lived most of his life since arriving there in 1958. Before leaving he shared these thoughts in an interview for The Far East.

Many people must wonder why you don't retire here in Australia?

"I am happy to retire in Peru because of the witness value. I believe it's important that the Peruvian people know that we Columban missionaries meant what we said. We did not just come here, do things for them and then go home. We came here to share our lives with the Peruvian people, to live close to them and to value them as people. As missionaries, we could not bring them the faith because they already had strong faith. What we could do is value them as human beings."



Fr Leo Donnelly.

What was it like in the areas where Columbans worked in Lima in 1958?

"Bloody awful! A page out of Tolstoy! Families were just beginning to migrate to the outskirts of Lima from poverty and oppression in the rural valleys and tableland of the Andes Mountains. There was dust, dust and more dust everywhere! There was no electricity, no town water and very few sealed roads."

What is it like now 55 years later?

"For many people, the standard of living has gone up. Serious problems like poor public health and education and the social divisions between rich and poor remain of course. The use of cocaine is a serious problem. Drugs are given out to school kids to get them hooked."

Which period was the most difficult for you?

"It was undoubtedly the last four years of the Shining Path guerrilla war. The Shining Path guerrillas were a Maoist terrorist movement that began their armed insurrection in 1980 and continued until the capture of their leader, Abigail Guzman, in 1992.

I spent 10 years at the height of the Shining Path guerrilla war as parish priest in the valley and town of Huasi Huasi, an area where the guerrillas were active. Huasi Huasi is 350kms east of Lima and situated high up in the Andes Mountains between 3000 and 3600 metres above sea level."

In my time there, I buried 28 people who had been murdered by the Shining Path guerrillas. In the beginning they shot people but later it became even worse as they started to kill people with knives.

The ordinary farmers and village people of course suffered from both sides. The military would go into a village and burn it down so that the Shining Path guerrillas could not hide there."

What great tragedies stand out for you from this time?

"Three massacres stand out clearly in my mind.

The Massacre in the Plaza of Huasi Huasi

"On May 21, 1991, a potato truck was leaving Huasi Huasi for an outlying village. They met the Shining Path guerrillas on the edge of the town who told them to turn around and gather with the rest of the population in the town plaza.

As the potato truck was passing near the parish, one of the men from the truck saw me, and called out to me to get inside as the Shining Path guerrillas were coming behind.

The guerrillas had a hit list with names on it of people they considered as enemies of the people. It included the Australian Josephite Sisters, who had been asked to help distribute Caritas aid to the poor. This was seen as propaganda for the United States.



Four of the men on the list along with Sr Irene McCormack were brought to the plaza and executed after a show trial. Myself and the parish choir who were practicing at the time hid anxiously in the presbytery until the guerrillas left the town."

"The guerrillas had a hit list with the names on it of people they considered as enemies of the people."

The Massacre at Huacuas

"One Saturday morning the following year 1992, I was holding a catechetical meeting in the parish. Meanwhile the Shining Path guerrillas had entered the nearby village of Huacuas and massacred 10 people. They then set out to Huasi Huasi, most likely to massacre more people.

After our meeting the people from Huacuas went home. One of them

found his father murdered and another found both his father and mother had been murdered.

Meanwhile the Shining Path guerrillas were heading in trucks to Huasi Huasi. A young man from Huacuas ran down the mountain tracks ahead of the guerrillas in the trucks to warn the town that the guerrillas were on the way. Just as the trucks with the guerrillas arrived on the ridge overlooking the town, the army also arrived in town having followed the river up through the valley.

Neither group were aware of the other's presence, until someone in the town signalled the guerrillas up on the ridge to turn around and leave."

The Massacre at Cachiyacu

"In Cachiyacu, another part of the parish, Shining Path guerrillas ambushed a truck carrying members of the Civil Defence Unit. The Military has established the Civil Defence Unit and made it compulsory for all men

between 16 and 45 to join, which of course most did not want to do.

Twelve men on the ambushed truck were identified as members of the Civil Defence and were promptly murdered. One man on the truck was my driver, Raul. He survived the massacre because he was not a member of the Civil Defence. I had previously written to the military asking that Raul be exempted from the Civil Defence as he was needed for parish work."

Any final thought!

I just would like to say that I am enjoying my retirement in Lima which of course has been my home for so many years. I spend time writing poetry and painting. I visit friends and help out in parishes when needed. I am grateful to God for so many years lived with the people of Peru. My life has indeed been rich and rewarding.

Fr Leo Donnelly spoke with Fr Dan Harding on a recent visit to Essendon.



Rosa's story

Columban Sr Mary McGuinness tells us about Rosa, a self made social worker.

SR MARY MCGUINNESS

Sr Mary McGuinness with a young friend in Lima.

There was something about her. The first time I met her I noticed it, a directness of manner, a level of attention that marked her out from others. Her bright eyes measured you and if you passed their scrutiny you earned her trust. She would be your loyal and fearless helper and friend in the teeming pueblo of Huaycan about 16kms southeast of Lima.

Rosa (not her real name) was one of the thousands who made their way from the interior, from the mountainous regions of Ayacucho in the 80s and 90. There, in their little pueblos, they had been caught in a vice between the terrorists, the Shining Path guerrillas and the Army.

The Shining Path guerrillas would come and threaten to kill everyone if the villagers did not give them food. The Army would come and threaten to kill everyone if they did give them food. It was a terrifying no-win situation.

So the people left in their thousands and squatted in the desert areas around Lima. Huaycan grew from a trickle to a population of over 180,000 people today. They are about to celebrate the 27th year of their foundation.

But what will they celebrate? You look around at this treeless, featureless place, and see shacks creeping up the hillside. Shacks and more shacks, some half built, some teetering precariously on the edge, some roofless, doorless, barely habitable. But people live here. Life spills over as the multitudes try to eke out a living.

In Peru the minimum wage is AUD\$160.00 (NZD\$200.00) a month but many earn a lot less than this. Twenty three percent of the population in Peru is between the ages of 6 and 17, a frightening statistic but easy to believe in this area.

The men, women and children are all poor and struggling. It looks hopeless,

oftentimes it feels hopeless but then you meet people like Rosa, so vibrant with life despite endless set-backs, endless disappointments. She is herself a sign of hope.

For several years now I have been working in this pueblo. I co-ordinate six of the 30 zones in the parish. I set up training and education programmes in basic communities whose growth and development is a testimony to the power of the Spirit and the resilience of a people who constantly amaze you with the joy of their community.

Rosa is a self-made 'social worker' in one of the zones. She keeps in touch with the people, visiting them, urging them to attend the meetings, helping to implement the decisions.

A born leader, she often accompanies me as I visit her area. She conducts meetings, leads prayer groups, helps with the liturgy, encourages the young, attends to the old and keeps her eye on me!



Photos: Sr Mary McGuinness

Sr Mary McGuinness strolls with Rosa through a pastoral area on the outskirts of Lima.

Rosa is a woman who hasn't two coins to rub together. But that doesn't stop her. She lives with her mother in one of the shacks and is rearing a young abandoned boy. Rosa looks after him with love and sees to his education. A teenage niece also lives with her, sure that her aunt will take care of her.

A born leader, she often accompanies me as I visit her area. She conducts meetings, leads prayer groups, helps with the liturgy, encourages the young, attends to the old and keeps her eye on me!

Rosa herself had hoped to go to university when younger, had got all the exams but as the family had no money for the fees, she had to withdraw. Now in her late forties, she has also had to put her hopes of being a religious at bay as the pressures of her situation made greater demands. Recently she got a little job to make tea and supply some snacks for a

working group in the area. They would pay her at the end of the month. She borrowed money to start, hoping she would be able to repay it when she was paid. But because she couldn't produce receipts, the organisation couldn't pay her. She had to go to the tax office, get a tax number, get a book of receipts before she could be paid. All this cost money so she got even deeper in debt.

Again there was a delay because of some petty rule. Meantime the little boy, now 9, had severely injured his eye which meant more bills so that poor Rosa was at her wit's end. In desperation she came to me. After she had paid back her loans she was down to her last coin and the cycle of borrowing began again. But first she returned the money I had lent her; though she knew I would gladly have given it to her.

This is Rosa's life, and the life of many of the women I meet on my rounds. They are up at 5:00am and seldom lie

down before midnight. Scrimping and saving, working non-stop to pay back loans, to put bread on the table, to help those even worse off.

The Good News, Jesus told us, is for these people. People on the margins, people forgotten by the rich and mighty. Their faith is deep; even in the darkest situation they have hope. Rosa today, despite her own difficulties, is actively encouraging the people of her Zone to build a little chapel in their area where they can come together to pray. I know it will be done. I am certain that this valiant, penniless woman will not be defeated.

Like the woman in the gospel who kept after Jesus until He cured her daughter, Rosa's prayers will be answered.

Sr Mary McGuinness served in pastoral work in both Chile and Peru. At present she is the Treasurer General of the Columban Sisters, in Ireland.



Nicole, Director of "Harmony Home", with one of the babies she cares for.



Tina, Kim Jung Woong and Nicole share a moment with a "Harmony Home" family.

Nicole and a special child.



Tina visits a sick patient.

Photos: Peter Woodruff

Solidarity with people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS

Columban Lay Missionaries Jhoanna Resari from the Philippines and Kim Jung Woong from Korea share their stories of working at "Harmony Home", Taiwan.

Jhoanna Resari

I was 26 years of age when I first arrived in Taiwan, a little apprehensive about how I might cope with all that is so different from what I had grown up with in the Philippines, my home country.

Even while I was in College I was interested in reaching out to others and doing something worthwhile with my life, but I did not know quite what that might mean in practical terms. One Sunday on my way to Mass, I saw a big banner outside the church announcing, "Columban Lay Mission". I realised immediately that as a lay person I could also be a missionary, but when I phoned the Columban contact person and answered her questions about my age, studies and work experience I was advised to get a job and come back in three years.

I found a job and continued discerning. I worked as a graphic artist and in my free time did volunteer work in emergency relief and community outreach, all of which seemed close to my idea of mission work. I thought that if I liked this then I'd probably like mission work.

Once again, aged 23 years, I contacted the Columban Lay Missionaries and was welcomed to their preparation program, but my parents cried when I told them. They were afraid for my safety and wondered whether I might end up in Africa. However, they ended up telling me that, "Wherever you are happy we will support you". They soon got to know the Columbans and my companions in the lay mission preparation program. Much to their relief, I was also able to inform them that the Columbans had no mission in Africa and they were quite pleased when I told them that I was being sent to Taiwan, not so far away from home.

On arrival in Taiwan I began a one year full-time Chinese language course and also made time for discerning which apostolate I might take on. I ended up opting for work with people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Fr Peter O'Neill, the Columban Lay Mission contact person put me in touch with Nicole Yang, the Taiwanese founder of "Harmony Home" Association Taiwan.

Nicole began her work with people living with HIV/AIDS in 1986 when a friend who was sick with AIDS asked her for help. She took the young man into her home where she was bringing up two young children and, as the saying goes, "The rest is history!" That initiative of kindness and compassion has steadily expanded in Taiwan and beyond to mainland China.

More men than women come to our shelters. Many are from the homosexual community and others are drug addicts. A separate shelter for women and children with HIV/AIDS is now available. We also shelter migrant women and their children involved in legal cases.

Nicole asked me to help with whatever might involve the English language. I also help out with hands-on work with patients, especially the children, so I have had to educate myself about HIV/AIDS. The women's shelter takes up quite a bit of my time. At first, I was a little afraid and nervous being in the shelter for adult patients because of my lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS, but soon came to understand more about the disease, its cause, consequences and treatment.

Soon I will be completing my six year term as a Columban Lay Missionary. I will then be 32 years of age. This means I will have to discern whether to apply to become a long term Columban lay missionary or not. One thing for sure

Kim Jung Woong with some "Harmony Home" children.



is the fact that I would like to continue working in the area of HIV/AIDS, be it here in Taiwan or back home in the Philippines.

Kim Jung Woong (Bosco)

Before joining the Columban Lay Mission program I had a varied experience of life. Among other things, I worked in a hotel chain in Seoul, Korea, as a room sales manager for eight years. For three years I wandered around Australia and New Zealand working and learning English.

During the Columban Lay Mission orientation period in Seoul I visited Columban Sisters who were running a shelter for HIV/AIDS patients. Even though I was afraid when I shook hands with patients, I was moved and wanted to overcome this fear. Later, in Taiwan, I chose to work at Harmony Home with people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

"Harmony Home" is a halfway shelter for women with HIV/AIDS and their children. Many of these women became infected through drug addiction and are now trying to break the habit. Some of the children here still have their mothers in prison and we take them there to visit them.

Recently I married another Korean Columban Lay Missionary, Lee Ji Young (Tina). After our wedding, Tina began work as a paid employee and not as a lay missionary at "Harmony Home". Both Tina and I are committed to working with people with HIV/AIDS who come to Harmony Home.

We look forward to sharing this mission and supporting each other as husband and wife. I am 44 and Tina is 39 and life continues to be an adventure for both of us.

Tina and Kim Jung Woong.





Mission World

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

Concern for Children

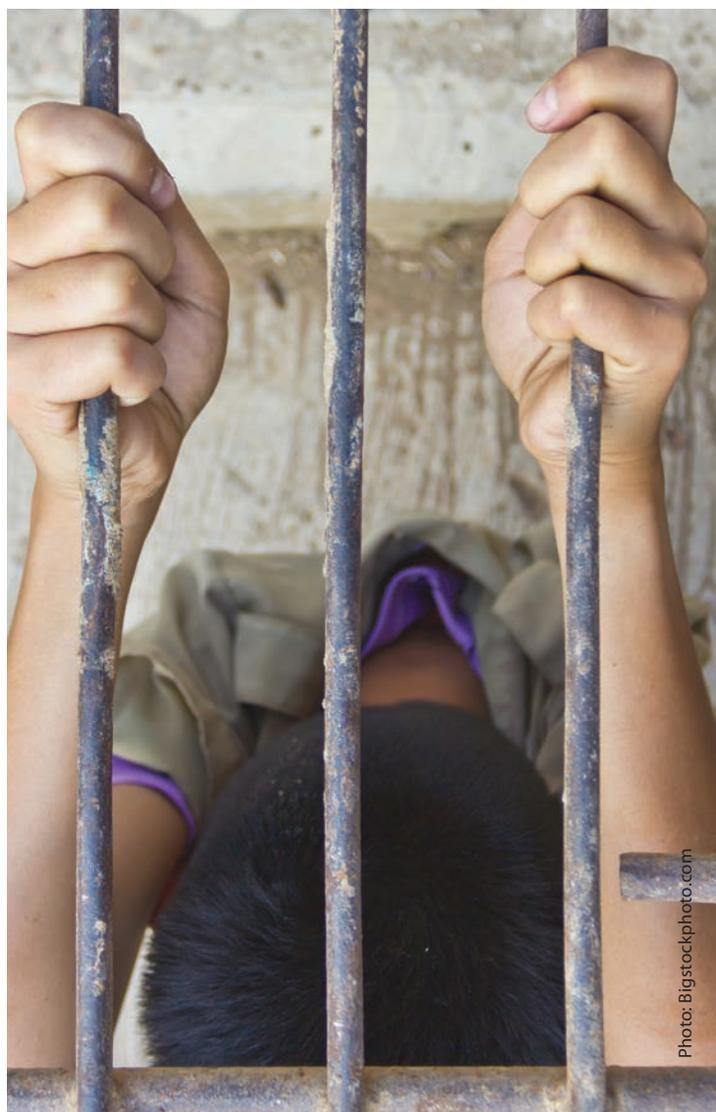
"We oppose the policy of prolonged detention of asylum seekers and we are particularly concerned about the children."

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC) has expressed serious concern for the state of asylum seeker children and their families currently detained in Detention Centres. The president of ACSJC, Bishop Christopher Saunders of Broome made the following statement to the Catholic News Agency Fides towards the end of November 2012.

"The fact that asylum seekers, including children, were sent to Manus Island (a northern island of Papua New Guinea) sounds an alarm bell. After personally verifying the conditions of detention centres in Australia, and after reading the reports of Amnesty on the crisis in Nauru, we are very concerned about their well-being."

Bishop Saunders stated: "No child should be detained on a fixed term in any centre. No person should be detained on a fixed term in an environment that we know will cause long-term damage." The Bishop concluded, "We oppose the policy of prolonged detention of asylum seekers, and we are particularly concerned about its effects on vulnerable people, especially children."

We call on the Australian Government to immediately release all children and their families from detention centres for immigrants located in Australia and those located offshore. "



A child in detention.

Mission Intention for January

That the Christian communities of the Middle East, often discriminated against, may receive from the Holy Spirit the strength of fidelity and perseverance.

Mission Intention for February

That the peoples at war and in conflict may lead the way in building a peaceful future.

From the Director

The 'Word of God'



*T*he 'Word of God' is powerful and life changing. In Advent we heard the 'Word of God' came to John... in the wilderness' (Lk 3:2) and he began a ministry of preaching to people around the Jordan. His life became purposeful and with direction. Prior to John, the 'Word of God' came to Mary, transmitted to her by the angel Gabriel. Her life changed too in ways she could not imagine but she agreed to cooperate with God, without fully understanding what this would mean for her. History is charged with the 'Word of God' coming to people in the Church creating new challenges and changing our perceptions through their interventions and example.

Recently we pondered the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River. The 'Word of God' came down on Jesus, 'You are my Son the Beloved, my favour rests on you' (Lk 3:22). Something powerful took place; Jesus' ministry began soon afterwards and he transforms the lives of people. St Paul had a similar experience: he received an inner transformation, a new insight, a new way of perceiving life having met the Risen Lord.

The 'Word of God' has come to the Church through the child sexual abuse scandal; we are going to be humiliated and humbled for quite some time to come.

The 'Word of God' in Scripture is unique but metaphorically we can see how the 'Word of God' came to people in history. For example, we can think of the Church in France after the French Revolution, seemingly destroyed, yet within 100 years, experiencing a new flowering of apostolic religious orders dedicated to the education and care of abandoned women and children.

In contemporary times L'Arche communities founded by Jean Vanier have turned our values upside down, subverting

'the normal'. People with developmental disabilities in the L'Arche communities have taught many people who have come into contact with them about genuine acceptance, an acceptance that does not depend on beauty or education or skills, just their value as a person. When people suddenly understand they are welcome for their own self they are changed by the experience.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta received the 'Word of God' and founded a new community the Missionaries of Charity. She became famous for her work among the poor in India where we renewed our humanity by seeing her service to the poor whom no one wanted and overlooked.

The 'Word of God' has come to the Church through the child sexual abuse scandal; we are going to be humiliated and humbled for quite some time to come. Not only are the bishops, as leaders of the Church, in for a hard time, but also the priests and people - just because we all belong to the Catholic Church.

What have we learned so far? That victims are people; that victims need to be cared for first; that victims need to be assured that their abusers will not be able to offend again after they have made a complaint to Church authorities.

Victims need justice and so do their families. When a family member is in distress the whole family is also in distress.

Let us listen to the 'Word of God' and pray that the victims and their families receive the justice and support they deserve.

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



Angels in Japan

FR JOE JOYCE

After almost 35 years of priestly ministry, I was given the precious privilege of a sabbatical year. To make best use of the time, I decided that, instead of studying books, I would study people and cultures in some of our Columban mission countries. I would also make the study a kind of pilgrimage.

On this pilgrimage, I resolved to do three things. Firstly, I would adopt a 'contemplative attitude', opening myself as much as possible to every thing and every one, and letting myself be impacted by what I encountered. Secondly, I would 'read' my experiences, reflecting each evening on my encounters with people and life as I found them. And thirdly, I would try to discern from it all how God might be guiding me for the future.

Thus, I set out on a journey that took me to Hong Kong, Mainland China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. As I travelled through the various countries, I had, of course, many interesting experiences, but one of the most outstanding occurred in Japan.

On arrival in the country, I was immediately impressed by the helpfulness of the people. Even on my way by train from the airport to our Columban residence, I was asked several times by passersby if I needed assistance. Usually I would be suspicious of such offers, but in Japan I very quickly came to see that I need have no fear. The values of hospitality, honesty and trustworthiness were so very prevalent in the culture. The experience I now recount is clear confirmation of this.

Once again, all I could do was express my deepest gratitude for such integrity, and tell them that I would never forget them. I still have a clear image of them etched in my memory, and every time I remember them, I become aware that I really did meet angels in Japan.

I had gone to Nagasaki in the south of the country to visit the shrine of St Paul Miki and the other Japanese martyrs. While there I also went to the museum to see the effects of the atomic bombing of the city by the Americans during World War II. This experience so moved me that I decided to travel north to Hiroshima, the site of the second atomic holocaust, and visit the museum there as well.

At the train station in Hagata, not very far from Nagasaki, I had to change trains very quickly, and in my haste, I didn't notice my documents falling from the plastic bag I was carrying. It was not until I was about a half-hour from Hiroshima that I discovered they were missing, and I was shocked beyond belief. I was gripped by a sickening feeling of desperation. My mouth went dry, and my heart rate shot up. I felt a cold sweat breaking out on my forehead, and I pondered the terrible predicament I was in.

Luckily, I had a bottle of water in my bag and my rail pass in my pocket. I drank copious drafts of water until I calmed down and was able to think. Where had I lost the passport? Was it on this train, or on the one I had just got off? I had been sitting in another carriage, so I went to search there, but found nothing. I went to talk with the conductor, but he couldn't understand English. I returned to my seat and sat there helplessly as I felt the desperation beginning to take hold of me again.

After a while, I rallied a bit, and decided that, as soon as I reached Hiroshima, I would take another train

and return to Hagata where I had come from. This decision brought me some calm, as I felt that at least I was taking some action.

On arriving in Hiroshima, I made the change without difficulty and was soon journeying back on the other train. The little calm I was feeling increased more when a young lady conductor came to check my ticket. To my relief, she could speak English, so I told her my story. Her response was immediate. She took all my information, and told me she would phone ahead to the next station.

She would also get in touch with officials on the other trains on which I had been a passenger. She could promise nothing, but she would do her best. Her manner was reassuring, and when she left, I felt quite hopeful that all would turn out well. I also said a silent prayer in thanksgiving for having been provided with such a willing helper.

After a while, as the train neared its destination, and the young lady had not returned, I began to feel anxious, and decided to go and find her. I entered several carriages, and saw no sign of her, but, then, at last, I saw her coming towards me.

I watched her face as she approached, but she showed no signs of either good or bad news until she reached where I stood. Then, breaking into a bright smile, she told me that my passport had been found and was in the hands of the police at Hagata. She gave me a document with which to retrieve it, and then bowed respectfully in the customary Japanese manner.

I was ecstatic, of course, and did a little dance of joy. I could have hugged and kissed her, but I knew that in Japan that would not be well received, so I bowed even more deeply and told her how grateful and delighted I was. I also offered her a reward, but she wouldn't hear of it, and, in the end, all I could do was assure her that I would always remember her in my prayers.

When I got to our destination, I waited for her to come out on the platform, and then thanked her again. I was greeted by two officers – a man and a woman. They told me that some person had found my passport on the platform and handed it in. They had been waiting for me, they said, and had been searching through my documents for an address to which they could send my passport.

I felt overwhelmed at their honesty and helpfulness, and offered them a reward too, but they held up their hands in protest, and declared that they were only doing their job.

Once again, all I could do was express my deepest gratitude for such integrity, and tell them that I would never forget them. I still have a clear image of them etched in my memory, and every time I remember them, I become aware that I really did meet angels in Japan.

Fr Joe Joyce has spent most of his missionary life in Pakistan. He is now doing studies in Japan.

Transformation

FR TOM TEHAN

Columban priests, sisters and lay missionaries spend their lives living and working with people in many countries across the globe. Like everyone else, they may suffer different illnesses especially as they get older. Columban Fr Tom Tehan from Ireland has spent many years as a missionary in Japan. Here he tells us of the transformation that occurred in his life following his heart attack which began one Sunday in his home in his Japanese parish.

Each year with the coming of Advent and Christmas, I find that the challenge of a new beginning becomes a regular theme of the Church liturgy. In that liturgy, we hear the words 'repent and believe in the Kingdom of God'.

The birth of Jesus is a story that still captures the attention of young and old as I see when the children gather to listen and to play the various parts in the Christmas play in my parish church here in Japan.

However as the New Year progresses, promises made with much preparation seem to fade away. So it is not surprising that we don't really change all that much unless something really big comes along making demand not only for change but also for "Transformation".

On May 15, 2012 I had such an experience. After lunch that Sunday, I was not feeling well and, having sent word that I would not be attending the parish general meeting, I lay down to rest. I had a slight pain in my chest which I thought might be heartburn but as soon as it subsided I thought it would be okay. However, I had a sixth sense that maybe I should have it looked at in a hospital. So I asked that an ambulance be called.

On my way to the hospital, as I did not feel bad and was fully conscious, my rational side was demanding to know what I was doing in an ambulance. I remember being wheeled on a trolley through the hospital corridor. Then everything went blank.



I had a slight pain in my chest which I thought might be heartburn but as soon as it subsided I thought it would be okay. However, I had a sixth sense that maybe I should have it looked at in a hospital. So I asked that an ambulance be called.

I woke with a severe pain across my chest and Doctor Kobayashi told me that he had put in a stent. It would not relieve the pain immediately but would take time to take effect. As I was being wheeled to ICU (Intensive Care Unit) I saw a number of familiar faces and was encouraged by what I saw.

Thus began my three week stay in Kyosai Hospital, Hiratsuka. I had fluid on my lungs which needed to be eliminated. So I had to lose all excess liquids from my body. I was put on a daily 1200 calorie diet including 800 millilitres of liquid. It was difficult for me to believe that I could survive on such a diet. Visitors on seeing my meals not only showed surprise but had difficulty in accepting that this regimen was necessary for my recovery.

I'm grateful for the prayers and kindness of so many people. Without that support I would not have recovered as quickly as I did.

Early each morning I was put on the weight scales and each day saw my weight decreasing. During my three week stay in the hospital I lost six kilos. I had many X-Rays but the MRI on the first morning was a really difficult experience. I felt uncomfortable in the confined space of the machine and the test took twice the normal length of time.

For the first week I was linked by tube to the oxygen tank as well as having an intravenous drip which confined my movements to the space beside the hospital bed. The staff were friendly and very efficient. The arrival of my visitors was something I enjoyed and looked forwards to with eagerness. I must really have been the envy of other patients as some had very few if any visitors.

"I think what has led to the "Transformation" is the feeling that I'm on borrowed time and that my life is now a big bonus."

I was eager to start my rehabilitation but I was reminded that it would take time. The pain had ceased a few hours after I entered ICU. The only discomfort I experienced after that was wearing the oxygen mask for just that one night. It prevented me from sleeping.

Before leaving hospital along with three others I was given the facts of my hospitalization. It was a heart attack and there was damage to a third of my heart. The MRI showed that the left side of my heart was not moving. The water in

my lungs was a complicating factor. Hence the strict diet which has to be continued along with medication and daily exercise.

The briefing took less than 30 minutes but I now knew that I had to accept the facts and start living in a new way. Hearing those facts come as a shock as I had no idea my condition was so serious. The good news at the briefing was that Dr Kobayashi had no objection to my travelling to Ireland provided I was careful to exercise on the plane.

Although at times I don't feel like I have a sickness, I get occasional reminders that I need to rest because my energy supply is depleted. I think what has led to the "Transformation" is the feeling that I'm on borrowed time and that my life is now a big bonus. Had the heart attack occurred somewhere other than in the hospital, would I now be writing about it?

I'm grateful for the prayers and kindness of so many people. Without that support I would not have recovered as quickly as I did.

Fr Tom Tehan first went to Japan in 1967.



Fr Tehan spent three weeks in Kyosai Hospital, Hiratsuka.



Photo: Fr Robert McCulloch

Cardinal George Pell (left), Bishop Sebastian Shah of Lahore, Archbishop Reno Fisichella, President of Pontifical Council for New Evangelization and Columban Fr Robert McCulloch (right) present the Catechism of the Catholic Church in Urdu.

Columban presents Urdu translation

In order for the Catholic faithful in any country to fully receive the Good News of Jesus Christ into their lives and culture, they must be able to read God's Word and other important texts in their own native languages. This is an important task of evangelization. Here is an account of the official presentation to the Vatican of the Urdu translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church by Columban Fr Robert McCulloch.

On October 20, 2012, Bishop Sebastian Shah from Pakistan and Fr Robert McCulloch, Procurator General of the Columban Fathers in Rome, presented the Urdu translation of the Parts 1 & 2 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to Archbishop Reno Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for New Evangelization.

Cardinal George Pell also attended the presentation which was held during the Synod of Bishops on New Evangelization at the Vatican.

Mr Emmanuel Neno, Executive Security of the Pakistan Episcopal Commission for Catechesis and Fr McCulloch worked for over eight years to translate into Urdu the first two parts of the Catechism.

Part 1 deals with *Dogmatic Theology* and Part 2 with the *Liturgy and Sacraments*. The translation of Part 3 (*Moral Theology*) & Part 4 (*Spirituality*) is underway. The translation work involves the creation of new Urdu words for Christian theological

vocabulary. The text that was presented to Archbishop Fisichella has 548 pages. 5,000 copies were printed in Karachi with financial assistance from the Vatican and is on sale in Pakistan for Rs.250 (AUD\$2.00, NZD\$2.50).

Columban Fr Robert McCulloch is the Procurator General of the Columban Fathers in Rome and a former missionary to Pakistan.

Being one of them

Fr Leo Donnelly has returned to his retirement in Peru. He has spent most of his missionary life there and wants to continue his life with the Peruvian people. Columbans leave their homelands to be with people of other cultures and become one of them.

With the continuing support of Columban benefactors Columban missionaries can continue to live with the people and minister to them.

Columbans thank you for assisting them to be there for people of other cultures.



Photo: Fr. Leo Donnelly

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