

The Far East

COLUMBAN MISSION MAGAZINE

May 2014



Ratno walks again

Back on his feet

Reflection - Linked with the people

Fr Leo Donnelly

Back from Fiji - continued

A seminarian's story



ST COLUMBAN'S MISSION SOCIETY

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The Far East

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A Pakistani family receives a new home.

Photo: St Columban Mission Society

From the Editor

The Fifty days of Glory

The May issue of *The Far East* occurs during "The Fifty days of Glory," the Easter period between the Resurrection and Pentecost. During these days we celebrate God's breaking into our world, overpowering sin and death and freeing us to live as God's children in this world and to be resurrected to life with Him in the next.

This issue of *The Far East*, like all other issues, is full of stories of glory, of God's power today continuing to break into our world through the Holy Spirit to overcome evil, sin, exploitation, domination, greed, hatred, prejudice and exclusion and replace this with God's Kingdom of love, peace, dignity, equality and justice. God's Kingdom has arrived in our world and will continue through this life into the next.

From Pakistan, the story of Rattno, who after suffering severe burns, can now walk again, is a resurrection story. Likewise, the empowerment of Reshma, an oppressed illiterate Hindu bonded labourer, who has become a community leader and spokesperson, is another resurrection story, another story of glory.

The work of Columban Sr Mary Dillon at the 'House of Hope,' a home for AIDS and HIV patients, particularly children, in Myanmar, again shows the power of God breaking into our world to overcome exclusion and prejudice. We also see the power of the resurrection at work in the story of the project to help tricycle drivers and their families escape poverty in the Philippines and the story of Naya in Chile overcoming prejudice and exclusion.

...reflects from Lima, on the true meaning of the missionary priesthood, symbolized by the manner of Fr Leo's death. It means being closely linked with the people, to whom one is assigned to serve.

Columban Fr Leo Donnelly died recently in an overcrowded ward of a public hospital in Lima, Peru. In a reflection in this issue of *The Far East*, Columban Fr John Hegerty reflects from Lima, on the true meaning of the missionary priesthood, symbolized by the manner of Fr Leo's death. It means being closely linked with the people, to whom one is assigned to serve. It



is here in this closeness that we are able to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, so that the resurrection of Christ can become a reality in people's lives as our stories in this issue demonstrate.

This search to be closely linked to the people one is sent to serve, also comes through in the story of Kurt Zion Pala, Columban Seminarian from the Philippines, and his missionary experience in Fiji.

During "The Fifty days of Glory", we celebrate how God through the resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ and the sending of his Holy Spirit at Pentecost, overpowers sin, evil, prejudice, exclusion and hatred.

Each of our stories is a story of glory, God's glory acting in our world.

Dan Harding

Fr Dan Harding
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Listen to: Rattno walks again

Rattno walks again

FR ROBERT MCCULLOCH

In the September 2013 issue of The Far East we introduced you to Rattno, a young Pakistani teenager who had suffered severe burns. Here is his story.

Two years ago 14-year-old Rattno Shivjee was burnt and lucky to have survived when the shack his family called home was burnt down. This occurred in November 2012. Rattno is a Hindu boy of the Parkari Koli tribal people in south-east Pakistan. He had severe burns to the left side of his face and body. His left leg was twisted and shortened due to joint dislocation of his knee and foot. After extensive hospital care, skin grafting and orthopedic surgery, Rattno can now walk again, thanks to the generosity of Columban benefactors.

Since April 2013, St. Elizabeth Hospital in Hyderabad has seen to Rattno's care. He was first admitted to St. Elizabeth to recover from malnutrition so that skin grafting could be done. He also had to become familiar with hospital situations, frightening for a boy from a family and community where no-one was literate, where there was no electricity, and for which the outside world was an ever-present threat. His mother and father took turns to remain with him. The hospital nurses surrounded him with happiness and great care.

After several weeks, St. Elizabeth arranged for him to be admitted to Patel Hospital in Karachi which has an outstanding burns department. Rattno's father, Shivjee, stayed with him. For the next three months, Patras Inayat, the senior male nurse at St. Elizabeth travelled back and forward from Hyderabad to Karachi to be with Rattno, to check on his progress... and to pay the bills.

Rattno stayed in hospital in Karachi for three months. Mr. James Francis, administrator of St. Elizabeth, then arranged for him to come back to St. Elizabeth until he was ready for the surgery in Karachi to reconstruct and realign his leg.

Three procedures were carried out successfully at the hospital in Karachi in January this year. After two years Rattno took his first steps on January 30, 2014, with the help of a walker and two nurses, Dilshad Jehangir and Joel Masih, who had come from St. Elizabeth Hospital. The whole ward erupted into applause and cheers. His surgeon, Dr. Mohsin, was delighted.



Photos: Fr Robert McCulloch



Rattno started to move confidently around the hospital and in the hospital garden with the help of his walker and with a nurse always with him, responding happily to greetings.

After two years Rattno took his first steps on January 30, 2014, with the help of a walker and two nurses, Dilshad Jehangir and Joel Masih, who had come from St. Elizabeth Hospital.

Rattno came back to St. Elizabeth Hospital to begin physiotherapy at the end of February 2014. St Elizabeth's hospital administrator arranged for him to join with five other illiterate young men from his village who will start an accelerated course of education at the Catholic Youth Development Centre in Hyderabad. A new beginning for all of them and a special new beginning for Rattno.

After the fire, Rattno's parents moved into a permanent home at Jhirruk, 40km south of Hyderabad. Here St. Elizabeth Hospital has been building houses for people who lost everything in the Pakistan floods of 2010 and 2011. It also allowed them to be closer to Rattno during his stay in St Elizabeth's, Hyderabad.

Columban Fr Robert McCulloch was a missionary in Pakistan for 34 years. He is currently the Procurator General of St Columbans Mission Society in Rome.



Columban Fr Robert McCulloch visits badly burned Rattno after his first surgery.



Rattno with Columban Fr Robert McCulloch at St Elizabeth's Hospital, Hyderabad, Pakistan.

Since the fire, Rattno's parents have moved into a permanent home at Jhirruk, 40km south of Hyderabad, where St. Elizabeth Hospital has been building houses for people who lost everything in the Pakistan floods of 2010 and 2011.



Rattno with nurses Dilshad and Joel taking his first steps to walking again.

The photo says it all

FR ROBERT MCCULLOCH



*T*his photo (left) of Reshma and James Francis, taken on February, 2, 2014, shows how far the Catholic Church has come in promoting human dignity, mutual respect, and gender harmony in Pakistan.

Reshma belongs to the Parkari Koli tribal community of south-east Pakistan. She is totally illiterate and has suffered the indignity and oppression of being an agricultural bonded labourer working in appalling conditions for powerful landlords. Reshma is Hindu. She is married and has three children. When asked about her age, she replies not from vanity but from total lack of knowledge, "God knows".

James Francis is administrator of St. Elizabeth Hospital in Hyderabad. He is executive secretary of the Diocesan Medical Board, member of the board of governors of the Catholic Centre of Academic Excellence, and a member of the Rotary Club of Hyderabad City, and more. He is from the Urdu-speaking Catholic community of Sindh province in Pakistan.

A lawyer and accountant, James Francis, has positive and effective personal and business contacts in the multi-cultural and multi-religious reality of Hyderabad. James is 55, married with four children and is a happy grandfather.

The photo was taken at Jhirruk, 35kms south of Hyderabad, when deeds of ownership and possession for new houses were handed to 14 families who had been made homeless during floods. Reshma and James are board members of the Bethlehem Shelter Society which legally administers the land and the housing. Forty-six families have been housed in new homes at Bethlehem and the

construction of 44 new houses is planned.

Overcoming the stereotype of the oppression of women in Pakistan, Reshma is the leader of this expanding community of families at Bethlehem. She chairs meetings with the building contractor, is spokesperson when visitors come to Bethlehem, and is a vocal participant at board meetings.

In January 2012 during a ceremony at Government House in Karachi hosted by the governor of Sindh, she spoke on behalf of 30 families who were the first to receive papers for their new homes. Recently she played an important part in taking steps to overcome the problem of 100% illiteracy at Bethlehem when five young men from Bethlehem were selected to begin two years of accelerated learning in April 2014 at the Catholic Youth Development Centre in Hyderabad.

Reshma's first contact with St. Elizabeth Hospital and James Francis was in 2009. St. Elizabeth's mobile medical outreach team visited the small group of families where she

was living. The medical outreach teams continued to care for them and thousands of other families during the floods of 2010 and 2011. The people lost everything in the floods.

After the second flood in 2011, Reshma's group of homeless families was five times pushed off land when they tried to put up temporary shelters. One time a landlord had his men burn the people's shacks and shelters to get rid of them. Hearing that St. Elizabeth's had begun building houses to re-house flood victims, Reshma went to see James Francis and asked if anything could be done for her people.

The "anything" that Reshma asked about has become the "good thing" at Bethlehem. A "great thing" is the level of harmonious understanding, cooperation, and interaction that has developed between Reshma representing the Bethlehem families, James Francis from St. Elizabeth Hospital, and the board of the Shelter society. The photo says it all.

Columban Fr Robert McCulloch was a missionary in Pakistan for 34 years.



Linked with the people

FR JOHN HEGERTY



Palm Sunday procession in the



For Fr Leo, the missionary priesthood was about sharing the drama, trauma, confusion, loving care, lifestyle and friendship of the people.



Photo: Fr George Hogarty

Peruvian Andes Mountains.

Long time missionary in Peru, Columban Fr John Hegerty, wrote the following reflection on the vocation of the missionary priesthood, based on the final days of his fellow missionary Fr Leo Donnelly. Fr Leo died in Lima, Peru on February 4, 2014 in a crowded ward of a Peruvian public hospital surrounded by 30 other patients.

*J*ust like that of a prophet, Fr Leo's message becomes clearer over time. Maybe it's just too much for us lesser mortals to take it all in at once. He saw and understood what we only see but don't always understand. Sometimes we are like Peter and John looking into the empty tomb on Easter Sunday morning and trying to make sense of it. Maybe the difference and key to understanding is love. Leo always confessed to having sinned much but to having loved more.

For him missionary priesthood was always linked with the people. All missionaries who lived apart and disconnected from the ordinary people to whom they had been assigned, no matter how faithful to their duties they may be, were not truly exercising their priestly ministry.

It was on Sunday the second of February when the doctor attending Leo during his cancer treatment decided Leo had to receive blood. The only place in Lima that provides blood on a Sunday is the emergency section of the Archbishop Loyaza Public Hospital in the centre of the old city.

The ambulance brought him on what was his last journey. Following the transfusions, he was moved to Public Ward Number Eight. Here he would share the drama, trauma and confusion, together with the loving care and constant attention of a public ward along with some 30 other patients from all walks of life and states of health.

Monday was for him uncomfortable, restless and agitated. With Tuesday

morning came some peace and calm and apparent comfort. It was here, propped up in bed, with the window behind him wide open to allow in the sweet breeze from a congested Alfonso Ugarte Avenue to waft over him, that he, now unable to speak, gave me that 'sign' of the two fingers vertical, followed by a thumbs up, and a hint of a smile.

With hindsight he seemed to be saying: *'This is enough, this is the right place'*, and *'This is the right time'*, *'Let's go'*. Only two hours later back at the Columban Centre House, we received the staggering news that Leo had moved on, leaving us with our memories and his testimony, with our fullness and our emptiness. Our world would never be the same.

By means of the strangest set of circumstances - within a few days Leo had been moved from the comfort of the Centre House to the isolation of a clinic to the crowded bustle of a public ward.

God had given his son the blessing of dying as he had always chosen to live, as one with his people. His cup was full and flowing over.

He lived to the last drop his priestly missionary ministry with and as one of his adopted people.

Columban Fr John Hegerty has been a missionary in Peru since 1971.

Blessings of meditation

SR MARY DILLON

Columban Sr Mary Dillon shares with us the capacity of the children living with HIV/AIDS at the Home of Hope in Myanmar to meditate.

Some months ago Fr Laurence Freeman OSB wrote an article in *The Tablet*, a British Catholic weekly, in which he described his first visit to Myanmar. He was, he said, very impressed by the 'contemplative culture' he found there. As the director of the World Community for Christian Meditation he led some meditation sessions and was struck by the still, silent and recollected attitude of the participants.

The pervasive influence of Buddhism was evident, no surprise in a country that is said to be 90% Buddhist. What was particularly striking for the priest was "the capacity of the Burmese children to meditate."

I too have been struck by the ease with which children, who journey through the 'Home of Hope', here in Myitkyina, meditate. All the more striking because the children I am helping are little ones that have HIV or AIDS or are the offspring of parents with the disease. The 'Home of Hope' has been built with the kind donations from our readers and benefactors to help look after children and people as a last resort.

With good food and retro-viral medication, many of the sick are helped back to health. While they still may have the disease, their quality of life is improved. For others, it is too late and no week goes by without at least one or two deaths. Many die with nothing at all and we see to their burial and help the families, very often young orphaned children.

For the past few years we have run a summer camp in the Youth Centre in Myitkyina. Columban Sr Ashwena



Myanmar custom - Faces are painted with a pale paste called "Thanaka" to protect their faces from sun and heat.



Photo: Sr. Mary Dillon

Children from the "Home of Hope" meditate at the summer camp.

Apao, from the Philippines, is involved in youth work and with the help of these young people and some excellent teachers we are able to look after about 100 children for about 10 days each year.

A variety of programmes are in place for the different age groups, whose ages range from five to 17 years. They are designed to help children who get so little love and help in the society in which they live.

The young teachers we employ are adept at teaching them life-changing skills. Many of the participants have never spoken of, or do not know how to express what it is like to have HIV or AIDS. Each child is helped through their emotional development, to express themselves through voice, and to deal with any fears or sense of loss and loneliness which blight their young lives.

We provide education on drugs (to prevent the harm that substance abuse can cause young people), how to cope with stress, how to make decisions, and how and where to find information or help. We have seen

friendships blossom and develop amongst the children, and some have returned to see each other again.

At the summer camp, every morning, a session of meditation begins with 10-15 minutes (depending on the age group) of silent meditation. How still the children sit! How committed they are to this precious time, which they enjoy and love.

No wonder Fr Freeman was impressed with the children; we too cannot but be moved by the natural contemplative spirit of 'our' children who are poor, sick and lonely and yet who give themselves to meditation; as they sit in the candlelight the little ones are united in peace.

After meditation the children may be as noisy and energetic as any child. They learn how to draw on the strength of their silence and experience the blessing it is.

Towards the end of the camp program, we have a ceremony to remember their dead; they light candles and put them around the floor, sitting and remembering and offering a prayer, a word for their

parent or friend. There are tears, but there is also healing as they unite in this ceremony. No child in that group is unacquainted with pain or loss.

It is a great privilege to be with them and in some small way to help them on their very tough journey. We marvel at their resilience, at their courage and determination to move on.

Seeing them dart about the compound, laughing and shouting as they play various games, helping one another, I cannot but thank God who holds them dear in their harsh reality. In time we hope to extend the programme and help many more children to regain their childhood.

And, of course, our hope is that one day HIV and AIDS will be a thing of the past for the children of Myanmar. Meanwhile, we go on, with your help and your prayer. Thank you.

Columban Sr Mary Dillon founded the 'Home of Hope' for AIDS and HIV patients in Myitkyina, Myanmar (formerly Burma).

Escaping poverty

Mrs Virginia Vidad is the Project Coordinator for the "Pedalling to Live and Green Shelter" programme in Ozamiz City, in the Philippines. She is married with two young children. After working for six years with Columban Sisters at the "Community of Hope," a home for the hearing impaired, she then began working in October 2004 with Columban Fr Oliver McCrossan as he began the "Pedalling to Live Programme."

In the following interview with The Far East, Virginia tells us how this programme has helped tricycle drivers and their families, who are among the poorest people in Ozamiz City, escape from poverty.

*T*ell us about the lives of tricycle drivers and their families?

Seventy percent of all the vehicles on the streets of Ozamiz City are tricycles. Travelling by tricycle is by far the cheapest way to get around the city. Different surveys have shown however that the tricycle drivers and their families are some of the poorest people in the whole of the city. Tricycle drivers leave home around 4:00am each morning to start work and continue to work until around 7:00pm. Rain or shine, being sick or in good health, the drivers must go to work every day to be able to support their families.

Most of the tricycle drivers and their families live in small rented rooms in slum areas near the sea. These small rooms serve as dining, living and bedrooms for the four to six members of the family. During high tide, the water reaches the floor level of the houses, making it both dangerous and unhealthy for the families.

On average, a tricycle driver earns between AUD/NZ\$5 to \$6 dollars each day. Of this amount, he must pay between \$1 and \$2 dollars daily to the businessman who owns the tricycle and rents it out. This leaves very little money left to help the family get out of the cycle of poverty and provide better nutrition, health and educational opportunities for their families.

How did the "Pedalling to Live Programme" begin?

When Columban Fr Oliver McCrossan became aware of this situation, he decided to try to do something about it. With the help of friends who sponsored the programme, he began by acquiring tricycles and renting them out to the drivers at a much lower daily rental rate than the businessmen. If the drivers paid the rental fee for a two year period, they would then become the owners of the tricycle.

Since the programme began in 2004, over 100 tricycle drivers have become the proud owners of their tricycles and



Mrs Virginia Vidad visits the home of a tricycle driver and his family (tricycle in foreground).



Families set up vegetable gardens.



Through drivers being able to eventually own their own tricycles along with their wives and families participating in other income generating schemes, many families have been able to increase their income by at least 50%. In this way, we are helping to reduce poverty and help families escape from poverty.

thus were freed from the burden of having to pay a large portion of their tiny income to someone else in order to work and be able to provide for their families.

Have you also been able to help the wives and children as well?

One of our goals from the very beginning was to give the wives of the tricycle drivers opportunities to improve their lives by becoming more independent and able to contribute to the families income. We have offered them training on different ways to generate income for their families.

We have helped them set up backyard vegetable gardens, piggeries and chicken coops and thus help them be able to sell to different organizations organic fertilizer, banyan saplings and vegetables from their gardens.

Some of the wives are engaged in the production and sale of doormats and in the buying and selling of rice at a small profit. Every Saturday we offer the children fun and games and a good nutritious meal, something many of them are lacking in. We strongly encourage them to do everything possible to complete their education.

Do you have any other projects operating?

In 2010, we were able to begin the Green Shelter Housing Programme which so far has offered 14 families of Tricycle drivers new homes, built out of cheap local but strong materials such as clay, rice hulls and hay. These homes are well built and can withstand heavy rain.

What are your immediate goals for the future?

We have two immediate goals. Firstly to buy a quarter of a hectare of land on which to build five new Green Shelter homes for five families of tricycle drivers.

Secondly, we hope to buy 40 new tricycles so that 40 of the poorest drivers will be able to enter the programme of working to pay off their tricycle after two years.

Through drivers being able to eventually own their own tricycles along with their wives and families participating in other income generating schemes, many families have been able to increase their income by at least 50%.

In this way, we are helping to reduce poverty and help families escape from poverty.



Columban Fr Oliver McCrossan and Virginia Vidad look on as drivers make bricks for their homes.

First Communion preparation

FR CHRIS SAENZ

Nayade Constanza Rocha Canales or "Naya", as her family and friends call her, is a 16-year-old adolescent who suffers from Spina Bifida. She is confined to a wheelchair.

Spina Bifida, which literally means "cleft spine", is characterized by the incomplete development of the brain, spinal cord, and/or meninges - the protective covering around the brain and spinal cord.



Photo: Fr Chris Saenz

Naya is an intelligent adolescent who dreams of being a teacher, or a doctor who treats children and adolescents. She enjoys being with her family and going to school. She lives with her grandparents, Rosa and Alejo, whom she affectionately calls "mom and dad". The grandparents have taken care of Naya since she was born. Naya has a distant relationship with her own mother.

I first met Naya when I was assigned to work in the parish of Santo Tomas Apostol in Santiago, Chile. Naya was attending First Communion classes in the Padre Hurtado Chapel, one of the chapels that are a part of the parish. I observed her as an outgoing, joyful adolescent who enjoyed participating in the chapel. I was curious about her life and faith.

Naya agreed to the following interview with me.

Naya, how did you arrive at the Padre Hurtado chapel?

Three years ago I told my parents that I wanted to make my First Communion and I kept asking them when, when, when? Eventually, my mother Rosa took me to the parish we were living in. (Technically, Naya lives in another parish that borders our parish).

We joined the First Communion programme there but one day my mother could not go to a class because I was having health problems. The parish told her that we could no longer attend the programme because my mother missed one class. (In Chile, both parents and children are required to attend separate weekly catechetical classes for two years in order for the children to be permitted to make their first communion). I really wanted to make my First Communion because I wanted to receive the host, the Body of Christ, and I prayed so much for my family.

So what did you do? What happened next?

A year later our neighbour, Mrs. Isabel, who is a member of the Padre Hurtado chapel, invited us to join. She took us to a Mass. Columban Fr John Boles was celebrating the Mass (Fr John Boles was the parish priest at that time). I really enjoyed it. There I saw good people. They were welcoming and greeted all who arrived. There was a sense of solidarity in the chapel. Fr John was very welcoming and a good companion to us, very inviting. We talked to Fr John about the possibility for me to join the First Communion programme in the chapel.

What did Fr John say?

Fr John said they have a Special Catechetical programme in the main parish church that was more suited to my needs. This programme only required a year's preparation for First

When I received the Body and Blood of Christ I felt a sense of relief and welcoming. I felt it in my heart and mind. Most of all, I had my family present to share the experience.

Communion. Yet, the parish church is farther away and as I am in a wheelchair, it would make it difficult for me to attend the weekly classes. Fr John said I could participate in the Padre Hurtado chapel, which was closer, but the preparation would be two years. He left it for us to decide. Of course, we decided to join the Padre Hurtado chapel First Communion programme.

How was the experience of participating in First Communion preparation?

With the other children we formed a good friendship. What I really liked was the works of charity we did as a part of our preparation. We tried to help those who had no food or a place to sleep. For instance, some mornings, as a group, we went out and handed out food to people who didn't have any. It was the first time I ever did something like that. It was a very good experience.

On the day of your First Communion, how did you feel?

I was really nervous but happy to be with my companions. Also, I was happy to receive Jesus. When I received the Body and Blood of Christ I felt a sense of relief and welcome. I felt it in my heart and mind. Most of all, I had my family present to share the experience.

Now that you have received your First Communion, what do you want to do?

I always dreamed of being on the altar. I would like to be an altar server. I want to help you and the other priests. For me the altar brings out a strong emotion of great joy.

What can you say about the Columbans?

Columbans are joyful priests and good people. They are attentive to the needs of the other. What I like most about them is their support of children who really need help.

And Rosa, (Naya's mother), what was it like for you to attend this programme?

It was difficult for me at first. I found it hard to express myself. But in time, the themes of the class touched daily life and I was able to share with the other parents. We discovered we had a lot in common.

Did you see any changes in Naya after catechesis?

Yes, before Naya was very impulsive and often grumpy. Now I see she is more serene and tranquil. Naya learned to listen.

Columban Fr Chris Saenz was ordained in 2000 and is currently working in Chile.

End note: We do plan on making Naya an altar server. I have asked the community to build a little ramp to the altar so Naya can go up to the altar. We will work out the logistics of what she will do. Naya is extremely happy to have this opportunity.



Remember the Missions

in your WILL

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

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

Why not speak to your lawyer about it?

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



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.*

Christians and Muslims unite to end slavery



The Global Freedom Network agreement brings together different faiths in an effort to stop modern slavery. (Photo: AFP: Andreas Solaro)

The Global Freedom Network was officially launched at the Vatican, March 17, 2014. It brought together the Catholic, Anglican and Sunni Islamic faiths in a united effort to end modern slavery by pressuring governments, businesses, educational and faith institutions to rid their supply chains of slave labour.

The initiative is the brainchild of billionaire Australian mining magnate,

Andrew Forrest and other members of the leadership council include Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and senior Islamic authority, the Grand Imam of al-Azhar.

Years of continuous efforts to help end human trafficking, forced prostitution and child labour has now culminated into a global interfaith initiative. At the Vatican signing, Forrest said the initiative would bring together "millions

of churches and mosques to gather in one great army to fight the war against slavery." (Source - ZENIT)

Columbans response

The Columban Mission Institute's Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations welcomes the good news and looks forward to following the work of the *Global Freedom Network*, as members of the leadership council address the issue and crisis of modern day slavery.

Staff at the *Columban Mission Institute* are committed members of the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) – the peak body for 190 religious orders in Australia, representing 8000 religious sisters, brothers and priests working towards the elimination of human trafficking in Australia, Asia, the Pacific and internationally.

The *Global Freedom Network* is a hopeful step forward toward a more just and peaceful world and, as developments receive global media coverage, many will also become exposed to the importance of interfaith dialogue and collaboration in addressing major global issues and crisis.

Source: Centre for Christian/Muslim Relations)

Mission Intention for May

That Mary, Star of Evangelisation, may guide the Church in proclaiming Christ to all nations.



From the Director

Failure and Trust in God

*H*ow does a person know that they are successful in doing God's work? Does it matter? Is it a concern to be a part of a 'successful' Church which is growing and going somewhere? Well yes, it is.

It could be said that the life of Jesus Christ was a failure if it wasn't for the Resurrection. He died a criminal's death despite the wonderful works that He performed and the hope He gave to many people. On Palm Sunday we celebrated His success and popularity; on Good Friday we pondered His cruel death. Was he interested in being successful? No, he wasn't.

In the arduous drama of torture and interrogation He kept his integrity. He always had a focus - His Father's will. Jesus spent nights in prayer as the Gospels reveal, when he discerned his Father's will. He stayed the course to the end, He entrusted His life to the Father and left the consequences to Him who affirmed Him at His Baptism and at the Transfiguration on the mountain. Jesus was not looking for public affirmation, he was fulfilling His destiny, His reason for living.

Fortunately, the Resurrection turns His failure and death into a success story after His dreadful ending on Good Friday. Does that matter? Yes it does, God does see things differently from us.

Fortunately, the Resurrection turns His failure and death into a success story after His dreadful ending on Good Friday. Does that matter? Yes it does, God does see things differently from us.

We like success. Success is a fine thing and an important part of our culture. People are applauded for their success and avoided if they fail.

But then I think of the success and failure of Bishop Edward Galvin, the co-founder of the Columban Fathers. He had a

dream to convert China to Christianity. Against the odds the dream became a reality in the 1920s when a fledgling band of Columban missionaries travelled to Hanyang in China to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ. They had hard times from natural disasters, bandits, civil war and sickness but the work prospered until the Communists took power in 1948. Then Bishop Galvin saw 30 years of missionary work cease and be dismantled.

He was expelled from China in 1952; the 'Cathedral' Church in Hanyang was turned into a factory. Recently, I was on a trip to Wuhan and a young Chinese priest took a group for a visit to former Columban parishes. Fr Joseph said all 130 churches in the diocese were demolished except for the 'Cathedral' Church. Since the churches were empty and the Catholic people dispersed, the churches were demolished for building material.

How does one deal with that? Bishop Galvin said that the Columbans had not come to China to convert the Chinese but to do God's will. God's will was what he sought and he left everything, as Jesus did, in the hands of the Father. Success had turned into what seemed like failure through no fault of the Columban missionaries.

Success, how important is it? It is important for us but not as important as 'doing God's will'. Our model is always Jesus Christ. How surprised would Bishop Galvin be to know that Columban priests and sisters are back in China albeit in a small, humble way? Fr Joseph received compensation from the government for the Church that was destroyed years ago; he is building a new one.

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: Kurt Zion Pala

Kurt enjoys a day out with the kids.

Back from Fiji - continued

In the April issue of *The Far East* we published the first part of an interview with Filipino Columban seminarian Kurt Zion Pala who had just completed his two year First Mission Assignment in Fiji. He now continues his theological studies in Manila and hopes to be ordained in the next few years. This is the second part of that interview.

What are some of the important things you learnt from your time in Fiji?

Because Fiji has two distinct ethnic groups, native Fijians and Indo-Fijians, it is very important to try to relate to both communities and not to take sides. Learning to balance one's time and attention between both groups as well as between different families is important.

When I visited a community, I tried not to stay with one family only because the others might get jealous. I tried to visit each house and would

lose count of the cups of tea I had in one day. Even if I'd already eaten in one house I'd had to eat again in the next, not because I don't know how to say 'No' but out of respect. It's part of the hospitality of the people that they give their visitor their best.

I guess you found the hospitality of the Fijians similar to that of your own people, the Filipinos.

Yes it's like that here as well. In Fiji, even if it's the first time people meet you, they already feel that you're close to them. In their language there's a specific way to address each other.

In order for people to feel comfortable with me I learned and studied that dynamic. In the Indo-Fijian family I was living with, I called my foster-father, 'Nana' and my foster-mother, 'Nani'. There are also specific ways to address relatives of one's Nana and Nani. I familiarized myself with these terms and when I used them my friends accepted me into their homes without any fuss.

Missionaries often have mixed feelings about where their home is. How did you feel when you were leaving Fiji?



FIJI



PHILIPPINES

When I went to board the plane, I knew I shouldn't look back. If I tried looking back I was sure I wouldn't be able to go at all. I might even run back. So I went straight to the plane without looking back. It was so painful. I could still see the looks on the faces of my Indo-Fijian family, especially Nana, whom I considered a real father.

For days prior to my leaving he wouldn't talk to me, wouldn't even look at me. But on my last day he suddenly gave me a hug and cried on my shoulder. I can never get over that moment when I knew I just had to go, no matter how much I had grown to love these people as my own family. What made it even more painful was that I know how hard it was for them too.

I was already spreading my roots in Fiji and felt like a tree being uprooted. I was comfortable going around the town. I knew everyone and everyone knew me. I was already living a normal life there. In the beginning I had felt a total stranger, with people looking at me from head to foot. I was a foreigner to them. After two years there I was 'an ordinary citizen', like the people who lived there.

I started to question if I was losing my effectiveness as a missionary. They were so at home with me that they wouldn't take me seriously anymore. I had become one of them so much that it seemed that we had the same colour and language.

Before, I would stay five minutes outside a store rehearsing my lines. But now I surprised myself with how spontaneous I had become in conversation, with the way I was dealing with the people. I consider this a little 'miracle'. No matter how old you are, you can still learn a new

language as long as you're open to challenges and possibilities. I consider all these things a very big adventure.

But it was through this that I started to understand the mystery of the Cross and that's when I became closer to God.

Pope Francis in his first homily as pope said, 'My wish is that all of us . . . will have the courage . . . to walk in the presence of the Lord, with the Lord's Cross'. Was there a point in your vocation journey when somehow you were afraid of the Cross? How did you get over it?

Yes there was, when my father died in an accident at work. I was already in the seminary. My initial reaction was, 'Why did this happen to me? Every day I prayed for him to always be safe. So there were so many 'whys' for me

that time. 'Why did this happen to my father? What did I do to deserve this?' We were only starting to know each other. The irony was we'd waited till I was an adult and my father was getting old for us to get to know each other. We didn't have the chance to do that when I was little.

When I entered the seminary I realized the importance of building relationships with my family, especially with my father. So I struggled a lot when he died. Even if you have given your whole self to God, there is still something that he will take from you, something that was hard for me to understand.

But it was through this that I started to understand the mystery of the Cross and that's when I became closer to God. God will never give you the Cross without the grace to carry it. We missionaries live by that reality.



Kurt with an Indo-Fijian family.

A man for the people

FR GARY WALKER

Fr Peter Doyle was farewelled from St Francis Xavier Church in West Mackay, Queensland by Bishop Emeritus, Most Rev Brian Heenan and a large contingent of priests and people who filled the Church on April 2, 2014. The homilist for the Requiem Mass was Fr Gary Walker, the Regional Director of the Columban Frs in Australia and New Zealand. Here are Fr Gary Walker's words from the funeral Mass.

Since Fr Peter Doyle stipulated that he did not want flowers or a eulogy at his funeral service I will use the readings to reflect the kind of priest that Fr Peter was. He was a Good News priest, like Jesus the High priest, he was compassionate and generous to the people whom he served and finally he was 'a man of God'; a man and priest with a well developed sense of humour who was nevertheless serious about the 'things of God'.

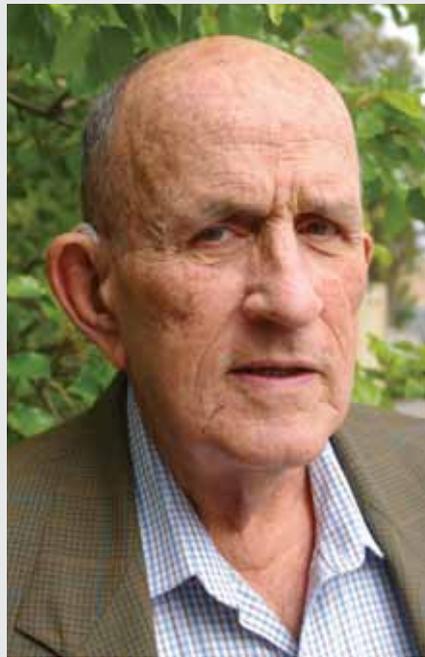
Columbans in Lima, Peru, remember him with cash stuffed into his shirt pocket and clearly visible to anyone on 'the make'; a myriad of keys hanging visibly from his hip and supported by precariously placed trousers. He was one of the easiest 'touches' in town and people came from far and wide to try their luck with Peter. He would give the shirt off his back to those in need and that of any Columban who left a shirt hanging from a chair in the priest's house.

He was deeply appreciated by the parishioners because of his capacity to listen and empathise. His sense of humour was a great asset in his work and in the final analysis, he was a very humble man in the very best sense of the term. He knew his limitations and still did whatever was requested of him.

Peter John Doyle was a local from Marian, just outside Mackay, where his father was a cane farmer. After primary school with the Sisters of Mercy at Marian, and secondary school with the Christian Brothers at

Yeppoon, Peter completed his teacher training in Brisbane and taught in Queensland State Schools for three years, 1959-1961.

He entered Pius X seminary in Brisbane in 1962 and was ordained a priest for the Rockhampton diocese in 1968 by Bishop Francis Rush at St Patrick's Church, Mackay.



His first appointment was as assistant priest in Bundaberg, 1969-1973, where he became friends with the Kinne family. (Their son Warren is a Columban missionary priest in Shanghai, China).

Bishop Francis Rush had a scheme of sending priests from the Diocese of Rockhampton to Papua New Guinea. Peter spent three years at the Catholic Mission, Burlei in Wewak

Diocese. On his return, he was appointed to St Joseph's parish in North Mackay, but after three years he asked for permission to become a Priest Associate with the Columban Fathers and was assigned to Lima, Peru. Six years later, Peter applied for permission to become a permanent member of the Missionary Society of St Columban in 1987 and remained in parishes in Lima until 1998 when he returned to Australia.

Ill-health became an issue for him but he was involved successfully in promoting the Columban Mission in various dioceses in Australia. In 2008, ill health intervened and he retired to St Francis of Assisi Nursing Home in Mackay under the splendid care of the Franciscan Sisters. The nursing home became his 'parish' and each morning after Mass he would do the rounds greeting the people, staff and carers.

When he was no longer able to visit them, people turned the tables and visited him. His genuine enjoyment of people and his sense of humour kept a steady stream of visitors coming to see him. The priests of the Diocese were in constant attention.

He celebrated his last Mass with some assistance on St Patrick's Day, March 17, and insisted on saying a few words in honour of St Patrick.

He died quietly on Friday afternoon March 21, 2014 in contrast to his sometimes boisterous life. He was buried in the family plot at Walkerston outside of Mackay.

May he rest in peace.



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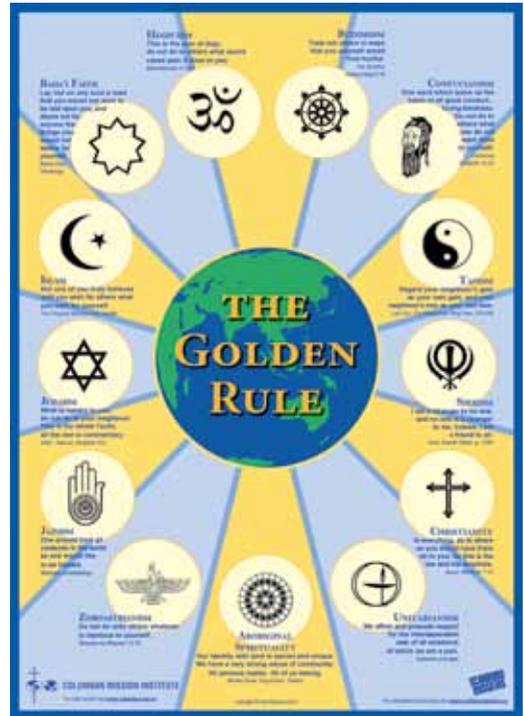
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Columbans on Mission

Stories of Columban priests, sisters, lay missionaries and the lay men and women with whom they work.

Compiled by Columban Fr Peter Woodruff

Fr Peter Woodruff has gathered a 135 individual missionary stories. Each is told in the story teller's own words, women and men, lay and clerical, young and old from many nationalities. All the stories evoke an enthusiasm expressed by Isaiah "...*Shout aloud and sing for joy... for the Lord comforts his people and has compassion on his suffering ones.*"

Fijian Lay Missionary, Sainiana Tamatawale tells of discovering the advice of St Columban: 'A life unlike your own can be your own teacher.'" Prompted by this Sainiana leaves the security of her own culture, travels to the other side of the world, and struggles to learn a new language living in solidarity with a community threatened by violence and extreme hardship in Juarez on the Mexican/U.S.A. border.

Returning one day from a children's confirmation class; to her horror, she has to pass two men just killed by gunfire on her own doorstep. "Now, whenever I go out I pray that God will guide and protect me..." (Page 92)

The recent *Apostolic Exhortation* by Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, laments the sad faces

of Christians seemingly living "like Lent without Easter". The crucifixion is dramatically present in each story in this book. But present too is the wonder of Christ's resurrection continually rediscovered among rejoicing people. The commitment on each page of Fr Woodruff's book is a total antidote to all downcast Christian outlooks.

Credit is due to the creativity of the Missionary Society of St Columban sponsoring an enduring international missionary framework within which such experiences can grow. But church structures are less to the fore in the book, than day to day human encounters of anguish and hope. It's strength

lies in the stories of real people in real situations searching together for the face of God.

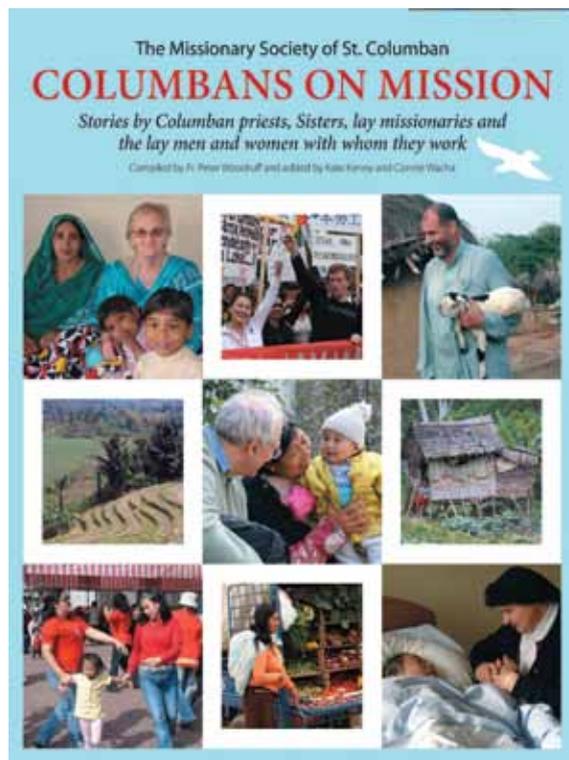
Fr Woodruff highlights distinct sections of Gospel challenges. In **word and deed** Christian are urged to link **Worship and prayer** by commitment to **justice and the integrity of creation**. Though viewing mission from Catholic perspectives, the stories display **interreligious dialogue** with other traditions on journeys of **inculturation**.

The book focuses on dialogical theology rooted in Gospel values. Helpfully, the author concludes every story with pointers to Scripture and links with wider traditions. With a minimum of "theory", the stories speak starkly and powerfully for themselves.

Today, Christians are encouraged creatively to imagine the New Evangelisation processes. "Columbans on Mission" provides practical examples of Gospel values that reverence human dignity in mutual solidarity in the most alien of social circumstances. We glimpse the Kingdom of God in some of the world's most hostile situations.

In his post-script, Fr Peter expresses hope that the book helps recall

God's love alive and active in all our lives.



*The book can be purchased from
www.bookdepository.com*

Columban Fr Peter Woodruff resides at St Columban's, Essendon.

Fr Nicholas Postlethwaite is a priest of the Passionist order in the UK and was the Provincial from 1997 to 2007.

Pakistan flood victims housed

This year 16 homeless families were handed the keys and ownership papers to their new homes in Sindh province in East Pakistan. They were built for the victims of floods in 2010-2011 with the help of Columban benefactors and St Elizabeth Hospital.

Recently, Fr Robert McCulloch reported that another 44 houses are under construction and there are plans for a school.

Fr Robert would like to thank you for making this project possible.

With the help of Columban benefactors more of these victims will receive a new home.



Photo: Fr Robert McCulloch

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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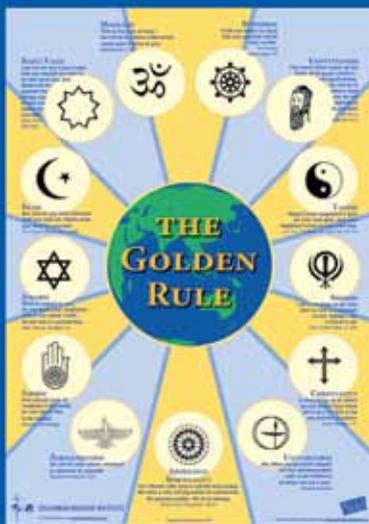
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