

# The Far East

COLUMBAN MISSION MAGAZINE

August 2016

Columban VOCATIONS issue 2016

## Sharing from the inside

Children sharing about trees in Peru & Korea.

## Ten years of slavery in Ireland

A journey from Nigeria to Ireland.

Impact of meat on humans and the  
global environment



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

PRICE \$1.50

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August 2016

Vol 98, No. 7

THE FAR EAST is devoted to furthering the missionary apostolate of the church and has been published by the Missionary Society of St Columban since November/December 15, 1920.

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$15 per year (AUSTRALIA)

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Saint Columbans Mission Property  
Association A.B.N. 17 686 524 625

Printed by Doran Printing, Melbourne

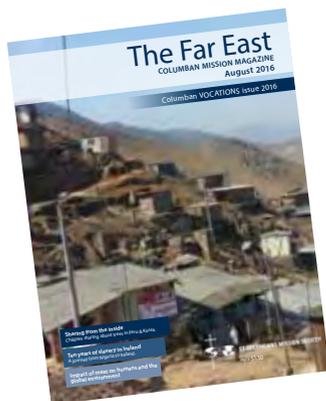


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A view of family homes in a Columban parish in the desert outskirts of Lima, Peru. (See Fr Donal O'Keeffe's story pages 04-05)

Photo: Fr Donal O'Keeffe SSC

## From the Editor

### Sharing in the life of the people

One of the gifts of being a missionary is the opportunity to share in the lives of people among whom we live and work at a level rarely accessible to an outsider. Columban Fr Donal O'Keeffe writes of this opportunity when on a visit to Peru from Korea he finds similarities between missionary works in both countries.

This August issue of *The Far East* magazine is an issue dedicated to vocations. It offers stories from around the world of Columban priests, sisters, lay missionaries and seminarians living out the Columban vocation.

Columban Fr Bobby Gilmore works with refugees in Ireland. He writes of a Nigerian woman who lived as a slave in Ireland for 10 years. Columban Fr Joe Brooder shares the amazing story of Miss Tsuneko Hinata, an intrepid catechist and parish worker with the Columbans for 50 years in Japan. Columban Fr Daniel O'Connor tells the story of a cricket tournament his parish organized in Pakistan to help build friendship between peoples of different religions.

Seminarian Erl Dylan Tabaco from the Philippines writes of the important

lessons he has learnt during his pastoral experience with the parishioners of a Columban parish in Lima, Peru. Korean Lay Missionary Anna Noh Hye-In works in the Philippines. She tells the story of her work to help families living in poverty earn extra income from a candle-making project.

Columban Sister Mary Dillon writes of Shwe Mya, a woman who suffered from HIV/AIDS. The Sisters took care of her during her last few months of life at their *House of Hope* in Myanmar. Columban Fr Bernard McDermott tells us about 92 year old Annie McQueen, a long term Columban supporter in Scotland. Annie comes from the outer Hebridean Island of Barra.

Columban Fr Noel Connelly reflects on Pope Francis' recent Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* and how Francis has extended the demand for a discerning, decentralised and consultative church into the area of the family and the formation of consciences.

Eco-theologian Columban Fr Sean McDonagh asks us to reflect on the amount of meat we consume, not only for health reasons but also for

the negative effects an expanding meat industry has on the natural environment of the world.

The stories we publish in this issue illustrate the great diversity of manner in which the Columban vocation is lived out by women and men throughout the world.

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# Sharing from the inside

FR DONAL O'KEEFFE

*One of the gifts of being a missionary is the privilege of being invited to share "from the inside" the important life moments in very diverse cultures.* Even when just visiting other countries, if accompanied by missionaries working and living there, we get to see and meet the people at a level rarely accessible to the outsider.

A couple of years ago I visited Peru to meet with Columban Korean Missionaries working there. Accompanied by Columban Sister Josephine Cho Young-Mi, I visited a study centre for young children in the outskirts of Lima which provides a service to students after school.

The children were celebrating in September the beginning of Spring. The highlight was the puppet show where the characters were talking about trees. As a project the study centre had been given a plot of land by the Local Council where each child planted a tree and took care of it. The children planted the trees and placed signs with their own names beside them. They watered the plant each day and the Local Council sent nutrients to mix with the soil.

To put this into context, Lima is basically a city in a desert. Rain comes perhaps once every few years, and then, just a light-fog like drizzle. So the hills in the outskirts are rocks and sand with next to no green growth visible unless planted and watered by residents. Water is piped down from the glaciers in the Andes Mountains.

The children were absorbed in the puppet show. Afterwards there was a quiz on the topic of trees, their contribution to life and our role in taking care of them. And of course there were prizes for nearly everyone. This was followed by a simple meal. After the meal I went out to look at the little plot of land and the trees. The plot is called 'St Columban's Garden.'

In December of that year in Seoul, Korea, I went to a study room in a poorer area of Seoul for Mass. The study room, called '*bright spring water*', was situated in the basement of a three-storey house and consisted of three small rooms and a wider kitchen-cum-living-room space. After the Mass, as a surprise, I showed a short power presentation of the study room in Lima, Peru, featuring the activities of the children there.



Children learn about trees in Seoul, Korea.



PERU



KOREA

There the children presented a play for students and parents. I could not believe it! The theme of the play was the contribution of trees to our life. In one corner of the room the children had put together a 'tree' glued together from cardboard and paper. Branches with 'fruit' were also attached. The story line had the children resting under the shade of the branches and eating its fruit. When it was cut down they used a boat made from the timber and other items made of wood. Other scenes had them chatting while sitting on the stump of the old tree. And all the time making references to how much trees contributed to their lives.

During the whole performance I kept thinking of the children in Lima. Here, independent of each other, students in two study rooms - one in Lima, Peru, and the other in Seoul, Korea both sharing about trees and learning of their contribution to life.

In a world where so often the seemingly endless cycle of violence, war, disasters, hunger and exploitation of children challenges human faith and hope, I was suddenly filled with new hope for the future. In the dreams and concerns of children I saw and experienced the Spirit moving, undeterred by continental divides and different cultures.

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*Columban Fr Donal O'Keeffe has been a missionary in Korea for many decades. As a former Regional Director, he visited Columban missionaries from Korea working in other parts of the world.*



*Peruvian children learn about the contribution of trees.*



*Korean children learn about the contribution of trees.*

# Ten years of slavery in Ireland

FR BOBBY GILMORE

## One Woman's Story



*Residential housing in Ireland.*

### *Olajoke Ajikolu's Journey from Nigeria to Ireland.*

*M*y name is Olajoke Ajikolu and I am from Nigeria. I have five brothers and a sister and life seemed to be pretty hard for us. I stopped going to school at the age of 16 as the family could not afford the school fees for me. Then things became so hard that I was forced to leave my family and move to the large city of Lagos to live with my dad's brother for a few years. I was selling pure water on the streets to be able to help myself and my family in what little way I could.

I was then introduced to a family who promised me a good education and to take good care of me if I came to live with them in Ireland. Not even in my wildest dreams could I foresee what was in store for me in Ireland.

I came to Ireland with this family, my employers, in 2002 to have a better life and to help my family back home. When I arrived to Ireland and started working, I realized that my

dreams for having a better life were fading away. I was required to work seven days per week. I was minding four children and doing the household duties such as cooking for the family, cleaning, ironing and vacuuming. I did not have any breaks and did not receive a single payment for my hard work. I was working around the clock without any pay.

I felt that I was trapped in the house like a slave with no way out of the situation. I could not leave because I did not know anybody. I would become homeless if I had left as the family provided me with the food and shelter for the work I did for them. I felt so scared and betrayed by the family who promised me I would have a good life in Ireland. I was forced to endure these conditions for ten years.

I became very depressed and isolated from the rest of the world during those years. I was not allowed to talk to other



*When I arrived to Ireland and started working, I realized that my dreams for having a better life were fading away.*

people about my situation or leave the house whenever I felt like having a little walk. Thank God I was allowed to attend my church in Drogheda where I felt consoled and peaceful at least for an hour or two. Over time I felt that I gained strength in the Church and received a lot of encouragement to talk about the things that worried me. In the end I got the courage to open up about the horrendous conditions I was forced to endure in my employment over those years.

The priest of the Church became very concerned about my wellbeing and situation. He helped me leave my employment in April 2012 and found me a place to stay at the *Women's Refugee Centre in Drogheda*. I felt relieved and free from exploitation and employers. I felt I could breathe again and felt that whatever happens down the road, it will be better than what I had experienced at my work with the family.

Eventually I was referred to *Migrants Rights Centre Ireland* (MRCI) for help and assistance in my situation. MRCI brought my case to the police to investigate the years of slavery I had suffered when working for the family. I was given accommodation in the Baleskin Direct Provision Centre as part of this case. I spent three years in the Baleskin Centre living in a limbo as I did not have any immigration status so I could not work, study or do any training. I therefore could not start moving on with my life. It is hard to live with unknown and uncertainty. In the end I did not receive a positive outcome in my trafficking case and I became depressed again and felt betrayed by the State this time.

In March 2015 finally some good news came my way when the Department of Justice gave me the opportunity to work as a carer without a work permit for up to 12 months. I was very delighted with this as I could start my work as a carer (nursing assistant), earn my own money and be able to move on. Unfortunately, my joy was short lived as I realized

I had to pay €300 for the registration certificate and I did not have such funds. I was getting only €19.10 weekly allowance when I was living in the Baleskin Centre, and there was no hope for me to save that amount of money.

MRCI did their best to get the fee waived in my case or get the social welfare office to fund the fee for the registration certificate. Unfortunately, these two requests were denied. I could not start my work as a carer without this registration certificate. At that moment I felt very low and desperate. In my mind I was thinking *"where on earth am I going to get that money from? Will the day come when I will work and live a normal life again?"*

I was very emotional when MRCI called me one day to tell me that €300 was donated for me from the Columban Missionary Society. I was so grateful to receive this help as I knew that this donation will make a big difference to my life. It had already been five long months since Department of Justice gave me the right to work when I was finally able to start work.

I started working as a carer only three weeks ago and I love it. I love my newly gained independence. I love my work and I love helping other people. I do not look back and I don't want to! I have many plans and dreams for the future and I know I am in a good place now to fulfil them. And I am lucky to have so many people around me who cared about me for years and who worked really hard to bring me to the place where I am now. God bless you all.

---

*Columban Fr Bobby Gilmore lives and works in Ireland with the migrant community.*

**Drogheda Women's & Children's Refuge Centre Ltd.**





# *Apostolic Exhortation*

AMORIS LAETITIA: ON LOVE IN THE FAMILY

## Pope Francis - A Church "called to form consciences"

FR NOEL CONNOLLY

The thing I found most challenging about Pope Francis' first Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), was his insistence on a discerning, decentralised and consultative church. He expressed his confidence in local bishops and Episcopal Conferences and spoke of a desire for a profound decentralisation and for Christian communities to come up with solutions "proper to their own country". I was surprised because, with the possible exception of Pope Paul VI in *Octogesima Adveniens*, I had never heard of a Pope who encouraged countries to come up with their own local solutions.

I thought the strength of the Catholic Church was that it was universal and uniform across the whole world. I also believed that building such a

discerning and consultative church would demand a new level of faith, greater courage, deeper spirituality and new structures if we are to learn to discern for ourselves after decades of waiting for Rome to speak.

Now in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis has extended his demand for a discerning, decentralised and consultative church into the area of the family. *Amoris Laetitia* is a call to all in the church to consider the complexities of peoples' lives and to respect their consciences. The Pope continues to proclaim the church's teaching on marriage but consistent with his principle from *Evangelii Gaudium* that reality is greater than theory, he constantly asks us to consider the "concrete situations and

practical possibilities of real families". People should not be "pigeonholed or fit into some overly rigid classifications leaving no room for personal and pastoral discernment." No law can cover every eventuality or apply in the same way to every circumstance. People are called to discern what God is asking of them in this situation and what is the most generous response they can make to God.

This will require a great change for the Church and especially for us who are priests and bishops. Pope Francis asks the church not to impose rules by sheer authority to be humble and realistic, with a healthy dose of self-criticism; we are not to waste pastoral energy on denouncing a decadent world without being proactive in proposing ways of finding

true happiness and above all we are "called to form consciences, not replace them".

**Pastors are to:** **1.** Understand the difficulties people face; **2.** Offer spiritual nourishment, encouragement and a positive vision; and **3.** Form consciences and help people to discern. This will be a new, demanding but exciting challenge for most pastors as it is not something we have been encouraged or trained to do.

Pope Francis is clearly confident that we can trust the consciences of the faithful. God wants to help us all make good decisions. The Pope shows his confidence by assuring us that "not all discussions of doctrinal, moral or pastoral issues need to be settled by interventions of the magisterium". He appreciates that the future depends on the laity and how they grow into maturity and take responsibility for their own spiritual lives.

A word that Pope Francis uses frequently in the encyclical is "maturity" (about 20 times). He hopes that the practice of discernment will help us all grow in personal maturity, the ability to make faith decisions and a mature friendship with Christ. The church that Pope Francis wants will clearly demand that we all learn to live as adults, taking responsibility for our decisions and learning to live with the uncertainty and sometimes the confusion that is often a part of discernment. He wants us not to be frightened of weakness. He mentions the word "weakness" (15 times) in the encyclical and sincerely believes "that Jesus wants a Church attentive to the goodness which the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness".

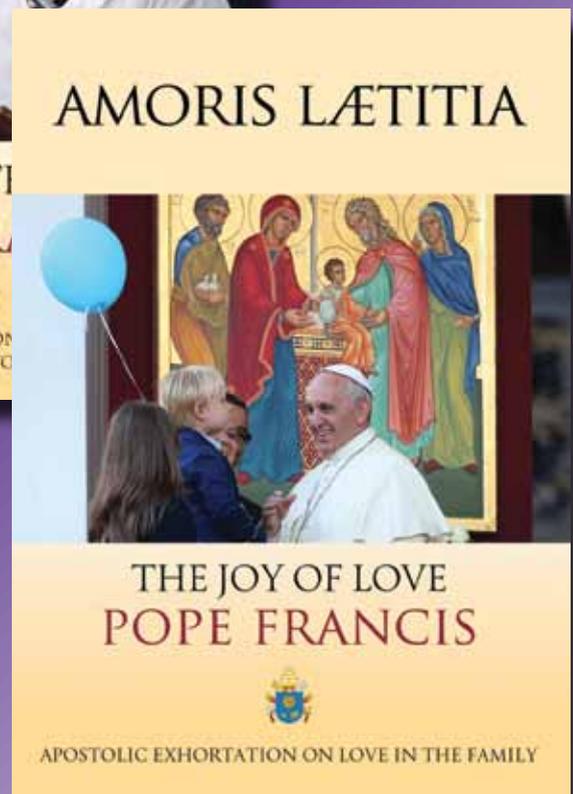
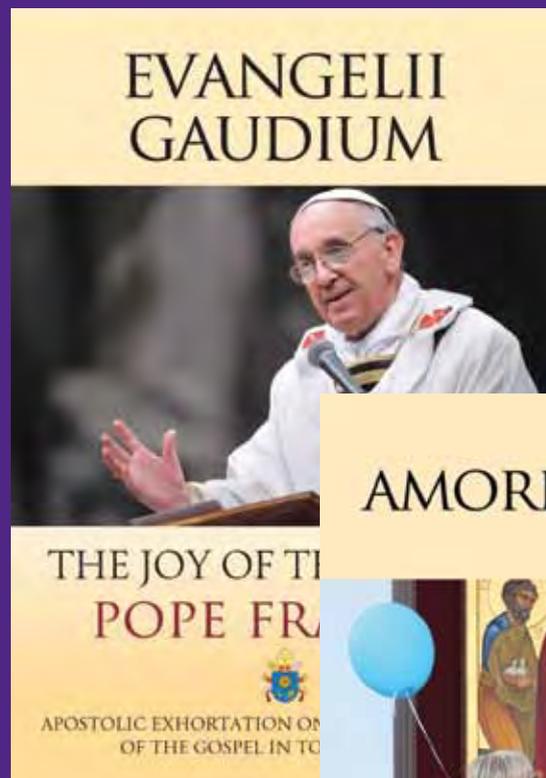
If we can achieve this level of discipleship we will clearly be a different church, a more adult, discerning, decentralised and consultative church.

---

*Fr Noel Connolly is a member of the Columban Mission Institute in North Sydney and a lecturer in Missiology at both the Broken Bay Institute and the Catholic Institute of Sydney.*

“

*that Jesus wants a Church attentive to the goodness which the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness".*



# Learning important lessons

ERL DYLAN J. TABACO

*Erl Dylan J. Tabaco is a Columban seminarian from the Philippines. As part of his seminary training to become a Columban missionary priest, Erl spent a year of pastoral experience in a Columban parish in Lima, Peru.*

*Recently returned to the seminary in the Philippines, he shares with us some of the lessons he learnt during his time in Peru.*

*My* life has been greatly enriched by the wonderful people of the Columban parish of “*Nuestra Señora de las Misiones*”, (Our Lady of the Missions) in Lima, Peru, where I recently completed one year’s pastoral experience. The people I met there taught me many important lessons and helped me grow and mature in my vocation.

To begin with, I learnt so much about parish pastoral ministry from the three Columban priests who minister there, parish priest Fr Edward O’Connell from England, Fr John Hegerty from Australia and Fr Lucano Hwa Ku from Korea. They taught me how to be a good missionary not only in words but especially in the way you lived out your vocation. These priests accompanied and supported me every step of the way during my time in Peru.

Our Lady of the Missions parish is one of four Columban parishes in the Diocese of Carabayllo which is located in the poor, northern suburbs of Lima. It comprises 12 vibrant chapel communities, each with their own lay pastoral leaders and each one named after a patron saint.

During my time there, I was assigned to support two chapel communities, “*Our Lady of the Rosary*” and “*the Miraculous Medal*”. I helped prepare for the Sunday Eucharist, visited the sick and did sacramental preparation particularly among the youth preparing for confirmation.



*Erl (front right) on a parish outing.*

I also learnt many important lessons from the people. I learnt how to support them in both their good times and in their bad times. As I struggled and stumbled at time in my newly learnt Spanish language, I had to become a good listener.

I remember one time when one of the young people preparing for confirmation came to me with a problem. I did my best with my limited Spanish to listen to what he was saying. He noticed my desire to listen and be with him at this difficult time. At the end of the conversation, I was surprised when he told me that my listening presence had consoled him somewhat.

I apologized to him for being unable to properly express myself and counsel him more. But he replied that he had noticed my non-verbal communication. He was able to understand my message because I spoke the language of the heart through my facial expressions. I was really moved by that. I then realized that when you are present to people in their situation, your listening presence is what matters most, even if you don’t say a word.

That encounter inspired me to be more confident in relating with the people. I learnt not to pretend to be different from my real self because people would easily notice it. I realized that people are grateful if you stay true to yourself and accept your limitations and weaknesses while also using your gifts.



*Erl enjoying Peruvian cuisine & dance.*



PERU



PHILIPPINES

After this, I began to widen my horizons by forming good relationships with the elderly men and women at the chapels. They were very warm and welcoming especially when I visited them in their houses. Regardless of how poor they were, they always offered me something to eat and would always say, “*Esta casa es tu casa*” (this house is your house). From these people I learnt what sharing is all about.

There was one old woman, a widow with a down-syndrome child who really touched me. Every Saturday when I cleaned one of the churches, she always dropped by after collecting discarded used bottles and newspapers from the streets. She made a precarious living for herself and her child selling these for a small amount to a recycle business.

This woman would always greet me by hugging me for some time.

After that she would hold out her hand which contained a sweet and some bread. Her simple gesture overwhelmed me and still influences me to be more generous with others. Every time I think of her I am reminded of the widow in the Gospels, who out of her poverty gave everything she had (Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4).

Looking back now from the Philippines, I feel that my time in Peru really helped me to become more committed to my vocation as a future missionary priest. I pray that all I learnt from the people of Peru will continue to inspire me to follow the values of the Gospel.

Just like the Peruvian dance, called “*Huayno*”, that I was taught while there, where one holds hands together, ***I will always be reminded of my strong connection with that beautiful land and beautiful people where I was called by God for one year to serve in love, joy and humility and to learn many important lessons.***



Erl (left) with Columban Fr Rolando (Roly) Aniscal and fellow seminarian Emmanuel Trocino in Lima.

Erl Dylan J. Tabaco is a Columban seminarian from the Philippines.

Photos: Erl Dylan J. Tabaco



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# Light the Life Candle-Making Project

MARIVIC H. MERCENE

## Saving for a brighter future

*M*y name is Anna Noh Hye-In, a teacher by profession. I am a Columban Lay Missionary from Korea based in the Philippines. I arrived here in April 2011. I spent my first year studying Tagalog and English and was then assigned to St Peter's Parish in the Diocese of Novaliches, which is located on the outskirts of Manila.

It was very difficult at first adapting to a new culture and language. From the start however the parish priest, Fr Tony Labiao encouraged me to get involved in the different parish pastoral programmes such as the parish feeding programme, the pastoral care of women and their children and the various livelihood projects which help poor families generate extra sources of income.

Early this year, I helped begin a candle making livelihood project. It was Fr Tony who first saw the great potential in candle making as a way to provide additional income for poor families. He realized that while many candles were being sold in the church not one of them actually was produced there by local people

I then decided to accept the challenge of trying to make this project work. I presented this project to the parish council and received US\$1500 working capital. I used around a half of this money for the purchase of materials and equipment and for a training session in candle making. Around US\$100

was used for a training seminar on family and work values and responsibilities and the remaining US\$650 will be used for another project that will begin soon. This project will convert old rags into usable items.

I then approached five unemployed mothers who were all delighted to participate in the project. Next I began studying candle making by watching online videos. I had to learn how to prime a wick, prepare a mould, dye wax and the necessary safety tips to avoid accidents in the workplace. Sr Maria from Vietnam, a Little Sister of Jesus had experience in candle making and also helped us a lot. Once I had a fairly good idea of how to proceed, I began practicing making candles with the mothers.

We also discussed which type of candle would best serve the needs of the parish. The mothers and I continuously and patiently experimented and practiced until the day arrived when we felt we were ready to begin with the product that would sell best.

The project has now been operating for several months and has 16 mothers involved. They work several hours a day which gives them a small income which hopefully will increase in time as the project takes off. In order to expand this project, I received some financial support from my home parish back in Korea which is greatly appreciated.



One of the problems that I faced earlier on was when two of the original mothers left the project, giving the reason that they needed to earn more income elsewhere. I later realize that there was more to it than this. It seems that my difficulty in communicating in a foreign language had led to some misunderstandings and this had contributed to these mothers leaving the project. As a result I then spent a lot of time in reflection and prayer. I now try to express myself in a way more suitable to Filipino culture and in a way that will not lead to misunderstandings and hurt feelings.

It is important to keep in mind that the candle making project is a part of the St Peter's parish community development scheme. This seeks to achieve holistic growth for the mothers involved in the economic, political and spiritual spheres. Parish pastoral agents work with the mothers in the area of goal-setting for themselves and for the entire team.

The mothers are encouraged to save money from their earnings and to make plans for the future. To emphasize the necessity of saving money, the parish has begun a saving scheme where 5% of the members' earnings are deposited in "The Light the Life Fund." This is the saving fund of the members. This fund will also help finance the expansion of the project.

We have also developed special candle products which are sold in the parish religious store to a larger and different market. Proceeds from the sale of these special candle products finance the mothers' outings and recollection days and other activities.

It gives me great joy to see the success of the candle making project. I love to see the joy on the faces of the mothers when they receive their earnings. It warms my heart when the mothers approach me and thank me. The mothers have begun to feel that they are responsible citizens and take an interest in electing the best candidate in the local elections and other areas of local concern. The mothers have grown in their faith in God and the importance of reaching out to others in need. All of this has led to a greater empowerment of these women.

The rag project will start soon and this will offer other women opportunities to increase their family income. We are also preparing new modules as a part of the formation programmes for the mothers with topics such as health and exercise, diet, women's health, positive attitudes and computer literacy.

***I am frequently asked by others, "How do you do all of this?"***

***I always reply, "With a lot of help from God"***

I also have grown in my trust in God and I truly believe that God will continue to help us and bless this work. I believe that God has empowered myself as well as the mothers to reach out to others.

---

*Anna Noh Hye-In was interviewed for this story by Marivic H. Mercene, a Columban lay mission staff member in the Philippines.*



*Columban Lay missionaries with Anna Noh Hye-In.*





Fr Bernard McDermott SSC

# "Are you Fr Bernard McDermott from the Columban Fathers?"

FR BERNARD MCDERMOTT



*Columban Fr Bernard McDermott shares with us a story from Scotland of a chance encounter with one of our long-term Columban supporters.*

Some years ago I, together with two other Columbans were working on mission appeals on the outer Hebridean Island of Barra, off the west coast of Scotland. Because of our presence, the three priests assigned to Barra had taken the chance for a holiday from their remote parishes and we had stayed on for an additional two weeks to supply at Masses for them.

I was supplying in the parish of Castlebay and one evening I received a 'sick call'.

An elderly lady from the small island of Vattersey had been taken ill and the doctor had decided she needed treatment in Glasgow. This involved the air ambulance which had been requested from Stornaway.

When I arrived at the nursing home where she had been taken ill, the elderly lady, Annie McQueen (92 years old) was moved to the ambulance which was to take her to the small airplane which had landed on the strand (beach) which acted as the runway.

I followed the ambulance to the beach and walked alongside Annie as she was taken from the ambulance.

She was accompanied by a nurse holding a drip. Above the sound of the engines of the plane I asked whether I could speak to Annie and anoint her!

I leaned over Annie and said "Annie, it's the priest and I have come to strengthen you with holy oil for your journey to Glasgow" She opened one eye and replied,

"You're not Fr McKay!"

"No Annie, Fr McKay is on holiday. I'm Fr McDermott and I am supplying for him while he is away".

She opened both eyes, sat up on the bed-stretcher and said,

"Are you Fr Bernard McDermott from the Columban Fathers?"

"I am" I replied.

"Well", she said, "I had a letter from you just yesterday!"

The nurse holding the drip nearly fell over in amazement and I was equally surprised!

I was Columban Director in Britain at the time and one of my tasks was to write the appeal letter to our supporters of whom Annie McQueen was obviously one.

"Well, isn't it great to put a face to the name after all this time" she said. We had a short chat and I nearly forgot to anoint her before she was placed aboard the plane.

I telephoned the hospital in Glasgow where she went a couple of times and she seemed to be making a good recovery.

The people of her parish laughed when I recalled the experience to them at Mass the following Sunday.

"Typical Annie!" they said.

Another encounter with a Columban supporter that has been part of my memories!

What a privilege it has been!

---

*Columban Fr Bernard McDermott was Regional Director in Britain for 12 years.*



*Annie, it's the priest and I have come to strengthen you with holy oil for your journey to Glasgow"*



# No family to grieve at her going

*During her final few months of life, Shwe Mya found a home at the Columban Sisters' Home of Hope, in the city of Myitkyina, Myanmar.*

Shwe Mya was a dignified 40-year-old mother of two children. Her oldest son had been sent to a Buddhist monastery when he was six-years-old because Shwe Mya was too poor to feed him. The younger sister lived with her grandmother whose village was very far away from Myitkyina. The difficult journey to the HIV clinic in Myitkyina would have taken the grandmother at least two days.

Poor Shwe Mya experienced much heartache while she was with us. When she was about two months in our care, she received news that her husband had died. A neighbour coming to the clinic gave her the sad news. This was no ordinary news and for weeks her heart was torn and her inner pain and loneliness was tangible. Deep in her heart she knew that she had contracted this HIV/AIDS from her husband and she feared for her future and that of her two children.

Shwe Mya's disease was advanced when she first came to the shelter. She had developed a rare growth on her left wrist which continued to develop in size and ugliness. This weakened and distressed her greatly. She began to fear what the future of her recovery might be.

She felt that if she was able to receive Burmese herbal treatment that it might help. The Doctor advised her to contact her relatives and to encourage them to come for a consultation.

Her two younger brothers showed up some days later, visiting her for a short time and then left assuring her that they would return next morning. Morning came and days followed but they never returned. They never kept their promise. How helpless she felt as we waited these long days. To our great disappointment we discovered that when they left, they had taken her clinic records and her citizen identity card which meant that

Shwe Mya could not travel. They had abandoned her.

From then on she seemed to lose hope and the rejection she suffered caused her to cry a lot. Her will to live diminished. Gradually her condition deteriorated and Shwe Mya died in our care two weeks later.

***I would like to thank our benefactors who have made it possible for us to care for those like Shwe Mya who have no one to mourn them, no family to grieve at their going.***

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*Columban Sr Mary Dillon has worked in Myanmar (Burma) since 2002. She has developed a home care health program for people with HIV/AIDS and established a respite house, "Hope Centre" to enable people from distant places to avail of medical care.*

*Shwe Mya at the Columban Home of Hope house in Myitkyina, Myanmar.*



# 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 and for the spiritual and the temporal welfare of all our readers, their families and friends.*

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## *The Church to oppose President Duterte in the Philippines over the death penalty*

*T*he Catholic Church in the Philippines will do everything possible to discourage political action likely to reintroduce the death penalty in the country.

The President of the Episcopal Conference of the Philippines, Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan, said he will ask for a meeting with newly-elected President Rodrigo Duterte to ask him to reconsider his plan to relaunch the death penalty. Duterte said he wanted to submit a measure to restore the death penalty, at least for the most serious crimes, to the Philippine Congress.

Several Bishops have expressed strong reservations, recalling the Catholic doctrine recently reiterated by Pope Francis. The Archbishop of Lipa, Ramon Arguelles, recalled that capital punishment is not a deterrent to crime, hoping that such a step *"does not happen, especially while the Church celebrates the Year of Mercy"*.

Archbishop Emeritus of Cebu, Oscar Cruz, questioned the intentions of the President and announced that *"the Church will oppose his plans"*. The Bishop of Balanga, Ruperto Santos, recalled that *"God alone has power over life. God gives life and God takes it away. No one should play God"*. Instead he suggests a *"reform of the judicial and prison system"*.

Duterte has based much of his election campaign on the theme of the fight against crime and the end of impunity for perpetrators of crimes. The new president of the Commission for Human Rights of the Philippines, Jose Luis Guascon, recalled that the objective of the Philippine penal system is rehabilitative, while the death penalty closes this option.



Photo: ©iStock.com/Main\_sail

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*Agenzia Fides - Information Service of the Pontifical Mission Society - June 22, 2016*

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## **Mission Intention for August**

That Christians may live the Gospel, giving witness to faith, honesty, and love of neighbour.

Listen to: From the Director - After all these years we are still afraid

# From the Director

## After all these years we are still afraid



The Berlin Wall was meant to be a symbol of peace signifying the end of the Cold War. But when it was dismantled in 1989 peace still eluded us, even though communism had collapsed and democracy ruled.

Today we are still anxious and afraid, particularly with the unprecedented movement of peoples around the world driven by drought and war, seeking safe homes in another country.

It is reported that one of the main reasons that people in Britain voted to leave the EU was the tremendous influx of 'foreigners' into Britain. The locals were anxious and fearful of losing their identity.

Currently there is a great deal of criticism of Muslims who are the new strangers. Sounds a lot like those criticisms in the 1950's, which I am old enough to remember, when Italian, Greek and Maltese immigrants arrived in Australia. They were accused of taking our jobs, of working at weekends, of keeping to themselves, of eating strange foods and playing soccer. Fear changed to familiarity but it took time; they conquered with their strong work ethic, family values and fine food.

A present fear for many people is that Muslims will eventually overtake us in terms of numbers and impose Sharia law on us. Among one of the many disciplines of Sharia law is that it establishes the patterns believers should follow in worshipping Allah: prayers, charity, fasting and pilgrimage. I have received many letters and emails telling me this will happen.

### *Accepting the strangers in our land*

The phenomenon of people on the move in millions is the context for the Church's mission in the world today. This is a challenge for all of us. As Columbans we have some experience and understanding of the dynamics in this crisis.

We have opted to become foreigners, immigrants for the sake of the Gospel, by working overseas in different cultures. What we have learnt is that people have other understandings of reality. When we, as missionaries, return home either permanently or temporarily we become conscious of the changes which have taken place in ourselves from living in another culture. We have a richer experience of life from being a 'stranger in a strange land.' This can often cause misunderstandings with family and friends. Our sense of belonging has changed.

The Church's mission today is to do our best to welcome the stranger in our midst, to make them feel at home. There are many references in the bible about welcoming the stranger in our midst. The one that many of us are most familiar with is, *Matthew 25: 35, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me"*

In this Year of Mercy, let us listen to the words of Pope Francis who said *"It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples. Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger"*.

***I pray that we can all overcome our fear of welcoming the stranger.***

*Gary Walker*

Fr Gary Walker  
director@columban.org.au



# Impact of meat on humans and the global environment

FR SEAN MCDONAGH

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us that “our sister (planet earth) now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will”. Shortly after, he tells us that he ... “would like to enter into dialogue with all the people of our common home” in order to determine what needs to be done. The Pope is aware that this will call for serious sacrifices which amount to changing our modes of production and consumption and opting for an ecological conversion.

One of the most difficult conversations which must take place is about the amount of meat which many of us eat each day. In November 2015, the *World Health Organisation* (WHO) warned us that eating too much meat can cause cancers and heart disease. Our human body is not designed for a heavy meat diet. Our hands are flat which facilitates pulling fruit and nuts from trees. Our teeth are designed to grind plant material. Our intestines are 12 times longer than our trunks in order that they can absorb nutrients slowly. Finally, our stomachs and livers have a low tolerance for

acids which are needed to digest animal protein. Contrast that with a tiger - a true carnivore. Their intestine is only three times longer than their trunk. Their stomach and liver have high concentrates of uric acid to help them break down animal protein. So, even if we do not become vegetarians, meat should only be a small portion of our diet.

We might think that this generation is merely following the tradition of our ancestors when it comes to eating meat. In reality the global meat industry has grown dramatically in recent decades. Between 1963 and 2014 meat production globally has grown from 78 million tons to 300 million tons. This amounts to a fourfold increase. With growing prosperity in Asia, meat-eating has increased in China and India. Experts believe that with population increase and a growing appetite for meat, production will increase by 75 percent by 2050.

According to Damien Carrington in *The Guardian*, to reach a healthy level of meat consumption, citizens of the United States would have to cut their meat consumption by two-thirds, while in Britain and Ireland we should be eating half as much meat as we do.

Photo: somegirl/Bigstock.com

Our current effort to produce meat takes a huge toll on our environment. A total of 40 percent of the world's land surface is used to feed the world's population which now stands at 7.2 billion. Much of this land is grazed by cattle, pigs and chickens. One third of the world's fresh water is used in food production. The 75 percent increase which is expected to take place by 2050 would be disastrous, making it impossible to keep the increase in the average global temperature to 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels.

While people are aware that transport and industry contribute hugely to climate change, most people do not realise that agriculture is responsible for 25 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. Fifteen percent of greenhouse gases are attributed to the meat industry globally, because ruminants produce methane, which is 20 times more heat retentive than carbon dioxide. This is more than all the cars, trains, planes and ships combined.

We are expected to reduce greenhouse gases in response to the agreement made at the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC), in Paris in December 2015.

An analysis from Glasgow University and the Chatham House think-tank found that in 12 countries measures to change peoples' behaviour can be acceptable to the public if they are seen to promote the common good. Of course, if there was a concerted effort to begin to tax our use of meat, the farming lobby and large multinational agribusiness corporations would be up in arms. The average subsidy on livestock in 13 OECD (*Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development*) countries in 2013, was \$190 per cow.

There would need to be a huge education campaign to support initiatives such as cutting subsidies to livestock farmers. Farmers would have to be given support to diversify their food production.

It is time for all of us to reflect on the amount of meat we eat and begin to make the necessary sacrifices, not only for the health of our bodies but also for the negative impact that the expanding meat industry has on the world environment.

---

*Columban Fr Sean McDonagh, a missionary in the Philippines for many years, has worked tirelessly to improve the care of the earth, and has published numerous books. He was an advisor to Pope Francis on preparing his encyclical, Laudato Si'.*

“

*It is time for all of us to reflect on the amount of meat we eat and begin to make the necessary sacrifices, not only for the health of our bodies but also for the negative impact that the expanding meat industry has on the world environment.*

Listen to: A valiant woman



Tsuneko Hinata

# A valiant woman

FR JOE BROODER

## The unfinished story of a valiant and committed woman

*W*hen we think of the missionary work of the Columbans in Japan, we must not forget the Trojan work done by the Japanese catechists. Very often they were the right hand Samurais of the trail blazing Columban missionaries. One such lady catechist is Miss Tsuneko Hinata.

She was born into a traditional Buddhist family, grew up in the Buddhist tradition and after high school became a professional working woman in a company, but never married. At the age of 40, she ran into crisis time. *"What is life all about? What am I working like a slave for? What happens to me after death?"*

She went searching for answers to the Catholic Church. There she found Christ, got her answers and received baptism. She was filled with joy and a new conviction. Another crisis arose. *"What do I do with this new joy and*

*conviction? I have to share it with others. How can I do that?"* She decided to quit her professional career and enter the Japanese Catechist School.

As a newly turned out catechist, she was first employed by Columban Fr Jim Norris and thus began her long journey working full time for the Church with the Columbans for meagre wages and even more "meagre" living quarters. She became the mouthpiece of the Japanese language-struggling Columbans, taught daily the doctrine to truth seeking searchers, visited the sick at home and in hospitals, walked with the newly baptized on their journey of faith in a non-faith environment, and became a spiritual mother to all her spiritual children. She took no credit for her work. It was her way of living out the Gospel.

In her life she jumped from being a professional worker into the waters of baptism. She then jumped from the waters of

Photo: Fr Joe Brooder SSC



*What is life all about?  
What am I working  
like a slave for?  
What happens to me  
after death?"*



baptism into the Catechetical profession and from there she jumped into the Columban world. She retired legally at the age of 65, but like Anna the Prophetess in St. Luke's Gospel, she was daily in the Church praising and glorifying God, teaching, visiting the sick, welcoming the stranger, guiding those searching for the truth and consoling the troubled. She never really retired. She is small in stature but big in heart. She is bent with age but straight in dedication and loyalty.

She has served with many Columbans and Japanese priests who change every few years, but she stays on, seemingly forever. She has witnessed the liturgical eccentricities of many Columbans but no matter whom they were or what fancy ideas they brought with them, she took everything in her stride and smiled knowing that the next man would come with other "more wonderful" ideas and plans. She is still at that original parish church of Tetori in Kumamoto City.

At 94 years of age, she has suffered no deterioration of the memory or mind or love for Jesus Christ. No one thought that such a frail looking lean lady would last for so long

without losing her zeal and zest. She knows she is outside the tomb stone of life, but she is already rejoicing in the new life ahead of her in God's Kingdom.

Let it be said in all honesty that all Columbans who worked in the same parish, at one time or other, thought about and prepared her funeral Mass sermon. The likes of Jim Norris, Eugene Griffin, Mick Conneely, Bill Curry (all of whom are now deceased) and myself, I must admit, all "saw" the day when we would be celebrating her funeral Mass but she outlasted them all, except myself of course. It is dangerous to write her obituary. I realize that I have just done that but deep down in my heart I believe that if I should live to be a hundred, Miss Tsuneko Hinata will attend my funeral, a little more stooped, and she will smile upon me in my coffin.

I want to thank God today for all the mighty Catechists that worked in Japan. They were and are God's great gift to Japan and all missionaries that worked or still work here.

---

*Columban Fr Joe Brooder has lived and worked in Japan for many years.*

# A cricket match to build friendships

FR DANIEL O'CONNOR

Cricket is played everywhere in Pakistan. On streets, in parks and wherever there is an area big enough for this game. People of all classes and faiths play it. All that the poor require to play is a bat, a few bricks which become the wicket and a tennis ball which is wrapped in tape so that it will last longer.

When Pakistan plays in international tournaments like the recent *World Twenty 20* in India, people are seen in the bazaars, in tea shops, and other places watching the game on television. If India beat Pakistan there is much disappointment. Television sets can be smashed. The cricket team can be accused of match-fixing and on their arrival back in Pakistan they can receive a hostile reception. Because they feel as though they are treated as second class citizens, many Christians are happy when Pakistan losses.

Some years ago it was a great honour for the Christians that one of their own, Yousaf Yohanna, made it into the Pakistan team as a very good batsman. He used to make the sign of the cross when he made a good score. This really gave the Christians a big encouragement with the result that they were more positive towards their national team.

Sadly something happened and he became a Muslim. The Christians felt betrayed and down-hearted.

***Opportunities for the Christians and the poor to participate in organized sport are rare.*** With this in mind, the Columban parish of St Thomas in the town of Badin, Hyderabad Diocese, recently organized two cricket tournaments in which a number of teams participated. Although meant for Christians, being short of players, Hindu players were asked to make up the numbers. Unfortunately because of the security situation in the country and because of the fear of the possibility of the misuse of the "Blasphemy Law" Muslims were not invited to play. The venue was an open area of ground on the outer part of Badin City. Although the area was bare soil with no grass it was still deemed to be a suitable pitch.

Before play commenced participants gathered to hear the rules and regulations. It was stated clearly that the umpires' decision was final. (*We had no replay T.V. third umpire*). A knockout system was the way of the tournament. It was recalled that Jesus as a young man when He walked on this earth, must have been involved in sport in one way or

Photo: jackmicro/Bigstock.com





other. A minute's silence was observed for the victims of the terrible suicide bomb attack in Lahore which happened on Easter Sunday, killing over seventy people.

The St Columban team batted and bowled well but was knocked out in their first game. The hot midday sun beat down on the players, yet overall the games were played in a very positive spirit. At the prize giving it was stated that participation in sport is very beneficial for good health and the Christian way of life. It can also prevent dangerous problems such as drug addiction from entering a person's life. Trophies were distributed to the winning team, the runner up team and the "best trying" team. Then all ate well

and went off happily, having enjoyed the day which had given them a "lift" despite the many hardships in their daily lives.

---

*Columban Fr Daniel O'Connor has spent several decades as a missionary in Pakistan.*



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# Light the Life Candle-Making Project - Philippines

Columban Lay Missionary Anna Noh Hye-In has developed a candle-making project in the parish she is assigned to in the Philippines. She is about to begin a new project converting old rags into useable object for sale.

**With your help**, Columban Missionaries like Anna are able to support unemployed mothers in the Philippines. (see pages 12-13).



Photo: Anna Noh Hye-In



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