

# The Far East

COLUMBAN MISSION MAGAZINE

January/February 2017

## Adventures

### on Tide Island

Fr Colin McLean's ministry to island fishing communities in Brazil.



ST COLUMBAN'S MISSION SOCIETY

PRICE \$1.50

# The Far East

January/February 2017

Vol 99, No. 1

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)

## AUSTRALIA

St Columban's Mission Society  
69 Woodland Street  
Essendon Vic 3040

Postal address:

PO Box 752, Niddrie Vic 3042

Tel: (03) 9375 9475

TFE@columban.org.au

www.columban.org.au

## NEW ZEALAND

St Columban's Mission Society  
P.O. Box 30-017

Lower Hutt 5040

Tel: (04) 567 7216

columban@iconz.co.nz

www.columban.org.au

## Publisher:

Fr Gary Walker

director@columban.org.au

## Editor:

Fr Dan Harding

TFE@columban.org.au

## Editorial Assistant:

Mrs Jacqueline Russell

TFE@columban.org.au

## Designer:

Mrs Assunta Arena

ascarpino@columban.org.au

## Communications & Publications

### Director:

Mrs Janette Mentha

jmentha@columban.org.au

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

Printed by Doran Printing, Melbourne



# Contents



- 3** From the Editor  
Battling storm seas
- 4-5** Out of my own ghetto  
and into solidarity  
A journey of interfaith  
friendship.
- 6-7** Men of the road
- 8-9** Reflection - Mission  
"from" and "not" to the  
margins
- 10-11** Korean priests in the  
world's driest place
- 12-13** Life was far from boring  
for me  
Memorable stories from Korea.
- 14-15** Missionary in China  
and pioneer of motion  
pictures
- 16** Mission World  
The trial for the murder of  
Shahbaz Bhatti is moving slowly
- 17** From the Director  
Lord to whom shall we go?
- 18-21** Adventures on  
Tide Island  
Fr Colin McLean's ministry to  
island fishing communities in  
Brazil.
- 22-23** Mission Expo  
Melbourne  
Mercy in Action 2016.  
An opportunity to engage in  
mission.
- 23** Your Columban Legacy





The feast of Corpus Christi celebrated on Tide Island in Brazil's north east by processions of brightly decorated boats such as this one. (See story pages 18-21)

Photo: Fr Colin McLean SSC



## From the Editor

### Battling storm seas

Every Sunday and major feast day Columban Fr Colin McLean travels 45 minutes from the mainland by motorized canoe to 'Tide Island', an island that lies off the coast of Salvador, in north east Brazil. He travels there to celebrate the Eucharist and offer pastoral care for the island's fishing communities.

In this January/February issue of *The Far East* magazine, Fr Colin writes of this ministry during 2016 as he battles high seas and stormy weather and attempts to make the liturgical life of the islanders more dynamic and meaningful.

This issue also carries the story of Fr Richard Ranaghan, one of the early Columban missionaries who in 1920 brought a motion picture camera with him to China. He went on to produce several motion pictures, including one with the accompanying sound on a vinyl disc on which an unknown singer at that time, called Bing Crosby, sings 'Silent Night'. We publish this article as a part of our historical lead up to the celebration of the Columban Centenary in 2018.

Columban seminarian, Louie Ybanez, grew up in an area of tension and

prejudice between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines. As a part of his seminary formation he had the opportunity to live with a Muslim family in the Philippines and later on in Pakistan where he experienced friendship and support from Muslims. He writes of his change in attitude.

The Atacama Desert in northern Chile is the driest place on Earth. Columban Fr Donal O'Keeffe writes of his visit to two Korean priests working there. Columban Fr Noel Doyle shares with us his encounters with homeless people in Japan while Columban Fr Charles O'Rourke shares memorable moments in his long missionary ministry in Korea.

We also carry the story of Columban participation in a *Mission Expo* in Melbourne that promoted overseas mission immersion experiences such as in Chile.

The overwhelming majority of people that Columbans work with across the world are people who live at the margins, at the periphery of society. These are the people we write about in *The Far East*, the island fishermen, those affected by prejudice, the desert dwellers, the homeless, etc.

Columban Fr Noel Connelly reminds us that for Pope Francis it is only at the periphery that reality can be understood and that we have much to learn there.

*Fr Daniel Harding*

Fr Daniel Harding  
TFE@columban.org.au

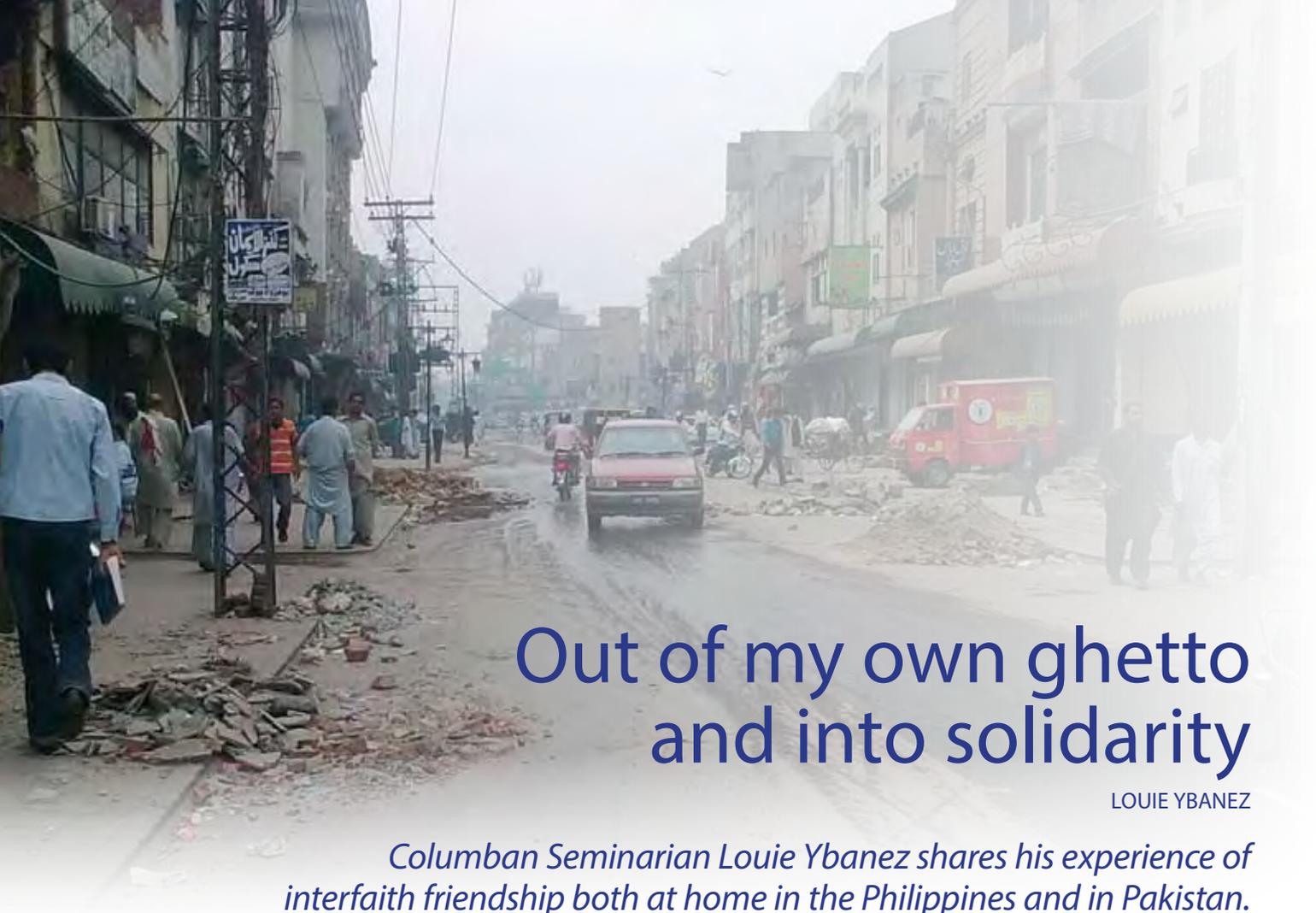


### Become a Columban Priest

Columban Missionary Priests:  
'Crossing Boundaries'



For more information: [www.columban.org.au](http://www.columban.org.au)  
E: [info@columban.org.au](mailto:info@columban.org.au)



# Out of my own ghetto and into solidarity

LOUIE YBANEZ

*Columban Seminarian Louie Ybanez shares his experience of interfaith friendship both at home in the Philippines and in Pakistan.*

When I lived in Pakistan I was part of the 1.6 % who are Christians in this predominantly Muslim country which has an estimated 203 million people. In Pakistan many Muslims have hardly ever met a Christian and certainly do not know anything about the Christian faith. Nor are most of them even interested because it is not a major concern for them. Prejudice among Muslims towards Christians and vice versa is common because of the lack of willingness or interest to engage with each other.

People in the Philippines, where I grew up, are inclined to have this same attitude. The predominant religion here is Catholicism. Common perceptions of Muslims are based on preconceived notions handed down from one generation to the next. Most of these preconceptions are quite offensive and express false notions about the culture and religion of Muslims.

When I was young I used to see Muslims selling in the market-place. I did not interact with them. I just listened to the offensive comments used to describe them. At the same

time I also learned early on in school that they pray five times a day. I could not reconcile these two opposing views of Muslims then.

Before leaving for Pakistan, as a part of my seminary formation, I was fortunate enough to get to know some Meranao Muslims here in Mindanao, in the Philippines. Most Christians only know them as 'Muslims' and don't bother to learn their language or take an interest in their unique culture. I was able to live for a while with Asnawi Mangka and his family and parents in Sultan Naga Dimaporo in the province of Lanao del Norte. This was my first experience of living with Muslims. I remember my apprehensions at first. I grew up with the usual Christian perceptions of them as being aggressive, hostile and not to be trusted.

These preconceptions were very far from what I experienced when I finally got to live with them. I joined them in planting crops on their farm, exploring their place, and I was able to join them when they prayed in the mosque. I ate with them and during meals Asnawi asked



that we take turns to pray before meals out of respect for each other's religion. It was a powerful gesture from Asnawi to allow me to pray with them in my own Christian way.

I felt I was in a space of freedom and I was accepted for what I was. I also admired Asnawi's family and neighbours for their hospitality and their willingness to befriend a complete stranger like me. It was not easy at first but our willingness to engage with each other and my ability to ask questions helped me to overcome some of the long-held prejudices I had. It was very liberating for me.

The same attitude and openness allowed me to overcome my anxieties when I was in Pakistan. I started exploring the alley-ways in the place where I was assigned. I talked to strangers and gave myself time to familiarise myself with the people by joining them for meals during special occasions or just spending time in long conversations over a cup of tea. Some became like brothers to me.

Although I was constantly bombarded by accounts of negative experiences of Muslims with Christians, my prior memories of the time spent with Asnawi and his family enabled me to realize that one's religion should not be confused with one's individual behaviour and cultural practices, which is what tends to happen in Pakistan. It was hard to go against the ghetto mentality that exists among the Christian minority in Pakistan. However, I drew inspiration from the Meranao Muslims that I lived with in Mindanao. Asnawi and his family not only opened their home, they opened their lives and hearts with the warmth of their welcome.

Now I'm back in the Philippines. That experience with Asnawi and his family has contributed to my being able to somehow understand how it is to live as part of a minority in a country where the majority confuse culture with religion. Recently I joined an event called 'Duyog Ramadan' where Christians join Muslims in the daily breaking of the Ramadan fast (*Iftar*). It was very encouraging to see many Christians joining this event in a symbolic gesture of solidarity. Among those who joined were students.

It is very important that we value a celebration that matters to our Muslim neighbours no matter how small a minority they are in the overall population of the Philippines. Whether one belongs to the minority or the majority does not matter. What matters is our constant openness to engage with people from other faiths, to find the good in

them and to appreciate our differences rather than to let them divide us. I am optimistic as I continue on a journey to move farther outside my own ghetto, to a space of freedom from prejudice, because I see a great need for this at a time where sectarian violence is so common and where the tendency to condemn others out of ignorance is so pervasive.

---

*Columban seminarian Louie Ybanez spent two years in Pakistan as part of his formation to become a missionary priest. He continues his studies for priesthood in Manila.*



*Louie Ybanez (back row, right) with Asnawi Family, Sultan Naga Dimaporo, Lanao del Norte.*



*...my prior memories of the time spent with Asnawi and his family enabled me to realize that one's religion should not be confused with one's individual behaviour and cultural practices, which is what tends to happen in Pakistan.*



# Men of the road

FR NOEL DOYLE

*I* call this article "*Men of the road*" because in all my years in Japan, only one woman came to me looking for a handout. I was once advised to refuse all such requests for three months after I went into a new parish or I would end up with an endless stream of petitioners asking for money.

The requests were generally for money for travel and not for food. Since the islands of Japan stretch for about 1,500 miles the requests were generally not for small but large amounts. The one request from a woman was also for travel money. There was a kindergarten in my parish at the time with over 200 pupils (and fortunately for me) run by two nuns. I was just trotted out for big occasions to give a talk for opening

or closing the school year or some special ceremony. The woman was very insistent that I not tell the nuns anything about her request to me which was very strange as she was a complete stranger to me.

One of my "men of the road" told me that he belonged to the *Yakuza* (local mafia) and that he had done something to upset the boss and needed to get out of the gang territory and beyond Osaka which was over three hundred miles away. The usual penalty for displeasing the boss is that he/they chop off one of his little fingers. He kept putting his hand in his pocket as if he had a knife in it. I was not worried as I am fairly big and I know some karate moves that would have taken care of him. I suggested that we go to the police and right the

wrong that he was worried about, but he was not agreeable to that.

One old man who seemed to be in his eighties told me that he was contemplating suicide and that he had travelled down to the sea on the opposite side of the peninsula to commit suicide in the sea. Then he had decided to travel back to the part of Japan that he had originated from as he still had relatives there, but unfortunately he did not have the money to get there. I thought his story was genuine and gave him the money. It was only when I lifted his two bags to help him on his way that I realized that all that was in them was paper and that I had been taken once again. Some of these "men of the road" could publish or act out their stories on stage and make money!



*One of my “men of the road” told me that he belonged to the Yakuza (local mafia) and that he had done something to upset the boss and needed to get out of the gang territory and beyond Osaka which was over three hundred miles away.*

One parish that I was in had a bicycle racing track that attracted many punters to the several meetings held there every year. The profits it made helped to keep the city going in various ways. If someone claimed they were broke, the police would give them a ticket, not money, for the train to the next town. I had a policy of refusing these punters who came to me as I knew that they were gamblers who would spend any money that they got from me on gambling machines near the station. Most of the punters were just out for a day of fun but there was a small number who were compulsive gamblers.

Another regular was known as 'hachimaki-san'. This means that he wore a kind of head towel. He only wanted a small amount of money as after visiting the Catholic church he had eleven Protestant churches to visit before travelling along to the next town. Time was literally money for him.

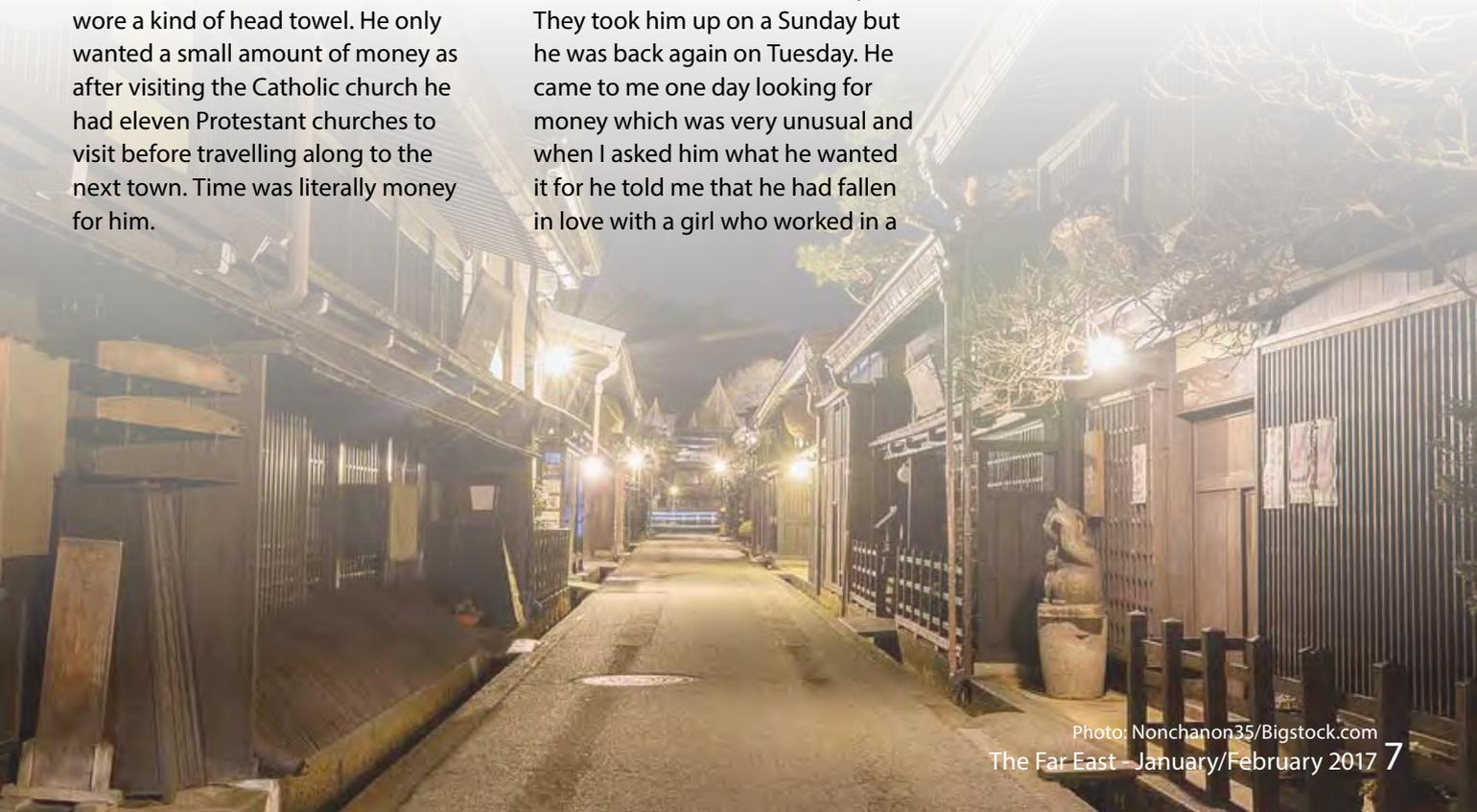
In another parish I made another exception in the case of a young man of about 19 or 20 years old. All he ever wanted was some food which I gave him. His was a sad case as the marriage of his parents had broken up and his mother and two sisters had gone back to the northern island of Hokkaido. He was living with his father who worked in a factory. After work each day the father went to a pub to drink. He would not give his son a key to the apartment and the son had to wait outside the apartment until his father came home or he would not be let in that night.

Some of the men in the church decided to get the young man into some kind of institution in Tokyo. They took him up on a Sunday but he was back again on Tuesday. He came to me one day looking for money which was very unusual and when I asked him what he wanted it for he told me that he had fallen in love with a girl who worked in a

department store and that he wanted to buy her flowers. He told me that he did not know her name nor had he spoken to her. I told him that if he gave her flowers that he would embarrass her and he should not do so. He disappeared after that. Some weeks later a policeman came to me with a picture of him and asked me if I knew him. I just told him that he used to come around the church at times. When I asked him why he wanted to know he refused to give me any answer. I only hope and pray that he got into some institution that was able to help him.

---

*After many years in Japan, Columban Fr Noel Doyle now resides in Ireland.*



# Mission "from" and "not" to the margins

FR NOEL CONNOLLY

I am writing just days after President Trump's election. His election has been likened to the Brexit referendum and even to the increasing number of Australians deserting the major parties. The common explanation for all these events is that the people in the centre just do not understand the concerns and fears of people who are marginalised from power and prosperity.

Sociologists claim that one of the major problems in the United States and probably of much of the world is that nowadays people only listen to, read of and converse with people who think the same as them.

There are some echoes of this in modern missiology only their reading is much more radical. Pope Francis in a book by Antonio Spadaro, *My Door Is Always Open: A Conversation on Faith, Hope and the Church in a Time of Change*, makes the strong statement;

*"I am convinced of one thing: the great changes in history were realised when reality was seen not from the centre but rather from the periphery. Reality is understood only if it is looked at from the periphery... Being at the periphery helps one to see and to understand better, to analyse reality more correctly, to shun centralism and approaches based on ideology."* I was shocked when I first read these words but actually they stand to reason. Power and prosperity can stifle the Spirit, blind us to others and prevent us from understanding the weak. Witness the rich man who never understood or appreciated Lazarus at his door. (Lk 16:19-31)

But it is not only Pope Francis who is speaking out. In 2013 the World Council of Churches met in Pusan, Korea and published the document *Together towards Life*. One of its most challenging chapters is *Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins*. Jesus' mission was to liberate the oppressed, to open the eyes of the blind and to announce the Kingdom of God by opting to spend his time with the marginalised people of his day. He did this not out of charity but to highlight the injustices that were marginalising his people and the people at the centre of Jewish religion and society clearly understood the challenge. Jesus mixes with the marginalised to confront and transform everything that denies life. Their situation points to the sinfulness of the world.

*Together towards Life* goes on to make the radical and thought provoking statement;

*"The aim of mission is not simply to move people from the margins to centres of power but to confront those who remain in the centre by keeping people on the margins. Instead, churches are called to transform power structures."* #40 Earlier it warns that the practice of mission has changed. Instead of mission *"being done by the powerful to the powerless, by the rich to the poor, or by the privileged to the marginalized"*, the missionaries are now coming from the margins to the powerful.

Like Pope Francis they insist that we have much to learn from the poor and marginalised;

*"People on the margins have agency, and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view. People on the margins, living in vulnerable positions, often know what exclusionary forces are threatening their survival and can best discern the urgency of their struggles; people in positions of privilege have much to learn from the daily struggles of people living in marginal conditions."* #38 *"Through struggles in and for life, marginalized people are reservoirs of the active hope, collective resistance, and perseverance that are needed to remain faithful to the promised reign of God."* #39

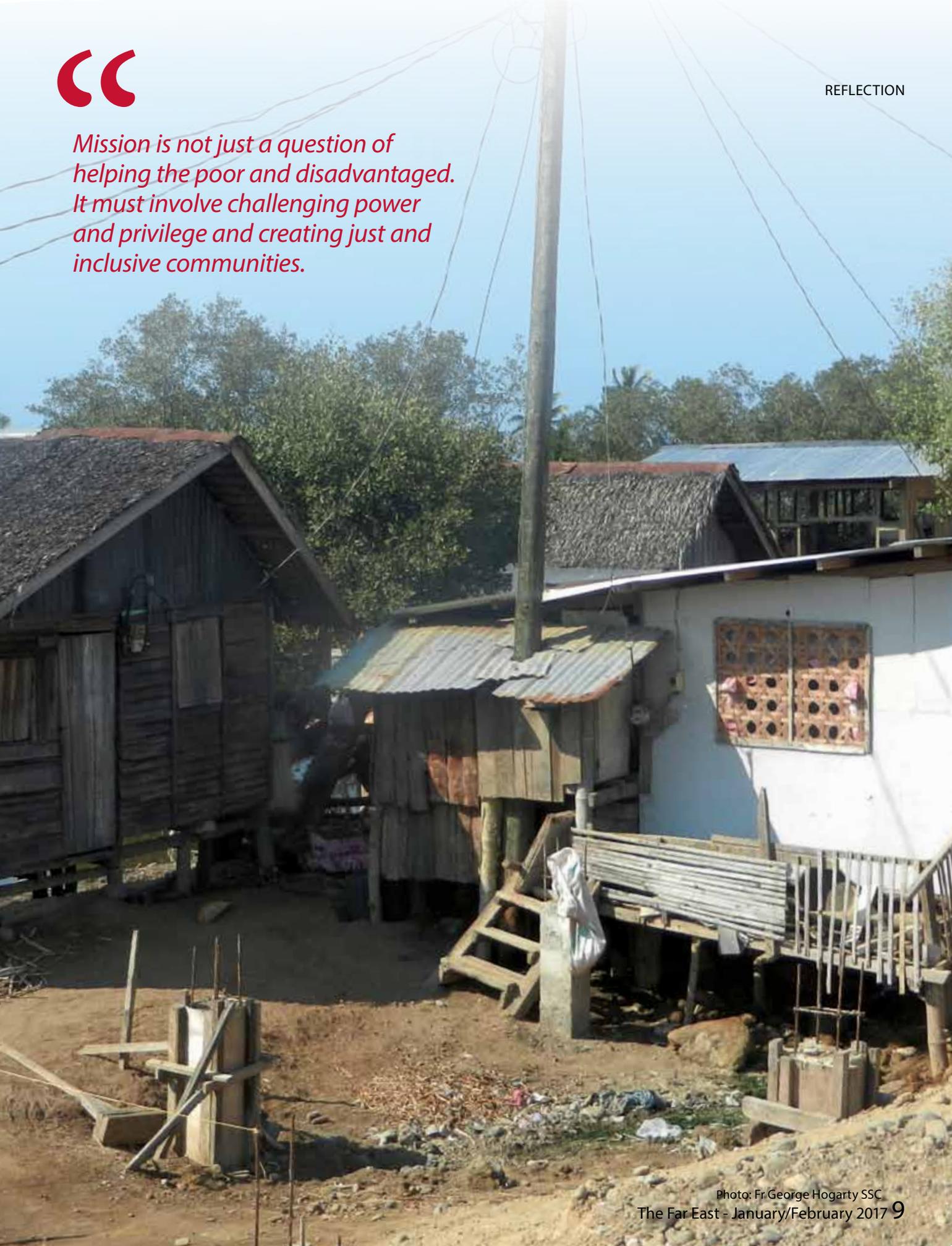
Mission is not just a question of helping the poor and disadvantaged. It must involve challenging power and privilege and creating just and inclusive communities. The centre has shifted to the margins.

---

*Columban Fr Noel Connolly SSC is a Columban missionary priest. He 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.*



*Mission is not just a question of helping the poor and disadvantaged. It must involve challenging power and privilege and creating just and inclusive communities.*



# Korean priests in the world's driest desert

FR DONAL O'KEEFFE

 On a September morning, I arrived in the city of Iquique in northern Chile on a flight from Santiago. I was coming to visit the Korean diocesan associate priests who work with the Columbans in a parish in the new city of Alto Hospicio which has formed in the hills above Iquique. It has grown from a small town of about 2,000 inhabitants in the early 1990s to a huge city today with over 100,000 inhabitants.

At the airport I was met by Fr Casimir Sung Woo-jin, a Korean associate priest working in Alto Hospicio. His companions are Fr Albinus Lee Chun-hyung, also an associate priest from Korea and Fr Michael Howe, a Columban from Ireland, with whom I had studied in the seminary in Ireland. They were all working together in the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As we drove in towards Iquique and then turned up the hill to Alto Hospicio, the dominant feature was the sand, the desert and the absence of any green vegetation. We were on the coastal line of the Atacama Desert, the driest place on earth. Alto Hospicio is just over six miles outside of Iquique and just under one half mile above sea level.

The Columbans have worked in Iquique since the 1970s and they moved up to Alto Hospicio in the 1990s. Over the years they have established three parishes in the city. Local church personnel now run two of the parishes, while the Columbans staff the parish of the Sacred Heart. The house where the three Columbans live is simple as was the fare. They accompany the people in their lives. Fr Albinus recalled the earthquake of April 1, 2014, when an earthquake measuring 8.2 on the Richter scale struck the city of Iquique at evening time. Several apartments were severely damaged, so the Columbans opened up one of the chapels as a temporary refuge.

The majority of the people in the parish have come from the interior which had been originally evangelized by the Spanish Friars who came down from Cusco in Peru. The friars visited only a few times a year, so the faith did not develop around the parish structure with regular Masses and education programs. Rather it is centered on devotion to saints, and shrines are everywhere. There is very low participation at Mass.

For Frs Albinus and Casimir fresh from working in a very different model of Church in Korea, this is a huge challenge. In Korea there are big attendances at parish Masses and the liturgies are very participative – diametrically opposite to the present reality in Alto Hospicio. Fr Albinus shared his struggle to recognize and accept those differences and he was very aware of the temptation of believing that his own cultural experience of Church is the only one.

In July the people leave on a pilgrimage to visit the Marian Shrine of 'La Tirana', which is situated out in the desert. At this time no one comes to Mass. We took a trip through the desert to visit this shrine. This is an area rich in



CHILE



KOREA

metallic resources including copper, gold, silver and iron as well as non-metallic minerals like lithium, sodium nitrate and potassium salts. Mining of course was the catalyst for opening up the area. It brought in explorers, entrepreneurs and of course people came to work in the mines. But it also opened up a new chapter of suffering and violence as workers were exploited in the mines.

Fr Casmir told me of the massacre of 1,000 miners by the police who were demanding better conditions back in 1901. Between 1879 and 1883 a war had been fought between Chile on one side and Peru and Bolivia on the other over these resources, the War of the Pacific. Today the desert is littered with abandoned nitrate mining towns, almost all of which shut down after the invention of synthetic nitrate at the turn of the 20th century.

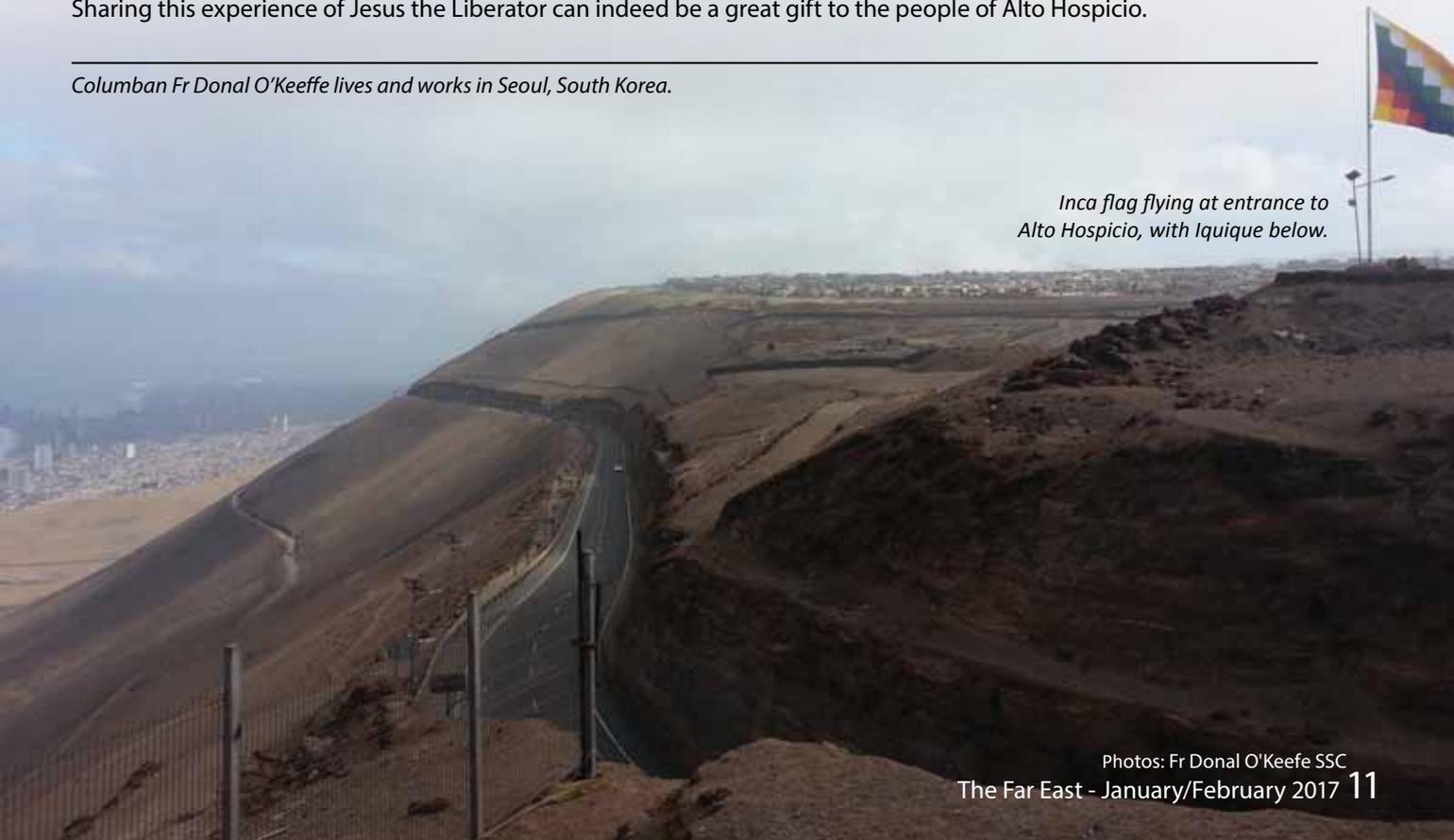
***Life is harsh in the desert and the devotion of the people to saints reflects the lives of the people, their history of suffering and struggle in a harsh environment.*** Everywhere Jesus is depicted with suffering features. In the famous Marian Shrine of 'La Tirana', Mary is seen as a mother standing with and protecting working miners. Very often all the images are pictured wrapped in the Chilean flag. The challenge now is to give depth and reinterpret the tradition so that it nurtures a faith which can help people in their lives today.

In many ways the Korean missionaries come from a background which gifts them, enables them to respond to these needs of the people here. The majority of the Korean martyrs, beatified by Pope Francis during his visit to Korea in 2014, come from Jeonju and Daejeon, the home dioceses of Frs Albinus and Casmir respectively. The faith in Korea is one which grew in the cauldron of persecution for the first 100 years of the Church, later in the struggle for liberation against Japan and more recently the struggle for democracy at the end of the 20th century. It is an experience of Jesus the Liberator, the one who walks with the poor in their daily struggles, the one who cares for the suffering. Sharing this experience of Jesus the Liberator can indeed be a great gift to the people of Alto Hospicio.

---

*Columban Fr Donal O'Keefe lives and works in Seoul, South Korea.*

*Inca flag flying at entrance to Alto Hospicio, with Iquique below.*



# Life was far from boring for me

## Columban Fr Charles O'Rourke shares with us memorable stories from his missionary life in Korea

*T*hinking back on my life in South Korea, there was the humdrum of daily living along with surprises and the excitement that went with being part of new things happening and the challenge of them. I went there about six years after the Korean War was over so the scene in the country was one of devastation, poverty and overcrowded living conditions. Seeing their broken spirits and suffering in the eyes of the people helped me to realize that this is where God wanted me to be. He wanted me to empathize with them and help them to experience the presence of God in the midst of all that was going on in their lives as victims of war and hatred.

As in everyone's life there have been bizarre incidents that have happened; some of them very sad and some of them rather humorous for me as I recall them now. One that comes to mind is about a young man for whom I was called in the middle of the day to administer the sacrament of the sick. When I arrived, as was the custom in Korea, he was lying on the floor and gasping for air. So I proceeded to anoint him asking God to heal whatever his problem was, thinking that it was possibly a heart attack.

As soon as I finished the prayers an old lady produced a rooster from the corner of that room and went to the sick man where she cut off the rooster's head and promptly stuck it in his mouth. When I saw this happen I was out the door like a shot as the blood was spurting everywhere. I peaked in and saw that the man immediately sat up choking on the blood. He was instantly cured! I found out later he had been hit in the Adam's apple by another man and wasn't suffering from a heart attack.

A few years later I was in a parish very near the seaside in Cheju Island about 50 yards from the water. Since there had been a storm the night before, the wind and waves were strong. It was a good day to go hunting for ducks that hovered on the coastline on such days. As I walked along the seaside, I came across a sizable fishing boat on its side in the water, apparently having capsized in the storm the night before.

When I arrived back at the rectory I learned that there were fifteen men on the boat and only one survivor who

had come to my place for something to eat and some dry clothes. He had taken refuge behind the craggy volcanic rock formation until daylight. Upon being asked how he survived that storm he told the story about his strong will to live because of the fact that he was due to be married the following week. So he threw a gas barrel into the sea to use as a float and hoped for the best since he did not know that the coast line was so near. The rest of the crew felt it was hopeless since they could not see the shore and didn't even try to survive. This story teaches me that God wants us to live and helps us survive in the midst of the storms in our life.

When I was in the southern city of Pusan, I was asked by the chaplain of the USS Midway aircraft carrier to take his place for Mass and confessions the following morning while he stayed on shore. At 7:00am, I was off with some of the Midway midshipmen to go out to the ship. Upon arriving at the stairway to go on board we were surprised to see the stairway all bashed because of heavy seas. The only way to board the ship was by rope ladder with three at a time going up this ladder while some of the men held it out from the side of the ship. It was only when I got halfway up did I realize that my legs were made of rubber! It was a feat for monkeys only.

Besides the pastoral work in the Korean parishes we were sometimes asked to help the military chaplains if we could. After arriving in Korea and while in language school, I was asked to offer Masses for the Air Force and so every Sunday I had the experience of flying in the different helicopters. It was usually three helicopter rides each Sunday to the different bases. That provided a great opportunity to take some great pictures of villages and the countryside from the air.

So life was far from boring for me as each day brought new ventures and experiences along with helping people to cope and grow in whatever situation they found themselves. God leads us all in different directions and it is up to us to try to respond to the call not to be selfish with our lives but to reach out to try to love the way God loves us.

---

*Columban Fr Charles O'Rourke lives and works at St Columbans, Nebraska, USA*

“

*Seeing their broken spirits and suffering in the eyes of the people helped me to realize that this is where God wanted me to be.*





# Missionary in China and pioneer of motion pictures

*R*ichard Ranaghan was born in Killough, Co. Down, Ireland in 1889. He was ordained in 1914 and ministered in the Diocese of Down and Connor until he joined the Columbans in 1917.

He worked initially in *The Far East* magazine office in Ireland. In 1918 he went to the US to do promotion work. In preparation for travel to China in 1920 he bought a motion picture camera. At that time motion pictures were still at a very early stage of development. Although funds were scarce, he received encouragement from Columban Superior General and co-founder Fr John Blowick who wrote to him on June 5, 1920: "*Be sure to get the movie camera and as much stuff for it as you can. It will be worth the little cost and the trouble.*" Fr E J McCarthy, the Columban Director in the US, provided the \$600 required for the equipment.

Fr Ranaghan was a member of the first group of Columbans who went to China in 1920. The boat journey to China provided him with the first opportunity to record Columban life on motion pictures.

Following Fr Ranaghan's arrival in China, Fr McCarthy wrote to him from the US about "*making history with the camera.*" Two years later, presumably following positive developments with his film clips in the US, Fr McCarthy continued his encouragement by writing:

*"The motion picture is the greatest means we have for propaganda. Nothing to beat it ... it brings China home better than a year's reading of The Far East magazine."*

From 1920 to 1924, Fr Ranaghan used more than 4,000 metres of film to record life in China. His recordings included the experiences of Columbans and the lives of

## Listen to: Missionary in China and pioneer of motion pictures



Columbans prepare for the 2018 Centenary

MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. COLUMBAN

Sharing Gospel Joy



CHINA

people in both rural and urban settings. This includes rare footage of a procession of bishops in front of St Ignatius Cathedral, Shanghai during the 1924 Synod of Bishops.

Pope Pius XI declared 1925 to be a Jubilee Year in the Church. During that year a missionary exhibition was held in Rome. Many missionary communities, including the Columbans, had displays at the exhibition. Fr Ranaghan was responsible for the Columban display and showed visitors his motion pictures about the Church's mission in China. These film clips, the only ones of their kind at the exhibition, were a unique attraction and even attracted favourable comment from Pope Pius XI.

Following the missionary exhibition in Rome, Fr Ranaghan went to the US where he continued his involvement in promotion work, relying heavily on the use of film clips to communicate an understanding of the Church's missionary outreach in China.

In the early 1930s Fr Ranaghan began to edit his film material. In cooperation with Fidelity Production Co. of New York, a film named *'Heralds of Dawn'* was produced. The film was released on December 21, 1932. Columban funds were scarce at the time due to the economic depression in the US. However, Columban priests contributed their own money towards the production of the film, which cost \$800. Unfortunately we do not have a copy of that film. Fidelity Production Co. is no longer in existence. Presumably it was taken over, along with its archives, by a larger film company, a common event in the early years of the film industry.

By the mid-1930s technology had developed to the point where it became possible to have motion pictures with recorded sound. At this time Fr Ranaghan began work on producing a new film named *'Cross and Dragon'*. It is a clever piece of film production because it has footage from the early 1920s with appropriate sound added for people's voices and street music as needed.

Suggestions were made at the time that it would be good to have sacred music as part of the film. Fr Ranaghan met a relatively unknown young singer named Bing Crosby who agreed to sing a number of hymns with well-known band leader, Guy Lombardo, for the new film. Bing Crosby believed that the hymns should be recorded onto a vinyl disc and sold during mission promotion events. One of the hymns on the vinyl disc, but not in the film, is *Silent Night*.



Fr Richard Ranaghan 1889 - 1937.

This is Bing Crosby's first recording of the hymn that later became one of his trademark pieces.

Fr Ranaghan died when his car skidded off the road on October 20, 1937 while returning to the Columban House in Omaha following promotion work in Iowa.

Film reel material used in the early years of motion picture was chemically unstable and therefore difficult to preserve for long periods of time. Unfortunately, the majority of Fr Ranaghan's film archive deteriorated over time. Most of his collection was eventually discarded with the close of the Columban house in Denver, Colorado (possibly in the 1970s).

The footage contained in *'Cross and Dragon'* is of a high quality. It shows Fr Ranaghan's skills as a filmmaker, particularly his understanding of panning the camera while recording, a technique that remains important in modern filmmaking. ***Apart from his creativity in being a pioneer of motion pictures, the narration by Fr Ranaghan also shows his great belief in the Church's mission in China as well as his deep love for the Chinese people, whom he describes as being "made in the image and likeness of God."***



# 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.*

## *The trial for the murder of Shahbaz Bhatti is moving slowly*

*T*he Anti-terrorism Military Court in Islamabad issued a forced subpoena for seven witnesses who did not present themselves in the trial for the murder of the government minister Shahbaz Bhatti, who was killed on March 2, 2011 in Islamabad. Bhatti, a Catholic, was the Federal Minister for Minority Affairs, the only Christian in the cabinet and an outspoken critic of Pakistan's blasphemy laws.

*"Five years have gone by and the Pakistani justice is moving slowly. The murderers of the Catholic minister have not been brought to justice",* notes a source of Fides.

Well-known defender of human rights in Pakistan, Bhatti was brutally murdered in Islamabad while he was in his car near his home. The murder was claimed by the terrorist group 'Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan', who left a leaflet describing him as 'a Christian infidel' at the scene of the crime.

*"Since the killing of Bhatti, the political leadership in Pakistan has not been doing enough to ask the police and the judiciary to ensure his killers are brought to justice",* noted the same source. Christians in Pakistan fear impunity for the killers.

In 2015 the case was transferred to a military court. Before this happened however, the man who confessed to the murder of Bhatti, Umer Abdullah, had been released on bail in 2014 by an earlier court. This same man is accused of killing in 2013, Chaudary Zulfiqar, the prosecutor in the case of the murder of Pakistani leader Benazir Bhutto. Abdullah is now paralysed as a result of being shot in the back by the prosecutor's body guards. His release on bail was for medical reasons.

Among the other suspects arrested for Bhatti's murder, Zia-ul-Rehman was acquitted in May 2012 for lack of evidence. In August 2013 Hammad Adil and Muhammad Tanveer, two militants of the 'Tehreek-e-Taliban' group, were arrested by the police for the attempted attack on a Shiite mosque. During the investigation Adil confessed to having organized and carried out the murder of Shahbaz Bhatti, with Muhammad Tanveer and Umer Abdullah's car. According to investigators, Adil guarded Bhatti's house and prepared the plan, while Tanveer provided the AK-47 rifles and other weapons used in the ambush.



*People rallying to condemn the death of Shahbaz Bhatti in Karachi, Pakistan, March 2, 2011.*

*Agenzia Fides - Islamabad, Pakistan November 30, 2016*

## **Mission Intention for January**

That all Christians may be faithful to the Lord's teaching by striving with prayer and fraternal charity to restore ecclesial communion and by collaborating to meet the challenges facing humanity.

## **Mission Intention for February**

That all those who are afflicted, especially the poor, refugees, and marginalized, may find welcome and comfort in our communities.



# From the Director

## Lord to whom shall we go?

I am in my last year as the Regional Director of the Columbans in Australia and New Zealand. I finish up on St Columban's Day, November 23, 2017. Naturally I am thinking of what I will do after this job. I must admit, that in my life as a Columban missionary, the appointments I have received have turned out well, much better than I could have anticipated.

At present there are a few Columbans returning to the ANZ Region to retire. No doubt each one of them has been doing a lot of thinking about their retirement. There will be hurdles to cross, not only because of the retirement issue, but the actual 'returning home'.

It isn't always an easy transition. For those who have lived in another country for many years, including missionaries, the experience leaves its impression and changes them whether they know it or not.

While everyone is happy to be home and united with family and friends, there is often a relief when visits come to an end. As the Latin phrase says, '*Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis*' 'Times change and we change with them'.

Living different lives and coping with different realities takes its toll. I remember hearing stories of Columbans going home from countries like Chile, then under the Pinochet regime and the Philippines under the Marcos regime. They had experienced fear, violence and uncertainty. They were changed and their families had difficulty understanding that change. Today we have very few missionaries living in dangerous situations, thank God.

*As the Latin phrase says, 'Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis' 'Times change and we change with them'.*

*Living different lives and coping with different realities takes its toll.*

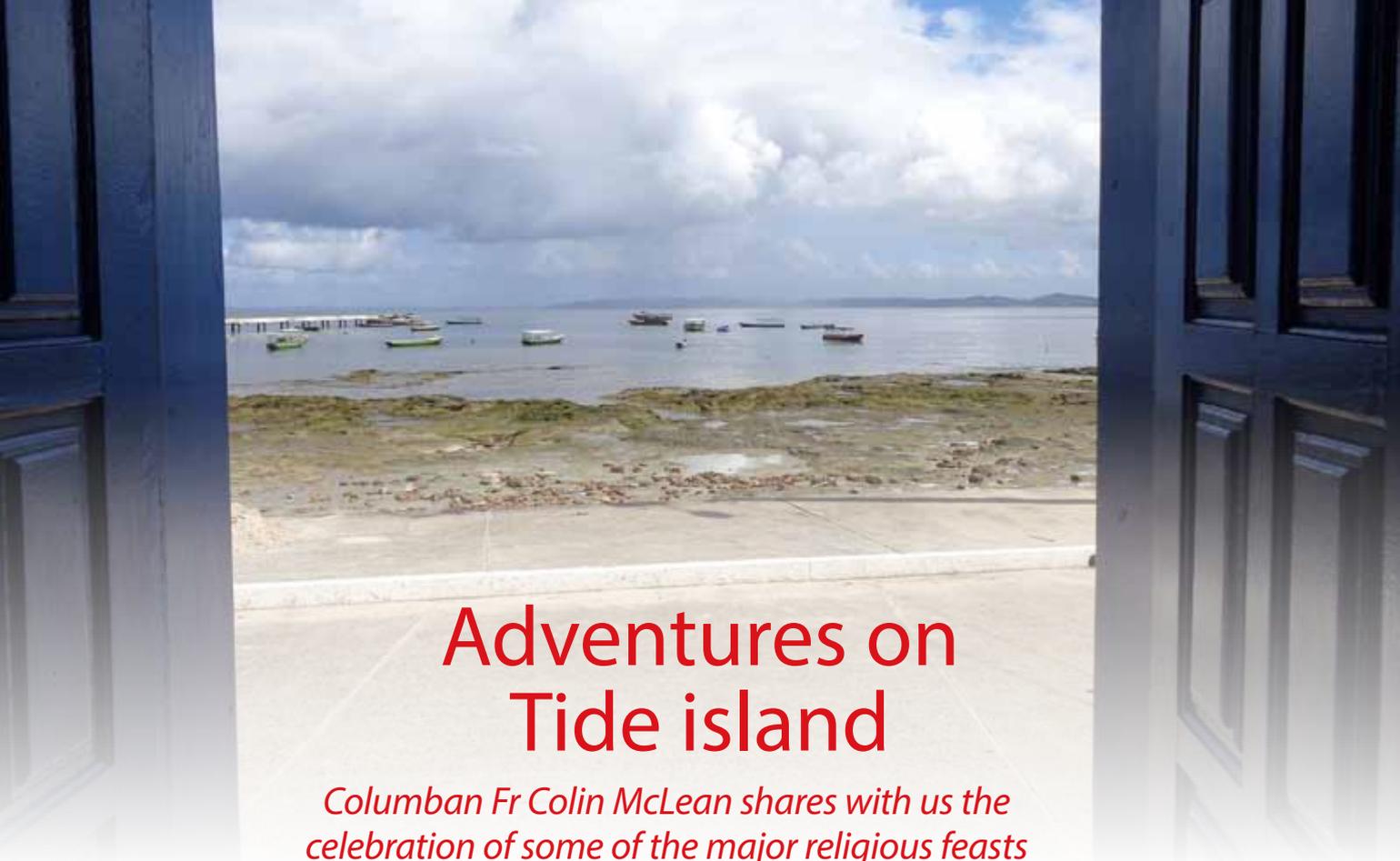
While some Columbans choose to stay in the country where they have spent most of their lives, there are others returning home permanently. The transition can be a challenge. The Columban Society offers them assistance to make the move. There are courses where those returning can share their sense of dislocation with others who have experienced the very same hurdles.

It is important for all of us to recognise the richness of living and being confused in another culture; to learn that there are many different ways to solve problems and deal with situations. It requires change and stretches anyone who embraces the challenge.

I ask you to pray for the Columbans who are returning home and for those who have chosen to retire in the countries where they have been on mission for many years. May they enjoy peace and tranquillity in this new stage of their lives. God bless them.

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

Fr Gary Walker  
director@columban.org.au



# Adventures on Tide island

*Columban Fr Colin McLean shares with us the celebration of some of the major religious feasts during 2016 on 'Tide Island', an island off the coast of Salvador, in north east Brazil.*

## The Atlantic ocean's influence

Island life is shaped by the ocean. The weather determines whether you can cross to the island from the mainland, a jetty at São Tomé de Paripe, and the tides determine when people can cross from the community of Praia Grande to the community of Santana and from Santana to the community of Nossa Senhora das Neves. The church of Nossa Senhora das Neves (*Our Lady of the Snows*) is reputedly the third oldest church in Brazil. There are six other communities on the island, all reachable by motorized canoes that take between five and eight people, and a few larger boats that can take up to 50 people. My usual mode of travel to the island communities, a trip of 40-45 minutes, is by motorized canoe. When the weather is bad, especially when there is a strong wind, it becomes dangerous to cross from the mainland to the island, especially in the small motorized canoes. The ocean also induces the three largest communities to have processions using boats on the sea to celebrate major feasts.

## Way of the Cross, March 25, 2016

I had planned to dramatize a modern *Way of the Cross* (based on the Brazilian Bishops annual Lenten Social Action theme) in the community of Praia Grande on Good Friday morning, March 25, which we had marked for 7am (later than that mothers are already cooking the fish for the traditional family get-together at Good Friday lunch, a big deal here in Salvador). After one night's rehearsal, all the actors arrived eagerly for the presentation at 7:00am on Good Friday, but no one arrived to accompany them in the procession, so we decided to call it off and reschedule it for the following Friday night, since various people told us they had prayed a version of the *Way of the Cross* during Lent on Friday nights and this would be better.

So, Friday night, April 1, a good group of about 25-30 people arrived to accompany the *Way of the Cross*, but only two of the actors arrived! We called it quits and decided to plan it better for next year.



## Corpus Christi, May 26, 2016

I had three very different days over the Corpus Christi feast. On the morning of Corpus Christi (May 26, 2016), I had a few qualms crossing the bay in the usual motorized canoe when I saw the sea a bit choppy. But I decided not to call it off as I had suggested to the two communities between which we would have the procession that they decorate the floors of their churches with designs made from sand, sawdust etc, and I didn't want to disappoint them.

Oh boy, what a trip out! While I can swim and wasn't afraid of drowning, I was a bit nervous that the canoe would overturn!! The three people with me though, who were from the island, sat calmly without even holding on to anything, while I was clinging to a post in the canoe so as not to fall out! Once on the island, where I learned the communities had been almost sure I wouldn't arrive because of the rough sea, they praised my courage, so I got brownie points for that! It also allows me to say "no" next time and not appear a "scaredy cat" if the sea seems even a bit rough.

Anyhow, the Mass in the community of Praia Grande, the procession along the beach and the concluding Benediction in the community of Santana went off really well, especially considering it was the first time for them and for me. As we walked along the somewhat rocky beach (I was carrying the Monstrance with the Eucharist), there was a bit of light rain, not really bothersome, but I couldn't repress a smile when someone opened an umbrella to protect me and the Monstrance. More the Monstrance than me I suspect! During the procession I kept looking out to the sea thinking of the marvelous Salvador Dali painting of *The Last Supper*, in which the bread and wine and the physical body of Jesus all merge with the scene of natural elements outside the glass-walled room in the painting. By the afternoon, the sea was rougher, so no canoes were going back to the mainland. I was told there would be a larger boat at 6am the next morning, which I was determined to be on or I could be stranded for several days.

Next morning, May 27, I got to the small jetty about half an hour before the "larger" boat was due to arrive, so it was still dark. When it did arrive, I couldn't help thinking it wasn't that big! Due to a cold wind blowing I decided to sit downstairs on the boat. Normally, I would have sat upstairs, so that if the boat tipped, I could throw myself off and try to swim away. But the cold wind forced me into the protection of the lower deck. My God, what a trip that was!

The boat lurched from side to side and at times I was looking straight at the waves just inches below the small open windows. If the water came in, we wouldn't be able to get out fast. Meanwhile, the island people aboard were totally unconcerned, and one elderly woman actually dozed!! That gave me a bit of confidence – they were probably used to this. When we got within sight of the mainland, the engine stopped, and we drifted 180 degrees before they got it going again. You can imagine my relief to finally get onto the jetty at São Tomé (*mainland*). I do not get seasick, but I was a bit concerned, maybe even "scared", you could say. But being up on top would have been worse, because the lurching would be felt more. So I called those two trips (going out in the motorized canoe and returning in the "bigger" boat) my "baptism of fire by the ocean".

The day after that traumatic boat trip, May 28, I had another Mass in another island community called Botelho. The sea was still a bit choppy and had I been alone, I probably would have chickened out. However, I was with two guys from Paripe parish, who often accompany me, so we decided to go ahead. Coming back after the Mass, the sea was still a bit choppy but not too bad. We got back okay but, as I was about to disembark, I put my left hand on the side of the boat to secure myself as I stood up. Right at that moment, due to the sea being a bit agitated, the boat slammed against another one with my hand between the two. Result? A finger on my left hand was split open. It looked worse than it actually felt. I was literally looking at the inside of my split finger! Hypnotically fascinating but yucky at the same time. The two guys with me drove me to a nearby hospital, where I got five stitches in the finger. I called that my "baptism of blood". So in three days I was baptized by fire and by blood! Not bad going, eh?



Fr. Colin McLean at Mass with local acolytes from the island.

## Feast of St Anthony of Padua, June 13, 2016

At least I had a plus for the feast of Santo Antônio. For months I had been suggesting the community of Botelho have a procession after the Mass, but the two women leaders of the community kept saying, "*Não dá certo, não*" ("It won't work" meaning people won't be interested to participate, since we haven't done it before). They keep complaining about the strong influence of evangelical Protestants on the island, so I insisted we need to show that we Catholics have a strong presence there also. I virtually shamed them into a procession, saying I would carry the statue of St Anthony if we couldn't borrow a wooden processional platform from one of the other communities, even if only five people followed behind me. While I am not big on processions, when it comes to competition with the evangelicals, I can rise to the task! It was a relatively short course and it was a great success. The only common complaint was that it was too short!! My response was "Today we made history and we walked. We marked our presence. Next year we will run!", which got a great ovation. So it was nice to have a couple of successes from my suggestions, despite the trials I had to go through to have them! On July 3 (Feast of St. Peter), I'm trying to organize a special Mass in honour of the fishermen and sailors who pilot the motorized canoes. It will be in the main square of the community of Santana. I intend to use a canoe for the altar, which will be in front of a small hall the fishermen use for meetings and functions. So I am hoping the weather will be kind to us. If the weather is bad and I cannot get out to the island, we will just reschedule the Mass.

## Feast of St Peter, July 3, 2016

With the two companions who were with me when my finger was crushed, I set out to celebrate the Mass of St Peter for the fishermen in Santana on Sunday, July 3. During the week I had called a contact on the island, who assured me that all was well, that the fishermen's cooperative was okay with us celebrating Mass in front of their meeting hall, with a small canoe as the altar. If it was raining we could celebrate inside the hall. We preferred outside if possible so as to attract more attention from those who normally don't frequent the church.

When we arrived on the island, the hall was closed, and no one was around, so we headed for the church. An older woman was there doing some cleaning. She told us nothing had been finalized with the fishermen's hall, and that even some of the younger women who organized the usual Sunday Masses in the church had left the island for the day. We were prepared to leave for the mainland when a group of people from the nearby Praia Grande community arrived to participate in what was to have been the historic St Peter the fisherman's Mass.

After some discussion, guided by our arranged leave for 11:00am, we decided on a Celebration of the Word with Communion. As we were finishing, some of the younger people, who usually prepare the Mass in that community, arrived and were upset at the miscommunication all round. No one was more mystified than the three of us from the mainland. I had bought an image of St Peter for the Mass, thinking we could have a procession afterwards! No go.

We decided I will bless the image of St Peter at the Festa Mass of Santana (*St Anne*) on their feast day, July 26, that the image will stay in that community until next year, and that we will have a raffle to decide which community will host the Feast of St Peter next year. There are so many fishermen and motorized canoe pilots on the island that I am determined to reach out to them via the fishermen's feast of St Peter.



*So in three days I was baptized  
by fire and by blood! Not bad  
going, eh?*





Nearly all the Masses in poor communities of Salvador at the moment are frequented mostly by women. I hope that in time we can make Jesus and his message appealing to men also, at least on the island. I am sure Jesus walked the shores of the Sea of Galilee, learned the talk of the fishermen, and entered their world before he chose some of them as disciples. We need to find a way to engage those, especially men and our youth, who do not come to church, and ask "Why?" Pope Francis is leading the way, but how many of us are ready to go with him out of our comfort zones? Next month (August) I am hoping to start up some biblical study groups in island communities to give a bit of sorely-needed formation. So the rest of 2016, depending always on the weather (!!!), could be a busy time for me. I have never really been in a situation before where one is totally dependent on the weather to get to the island, and also on the tides (to be able to walk from one community to another) on the island!! So my new lifestyle, "transition to retirement" began last year, when I turned 70. On reflection, it is interesting that when I turned 40 I came to Brazil, and when I turned 70 I began the Tide Island Apostolate!!!!

---

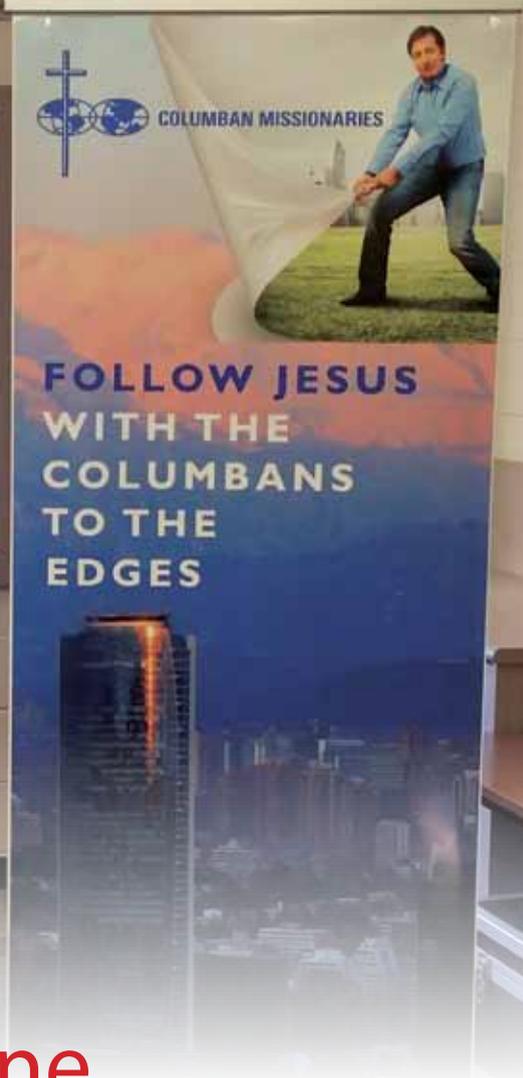
*Columban Fr Colin McLean has worked in Brazil since 1986. Today he is the priest in charge of Tide Island and other island communities off Salvador in north east Brazil.*

*One of the boats used to transport the people between Tide Island and the mainland.*



*I am sure Jesus walked the shores of the Sea of Galilee, learned the talk of the fishermen, and entered their world before he chose some of them as disciples.*





# Mission Expo Melbourne

Mercy in Action, November 24, 2016

ASSUNTA ARENA

Each year the Melbourne Archdiocesan Office for Youth organizes a Mission Expo which is held at the Cardinal Knox Centre, next to St Patrick's Cathedral. It is organised to showcase a range of Catholic organisations that offer young people an opportunity to engage in Mission, both locally (in the midst of work, school and family life) and further afield such as a short term mission experience overseas.

Columban Fr Daniel Harding, the Editor of *The Far East* magazine and I attended the event and presented the works of Columban. We promoted the Short Term Mission Experience to Chile, inviting interested candidates to take home the promotional material and consider this opportunity. A young man from Canberra, is currently participating in a Short Term Mission Experience in Santiago, Chile.

Many young people also signed up for the Columban E-News and were more than happy to take home a copy of *The Far East* magazine.

***The Mission Expo was a great opportunity to network with the other 28 organisations that participated, including Catholic Mission and Caritas, as well as with the many young adults who attended.***

---

*Assunta Arena currently works at the Columban Mission Centre in Essendon as the Marketing & Communications Co-ordinator and is the designer of The Far East magazine.*



# YOU HAVE BEEN INVITED



COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

## Your Columban Legacy

*"Do what you can"* Bishop Edward J Galvin

### Remember Columbans 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.*

*By leaving a Gift to Columban Missionaries in your Will you become a partner in our work and you are leaving a lasting legacy for the future.*

*Why not speak to your lawyer about it?*

#### FORM OF WILL

"I give and bequeath the sum of \$..... to the Regional Director for Australia (NZ Wills: The Superior of New Zealand) of St Columbans Mission Society to be used for that Society's general purposes as the Regional Director (NZ Wills: The Superior of New Zealand) sees fit.

**AUSTRALIA:** PH: (03) 9375 9475 E: bequest@columban.org.au www.columban.org.au  
**NZ:** PH: (04) 567 7216 E: columban@iconz.co.nz www.columban.org.au



COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

PO Box 752 Niddrie Victoria Australia 3042  
bequest@columban.org.au

### YOUR COLUMBAN LEGACY

Will information request

*Please fill in your details below if you would like to receive further information about Your Columban Legacy:*

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ P/Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

www.columban.org.au



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

Australia Brazil Britain Chile China Fiji Ireland Japan Korea Myanmar  
New Zealand Pakistan Peru Philippines Taiwan United States

[www.columban.org.au](http://www.columban.org.au)

**SHOP ONLINE TODAY**  
Purchase Columban products online at [www.columban.org.au](http://www.columban.org.au)

## Adventures on Tide Island - Brazil



Photo: Fr Colin McLean SSC

Every Sunday and major feast, Columban Fr Colin McLean travels by motorized canoe to "Tide Island", off the coast of Salvador in north-east Brazil. Fr Colin visits the three island communities of fishing families in order to celebrate the Eucharist, to offer them pastoral care and formation in the faith.

**With your help**, Fr Colin can continue to reach these island communities. (See pages 18-21)



Thank you for supporting **COLUMBAN MISSION**

**The Far East Subscription** (\$15.00 per year)

**My gift to the Columbans:**

\$40  \$70  \$120  \$240 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**I wish to donate on a REGULAR BASIS**

QUARTERLY  MONTHLY

**2017 Columban Calendar** (\$11.00 inc. GST & postage AUS) QTY   
(\$14.00 inc. GST & postage NZ)

**I send my gift by:**

Cheque/Money order (*Pay St Columbans Mission Society*)

Visa  Mastercard

Credit card number:

Card holder name: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

To help us to be cost effective please provide your email address below:

**Email:**

An acknowledgement will be sent by email.

**Your Columban legacy:**

Please send me information on Columban legacy

I have included the Columbans in my Will

**Total Amount Enclosed**

Please fill in your details below:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ P/Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY  
TFE@columban.org.au

**AUSTRALIA return coupon to:** St Columban's Mission Society,  
PO Box 752, Niddrie VIC 3042 **A.B.N.** 17 686 524 625  
**NEW ZEALAND return coupon to:** St Columban's Mission Society,  
PO Box 30-017, Lower Hutt 5040

