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# 2019

## Annual Report

St Columbans Mission Society

*Front cover: Columban Fr Lee Jehoon Augustine (4th from the left) with parishioners during a family celebration (Myanmar)  
Photos: Missionary Society of St Columban*

## Section 1 | Annual report from Australia/New Zealand

### From the Director report

Dear Columban Friends,

In 2018 the *Missionary Society of St Columban* began celebrating 100 years since its foundation on the Feast of St Columban November 23. It was an occasion to recall what inspired the early Columban pioneers and what they achieved and to thank the hundreds of thousands of benefactors whose sacrifices over one hundred years made it all possible. More than 12,000 benefactors were issued with 'Certificates of Appreciation' as our way of thanking them personally.

Events including Masses, Lectures on '*Mission Today and Tomorrow*' and benefactor gatherings took place throughout Australia and New Zealand. Twenty three Columban supporters travelled to China to enter into the world where Bishop Galvin and his young priests began the *Mission of St Columban* 100 years ago. This was the first ever Columban pilgrimage to China from the Australia/New Zealand (ANZ) Region. Our mid-year appeal focussed on the centenary and resulted in a positive result that was possibly influenced by the 'Certificates of Appreciation' as well as the events.

The year saw five Columbans celebrate their 40th anniversary of ordination and four Columbans celebrate their 50th year of ordination.

Fr Leo Baker, who spent most of his missionary life in Japan also celebrated 70 years of priestly ministry. During the year he passed away and many of his friends attended a wonderful funeral held in the chapel of our house in Melbourne. The Mass was led by his two brothers, also Columban, Chris and Pat. It was a privilege to be with these three men at that special time.

Fr Noel Connolly was elected as a member of the Facilitation Team for the *Plenary Council* in Australia. He said that he was humbled by the opportunity to be a part of the *Plenary Council* process of listening, dialogue, consultation and discernment.

During the year we welcomed back to Australia Fr Chris Baker from Peru, Fr Jim Mulrone from Hong Kong and back to New Zealand Fr Paul Finlayson from the Philippines.

At the General Assembly in Taiwan the Director of the ANZ Region, Columban Fr Brian Vale was elected to the General Council as Vicar General. He had been

the ANZ Director for less than twelve months. On November 23, 2018, I was appointed as Regional Director for ANZ with Fr Patrick McInerney as Vice Director.



On March 15, 2019 50 Muslim worshippers were brutally murdered in Christchurch whilst praying at their mosques. Fr Patrick McInerney, the Director of the *Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations* and a staff member immediately headed to evening prayers at Lakemba Mosque, Sydney to stand in solidarity with a shocked and grief-stricken congregation. In New Zealand the Mission Coordinator, Fr Tom Rouse, Frs Paul Finlayson and Don Hornsey were invited to pray with their Muslim brothers in a nearby mosque. Fr Tom said that he would never have imagined that one day he would join with Muslims in New Zealand and pray together in their place of prayer.

The Columban house, North Park Mansion, built in 1888 and a heritage listed treasure in Essendon was show cased yet again for the Moonee Valley Art Show. More than 200 pieces of art were displayed giving amateur and professional artists the opportunity to present their work at the event.

In Melbourne we have the *Columban Mission Centre* whose primary aim is to promote Columban Mission and to raise funds. We have professional lay people responsible for the publication of *The Far East* magazine and the iconic *Columban Art Calendar*. These people are essential to our mission and I am pleased to be able to acknowledge them.

I pray that God will continue to bless us and all of those who support us in our carrying on the mission here in Australia and New Zealand and across the 14 countries that we work in.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Trotter'.

Fr Trevor Trotter  
Regional Director ANZ Region  
director@columban.org.au

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St Columbans Mission Society

## Section 1 | Annual report from Australia/New Zealand

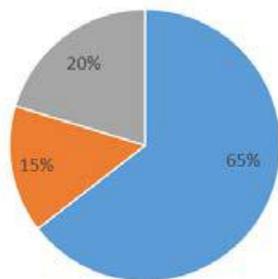
### Financial summary

During the year ended March 31, 2019 Columban benefactors donated \$2,599,555 (2018: \$3,657,351) to support the work of Columbans in Australia and overseas. The reduction in total donations received in 2019 can be sourced to the drop in bequests. In the 2019 year bequests made up 54% (2018: 66%) of donation income.

The pie chart below provides a high-level breakdown of how donations received in the 2019 year were expended.

Application of donations received in 2019 year

- Overseas Mission
- Mission in Australia
- Net Administration Costs



**Overseas Mission Funds** are remitted to the Society's General Council. The General Council allocates the funds received from Australia, Britain, Ireland, New Zealand and USA to the overseas mission units that require financial support.

**Mission in Australia** expenditure covers the work of Columbans in Australia. Income earned by Columbans and any contributions made to the Society by Columbans are used to reduce Mission in Australia costs. Also included is the financial support for the work of *Peace Ecology and Justice*, the *Columban Centre for Christian Muslim Relations*, the cost (net of subscription revenue) to publish *The Far East* magazine and the surplus from the sale of the *2019 Columban Art Calendar*.

Net Administration Costs is inclusive of the expenditure to administer the Society and its membership and the activities of the regional office located at Essendon in Victoria. Interest income has been allocated against this cost.



*Columban Missionary Sr Rebecca Conlon  
embracing the people of Sindh, Pakistan.*

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Photo: Missionary Society of St Columban

## Section 1 | Annual report from Australia/New Zealand

### Thank you

We thank all Columban friends who so generously supported us during the 2018/19 year.

We also acknowledge the following Archdiocese, dioceses and parish priests who gave us permission to promote The Far East magazine in their parishes.

- Ballarat Diocese
- Broken Bay Diocese
- Sale Diocese

### Your Columban Legacy

St Columbans Mission Society has been able to work with the poor in many countries throughout Asia and South America because generous people had the vision to contribute to our work through a gift in their Will.

We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of all those who left a gift to the St Columbans Mission Society during the 2018/19 year.

### Vocations

Missionary priests are as needed today as ever they were in the past to bring Christ to the nations of the Earth. As Columban benefactors and friends, you can help promote vocations to the priesthood through your prayers, and by actively promoting priestly vocations amongst young people.



## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Mission statement

The Missionary Society of St Columban is sent by the Church to proclaim and witness to the Good News in Jesus Christ. We cross boundaries of country, language and culture and live in solidarity with the poor and the exploited earth:

- To establish the Church among peoples to whom the Gospel has not been preached;
- To help churches mature until they are able to evangelize their own and other peoples;
- To promote dialogue between Christians and those of other religious traditions;
- To facilitate interchange between local churches especially those from which we come and those to which we are sent.
- To foster in local churches an awareness of their missionary responsibility.

We are called to build collaborative relationships with our supporters in order to nurture their faith and provide spiritual and financial support for Columban missionary ministries.



*"The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God."*

Leviticus 19:34

Columban Lay Missionary, Joan Yap, facilitates an art activity with the residents of the female shelter at the Hope Workers' Center for migrants, Taiwan.



## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Letter from the Superior General

Dear Friends and Partners in Columban Mission,

Columban missionaries see ourselves as migrants for Christ. In response to God's call, we leave family, friends and homeland to share the Good News of God's unconditional love with people in other lands. As cross-cultural missionaries, we struggle to adapt to another culture and to learn a new language. At times we experience loneliness, anxiety and frustration. Moreover, we learn to accept the fact that, no matter how well we adapt ourselves to the lives of the local people, we will always be viewed as outsiders and foreigners.

While these experiences are sometimes painful, they are also blessings. Being a migrant missionary means that we develop a heart that is capable of empathizing with other migrants, most of whom carry much heavier burdens than we do. The vast majority of migrants would prefer to stay in their home country, but corruption, poverty and violence compel them to move. When Columban missionaries encounter migrants in other countries, we easily sense their loneliness, anxieties and frustrations. We also learn about the discrimination, rejection and hostility that they endure in their workplace as well as on the streets.

A dominant theme in the pages of this Annual Report is the response of Columban missionaries to migrants. In Seoul, Columban missionaries provide spiritual and material support to refugees from North Korea. On the other side of the globe, Columban missionaries in Peru and Chile continue to do likewise in response to the large influx of migrants from Venezuela as a result of the collapse of the economy of that country. In Britain, Columban lay missionaries are engaged in a collaborative effort with other organizations, including the archdiocese of Birmingham, to provide shelter and support services to destitute, female asylum seekers. Across the water, in Ireland, Columban missionaries and co-workers are engaged with migrants of different faith traditions through the *Dublin City Interfaith Forum*.

One of the major challenges facing migrants everywhere is finding a place and a community where they can belong, feel safe and respected. For many Catholics, the nearest church is that place. Columbans ministering in parishes in Mexico, Chile and Peru emphasize to the local Catholic community the importance of welcoming migrants, seeing them as a gift, and working together with them to

build up the Body of Christ. Migrants from Latin America who are living in New Zealand are delighted to discover that there is a weekly Mass in Spanish at the Columban house in Lower Hutt. Some of the North Korean refugees who have attended Mass in Seoul value the sense of belonging that they feel in the Catholic community and become curious about our Christian faith. On the other hand, migrants from various religious traditions are provided with opportunities to share their own faith and learn about the faith of other migrants at Dalgan Park, the home of Columban missionaries in Ireland.



These are just a few examples of what you will learn in the pages that follow about how Columban missionaries minister to migrants. During this past year, we have welcomed strangers, fed the hungry, comforted the lonely, and nourished the dispirited. Thanks to your generosity and prayers, we have discovered once more that being migrant missionaries makes us a blessing to our fellow migrants as they move across the world. Indeed, all of us are on the same faith journey in search of our true homeland.

*Rev. Jim Mulroy, SAC*

Fr Jim Mulroy  
Superior General  
Missionary Society of St Columban

## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Missionary summary

As missionary disciples of Jesus, we are called to heal, reconcile, build bridges, and create mutual understanding through prophetic dialogue. Our commitment to interculturality, inter-faith dialogue, solidarity with marginalized people and the exploited earth are ways to participate in God's mission, calling us forward into communion with our triune God. Our proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus challenges us to build communities of peace.



Evangelization and education    Solidarity with the poor    Vocations



Inter-religious dialogue    Justice and peace    Integrity of creation

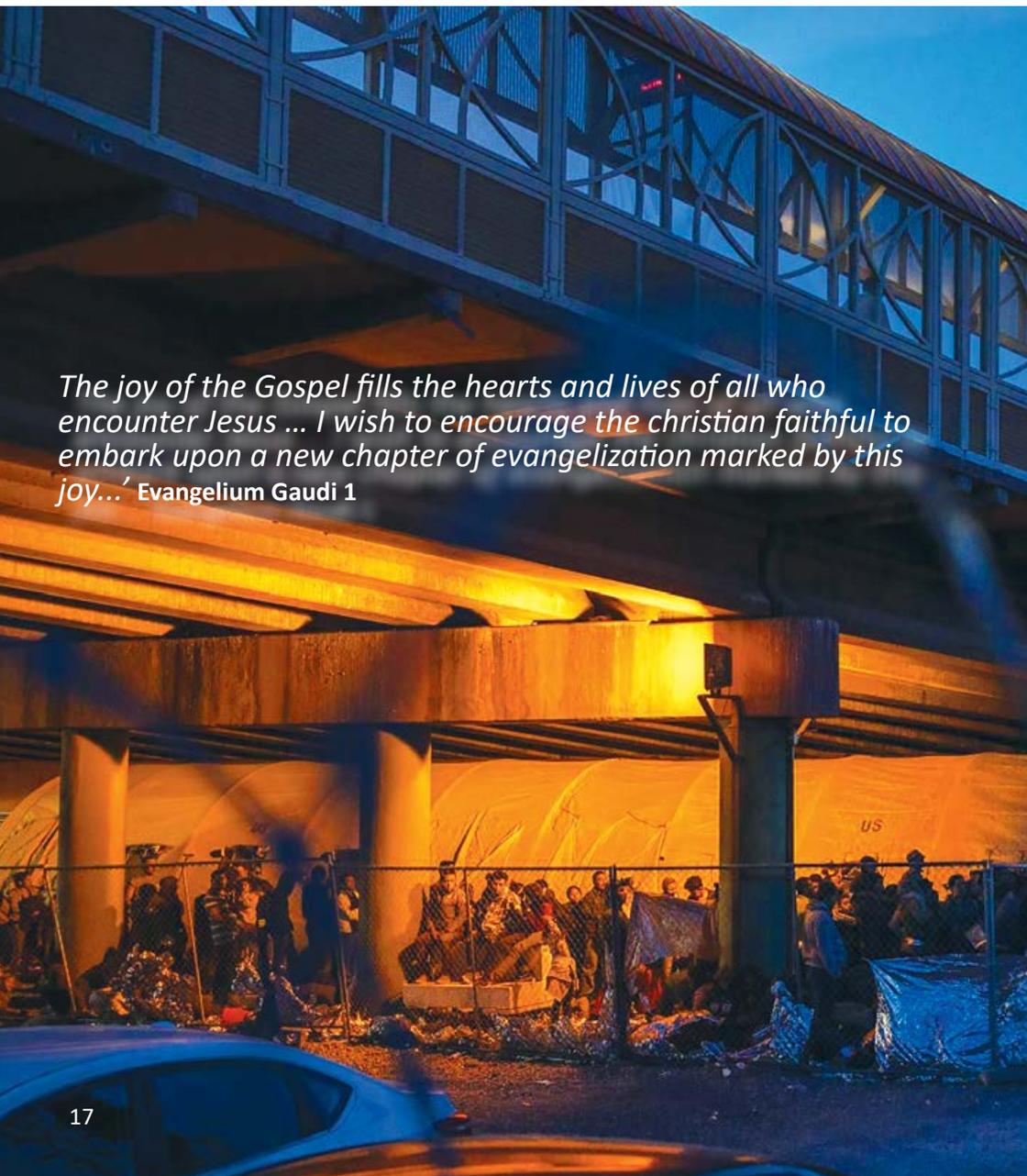
Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

Where we work



 AUSTRALIA	 FIJI	 MYANMAR	 PHILIPPINES
 BRITAIN	 IRELAND	 NEW ZEALAND	 TAIWAN
 CHILE	 JAPAN	 PAKISTAN	 UNITED STATES
 CHINA	 SOUTH KOREA	 PERU	

### Columban Mission



*The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus ... I wish to encourage the christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy...'* Evangelium Gaudi 1

### U.S/Mexico border

#### Building up the body of Christ at the border

The *Columban Border Ministry Team* was delighted this past March to welcome Columban Associate, Fr Felipe Choi, diocesan priest from Seoul, Korea. Fr Choi is actively becoming part of Corpus Christi parish even as he has spent several weeks serving at a major refugee shelter in El Paso - Casa Refugiado - as well as becoming involved with the parish *Migrant Ministry* which serves Casa del Migrante in the city of Juarez.

We have been putting flesh on our Mission Statement from two years ago: *"Corpus Christi Catholic community is building up the Body of Christ at the Border. We are becoming a poor church that serves the poor and vulnerable communities that surround us."*

Last year we invited the special needs children from the *Santo Niño project* to join with our children for First Communion, a historic event that saw thirteen of these angels in wheelchairs or carried by their parent, being fed the Bread of Life, often with a tiny piece of the host being placed gently on their tongues by their mothers.

The continuing crises of poverty, violence and immigration are providing us wonderful opportunities to put into practice what the Gospel teaches and in the process to be transformed and sent even further into the community as Heralds of God's healing and reconciling presence. We are blessed!

Fr Bill Morton SSC

## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Peru

Columban missionary outreach is rich in diversity, with strong emphasis on advocacy and changing structural inequality.

Parishes are a “community of communities”, where parishioners gather in neighbourhood chapels to celebrate their faith and respond to the challenges of Christian living, like receiving and welcoming newly arrived immigrants from the interior of Peru or Venezuela.

Educational formation programmes are offered through our parishes and Mission Centre and help people make the link between faith and life. They include the *School of Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, the *Summer Catechetics Programme* and *Missiology Courses*. Participants include Columban Missionary Collaborators, lay people who go out with us on mission.

Projects are responding to concrete needs with special interventions. *Manuel Duato Special Needs School* provides free education for children with disabilities or hearing impairments. *St. Bernadette’s* creates safe spaces where children can live and grow up. *Sí, da vida* supports people affected by HIV and the *Happy Worm* is an ecological initiative recycling organic waste.

### Warmi Huasi

In the townships of Lima and in the villages in the High Andes, children spend many hours each day unaccompanied by their working mothers, at risk from accidents, poor diets, falling behind in school, no play time and physical, psychological and sometimes sexual violence.

*Warmi Huasi*, a project set up by Columbans, responds by setting up safe spaces for the children, especially homework and reading clubs. There the children learn about their rights and how to defend themselves from violence. They now have the confidence to present projects to their local councils to improve public facilities and services for children.

This year, children of two of the reading clubs achieved the highest results in reading comprehension and the *Ministry of Education* wants to promote this model in all primary schools. The safeguarding provided by *Warmi Huasi* in these two municipal areas means over 105,000 children and adolescents live safer and happier lives.

### Chile

High priority continues to be given to “a preferential option for youth”. The decision was influenced by Pope Francis’s decision to hold a Synod of Bishops on the theme of ‘*Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*’. The celebration of an *International Youth Festival* on November 3, 2018 comprised a full day of song, prayer, and participation in workshops, resulting in several young men showing an interest in Columban missionary priesthood. Columban parishes continue to support migrants and refugees, setting aside a meeting place for Peruvians, facilitating housing for Haitians, and providing food to those who are destitute.

### Parish of San Columbano - Migrant and refugees



*Migrant apostolate.*

Parish priest, Fr Dan Harding made outreach to migrants one of the priorities of the parish. Together with the parish council he has organized activities, such as the parish fiesta, with various dishes from Colombia, Venezuela, Peru and Haiti. The Haitians meet regularly in the parish and have their own prayer meeting before Mass. Some of their children are among the altar servers.

## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Britain

Women in mission have been prominent this year, as protagonists, participants and beneficiaries. Lay missionaries Jayjay and Ger from the Philippines, and Nathalie from Chile, contributed widely to ministries in Birmingham giving support to asylum seekers and refugees. Columban missionaries are central to the success of *Fatima House*, a partnership project with the Archdiocese of Birmingham and *Fr Hudson's charity*, providing accommodation to destitute female asylum seekers.

Faith-filled women from different religious traditions were brought together by the Columbans to share and discuss the challenges and joys of being women in the context of their own faith communities as well as in wider society. Young women also led the way in our schools' journalism competitions on the themes of *'migrants are our neighbours'* and *'the challenge of climate change'*.

Special thanks to the Catholic communities in Middlesbrough, Nottingham, Northampton, Birmingham and in Scotland for your prayers and generous response to the annual mission appeal.

### Faith in action

Catherine is the fourth young person to serve as our *Faith in Action* volunteer. A recent university graduate, she has worked closely with James Trewby, our Justice & Peace Education worker, and Mauricio Silva, our Interreligious Dialogue coordinator, deepening her faith through service and encounter. Responding to Pope Francis' call to all the baptised to be missionary disciples, Catherine and her predecessors have explored mission in different contexts, in Britain and overseas, providing them with a stronger foundation for the mission they are being called to in their lives.

The *Faith in Action programme* is one of a growing number of initiatives, including training and exposure programmes for teachers and young people in schools, as well as speaking at parishes and events that are designed to bring Columban learning and experience of cross-cultural mission to the local Church in Britain.



*“Having conversations with young people about the meaning of mission and what they've learned through their own experiences has been really valuable for me”.*

Catherine, Faith in Action volunteer

## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Ireland

Columbans in Ireland comprise 106 ordained, two lay missionaries and three co-workers. Roughly two-thirds of the ordained are over 75 years old with rich experience of different cultures, religions and traditions. They are a reservoir of wisdom and knowledge.

Key achievements in the past year included the *Family and Mission Day* in Dalgan on 1st July 2018 when over 2,000 people gathered to give thanks to God for 100 years of Columban Mission. Relatives and friends of the Columbans, *Far East magazine* promoters and subscribers, *Mission League members* and benefactors were present for a liturgy led by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, which was followed by a colourful multicultural concert.

An emerging project is *Turas Columbanus*, a walking route through Ireland and part of the Columban Way, which retraces the footsteps of St. Columban from his birth place Carlow, Co. Wexford, to his resting place in Bobbio, Italy. This pilgrim trail is making wonderful connections across social, national, religious and political grounds and promoting the spirituality of St. Columban in the modern age.

### The Columban Centre in Dublin

Ireland is a society in transition. It has become very multicultural in a short space of time. The *Columban Centre* in Dublin is a collaborative outreach by the Columban Fathers and Columban Sisters to immigrants who have made Ireland their home. The centre is run by two Columban co-workers, Michael O Sullivan and Claire Carey, in partnership with the Columban Sisters. Through Michael, the *Columban Centre* is also involved in interfaith dialogue via the *Dublin City Interfaith Forum*.

Seven world faiths are represented in the Forum: Baha’I, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islam, Jewish and Sikh. Members of the Forum have come to Dalgan on several occasions and there has been a rich engagement with them. The Forum works on issues such as climate change, refugees, discrimination, racism, as well as fostering good relations between all faiths. The Columbans have made a positive contribution to the work and ministry of this interfaith forum.



## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Fiji

Columban parishes, partners and the wider community welcomed and celebrated the *Centenary Pilgrim Altar Cloth*, a symbol bearing the names of people around the world who are partners in Columban mission. This powerful witness to the work of the Columbans helped to raise the missionary consciousness within the Archdiocese of Suva.

An interfaith pilgrimage was organised for twenty-five young people, including seminarians, lay missionaries and young religious, who visited six different faith centres. Hundreds of people came to three night vigils held during the year, where they were ministered to through confessions, prayer, adoration, worship and catechesis – seeds were planted in hope for the fruit they will bear in the future.

### Parishes and schools

There are three Columban parishes in Fiji serving 6,000 people. Raiwaqa parish community celebrated its Golden Jubilee and gave thanks for the enduring presence and impact of Columban missionaries over 50 years.

Among the many events held, the parish welcomed and prepared a feast for thousands of people invited from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including Indian, Chinese, Tongan, Rotuman and, of course, Fijian!

Financial assistance was given to Ba parish for the building of a new church following the destruction of their old church by *Tropical Cyclone Winston* in 2017.

All three parishes have schools. Raiwaqa parish runs a small kindergarten for 45 disadvantaged children. The parish of Ba has three primary schools that are attended by 800 students and Labasa parish has a primary and secondary school with 555 students enrolled.

### A new Columban century brought a new Columban priest



*Columban Fr Martin Koroiciri speaking after his ordination in Fiji.*

Deacon Martin Koroiciri was ordained priest at the *Sacred Heart Cathedral* in Suva by Archbishop Chong on the vigil of St Columban's Day, 2018.

A particularly joyful note for the region was the presence of some eighty priests at the ordination. Not only were there Fiji priests in attendance but also many from Tonga, the Samoa Islands and the Cook Islands.

The new Columban priest is from a Catholic family that originated in Lakeba, capital of the Lau Group here in Fiji. Martin was born in Suva and his early childhood and teens were spent in the Columban parish of Labasa.

His first mission assignment as a seminarian was to various Columban parishes in Chile where he served the people there and improved his Spanish.

Fr Martin's ordination was a happy conclusion to the Columban centenary year and a great opening to our second century.

## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Australia/New Zealand

The celebration of 100 Years of Columban Mission was the main focus for the Australian/New Zealand Region. In October 27 pilgrims travelled through China to see where Bishop Galvin and his companions began our mission. Ministry, including Mass in Spanish, for Columbian refugees at the Columban chapel in Lower Hutt, New Zealand, continues to grow. The *Peace, Ecology and Justice office* strives to eradicate human trafficking through education and advocacy in areas such as forced marriage, labour exploitation and anti-slavery supply chains. It is also educating people about *Laudato Si'*.

### The Centre for Columban Christian Muslim Relations (CCMR)

#### **Youth PoWR**

The Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations (CCMR) facilitates *Youth PoWR* (Parliament of the World's Religions) whose aim it is to bring young people together from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds in order to transform society into one that embraces diversity. In August 2018, over 200 youth aged 18-35 representing eight religions, attended a *Youth PoWR* event that gave them an opportunity to reflect together on shaping a multicultural and multi-religious society.

#### **Social media**

They have 3,000 followers on Facebook. After the Christchurch terrorist attacks, Facebook posts reached over 32,000. People came out in their thousands to share their shock and pain, as well as to pray together and follow the example of a remarkable leader and young mother, Jacinda Ardern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

#### **Sharing the pain**

Accompanied by other Columbans, I went over to the *Kilbirnie Mosque* to meet the president of the Islamic communities of New Zealand and to present him with letters from Fr Tim Mulroy, our Superior General and Fr Patrick McInerney, the director of the Columban Centre for Christian Muslim Relations, Sydney, Australia. The next day we went to the mosque at Taita where we were invited inside to pray. These were moments of profound solidarity in grief.



### South Korea



Columban Fr Nam SeungWon, continues to visit North Korean refugees in Seoul. He joins other priests and sisters in celebrating Mass and praying together with them. During the homily they share stories about life in both North and South Korea. They also pray together for family members who are still living in North Korea and China. As a consequence, several North Korean refugees have become curious about the Catholic faith and want to learn more about it.

Many of the female refugees were victims of human trafficking, who had first moved from North Korea to China. Some of them had been forcibly separated from their husbands and children. Naturally, they are still feel deeply troubled by such experiences. After settling down in South Korea, some of them return to China to visit their children – such visits help them and their families come to terms with their painful past.

During one of our monthly Masses with Columban benefactors, we presented Columban scholarships to three students who are among the refugees now living in Seoul. One of those students is now attending middle school, while another is studying nursing, and the third is studying business administration. We also extended support to four "Group Homes" for North Korean refugees. The Mass was a good opportunity for our benefactors and the North Korean refugees to get to know one other and to learn how to support one other.

## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Philippines

Peace-building has been ever more necessary since the destruction of Marawi City in 2017, which fuelled long-standing tensions between Christians, Muslims and indigenous peoples in the southern island of Mindanao. High priority has been given to sustaining regular Interfaith Forum meetings and to supporting workshops, courses and events, including a *Walk for Peace* in Cagayan de Oro, that aim to foster understanding, appreciation and solidarity on grassroots issues between the different cultures. Columban seminarians participated in these events as part of their preparation for missionary priesthood.

Mission with the Subanen community, also in Mindanao, continues to flourish. A new workshop was opened to give more young Subanen women the opportunity to participate in the craft-making project renowned for its Christmas cards, mandalas and jewellery, which are inspired by their care and respect for the natural environment. In Manila, the priests and community of Our Lady of Remedies parish, welcomed a group from Britain participating in the mission exposure programme '*Invitation to Mission*'.

### Deep journey into Laudato Si'



Columban staff, Benny Curotan with volunteers from Britain at the Center for Ecozoic Living and Learning (CELL).

Inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* and bearing witness to the ecological destruction caused by successive political regimes, the *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Team* has been at the forefront of developing a new workshop to form '*Care for the Earth*' advocates. Socio-economically disadvantaged and culturally marginalised communities who bear the worst effects of actions that lead to environmental degradation are being prioritised for this work, but it has also drawn the attention of society, church and other faith leaders. Audio, video and print materials based on *Laudato Si'* have been translated into local Filipino languages.

The Columbans are leading the way on this issue and are the convenor of the *Global Catholic Climate Change Movement (GCCM)* in the Philippines, networking with other Columban Regions and Mission Units to generate world wide awareness of why we must care for our common home NOW!

### Taiwan

*Taiwan Mission Unit* is a multicultural group of young and enthusiastic ordained Columbans and lay missionaries who work in partnership with one another. Missionaries from Korea, Peru, Kiribati, USA, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines are serving in ministry to immigrants and their families, migrant workers, victims of trafficking and the indigenous people.

Columbans help run the *Hope Workers' Center* which serves as a shelter for victims of trafficking and abuse. The center takes an active role in the campaign to abolish the brokers system in Taiwan to provide more social justice for migrant workers. The DaAn parish provides pastoral care to the local needs of indigenous farming villagers in the Hsinchu and Taichung dioceses. The *Interfaith Spiritual Direction Ministry* encourages people of many different faiths to cultivate their relationships with the God of their experience. Spiritual direction sessions are part of an ongoing dialogue and interaction with God, a companionship on a spiritual journey.

### Parishioners

Bae Sihyeon Teresa, Columban Lay Missionary, celebrates with parishioners from local tribal villages at the DaAn Parish. DaAn Parish is located in farming villages along the DaAn River in the mountains of Miaoli County in Hsinchu and Taichung dioceses. The parish, made of eight chapels, serves 350 indigenous families who are Presbyterians, Baptists as well as Catholics. Pastoral care includes social services like children's after school tutorial program, counselling and skills development for abused women, and promotion of family values and youth groups.



This year's highlight includes the revival of a youth group, the graduation from Senior High School and University of several past members of the youth group, and the beautification of the chapel in XiangPi Village. It was most rewarding to witness the resilience and faith of the Catholic women of the village who took up the opportunity to rebuild the DaGuan chapel, which was burnt to the grounds, by inviting Catholic families in reconstruction.

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## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Pakistan

Columbans in Pakistan prioritised several occasions to celebrate and remember during the year. On the feast of St Columban, a Mass was celebrated in Hyderabad to formally close the Columban centenary year. Other events included, a four-hour mission seminar held at the major seminary in Karachi. It focused on the background of mission; Columban mission priorities of tribal ministry, *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC)*, *Interreligious Dialogue (IRD)*, formation of the laity; how the Pakistani church can become more missionary.

In June an anniversary Mass in the Parish of Columban, Greentown, Lahore was celebrated remembering the three Columbans buried in Lahore - Lay Missionary, Pilar Tilos, Columban Frs Pat McCaffrey and Tanvir O'Hanlon.

And in January, 40 years since the first Columbans, Frs Pat McCaffrey and Tom O'Reilly - set foot into Pakistan was remembered.

Columban missionaries continue to care for the vulnerable Catholic community here in a country that is weighed down by political and economic uncertainties, as well as the impact wrought by climate change.

### No time for boredom

A number of happenings here in Badin Parish today. A mother with her baby, born prematurely a week ago, was asked by the public hospital to move on as their one-week admission limit had expired. We arranged for the baby and mother to go to the hospital in Hyderabad.

Recently some very poor people needed a place to live, so I arranged for them to live in the cemetery area. However, the family that lives in a watchman's house at the Christian cemetery to keep vandals and dogs away may not have been pleased with the arrival of those newcomers. This evening, those newcomers returned to the church, claiming that they had been attacked by the watchman's family. We will have a meeting with both groups tomorrow.

A catechist also came seeking food rations for cleaners who had not been paid their salary for some months. We were able to provide assistance.

Time to hit the hay!

Fr Dan O'Connor SSC

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### Japan

In 2018, the Columbans celebrated 70 years of mission in Japan. Arriving after the Second World War to a devastated country and to a devastated church, the Columbans quickly set about building churches and communities, helping the local Church recover and expand. At one stage Columbans worked in nearly 60 parishes, many of which we had founded. We are now down to 11 priests from five countries working in four dioceses completely funded by the local church. During our centenary celebrations last year, it was a great blessing to meet up again with many Catholics who spoke kindly of the over 150 Columbans who have worked in Japan.

The Church in Japan can be described as a New Testament church. Like the communities that Saints Paul and Peter ministered to, our numbers are small yet international. In a wealthy, work oriented society we witness to the Gospel values of acceptance, service and charity. As St Peter tells us, be ready to share with whoever asks what the basis of your hope is; our faith in Jesus Christ.

### The joy of the Gospel for each and everyone

Can you imagine what it is like teaching the parable of the Prodigal Son to someone who has never heard it before. Explaining that God is a loving father that knows each one of us by name; that the Gospel of Jesus is centered on forgiveness and acceptance. Each year we welcome adult converts into our small parishes and seeing the joy of the gospel in their lives helps us to experience again the loving power of the teachings of Jesus.

The people coming to our adult classes vary. Young couples looking for values to teach their children; retired people wondering what hope is left for them; individuals moved by a visit to a church while traveling overseas. Without the cross on our churches guiding these people, they may never have the opportunity to receive the Good News.



Columban Fr Jehoon, SSC with parishioners.



## Myanmar

Columbans serve in dioceses in Kachin and Mandalay states in Myanmar. Mission priorities are serving children and families living in poverty with limited access to education, family support and counselling and healthcare.

In Myitkyina, Columbans are in charge of the *Diocesan Youth Commission* which works with Catholic teachers and parish priests. One of the programs is the student organized *CSAM* (Catholic Student Action Myitkyina) which has chapters in seven government education centers.

*CSAM* is a student movement inspired by an initiative in the Philippines started by the Columbans. It aims to address the spiritual, psycho-social and personal development needs of university students. It hopes to help build a true Catholic community in the education centers, promote the Catholic Faith and Catholic Social Teachings; provide outreach programs and services.

In Mandalay, Columbans help run the *HEC* (Higher Education Center) where poor youth from displaced regions receive sponsored education and spiritual guidance. Columbans also support two rural education projects in Myitkyina and Banmaw for local students to attend school.

### Family commission of the Myitkyina Diocese

Columban Fr Lee Jehoon Augustine has rebuilt the *Family Commission* of the Myitkyina Diocese since May 2018. The revitalization has included setting up new programs such as *Pre-Cana Workshops* (pre-marital), domestic violence workshops, *'Healthy Family'* workshops and a training place for families known as *'Father's School'*. It had been eight years since there was *Family Commission* in the community so the effort began by visiting families and collaborating with other commissions (such as the Youth, Justice and Peace, and Education commissions) as well as local priests, sisters, and catechists, to lay the foundations for the new programs.

Slowly, parishioners learned about the programs and are increasingly interested in participating. Now, once a month modules of the *Pre-Cana program* are offered in several parishes to a large number of people who are preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. During this past year, Columbans have visited and instituted family promotion workshops in eleven different parishes across the diocese for around 3,000 participants.

Giving back to our benefactors



In honor of all that our benefactors give to Columban mission - their prayers, their financial sacrifices, their time - the U.S. region produced two booklets, *The Stations of the Cross* and *The Stations of the Resurrection*, to share with our friends during Lent and Easter 2019.

These booklets were written and designed to become a rich, deep, and meaningful component of the prayer lives of our benefactors. One of our common religious struggles is to realize that we are not alone. The Good News is that Jesus entered into our life's experience completely - even suffering and death - and that He fell into the hands of a Loving God, who raised Him from

death to life. We have complete hope that suffering and death have no complete hold on us. We will all share eternal life with Him, and, along the way, we are not alone. Jesus is with us as one who knows our suffering.

These booklets offer our benefactors an intimate experience of Jesus' solidarity with all humanity in our way of the cross each day. When Jesus rose it was not the end of the story, it was the beginning.

We celebrate what happened, and we grow in understanding this world and ourselves. What happened was prophesied, it was meaningful. We participate in a story within a larger story. This consideration reminds us of the broader work of God in time, space, and our lives.

By the end of 2019, the U.S. Region will complete work on our new *Stations of the Cross* and *Stations of the Resurrection* leading to and from our grotto at St Columban, Nebraska. We hope this walk provides reflection and meaning for all who visit.



## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Partners in mission

Columbans have a tradition of inviting people to cross-cultural mission. We believe that the missionary vocation, which begins with baptism, needs to be nurtured in various forms throughout one's life. We see that there is a desire among people to engage in mission in new ways. Therefore, Columbans are providing our friends and supporters with various opportunities to nurture a missionary spirit and foster global solidarity. Our hope is to build an ongoing relationship between younger generations and Columban missionaries so that together, as people of faith, we can continue to make a difference in our world.

#### Building community at the U.S./Mexico border

Thanks to the Columbans, I was invited to participate in a border awareness programme based in El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico over Easter. If one word comes to my mind regarding the experience, it is Community.



Hosted by Columban Fr Bob Mosher, with the assistance of Fr Liam Merrigan, I met a community of individuals and groups working for justice in a true display of their preferential option for the poor; serving families and individuals who had travelled long and arduous journeys from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and those in Juarez who risked violence in its many ugly forms. Migrants who made it to the migrant centers could find rest and help to progress their claims for asylum or to be reunited with relatives.

What I found most inspirational was the young American volunteers working at the centres. They were calm, capable, caring and helped people with generosity of spirit and good humour. They created a sense of community in the shelters – breaking down barriers and building community through every interaction. On Easter Sunday, we prepared dinner for residents at a nearby centre. Smiling faces abounded while volunteers and migrants shared a meal and songs with one another.... no doubt there was still anxiety about the next stage of the migrants' journey... but on that Easter Sunday in El Paso, they broke bread and tortillas together and on that significant day, we formed not just a community, but a family.

Bernie McGonigle, Ireland

### Opportunities



#### Columban Mission exposure and pilgrimages

Participants grow in understanding of mission and their own faith through educational experiences in places of Columban mission

Sending countries: Australia, Britain, Ireland, Korea, USA

Receiving countries: Britain, Chile, China, Fiji, Ireland, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Taiwan, USA

1 - 3 weeks

#### Columban internships

Participants gain practical skills through part-time or full-time service and experiential learning either in their home country or in another country, which prepares them for future service in the Church.

Locations: Britain, USA

1 - 3 months



#### Columban volunteering

Participants engage in international or domestic full time missionary service to vulnerable populations while assisting with education and advocacy in pursuit of Columban mission priorities.

Location: Britain, China, Philippines, Taiwan, USA

3 -12 months



For more information about Columban Invitation to Mission, please contact Amy Echeverria: [amywe@columban.org](mailto:amywe@columban.org)

## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Columban Mission trip to Korea: The start of an adventure



In July of last year, I attended the *Columban Centenary Youth Mission Program* in South Korea. Columban Fr Joseph Kang welcomed us to Seoul. This was soon followed by our first Mass in Spanish, with English readings and intercessory prayers in Chinese! This was to become the norm and, thanks to the composition of our group, we came to experience many more strange language combinations during the following days.

The Columbans had gathered young people from America, Britain, China, Fiji, Myanmar, Mexico and Peru – and added a dollop of Koreans – to make a recipe for two weeks of unforgettable experiences related to faith and church, the world and mission.

Our orientation started with icebreaker activities so that we could get to know one another. After a delicious lunch, with a minimum of struggling with chopsticks, we spent the afternoon in mixed nationality groups discussing why we were there, our expectations and fears, and our views on life, faith and mission.

That afternoon was one of the most enjoyable parts of the mission trip for me. One of my groups puts it like this: *“It is an opportunity to learn from others without having to take a plane and fly to all those countries.”* For example, in my first few hours I talked to young Koreans about their religious desire for peace and reunification. I learned from Americans about their views on migration. However, the conversation I found most moving was with one of our Chinese companions who spoke about difficulties in practicing the Catholic faith in his home country. All of these issues I had heard about previously, but it was a privilege to hear it directly from people who were trying to understand these various challenges for themselves in the light of their Christian faith.

Despite major differences in language and culture, the mission trip brought us all closer together and reminded us that we are toiling together to build the kingdom of God ... as partners with Columban missionaries.

John (Jack) Edwards, Britain

### Formation



Columban seminarians share about their life in the Columban seminary in Manila. They provide an overview of their experiences, learnings, hopes and challenges during this past year. They also express their appreciation for the generosity of Columban benefactors in supporting them as they continue their preparation to become Columban missionary priests.

*“My life is filled with thanksgiving, satisfaction and a passion to serve. My missionary vocation was strongly affirmed during the two years that I recently spent as a Columban seminarian in Pakistan. The ministries of Columban missionaries in Pakistan - pastoral outreach to the poor, caring for the earth, and building bridges with people of different religions- helped me to appreciate the simplicity of the missionary way of life, as well as the gift of encountering people who are very different from me.”*

Elbert Balbastro, Philippines (third-year theology seminarian)

*“There are many congregations in the Church, but I chose the Missionary Society of St Columban because I wanted to become a missionary priest, participating in cross-cultural mission. Living as a seminarian in a Columban community, I am slowly learning to understand and accept people from different cultures, with different languages and lifestyles habits.”*

Columban Lahtaw Aung Li, Myanmar (seminarian who completed a two-year philosophy program)

*“Reading Columban newsletters and the Far East magazines helped me to learn about Columban missionaries. They always emphasize the proclamation of the Good News to the poor, caring for God’s creation, and building relationships with people of other religions. The stories of their lives and mission inspired me to want to become a Columban missionary priest.”*

Uakeia Tawaia, Kiribati islands (first-year philosophy seminarian)

## Section 2 | Annual report from the Columban General Council

### Preparation for mission

Columban seminarian Navitalai Paulo writes about two experiences in his home country of Fiji.

*“What do we do now?”* I asked my companions as our boat drifted out to sea. Earlier that day, I had been invited by four young men to go fishing with them. Since our boat had no engine, we rowed to a place far out in the ocean that was known as a “sweet spot” for fish. We had just made a great catch when, suddenly, a strong wind blew up and the sea became rough. We tried to head for land, but despite our best efforts at rowing, we could make no headway. Instead, we drifted further out to sea. To make matters worse, the tide began to rise. Fortunately, we were able to throw out our anchor, but we had to sit and wait for many hours until the tide rose to its full height, and then wait several more hours until it subsided. We took turns to sleep for a few hours in the open boat during the night. When the tide became low, we were able to row the boat towards the land and finally reached home, exhausted and hungry, just as the sun was rising. I believe that this experience of dealing with great uncertainty and anxiety has strengthened me to face the uncertainties and anxieties that are sure to come my way as a missionary priest.

### A taste of mission in my own country

At the end of a year’s study in the Pacific Regional Seminary, I was sent to the Indo-Fijian village of Karokaro for two weeks in order to get a taste of mission by living with a family whose culture and language were different from mine, even though all of us live in the same country of Fiji. I stayed with the Prakasham family. My job each day was to change the goat (bakari) and the cow (gai) to new grazing, and to ensure that they had sufficient water.



I attended the prayer service in Hindi at Naleba Church on Sundays, even though I could understand very little of it. I am grateful for God’s guidance during my two weeks stay with the Prakasham family. There were moments from that period that I will always remember as God’s gifts to me.

### Leadership



Fr Timothy Mulroy



Fr Brian Vale



Fr Kang Seung-Won Joseph



Fr Alvaro Martinez

### General council - Hong Kong

Superior General  
Vicar General  
Second Councillor  
Third Councillor

Fr Timothy Mulroy  
Fr Brian Vale  
Fr Kang Seung-Won Joseph  
Fr Alvaro Martinez

### Columban Lay Missionaries Central Leadership Team - Hong Kong

Coordinator  
Team Member  
Team Member

Vida Amor Hequilan  
Catharina Son Seon Young  
Kevin Sheerin

### Central Administration Portfolios

Bursar General  
Procurator General  
Central JPIC Coordinator  
Researcher JPIC Priorities  
Researcher on Mission and Culture

Florence Tsui (Hong Kong)  
Fr Robert McCulloch (Rome)  
Amy W. Echeverria (USA)  
Fr Sean McDonagh (Ireland)  
Fr Sean Dwan (Ireland)



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

