

# The Far East

COLUMBAN MISSION MAGAZINE

May 2019

## The challenges of a translator

Many cultures recognised at Korean  
Columban Centenary Mass.



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# The Far East

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# Contents



- |       |  |       |  |
|-------|--|-------|--|
| 3     | From the Editor  | 16    | Mission World<br>Catholic leaders respond to<br>New Zealand tragedy            |
| 4-5   | A grandfather's legacy<br>Pastoral direction influenced by<br>grandfather.                             | 17    | From the Director<br>Healing and transformation                                |
| 6-7   | The challenges of a<br>translator<br>Many cultures recognised at<br>Korean Columban Centenary<br>Mass. | 18    | Prophetic theologian dies<br>suddenly<br>Unexpected death shocks<br>Columbans. |
| 8-9   | You belong<br>Still coming to terms with<br>Christchurch tragedy.                                      | 19    | Strategies for promoting<br>Interfaith Dialogue<br>Babies are winners.         |
| 10-11 | When the white van<br>arrives  | 20-21 | The Princess of Paradise<br>Mission on the beach.                              |
| 12-13 | Children's rights respected  | 22-23 | Vale Fr Leo Baker  |
| 14-15 | Women's work!  | 23    | Your Columban Legacy   |



## The challenges of a translator

Supporters of Columban Mission welcome people to the Korean Centenary Mass.

Photo: Noel Mackey

# From the Editor

In the May issue of *The Far East* magazine many of the stories focus on Social Justice issues, the need for peace and the need to respect human life.

In the aftermath of the massacre in Christchurch, New Zealand, Columban Fr Patrick O'Shea reflects on how New Zealanders are still coming to terms with what happened.

In *Mission World* on page 16 you can read how Catholic leaders around the world sent prayers in solidarity and concern for the Muslim community in New Zealand.

In his Director's column, Columban Fr Trevor Trotter also refers to the tragedy in Christchurch and how the killing and the pain was not the end of the story. A thought-provoking column which gives us a lot to think about.

USA born, Columban Fr Chris Saenz writes about the polarisation of USA society over the issue of immigration and wonders how his grandfather, an illegal migrant from Mexico, would have fared today. From Birmingham in the UK, Columban lay missionary, Nathalie Marytsch gives an insight into her work with women asylum

seekers, some of whom have been waiting for as long as 18 years for the Home Office to recognise them as asylum seekers. A gut-wrenching story.

When Columban Fr Ed O'Connell heard the women in the northern outskirts of Lima saying, "*We have to do something about the children, they are at risk,*" the work of the *Warmi Huasi* (Women's House) began, resulting in a project to protect the rights and safety of children.

From South Korea and working in Taiwan, Columban lay missionary, Teresa Bae writes about her work with women who are discriminated against and are denied the right of education. The faith of these women has made a big impression on Teresa.

Columban Fr Charles Rue pays tribute to Mgr. Denis Edwards, a priest of the *Archdiocese of Adelaide, Australia*, and inspiring teacher and theologian. He died suddenly on March 5, 2019.

Columban Fr Patrick McInerney gives a witty account of how baby photos can outweigh serious academic comment while Columban Fr Warren Kinne, from Surfer's Paradise, takes us into the life of a schizophrenic named

David who prefers to be called '*The Princess of Paradise*'. Both excellent reads.

And finally we say farewell to Columban Fr Leo Baker who passed away on March 27. Much loved by many, Leo was a quiet and gentle soul. Rest in Peace, Leo.

As we leave the Easter season behind, let us remember that there is hope for the future. A hope that was given to us by Jesus who died on Good Friday and rose from the dead on Easter Sunday.

Let us pray with hope and optimism for all those seeking justice and especially for our brothers and sisters in New Zealand.

Janette Mentha  
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# A grandfather's legacy

FR CHRIS SAENZ

Columban Fr Chris Saenz writes about the polarisation of American society over the issue of immigration and wonders how his grandfather, an illegal migrant from Mexico, would have fared today.



*Fr Chris Saenz as a young student with his grandfather Augustine (Auggie) Ramirez prior to his death in 2011 aged 96.*

When I was ordained in the year 2000 I envisioned myself serving on the foreign missions for my entire life eventually dying "with my boots on." However, last year I found myself returning home after 17 years in Chile, South America. It was hard to leave a land and people that I had come to consider as my own. Yet, a sense of urgency came over me as I entered into my home mission.

I was confronted by a nation that had completely changed since I left it in 2000. The social and political climate has become much polarised. One of the central issues of the polarisation is immigration. I found myself looking to the past and finding guidance from my deceased grandfather,

Augustine Ramirez. Auggie, as many called him, was born in Leon in Mexico and came to the USA illegally when he was an adolescent. He was a migrant worker for many years. Eventually, he settled in Topeka, Kansas, where he became a city bus driver. There he married my grandmother Maria de Jesus (Jesse) and began a family. In time, he began his own janitorial business and worked in it until he was 92. He passed away in January 2011 at the age of 96.

At his funeral an elderly gentleman, Billy Gomez, came forward to tell me a story about riding my grandfather's bus route to and from school as a young boy. One day Billy was very sick and on the way home he lost consciousness. When he woke up, Billy was at the front door of his house.

My grandfather, breaking city regulations and risking being fired, had driven off his bus route several blocks on the side streets to deliver Billy into the arms of his mother. It was similar to Jesus healing the crippled man on the Sabbath, violating the Sabbath laws (*Matthew 12: 10-15*). Like Jesus, my grandfather believed compassion was not limited by law.

Today, my grandfather's experience would describe the reality of the many DACA (*Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals*) "dreamers" living in the USA. Although blessed with a long and healthy life, for many years he lived in fear of being deported. He had come to consider the United States his home.

He was an avid *Kansas State Wildcat* football fan and wore the purple and grey (*Kansas State's colours*) with pride. He paid taxes and social security for decades knowing that as an illegal he would never receive those benefits. What terrified him most was the possibility of being separated from his family.

Therefore, after being more than 60 years in the country and having sufficiently comfortable economic circumstances to allow him to pay for the naturalisation process, my grandfather took the first steps to become a US citizen. Finally, in 1994 at the age of 80 he was sworn in as a US citizen.

Given my grandfather's legacy and the biblical imperative to welcome the stranger and foreigner (*Exodus 22: 21; Deuteronomy 10: 19; Matthew 25: 31-46*), I felt compelled to direct my pastoral efforts in my home mission to accompany our brothers and sisters from other lands.

Currently, I visit Hispanics in a local jail who have been detained by ICE (*Immigration and Customs Enforcement*) for illegal entry into the USA. Many had escaped violent and difficult economic situations looking for a better life for themselves and their families.

One such example is Juan from Guatemala. Juan had witnessed his grandmother murdered by gangs as a young adolescent. The gangs tried to recruit him; "join or die" was the motto. Having no family left in Guatemala and no security, Juan left his home country to join his family in the USA where he found work in restaurants and construction. He committed no crime. But one day, while driving, Juan's tyre went flat which resulted in him having a minor car accident. The police asked for documentation and, not having any, Juan was detained. He pleaded for asylum but,

unfortunately, was deported back to Guatemala. I don't know what happened to Juan, but I always pray for his safety.

Juan's story is like many others I have heard. I can't ignore their plight. Bringing compassion to a difficult situation is my grandfather's legacy, and a Columban priority.

---

*Columban Fr Chris Saenz is from Bellevue, Nebraska in the US. After many years in Chile he returned to the US in 2017 and was assigned to the Columban Hispanic Ministry.*

Juan's story is like many others I have heard. I can't ignore their plight. Bringing compassion to a difficult situation is my grandfather's legacy, and a Columban priority.



*Augustine (Auggie) and Maria de Jesus (Jesse) Ramirez on their wedding day.*



Korean Columban Centenary  
Mass at Myungdong Cathedral.

# The challenges of a translator

NOEL MACKEY

I could scarcely believe my eyes when I opened the curtains to see that we had an unexpected heavy snowfall during the night. I had promised Columban Fr Yang to act as translator for the Irish Ambassador and the Chilean Consul at the Columban Centenary Mass in Myungdong Cathedral and wondered if I could make it there.

As I live under Mt Surak I was worried that the mountain road might be impassable. Luckily a thaw set in before noon and the bus that would take me to the nearest subway station was able to climb the steep hills. When I got to the Cathedral I saw several Columban priests dressed in an array of headgear as they tried to stay warm in the bitter cold. Scattered around the grounds of the Cathedral were Columban priests, sisters and lay missionaries chatting with the many faithful that had come to partake in the Centenary celebrations. Members of the Columban supporters group were busy welcoming the people and distributing the Centenary Mass leaflets. I was immediately escorted to the front seat by two of them and shown where the Ambassador and Consul would be seated.

When Julian Clare, the Irish Ambassador, finally arrived accompanied by a woman, I led them to the front seat that had been reserved for them. I knew Julian, having translated for him at the funeral of Columban Fr PJ McGlinchey, but, as this was my first time meeting the Chilean Consul, I introduced myself to her and having asked her where in Chile did she come from I was surprised to hear that she came from Galway. She was not the Chilean

Consul but rather Fionula, the wife of the Irish Ambassador. I was later to hear that the Chilean Consul felt that she was not properly dressed for this formal occasion and choose to take a seat at the back of the church.

I experienced my first difficulty in my role as translator when a lay missionary from the Philippines read the First Reading in her native Cebuano and a Korean lay missionary, returned from China, read the Second Reading in Chinese. Fortunately I had asked Fr Yang what readings they intended using for the Centenary Mass and after an initial setback I was able to translate both readings for the Ambassador as I had a copy of them in my possession. A translator has to be prepared for every eventuality!

I had no such difficulties in translating the homily of Andrew Cardinal Yeom Soo-jung who was expansive in his praise of the Columban Missionaries for all that they contributed to his Archdiocese of Seoul, to the Korean church and to Korean society.

He described how Columbans had built their first parish in Donam-dong and continued to build some thirty two more in *Seoul Diocese*. He appeared to be eternally grateful for the way the Columbans, having built up communities in areas



of great need and as soon as they were fully established parishes, handed over the running of them to the diocese. They had behaved according to that old missionary maxim of the role of missionaries which was to “begin”, “beget” and “be gone”. In all, one hundred Columban priests worked in *Seoul Archdiocese* with Fr Bob Brennan still serving in a special parish there.

The Cardinal next listed many “specialist” ministries whereby Columban missionaries had contributed greatly not only to the Catholic Church but to Korean society. I found it difficult to keep translating as he reeled off so many different ways Columban Missionaries had contributed to the growth of the Korean church. He thanked them for their contributions to programs for university students, for their ministry to young workers, their involvement with Choice, Marriage Encounter and Retrouvaille.

By founding *Alcoholics and Gamblers Anonymous* in Korea Columban Missionaries had helped thousands of Koreans. Columbans had been to the fore in working for justice and peace, in dialoguing with other religions, and promoting preservation of the environment. I was surprised, when talking about the Columban commitment to the urban poor, he actually singled out the Columban ministry in Shillim-dong. I remembered that he as a parish priest had actually visited the area along with a number of his parishioners who were involved in a ‘*meals on heels*’ program. The steep hills and extra narrow alley forced the participants in this program to abandon their wheels and take to walking when delivering hot meals to shut-in people in the area.

Another Korean priest that showed remarkable interest in the work being done for the urban poor by Columbans was Fr Kang Woo-il, the present bishop of Jeju. He was given a few months pastoral experience in the neighboring parish when he was “in danger” of being appointed bishop in Seoul.

Cardinal Yeom thanked the Columbans for helping the Korean church to become more missionary in its outlook, mentioning the decision to accept Korean seminarians, the establishment of the *Lay Mission Programme* as well as the *Associate Priests Programme*.

For a Communion reflection, the letter written by Bishop Galvin on April 20, 1927 at a time of major upheaval asking his priests to remain with their people in China, was read. Some of the one thousand people in the cathedral were moved to tears on hearing the bishop’s fervent plea to his priests not to abandon their flock no matter what the personal cost might be.

Around 600 people were given a sit down meal as well as the customary souvenir towel. Some 60 priests as well as the Papal Nuncio and the auxiliary bishops of Seoul and Suwon diocese concelebrated the thanksgiving Mass.

Portraits of the founders as well as a globe and a copy of the *Columban Constitutions* were brought to the altar at the Offertory. Fionula expressed surprise at the fact that most of the women attending were wearing mantillas and that everyone processed to the altar for the Offertory collection!

What a wonderful celebration it was and a great privilege for me to participate as a translator.

---

*Noel Mackey is a former Columban and a resident of Seoul.*

Photo: Noel Mackey

Shahida Abdulaziz makes her contribution to the flower tributes at the Wellington Islamic Community Centre in Kilbirnie.



# You belong

REFLECTION

FR PATRICK O'SHEA

New Zealanders are still coming to terms with what happened on March 15, 2019 when 50 people at Friday prayers at two mosques in Christchurch were killed and many more were wounded.

My own reflections have been shaped in some measure by the theme of *Social Justice Week 2018* in New Zealand which was 'Everyone has a Part to Play'. Its focus was belonging. So one of the things that I noticed is that this act of extreme violence was committed by what is referred to as "a lone wolf". This term suggests an isolated individual with a limited sense of belonging. If there is a connection with any group it is most likely to be only with people who share their view of the world. The impression is that such people have no great capacity or desire for diversity or for relating in a positive way to what is different. The "other" is seen as a threat and therefore to be feared and, sadly in this case, to be attacked and killed.

In the West there is a growing tendency to "go it alone". We have seen this in the USA which has pulled away from a number of International Agreements, including the *Paris Accord* on climate change, and is focused mainly on its own interests. We see it also in the UK with *Brexit*. This movement towards isolation is happening in a world where so many of the big issues we face are global in scope and impact and require coordinated and shared responses. What is needed is for people to come together rather than isolating themselves even more.

That is what we have witnessed here after March 15. What will stay in my memory are images of women of other religious traditions and none wearing headscarves as a very visible act of solidarity with their Muslim sisters. I will remember groups of people of all ages standing together in silence, solidarity, prayer and grief all around this country. I will remember the image of Andrew Graystone outside a mosque in Manchester holding a sign which said "You are my friends. I will keep watch while you pray". What happened here is not an isolated event but one with a global impact. The world noticed and many grieved with us.

Our local Wellington paper, *The Dominion Post*, on March 19 had a headline which read 'A Wall of Flowers' with a photo of a young girl, Shahida Abdulaziz, making her contribution. Here was a wall that was not about keeping others out, about isolation, but a powerful expression of belonging. I will remember the Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, tapping into the biblical tradition when she said that when one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. Her consistent

I will remember the image of Andrew Graystone outside a mosque in Manchester holding a sign which said "You are my friends. I will keep watch while you pray".

message has been "you belong". This reflects an attitude that says difference is a gift and an enrichment to those who are willing to embrace it. Many here desire and have a capacity to let this openness be what defines us as a nation.

It is natural that those directly affected will remember most strongly what happened to their loved ones and the sense of loss that this act created for them and the Muslim community. The trauma of the event will take time and effort to heal. Hopefully that will be aided in some way by the part played by many New Zealanders, who responded to this tragedy by coming together and reaching out to their hurting brothers and sisters and reinforcing in many different ways the message "you belong".

---

*Fr Patrick O'Shea resides at St Columban's Lower Hutt, New Zealand.*

## A statement from Columban Superior General Fr Tim Mulroy

To Muslims in Aotearoa/New Zealand and around the world.

The *Missionary Society of St Columban* condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks which unfolded in Christchurch, New Zealand on March 15, 2019.

We reiterate the sentiments of the Catholic Bishops of New Zealand in their message of solidarity with the Muslim community of Aotearoa New Zealand at this very difficult time.

We also join with Pope Francis in sending condolences to the victims and their loved ones. We condemn all forms of violence, extremism and terrorism; we pray for all those killed and injured in the attacks during the Friday prayers in Christchurch, their families and friends and all affected by this tragedy.

Yours in solidarity,

Fr Tim Mulroy  
Columban Superior General



Nathalie and her husband Mauricio.

# When the white van arrives

Situated close to the centre of Birmingham, UK, *Fatima House* is operated by the *Birmingham Archdiocese* and the *Columbans* and offers shelter for women asylum seekers.

Lent is a special time for Catholic faithful around the world. It is a time when they are invited to reflect on Jesus' passion and his 40 day fast in the desert. It begins on Ash Wednesday when we receive a cross of ash on our foreheads as a sign of repentance and conversion and finishes on Easter Sunday when we celebrate the central message of Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I have worked alongside my husband at *Fatima House* since its beginning. In fact from before that, because, together with other organisations, we were part of the planning, designing and implementation of the project. It opened in July 2016 and so far has supported 27 women.

When I think of Lent, the image of the women at *Fatima House* comes to mind. These women are fasting from food and many of the basics of life and also suffer a long agonising wait for new life. They are patiently and desperately waiting for the *Home Office* to recognise them as asylum seekers.

Some of them have been waiting for as long as 18 years. They wait for a favourable outcome to their claim for asylum. They wait for their call to go to the *Home Office* reporting centre and hope they will not be detained there.

They wait for someone from home to send them some 'official evidence' which might support their claim for asylum. They wait for the NHS (*National Health Service*) certificate which will enable them to access free medical treatment and so many more things they need. They are constantly waiting for the post and a letter from the *Home Office*, hoping for some news of progress in their case.

They also wait for the white van! The white van comes to *Fatima House* when a woman is granted *Section 4 support*. This means that she is recognised as an asylum seeker and will be provided with some form of accommodation and \$70.00 (AUD) per week. This is only one step on their wait; it doesn't mean that they have the right to remain in the UK or find a job or to study.

The white van comes to *Fatima House* now and then and every time it comes there is a celebration for someone.



The white van comes to *Fatima House* when a woman is granted *Section 4 support*. This means that she is recognised as an asylum seeker and will be provided with some form of accommodation and \$70.00 (AUD) per week.

It means liberation and new life and hope for someone! There are shouts of joy and tears of happiness, but also sadness for the friends they leave behind to continue the wait.

I feel very privileged to share my life with these women. Each one has taught me in some way or other about resilience and survival and hope and, above all, about faith. They say it is faith that sustains them. The *Home Office* can strip them of everything but their faith.

Among those waiting at *Fatima House* are women of Christian faith and of Muslim and other religions. We volunteers cannot help noticing how faithfully they fast or practice other customs of their respective religions. One of

the women said: *"It is perhaps the only freedom we experience here. We can decide for ourselves to fast or not fast and nobody can question that."*

They are grateful to God for the hospitality and help they receive at *Fatima House* and many of them pray each day that God will look after them.

We can say that Lent is always continuing at *Fatima House*. We all wait in hope for good news to break into the lives of these faithful women. We wait for the Risen Lord to bless all of us.

---

*Nathalie Marytsch is a Columban lay missionary from Chile, based in Birmingham.*

Children enjoying activities in a safe environment.



## Children's rights respected

FR ED O'CONNELL

The Columbans are always challenged to be on mission to those in most need and at most risk and that comes straight from the Gospel and, in consequence, has become our charism. It was in response to this calling that, with the health ministry team from our parish, *Our Lady of the Missions*, we went out to San Benito, a very poor township on the northern outskirts of Lima.

There we heard the women say *"The children, the young children, we have to do something about the children, they are at risk"* and so began the work of the *Warmi Huasi* (Women's House) in San Benito, providing safe places for them to be and educating them to their rights and importantly how to protect themselves from abuse.

Four years ago we heard a similar call for help from a young Peruvian parish priest, who was based in the provincial capital of Pausa who had heard of the work of *Warmi Huasi* from a parishioner of ours. He said, *"I am very worried about the children, especially in the smaller far away towns, as there is much abuse, physical, psychological and sexual. Please help!"*

After an initial study in the second half of 2015, the *Warmi Huasi* team, relying on what we had learned from our

experiences in San Benito in Lima, set up a *reading club* first in Pausa and then in the outlying town, an hour away by bus, called Lampa. The *reading club* was for children aged between six and 12 years of age.

Pausa, being the provincial capital, is where all the authorities live and work from, the provincial mayor and councillors and the health, education and judiciary functionaries. We needed to show them what could be done so that they would be on side in our work in the more remote towns and villages.

Two years later 140 children were participating regularly in Pausa and 48 in Lampa. Each club then formed their own childrens' committee which was recognized by their local municipalities, with 52 children participating. That way, their voices could be heard by the adults in their

communities and they could make proposals to their local municipalities on the need to provide safe places for the children to play in and also suggestions on how to clean up the rubbish and make the environment safer in their towns.

A big bonus from the work of the *Warmi Huasi* team to the benefit of children and adolescents was the recognition by the *Provincial Municipality* in Pausa of the expertise of our organisations as consultants to them in their child protection policies.

In Peru, each municipality is obliged legally to have a COMUDENA, (*Committee for the Rights of Children and Adolescents*), but often they existed only on paper.

In Pausa, the *Warmi Huasi* team encouraged the setting up of the committee, which is now in place, and monitors its progress, offering workshops to help the different municipal offices know their responsibilities along with the leaders of the local communities and the representatives of the Police, the Judiciary and the Ministries of Education and Health.

Over 5,000 children and adolescents who live in the province indirectly benefit from the work of *Warmi Huasi* with the COMUDENA of the Paucar de Sara Sara provincial municipality, as the now pro-active committee there to teach them their rights and defend them from abuse. The use of local radio programs has also been an effective way in which the children in Pausa, along with the *Warmi Huasi* staff member, can communicate with all the children of the Province and invite them to events and share with them how they can protect themselves.

The local communities in Pausa and Lampa are now more aware of the need to protect and to listen to the children and the news is spreading around the villages and towns of the county of Ayacucho about the *reading clubs* and the growing voice of children demanding they be treated with dignity, that their rights be respected and that they be not mistreated or abused.

Watch this space, as this year in Ayacucho we are planning, with the children, to set up a mobile reading club to reach isolated villages and also to run a study club for adolescents who, in the last years of secondary school, are preparing themselves for university. All help welcome!

---

*Columban Fr Ed O'Connell began his mission work in Peru in 1973 and is the safeguarding officer for the Columbans in Peru.*

## Pepito's testimonial

Pepito lives in Ayacucho and comes from a broken home. Some years ago his father left home, leaving behind Pepito's mother and his two siblings. He used to slip out of the house so he didn't have to work on the farm and would argue constantly with his mother and complain about how little time she had for him.

With this background, and at eight years of age, Pepito joined the project in August 2015, and in discussions he showed that he liked giving his opinion about children's problems. He did this because he understood all of these problems only too well.

Now, three years on, Pepito is one of the best readers in the *Reading House*. He is one of the most active and enthusiastic members of the *Children's Committee*. He likes writing and has won theatre competitions.

His mother supports him and feels really proud of how much Pepito has progressed.

Although there are still improvements to be made, we know that Pepito feels hopeful and confident that he can choose a better path in life now that he can see the future differently. This is because he feels his opinions are valued and he sees how his decisions can contribute towards helping other children improve just as he did.

*Note: In accordance with the Child Safeguarding Policy, the name of the boy in this story has been changed to protect his identity.*



*Warmi Huasi team at a planning meeting in Pausa.*

# Women's work!

TERESA SIHYEON BAE

Teresa Sihyeon Bae is a lay missionary working with Taiwan's indigenous Atayal people. She highlights some of the challenges young Atayal girls face if they wish to further their education.

I live and work in a mountainous area of Taiwan among the indigenous *Atayal* tribespeople. I am happy here and I thank God for the privilege of such a life.

The majority of the people are pomegranate and orange farmers. They also cultivate a variety of vegetables for sale. Although husbands and wives share the work, it is the women who do the most to generate an income. This may be due to the fact that from antiquity men were mostly engaged in hunting and seldom contributed to work on the land or in the home. The men who do not work on farms go to the city for contract work or other jobs. They hardly ever help out at home because they consider domestic work to be solely the domain of women.

The women take care of managing and educating the family. Often, as the children progress through school, the more advanced levels of education are beyond their mothers' finances. Chatting to some of the mothers after Mass on a Sunday, I'll often hear them complain of being exhausted as they gripe about their husbands' lack of support and the fact that they have to take care of the children all on their own. These women are often unable to attend Church on Sunday because they are so busy trying to make a living. It is a sad situation.

But when these women pray, they always begin with a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God. This has made a big impression on me. But I worry about how their deep faith and close connection to God can continue to grow in the circumstances of their lives.

One night I got a telephone call from a young mother. It was her third time calling me that day. The first call was an inquiry about the next day's liturgy. The second call was to ask about my personal welfare. On the third call she didn't say a word, but simply cried. Due to my limited Chinese language I was unable to offer appropriate words of comfort to her. I am saddened that I was unable to help her, especially since she had made the effort to contact me.

In this mountainous area there is only a primary school. Students who want to continue on to middle or high school must move to the city and get lodgings there away from their families. There is, for the most part, no protection or

supervision by parents or elders for the young students. As a result, they are exposed to, and fall prey to temptations of alcohol, smoking and sex. Many of the girls become pregnant in high school and don't get to graduate due to the demands of their pregnancy and the challenges of caring for a baby. Consequently, their long cherished hopes for their lives are severely curtailed.

Furthermore, high divorce rates as well as unwholesome family situations, result in problems passing down from one generation to the next. During my two-year stay here, out of the many I've met, just two female students have attended university.

I know one high school student who has three younger sisters. Her mother has been married and divorced several times and has children from all of these unions. However, the burden of supporting these children was placed on the shoulders of this high school student and her aged grandmother. Due to the lack of family resources, she frequently missed school in order to work. An intelligent and talented young woman, if she only had some family support, she could do anything she wanted to. It is really sad that there is nobody to help her with this burden and enable her to concentrate on her studies and realise her dream of attending university.

Children and adolescents are God's gifts, our happiness and our hope. If we want them to grow up and reach their God-given potential we must do all we can to help them.

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*Teresa Sihyeon Bae is a South Korean Columban lay missionary.*

Many of the girls become pregnant in high school and don't get to graduate due to the demands of their pregnancy and the challenges of caring for a baby.



Lay missionary Teresa Sihyeon Bae with Taiwan's indigenous Atayal young women.

# 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.*

## Mission Intention for May

That the Church in Africa, through the commitment of its members, may be the seed of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for this continent.



## Catholic leaders respond to New Zealand tragedy

Catholic leaders from all around the world responded to the tragic shooting in Christchurch New Zealand that killed 52 people, showing solidarity and closeness to the Muslim community.

Whether through social media or through statements released by their relative *Bishops' Conferences*, Catholic leaders worldwide have been sending out messages of prayer, solidarity and concern for the Muslim community of New Zealand, and worldwide.

### A tweet from England

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, tweeted his profound sympathy for the victims praying for the healing of people, and reminding everyone that Jesus calls us to welcome strangers and love our neighbour however different they may be.

### A message from India

Indian Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Archbishop of Mumbai and president of the *Indian Bishops' Conference*, expressed "profound pain" for the massacre. And in remembering that it was filmed and broadcast live on Facebook, expressed his concern about inappropriate use of Social Media. *"It is increasingly getting loaded with hate, threatening messages, ultra-nationalistic rage and categorization of dissenters as anti-nationals,"* he said. *"It is time to call out hate mongers and take them to task."*

### Statements from Ireland and the US

In Ireland, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, of Dublin, asked that prayers be said at all Masses in the Archdiocese of Dublin on Sunday March 17, Feast of St Patrick, in remembrance of those who died and were injured in the attacks. The Archbishop also expressed his concern about anti-Islamic

sentiments being expressed via social media in Ireland and even in publications purporting to be of Catholic inspiration.

### A prayer from Australia

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison confirmed that one of the four people arrested was an Australian-born citizen. In a statement, Archbishop Mark Coleridge, President of the *Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference*, condemned *"this unfathomable act of evil"*, and is praying that *"out of evil good will come, strengthening the bonds of good will in the city, the country and the entire human family, but especially between Christians and Muslims"*.

Other global leaders have expressed their sadness, including the Bishop of Singapore, who stated that *"such deeds remind us of the importance of promoting inter-faith dialogue"* and that tolerance, mutual respect and appreciation of other faiths must be taught and learnt.

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Francesca Merlo, [www.vaticannews.va](http://www.vaticannews.va) March 16, 2019

Photo: Women leaving flowers for mosque shooting victims by Luis Alejandro Apolaza (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Conuco>) is licensed under CC BY 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)



# From the Director

## Healing and transformation

We have just celebrated Easter and most of us have heard someone preach about the meaning of the day. What do we remember? What stays with us as the meaning of what is called the most important celebration of the liturgical year?

Easter means that Jesus is risen from the dead and it reminds us that we too will rise from the dead. It also says that Jesus has not left us behind and is always with us.

The question is, what is Jesus doing when he is with us? Is he just here to provide us with companionship? There are two words that remind me that Jesus is more than a companion with us on the road. They are healing and transformation.

### Healing

When Jesus rose from the dead he appeared to the disciples and showed them his wounds which were still there but in his risen body there was no pain. It is a good image of what the resurrection of Jesus does for us. We too are healed of our pain through the power of the resurrection.

When we think of what happened in Christchurch we can see the pain in the community over the 50 people who were killed. But the killing and the pain was not the end of the story. Led by Prime Minister Jacinda Adern, people were invited to respond to this tragedy from a deeper, better place from within themselves. They were called to be inclusive, to be forgiving and compassionate and they were.

This was the power of the resurrection at work in our world. God did not turn away and ignore us at that time. God is God-with-us and the risen Jesus, through the power of the Resurrection, through the Holy Spirit, worked in the hearts and minds of millions of people to bring healing to individuals and to nations.

### Transformation

The response that we saw in New Zealand was so different from what has been the usual way of talking and behaving. You could call it a transformation of the public discourse after such tragedies.

It is common to talk of our own growth in life as a journey through a series of transformations. We reach a certain plateau but the life within us keeps pushing forward. We start to feel things changing within us and then there is a breakthrough. We see other people differently.

The question is, what is Jesus doing when he is with us? Is he just here to provide us with companionship? There are two words that remind me that Jesus is more than a companion with us on the road. They are healing and transformation.

We often read of stories where people have had a crisis and with the help of others they come to a new understanding and a new perspective on life. They have been transformed. This is the power of the resurrection at work.

So Easter is not just a remembrance of something that happened a long time ago and is far from our everyday lives. It is a celebration of what God continues to do in us and in our communities.

Despite the Son of God being killed, he rose from the dead because of the love of God for us. That same love continues to heal and transform the whole world.

Alleluia.

Despite the Son of God being killed, he rose from the dead because of the love of God for us. That same love continues to heal and transform the whole world.



Fr Trevor Trotter  
director@columban.org.au



# Prophetic theologian dies suddenly

FR CHARLES RUE AUSTRALIA

Members of *St Columbans Mission Society* join with many others around the world in mourning the death of Mgr. Denis Edwards, a priest of the *Archdiocese of Adelaide*, Australia, and inspiring teacher and theologian. Mgr. Edwards spent much of his priestly life researching and writing, lecturing and promoting the link between ecological science and Catholic faith. He died suddenly on March 5, 2019, in Adelaide after suffering a stroke.

Requiem Mass for Mgr. Edwards was celebrated at *St Francis Xavier's Cathedral* with Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ, presiding, with concelebrants, Bishops Charles Gauci and Eugene Hurley from Darwin, many priests of the diocese and elsewhere and a packed Cathedral of family members, friends and the people of Adelaide.

Mgr. Denis was born on December 10, 1943 in Port Pirie, South Australia, and was ordained priest on July 9, 1966 in *St Francis Xavier's Cathedral*. In her eulogy at the Requiem Mass, a grandniece spoke of the mutual love and appreciation that Denis shared within his family.

A senior lecturer in theology at the *Australian Catholic University's* Adelaide campus, Mgr. Edwards was awarded an *Order of Australia Medal* in 2012 for his contribution to the Archdiocese and to theological education. Fellow lecturer and friend, Rev Dr James McEvoy, recalled some of the contributions Denis made to develop the ecological tradition of the church and his contribution to eco-mission globally.

A founding member of the *International Society for Science and Religion*, Denis wrote 14 books on the dialogue between science and faith, many of which were published by *Orbis Books of the Maryknoll Missionaries*. He was a sought-after speaker around the world and in 2015 was awarded an honorary doctorate from the *Faculty of Catholic Theology* at the *University of Fribourg* in Switzerland.

In Adelaide, Mgr. Edwards chaired the *Catholic Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission* for five years. From the 1990s he worked with members of the *Earth Bible ecumenical team* which laid a foundation for the development of a liturgical *Season of Creation for September*.

Denis was a member of the original group of experts consulted by the bishops of Australia prior to the establishment of *Catholic Earthcare Australia* in 2002.

This diverse group was made up of women and men, young and old, laity and clergy, sisters and teachers, politicians and scientists.

Mgr. Denis Edwards has long had an association with *St Columbans Mission Society*. He was one of the priests to warmly welcome their mission promotion team to the Adelaide Archdiocese in 1987. In 2002 *St Columbans College*, North Turrumurra, with Denis's involvement, hosted the initial consultation which led to the formation of *Catholic Earthcare Australia*. Columban Fr Sean McDonagh collaborated with Denis for lectures in Australia and in Rome in the consultation preparing for the publication of Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, on care for the earth as our common home.

At the Requiem, Bishop O'Kelly said, "Denis has been a wonderful contributor and mainstay of the Archdiocese, a rock of strength for many. His writings gifted the Church across the world. He carried with him a prayerfulness and humility that clothed his scholarship." In his homily, Fr Philip Marshall said the church had been "blessed by Mgr. Denis' faith, his love and his presence among us".

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Columban Fr Charles Rue resides in Sydney.



Mgr. Denis Edwards.

In his homily, Fr Philip Marshall said the church had been "blessed by Mgr. Denis' faith, his love and his presence among us".

# Strategies for promoting Interfaith Dialogue

Last month I posted a serious comment on Facebook about a terrorism case in the *NSW Supreme Court*.

I felt the Judge's comments pandered to popular prejudice against Islam and Muslims.

Taking on such a high office was a risk, so I was very careful, spending over an hour drafting and re-drafting a few brief paragraphs until they stated exactly what I wanted to say, <http://bit.ly/2SI487>

I was very pleased that my post was liked over 100 times (nearly all Muslims), received 69 mostly enthusiastic and appreciative comments, and was shared 35 times.

It didn't go viral by any means, but it made a significant impact and enhanced my reputation as a serious commentator on matters Islamic. I was very pleased.

The next day I made a BIG mistake! I posted a picture of myself holding my 8-month old great niece, Joey. A beaming baby is irresistible.

This family post received nearly 300 likes - three times as many as my post! - and 50 comments, mostly "cute" (referring to the baby, not to me!).

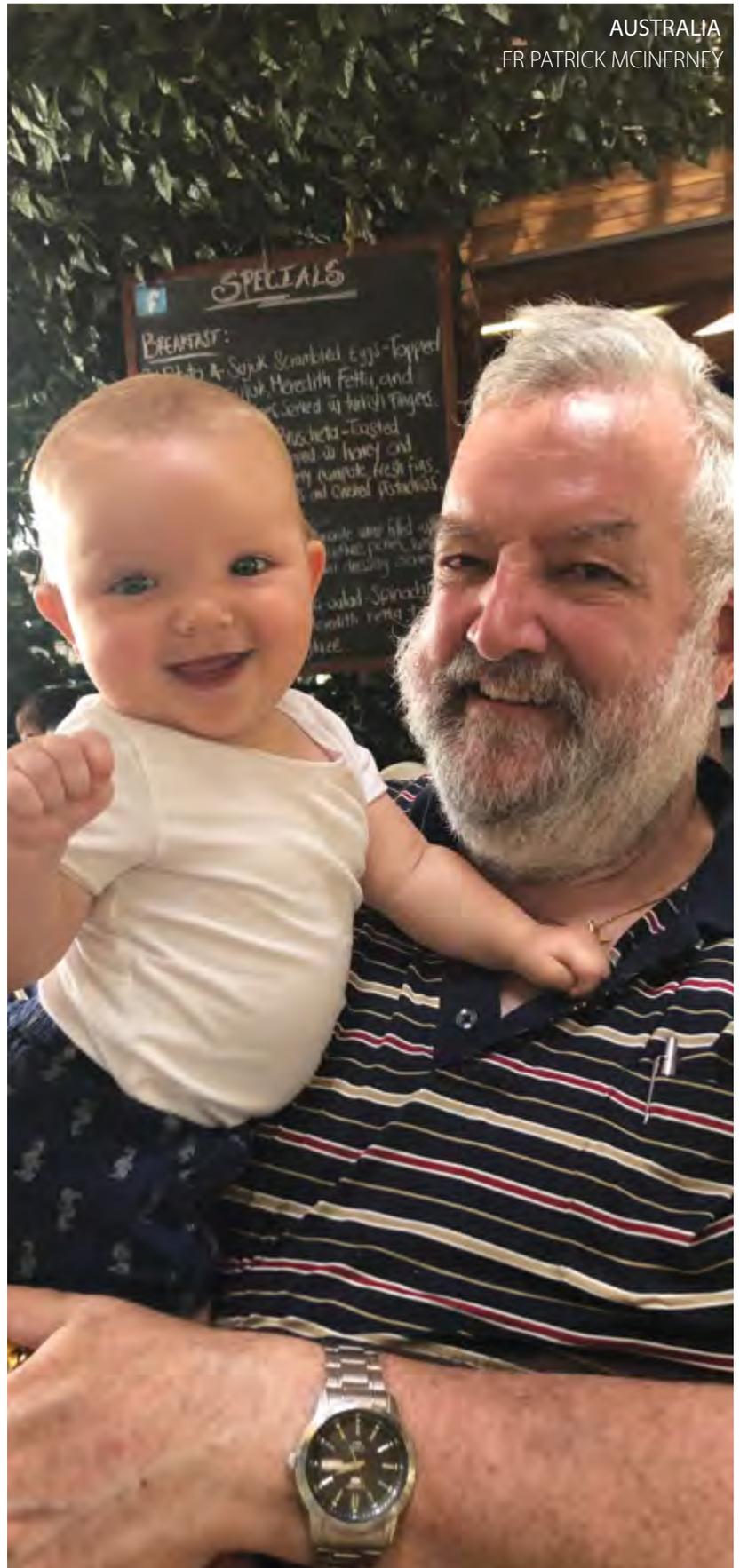
Just shows that baby photos far outweigh serious academic comment!

Maybe the polities have it right, kissing all those babies in their electioneering campaigns.

Maybe to promote Christian-Muslim Relations, I should post photos of me holding Muslim babies!!!

---

*Columban Fr Patrick McInerney is the Director of the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations in Blacktown, NSW.*





# The Princess of Paradise

I want to tell you about my friend David. Mind you he prefers to be called *Princess*. He is known as the *Princess of Paradise*.

Since I arrived on the Gold Coast a little over two years ago I usually rise before 5am and go for a walk along the beach. During these early morning excursions I often passed the *Princess of Paradise* sitting there on his bench. As time went by we would exchange a few words and then as more time went by I would sit with him and give him a few coins to go into the 7-Eleven and buy both of us a coffee and him a muffin.

David is a cross-dresser and is well known on Cavill Avenue. He has sat there for years. He used to live opposite above a Karaoke Bar, but late last year he was given notice to leave. He had been in this same place for six years, meticulously paying his rent.

David has schizophrenia according to doctors who examined him. By his own story he asked does that mean "I am mad?" They answered that "we don't use that term any more". He sits at Surfers Paradise and waits for Kylie Minogue to turn up and marry him. He has done it for over a decade.

I was able to get David to visit the *St Vincent de Paul Cornerstone Program* which deals in housing for people in difficulties. I had the intention of following this case through, not just for friendship sake, but in order to see how the housing for the homeless system works.

David was willing to have me talk to the people at the karaoke place where he lives about the termination. The plot thickened a bit when he told me that the reason they were shafting him was that they didn't like him wearing women's clothing. This sounded like a case of discrimination as he had lived, faithfully paying his rent, in the same place for so long.

After that I arranged through the *St Vincent de Paul* for David to meet with some free legal aid to prepare papers for a stay of execution on his ejection from the property. I mentioned to David that he could perhaps wear something more helpful for that meeting. When it is cold he had trousers on under his wee skirt. He said it might be hot and I suggested he could suffer a little like the rest of us. He listened but I am not sure if we were singing off the same hymn sheet. He is ruled by the "voice – God" as he repeats endlessly.

I explained to him that as far as I could see he would finish up on the streets, which he had previously told me he didn't want to do. He now seemed resigned to this as a distinct possibility. He was talking about cubby houses for keeping out of the wind and rain. He has done it before.

David's stuffed "babies" which he carries around with him.

I asked "what about your stuff?" He said he was thinking about storage and then he got into a discourse about his three large stuffed toys to which he has given names. They are his children. He couldn't store those. Anyway, he knows that he cannot drag all his gear around the streets.

I doubt that I am ever able to overcome the power of the voice even though I risked telling him that as a man of God, I doubted that the voice was God. He wasn't perturbed about that but just said in so many words that he would need to follow its capricious whims.

He doesn't really understand the court procedures and the dates on bits of paper and what it all meant. I explained that as far as I understood it was looking for a way to help him to stay where he was until we got something else sorted out. Then abruptly he asked me to tell them to withdraw the court submission.

In the end the voice undermined our efforts to keep him off the streets. I could only help him to find a safe storage place for his goods and chattels. He had his three "babies" with him in baskets when we went to the storage place – Sunshine a big bear and another two smaller stuffed toys. He maternally took these out of the sunshine in the car when we went into the office to sign the forms.

I had him sign the papers at the storage place and then drove and left him on Cavill Avenue. He has now been there for over two months sleeping in a door-way on a blanket. He has money in the bank but the voice says he needs to await the imminent arrival of the said Kylie.

I broached the subject of the "voices" and asked would he like help with those. He said he didn't want any "mental health" intervention. Perhaps he finds comfort in the voices. So he is in the hands of the voice/God.

Since that time just before Christmas, I have met David a few times for breakfast in Surfers Paradise McDonalds. We dine there in the early morning. He has his stuffed "babies" with him in a bag and he tends them with care. He is quite talkative and awaiting the imminent arrival of Kylie Minogue who is travelling to Australia for Mardi Gras. This could be the big moment.

---

*Columban Fr Warren Kinne served nearly 20 years as a missionary in Shanghai, China and now lives on the Gold Coast, working in parishes and as a chaplain to students at Griffith University.*



David - the 'Princess of Paradise'.



# Vale for Fr Leo Baker



Fr Leo Baker (left) with his brother Fr Chris Baker at the Columban House in Essendon, 2014.

In his 96th year, Fr Leo Baker died of cancer on March 27, 2019 at *Mercy Health Care* in Colac, Victoria. Two of Leo's brothers, Chris and Pat, also Columban missionary priests were with him when he died.

Fr Leo was born in Camperdown, Victoria, on January 6, 1923, the eldest of four boys and three girls.

At five years of age Leo began his schooling in Camperdown riding a horse five miles each way to the Catholic school. The horse was reluctant to move on the way to school but happily galloped home each day at a great rate.

The family later moved to Cobden where Leo continued his schooling until 14 years of age when he left to bolster the family income and worked for two years on local farming properties.

He took on some very heavy work like milking cows by hand, chopping tons of wood, working in a hardware store doing a lot of heavy lifting as a builder's labourer. He also spent a lot of time catching rabbits and selling them.

At 16 years of age the missions began to call and Leo contacted the *Columban Fathers* in Essendon who encouraged him to go back to school and complete his education. He spent the next two and a half years, boarding at *St Patrick's CBC*, Ballarat.

From there he moved on to Spiritual Year and Philosophy at *St Columbans*, Essendon, followed by the diocesan seminary at Werribee where he studied Theology. He was ordained by Archbishop Daniel Mannix at *St Patrick's Cathedral*, Melbourne, on July 25, 1948.

After six months in a parish in Melbourne, Leo received an appointment to Korea, arriving there in April, 1950, to begin language studies. But two months later the Korean War began and Leo was moved south. In August he was assigned to Japan where he began Japanese language study before being appointed to Kamogawa, Ryujin, Tetori, and Arao parishes.

Fr Leo combined the parish apostolates with writing histories of Columban parishes in Japan and photographing Columbans and their work. These photographs were often used by *The Far East magazines*.

After several years as pastor in *Choshi parish*, a four-year appointment to Australia followed in 1976 when he served as Bursar in the Essendon house and in other capacities.

Back in Japan in 1979, Leo became Regional Correspondent and Communications Officer at the *Tokyo Procure* and took on further research into Columban Mission history in Japan and the publishing of the *Japan Regional Newsletter*. This was followed by directing the *Good Shepherd Movement* (an English language teaching project) and appealing for support for it in parishes around Tokyo and Yokohama.

In July 2018, Fr Leo Baker was asked about his life as a Columban Missionary, he said: "It has been quite an adventure."

Leo's final appointment in 1986 was back to the Australia/ New Zealand Region where he engaged in mission education and parish appeals in a number of dioceses. He completed the *Pacific Mission Institute* course in Turrumurra NSW and became chaplain to *Nazareth House Aged Care* in North Turrumurra, NSW.

After retiring to Essendon in 1998, and despite failing eyesight, Leo continued his interests in photography, card-making, gardening and participation in ROTA (*Religious of the Third Age*).

In May of 2014 Leo moved to *Mercy Health Care* in Colac, Victoria, to be closer to his family and friends there and celebrated his 70th Anniversary of ordination there in July, 2018.

Following his Requiem Mass at *St Columbans Essendon*, Leo was laid to rest alongside many of his friends in the Columban plot at the *Melbourne General Cemetery* in Carlton.

Rest in Peace, Leo.



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