

# The Far East

COLUMBAN MISSION MAGAZINE

April 2017

## People were **thirsty for God**

Columban Fr Paul Prendergast  
shares about his life in the  
Peruvian Andes mountains.



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# The Far East

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## AUSTRALIA

St Columban's Mission Society  
69 Woodland Street  
Essendon Vic 3040  
Postal address:  
PO Box 752, Niddrie Vic 3042  
Tel: (03) 9375 9475  
TFE@columban.org.au  
www.columban.org.au

## NEW ZEALAND

St Columban's Mission Society  
P.O. Box 30-017  
Lower Hutt 5040  
Tel: (04) 567 7216  
columban@iconz.co.nz  
www.columban.org.au

## Publisher:

Fr Gary Walker  
director@columban.org.au

## Editor:

Fr Dan Harding  
TFE@columban.org.au

## Editorial Assistant:

Mrs Jacqueline Russell  
TFE@columban.org.au

## Designer:

Mrs Assunta Arena  
aarena@columban.org.au

## Communications & Publications

### Director:

Mrs Janette Mentha  
jmentha@columban.org.au

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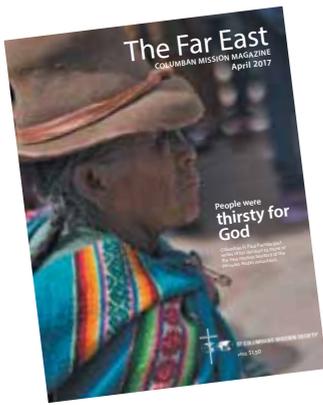


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*An indigenous Quechua speaking woman in Yanoaca, in the parish of Columban Fr Paul Prendergast in the Peruvian Andes Mountains.*

*Photo: Missionary Society of St Columban*



## From the Editor

### New life in Christ at Easter

Columban Fr Barry Cairns choked with emotion when he saw his entire Parish Pastoral Council come to pray at the home of a certain dying man. This man had betrayed members of the parish community to the 'thought-police' during the war years in Japan. This is an Easter story. The Risen Christ challenges all of us to move on, to forgive, to let go of what is dead and to seek new life in Him.

This issue has many other Easter stories. Columban Fr Shay Cullen tells the story of the PREDA Foundation that seeks to bring new life to street children such as six year old Rosi, who are victims of poverty, of human trafficking and the sex industry. In May of this year, Fr Shay and the PREDA Foundation will receive the Shalom Prize for Justice and Peace from a Catholic University in Germany.

In Adelaide, 'The 12 Stars Boxing Club', run by founder and coach Deacon Anthony Hill, offers spiritual growth and pastoral care as well as physical fitness training to its members. From November 2016 to the end of February 2017, Club member Joel Webber brought new life to the impoverished young people of the

Columban parish of San Matias in Santiago, Chile.

In the March issue of the magazine, Christian Brother Reginald Whitely wrote of his brother, Columban Lynn Whitely, who died in Chile in 1971 at the age of 31 from hepatitis. In this issue, several of his former parishioners share about the new life in Christ that Padre Lino had brought to each of them during his journey in the parish of San Marcos. He would have also received this new life in return from them.

Columban Fr Paul Prendergast went to Peru in 1966 from his native New Zealand. For the last 30 years he has ministered in the high mountain valleys of the Peruvian Andes. After first spending 13 years in Columban parishes in Lima, the Peruvian capital on the coast, he shares with us the circumstances that led him to step out in faith, leave the coast and go up to a new mission territory, a place where impoverished indigenous peoples live in the high mountain valleys.

After almost 20 years in China, Columban Fr Warren Kinne shares his China swan song with us. He will be

"coming in from the deep", returning to his roots in Australia later this year. Columban Fr Sean Connaughton writes about his early years in the Philippines, learning to be a parish priest.

As we did in the March issue, we focus once again on the disaster at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, Japan, on March 11, 2011. Columban Sean McDonagh writes of the astronomical costs of cleaning up this disaster.

The Easter Season is about new life in Christ. We hope you enjoy these stories from Columban Missionaries around the world who bring new life in Christ and find new life in Christ amongst the people they minister to.

Fr Daniel Harding  
TFE@columban.org.au

# The story behind the photo of Rosi

*Columban Fr Shay Cullen from the PREDA (People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance) Foundation tells of their work in rescuing children from the sex industry and abuse. See related article pages 22-23*

*R*osi was a six-year old child detained in the police detention cell of Police Station B on Magsaysay Drive in Olongapo City, the Philippines some years ago. More like her will be jailed if the minimum age of criminal liability will be lowered to nine or 12 years old.

One evening during Holy Week, I was downtown in Olongapo City. It was filled with sex tourists. Many street children were as usual running about begging money from the foreign sex tourists and US servicemen from the nearby US Naval Base.

The children were vulnerable as paedophiles would prowl the streets and try and lure them away and abuse them. In 1983, I uncovered a child sex ring where dozens of street children were sexually raped and abused and infected with venereal disease. A US serviceman was accused as one of the many abusers. He was brought to trial on the Pacific Ocean island of Guam. It was sensational news but he got only a light sentence.

The city had one source of employment and that was entertainment for sex tourists. Thousands of young girls, many underage, were victims of human trafficking and bound to the sex bars by debt bondage. Hundreds of sex bars lined the streets and they operated with a mayor's permit. HIV-AIDS was spreading.

*PREDA Foundation* established a home for these street children to protect and care for them with professional social workers. Today there are 40 children in care in the *PREDA* home for girls recovering from sexual abuse. In the home for boys, another 30 children are protected and safe.

That evening, I went to visit Police Station B on Magsaysay Drive, Olongapo City because many children were jailed there for begging for food and it was the work of *PREDA Foundation* to get them out and bring them to a safe home. They needed protection, therapy, support and a new start in life.

*Rosi in the jail cell at the Police Station B holding a soft drink can.*



I went to Police Station B and walked to the desk and greeted the police officer on duty and I asked if there were any children detained. He said yes, so I went inside to the cells and heard a child crying. I went to a cell and there I was shocked to see a little six-year old child holding a soft drink can and crying her heart out. **She was crying, "Mama, I want my Mama, Mama come for me." It would break your heart if you saw her.**

I found about eight other street children from six to 12 years old in that filthy cell. Most were sleeping on the dirty stone floor. A few feet away in the opposite cell was a half-naked man so close that he could almost touch the children. Rosi was terrified of him.

I was shocked when I saw the children and Rosi crying, tears streaming down her face. She was made to be like a criminal behind the iron bars of the terrible, smelly, empty cell. I felt very angry at this and immediately took out a camera and photographed Rosi as evidence of a crime committed against the children.

I immediately went to the police desk and told the police on duty they must release the children to the social workers immediately as the children were being traumatized and treated as criminals and it was a violation of children's rights to be detained in a jail cell. They seemed surprised as if they did not know that.

I advised them to call the child care centre to be ready to receive the children. Then after almost an hour a police pick-up with a wire cage on the back came to the police station and the children were released and put in the cage. I saw that they were brought safely to the child care centre where they were given food and shelter.

Later I found out that Julia, the mother of Rosi, was a very poor street vendor selling peanuts to the passersby to survive and the child was with her. A corrupt local government official called a 'tanod' or village guard would make all vendors pay him a fee to be allowed to sell informally on the streets. When Julia could not pay, as she earned only a little money, the 'tanod', arrested her child Rosi and locked her up in the police cell until Julia would pay to have her released. It was an extortion racket that the poor vendors suffered.

When Julia came looking to get Rosi out having borrowed money to pay the fee, she was told Rosi was in the child care centre. So that is the story behind the photograph of Rosi holding the red soft drink can.

We were and are still campaigning to stop the jailing of minors as it is illegal. But the police and the city authorities were above the law. Looking for abandoned street children to be able to release them and bring them to a safe haven was my goal that night.

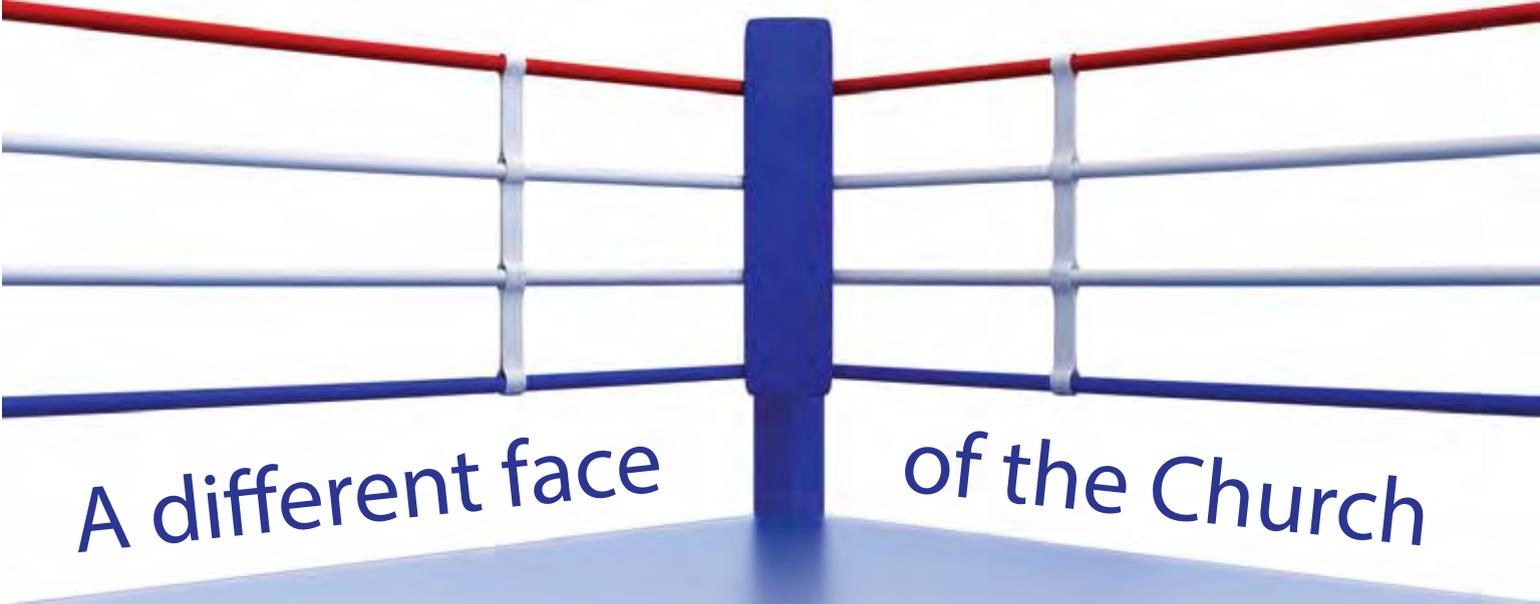
At the *PREDA Foundation*, I and the *PREDA* team formed a coalition of supporters in the Philippines and campaigned to end the sex tourist industry and remove the US Navy base. The conversion plan idea that we promoted was to convert the huge facilities into an economic zone with hi-tech factories to give many jobs and work with dignity to the people of Olongapo City. After ten years, the anti-base campaign was a huge success with political action that removed the US military facilities in the Philippines. Today, the huge former base is now a thriving economic zone providing 68,000 dignified jobs.

Today thousands of children are put into detention cells as local governments do not obey the juvenile justice and welfare law. They are mandated by the RA 9344 Law to build homes for the children and provide care for them.

*PREDA* Foundation has safe and beautiful homes for many of these children. We cannot help them all. There will be many more jailed children like Rosi until the local government units do their duty and respect the law and the rights of the child.

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*Columban Fr Shay Cullen, founder of PREDA, has spent more than 40 years in the Philippines.*



# A different face

# of the Church

## The '12 Stars Boxing Club's' mission to Chile

*Joel Webber is a 23 year old boxer, gym instructor, life saver and sports massage therapist resident in Adelaide, South Australia. His boxing coach is Deacon Anthony Hill, of the Archdiocese of Adelaide. On November 22, 2016, Joel left Australia for a two and a half month mission experience with the Columbans in Santiago, Chile. Joel brought the mission of Adelaide's '12 Stars Boxing Club' to the Columban parish of San Matias, located in an impoverished area of Santiago. He would show a different face of the Church.*

### The '12 Stars Boxing Club'

The 12 Stars Boxing Club was founded in the year 2000 by Deacon Anthony Hill as a part of his preparation for the diaconate. The '12 Stars' comes from Chapter 12:1 of the *Book of Revelation*, where there is a woman clothed as the sun and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of 12 stars. She is pregnant and gives birth to a male child who is attacked by the Dragon, who represents the Devil. The male child refers to Jesus. The woman represents the Church and is identified with Our Lady, Mother of God and Mother of the Church.

The Club's Constitution provides for the spiritual growth, the pastoral care and overall fitness and wellbeing of its members. It currently has over 500 members on its books with regular contact with around 120 members. About 10% of the Club members are women. Members come from all walks of life. As the Club's coach and founder, Deacon Anthony says that boxing can be used to reach out to people. It can be used for evangelization and the discovery of God in people's lives.

Deacon Anthony was an Australian Boxing Champion in 1989. He has participated in six international boxing tournaments representing Australia. He won four bronze medals. Dianne, Deacon Anthony's wife, is also a qualified boxing trainer and has been involved in the Club over the years. They have one son, Matthew, a university student.

Deacon Anthony was ordained deacon for the Archdiocese of Adelaide in September 2012. As well as his work for the Club, he is the Director of Catholic Mission for the Archdiocese of Adelaide.

Over time, the Club has grown into a caring community. Doctors and a psychologist refer patients suffering from depression to the Club. Each training session ends when everyone gathers around the coach for a short prayer and Gospel Reflection. Members often ask for prayers for others.

Recently one young member asked the other members for prayers for a friend who had attempted suicide. The Club members then discussed ways in which they could be of

assistance to those suffering from mental health issues and were suicidal. They managed to identify key vulnerable groups and did a pamphlet letter box drop locally inviting people to join the Club. As a group they prayed that God would touch and inspire those in need to attend. Deacon Anthony used the story of Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi from the *Book of Ruth* to motivate the members as examples of how one can turn one's life around when through courage and trust one walks with God.

Around 95% of Club members have had little or no contact with the institutional Church, seeing God and the Church as very distant and unrelated to their lives. Now many members discover a God who is close and involved with them. As a result several weddings and various baptisms and lots of prayers and spiritual accompaniment have come out of the Club's mission.

## Bringing the mission of the '12 Stars Boxing Club' to Chile

Joel Webber trains at the '12 Stars Boxing Club'. He has had two fights for the club and remains undefeated. As a young practicing Catholic, Joel frequently asked Coach Deacon Anthony about doing some form of mission work overseas in areas of great need. He felt the call to bring the mission of the '12 Stars Boxing Club' to an overseas setting.

Deacon Anthony got in touch with the Columbans who then arranged for Joel to have a short term mission experience in the Columban parish of San Matias in Santiago, Chile. For several months leading up to his mission trip, Joel studied the Spanish language and participated in workshops on Columban mission in Chile.

Joel arrived in Santiago just before the St Columbans Day celebrations on November 23, 2016. He says that the following months he spent in the parish of San Matias were among the best experiences of his whole life. It was life transforming.

Joel boarded with a family in the area of the Holy Family Chapel, which became his home chapel in San Matias parish. He says that Sunday Masses in Chile seem a lot more vibrant and alive than in Australia, having a strong sense of community and participation.

During the summer school holidays in January Joel participated in the parish Summer Camp programme for children each morning along with Columbans, parents and

teachers. This involved participating in sessions of prayer and faith formation, character building, games, paintings, handicrafts and personal development. He accompanied the children on excursions to places such as the Zoo.



[www.12stars.com.au](http://www.12stars.com.au)

Each afternoon Joel ran two boxing classes for children and adolescents at the Holy Family Chapel. A lot of preparation went into preparing them. They were held in one of the chapel's meeting rooms. The first class ran from 5:00pm to 6:00pm and the second class from 6:30pm to 7:30pm. Fifteen young people between the ages of nine and 17 participated.

True to Joel's formation at Adelaide's '12 Stars Boxing Club', he took a special interest in his students, helping them to grow not only in fitness but mentoring them at the same time in self discipline, respect for others, community service and in faith in God. According to Columban Fr Michael Hoban, the parents of the young boxers and the Holy Family Chapel community in general were very impressed by Joel's dedication, faith, professionalism and hard work. He was able to show them a different face of the Church.

**The Columban fathers and local community hope Joel will be able to continue that mission next year as well.**

---

*Columban Fr Daniel Harding is the Editor of The Far East magazine.*



*'12 Stars Boxing Club' members with Deacon Anthony Hill, Adelaide (center back) and Joel Webber (second from left in red).*

# An Easter experience

FR BARRY CAIRNS

## The parable of the loving father and his two sons revisited

*Christ is risen, He is risen indeed.*

*The Easter season reminds us that from death comes life. An encounter with the Risen Christ can bring peace, forgiveness and reconciliation out of situations of animosity, division and the inability to forgive. Columban Fr Barry Cairns shares an Easter story of his parish pastoral council reaching out to forgive.*

*F*ifty years ago I was pastor of an 'old Christian' community on Amakusa Island in the far south of Japan. By 'old Christian' I mean that a Jesuit missionary, Fr Luis Almeida, founded the parish 451 years ago in 1566. Then the Tokugawa daimyo government expelled or executed all missionaries. The Amakusa community went into hiding remaining faithful for 240 years. This persecution officially ended in 1873 by Imperial decree. However, the attitude of persecuting Christians was deeply embedded. The parish on Amakusa Island was a small village, one third being Christian. Nearly all were very poor fishermen.

When World War II came those slumbering antagonisms against Christians resurfaced. During the war the Catholic community suffered blatant discrimination and mischievous slander even in the school classroom. Christians were regarded as doubtfully loyal towards the Emperor who was regarded as a living god.

One day, 20 years after the end of World War II, a woman (I will call her Mrs Tanaka) came to the rectory door and said to me: *"My husband is dying. He has cancer. He would like to see you."*

So I went with her to a small house where the sick Mr Tanaka was lying on the tatami mats. We talked together for a long time. It emerged that Mr Tanaka was a baptized Catholic from an 'old Christian' family. However he had not been near the Church for over 40 years.

*"Is it possible for me to return?"* he asked me. I replied: *"Most certainly! Jesus gives people like you a very special warm welcome back."* And so he received the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I told him I would be back on Sunday afternoon with Anointing of the Sick and Holy Communion. I left that house with a man at peace.

On Saturday evening there was a meeting of the parish council. I told them about my recent visit to Mr Tanaka and his return to the Church. Wow! There was a united human volcanic eruption with red hot lava flowing! *"You cannot take him back. He is an apostate. Only a few years ago during the war he co-operated with the thought-police and persecuted us."* Old wounds thought healed came to the suppurating surface.

This is where providence stepped in. The Lenten Gospel for the Sunday was the parable of the loving father

with two sons (aka the parable of the Prodigal Son). Without mentioning Mr Tanaka by name I did speak about the elder unforgiving son who wanted punishment rather than forgiveness for his younger prodigal brother. God our Father's mercy and compassion is for everyone. This elder brother was bathed in the father's love but took it for granted.

His younger brother made a terrible mistake. In suffering he later realised the depth of his father's love. He returned to him and received a warm, unconditional welcome back. He was hugged.

At the end of Mass I announced that there would be a house prayer gathering at Mr Tanaka's home this afternoon at 3:00pm. I left it at that.

It was with anxiety I approached Mr Tanaka's house that Sunday afternoon. I left my shoes at the door, opened the sliding door and entered a packed room. There in the front row talking to the sick man was my entire parish council.

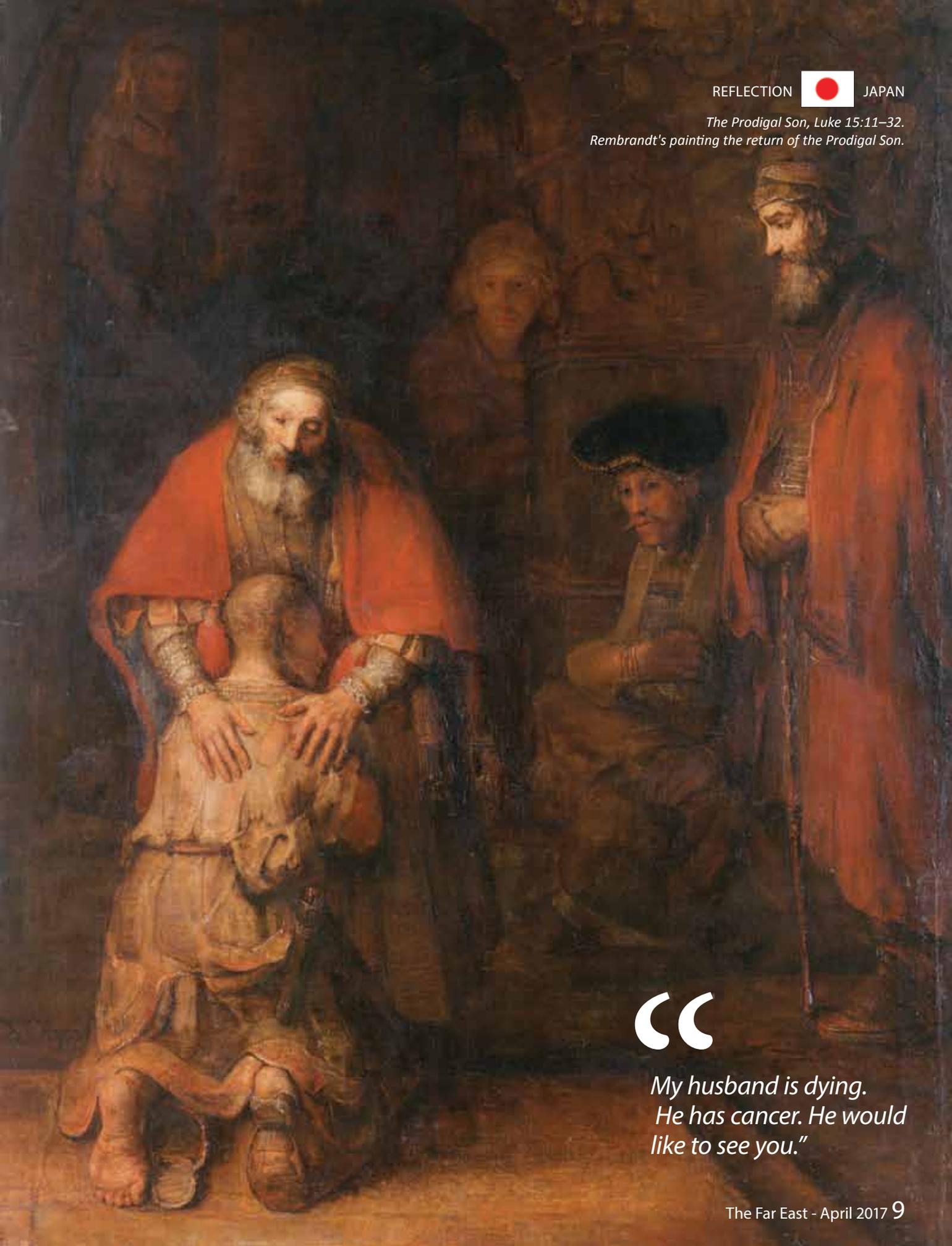
I choked up with emotion and just said to them: *"I am proud of you"*.

---

*Columban Fr Barry Cairns has been a Columban missionary priest in Japan since 1956.*



*The Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11–32.  
Rembrandt's painting the return of the Prodigal Son.*



“

*My husband is dying.  
He has cancer. He would  
like to see you.”*



# The fire brigade priest is dead

FR DANIEL HARDING

## Preparing for the Columban Centenary 2018

Padre Lino's parishioners remember him

*In the March issue of The Far East, Christian Brother, Brother Regional Whitely shared his memories of his brother, Columban Fr Lynn Whitely (Padre Lino), who died in Chile from Hepatitis in 1971 at the age of 31. We now publish the memories of some of his former parishioners.*

*A* young boy ran through the parish neighbourhood shouting, "The fire brigade priest has died". It was January 14, 1971. Columban Fr Lynn Whitely, known to the parishioners of San Marcos parish, Santiago, Chile, as Padre Lino, had just died. Padre Lino had been the chaplain and fire engine driver for the local fire brigade, located next to the parish church. Recently I was in Chile and spoke to several parishioners who worked closely with him. They share their memories of him.

### Jorge Pinto and wife Miriam

Jorge and Miriam have recently celebrated their 50th anniversary of marriage. Padre Lino spent a lot of time at their home.

*"Padre Lino was the type of priest who cared about the parishioners. He was not one of these priests shut up in his home that one rarely sees. He spent his time visiting families, visiting the sick and visiting those in need.*

*We were parish catechists. At our meetings he would challenge us to read more, study more, to get informed, to educate ourselves better in the faith and what was happening in society.*

*We came to know Christ as real in our lives thanks to the Columbans and in a special way to Padre Lino. He always said, "Go out from the Church and bring Christ to those most removed from him."*

### Edgardo Contreras

Edgardo Contreras and wife Susana Alvarez were married by Padre Lino in 1969. One of their sons is named Lino after him.

*"The Second Vatican Council along with the Medellin and Puebla Conferences of the Latin American Bishop's Conference, made a big difference in our lives. We, in San Marcos parish, wanted to live out and help implement these changes in the Church. In the midst of these changes, several priests arrived in the parish that inspired us to promote these necessary changes that the times were calling for.*

*One priest in particular who made a huge impact on my life and that of many others was Padre Lino. By his example he modelled for us the way to be consequent with our faith commitment. He challenged us to be more involved and committed. Along with fellow parishioner Gustavo Lastra, I*



participated in an Archdiocesan course on the Social Doctrine of the Church. We went on to organize the parish fraternity group that reached out and supported the most needy of the parish.

The end of the 1960's and the beginning of the 1970's was a time of great social change in Chile and in the Church. New movements such as 'Christians for Socialism' sprang up in the Church. Then on September 4, 1970, the socialist Salvador Allende was elected president of Chile. Hope had now triumphed. The Proletariat was now in power. Yet, from that moment onwards, our enemies began conspiring to bring down the new government. They could not stand the idea that we, the workers, were now in power.

Then on January 14, 1971, we lost a great, sincere and wonderful friend, Padre Lino. He left a great legacy of living out the consequences of one's Christian faith. Even Pastor Zurita, a local Evangelical pastor, spoke at the cemetery with great affection of Padre Lino when we were burying him. He spoke of his strong commitment and his great altruism and finished by saying, "My brother Lino, I am not saying Adios but rather, until we meet again."

The profound human quality of this priest and his apostolate, I believe, has profoundly marked every one of us who knew him. His leaving us was an irreparable loss for the parish. Maybe it was a prelude to the tragedy that we were about to live."

## Susana Alvarez

"Padre Lino did all his own shopping, cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing. He tried to live as close to the people as possible. With all the demands of parish work on top of this, it was probably too much for him and made him very tired at times. Sometimes he would bring me some shirts to iron and say he could never really get the hang of ironing shirts correctly.

In this sense, he did not really look after himself sufficiently. He gave too much of himself. He sacrificed himself too much without a break. We believe that this probably contributed to making his illness worse and to his early and sudden death.

Padre Lino always celebrated his feast day, September 23, with my family. I remember the last celebration in 1970. Little did we know he would be dead in a few months time. We still pray for him every year on the Feast Day of San Lino (St Linus)."

## Gustavo Lastra

Gustavo Lastra is now deceased. At the time of the Military Coup on September 11, 1973, Gustavo was arrested for his political involvement. He spent two years in prison. In 1975, Gustavo, wife Ana and children were accepted to go into exile in England.

In 1983, on the twentieth anniversary of the formation of the parish of San Marcos, Gustavo wrote from exile in Sheffield, England, a letter congratulating the parish on its anniversary and made a special mention of Padre Lino.

"Without diminishing all the great virtues and goodness of the other Columban priests, I especially want to mention my beloved Padre Lino, who died at 12:15pm on January 14, 1971. He was a deeply missed friend, a brother, a son and a spiritual father.

In our family, he had become an elder son. Truly he was a messenger sent by God - loving, meek, valiant, humble, serious about his commitments and dedicated 24 hours of the day. He managed to reach the very heart of the people of the parish of San Marcos, leaving many profound teachings and thousands of wonderful memories. He left us with so much love, our beloved Padre Lino."

## Petition to the Municipal Council of the City of San Bernardo

In recent years, this faithful group of parishioners has successfully petitioned the local municipal council for a local street to be renamed after Padre Lino. They concluded the letter by saying, "Padre Lino's journey with us in San Marcos Parish deeply touched all of our lives".

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Columban Fr Daniel Harding is the Editor of The Far East magazine.



Fr Lynn Whitely.



# People were thirsty for God

MARIA JOHNSON

## A Missionary to the Peruvian Andes

The tall elderly man, leaning slightly on his cane, stands out among the people of the Peruvian Andes Mountain Range. Most Andean folks reach only to his shoulders and his white and ruddy skin, burned by the cold, contrasts with the coppery skin of the local residents. He is almost a legend in the area. Everybody in the parish of Santiago Apostol (St James the Apostle) knows Padre Pablo. They speak to him either in Quechua, the local indigenous language or in Spanish.

Yanaoca, where the parish is located, is 4,000 meters above sea level. It is a good two hour's drive from Cusco, the ancient Inca capital and tourist capital of Peru. But Yanaoca is another world. It is a town of extremely poor peasants and small farmers. The scenery is very beautiful, yet desolate. Yet it is here where New Zealander,

Columban Fr Paul Prendergast began his Andean mission 30 years ago.

### Missionary experience

Fr Paul was sent in 1966 to Peru three years after being ordained. After Spanish language studies, he was assigned to the parish of St Matthew the Apostle in Lima, where he worked for 13 years.

*"People were happy to be Catholic and wanted to know more about their faith. I realized that almost all of our parishioners were not from Lima, they were from the Andes. My parishioners used to invite me to visit their native village and once I went with them to a small town in Ayacucho. When people found out that I was a priest, they immediately asked me to say Mass. The news that a priest had arrived spread out very fast and people came*

*from everywhere, far and wide asking for Mass, Sacraments and blessings. I thought to myself, 'people in Lima need priests, but even more in the Andes.' Some people had not seen a priest for more than ten years and their faith was sustained by their religious traditions. When I returned to Lima, I formed a missionary team with a group of 15 men and women and for nearly ten years we went every year for two or three weeks to different villages in Ayacucho. People were thirsty for God."*

### Missionary territory

The experience of those short term missions convinced Fr Paul that the Andes Mountains were missionary territory. So after working 13 years in Lima and spending a short period back home in New Zealand, Fr Paul returned to Peru to work in the Andean mountains. Bishop Quinn of

the Prelature of Sicuani, Cuzco, invited him to work in his diocese, where he has remained for the last 30 years.

Many of the churches in the 60 towns and villages that formed Fr Paul's parish were in a desperate state of repair. In most places, local people had fabricated mud bricks for the church walls but never had enough money to put on the roof. Donations from Columban benefactors started to come in and each year three or four towns put on the roof of their chapels.

## Violent years

The decades of the 1980s and 1990s were violent years in Peru. They were dominated by *two large terrorist organizations, the Shining Path Guerrillas and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement. It was a time of great suffering for the whole country but especially for the already oppressed people of the Andes. Fr Paul spent those years with his people although he often received death threats.*

***"The time of terrorism was terrible, horrible. Nobody could say anything. While travelling by bus, you dared not say anything because you did not know if the person by your side was a terrorist or not. Our people survived this time because they are quite strong. The farming work is very difficult in these regions and makes people stronger physically and spiritually too."***

## Ecological terrorism

Today a new kind of terrorism has arisen.

*"Today the large foreign companies are doing great damage to the area. It is a true ecological terrorism. After a few years of mining work in the area, nothing grows. We have gold and copper mines and the mining*

*companies that have worked here, have left the river dirty, the land itself is not clean, it is poisonous, and the children get sick."*

## Some improvements in Yanaoca

Nevertheless there have been some improvements in the last 20 years. There are now paved roads for all the towns and districts of the parish. Goods are no longer carried on horseback but on trucks. A young Columban priest from Korea, Fr Young-In Kim is now the parish priest and following in Fr Paul's footsteps, serves the people with love and generosity. Nevertheless young people are still leaving the area after finishing high school, not wanting to be farmers and subsist on small pieces of land.

Speaking of the future, Fr Paul says, *"The church in this area will survive due to the laity. There will be no priests or religious who can take care of many parishes. The church needs to be more open to the laity who want to do something. There are even priests who do not want a layperson to speak in the church or a woman to get near the altar, not even for a reading during Mass. The Church has to change drastically. Our bishop will continue to insist on preparing more lay people for leadership. The church will continue to exist and will thrive into the future wherever the laity is allowed to work."*

Fr Paul has worked hard over the years preparing the people for this kind of future.

Today every village in the parish has a lay person, male or female, who baptizes, opens the church or chapel on Sundays, and presides over the Sunday service, which includes a

reflection on the Mass readings of the day. Each month these community leaders and catechists meet in Yanaoca for a weekend to share about their work and continue an ongoing formation.

*Maria Johnson was the Director for Hispanic Ministry for the Columbans in the US.*





# My Chinese swan song

FR WARREN KINNE

*Columban Fr Warren Kinne writes of his return to Australia after nearly 20 years of mission in China.*

When I was home at Christmas I went for a walk along the beach at Surfer's Paradise with my sister Narelle and then decided on a swim. The water was limpid and fresh but quite rough so I swam out beyond the breakers to get some still water to turn on my back and enjoy the blue sky.

Apparently the life-guard was a bit anxious with this old baldy-headed bloke out so far, albeit inside the flags, and on a loud speaker and with flashing head-lights on the beach car hailed: if that gentleman out there is not a very good swimmer come in immediately. I didn't hear it but my sister did and said that, even without the need to look up and not being in the least perturbed, she knew it was me. She was a little embarrassed and murmured something about "way out, that's him!"

Well, I intend coming in from the deep later this year, in June in fact. Come June of this year I will leave Shanghai after 16 and a half years here. Before that I was in Beijing for nearly three years. So all in all close to 20 years in China. Could I be called 'an old China hand'?

I have enjoyed the challenge here in China, living by myself throughout the period and, both in Shanghai and Beijing, starting out with almost not a friend in sight. In fact when I first arrived in Beijing from the airport, I discovered, at the front desk of the student accommodation that I had been

told was booked for me, that there was no entry for my name to be found. And I knew not a soul in that city.

My initial language studies were in Beijing and although I worked hard at them I was over 50 years old when I started and so was up against the downward curve of ability to easily absorb a new and complicated language. However I have made enough progress over the years to carry on ordinary conversation with people and to read my text messages and to send off something that is generally intelligible to Chinese friends.

I came without a plan in regard to what I would do. There was for example no contract between the Columbans and the Diocese. One here needs to find one's own way given opportunities that present themselves.

Eventually my life-work in Shanghai was to have three streams. The first one was to teach in the then Philosophy Department, now School of Philosophy in Fudan University. I got this position on the strength of my PhD from a secular university in the UK and with the help of some friends as well as a little bit of obfuscation on my part.

Secondly, I established a foreign-registered charity, *You Dao Foundation*, also with the help of some other friends here. I was its founding Chairman and have just recently relinquished this post. Soon I will also step off the Board. The *Foundation* has done a lot of work with internal migrant workers here in Shanghai and continues its work although not without a lot of difficulty because of the suspicion that surrounds Non-government Organizations (NGO) in China. The Communist Party that seeks to control everything seems to have difficulty with the very concept of an NGO and the whole notion of civil society itself.

My third stream of endeavor is with the local church but largely with the huge ex-pat community in Shanghai. I have been tolerated by the Government in this role although one cannot enter China as a priest. I am here currently as a 'businessman'. It is all a little hard to understand, even for me.



Fr Warren Kinne (center right with sunglasses) with the You Dao Foundation team.

You Dao Foundation family day event for the scholarship students with MSD, November 27 & December 11, 2016.



AUSTRALIA



CHINA



*I have been tolerated by the Government in this role although one cannot enter China as a priest. I am here currently as a 'businessman'. It is all a little hard to understand, even for me.*

However there comes a time in the affairs of men when it seems like moving-on is the wise thing to do. I am 70 in May and it is difficult to get adequate medical insurance cover. What's more, I feel that it is time to go home and to see what is happening in the local church there.

I have talked to the Archbishop of Brisbane, Mark Coleridge, who is a friend and former resident in St Columbans in Rome, and he is very willing that I do some pastoral work in his diocese, probably near where my sister lives in the hinterland of the Gold Coast and not too far from that pounding surf of my own native shores.

In fact I haven't lived in Queensland, my home state, since 1964, the year I went to St Columbans Seminary then at Sassafra, Victoria. What's more, I have only worked for seven years in Australia since 1971 when I was sent to the Republic of the Philippines.

I appreciate the opportunity I have had here to return to a part of my roots and to meet Chinese family members who reside in Guangzhou. China is also the place where our Columban Society began and our Procure, built by us in about 1930, is here in walking distance of where I live. Our Columban mission stations far up the Yangtze River were supplied from here. Of course we do not "own it" these days but it is a reminder of the past.

I thank the Society of St Columban for giving me the freedom and the resources to live the mission. Now is the time to return to the shores of my home state. I wonder how much it has changed!

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*Columban Fr Warren Kinne served several decades working in Shanghai, China.*



# Mission World

**We ask your prayers:** *The prayers of our readers are requested for the repose of the souls of friends and benefactors of the Missionary Society of St Columban who died recently and for the spiritual and the temporal welfare of all our readers, their families and friends.*

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## *Learn from indigenous peoples how to care for creation, says Pope Francis*

Pope Francis has joined his voice to those taking part in Brazil's *Fraternity Campaign*, an annual Lenten Campaign organized by the Brazilian National Conference of Bishops.

This year's campaign focuses on the theme '*Brazilian biomes and the defence of life*' with the motto from Genesis: 'Cultivate and keep creation'. Biomes are large communities of animals and plants that occupy and are adapted to a distinct environment such as rainforests, grasslands and deserts.

Brazil has one of the most significant biodiversities in the world and its territory is divided into six natural biomes, each with its own set of fauna, flora and soil, with specific social and cultural manifestations of its population. The 2017 Fraternity Campaign is dedicated to the appreciation and protection of these biomes.

In his message addressed to his "dear brothers and sisters in Brazil", Pope Francis speaks of the generosity of the Creator towards Brazil in giving it "a diversity of ecosystems of extraordinary beauty."

Unfortunately, the Pope said, the land of Brazil also carries "the signs of aggression towards creation and the deterioration of nature".



Amazon River, Brazil, May 2012.

He said the Church in Brazil not only provides a prophetic voice for the care and respect of the environment and attention towards the poor, but highlights the need to tackle the ecological challenges and problems as well as pinpointing their causes and possible solutions.

Pope Francis recalled that amongst the many initiatives promoted by the Church, as far back as 1979, the Lenten *Fraternity Campaign* shone the spotlight on environmental issues.

He also noted that we cannot not consider the effects that environmental degradation, the current model for development and the culture of waste are having on the lives of people.

*"This Campaign invites us to contemplate, admire, give thanks and respect the diversity of nature manifested in Brazil's different ecosystems which are a true gift of God"* he said.

Pointing out that environmental degradation is one of the greatest challenges we face because it is always accompanied by social injustice, the Pope pointed to indigenous peoples as an example of "how cohabitation with creation can be respectful, fruitful and merciful".

*"It is necessary,"* he said, *"to learn from these peoples how to relate to nature in the quest for a sustainable model, that can be a valid alternative to the race for profit that exhausts natural resources and damages the dignity of peoples".*

The Pope concluded by saying, "Every year, the Fraternity Campaign takes place during Lent. It is an invitation to live the spirituality of Easter with deepened awareness".

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Vatican radio - [en.radiovaticana.va](http://en.radiovaticana.va), March 1, 2017  
Photo: kovgabor79/Bigstock.com

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## **Mission Intention for April**

That young people may respond generously to their vocations and seriously consider offering themselves to God in the priesthood or consecrated life.



# From the Director

## Easter is a success story

*T*hank God for Easter. Jesus Christ is alive and he is not going to die again. This is a 'good news story' after the grim reality of Good Friday.

As the Passion of Jesus Christ is read on Good Friday afternoon, I always think of the scourging of Christ in the film, *The Passion of Christ*, directed by Mel Gibson. I only watched it once and the punishment is obscene.

Christ was not the first good man to die at the hands of 'authorities'. The casual cruelty of the Romans crucifying Jesus, is the same casual cruelty that people experience everywhere today. Violence is in our DNA.

On Good Friday, in the church, people come up in a long line to touch the Cross or kiss it, linger momentarily because they have to move on with the press of people behind them. I ask myself: what are they thinking about? Is it wrongs done to them or what they have done to others that is on their minds? What 'sorry' or 'angry' words are hidden in their hearts.

The Good Friday liturgy allows us to enter into this area of sin and sorrow, whether accused or accuser. We know that forgiveness is here and now from the compassionate Christ who asked forgiveness for those who killed him.

*I ask myself: what are they thinking about? Is it wrongs done to them or what they have done to others that is on their minds?*

Easter arrives with the unexpected good news of his resurrection, showing to the world that Jesus conquered not only death, but also the evil intentions of people who plotted against him, as they do today.

If we step back for a moment and reflect on his manner of living, of his dying in pain and feeling abandoned, we know that he retained a pure heart. He did not curse or swear; he forgave those who killed him on the orders of others whom he also forgave. He died free. He offers us the same possibilities of being free in the serious disturbances in our lives. He shows us how not to hold hatred in our hearts because its poison corrodes our spirit.

Easter teaches us to have hope, to be resilient, to live fully and most of all to have a pure heart.

Fr Gary Walker  
director@columban.org.au

**This Easter may the light of the Risen Christ fill your mind with joy and lead you into his peace!**

*Fr Patrick Sayles SSC*

Watch Fr Gary Walker's 'From the Director - Easter message' on our website: [www.columban.org.au](http://www.columban.org.au)

# Cleaning up Fukushima

FR SEAN MCDONAGH

Photo: AAP image/EPA/Toru Hanai/Pool



On March 11, 2011, at 2:46pm an earthquake registering nine on the richter scale damaged the nuclear plant at Fukushima and cut off the supply of electricity. Even though the reactors were shut down, it was necessary to pump coolants around the reactor cores, so that the fuel rods would not overheat. The coolants were pumped by the back-up diesel generators which kicked into action when the energy to the power station from the electricity was cut off.

Less than an hour later at 3:30pm, the power station was hit by a 15 metre tsunami which destroyed the fuel tanks for the generators. With no coolant circulating, the fuel began to meltdown, beginning an extraordinary saga which is destined to last, at least 40 years and will cost an estimated AUD \$245 billion.

The trouble with having a serious incident at a nuclear plant is that the damage continues long after the initial accident. Because it is so radioactive, plutonium has to be kept out of contact with humans for 200,000 years. In the

spring of 2017, radiation levels inside a damaged reactor at Fukushima nuclear power station are at their highest since the plant suffered a triple meltdown almost six years ago.

According to Tokyo Electric Power (Tepco) the company that runs the plant, readings as high as 530 sieverts an hour have been recorded inside the number two containment vessel. This was one of the three reactors that melted down after the accident in March 2011.

The extraordinary radiation readings five years after the accident highlight the scale of the task confronting the thousands of workers who are involved in decommissioning the plant. Experts now reckon that it will take 40 years to complete the task. Decommissioning is also dangerous work. **For example, a single dose of one Sievert will cause radiation sickness and nausea. When you increase it to five Sieverts, this will kill half of those exposed within a month. Ten Sieverts would kill a person within weeks.**

Engineers realise that, because there are such high levels of radioactivity in the plant, this will make it very difficult to

dismantle it. They will have to create various forms of robots to accomplish their task.

Tepco has used imaging technology to examine each of the affected reactors at the plant. They have admitted finding a one metre wide hole which they believe was created by nuclear fuel that melted and then penetrated the vessel when the coolant liquid was cut off because of the earthquake and the subsequent tsunami.

Tepco intends to send a remotely-controlled robot into reactor two to assess the full level of damage. This robot will be able to tolerate exposure of up to 1,000 sieverts for about two hours before it begins to malfunction. Tepco has yet to identify and locate the melted fuel in the three reactors which were damaged in the 2011 accident.

In December 2016, the Japanese government revised the cost of decommissioning the stricken plant, decontaminating the surrounding environment and paying compensation. This will come to AUD \$245 billion which is twice what they had estimated in 2013. And there is no guarantee that it will not become even more costly as the decommissioning processes continues. Most operation costs will be borne, not by Tepco, but by the Japanese taxpayer.

The enormous sums of money involved should act as wake-up call for British citizens after government approval was given in September 2016 to construct the Hinkley Point C Nuclear Power Plant in Somerset, England. People believe that the agreement to build Hinkley is linked to the military use of nuclear power in upgrading the Trident weapons programme operated by the Royal Navy.

An article in *The New York Times* claimed that the British government was “*hiding the true costs of a project like Trident by promoting a questionable and ruinous project like Hinkley Point C distorts the economics of both the defense and the civilian energy sectors. It also skews energy policy itself.*”<sup>1</sup>

The estimated cost of building Hinkley is in the region of £22 billion. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) estimates that replacing the Trident missile system will cost around £205 billion, far more than previously estimated.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Peter Wynn-Kirby, 'Britain's Nuclear Cover-Up', *New York Times*, October 10, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Norton-Taylor 'Replacing Trident will cost at least £205bn, campaigners say,' *The Guardian*, March 12, 2016 - [www.theguardian.com/uk-news](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news)

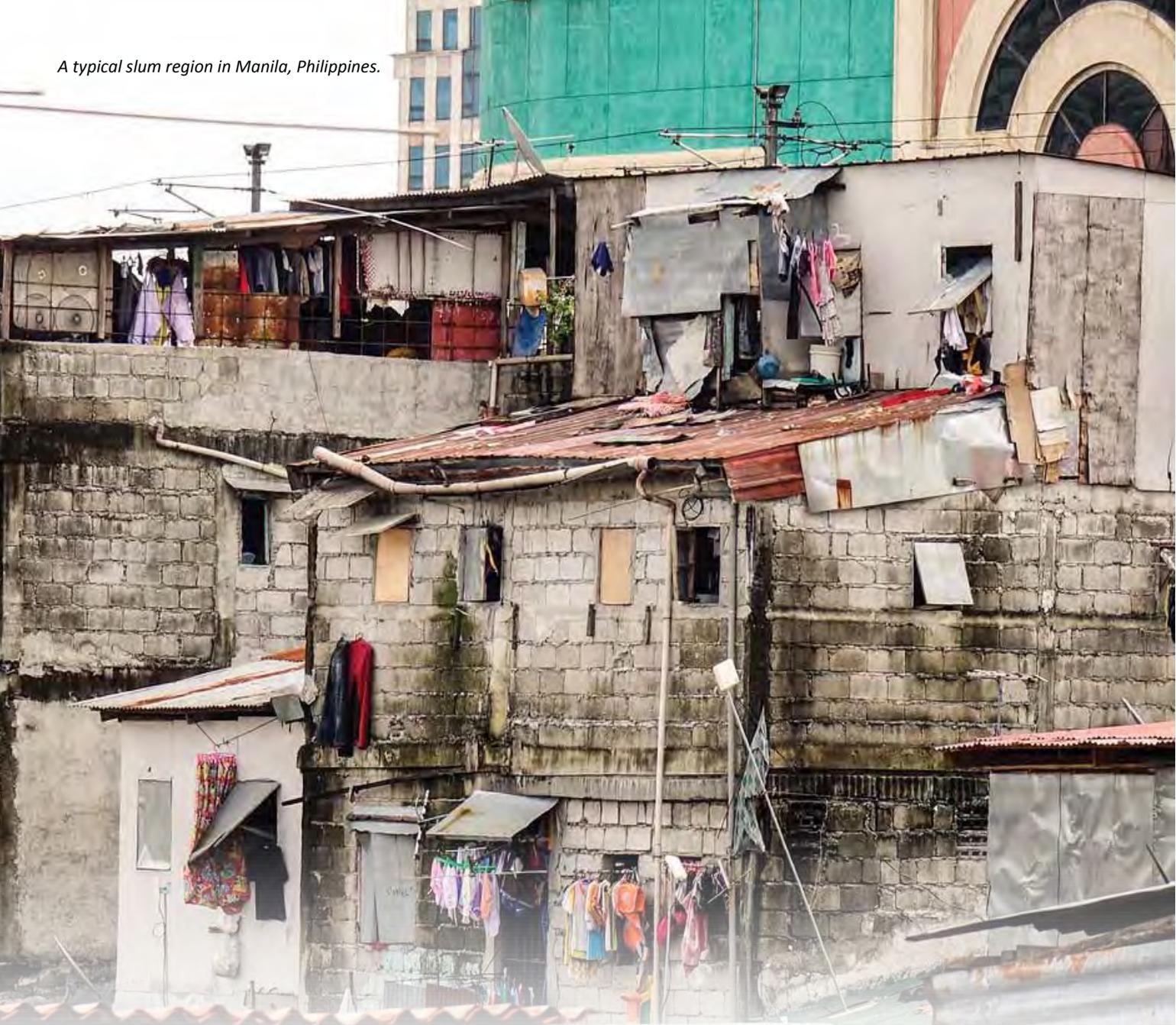
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*Columban Fr Sean McDonagh is an eco-theologian working to raise awareness on the connections between justice/peace issues, environmental sustainability and faith.*



Photo: AAP image/AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi

A typical slum region in Manila, Philippines.



# Learning to be a parish priest

FR SEAN CONNOUGHTON

*W*e priests believe firmly that we have a vocation, that is to say that we are called by the Lord. But the question arises, to what are we called? For some reason, my memory tracks back to 1981, when the local Vicar General of our Diocese in the Philippines was formally inducting me as parish priest. The brief Mass had a long homily. What was the new parish priest for? *"Call him,"* said the Monsignor, *"for the sick, for blessings, for reconciliation, for the poor, the homeless, the children, Sacraments, etc."* I remember thinking to myself, "I'm to do more than 20 things here in San Pablo. So this is my vocation."

The Vicar General had more than 50 years of service behind him, had survived the American colonial regime and the Japanese occupation, so he must know what he was talking about. But where would I start in his long list of services? On the first morning, on looking out the window I could see five very industrious women. They were sweeping, dusting, polishing,



*So, vocation, who calls? Is it God? Or is it the people?  
Or both! I keep thinking about that.*

even mopping the wall. What on earth could this be about? Opening the door I quickly found out. My predecessor had a cook. All five women were applicants for the job.

I wondered what the Monsignor would have done. I didn't want to hurt or turn away anyone, but I didn't see how I could afford a cook. Yet it took me more than one whole day to accomplish a task that a competent canteen manager would have accomplished in ten minutes. Nena was clearly the most vigorous sweeper having piled a knee-deep corner of dust and sand. But Josie and Mila had actually climbed a wall to reach and clean the gutters. Then I had a brain wave and asked, "Who was my predecessor's cook?" "Oh, she's an outsider and doesn't belong in this place," was the reply. However, after much agonizing, and for want of a better way to resolve my dilemma, I reinstated the former cook two mornings a week.

As time went on I discovered great treasures among the women of the parish. Marisa was a member of the Apostleship of Prayer. I'd met this group in another parish. To me they were the nearest thing to 'Women's Lib' activists. This woman and two or three friends went on to become the 'Appropriate Housing Group'. During my time they built sixty-eight houses for families who had mostly lived in illegal shacks constructed on sidewalks. The housing group from Germany, who helped fund the project and the young architects from the nearby university thought we were marvellous.

A credit union stimulated the school and dozens of small shops in the market came from gatherings which discussed what we needed most. One disappointing case became the bane of our lives, with children in and out of jail and an alcoholic husband. One day when the flood was knee-deep in all our houses, I observed her daughter splashing through the flood with a huge sack on her shoulder. Too mucky for me, I just let her pass. Only later did we discover that she had cleared our little student library of a whole shelf of expensive math books. "Keep the books on the shelves or sell to feed the hungry?" A Gospel dilemma surely!

Did we thank God and make our needs known to Him? It used to hit me over the head when I looked at our under-20 choir. Nobody could say how many were escapees from the nearby jail. They sang every verse of every song and retired to the nearby bar after Mass to recover. So, vocation, who calls? Is it God? Or is it the people? Or both! I keep thinking about that.

---

*Columban Fr Sean Connaughton served for many years in the Philippines and now serves as assistant in Castletown-Finea, in the Diocese of Meath, Ireland.*



Fr Sean  
Connaughton



# Fr Shay Cullen and PREDA Foundation to receive Shalom award



Columban Missionary, Fr Shay Cullen and the PREDA Foundation (*People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance*) in the Philippines have been chosen to receive the Shalom Award for Justice and Peace at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany. The prize has been awarded since 1982 to extraordinary commitment in the field of peace and human rights. Fr Shay has worked for justice and peace in the Philippines since 1969.

The Prize is awarded for the work of 54 staff, social workers, therapists, administrators and public educators in defending human rights and the work for peace. The PREDA Foundation is active in caring for the rescue of abused children from jails, abusers and brothels and giving the

victims of abuse a safe home with protection, education, values formation, affirmation, empowerment and healing therapy and restoring the self-esteem of the victims of abuse and violence.

The Foundation also takes legal action against child abusers and campaigns for the rights of the child through main stream media and the social media.

PREDA believes that many acts of violence, conflict, war, begins with individuals who have been victimized as children. They may have been victims of violence in words, punishment, by rejection, been unwanted and/or physical or sexually abused. Some of these young people carry the urge and tendency to violence and anger-release buried within their psyche.



FR SHAY CULLEN



PHILIPPINES

*PREDA believes that many acts of violence, conflict, war, begins with individuals who have been victimized as children.*

Later in life a few may vent their buried anger or misunderstandings or false perceptions of reality on society, family or community. Some can create a cycle of violence designed to overpower others and they express feelings of revenge and vengeance. This is the effect of childhood violence and neglect.

The healing process at the PREDA Foundation is through dialogue, positive relationships and community education through participation. The PREDA Foundation strives to create a community that listens and learns from victims and

gives support and encouragement and healing to victims of violence and abuse.

The prize will be awarded on May 4, 2017 in Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany.

*Columban Fr Shay Cullen, founder of PREDA, has spent more than 40 years in the Philippines.*



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## People were thirsty for God - Peru

*For over 30 years Columban Fr Paul Prendergast has ministered to the Quechua people of the high valleys of the Peruvian Andes Mountains. He went up to the Andes after he realised this was a new mission territory, a place abandoned by both state and church.*

**With your help**, Fr Paul can continue to work with the Quechua people in Peru. (See pages 12-13)



Photo: Missionary Society of St Columban



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