

The Far East

COLUMBAN MISSION MAGAZINE

August 2017

Mary

MacKillop

Advocate for the poor

August 8, the Feast of St Mary of the Cross.



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

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*Mary MacKillop, St Mary of the Cross, 1882.
(See story pages 8-9)*

Photo: Mary MacKillop, 1882, Sisters of St Joseph Congregational Archives. Used with permission of the Trustees of the Sisters of St Joseph. Must not be reproduced without permission of the Trustees.

From the Editor

As the new Editor of *The Far East* magazine I feel privileged to be part of an iconic magazine that is almost 100 years old. It will be a hard act to follow in the footsteps of the previous editor, Columban Fr Daniel Harding who is returning to Chile later in the year. I am fortunate to have the support and experience of excellent staff and trust and pray that God will guide and assist me along the way.

In the August edition of *The Far East* we read about Columban Fr Pat Colgan travelling to Columbia to spread the message that trying to smuggle drugs into Hong Kong will result in being caught and spending long sentences in remote jails.

Fr Noel Connolly reflects on working with the laity and enjoying it. He talks about Pope Francis' priorities to end clericalism and empower the laity.

The Reflection features the Feast of St Mary of the Cross, Australia's first Saint. Mary MacKillop was an advocate of the poor and worked with those at the margins of society. Columban Director, Fr Gary Walker writes an insightful column on Mary's inspirational missionary spirit.

Leading up to the Centenary of St Columban's Mission Society, we remember Fr Edward (Eddie) Sherry whose anniversary of death is the 18th August. Fr Eddie Sherry was ordained in 1935 by the Columban founder, Bishop Edward Galvin. He later became secretary to Bishop Galvin for four of the nine years he spent in China. Fr Sherry's name continues to be associated with the Australian Columban Art Calendar, to which he dedicated much time and thought.

As we come nearer to the closure of the Columban Mission Institute in North Sydney we feature the work of the Columban Centre for Promoting Communion with the Church in China (formally closed in 2012) and twenty years of the Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice.

From Rome, Fr Robert McCulloch, Procurator General of the Missionary Society of St Columban, writes about a goodwill gesture of sending back and presenting a relic of St Thomas Becket to the Anglican Centre in Rome. The relic had been kept in the Columban Essendon chapel for many years.

The author of *Hanging between Home and Away* gives a first-hand account of what it is like for migrants to be stuck between two worlds. As a Columban Missionary he had also experienced wondering where home was. A thought provoking article.

While working as a volunteer in Taiwan with mentally challenged students, a young Peruvian seminarian learns a life-changing lesson in breaking down his prejudices about those who seem different from him.

As a missionary in Japan for over 60 years, Fr Barry Cairns has a keen cultural curiosity. It leads him to the local bookstore to see the ten top selling books of the month. The continual change in topics gives him an indication of what is of current interest to the people with whom he lives and works.

Janette Mentha
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Priest on reverse drug run

PATRICK COLGAN

Columban Fr Patrick (Pat) Colgan has made a trip to Colombia to spread the message that drug smuggling into Hong Kong is a no brainer and dispels the myth that chances of being caught are remote and jail sentences short.

*F*ebruary 11 to 14 was a rather unusual and challenging time in my life.

I had embarked on a journey to the city of Pereira as a result of meeting so many men and women from the Central Colombian town in our Hong Kong prisons and hearing their cry for someone from the chaplaincy, of which I am part, to go and meet their families.

It was a type of drug run in reverse, as I traversed the same territory, but with an entirely different cargo in my bag.

My plan was not to bring drugs, but an appeal to the civic and Church authorities in Pereira to be pro-active in warning people not to follow their fellow townfolk on the drug trail.

My message was simple, *"Never bring drugs to Hong Kong because detection rates are high, sentences are long and while prison conditions are not draconian, the dislocation and loneliness of living amidst a culture and language so foreign and far from home is a big cross to carry."*

It was almost midnight when I got off the plane at the small airport, but I was touched at the reception committee

waiting for me, a large gathering of families holding banners (image above) and singing a cheerful welcome.

One of the priests in the city, Fr Oscar, welcomed me and I stayed with the family of a man who is currently doing time in Stanley Prison.

The next four days were a whirlwind of radio and television interviews on both secular and Catholic stations, all of course in Spanish, a language I have never formally learned.

I was in constant and desperate prayer to the Holy Spirit to give me the right words!

But while it was not exactly the gift of tongues, by the fourth or fifth interview the words were beginning to flow and the Colombian people were, to a fault, gracious and patient with me.

They were so happy to know that the Diocese of Hong Kong, despite its limitations of language and culture, is doing what it can to bring spiritual and emotional support to these, our Catholic brothers and sisters. Permanent deacons, Filipino migrant workers on their Sundays off, Spanish-speaking communities like the San Francisco Javier

and many others, make the sacrifice to go and visit these often forgotten people.

I learned that the families in Colombia already have a well organised campaign to spread information through flyers and banners carrying a warning about the risks of being a drug mule. They are distributing them in markets and airport departure lounges.

The Colombian government is being lobbied to consider the repatriation of a number of their own citizens from Hong Kong prisons, so they can serve their sentences at home. This is a particularly acute need for those who are old and sick. In fact, the Hong Kong authorities have already given the go ahead for a small number of repatriations for humanitarian reasons, but the intergovernmental logistics have yet to be worked out.

I was much encouraged by the support of Bishop Rigoberto Corredor, from Pereira, in offering the use of his curial offices for my first press conference, where I was accompanied by local priests, Frs Oscar and Pacho, as well as the governor of Pereira-Risaralda, Sigifredo Salazar Osorio, who met us in his chambers, and, of course, some of the families.

Incarceration affects not only the person concerned, but the whole network of family and the community. I saw many spouses struggling to put bread on the table and send their children to school.

I met others with illnesses that cannot be treated due to lack of funds. Thanks to a kind Mexican friend in Hong Kong, I was able to offer a little financial relief, but the needs grow in tandem with their loved ones' imprisonment.

Although in many ways a drop in the ocean, I felt privileged to be the link between the Hong Kong and Colombian Churches.

As Pope Francis prepares to visit Colombia in September, we pray that it may bolster not only the peace process there, but also our awareness of the evils of the drug industry and the victims it continues to produce, both at home and in countries far away.

Columban Fr Patrick Colgan has been a member of the General Council in Hong Kong since 2012.



My plan was not to bring drugs, but an appeal to the civic and Church authorities in Pereira to be pro-active in warning people not to follow their fellow townfolk on the drug trail.



Working with the laity and enjoying it

FR NOEL CONNOLLY



“

One of Pope Francis' priorities is to end clericalism and empower the laity.

Some years ago, I was at a meeting of priests and one priest, whom I admire, proposed that we write to Rome and recommend the ordination of suitable married men especially for small rural communities. I felt ambivalent about the motion.

I am not against the ordination of married men but it seemed to be a “male and priestly” solution. I thought it revealed a blindness to the leadership that women and men, were already showing in many communities and that we might be better off recognising, training and celebrating the leadership that was already there. Too often we send in a priest and he, perhaps unconsciously but certainly effectively, squashes the existing lay leadership.

One of Pope Francis’ priorities is to end clericalism and empower the laity. Clericalism is often understood as we clergy taking too many privileges to ourselves but I suspect the more dangerous form of clericalism is taking too much responsibility to ourselves. Many of us clerics have “messianic complexes”. We tend to do everything and implicitly show little faith in the laity. We fail to notice the talents and competencies of our people. I know of several priests who are working too hard and so are tired and demoralised. And the future promises to be worse unless we and the bishops come to realise that we do not have to do it all on our own and that more priests is not the only solution, realistically or theologically.

This year I will celebrate my 48th anniversary of ordination and these are three things I have learnt:

1. Lay ministry comes from baptism. It does not derive from the approval of the bishop or the priest.
2. Despite my “natural male” intelligence and “priestly” powers of leadership I cannot and should not do everything.
3. Women have insights, sensitivities, imagination and skills (I just don’t have) that are wonderful and we cannot do without them.

We, priests, have a role in discerning, fostering, encouraging, coordinating gifts discovered among the laity and maintaining unity but we should not do everything. If we do, we will dominate and no new ministries will grow or new leadership emerge. Possibly it is time that we work less and exercise a new ministry of “creative absence” and see what happens when we are not around. It might create space for others to flourish.

It seems clear that the future of the church cannot depend on priests alone. That type of church is coming to an end and we should be preparing for the new one which will emerge. We need to put more energy and money into training lay leadership. It is not just a question of numbers. It is theologically desirable that the ministry of the laity be encouraged and celebrated. It is also administratively necessary. Ministry today requires a great range of skills which no one group has. We need one another. No longer can one group be set apart and take all the responsibility. That is also the clear lesson of the Royal Commission. In future, we are going to need more lay and female involvement in the governance of the church in Australia on a national, diocesan and parish level. And psychologically it is necessary to live healthy and creative lives.

I was very lucky that early in my years as a priest I was made Rector of St Columban’s Turramurra. At the time, there were approximately 40 Sisters studying mission in the seminary as well as our seminarians and priests. I was the leader of a community of almost seventy men and women, lay, religious and ordained but all on mission. I slowly learnt that it was the mission we shared that united and governed us and that mixed teams are more effective, satisfying, healthy and enjoyable.

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



And the future promises to be worse unless we and the bishops come to realise that we do not have to do it all on our own and that more priests is not the only solution, realistically or theologically.

Mary MacKillop - Advocate for the poor

On Tuesday August 8, we celebrate the Feast of St Mary of the Cross, Australia's first Saint. Mary MacKillop was a pioneer and advocate for the poor, sick and those on the margins of our society. Today, her mission to the poor is very much alive in our world.

*M*ary's love for Christ was so strong that she sought Him out in the poor, sick and suffering.

There are many examples in Mary's life where she put aside her own needs in order to serve the sick, lonely and disadvantaged. The children taught by the Sisters often had no shoes to wear. On the night before their First Communion, Mary would have a re-enactment of the Washing of the Feet. This meant all the children would have clean feet for this special occasion in their life.

From the pen of Mary MacKillop who wrote to the Sisters in March 1900:

If choice be given, seek the most neglected places to which He calls us. Let us never forget that, in the spirit of our Rule, it is to those we should desire to go.... Let us be true to the beautiful spirit of our Institute.... Let St Joseph's true children remember their mission and seek first the poorest, most neglected parts of God's vineyard.

Let us be inspired by the work of St Mary of the Cross as we pray the following prayer.

Bountiful and loving God,

You filled the heart of Mary MacKillop with compassionate love for those who are in need and those at the margins of our society.

Inspired by her example, may we be led by your Spirit to reach out to our brothers and sisters.

Give us generous hearts to respond to the cries of those who are poor in our community and in our world.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessed Mary of the Cross, standing with the vulnerable, pray for us.

Blessed Mary of the Cross, standing with the vulnerable, pray for us.

Monica Cavanagh rsj © Trustees of the Sisters of St Joseph - www.sosj.org.au

REFLECTION
SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH



The quiet and gentle missionary

Preparing for the Columban Centenary

- *Ordained by Bishop Galvin*
- *Secretary to Bishop Galvin*
- *With Bishop Galvin in Hanyang to see the end of World War II*
- *Manager of The Far East Office Melbourne*
- *Prepared the Australian Columban Art Calendar for decades.*



Fr Edward Sherry SSC

Leading up to the Centenary of St Columban's Mission Society, we remember Fr Edward (Eddie) Sherry whose anniversary of death is August 18.

Fr Sherry was ordained in Dalgan, Ireland, in 1935 by the Columban founder, Bishop Edward Galvin.

He was appointed to China in 1936. As part of his training for the China Mission he studied printing in Manchester, with the aim of teaching printing at the Mission's trade school of Hanyang. The Japanese invasion of China destroyed this plan before Fr Sherry had completed the three year course. He arrived in China in 1939 and was there until 1948. He spent four of those years as secretary to Bishop Galvin in Hanyang.

He was appointed to a parish which he occupied briefly before leaving in the face of the Communist threat. One of his treasured experiences was being with Bishop Galvin in Hanyang to see the end of World War II.

After a home vacation Fr Sherry was on Columban promotion in England for three years before being appointed to the Australian and New Zealand Region in 1954.

He worked in *The Far East* office as manager and for many years prepared the Columban Art Calendar. Finding suitable paintings for the calendar was an onerous task that Fr Sherry took upon himself. When he returned to England for home leave, he took the opportunity to tour the best art galleries of Europe and the USA searching for fine artworks.

Fr Sherry prepared the Columban Art Calendar for the last time in 1992 before his retirement in 1994 at St Columban's, Essendon.

He died on August 18, 2006 and is buried at the Melbourne General Cemetery in Carlton.

In a reflection '*We are Worthwhile*' Columban Fr Keith Gorman wrote "I often think of fellow Columban Fr Edward Sherry who died in August 2006. Shortly before he died one of the staff who was going away for two weeks said, "I'll see you when I get back." To which Eddie replied with a smile, "I may have changed my address by then."

The quiet, gentle, dedicated missionary will be long remembered.

Columban Centre for promoting communion with the Church in China

The Centre for promoting communion with the Church in China was established by Fr Cyril Hally in 1997 at the Columban Mission Institute. The Centre's mission was to promote within the Australian Church a knowledge and understanding of the history and suffering of the church in China. Columban missionaries have always had a special concern for the church in China as it was there that the Mission Society in 1920 began its missionary work.

One of the first activities of the Centre was to offer the services of Columban priests to the Chinese Catholic communities in Sydney, Parramatta and Broken Bay dioceses. Columban Fr Paul McGee, began to publish and distribute an information newsletter called *China Exchange*. The newsletter contained articles about the early history of the church in China, the political circumstances that led to the present situation of the divided church and reports on how the Catholic communities were coping with life under the antireligious policies of the Communist government. The articles were written by experienced Columban and religious missionaries and lay academics. Forty-eight issues of *China Exchange* were published and distributed.

In 1998 Bishop Anthony Li of Xian requested the Centre to facilitate a university study programme in social communications for a young woman from his diocese. The bishop desired to have a qualified social communication expert in his diocese to develop ways and means of spreading the good news of the Gospel beyond the walls of the parish compounds. In 2004, the Centre arranged for the candidate to be accepted as a student at Macquarie University in Sydney where after completing two courses was awarded the degree *International Communications* (MA) from the Faculty of Arts and the degree MA from the School of Politics. **Besides providing tuition fees, the Centre also accommodated the candidate at the Mission Institute house in North Turramurra and supported her with living and travel expenses while in Australia.** In 2006, the young lady returned to China to work for the church in the diocese of Xian.

In 2002, Bishop Aloysius Jin of Shanghai again asked the Centre to send a Columban priest to Shanghai for an extended period to organise and conduct renewal programmes for all the priests and sisters under 50 in the diocese. The bishop wanted each programme to be a full time live-in community experience of five months' durations for groups of 25 priests and sisters. Five programmes were conducted successfully over a period of three years. These programmes helped the young priests and sisters to develop their English speaking, reading and writing skills and also introduced them to some of the theological and spiritual thinking of the Second Vatican Council.

By the year 2012, information about the church in China was freely available in periodicals, religious newspapers and on the internet. As a result, it was decided the publication of *China Exchange* was no longer necessary. In addition, key staff members of the Centre had reached retirement age and wished to engage in other works of the Columban Mission Society. Accordingly, at the end of 2012, it was decided to formally close the Centre. However, priests who had worked with the Centre over the years, continued to provide Sunday liturgies for the Mandarin and Cantonese speaking Chinese communities in Sydney.



Fr Paul McGee SSC

Photo: Missionary Society of St Columban

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Twenty years of the Centre for Peace Ecology and Justice



In 1997, the Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice (PEJ) was formed. The founding members, Frs Michael Gormly, Cyril Hally, Tom Rouse and Pat O'Shea had experiences of structural injustice, oppression of the poor, ecological destruction and militarism in the Philippines and South Korea. They knew that issues around peace, ecology and justice were connected. Responding to them is our Christian mission and part of Columban mission globally. In early 1998, Fr Michael Gormly, the first PEJ Convenor, wrote in an article for *The Far East*: "What is happening in God's world today. Why so much violence? Can we identify sources of hope for the poor and the next generation? How do we help to promote fullness of life and harmony with God's creation?" So they began the work of the Centre by engaging with Catholic and secular social justice groups in reflection, action and advocacy on issues such as justice for East Timor and West Papua, the effects of mining in the Philippines, and international poor country debt. Networking with diocesan agencies, religious congregations, catholic education offices and other churches became a large part of the work of the PEJ Centre.

In 1999, for the preparation of the Great Jubilee 2000, the Columbans in Australia and elsewhere were involved in the preparation of resources highlighting the Jubilee biblical themes of Sabbath, Land, Reconciliation, Freedom from Slavery, Sight for the Blind and Forgiveness of Debt (*Luke 4: 16 -30*). Fr Brendan Hoban was part of the Centre at this time. Then Director of Columban Mission Institute (CMI), Fr Trevor Trotter, approached John McGrath, Director of Mission Services at the Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office, regarding a partnership. Anne Lanyon, a teacher and Religious Education Coordinator, was employed as the Diocesan Jubilee Coordinator. Thus began mission formation in schools.

In 2000, the first *Social Justice Day* for students in Broken Bay was held and continued annually for 16 years. Since then the Centre has run numerous workshops for students in various dioceses on peace, ecology and justice issues. The formation of teachers began in Broken Bay with programs related to Jubilee 2000, then continued with Anne Lanyon and Ken Nobin of Parramatta Diocese working in partnership to run a Social Justice Train the Trainer Program.

By 2009, this had evolved into a two day formation program now known as 'Growing a Culture of Peace' (COP). It is run across dioceses by Anne Lanyon, Columban Fr Jack Evans and Luke Tobin who was a teacher in the Sydney Archdiocese and now works with Catholic Mission. Catholic Mission will continue to run this program when PEJ closes. Partnerships have enabled us to do more with limited resources.

In 2001, Fr Brian Gore moved to Sydney from Melbourne to become the second Convenor of the PEJ Centre, whilst at the same time acting as the Columban ANZ Regional Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Coordinator (JPIC). Brian's passion for the poor inspired people across Australia with workshops and strong involvement in the Jubilee 2000 Drop the Debt campaign. He initiated a national 'Run for Life' series of events with ultra-marathon 'running priest' from the Philippines, Fr Robert Reyes. At this time PEJ became the Coordinator of the Jubilee 2000 Working Group. The Centre maintained this commitment to keeping alive the awareness of the foundational Hebrew Jubilee principles of economic and environmental justice through Anne Lanyon's board membership of Jubilee Australia.

In 2002, PEJ's venture into written publications led to the newsletter, Columban Connections, being produced three times a year. This eventually became an electronic monthly newsletter. Written resources for parishes, schools and religious congregations used colourful leaflets for a variety of purposes. The 9/11 Twin Towers bombing and the violent response of the invasion of Iraq prompted the Centre to be proactive in promoting active Gospel nonviolence. *The Way of Peace* was produced. Other resources which are all still available online at www.columban.org.au are *The Gospel of Life* on the Beatitudes, *The Lantern* on Evangelisation, Ecological Liturgy resources for Lent and Advent and the Australian version of *The Stations of the Forests DVD*.

In 2003, the Centre developed greater opportunities for dialogue between religions and the secular. Amid the climate of fear, PEJ collaborated with the *Centre for Christian Muslim Relations* and local Councils to conduct public forums on 'Christians and Muslims Growing Peace'. Over four years the Centre ran 18 of these in New South Wales to break down barriers of ignorance through face to face meetings. By this time Columban Fr Charles Rue had joined the Centre. He initiated an event, *'Wonder and the Will to Care'*, which brought together 120 people of different faiths to share their ecological insights. So the Faith Ecology Network was born. In these times of planetary ecological



Growing Peace Forum with Christians & Muslims at Sydney City Council. Sr Pauline Rae (left), Anne Lanyon, Silma Ihram, Fr Patrick McInerney, Chantelle Ogilvie, Afroz Ali, Susana Ng & Fr Charles Rue (right).

crises, *Faith Ecology Network* (FEN) now has a global reach and has become a valuable Australian network for strengthening dialogue between the sciences and diverse religions. FEN holds public events and nature experiences to bring people together, to learn, grow ecological awareness and promote religious reasons for advocacy. In recent years Hannah Cifuentes and Liesje Barratt have assisted in the work of FEN. As PEJ closes, the FEN team has plans under way for it to flourish and grow into a new model that will take it into the future.

In 2004, Fr Brian Gore returned to the Philippines and Anne Lanyon became the third PEJ Centre Coordinator. Fr Charles Rue became the Regional Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Coordinator, combining the two roles. PEJ Centre became more involved in a variety of secular and religious networks, bringing a global and Gospel perspective to local issues about food sovereignty, genetically modified food, fair trade and human trafficking. The workshop developed around the issue of slavery in the chocolate industry became much in demand in schools and the wider community.

In 2005, after the Columban Mission Institute moved from North Turrumurra to Strathfield, opportunities for greater collaboration in mission education arose. Fr Charles Rue taught a course on Environmental Ethics at the Catholic Institute of Sydney. Anne Lanyon and Fr Jack Evans began guest lectures on peace, ecology and justice with Religious Education students at Australian Catholic University.



FEN participants Fr Charles Rue (left), Robert Iocapetta, Vijai Singhal, A Friend of North Head Sanctuary, Anne Lanyon & Miriam Pepper (right) learning about Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub at North Head, Sydney.

For 20 years the Centre has adapted responses to the question “*What is happening in God’s world?*” in order to respond to where God’s Spirit is leading us. As well as education, formation, production of resources, networking and membership of many groups, through generous collaboration with others, some big initiatives were taken on. The Jubilee 2000 event for schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay was huge, involving 20,000 students and teachers. For the 2008 Sydney World Youth Day, with the help of a grant, the Cena Um dance group with Columban Fr Colin McLean from Brazil and the Preda Akbay theatre group from the Philippines travelled to Sydney. Together with wonderful dance and drama teachers from St Peter’s College, Tuggerah, the Columban Youth Theatre of the Oppressed performed in Sydney and on the Central Coast. In 2010 this enormous undertaking was followed up by coordinating an unforgettable return immersion experience in the Philippines with the St Peter’s College students. In 2016 there was a national speaking tour with Columban Fr Sean McDonagh to promote Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si’*. Through the willing support of other Church agencies Fr McDonagh’s expertise directly reached over

two thousand people plus mass media audiences. We are so grateful for the way cooperation can make the world a better place.

Although the PEJ Centre is closing, the challenges of our world are ever present. The same questions asked by Michael Gormly 20 years ago are still relevant. We give thanks for the leadership of Pope Francis in calling believers to a deeper commitment to mission and all peoples to ecological consciousness and action for the suffering poor and the earth. *“The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development.” Laudato Si’ #13.* We also give thanks for Pope Francis’ call to *“Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace”* in his World Day of Peace Message 2017. As we close the Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice we hand on to others. ***Let this not be an ending but a new chapter in a new beginning: “to make an end is to make a beginning.” TS Eliot.***

Anne Lanyon is the Coordinator for the Centre of Peace, Ecology and Justice at the Columban Mission Centre in Sydney.

How our saints hold us together AUSTRALIA

FR ROBERT MCCULLOCH

Presentation of a relic of St Thomas Becket from the Columban Fathers in ANZ to the Anglican Centre in Rome on June 13, 2017, by Fr Robert McCulloch, Procurator General of the Missionary Society of St Columban.

*O*n behalf of Fr Gary Walker, the Director of the Missionary Society of St Columban in Australia New Zealand, I am very happy to present this relic of St Thomas Becket to the Anglican Centre in Rome.

Archbishop David Moxon, the Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome (retired in June, 2017) told me, when we first met, that he has a long-standing close connection with the Columbans. In New Zealand before coming to Rome, every year he always bought a copy of the Columban Art Calendar.

Archbishop Moxon prepares to return to New Zealand on June 17. One Archbishop with Canterbury connections departs after four years in Rome; another Archbishop with Canterbury connections comes to Rome this evening from Australia and New Zealand... although, in the latter case, after a long intervening journey of 800 years.

This relic of St Thomas Becket has been in the ANZ Columban regional house in Melbourne for nearly 90 years. ***How it got there no one can explain. But when I saw it in the chapel last August I knew immediately that Becket was not happy there.*** I said to the Columban superior that his Becket would be happier in Rome with us. And here he is.

How our saints hold us together! Archbishop Moxon has often spoken of the common heritage that we have, as Anglicans and Roman Catholics, through our saints: St Gregory the Great, St Augustine of Canterbury, St Columban, St Bede, St Thomas Becket. They are part of the great list of exemplars in holiness from that time when we were one.



Columban Fr Robert McCulloch (left) alongside Archbishop David Moxon (right) holding the relic of St Thomas Becket in Rome.

In a special way, I would like to thank Fr Anthony Robbie, who arranged with the offices in the Vatican for the re-sealing and authentication of this relic of Becket.

This relic which has come from Canterbury, to Australia and now to Rome, is a holy reminder of St Thomas Becket, a great and courageous saint.

We have links to either Canterbury or Rome and, in many ways, to both. We are united in our history, in our tradition, and through our journey in faith.

Columban Fr Robert McCulloch resides in Rome as the Procurator General for St Columbans Mission Society.

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 August

That artists of our time, through their ingenuity, may help everyone discover the beauty of creation.



Photo: sgame/bigstock.com

Pope Francis supports Hong Kong prison ministry

Joseph Cardinal Zen Ze-kiun has a long record of prison ministry and his dedication to those behind bars continues to this very day.

He regularly celebrates Mass in the prisons when the opportunity arises and several years ago embarked on a project to provide every person behind bars in the city's prisons or correctional centres with a treat of a top class mooncake for the *Mid-Autumn festival in September.

Since he stepped down from his role as bishop of the city in 2009, he has held twice-monthly meetings in prisons.

His mooncake drive got an extra shot in the arm this year when Pope Francis announced that he would get behind the drive and personally put in €500 (\$750AUD) to help the cause.

The papal generosity and interest prompted a record collection among people in Hong Kong.

The \$253,000 HK (\$42,500AUD) collected exceeded the cost of the purchase of the 10,000 mooncakes needed to supply each prisoner.

The excess will be donated to the papal charities. "In this way," Cardinal Zen said, "we contribute willingly to support two significant works."

In a letter to the people of Hong Kong, Pope Francis wrote, "***Dear faithful. Gladly I join with you to donate mooncakes to our brothers and sisters in the prisons of Hong Kong. Jesus will recognise us at the door of heaven. Happy moon festival! I cordially bless you. Pope Francis.***"



Cardinal Zen Ze-kiun being interviewed in Hong Kong.

Cardinal Zen said that he only asked the pope for €2 (\$3AUD) and said that he was overjoyed at his generosity.

**The Mid-Autumn Festival is a harvest festival that has its history dating back over 3,000 years to the Shang Dynasty when people thanked the moon god for the harvest. It is still a time of giving thanks, time for families to spend special time together and for prayer where people pray their specific requests.*

Sunday Examiner, Hong Kong - sundayex.catholic.org.hk

Photo: Fr Jim Mulroney SSC



From the Director

The woman with the umbrella

August 8, we celebrate the feast of St Mary of the Cross, Australia's first and only canonised saint. Mary MacKillop, her ordinary name, was the founder of the Josephite Sisters. She spent her life in Australia and New Zealand as a missionary of the Gospel.

Mary MacKillop imbued the women who joined the 'Joeys' with a new spirit and a way of connecting with secular Australian and New Zealand people who knew nothing about religious sisters.

This leads me to a story by a diocesan priest who was giving a talk at Pius XII seminary Banyo, Queensland, probably 40 years ago.

He described a Friday afternoon in western Queensland, where he saw ringers and rural workers coming into town for the weekend, to have a few beers and look forward to a weekend off.

As they passed the convent school they could see a cricket match in progress with the boys from the local school. Their eye was drawn to the umpire. 'Sister' with a hat and an umbrella, in her voluminous robes, was umpiring the game in 100 degree heat.

This image appealed to the secular instincts of the workers; this was what was good about the nuns. They were out with the children, they were involved in the life of the school, of the families, they were down to earth; it was something that the ringers could understand. The sisters were 'true blue'.

Mary MacKillop broke new ground. She had her own vision, she stuck to it and maintained her confidence in Jesus.

Mary of the Cross is an appropriate name for her as her work was tough, challenging and arduous. She fought many battles including financial hardship, lack of support and opposition from the hierarchy of the Church at the time.

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She fought many battles including financial hardship, lack of support and opposition from the hierarchy of the Church at the time.

But she understood her society and its culture. She was successful in attracting vocations because she knew what people needed in Australia and New Zealand.

The ringers may not have entered a church, they might have even been afraid of, or contemptuous of it, but Mary knew that credibility came when 'Sister' umpired a cricket match on Friday afternoon in the 'sizzling' heat. This was something that ringers could appreciate and understand. The Sisters never demanded respect but they earned it by the lives they led and still do.

Today, we need Mary MacKillop's missionary spirit to take us forward in our changing society to create a new way of bring people into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Happy Feast Day, Mary.

Gary Walker

Fr Gary Walker
director@columban.org.au



Hanging between home and away

FR BOBBY GILMORE

What was it my father used to say? A bird stuck between two branches gets bitten on both wings. I would like to add my saying to the list now, father: A man stuck between two worlds lives and dies alone. (Dinaw Mengestu - The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears)

In the 1980s before the onset of cheap air fares and the free movement of people introduced by the European Union, Irish immigrants in London were always on the look-out for news about people going to Ireland. As my work took me back and forth I was frequently asked to take items in my car. On one such occasion a few people heard that I was about to make the journey. I began to get calls requesting to take a few items.

The first was my young friend Caroline. She asked me to take her wedding dress. I said no problem, take it around and put in my car boot. That she did.

A few days later I had a call from Pat requesting that I take an outboard motor. Pat was a cyclical migrant. During the winter he migrated to London. Being from Donegal he had connections with his county men who specialised in the tunnelling business. When spring arrived Pat returned to Donegal to work on the family farm and make some money fishing on Lough Foyle. Again I responded positively and suggested that he take it around to my residence. Giving him the car keys I suggested he stick it in the boot.

Then a few days later another friend Pauline called. She said, I hear you are going to Ireland and I have a special request. My friend and local doctor died while I was away on holidays. After graduating from the College of Surgeons he had come to England after the war in 1946. He was always planning to return to Ireland, marry and settle down. But, she said, the years passed him by and he didn't get back home. In his Will he requested that she have his ashes scattered in the Irish Sea halfway between England and Ireland. She had the ashes in her house and was anxious to have his request fulfilled. I assured her that I would carry out his wishes and her request.

On the evening I was leaving for Holyhead I went around to her house to pick up the container with the ashes. Seeing me arrive outside her house she opened the door and welcomed me. There and then she offered me a cup of tea. While I enjoyed the tea I gave her the keys and told her to place the ashes in the boot. Bidding her farewell I set off for the 2:15am ferry from Holyhead to Dublin. I enjoyed traveling that time of night as there was less traffic on the M1/M6 and the BBC was a good companion.

As I made my way up the motorway listening to whatever was on the radio the cargo in the boot of my car wasn't on my mind. However, I had a feeling that I wasn't making time. I wondered what was slowing me down. Anxious, I pulled over at a lay-by, got out and looked at the tyres. Everything seemed to be in order. Getting back into the car I started off again but the sluggishness of my pace began to bother me. There and then I remembered my cargo and realized that the weight of the outboard motor was the cause of my sluggish pace.

Then I began to wonder how I would get through border security at Holyhead. How would I explain the contents of my car boot and particularly the ashes for which I didn't have a death certificate? Borders are ambivalent places, nowhere zones where identity, legality and humanity are challenged. They are not just physical boundaries. Your mental sense of belonging is momentarily transparent, in someone else's hands until you are beckoned to proceed. Borders are useless inventions. They just make it harder for people to do the things they need to do.

Arriving at the port I took my place in the line of vehicles waiting to board the ferry. About a half hour before boarding the police began their inspection of the cars. We all opened our car boots and waited. As I waited I wondered what the police reaction would be on listing the contents of the boot and what my response would be. At last he arrived, looked in and asked what I had. I started with the wedding dress, then the outboard motor, then the ashes and lastly my tennis gear. Closing the boot cover he said, "Extraordinary" and continued with his work. Relieved, I got into the car. At last I was legal, someone belonging somewhere again.

Then the next part of the saga began to intrude - the disposal of the ashes in the middle of the Irish Sea. As the trip was about three hours I calculated that after about ninety minutes out at sea I would perform the burial rites of Dr. Frank. It was easy to understand the significance of Caroline and Pat's items. Theirs' was a temporary migration. They were in the process of managing a return.

The ashes caused me deeper reflection about Dr. Frank's life of suspension between England and Ireland, working in England but living in Ireland. He was like many Irish emigrants in Britain hanging between home and away, neither there or here. There and then I wondered if my life as a migrant mirrored that of Pat, Caroline or Dr. Frank. Where was home? Lost in my musings, I looked at my watch. It told me the time had come to deposit Dr. Frank's ashes. I made my way to the rear of the ferry. As the wind blew from the west I deposited Dr. Frank's ashes in the Irish Sea. I said a short prayer asking the Lord to give Dr. Frank the home his spirit desired but in his life did not get around to realizing it. He was no longer a border person.

Home is a place where, when you go there, they have to let you in.
(Robert Frost - The Death Of A Hired Man)

Columban Fr Bobby Gilmore lives and works in Ireland.



As I waited I wondered what the police reaction would be on listing the contents of the boot and what my response would be.



Cultural curiosity and trends in Japan

Learning at the local bookstore

FR BARRY CAIRNS

Since first coming to Japan as a missionary 60 years ago I have had a cultural curiosity! It is still with me. It makes missionary life interesting. Such events as festivals, customs, ways of thinking and acting fascinate me. And Japanese people delight in explaining things Japanese to a foreigner.

This cultural curiosity leads me to go regularly to the local bookstore and see the ten top selling books of the month. These give me an indication of what is going on among the people to whom I am missioned.

For example: ten years ago books on improving the quality of life predominated. These included books on exercise, relieving stress, healthy food cook-books etc.

Then in 2014-15, 70 years after the end of World War II, history books had a time of popularity. Recently there has been a subtle change. Books written for senior citizens who prefer bound volumes rather than the internet have started to appear. Some of these seem to regard the future as bleak and without hope. There are books with these ominous titles: *'Elderly People's Hell – a Report,' 'Poverty in Old Age,' 'Aged and Bankrupt'* and *'The Aged are Second Class Citizens'*.

In a recent article in the Japanese Yomiuri News the social welfare editor, Ms. Ritsuko Inakuma writes: In Japan *"an increasing number of elderly people have become more interested in how to live before dying....People today have begun to seriously worry about their future in Japan."*

This brings to mind what the Japanese literature Nobel Laureate Kensaburo Oe said almost 20 years ago: *"Despite material affluence we Japanese are facing a crisis worse than the devastation left by the war. The problem is an absence of hope."* (Interview reported in Daily Yomiuri November 13, 1998).

What is causing such widespread pessimism and fear especially among the elderly? There is the Fukushima nuclear disaster still causing problems with leaking radioactive water. Are the other nuclear power plants safe? There are the frequent missile launchings by North Korea when the people see massive mobile missile interceptors move into place even in central Tokyo. There are rumblings in China over the ownership of the Senkaku offshore islands. To whom do they really belong? Will this disputed ownership cause war?

The present Prime Minister Abe proposes a change in the Peace Constitution. He wants to change Article Nine renouncing war and calls for a standing army. Then there are the frequent articles in the media predicting a major earthquake and tsunami with the number of dead in the tens of thousands. There are even some who predict Mt. Fuji to erupt after 700 years. We get many minor earthquakes – we ask ourselves each time: Is this the big one? A subtle sense of fear pervades especially among the aged in Japan.

In many cases fear is combined with loneliness. For example, I often visit

retirement homes. It is sad to see the old people gathered in one room just sitting. But many watch the door in the hope that the next person to come in might be a visitor for them.

All this I feel is a renewed call to mission. The Risen Lord gives us hope. We are called to be instruments of hope. The Apostles when worried about their future were told to look at nature – the birds and flowers. This is so suitable for nature loving Japanese. Our Abba Father – God, knows where each tiny bird flies and where each flower blooms. Our loving Father cares for us humans as much as nature. Jesus tells us: *"Fear not! Because I am with you."* We have been gifted. Let us share those gifts with others.

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



Despite material affluence we Japanese are facing a crisis worse than the devastation left by the war. The problem is an absence of hope."



青翰堂

Spoken language is not the only way of communicating

SALUSTINO VILLALOBOS MONDRAGON

Salustino Villalobos Mondragon, is a Peruvian Columban seminarian currently living in Taiwan. He has been working as a volunteer at the The Ai Jia Development Center for more than six months and says the experience has been difficult at times but a fruitful experience.



The Ai Jia Development Center was founded by the Hsinchu Catholic diocese in Taiwan to help and support mentally challenged adult students. Like in many other countries, mentally challenged people in Taiwan are not considered important. Consequently, there are not enough social benefits to cover their daily needs.

When I started my volunteer work, I was not able to communicate well in Chinese with the teachers and students. I needed to talk with the teachers about the daily activities for the students, but I could not understand what they were talking about which was frustrating. In the early days I had no self-confidence even with simple words. Moreover, in my daily activities I had no one to speak to in English, so I had to speak Chinese. What I learned from this experience is that the spoken language is not the only way of communicating.

For example, the students frequently manifested their feelings in their facial expressions or gestures.

At the beginning I did not feel comfortable with the students. Even though in theory I knew the students at the Center were the same as me, I felt that I was normal and they were not!!

In order to realize they are the same as me, I needed to stay, spend time and share with them. I started by learning their names and began to feel comfortable and enjoy my time with them. The borders I had created between being normal and abnormal disappeared. My feelings of 'who is normal' and 'who is not' changed

Since I had completed two degrees at university, I thought I could teach the students but in reality it was the students who taught me particularly to appreciate the simple things in life.

Photo: Salustino Villalobos Mondragon

Join us at Ignite Conference 2017

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They have clear priorities that always include others. In our daily prayer time at the Center the students always pray for their close relatives, teachers, staff and other students. This made me think that I too must care for people around me. The students made me aware that I cannot be individualistic. Others must be present in my daily life.

During my time at Ai Jia Center I have been challenged to break down my prejudices and to live and accept those who may seem different from me.

As Proverbs 19:21 says, "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."

Salustino Villalobos Mondragon, is a Columban seminarian currently living in Taiwan.



Columbans will be present at the Ignite Conference 2017 in Brisbane next month. We will be promoting the works of Columbans, vocations and much more.

We encourage those benefactors attending to visit the Columban stand.

We look forward to seeing you there!



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Hanging between home and away- Ireland

Founding member and President of *Migrants Rights Centre* Ireland, Columban Fr Bobby Gilmore in Ireland, calls for a new European heart, saying, "This is not just an individual member state issue. It is a European legacy and a European Union tragedy that needs a European institutional human response."

With your help, Fr Gilmore can respond to Pope Francis' call for 'concrete gestures' in serving the needs of migrants.
(See pages 18-19)



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