

# The Far East

COLUMBAN MISSION MAGAZINE

October 2017



## Youth PoWR

'Light in Dark Times'

A multi-faith initiative to bring young people together from diverse religions.



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

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# The Far East

October 2017

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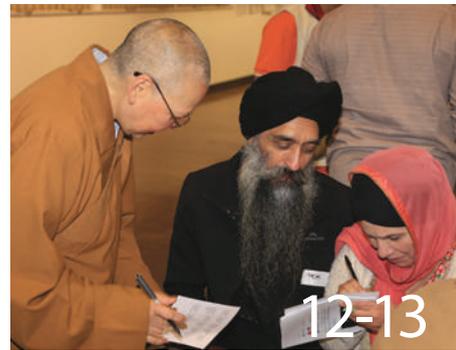
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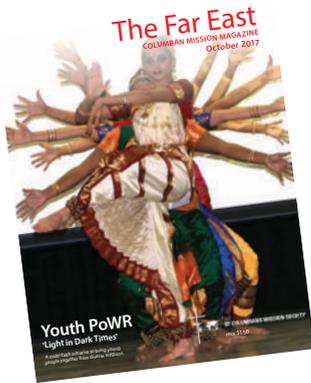
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Photo: Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

## From the Editor

On Sunday October 22, 2017 we celebrate *World Mission Day*. Pope Francis reminds us that: *Mission is at the heart of our Christian faith*.

In this issue of *The Far East*, there are many examples of Mission at the heart of our Christian faith beginning with a good news story of hope to shut-ins and prisoners in Hong Kong. Bruce Aitken, a volunteer has hosted a two hour radio program of spirituality, news and religious music for the past 12 years.

In his parish in Japan, Columban Fr Joseph Broderick works with Fr Ota Masaru, the leader of the de Foucauld community whose ministry is with the homeless. Members of the de Foucauld community have day jobs to support their community and work with the poor in the evenings.

Columban Fr Tomás King, in his homily to celebrate 25 years in the priesthood, reflects on the image of a poor woman in Pakistan baking and sharing bread for her family. He carries the powerful memory of the woman living out the invitation that Jesus gave at the Last Supper when he said: *"Do this in memory me."*

Mission was surely at the heart of Christian faith when Columban Dr Ned Maguire was sent to Australia to seek support for mission in China. He became the first Columban Superior for Australia and New Zealand and was the first Editor of *The Far East*

Youth PoWR *'Light in Dark Times'*, a multi-faith initiative of the *Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations*, provided a platform for bringing young people together from diverse religions.

In a time of tension in Korea, it is refreshing to read Columban Fr Kelvin Barrett's article about leaving Korea, his second home, his love of Korean people, the beautiful seasons and his mission work that has taken many turns.

With benefactor support, young children in Yanaoca, Peru, now have a safe place to learn valuable skills for their future life.

In his Annual Report, *Mission in Pakistan 2017*, Columban Fr Robert McCulloch thanks donors for making possible care for mothers and infants, education for young men, palliative care, training of mid-wives, shelter and water.

And finally, *The Far East* receives a well-deserved award from *Australasian Catholic Press Association (ACPA)* for *'Most improved Publication'* editor, Fr Daniel Harding.

Who would have thought that almost 98 years after Dr Ned Maguire launched *The Far East* that it would still be in production today.

And how shocked would Columban, Fr McCarthy in Omaha be to see a 'lay woman' and 'not a Sister' as editor of *The Far East*. In the publication, *'The Red Lacquered Gate'*, Fr McCarthy, replies to Fr Blowick's letter which sought employment for a staunch lady supporter of the society: *"there is absolutely no place here that we could fit in a woman of her character and disposition unless she were a Sister. I will guarantee to keep this show running with Sisters around, no matter what kind they are, but you can't do a thing with lay women."*

Janette Mentha  
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# Prayer-on-air with prisoners and shut-ins

FR JIM MULRONEY

*Frs Jim Mulroney, Pat Colgan, Lay Missionary Beth Sabado & Sr Romily. (right).*



An unsung two hours of prayer-on-air with the many English-speaking people locked away in the prisons of Hong Kong that has been going on every Sunday night for almost 12 years has proven an important lifeline for its ever-keen and expanding listening audience.

The host of *The Hour of Love*, Bruce Aitken, has hunkered down behind the microphone over 600 times in his studio at *AM 1044 Metro Plus* to provide two hours of spirituality, news and religious music from 9:00pm on Sunday nights specifically for those who are unable to leave home or come near a church on Sundays.

As the flood of correspondence reflects, an outside voice of prayer coming into prison cells and the ears of migrant workers who are unable to leave their employer's homes, has brought a wash of company and healing to many a scarred soul and encouragement to many a lonely heart.

Aitken, who broadcasts under the name of Br Bruce, says his message is simple. A bit of scripture opens the evening, with the readings from the Mass of each Sunday, followed by some music and on a good night, a guest or two.

The programme regularly features live interviews with prison chaplains, Oblate Fr John Wotherspoon and Columban Fr Pat Colgan who adds the dimension of a little bit of Spanish for the many in jail for whom it is a native tongue.

Filipino migrant workers also have their spot, with their chaplain, Fr Jay Flandez, having a word, and a few direct telephone calls from Manila about life at home are added to round out the evening.

But the big attraction of the two-hours on air is the invitation to pray with other listeners, as Aitken reads out prayer requests for loved ones both far away and nearby and in his own unique way, uses the airwaves to bring a spiritual comfort to many an aching heart, flagging spirit and lost soul.

He believes strongly in the power of prayer, and the prayer does not stop in the studio, but is backed up by a praying community that gathers every Sunday at St Jude's church in Kam Tin, something Aitken says is an essential element that gives the prayer-on-air a concrete community base, and a communion of hearts and souls.

Although he never set out to create a record but just offer a bit of solace, hosting over 600 weekly programmes on the trot could surely be worthy of some mention in the Guinness Book of Records.

***Aitken's red-hot passion is for those behind bars, whose real crime he says is often not much more than naïveté and the unforgivable sin of being born into poverty.***

Although his record is not quite perfect, as he did miss one week recently when visiting his native United States of America. Columbans Fr Jim Mulrone, Pat Colgan, Columban Lay Missionary Beth Sabado and local volunteer Sr Romily stepped in to host the program.

*The Hour of Love* is a long-running outreach that its vast listening audience attests is a worthwhile and much appreciated ministry in the diocese of Hong Kong.

But although *Metro Radio* is a community broadcaster, the programme does not go to air without the financial support of people who believe that forgiveness, reconciliation and offering mercy to those who are suffering is a holy and wholesome thought.

Aitken says that he has plans to add a half-an-hour to the programme to give more time to his segment, *Prison Visitation on the Air*, which he describes as having taken on a life of its own. However, finance is holding him back.

So if you reckon a bit of spiritual healing is worth your support, a quick email to [houroflove@gmail.com](mailto:houroflove@gmail.com) can tell you how to do it.

And may God guide you gently through the week.

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*Columban Fr Jim Mulrone is Editor of the Sunday Examiner, Hong Kong.*



# Priests on the streets

FR JOE BRODERICK

## LISTEN TO: Priests on the streets

*F*r Joe Broderick recalls coordinating with Japanese priest, Fr Ota Masaru, to help connect the parish community in solidarity with his work with the homeless (Yakata-machi) of the city.

In 2005 I went to work in the Yakatamachi parish where a group of Brothers and priests, inspired by Charles de Foucauld, lived simply and worked among the homeless. They went to the public parks and other places where the homeless lived, looked after them and put pressure on the local government to play their part.

When I arrived they were holding their monthly meetings in the church hall where they shared a big meal with 60 to 80 homeless individuals (mainly men) and offered haircuts, medical attention and clothes. Initially I was not involved but had ample opportunity to meet the de Foucauld Brothers and Priests. I soon began to go to the monthly meetings and one of my roles was to accompany those who wished to get cigarettes to the local 7-Eleven store, where of course, I paid.

Fr Ota Masaru is the leader of the de Foucauld community and he coordinated all the activities with the homeless. He, like his companions, worked a day job, which was their way of both supporting their community and living close to the people of the local community. Fr Ota went to the best schools and a top university and could have had a career in the upper circles of Japanese society. He, like all the members of his religious community, has chosen to put his talents at the service of the poorest of the poor.

Their priests do not staff parishes but serve their own religious community and may help in the parish when necessary. They and the Brothers come to Mass like any other parishioner and maintain an unobtrusive presence in our parish community. Most Christian families in our city come from low caste families as, for centuries, this part of Japan was home to a huge tannery centre and those who engaged in this work were relegated by an ancient government decree to the lowest caste in society. While the caste system is no longer officially recognized in Japan

many families continue to be aware of their caste origin and, in general, prefer to avoid social contact with those they consider beneath them.

There was a period when many low caste families in the Wakayama area entered the Church but not all members of the community were happy with this. They unsuccessfully requested a parish for themselves apart from the low caste Catholics.

In due course I came to admire the work being done by Fr Ota and his companions. I decided to do what I could to support their work. So, at a meeting of the group (made up of Christians and non-Christians) that worked with the homeless I proposed using the church hall for accommodation during the winter months. Some Christians present wondered whether the parish council would go along with this proposal but that was not a problem. However, they did request that first, all drinking and smoking be outside; second, one member of the organization group stay with the homeless in the church hall at night.

Fr Ota stayed with them the first night and assured us that all would be fine after that. There were around eight

men (after a while it was down to four) who came along regularly, and they themselves eventually decided that they would come in after Christmas and leave the first day of Holy Week. I feared they would make a mess, but each day they cleaned up and showed a great respect for the church. Often one would say to me: *"We like that guy on the cross; he's one of us."*

Fr Ota and his companions would help them get a small apartment funded by the City and once they had an address, they were able to access the financial help offered by the City. However, there are always some who don't like to be confined to a single room; they prefer the freedom of the streets. ***Part of that freedom is the sharing that is so common among people on the streets, which might be difficult to come by if living independently in a small apartment.***

I left that parish some time ago and the homeless took up a collection for me. It was the most joyous collection I have ever received.

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*Columban Fr Joe Broderick lives and works in Japan.*

*Parishioner Yukiko Hirata & Fr Joe Broderick.*



# Do this in memory of me

FR TOMÁS KING

*Homily on the occasion of the Jubilarian Mass, Dalgan Park, Ireland  
August 15, 2017 (Abridged with permission Ed.)*

## LISTEN TO: Reflection - Do this in memory of me

In the spring of 2005, in a parish in southern Pakistan, the catechist and I were visiting villages of landless peasants, people who live in mud and timber houses and work on the estates of their landlords. They are bonded labourers, living in a state of debt to the landlord.

We visited one village of seven families every month or so. However, on this visit we found the village empty – no people, the houses knocked down, all belongings gone, no sign of life.

The families had moved to the estate of another landlord who had paid off their debt, which meant that they were now bonded to him. We found these families as dusk was falling. They had set up camp in a field of their new landlord. That field would eventually become a village. Their few possessions, such as beds and beddings, were scattered; a few goats and hens quietly explored their new surroundings.

The women had made mud stoves on the ground and were cooking the evening meal. As the darkness gathered, the flames from their fires seemed to become even more radiant – their only source of light.

One woman, squatting on the ground, caught my attention. She was making chapati, a flat, thin bread on a flat pan. First, she broke the firewood, lit the stove and kindled it. Next, she kneaded the dough, broke it into pieces, then flattened it with the palms of her hands - all while keeping an eye on her infant child.

While the catechist and I contemplated this scene, he said to me: *"It'll be difficult to celebrate Mass here."* Logistically he was right, but my instinctive response was, *"If we can't celebrate Eucharist here, we can't celebrate it anywhere."*

In fact, the Eucharist was being celebrated before our eyes - as the woman baked the bread and shared it with her family, the catechist and me. I had no doubt about the Real Presence in the making and breaking of bread by that young woman. Making and breaking bread in such a context was an act of resilience, an act of resistance against the injustice and oppression she endured daily. By her actions, you could almost imagine her saying to the world; *"no matter what you throw at me nothing will stop me from baking and breaking bread. I will go on nurturing life."* She lived out the invitation that Jesus gave at the Last Supper when he said: *"Do this in memory of me."*

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*Columban Fr Tomás King has been a missionary in Pakistan since 1992.*

“

*no matter what you  
throw at me nothing will  
stop me from baking and  
breaking bread. I will go  
on nurturing life.”*



# Columban Pioneer - Dr Ned Maguire

Preparing for the Columban Centenary

FR RAY SCANLON



Back row, Frs Luke Mullany, Romuald Hayes, Hugh Donnelly and front row, Frs William McGoldrick, Edward Maguire & James Hayes.

*O*n October 10, 1916, the bishops of Ireland gave permission to a group of Irish diocesan priests, led by Frs Edward Galvin and John Blowick, to set up a college for the training of missionary priests for China. Permission was also given to raise funds for this project. In this way the Maynooth Mission to China was begun. The next step was approval from the authorities in Rome. This came on June 29, 1918, with the new name of 'Society of St Columban', as the great 6th century Irish missionary to Europe had been chosen to be the patron of this new venture.

By that date twenty Irish priests and a large number of seminarians had

volunteered to join the Society, a large Georgian building had been purchased for a college and the seminarians installed and a new mission magazine, *The Far East*, was being widely distributed. While his co-founder, Fr John Blowick, was busy with these developments in Ireland, Fr Edward Galvin was active in the USA organising support for the new mission society there. Once that was underway their next target was Australia and New Zealand.

Dr Edward Maguire had been ordained in 1912 and was teaching theology at All Hallows College in Dublin when he was moved to resign his chair there and join the new

society. **"I felt it wasn't a job for a young man,"** was the way he put it. The call of China was making itself heard. But it was to Australia and New Zealand that he was asked to go to seek support for China there. He was joined for the trip to Australia by Fr James Galvin, another Irish Columban, ordained less than two years.

Their road had been prepared. Co-founder, Fr John Blowick, had been a professor at the Maynooth seminary when Dr Mannix was the Rector there some years before and he had already written to Archbishop Mannix asking for his help. In response Archbishop Mannix had sought and received authorization

Photos: Missionary Society of St Columban



from the bishops of Australia and New Zealand to invite the Columbans to come to both countries to seek funds for their cause.

On January 6, 1920, the two new Columbans arrived in Sydney. They were warmly welcomed by Archbishop Kelly and some Irish priests serving in Sydney and then boarded the train for Melbourne where a limousine sent by Archbishop Mannix met them.

At the suggestion of Archbishop Mannix, Fr Maguire addressed the diocesan priests when they gathered for their annual retreat. The response was enthusiastic and generous.

Frs Maguire and Galvin began the work of visiting parishes, preaching about the China mission and collecting funds. The first issue of

the Australian edition of *The Far East* magazine, edited by Fr Maguire, came out in October, 1920. Earlier in the same year two young priests of the Melbourne Archdiocese sought and received permission to join the Society. Remarkably, Frs Romuald Hayes and Luke Mullany were curates in the same parish of Northcote, Melbourne, and both of them decided independently to join up for China. The following year Fr Maguire purchased the first Columban house in Australia at Mentone, Victoria, and two years later replaced it for the present Columban house in Essendon. Meanwhile early in 1923 Columban mission appeals began across the Tasman in New Zealand.

Dr Maguire was superior in Australia and New Zealand until 1924 when he went as a delegate to the first General

Chapter of the Society at which unsurprisingly he was elected to the Superior General's Council. He stayed on that Council until 1947 and at the same time edited the Irish edition of *The Far East* until 1936. In later years he taught in the Columban seminary in Ireland and engaged in administration in Columban houses in San Francisco and Brooklyn. Dr Ned Maguire died in Los Angeles in June 1957 and is buried there in Calvary Cemetery.

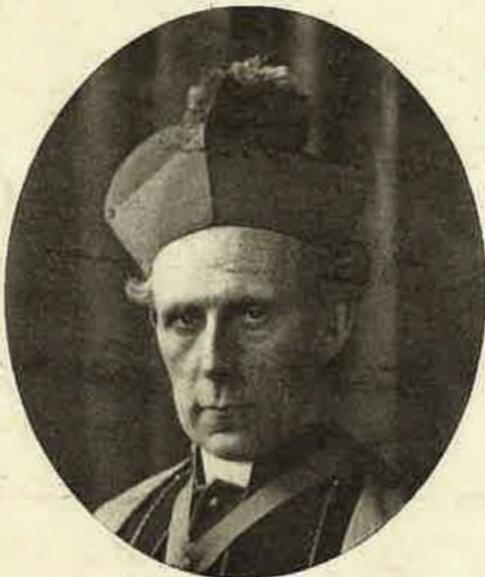
As we commemorate our centenary we remember and give thanks for the great start St Columbans was given in Australia and New Zealand by such inspirational missionary pioneers as Dr Maguire and his co-workers.

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*Columban Fr Ray Scanlon is the Vice Director of St Columbans Mission Society in Australia & New Zealand.*

# IRISH MISSION TO CHINA

(Established October, 1916)



Archbishop Mannix

*Australian Catholics carry heavy burdens of their own. But I know them well enough to assure you that you can rely upon them to give a generous helping hand to the Irish Mission to China. I send you £100 for the great work; and I wish I could make it ten times as much.*

# Youth PoWR - 'Light in Dark Times'

## Sparking an Interfaith Movement of Hope

FR PATRICK MCINERNEY

More than 200 young people participated in this year's *Youth PoWR* (Parliament of the World's Religions) at Strathfield NSW on Sunday August 20, 2017.

Now in its third year, *Youth PoWR* is a multi-faith initiative of the *Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations*. It brings together young people from diverse religions – Aboriginal, Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism – and secular society.

This year's *Youth PoWR* was sponsored by *The Glenburnie Program*, the *NSW Government through Multicultural NSW*, and *St Columbans Mission Society*.

*Youth PoWR* is **by young people** – the members of the Coordinating Committee are young representatives from different religions who plan, organise, promote and host the event; **with young people** – the speakers and performers are young people; **for young people** – the participants are young people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds across Sydney.

The venue was Santa Sabina College, Strathfield where young people aged 17-35 engaged with each other on the practical implications of this year's theme, 'Light in Dark Times'.

In a video message from Chicago, Rev Dr Larry Greenfield, Executive Director of the Parliament of the World's Religions, had a positive and encouraging message for the participants.

Dr Greenfield said he was keen to listen and learn from this gathering of Australian youth from different religions, and extended an invitation to join him and others from around the world at next year's Parliament of the World's Religions to be held in November in Toronto, Canada.

The program featured inspiring talks, dynamic performances expressing compassion and justice in artistic form, and great engagement of the young people with each other.

The program included speakers from four faiths: Leonard Choy (Buddhism), Rabbi Nicole Roberts (Judaism) Matin Gouniai (Baha'i) and Sourosh Cina (Islam). There were performances from Hope Uniting Band (Christian), Natyanivedan Indian Dance School (Hindu) and Shaheedi Faujan Gatka Akhara (Sikh).

Participants gathered in small groups and considered a range of issues. **Racism and Discrimination and Climate Change and the Environment** emerged as the two most important issues to them and to young people in their faith community. The group participants then discussed their chosen issue in depth and came up with one concrete, practical action to address that issue. The entire gathering then voted on the action proposals.

Through meeting, discussing and agreeing on shared commitments, the members of *Youth PoWR* demonstrated how young people from different religions can model harmonious interreligious living for the rest of the world to emulate.

You can stay in touch with *Youth PoWR* through the Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/Youth.PoWR](http://www.facebook.com/Youth.PoWR)

Some comments from participants:

***"This kind of event is a good platform for young people to meet, experience and discuss. Keep having Youth PoWR every year!"***

***"The speakers were very good and their talks were complementary."***

***"The entertainment was excellent. Starting off with a calming performance and ending with something exciting worked very well."***

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*Columban Fr Patrick McInerney is the Director of the Columban Mission Institute in Sydney and the Coordinator of its Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations.*



Participants & performers at Youth PoWR, August 2017.

# Leaving my second home

FR KELVIN BARRETT



## Listen to: Leaving my second home

How many winters have I passed in Korea, I muse. Too many or too few? As I come to leave it seems too few. In fact, it has been around thirty. Back in 1969, I remember being very happy when I was appointed to Korea. Even in my teenage years I had developed an affection for the country. My affection stemmed from reading Fr Philip Crosbie's book *'Pencilling Prisoner'*. I was very inspired by his faith and courage as shown in his account of his experience of the Death March during the Korean War. Influenced by Fr Phil's obvious love of the country and its people I began feeling a mysterious attraction to it.

In addition to the lure of the country and its people, I learnt that the Korean winters are very cold. I wanted to experience such cold even if only once. This was to be a challenge for someone who found riding a bicycle to school in winter on the West Coast of South Australia more than a challenge. I arrived in Korea just before the winter of 1970 and survived it! Then after spending one year in Korea I realised that aside from freezing winds to be avoided and

the calm magic of winter snow to be enjoyed, Korea also has a sweltering, sticky summer accompanied by the cicada orchestra. In between, Korea has the radiance of the cherry blossom which welcomes in spring loaded with new life. Then there are the balmy evenings and crisp mornings of autumn heralding a sea of colour which sadly fades into the next cycle of winter redeemed only by the snow. For me this was a refreshingly new experience of four very distinct seasons – the wonder of God's creation.

After language study, I was assigned to Sam cheok in Gangweon Province on the east coast of the peninsula. I still remember the warmth of the parishioners who were very understanding of my faltering Korean. As I met the sick people journeying long distances to St Joseph's Clinic run by the Columban Sisters situated on the church grounds, I came to see with my own eyes how difficult life was for the people at that time. Nevertheless, they were very patient waiting in long queues to see the doctors. Indeed they were also patient with me as I hesitantly approached them to try out my limited Korean. I could not but feel for and

Photo: Fr Kelvin Barrett SSC

respect for the courage these people who in many ways were still recovering from the Korean War. Their will to live was inspiring. It was in Samcheok that I first started to make Korean friends.

When I returned to Australia several years later I came to realise how deeply I had come to love the Korean people and their country. The next 17 years I spent on the formation team at Turramurra in Sydney. It was a time when I also came to see my own country in a new light. I came to see its strengths and weaknesses: its seemingly preference for individualism and excessive consumerism contrasting with its search for ways to build an inclusive multi-cultural society and concern to build a just society for all. Within the context of these and other competing values, I came to love Australia anew as my home. I love its vitality and sense of hope.

Subsequently, I returned to the country I had continued to miss, Korea. On my return, I first spent time in Gayang community which was an out-station of Dongcheon Parish on the western outskirts of Seoul. Here I lived a full life. I felt the comfort and peace one feels when one returns home. Korea is indeed my second home. I found it difficult to leave this small community where I had become close to the faithful even though I had only been there for a short time. Our Sunday liturgies and weekly small group 'sharings', as well as visiting the sick in their homes were particularly dear to me. The people taught me so much about the culture of Korea and the meaning of supporting each other in a small community.

From Gayang I returned to formation ministry, this time in the Columban Formation House in Seoul. How would I find formation with Korean seminarians? I was anxious. As time went on, even though our cultures are different, I found that we could share together at a very deep level. I came to know that God plants the seeds of a vocation in all peoples' hearts, not just in theory but in reality. This experience filled me with joy. ***As the students shared their journey with me I became aware that we are indeed companions walking together on a meaningful and grace-filled journey – sharing the unfolding of our faith as we continually discovered God calling us forth to be missionaries.***

Next I shared the responsibility for Columban Lay Mission together with an experienced lay missionary. We partnered in the ministry of recruiting, preparing and sending Korean lay missionaries overseas. In addition, we facilitated lay missionaries from other countries to come as missionaries to Korea. Rather than a responsibility I again experienced this work as a joy. In a sense this time was

the most meaningful of my missionary life. Journeying with the lay missionaries was a new experience for me in that my ministry in formation had been with seminarians. Now I was accompanying lay people on mission - women and men, married and single.

Through their deep faith and enthusiasm for mission I experienced a whole new and broader understanding of being a missionary. These young people wanted to become missionaries with a single-minded purpose often at significant personal cost. They were prepared to commit themselves to live their lives in line with this aspiration. In this way, they inspired me to renew my commitment to God's call.

Looking back over my time as a priest missionary - now 48 years have elapsed - I have a strong sense of being blessed. This blessing fills me with gratitude. I am particularly grateful to all our supporters here in Australia and New Zealand as well as in Korea. Through your prayers and support I have been able to live a fulfilled missionary life. I have been nourished by others and hopefully they have been nourished by my presence.

The time has come and I have returned to Australia. This is not the end of my journey. I now gather my experiences of Korea, reflect on them and bring them with me on the next chapter of my missionary journey. Thus far from forgetting my experiences of the people of faith in Korea (I include my experiences at Turramurra), I will treasure them in my heart as a source of hope for the future. I offer a big thanks to the people of Korea. I invite you to join me in praying that they may find the peace and harmony they so seek between the one people of North and South Korea. They will have a profound influence on my life as a missionary in Perth. Yes I am now heading to Perth to take up again my life as a missionary in Australia. As in the past I expect the mystery of my journey will continue there. I again expect to be surprised by many unexpected outcomes. Life is certainly a mystery. I look forward to meeting many of you on this alluring journey.



*Fr Kelvin Barrett*

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*Columban Fr Kelvin Barrett is currently residing at the Columban Mission House in Essendon, Australia.*

# 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 October

That all workers may receive respect and protection of their rights, and that the unemployed may receive the opportunity to contribute to the common good.



photo: sgame/bigstock.com

## Columban Superior General urges an end to persecution of Myanmar Muslims

As the persecution of the Muslim minority in Rakhine State in Myanmar/Burma reaches a feverish pitch and forces thousands to flee to neighboring Bangladesh, Columban Superior General, Fr Kevin O'Neill, sends a message of solidarity saying, ***"We reject persecution of any community regardless of religion, race, or ethnic identity. We urge an end to the violence and violation of human rights of the Rohingya people and hope for their peaceful return to their homes in the Rakhine State of Myanmar/Burma."***

Columban missionaries urge the government of Myanmar/Burma to immediately allow international humanitarian assistance to reach people in need and to seek long term peace and protection for the Muslim minorities of the Rakhine State and ethnic minorities throughout the country. We support the Caritas Internationalis campaign for refugees and migrants, 'Share the Journey', which was launched September 27, 2017 and hope that it will contribute to a global response of support for the Muslim minorities forced to flee Myanmar/Burma due to violence and persecution.



Photo: dmitrydesigner/Bigstock.com

Columban missionaries are present in Myanmar/Burma and in Pakistan. We work with the local church in carrying out its mission of evangelization which includes working for peace, justice, and care for creation.

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*Columban Fr Kevin O'Neill, September 13, 2017*

# From the Director

## My last column



I am finishing in my role as Regional Director of Australia and New Zealand next month so this is my last Director's column in *The Far East*. Columban Fr Brian Vale will be taking over from me on November 23, 2017, the feast of St Columban.

Fr Brian will bring his own special gifts to the task of leadership and to this column. He will bring fresh insights to the understanding and challenges which we face today. He has already served as a Regional Director in Japan and is presently involved in interfaith dialogue with the Columban Mission Institute in Sydney. I wish him well.

I hope you give him the same support and encouragement that you have given to me over the last six years.

I have come to the end of another phase in my life. I have been 'in the office' at *Columban Mission Centre (CMC)* for 14 years. It has been a challenge from the first day. I spent nine years as Editor of *The Far East* magazine starting from scratch and without any particular skills. It was a steep learning curve but I survived with the generous help of people in the CMC who had experience and from professional people who worked in the Catholic Press. I came to appreciate what is involved in producing a magazine in content and 'look'. It was exciting and I learned so much.

When I became Regional Director I was immersed in a modern business operation. I did not have to do any of the technical work but once again it was a challenge to come to terms with an operation, which in Australia and New Zealand, had to be contemporary and efficient. Once again I was surrounded by co-workers who knew what they were doing and from whom I learnt a great deal. Having worked in Fiji and Jamaica, I did not have experience of 'how things work'.



*I have been 'in the office' at Columban Mission Centre (CMC) for 14 years. It has been a challenge from the first day.*

Columban priests used to be managers of the Columban Mission office but we have moved past that, we need much more expertise which we find in the people who work with us. Once again I had a steep learning relating to how the business side of a missionary congregation runs. I have learnt so much.

I would say that the use of technology has been a revelation to me. I am not inclined to technology but I have seen how useful and effective the internet, the website and social media is for promoting mission. We are able to stay connected with other Columbans and Regions throughout the world and spread the good work of mission electronically through our *Columban eBulletin* in addition to *The Far East*.

I am grateful for not being left behind as I might have been if I did not have this job.

Finally, a 'thank you' to you our benefactors. Without your support and belief in Columban mission, we would not have achieved anything. Together we have achieved a lot to the glory of God.

God bless you.

*Gary Walker*

Fr Gary Walker  
director@columban.org.au

**LISTEN TO: From the Director - My last column**



# Peruvian children find safety

KIM BALKOVEC

## The Children's Centre of Yanaoca, Peru

### LISTEN TO: Peruvian children find safety

The Columban missionaries began their work in Peru in 1951 and continue working throughout the country today. While Peru is a beautiful country, rich in culture and history and was once the Centre of the Incan empire, over 44% of the population currently lives below the poverty line. Many of those living in dire poverty are children.

The parish of Santiago Apostol in Yanaoca has been staffed by Columban Fr Paul Prendergast since the late 1980's. The present pastor is Columban Fr Young-In Kim from Korea who is fluent in Spanish, as well as in Quechua, the language of the indigenous people of the area.

The Children's Centre of Yanaoca began with the initiative of a

few Columban benefactors and their concern for the survival of children during a couple of years of intense cold. This unusual weather phenomenon put the lives of children, elderly, farm animals and pets at risk.

The area of Yanaoca is very impoverished. It is a town of farmers and shepherds of goats and sheep. The average family lives off what the land produces and raise chickens, guinea pigs and pigeons for their own consumption. By selling some of their products, a family may earn \$40.00 to \$60.00 dollars a month.

With the assistance of generous benefactors, Fr Kim was able to adapt an existing building owned by the parish that had been vacant for five years into the new Children's Centre.

Fortunately the building was well constructed and structurally sound.

The program serves about 50 children. They are divided into three groups, according to their ages: five to six year olds, seven to nine and ten to eleven year olds.

Due to limits of space and of personnel available to care for the children and provide instruction, not all children can attend the Centre at the same time. The children must come in shifts. There is a waiting list for children that want to be in the program. The Centre is not just a place for children to play; it is a learning space where they can attain valuable skills for their future life. Children learn handcrafts, painting and music. They develop communication skills,



*With the assistance of generous benefactors, Fr Kim was able to adapt an existing building owned by the parish that had been vacant for five years into the new Children's Centre.*

learn more about family farming, and improve their dance repertoire.

Like parents the world over, the parents in Yanaoca want their children to be well fed, well-educated and able to carry on the important traditions of the area. Unfortunately, because they are subsistence workers, they are unable to help fund the project. It is with our deepest gratitude that we thank everyone who has helped the children of Yanaoca by providing them a safe place to realize their dreams.

---

*Kim Balkovec is a development officer at St Columban, Omaha, USA.*



# Together we make a difference

## Mission in Pakistan

FR ROBERT MCCULLOCH

*Fr Robert McCulloch reports on Mission in Pakistan 2017. He says, “**What we have achieved is the fruit of the generosity of our donors. I hope this short report will show you how much you enable us to do: care for mothers and infants, hope through education for boys and young men, relief for the dying, training of young women as midwives, water in the middle of a desert, homes for the homeless, health care for tens of thousands. Together we make a huge difference.**”*

### *Bethlehem Shelter Society (BSS) providing homes for the homeless*

*Bethlehem Shelter Society (BSS) was founded through St Elizabeth Hospital Hyderabad in 2012 to respond to the havoc caused by the massive floods in Sindh Pakistan in 2010 and 2011. It takes its name from the incident in the gospel when the Holy Family were without shelter when they arrived in Bethlehem. BSS is a government-registered society and has an annual external audit. Its results depend completely on the generosity of donors.*

To date 895 homes have been built in many locations for impoverished Hindus, Muslims and Christians. A special focus has been the planning and development of a settlement at Jhirruk 40km south of Hyderabad. Ninety permanent homes have been built there, a permanent water connection has been made, and large water storage tanks have been constructed throughout the settlement both for drinking and cooking purposes and separately for bathing and washing. We plan to extend and increase these water tanks and connections this year to cope with the extra number of houses which will be built.

A major achievement at Jhirruk is the development of positive community participation and responsibility among the people who live there. They are led by Mrs. Reshma who, although illiterate, is an effective co-chairperson of the *Bethlehem Shelter Society*. Reshma overturns the convenient stereotypes about Pakistani women.

In 2016 a two-roomed clinic was built so that *St Elizabeth Hospital* could provide regular medical care through its Mobile Medical Outreach Programme to people of Jhirruk and the surrounding area. We hope to be able to complete and furnish the clinic this year and to purchase equipment and a generator.

### *Mobile Medical Outreach Programme (MMOP)*

Through its *Mobile Medical Outreach Programme (MMOP)*, *St Elizabeth Hospital* is the sole medical provider to many impoverished semi-nomadic tribal people who are bonded agricultural workers in Sindh province in south-east Pakistan. The majority are Hindu although many are marginalized Christians and Muslims.

The outcomes this year in patient care by the MMOP on a primary health care level are impressive. A total of 46,930 people were cared for: 14,079 male; 21,119 female; 4,693 male children under the age of five years; 7,039 children under the age of five years.

Common healthcare issues are those related to mother and child care, malnutrition, malaria, typhoid, gastroenteritis, respiratory tract infections, anaemia, jaundice, viral infections, dysentery, dehydration, UTI, skin diseases, and TB prevention and control.

MMOP at *St Elizabeth Hospital* is an outstanding example of inter-faith collaboration in Pakistan. Dr. Sajid Hussain Naqvi is a Shia Muslim, the Head of the MMOP Department Mr. Eric Siraj is a Catholic, Dr. Vedwiyas Lohana is Hindu, and all the nursing staff are Christian. The patients seen are Muslim, Christian, and Hindu.



## St Elizabeth Hospital

*St Elizabeth Hospital* in Hyderabad continues to contribute significantly to health care in south-east Pakistan. Most hospitals and doctors are in big cities and the ratio for the rural population is unsatisfactory. The government health departments recognize the important role of the private sector in providing health care but provide zero financial assistance and minimal tax concessions.

*St Elizabeth Hospital* in Hyderabad gives the best possible care at the lowest possible cost to those in greatest need. Responding to the increasing incidence in Pakistan of cancer as a major medical issue (*Pakistan Economic Survey 2017, p.191*), *St Elizabeth* provides *home-based palliative care* to terminally-ill cancer patients.

Although Pakistan has shown improvement in the Infant Mortality rate of 62 per thousand from 66 per thousand in 2015, the maternal mortality rate of 170 per 100,000 is still very high compared to other countries in the region (*Pakistan Economic Survey 2017, p.190*). *Mother and child care and neo-natal care* are prime issues in the health care given at *St Elizabeth* which is a major contributor in addressing these issues in interior Sindh. The *School of Midwifery* attached to *St Elizabeth* continues to make a difference in maternal, neonatal, and infant care in Pakistan through the training and annual graduation of midwives and lady health visitors. At the same time, young women from marginalized communities in less-developed areas of Pakistan who train at *St Elizabeth School of Midwifery* advance their socio-economic position by enabling them to become skilled professional and qualified midwives.

Christian, Muslim and Hindu professionals, doctors and nurses work together at *St Elizabeth Hospital* in the best tradition of Catholic health care.



*St Elizabeth Hospital, Hyderabad, Pakistan.*



*Young men from the Catholic Youth Development Centre.*

## Celebrating 10 years of Education in Hyderabad Pakistan

### *Catholic Centre of Academic Excellence (CCAEE)*

Seventy-three young men have graduated from CCAE since the first group completed the four-year course in 2011. Their results have far exceeded our hopes. Amongst the courses they are enrolled in are MA Software Engineering, Fine Arts, Commerce, BBA, MBA, Chartered Accountancy, Automotive Engineering, Media and Mass Communication, Information Technology, Hotel and Hospitality Management, Agricultural Engineering, MA English, Nursing, Sociology, MBBS, Pharmacy, and Dentistry. Most work at the same time to support themselves. All are involved in the life of their communities and parishes. Four have joined the seminary to prepare for the priesthood. Several have joined the Pakistan armed forces. Seventy two students are currently enrolled in the CCAE.

### *Catholic Youth Development Centre (CYDC)*

Delighted with the success of the CCAE, we decided in 2008 to extend our scope to include the other major problem of Catholic young people in Pakistan: being condemned to a grinding life of social discrimination and exclusion due to illiteracy. Literacy and education give the openings to work opportunities.

Fifty-four young graduates of the CYDC are now well employed as tradesmen, in the hospitality industry, and in factories and companies, and in health care. Sixty-one are currently enrolled in CYDC.

---

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

# Winner

AUSTRALIA  
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## The Far East Magazine

### ACPA Awards 2017

**'Most Improved Publication' - Highly commended  
The Far East - Editor Fr Daniel Harding**

Receiving the award was Assunta Arena, *The Far East* designer, who attended the *Australasian Catholic Press Association (ACPA)* annual conference in Auckland in August.

The award read: *In its 96th year, a new design and layout for The Far East has rightly won praise from readers. An excellent read, full of good news about people doing good work in the most unusual places.*



Photo: MaxBorovkov/Bigstock.com



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

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## Together we make a difference - Pakistan

In this issue of *The Far East* you will see Fr Robert McCulloch's report on 'Mission in Pakistan 2017'.

Health care, palliative care, training of mid-wives, education and shelter are now available to some of the most disadvantaged people in Pakistan.

**With your help**, 'Mission in Pakistan' can continue to support the young and the elderly where the need is great. (See pages 20-22)



Photo: Fr Robert McCulloch SSC



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