



Missionary Society of St Columban

聖高隆龐傳教會
General Council

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Columban Missionaries Offer ‘Concrete Hope’ in the Face of Refugee Crisis in Europe

HONG KONG. Columban missionaries around the world are heartbroken and outraged by the ongoing humanitarian crisis facing Europe in the waves of refugees coming from the Middle East and Africa. “Pope Francis urges us to offer ‘concrete hope’,” said **Columban Superior General, Fr. Kevin O’Neill**. “For Columban missionaries, this means welcoming the stranger in our parishes and mission centers. We also advocate for national and international policies that address root causes of migration such as violent conflict and environmental and economic injustice. We take heed of the Pope’s Angelus address of Sept 6th 2015, when he called for a ‘concrete gesture’ ahead of a Jubilee Year of Mercy starting in December, calling on every parish, every religious community, every monastery, every sanctuary in Europe (to) take in a family.’ ”

Founding member and President of [Migrants Rights Center 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.”

Columbans have served refugees and asylum seekers in England for decades. Of the current crisis, **Mauricio Silva, Columban Lay Missionary Coordinator** in the UK said, “We are more committed than ever to serving the needs of refugees and asylum seekers and pray that this crisis will bring to people’s attention the plight of so many victims of wars, violence, poverty and abuse of Creation.”

Columban Fr. Shay Cullen in the Philippines, founder of [PREDA](#) had this to say of the European refugee crisis, “There are remarkable dedicated people and Non-Government organizations assisting the refugees and the desperate migrants fleeing awful degrading and oppressive regimes and poverty. However it is the government that has to respond and welcome and help them.” Fr. Cullen’s weekly column appears in several newspapers worldwide including in the Manila Times, the UK, and Hong Kong. PREDA is a Philippine human rights social development organization working for 40 years through fair trade practices to help the poorest and most vulnerable people in society, including victims of human trafficking, and overcome injustice and poverty.

Scott Wright, Director of the Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach in the U.S. says it is not just Europe that must respond but that, “The response of the United States has been woefully inadequate, especially since the US has been so directly involved in more than a decade of war in the Middle East. For Christians, it means taking seriously the biblical mandate “to welcome” our Muslim sisters and brothers and to work urgently for peace in the Middle East.”

Columban Missionaries serve economically poor and marginalized communities globally, often in countries plagued by poverty, injustice, climate disasters, armed conflict, and religious, inter-ethnic or political persecution. These conditions drive people to migrate away from their homes in search of economic and human security. We believe that we are called to both serve the needs of migrants everywhere, and to address the root causes of migration so that people and their families have the choice to remain at home.

Columban position on Migration <http://www.columbans.co.uk/news/jpic-policy-statements-of-the-columban-missionary-society/>

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