



Columban Fr Kelvin Barrett in Australia.

I am Kelvin Barrett. I was born and raised on the West Coast of South Australia. Through the “Far East”, Columban Art Calendar and the presence of a Columban relieving in our parish, I found myself drawn to the Columbans. I wanted to be an overseas missionary.

My first missionary assignment was to Korea. There I discovered both the pain and the joy, the disappointments and the surprises of learning a new language and culture. Disappointments were when my language skills failed, and joyful surprises when I could communicate with the Korean people. This pattern mirrored the various aspects of my missionary life.

I also discovered the warmth and care of many people I knew and loved. I accompanied young Koreans as they found their vocation as priests or lay missionaries.

COLUMBAN SEMINARIAN TESTIMONY

The Columban International Formation Program in Manila consists of six nationalities. We have Irish, Filipino, Burmese, Korean, Kiribati, and Fijian. Yes, living in this community can be challenging at times, but personally, it is enriching. Interacting with these different cultures moves me to take a closer look at my own culture, to identify and accept its limitations, and at the same time, to recognise and treasure some of its unique qualities. These intercultural experiences helped me be more understanding and open to other cultures while remaining grounded in my own.

My name is Iovane Naio, from Fiji. I am a fourth-year theology student. Together with Marvin, my fellow Columban seminarian, I am engaged in pastoral work with an ecclesial base community at a local Manila parish. I would describe my pastoral

experience as being “planted in rich soil”. In the beginning, Marvin and I needed to identify an entry point into this project. After a few pastoral visits and moments of shared reflection, Marvin and I sensed the importance of inspiring more people to become active participants in the community. So, we decided to organise a home visitation ministry. People were happy to welcome us, and they were very excited about the journey ahead. As I immersed myself in the community, I gradually became aware of my own gifts, which were emerging through these encounters. I also began to observe areas of ministry sprouting around me. This gives me hope and inspiration for the future.

Their faith and enthusiasm always inspired me as they responded to God’s call. Moreover, I was repeatedly surprised by how God worked in their lives and mine. I have come to believe that the gift of the missionary life is not primarily in what we bring to others but simply allowing others to discover and share the gifts they have within themselves. Indeed, missionary life is privileged, not as a life of comfort or honour, but because we are invited into people’s lives at that deep level where they meet God. In that space, there are many surprises. Surprises at the wonder of God’s work. If you like surprises, then perhaps this is the life for you.

FR KELVIN BARRETT

Columban Fr Kelvin Barrett is the vocations coordinator for St Columbans Mission Society, Australia and New Zealand.

I am indeed blessed to have studied at Loyola School of Theology. It was challenging initially as it took me a while to understand and follow each professor's



Columban Seminarian Iowane Naio (fifth from left) on mission in South America. Photo: Iowane Naio

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teaching style. Still, I enjoyed my studies. They teach us Catholic doctrine, but at the same time, they stretch our understanding as much as possible, especially when it comes to actualizing these theological concepts. The study has not only deepened my knowledge and love of God but also broadened the way I see and understand God’s mission of love in the world and to all his creatures, especially us, his people.

Recently, I spent two months with Columban Fr Brian Gore in Negros. It was a blessing to be with Fr Gore, especially as I approach the end of my initial formation program. I had a chance to listen to his inspiring stories and witness his way of doing mission.

IOWANE NAIO

Columban seminarian, Iowane Naio is currently living and working in the Philippines.

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IOWANE NAIO - COLUMBAN SEMINARIAN

COLUMBAN VOCATIONS

Do you have a dream of doing some services that are pleasing to God and good for God’s struggling people? Is your faith important to you? Could God be calling you to be a missionary priest or a lay missionary?

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