



MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. COLUMBAN
ANNUAL REPORT 2021
1 July 2020 - 30 June 2021



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◀ Fr. Tony Cavanagh celebrating Mass
with Tribal People in Pakistan

Cover photo:
Lay leaders with Fr. Ed O'Connell in the Chapel
of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Lima, Peru.



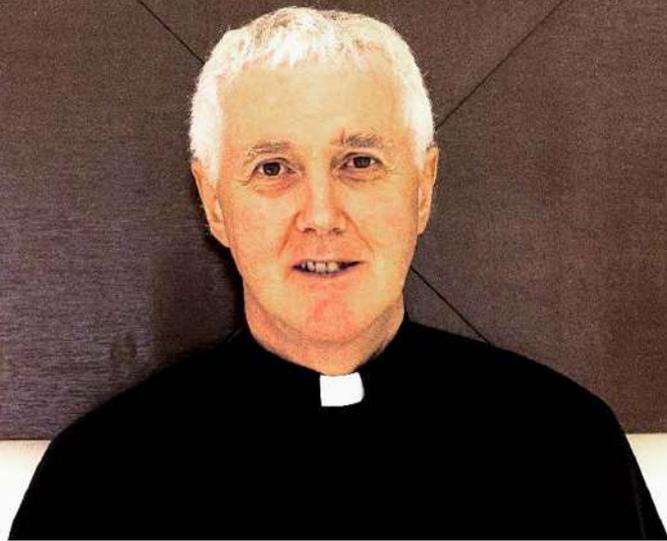
MISSION STATEMENT

The Missionary Society of St Columban is sent by the Church to proclaim and witness to the Good News in Jesus Christ. We cross boundaries of country, language and culture, living in close relationship with the poor while fostering care for our common home, the earth:

- To establish the Church among peoples to whom the Gospel has not been preached;
- To accompany local churches as they mature until they are able to evangelize their own and other people;
- To promote dialogue between Christians and those of other religious traditions;
- To facilitate exchange between local churches especially those from which we come and those to which we are sent;
- To foster in local churches an awareness of their missionary responsibility, particularly in the areas of justice, peace and care for creation.

We strive to build collaborative relationships with our supporters in order to nurture their faith while encouraging them to provide spiritual and financial support for our missionary endeavors.





Fr. Tim Mulroy with some members of the Japanese Mass community in Hong Kong

LETTER FROM THE SOCIETY LEADER

During this past year, as a result of the coronavirus crisis, our world has experienced profound and widespread suffering as well as extraordinary compassion and resilience. We have been reminded clearly and forcefully that, since all of us are interconnected across the globe, our daily actions and interactions have consequences far beyond our range of vision. This has led us to a deeper realization of the truth of our Christian faith: that all of us belong to one family and share a common home.

In the wake of the coronavirus crisis, people in many of our mission countries who live and work from day to day had no income to provide food for their families due to forced restrictions and lockdowns. For them, the fear of starvation became greater than the fear of becoming infected. Columbans in countries such as the Philippines, Peru and Myanmar were able find ways to respond to this nightmare by creatively and safely organizing community pots or by providing the support that people needed to grow their own food. As might be expected, many migrants and refugees were particularly vulnerable when they lost their jobs and could no longer pay rent and feed themselves. In desperation, some of them turned to their local church, and fortunately Columban missionaries in Korea, Japan and Chile were able to provide them with assistance. The story of the baby boy who was born in a newly-established home for vulnerable migrant women in the parish of San Colombano in Santiago, Chile has echoes of the story of the birth of Jesus – a reminder that God continues to send life and hope into the bleak corners of our world.

Tragically, far too many people were unable to receive the help that they needed. Faced with the stark choice of obtaining medical help or providing for their families, many chose the latter. As a consequence, many more became infected and large numbers of people died. For their families, these had been mothers, brothers, and breadwinners; for Columban missionaries, they were parishioners, neighbors and friends. Unable to gather with grieving families and the community, Columbans in many countries provided consolation by letter or phone, and facilitated online Masses and funeral services.

During this past year, news of the pandemic drowned out other stories of great suffering and of various efforts to provide relief and hope. For example, Columbans in Fiji and Pakistan were able to provide support to families that had been left destitute as a result of various natural disasters. Meanwhile, in Myanmar, Columban missionaries continue to walk alongside and support the suffering people of that country in the wake of a military coup in February of this year. Like the pandemic, these events remind us that people from different religious traditions are equally impacted, and that the suffering will be felt for many years to come. It remains important, therefore, that all of us continue to collaborate on finding the best path forward.

Despite the many challenges that you, our supporters, have experienced during this past year, Columban missionaries have been overwhelmed by your fidelity and generosity toward our mission. Your compassion, sacrifices and prayers have also traveled mysteriously to far-off cities and remote corners of the globe, enabling Columban missionaries to bring consolation, relief and hope to countless people. As a token of our gratitude, all of us Columbans missionaries – but particularly our elderly priests who were greatly confined throughout much of this past year – continue to lift up your intentions and needs to God in our prayers and Masses.



Fr. Tim Mulroy shares his overview of Columban mission during this past year.

<https://youtu.be/3nHmZyoXknE>

SCAN TO WATCH



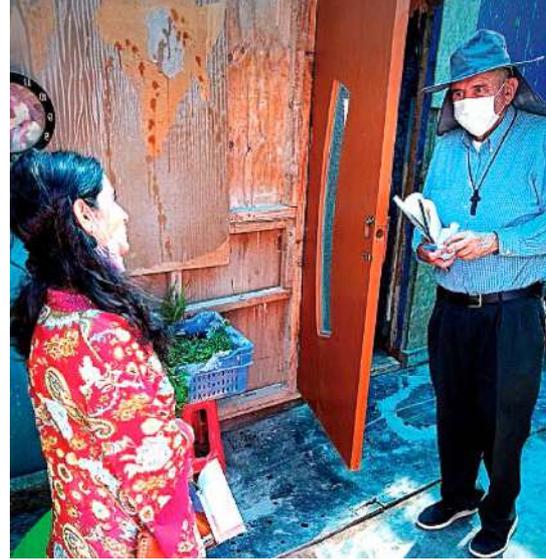
Rev. Jim Mulroy, SSC

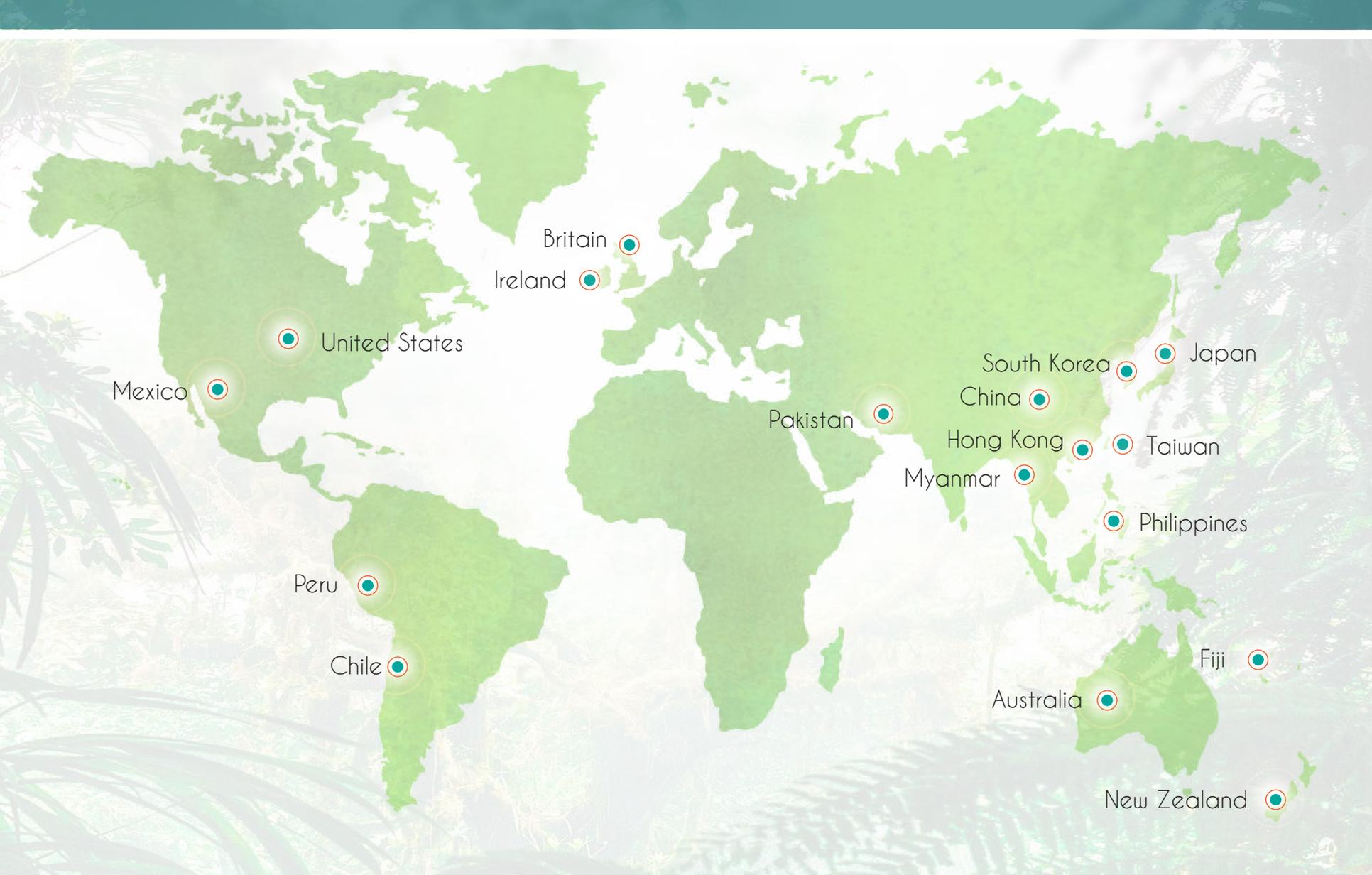
MISSIONARY WAY OF LIFE

As missionary disciples of Jesus, we are called to build bridges and foster mutual understanding through encounters with people of other cultures and religious traditions, as well as to promote healing, reconciliation and peace. Moreover, our commitment to live in solidarity with people on the margins of our world, and to care for the earth, our common home, are ways in which we participate in God's mission. Our proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus leads us into a deeper awareness of God's presence and action throughout our world, which leads us into a deeper communion with the Trinity.

- EVANGELIZATION AND EDUCATION
- SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR
- INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE
- JUSTICE AND PEACE
- CARE FOR THE EARTH

Snapshots of Columban mission in Chile, ▶
Peru, Taiwan, and the Philippines





WHERE WE WORK

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples
if you have love for one another.”

~ John 13:35



▲ Fr. Peter O'Neill with Timorese migrant workers in Australia

AUSTRALIA

In response to the urgent call by Pope Francis in his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, Columban missionaries continue to advocate through the *Laudato Si'* Animators Melbourne Group for a coordinated response to the care for creation in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. We meet regularly with the Diocesan Director of Mission and support archdiocesan communications personnel. Columban missionaries and co-workers prepare e-bulletins, Facebook posts and website features that address environmental matters. We also support various initiatives by local parishes to educate their members about the encyclical.

Fr. Peter O'Neill has continued to engage in pastoral outreach to seasonal, agricultural workers. Through listening to their stories, he has become deeply aware of the various challenges they face. This enables him to make a more effective contribution to government policies and guidelines that provide greater legal protection for such workers.

During these past five years, Columbans have provided free accommodation to over 50 refugees and asylum seekers in the cottage on our grounds in Melbourne. At present, a refugee family lives in the house next door to our Columban Mission Centre.



The 'Meet a Columban' series of videos features individual Columban priests, lay missionaries and co-workers reflecting on the challenges and rewards of missionary life in various parts of the world.

In this episode of 'Meet a Columban', Fr. Jim Mulrone speaks with Fr. Peter O'Neill who is currently the Columban Leader as well as Coordinator for Peace, Ecology and Justice in Australia. Previously, Peter ministered for 26 years to vulnerable migrants and victims of human trafficking in Taiwan.

SCAN TO WATCH



<https://youtu.be/oZgHuTmKY3E>



In Sydney, the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations initiated and oversaw the development of The Sydney Statement, a bold, new interfaith charter for "Building Bridges Between Believers from Different Religions". The text was generated and authorised by Youth PoWR (Parliament of the World's Religions), a coalition of young adults from different religions, and is relevant to multi-faith societies worldwide. Columban expertise in interfaith relations informed the process at every stage. The Youth Coordinator at the Centre, Ryan Epondulan, led Youth PoWR, while Kim Chong, the Media Coordinator, oversaw the development of various resources. Fr. Patrick McNerney, Project Executive Officer, led the consultations and collaboration with partners from other faiths. The result is an outstanding suite of interfaith resources, including a dedicated website, www.thesydneystatement.org.au.



A summary of the Sydney Statement and of why it was developed, as well as an invitation to reach out to others in order to discover a brother and sister with whom to cooperate in transforming our multi-cultural, multi-religious society.

SCAN TO WATCH



https://youtu.be/ZXhnfa5A_QU

BRITAIN

Embracing the challenges presented by the pandemic, Columban missionaries in Britain continued to focus on promoting the gospel values of justice and peace while walking in solidarity with those on the margins of society.

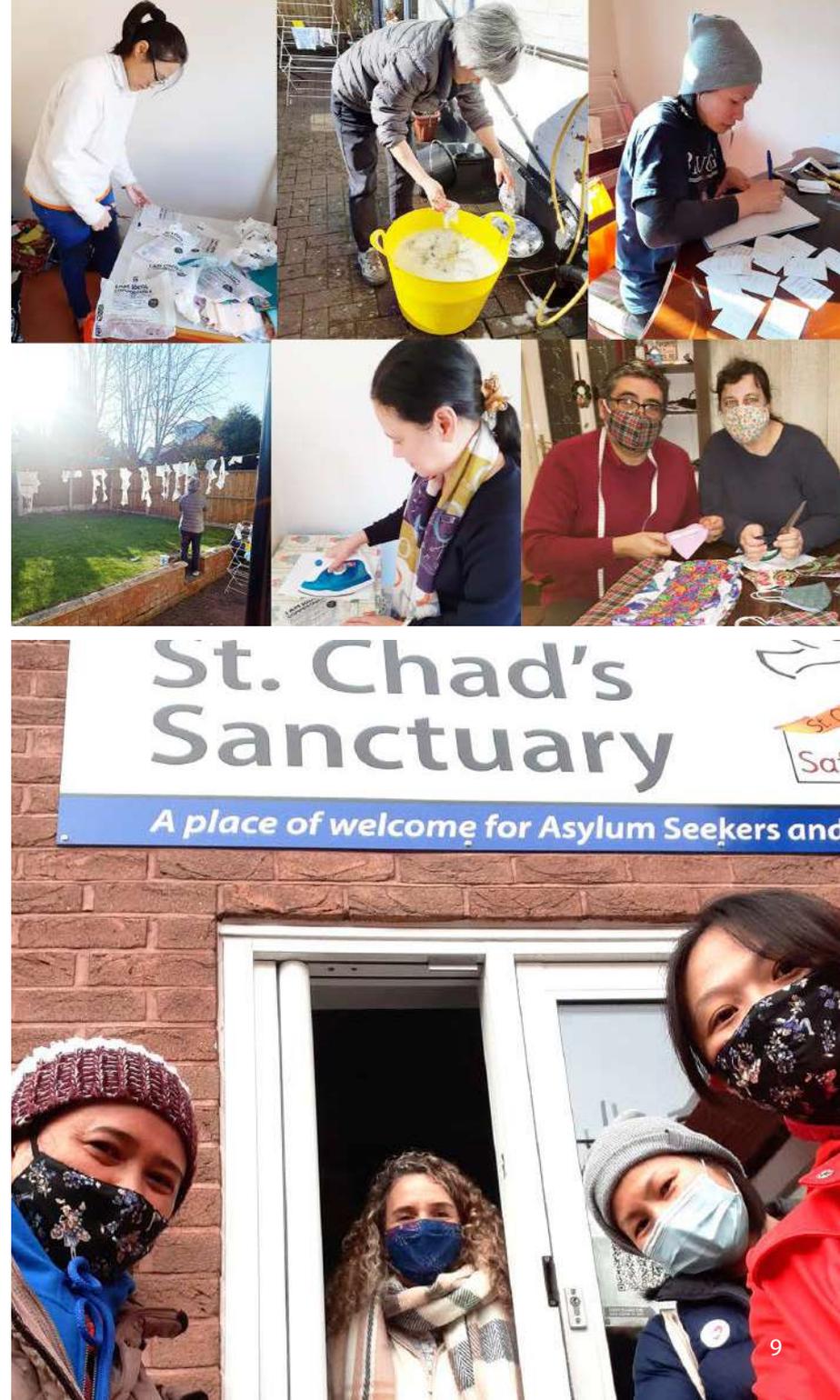
Two new Columban lay missionaries, Sophia Chee Tzu Ting and Teresa Ling Chuah Hui arrived from New Zealand. They joined other Columban lay missionaries in Birmingham where they support Fatima House, a project providing sanctuary for female asylum seekers, and outreach initiatives to those living on the streets.

In response to the pandemic, these lay missionaries began making handmade reusable face masks for those who could not afford them. This ministry also aims to highlight the importance of reducing non-biodegradable rubbish that pollutes the environment, contaminates oceans and negatively impacts wildlife and aquatic life.

In relation to this activity, Gertrudes Samson, Coordinator of Columban Lay Missionaries said: "With our priority to care for the health and well-being of the people we serve, our intention is to help the poor manage life through this pandemic whilst at the same time preventing an extra burden to our environment that is already in crisis."

Lay missionaries make handmade face masks to distribute to the community ▲

Lay missionaries deliver face masks to St. Chad's Sanctuary in Birmingham, a place of welcome for asylum seekers ►



We were delighted that one of our long-serving co-workers, Ellen Teague, who is editor of our 'Vocation for Justice' magazine, was honoured with the Pax Christi Peace Award.

Ellen leads Columban involvement in raising awareness about numerous issues related to migration, international debt, environmental justice, and peace-building.

The annual Columban Schools Media Competition had its most successful year yet. Taking the theme 'Let's create a world without racism', many young people were given the opportunity to engage in reflection on a major societal challenge in the light of Catholic Social Teaching and to have their experience and insights reported in the Catholic media.

This past year challenged us to creatively present the Columban missionary vision online and engage with others through virtual meetings.



Gertrudes Samson, Coordinator of Columban Lay Missionaries in Britain, explains how her ministry has responded to the challenge of the pandemic, while co-worker Ellen Teague shares about the Columban media competition in schools which led young people to reflect on racism.

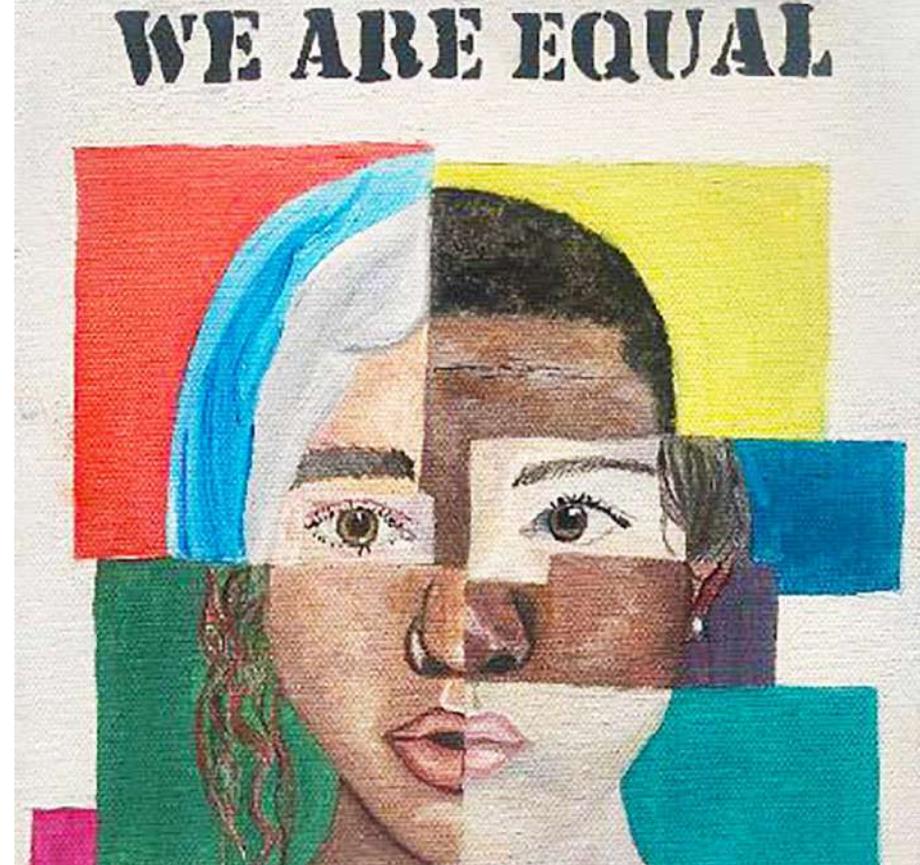
SCAN TO WATCH



<https://youtu.be/i8mXl1JQEMU>

Winning image in Columban Competition 'Let's create a world without racism' ▶

Ellen Teague with her Pax Christi Peace Award ▶



CHILE

When the Covid-19 pandemic first hit Chile in March 2020, many recently-arrived migrants from countries such as Haiti and Venezuela found themselves unemployed and, therefore, homeless. At that time, the Parish of San Columbano in Santiago was already overseeing the St Columban's Migrant House for 15 homeless migrant men. However, it had no suitable accommodation for homeless women.

By April 2020, repeated requests from other parishes and organizations like the Red Cross for accommodation for homeless migrant women and their children led Columban Fr. Martin Koroiciri and a team of lay leaders to seriously consider how to respond to this crisis. The outcome of their deliberations was the decision to set up 'Casa Betania' at one of the chapels within the Parish of San Columbano. This new facility would offer temporary shelter to homeless migrant women, particularly victims of domestic abuse.

Columban priest associates, Fr. Lee Hyun Kyu Daegun ▶
Andrea (top) and Fr. Jung Sung Hoon Francisco
(bottom) with parishioners in Alto Hospicio, Chile



Since April 2020, seven Haitian, Venezuelan or Colombian migrant women, with their children have resided in Casa Betania. It offers them a space to recover their lives, seek legal help, avail of pastoral and psychological support, live in a Christian community, and eventually find work and economic independence.

Columban Fr. Martin Koroiciri states, "Casa Betania continues to collaborate with a large network of migrant organizations, including many NGOs, Foundations, Public Hospitals, Parishes and Religious Congregations. New residents for Casa Betania come from requests from these organizations, which in turn provide a wide range of support and services. At present, we have in residence a 32-year-old Venezuelan lady, and a young Colombian lady who was 8-months pregnant when she first arrived. She had been thrown out of her accommodation because she was unable to pay the rent. While living at Casa Betania, she gave birth to a baby son, who has become a sign of promise and hope for all of us during this pandemic."



Fr. Martin Koroiciri blessing a family after Sunday Mass at Santa Ana Chapel



Fr. Martin with a Haitian child baptized at Our Lady of Carmen Chapel.



Fr. Martin Koroiciri shares his vocation story (Part I)

Fr. Martin Koroiciri shares some of his mission experiences in Chile (Part II)

SCAN
TO
WATCH
PART I



<https://youtu.be/u1y6y4zwfjs>

SCAN
TO
WATCH
PART II



<https://youtu.be/GOy-4Jo5UA8>



CHINA

Wuhan is a destination for many Columbans and the friends of Columbans who visit China. One side of the city is Hanyang, the first mission area assigned to us by the Vatican in preparation for the arrival of our first missionaries in 1920. Last year's sudden emergence of Covid-19 led to the city becoming famous for all the wrong reasons.

The effects of the pandemic have been deep for Columbans. Some were unable to return to Beijing or Wuhan due to the lockdown. Our members living in Hong Kong were often restricted from carrying out their normal ministries due to outbreaks of the virus in that densely populated city.

However, missionary creativity also emerged during the pandemic. One of our members who was unable to return to Beijing became greatly involved in ministering to people in prison and to people experiencing homelessness in Hong Kong. Three members who expected to be in China have instead assisted with Columban ministry in Korea, the Philippines and

▲ Members of the international community of Holy Family Church in Wuhan with Fr. Dan Troy



Fr. Kevin O'Neill shares his vocation story and experience of ministry among the Chinese people

SCAN TO WATCH



<https://youtu.be/r3Jr42CnCuo>

Australia. One Columban in Wuhan continues to write a series of articles about the life of the Church in that city.

We are still not sure where all of this will lead us. More than 100 years ago, when the eventual co-founder of the Missionary Society of St. Columban, Fr. Edward Galvin, was setting out for China for the first time, he was aware that he faced many challenges. On the day of his departure from New York to China in February 1912, he wrote that, "God would open a way when we see no way. He will do it now. I don't know how he will do it."

Perhaps we are called to have the same trust in God's mysterious ways as we face a future which seems to be filled with more questions than answers.

Bishop Yang Xiao Ting with tutors and participants of the Columban sponsored formation program for spiritual directors in Beijing ▲

Sisters of Our Lady of Hanyang entertaining visitors from Ireland ►



FIJI

During the earlier part of this past year, Fiji escaped the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic, which allowed us to continue with many of our missionary endeavours.

In response to the papal encyclical, Laudato Si', Columbans workshops and seminars entitled 'Journey into Laudato Si'' were organised in remote Island Village Communities. We also organized activities around the Season of Creation. A women's group entitled 'Sema' – meaning 'We Together' – was formed in one of our parishes to promote a sustainable way of life among the members of this group.

Our efforts in the area of interreligious dialogue were also well received. Five major events were organised for youth groups of different religious traditions. A significant development was the forming of an organising committee with representatives from the various traditions to assume ongoing responsibility for such events.

Raiwaqa Parish Sema Group, with Frs. Donal McIlraith and John McEvoy, committed to caring for God's creation ▲

Columban seminarian, Ratu Pio Daurewa, participating (with page in hand) in an inter-religious youth activity at Sacred Heart Cathedral Crypt in Suva. ►

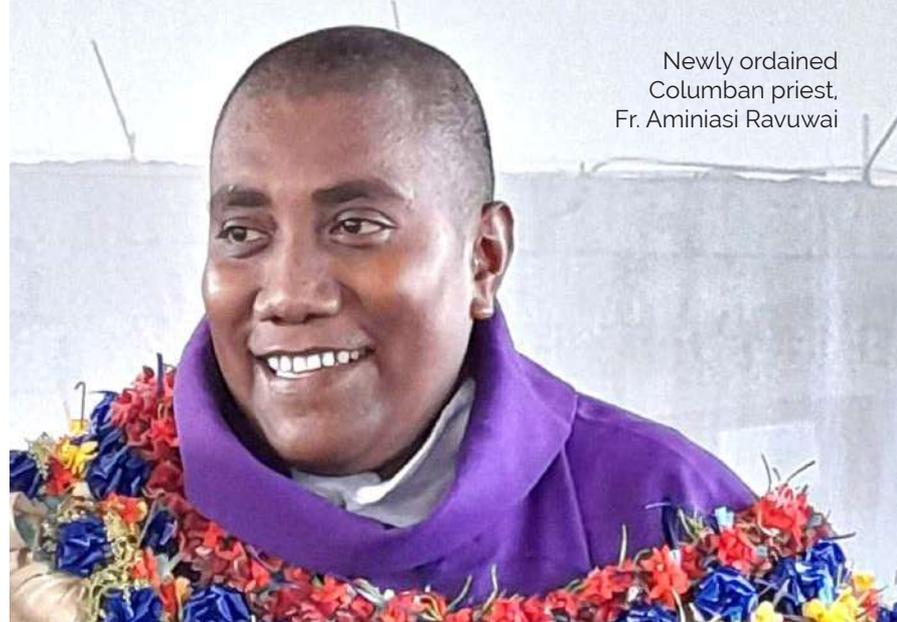


When Covid-19 restrictions and lockdowns hit, we found new and creative ways of continuing our mission. Online meetings became common. Thanks to the Columban Mission Centre in Melbourne, we revamped the Fiji Columban website www.columban.org.fj. We also continued to produce three online, annual newsletters – e-Kaulotu – which tells the stories of our young Pacifican Columbans on Mission overseas.

A notable feature of this past year were three tropical cyclones, which wreaked havoc on our people. Although the people in the capital city of Suva were not seriously impacted, the people in Columban parishes in Ba and Labasa suffered great hardship, including the displacement of 60 families. As a consequence of one of the cyclones, the ordination to priesthood of Aminiasi Ravuwai, a Columban deacon, had to be postponed by a few days.

Two Columban seminarians from Myanmar completed their two-year, cross-cultural mission exposure program here. Since they cannot return to Manila to continue their theology studies due to restrictions on international travel, they will remain here and take their classes online from Manila.

Newly ordained
Columban priest,
Fr. Aminiasi Ravuwai



Francis Xavier Nbwi La Aung,
a Columban seminarian from
Myanmar, leading a Prayer Service
for an Indo-Fijian community



Interview by Fr. Frank Hoare with Columban seminarian, Francis Xavier Nbwi La Aung from Myanmar, regarding his mission experience in Fiji

<https://youtu.be/MbtNzpFdWho>

SCAN TO WATCH



IRELAND

As elsewhere throughout the Columban world, Ireland was greatly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. It brought almost all our ministries to a standstill as the Irish government imposed tight restrictions in an effort to combat and control the spread of the virus.

However, Columbans and co-workers in our mission office worked hard to stay in contact with our benefactors and the promoters of the Far East mission magazine. They made a special effort to send out letters of support and prayer booklets to those living alone, while also updating our supporters about what was happening in Columban missions around the world.



Continuing Columban mission while caring for one another during the pandemic in Ireland

<https://youtu.be/3MWxdqQzTeE>

SCAN TO WATCH



Fr. Cyril Lovett sends a message of solidarity from the Columban community in Dalgan Park during the Covid-19 lockdown



Staff from the Nursing Home for retired Columbans in Dalgan Park take part in the Jerusalem Dance during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020

Through social media and zoom conference calls, Columban co-worker, Michael O Sullivan, and Columban lay missionary, Angie Escarsa, supported various groups, particularly those engaged in outreach to migrants, youth, and people of other faith traditions. Angie also provided online retreats to high school students.

Over the last few years racism has raised its ugly head. The annual Columban Schools Media Competition gave young people an opportunity to address this important issue. 158 students from 63 schools shared their insights on the theme 'Let's create a world without racism'. This Columban competition continues to grow year on year.

Having returned from various mission countries, the vast majority of Columbans in Ireland are over seventy years of age. Consequently, they had to cocoon for most of this past year. However, they were fortunate to have a large residence as well as spacious grounds, Dalgan Park, as a safe haven.

Since they were unable to engage in part-time ministry, many of them devoted more time to personal and communal prayer for the people who were suffering as a result of the pandemic in Ireland as well as in our various mission countries.

▶ Columban lay missionary Angie Escarsa outside St. Benildus' Pastoral Centre in Dublin where she has been involved in youth ministry for Dublin diocese.

▶ During the celebration of a Sacred Earth Day at Dalgan Park on 11th March, the community gave thanks for the gift of creation and prayed for conversion so that we may better care for our common home. Some of the participants, including Fr. Eamon O'Brien





Fr. Harry O'Carroll celebrating Mass in the mountains of Oguni, Kumamoto in memory of those martyred there.

JAPAN



Fr. Paul McCartin shares about the challenges of protecting our Common Home

<https://youtu.be/nS59-drgPHE>

SCAN TO WATCH



What a year! Much of Japan has been under a 'State of Emergency', a type of lockdown that involves the government 'requesting' people to voluntarily stay home. Wartime excesses have resulted in the power of coercion given by the country's constitution to the police being minimal.

What do we do as missionaries during this covid confinement when many people around us are experiencing 'corona weariness'? We have turned to cyber mission. Many parishes and apostolates have a webpage that is updated regularly with messages of hope and encouragement. Online Masses have facilitated outreach not only to Christians, but also to people of other faiths who are curious about the Church and feel more at ease making their initial contact with it over the internet.

As a result of the pandemic, poverty and loneliness have become greater and more obvious despite the façade of prosperity. Depression is prevalent, while suicides have drastically increased. Single parents and migrant workers – particularly Chinese, Filipinos, Vietnamese and Indonesians – have been hit hard by the loss of employment in small companies, particularly bars and restaurants. Many have had their contracts unilaterally cancelled, so they are left without income, accommodation or a plane to take them home. Columbans reassure them that the church won't abandon them as we try to respond to their various needs through parish ministries.

There are eleven Columban missionaries in Japan. While baptisms are few, we continue to see a great need and value in proclaiming and witnessing to God's love. Our decision to remain on mission here strengthens the camaraderie among ourselves.





KOREA

A few years ago, Columbans in Korea decided to engage Peace Ministry, a pastoral endeavor in which South Koreans, North Koreans and the Korean Catholic church collaborate to provide humanitarian assistance and support to North Korean parents and their children, as well as to young, single adults, who come as refugees to South Korea.

Columban Fr. Nam SeungWon continues to be deeply engaged in this ministry, celebrating a monthly reconciliation and peace Mass with Catholics – particularly Columban supporters –, as well as with North Korean refugees who want to learn more about the Christian faith. He also celebrates the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation for those who request them.

Every Sunday afternoon, representatives of the Peace Ministry visit the National Intelligence Service (NIS) to introduce Catholicism there, while once a month, they visit a center for children, youth and adult female refugees (Anseong Hanawon) as well as a center for adult male refugees (Hwacheon Hanawon).

- ▶ Volunteer Catholic families at the end of a home-stay program for North Korean females. It had been the first time for North Korean refugees to stay overnight with South Korean families.



Fr. Jason Antiquera shares about his vocation journey and his art ministry in Korea

SCAN TO WATCH



<https://youtu.be/moMRW8gLVoo>

However, as the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Korea increased in early 2020, the Korea Center for Disease Control strengthened the social distancing policy and, as a result, many of the above activities had to be postponed or cancelled. However, in order that North Korean refugees not be excluded from information campaigns about the pandemic or feel more isolated as a result of social distancing regulations, representatives of Peace Ministry distributed official government notices as well as face masks and hand sanitizers. They also provided support through online messages as well as virtual meetings. Such regular communication ensured that essential items were provided to those refugees who requested them.

Fr. Seungwon continues to actively participate in the Assembly of the Reconciliation Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea as well as the Reconciliation Committee of the Conference of Major Superiors of Korean Men's Religious Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life.

Fr. Nam SeungWon and Sr. Hangryun Chon outside Hanawon (House of Unity). North Korean refugees undergo a three-month mandatory training program in social adaptation here. ▶



MYANMAR

In the wake of the military coup on February 1, 2021, Columban missionaries in Myanmar share the great sadness and deep fear that the local people are experiencing. Although most governments have advised their citizens to leave the country, Columbans have decided to stay until we are sure that, when we do leave for a vacation, we can return to our mission here. The people certainly appreciate our continuing presence among them.

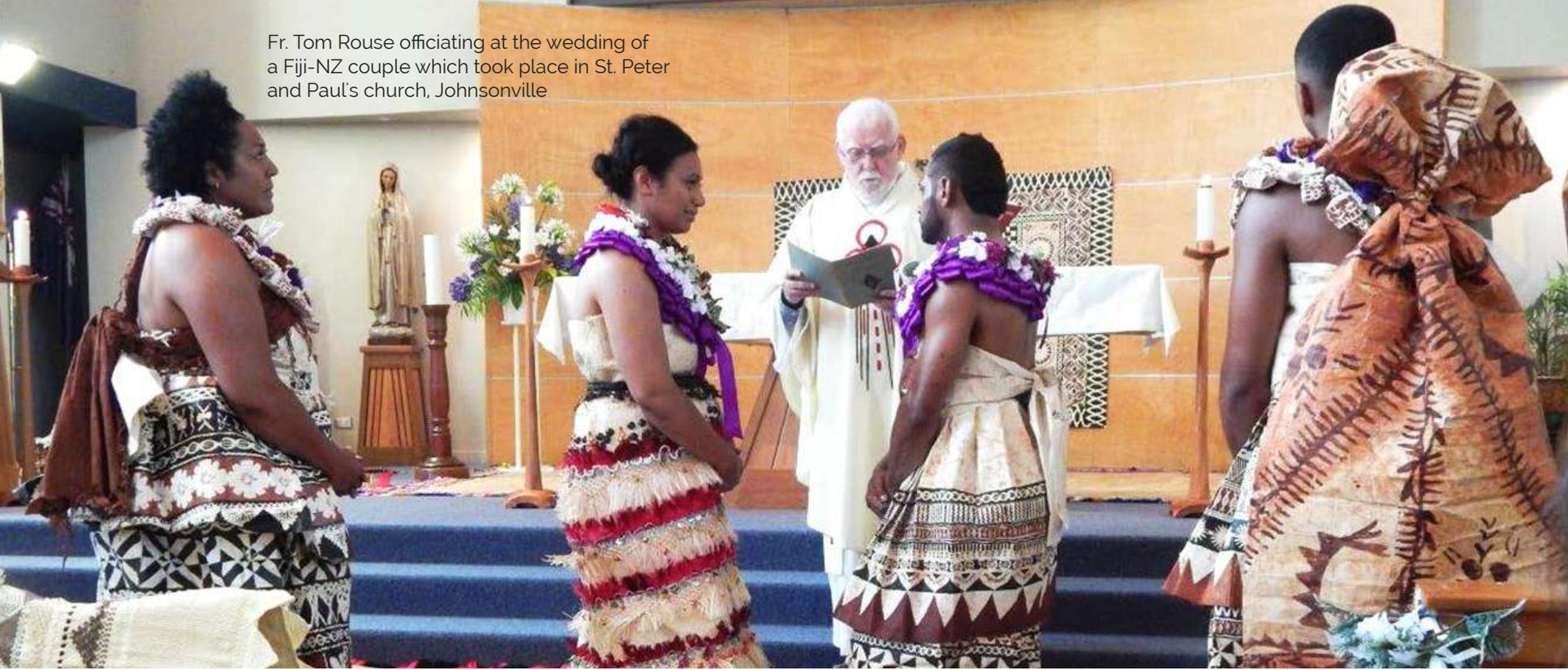
In Kachin state where four Columbans are living and ministering, the armed conflict between the military and the Kachin Independence Army has resumed, so people are very fearful about how things will unfold. Besides, the number of Covid-19 infections is a continuing cause of concern as the healthcare system is basic.

Columbans continue our ministries as best we can under these difficult circumstances. We minister to families, orphans, university students, and drug addicts. We are also preparing facilities so that more poor, young adults can avail of higher education when things settle down again.

Fr. Lee JeHoon (R) deepening a friendship ▶



Fr. Tom Rouse officiating at the wedding of a Fiji-NZ couple which took place in St. Peter and Paul's church, Johnsonville



AOTEAROA-NEW ZEALAND

During this past year, Columban life and mission in Aotearoa-New Zealand experienced little disruption from the Covid-19 pandemic.

We continued to accompany members of the local community who attend weekday Masses in the Columban chapel at our residence in Lower Hutt. Besides, Columban Fr. Michael Gormly continued as a chaplain to the Sisters of Mercy community in Upper Hutt.

We continued doing outreach to the Spanish-speaking community in the greater Wellington area. Most of these are recent migrants to New Zealand and reflect the changing face of the Church in this country. Meanwhile, Columban Fr. Paul Finlayson took up a new assignment in the Tasman district, serving a rural community spread over a large area.

In September 2020, the first Columban lay missionaries from Aotearoa-New Zealand, Sophia Chee Tzu Ting and Teresa Ling Chuah Hui, took up their cross-cultural mission assignment in Britain.

Columban Fr. Tom Rouse is a member of the National Catholic-Lutheran Dialogue commission which is preparing a joint statement on Baptism. He is also an active member of the Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Wellington, as well as of the local branch of Talitha Kum, a faith-based organization that works against human trafficking.

To enable our supporters to better understand the nature and needs of Columban mission, we launched a new website. We are indebted to the Columban Mission Centre in Melbourne, as well as to our office staff here in Lower Hutt, Ms. Vinita Naidu and Ms. Anita Walsh, for their assistance with this endeavor.

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our benefactors in response to our Christmas and mid-year appeals, we were able to provide Columban missionaries in other countries with substantial financial resources for their various mission activities. We continue to pray daily for the intentions of all our supporters.



Fr. Tom Rouse thanks Columban supporters in New Zealand for their fidelity and generosity towards our international missionary endeavours

<https://youtu.be/HBRi5bYwwYc>

SCAN TO WATCH



Columban lay missionaries from Aotearoa-New Zealand:
Sophia Chee Tzu Ting and Teresa Ling Chuah Hui



Columban office workers in Lower Hutt, Anita Walsh (L) and Vinita Naidu (R) with Fr. Tom Rouse

PAKISTAN

Columban missionaries minister in the Diocese of Hyderabad in the Sindh province where we continue to serve the widely-dispersed and vulnerable Christian community. The vast majority of its members are indentured farm labourers belonging to the indigenous Tribal People, the Parkari Kohli, or are street sweepers whose background is in the distant Punjab province. Since, historically, both these groups of people have been considered low-caste, poverty, injustice and discrimination are daily realities for them.

Columban ministries include pastoral care, the training and formation of local lay leaders, strengthening relationships with peoples of various religious traditions, protecting the environment, as well as promoting justice and peace.

The Covid-19 pandemic seriously impacted Pakistan, causing untold suffering to the majority of its people. Since many Christians are day laborers, they became unemployed overnight, resulting in prolonged hardship for their families and the wider community.

Fr. Tomas King celebrating Mass in Isai Farm, a Nagar Parkar village. In the Parkar Kohli tradition, his saffron vestments are a reminder of the sacredness of this occasion. ▶

Accompanied by a catechist from Badin Parish, Fr. Louie Ibáñez (in saffron vestment) baptizes a child in a remote village. ▶



The Columban response was channelled through existing projects. These include the TB Outreach Program, the Poor and Needy Project, and the Natural Disaster Response Project. These long-established projects enabled us to respond immediately to the crisis by providing emergency aid, particularly food rations, medicines, and basic materials for shelter.

The impact of the coronavirus crisis was exacerbated by the monsoon season from July through September 2020, which caused extensive flooding in the Sindh province. It is estimated that 400 people died, while 200,000 houses were either damaged or destroyed. Most of those homes, which were made from mud and timber, belonged to poor people in numerous villages.

Due to the coronavirus crisis, our planned project to promote care for the environment had to be cancelled. However, with the understanding and support of our benefactors, the funds were diverted to providing relief to those who had become impoverished as a result of the pandemic.



The Kingdom of God is like a sapling taking root in Pakistan

<https://youtu.be/IG3tQTPwVZo>

SCAN TO WATCH



A Parkar Kohli Tribal woman being treated in the Badin Parish TB Clinic. Members of the TB Outreach Team also visit her in her home.

PERU

A year in which the Covid-19 pandemic caused the death of many parishioners, friends and loved ones. A year in which the injustices of the economic system crushed the lives of the poor. A year in which we became more resilient and found new ways to move forward. A year in which we realized that, in the post-pandemic era, we must be guided by a new vision of society in our efforts to rebuild.

Columban missionaries fostered our social and ministerial relationships online. We also celebrated Masses and prayer services over the internet. These online endeavors were an important means of providing emotional and spiritual support to those who were anxious, fearful, or isolated, to those who were suffering from Covid, as well as to families who were grieving the loss of a loved one from Covid. We started important initiatives, such as Community Pots and organic gardens at home. We also provided the necessities of life to many victims of Covid and to their families, as to well as to destitute migrants.

Fr. Erl Dylan Tabaco (L) provides assistance to a Venezuelan migrant ▲

Following an online workshop, the Columban Mission Centre in Lima delivers boxes to members of the local community, which they will use to grow organic vegetables for their families ▲



However, Columbans also began to glimpse the 'new post-pandemic reality' by facilitating people to reflect on their common challenges at a regional level through the convocation of the Social Action Network of the Civil Society of North Lima. This network is made up of representatives from various non-governmental organizations, Catholic parishes and other Christian denominations, as well as local and national government. Through regular online meetings, we have begun to respond in a coordinated manner to the multiple needs of people in the areas of health and well-being, food security, spiritual development, education, as well as civic rights and responsibilities. Through this initiative, Columbans in Lima are striving to promote the Common Good, which ought to be the guiding principle for all of us in the post-pandemic world.



Allowing the light of God's love to shine on all aspects of society in Peru

SCAN TO WATCH



<https://youtu.be/n2bac8MdUoA>

Fr. Iovane Gukibau joins others in delivering essential supplies to those in need in Lima

Homegrown: Local experienced gardener, Gaspar, shares his wisdom with Fr. John Hegerty at the Columban house in Lima

PHILIPPINES

The Philippines has been under a very strict lockdown since March 2020. Anyone over 65 or under 15 years of age must stay in their homes and others should only go outside for essential reasons. Consequently, a large section of the population has been without work for a prolonged period. Government aid is both sporadic and miserly. Many people are experiencing hunger, fatigue and anxiety.

Columban lay missionary Kim Sun Hee has continued to join other volunteers in the Columban parish, Our Lady of Remedies, in Manila to provide food for the home-bound elderly and persons with disability, as well as to homeless children and adults who live in that vicinity. Meanwhile, Columban lay missionary, John Din, has joined other religious groups in providing food packs, water containers and school supplies to the Dumagat Indigenous Community in the Sierra Madre Mountains.

Lay missionary, John Din distributing
much-needed help to the Dumagat
Indigenous community ▲

Lay missionary, Kim Sun Hee (R) joins other
volunteers in preparing food for the homeless
and house-bound in Manila ▶



In the Parish of Barra in the city of Cagayan de Oro, Columban Fr. Enrique Escobar and Columban lay missionaries, Ana Flores, Latai Muller and Mereani Nailevu realized that many parishioners who became unemployed due to the pandemic happen to live near public land. They decided to create 'square-foot gardens' on that land to enable those parishioners to grow their own food and to sell whatever they do not consume themselves. Meanwhile, they and other Columbans continue to promote over the internet the urgent need to care for God's creation.

Columbans are grateful to our large network of mission supporters throughout the Philippines who have continued to generously support the education of our seminarians. Through our monthly on-line Recollection and Eucharist, hosted by Filipino Columban priests from as far away as Peru, Pakistan and Korea, and also through our daily prayers via text message, we have continued to provide our supporters who are experiencing isolation and loneliness with support and comfort.



John Din shares about his life's journey, including his 28 years as a Columban lay missionary

<https://youtu.be/WqDtM-Xj6ls>

SCAN TO WATCH



Lay missionary, Latai Muller with the harvest from her 'square-foot garden'

TAIWAN

During this past year, Taiwan has been fortunate to have been only mildly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Up until the end of March 2021, the government's vigilance and the people's cooperation greatly helped to control the spread of the virus. As a result, only a small number of local people were infected. Public gatherings and activities were suspended for just a few weeks, after which the Columban missionaries were able to resume their ministries, guided by the safety precautions implemented by the Taiwan government.

Columbans are actively involved in ministries to migrant workers, victims of human trafficking, immigrants and their families, indigenous people, as well as people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. Moreover, through our 12 Step Spirituality and Interfaith Spiritual Direction ministries we are engaged in outreach to people of other faith traditions at the grassroots level.



Fr. Seok Jinwook Antonio shares about the challenges and joys that he and Columban lay missionary Febie Gonzales experienced in their ministries in Taiwan

<https://youtu.be/WGaJ-WzfwFA>

SCAN TO WATCH



A young woman – who attends a center for people who are physically and mentally challenged – rejoices with her mother after both were baptized by Fr. Jinwook Seok Antonio



Four Columban lay missionaries and one priest are engaged in ministerial outreach to physically and mentally challenged people. Since these are generally perceived as burdens rather than as valued members of society, they are often ignored or neglected. Sometimes, they experience discrimination and abuse, even within their own families.

With the help of Columban missionaries, Hsinchu Diocese has established centers to ensure the welfare of the physically and mentally-challenged, teaching them self-reliance and helping them to realize their physical, mental and spiritual potential. The Columbans assist the centers' teachers in conducting physical therapy activities as well as creative activities for honing the students' skills. They are also involved in the faith formation of the staff and students.

Columbans in Taiwan are a multi-cultural team of lay and ordained missionaries, who advocate empowerment – particularly of laity and women, equality, partnership, group decision making and shared responsibility. We hope that our way of being missionaries stands as a witness to the Church and Taiwan society.

Fr. Jinwook Seok Antonio and lay missionary, Febie Gonzales (5th from left) with the teachers and students of House of Love (愛家) ▲

Caring for plants at the Holy Family Center for Special Education: Lay missionary, Reina Mosqueda with one of the students ▼

Brushing teeth: Lay missionary Kim Jung Woong assists a student at St. Joseph Social Welfare Foundation – Sunrise Opportunity Center ▼



UNITED STATES

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, it was a year of uncertainty but

Everyone learned new ways to do things as we adjusted to working from home many days.

Our co-workers kept the retired priests safe from Covid-19 at our Nebraska headquarters and at our retirement home in Rhode Island.

We continued to update our supporters on what was happening in various countries through our English and Spanish mission magazines.

We also continued to advocate justice for migrants, promote greater understanding of racism, support peace-building initiatives, and foster care for our common home.

Almost all our parish mission appeals were cancelled, but one exceptionally high-tech parish welcomed us 'virtually' by video.

Our benefactors continued to support our mission, and we were not only amazed by their generosity but also deeply grateful for it. We reached out by telephone and letter to express our appreciation and to assure people of our continuing prayers for their intentions.

Vaccination Day: Fr. John Marley (top) and Fr. John Brannigan (bottom) at the Columban Retirement Home in Rhode Island ▶



Columbans at St. Hilary's Parish in Los Angeles celebrated the sacraments outdoors for several months.

Columbans in St. Mary's Parish in Fontana, California, almost experienced a year without the celebration of Christmas because the pastor came down with Covid-19, and the diocese cancelled all church activities in the interest of public safety. Despite the pandemic, preparations for the groundbreaking ceremony for a new, large, parish church at St. Mary's continue.

Fr. Bill Morton and lay missionary, Sainiana Tamatawale delivered pastoral care and practical help to the people of Corpus Christi Parish in Juarez city in Mexico.

While the Columban mission center in El Paso was unable to facilitate mission exposure trips, it anticipates resuming that important educational activity when it becomes safe to do so.

And now, we look forward to what is around the next bend on our missionary path ...



The challenges and rewards of Columban Mission in the USA during the pandemic

SCAN TO WATCH



<https://youtu.be/r4fr3XSLihU>

Prayer and Good Works: ▲
Fr. Bill Morton (L) and lay missionary Sainiana Tamatawale (R) with some members of Corpus Christi Parish in Juarez, Mexico

Argelia Loza from Nicaragua ▶
assists with the packaging and distribution of groceries for poor migrants in Juarez



IN GRATITUDE

"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people."
Colossians 1:3-4

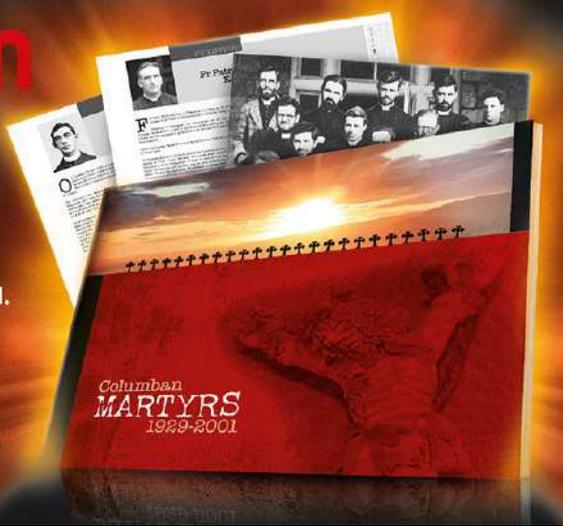


During the pandemic, Columban Missionaries prayed online with our supporters in all of our missions

COLUMBAN MARTYRS 1929-2001

Over a 72-year period, 24 Columban missionaries died violently on mission for the Gospel.

Their witness is a reminder of how God works through ordinary people in extraordinary ways. They were often urged to leave dangerous situations, but, as these stories illustrate, they consistently opted to stay with their people and paid the ultimate price for this choice.



“ By uniting not only their lives, but also their deaths with Christ, these Columban missionaries make tangible God's goodness and fidelity towards people of every race and language. ”

Fr. Tim Mulroy
Society Leader

GIVING BACK TO OUR BENEFACTORS

The Mission Office in Dalgan Park is the contact point for our supporters here in Ireland, where we put people in touch with the work of Columban mission worldwide. In effect we provide pastoral care for thousands through personal letters, phone calls, Masses cards and books ordered online.

The Columban Prayer Trust in Britain supplies us with booklets each year. We order those that suit our theme for that particular year. Every supporter receives a booklet with the Irish Mission League card at renewal time. The personal approach is significant. We receive requests for extra booklets for family members or friends. This year our supporters found the booklet 'Stay Safe' particularly helpful in dealing with pandemic restrictions and lockdowns.

Our supporters continued to be generous this year despite the challenges they faced themselves due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the various lockdowns.

As well as being the subscription and distribution centre for the Far East magazine, the Mission Office distributes Columban books as they are published. This year the focus was on 'Columban Martyrs 1929-2001', a collection of concise biographies of the 24 Columban missionaries who over a 72-year period died violently on mission for the Gospel. Their witness is a reminder of how God works through ordinary people in extraordinary ways.

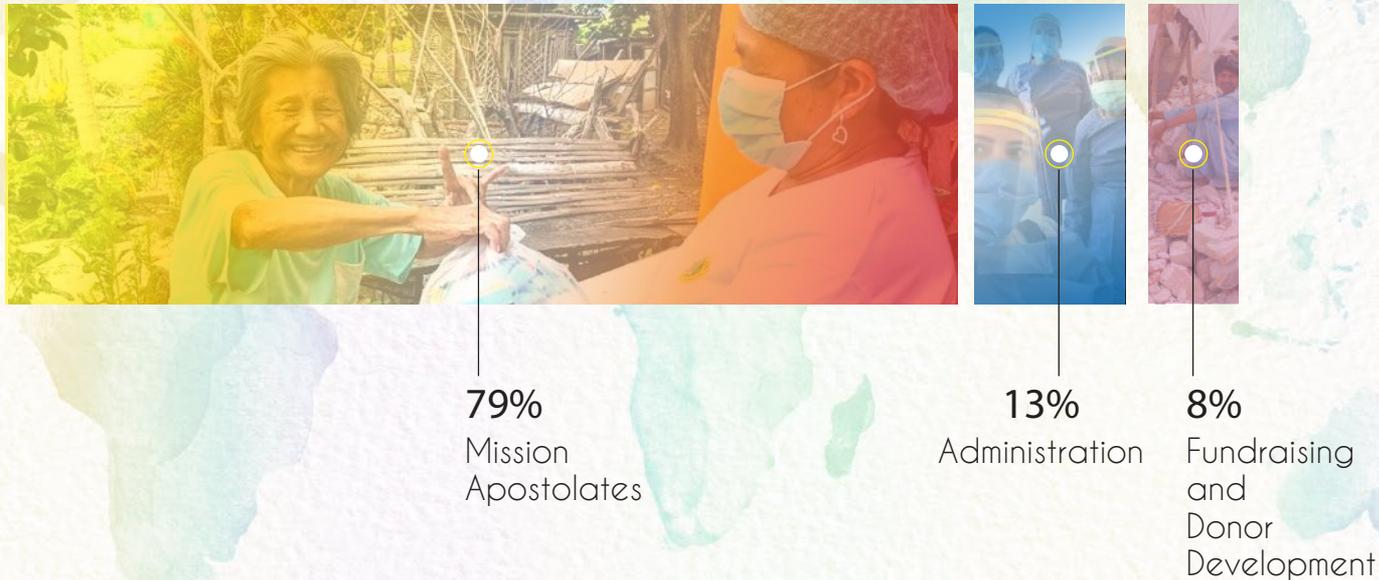
In the Foreword to the booklet, Society Leader, Fr. Tim Mulroy writes: "Throughout this collection of biographies of Columban martyrs, we find echoes of the Passion of Jesus. Every page reflects a particular aspect of his journey to the cross; each story illuminates a salvific moment of grace for others."

2020 - 2021 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

APPLICATION OF FUNDS RECEIVED IN THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

During the Year ended March 31, 2021, the Society received U.S.\$30.50M in revenue. Total funds received were used in the following manner:

MISSION EXPENSES



FUNDING OF VARIOUS MISSIONS



Our missionary endeavours in Australia, Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, South Korea, and the U.S./ Mexico are self-funded.

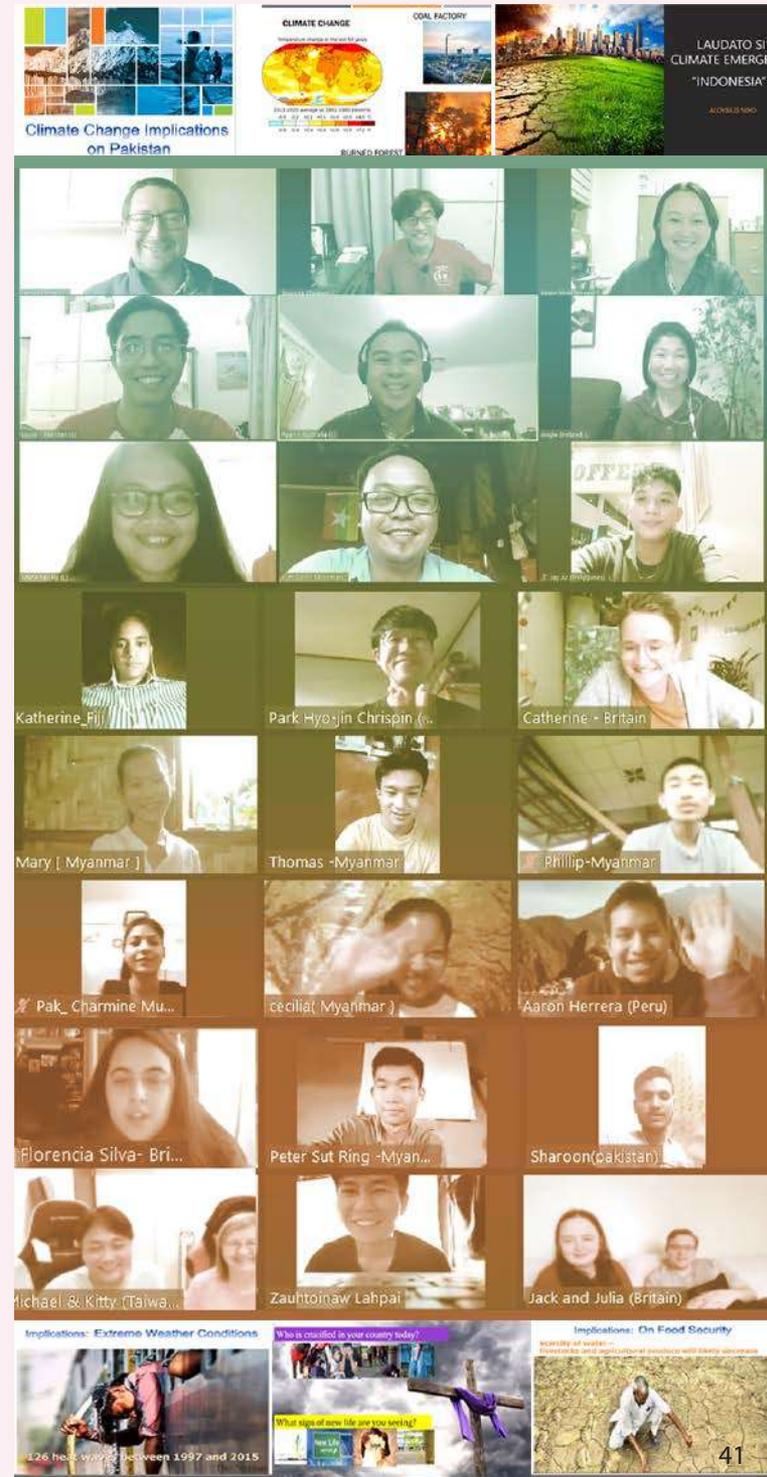
The expense associated with each mission country reflects the number of Columban Missionaries ministering there, the cost of living, and the level of support which the local church can provide.

PARTNERS IN MISSION

The Society of St. Columban facilitates programs that enable participants to have face-to-face encounters in Columban places of mission. These programs include travel, cross-cultural encounters, and – in some countries – service to vulnerable communities.

Unfortunately, during this past year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, such programs had to be paused. However, Columban organizing teams in various countries responded creatively by facilitating online encounters and experiences for many people who are curious to learn more about Columban mission. For example, participants of previous mission-exposure programs in Britain came together online to reflect on their shared experience of Columban mission and its continuing impact on their lives. Another example was the facilitation by the Columban organizing teams of Chile, Peru, and the United States in May 2020 of a weeklong webinar series about our missionary commitment to care for our common home, the earth.

An exciting initiative during this past year has been Columban International Youth Encounter. The organizers were inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical Fratelli Tutti, particularly his invitation: "We as people, should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone." (FT 215,21 6). Columban International Youth Encounter involves young people coming together online from ten countries where the Columbans are on mission for the purpose of fostering friendships and discovering ways to participate more fully in God's mission.





“ By being part of the group of young individuals meeting online, I am a missionary, spreading the word of God and his love for people. ”

Charmine Mukthar
A Pakistani Participant of
Columban International Youth Encounter

Reflecting on her experience of Columban International Youth Encounter, Charmine Mukthar, from Hyderabad in Pakistan wrote: "I think that there are many challenges that young people like me are facing today like depression, different forms of addictions, peer pressure, poverty, lack of opportunities including getting quality education and employment, caring for our common home, and materialism among other things. Talking to other youth about these concerns and making ourselves aware about these common issues through social media and conversations like zoom meetings can make us rise above these challenges. By being part of the group of young individuals meeting online, I am a missionary, spreading the word of God and his love for his people".

Columban missionaries remain hopeful that when people can safely resume travel, we will once again offer our traditional in-person, cross-cultural, mission experiences. However, as we reflect on the benefits of online gatherings during this past year, we would also like to continue providing similar opportunities for those who are eager to learn more about Columban mission, particularly for those who may not have the time or resources needed for travel, as well as for those who may wish to avoid travel out of concern for our common home, the earth.

VOCATION AND SEMINARY LIFE

In the Columban seminary in Seoul, Korea, as the new term began in March 2020, an emergency decision was made by the nearby seminary college to suspend face-to-face classes due to the rapid spread of Covid-19. It was a difficult time because neither the professors nor the seminarians had an opportunity to prepare or adjust to teaching or learning online.

Moreover, as a consequence, Columban priests and students were together from early morning to late at night in the seminary, having almost no involvement with the outside world. It was stressful, but it was also an opportunity to come to know ourselves and one another more deeply.

Thankfully, in August 2020, face-to-face classes resumed in the college seminary for the second term of the academic year. The students were delighted to be able to commute to class and meet their friends again. However, they were still unable to engage in pastoral ministry.



Columban students adapting to online learning ▲

Members of the Columban community – including seminarians – praying the Way of the Cross during Lent in Korea. ▼

Due to the impact of the pandemic in Columban missions, some of our seminarians were unable to begin their two-year cross-cultural mission program. They continued, therefore, with their academic studies in the hope that the global situation will allow them to travel next year.

During the second term of the academic year, three long-serving Columban Missionaries died in Korea. Since Frs. Padraig Murphy, Kevin O'Rourke and Frank Ferrie had spent a total of 172 years on mission in Korea, their funerals provided the seminarians with important moments to reflect on the Columban legacy that they are inheriting.

On the occasion of the opening of the new academic year on the 1st March, 2021, an icon of SS. Peter and Paul, which had been painted by Columban Fr. Jason Antiquera on our seminary chapel door, was unveiled and blessed. Several Columban priests and nine Columban seminarians were present for that ceremony.



Preparing for mission:
Life in the Columban
International Seminary
in the Philippines

<https://youtu.be/lrUTrNkayQ>

SCAN TO WATCH





I am Elia Poasa, a Columban seminarian, studying at the Pacific Regional Seminary in Suva, the capital city of Fiji. However, during this past year, I was grateful to have been given the opportunity to attend a one-year program, which was less focused on academic studies, and more on my inner life and spiritual journey.

It was a year of prayer and deep self-reflection, which helped me recognize the ways in which God is present in all aspects of my daily life. The program also helped me to deepen my awareness of God's presence in creation, making me realize that I honor God through showing appreciation and care for the works of God's hands.

I also did some pastoral work in a nearby prison. This was a blessed experience because I came to realize that I was not bringing Jesus to the inmates, but rather that I was visiting Jesus who was present in the inmates.

I am Ratu Pio Daurewa, currently a second-year Columban seminarian in Suva, Fiji. The various demands of seminary life are an ongoing reminder that I am here not to do my own will, but God's will, since it is God who has called me.

On weekdays I study philosophy. At weekends, I help to facilitate bible reflection groups in parishes close to the seminary. I also participate in various activities that are aimed at building bridges of mutual understanding and respect among people from different Christian denominations as well as with members of other religious traditions. Since most of the participants in these activities are young, we enjoy sharing and learning together about how God is at work in the lives of all people, regardless of their ethnicity, culture or religion. These experiences help me to better understand what St. Columban meant when he said, "A life unlike your own can be your teacher".





▲ (L-R) Fr. Tim, Fr. Alvaro, Fr. Seung-Won, Vida Amor, Fr. Brian, Sainiana

INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

GENERAL COUNCIL (HONG KONG)

SOCIETY LEADER	FR. TIM MULROY
SOCIETY VICAR	FR. BRIAN VALE
SECOND COUNCILLOR	FR. KANG SEUNG-WON JOSEPH
THIRD COUNCILLOR	FR. ALVARO MARTINEZ

COLUMBAN LAY MISSIONARY CENTRAL LEADERSHIP TEAM (HONG KONG)

COORDINATOR	VIDA AMOR HEQUILAN
TEAM MEMBER	SAINIANA TAMATAWALE
TEAM MEMBER	FR. BRIAN VALE

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT PERSONNEL

BURSAR GENERAL	FLORENCE TSUI (HONG KONG)
CENTRAL JPIC COORDINATOR	AMY W. ECHEVERRIA (U.S.)
RESEARCHER JPIC PRIORITIES	FR. SEAN McDONAGH (IRELAND)
RESEARCHER ON MISSION AND CULTURE	FR. SEAN DWAN (IRELAND)
SOCIETY ARCHIVIST	FR. NEIL COLLINS (IRELAND)

