

2021

ANNUAL REPORT

NEW ZEALAND - ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY



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Front cover: Columban lay missionaries, Teresa Hui Ling Chuah (left) and Sophia Tzu Chee Ting (right).

Annual report from Aotearoa - New Zealand

From the Columban Leader New Zealand report

Dear Columban Friends,

We have had a very fruitful or successful year. We doubled our surplus from last year. This was because we had not only received far more through bequests but also in response to our Christmas and mid-year appeals. So we are very grateful to our very generous supporters and donors.

What will be an important aid in ensuring ongoing contributions is the launch of our new website and the continued support for our Facebook page. Promotion of our website page through local Catholic newspapers helps to draw people's attention to the website. Another important aspect of exploiting new and creative ways of seeking support for Columban Mission in Aotearoa is that future donations will largely be done through direct internet banking since the banks will no longer accept cheques.

To process these changes we are once again grateful to a dedicated and highly competent though small staff, Vinita Naidu and Anita Walsh, and our office manager, Pat O'Shea.

Another significant event this year was the departure of Sophia Ting and Teresa Chuah (Ling) for London where they will take up their assignment to the region of Britain. They are the first two Columban lay missionaries from Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Throughout the year we continue to accompany members of the local parish communities who attend our weekday celebrations of the eucharist. Most of these people are recent migrants to New Zealand and reflect the emerging shape of the church in this country.

Columban Fr Don Hornsey continues to minister as chaplain to the Spanish-speaking community throughout the greater Wellington area. He also provides a welcome service to prisoners at the Rimutaka prison.

I am a member of the *National Catholic-Lutheran Dialogue commission* which is about to launch a joint statement on baptism. I am also an active member of the *Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission* for the Archdiocese of Wellington and the local Talitha Kum organization of religious against human trafficking.

Columban Fr Paul Finlayson took up a new assignment as a priest of the Tasman district parish. He is resident in the presbytery at Motueka and serves people in what is a large rural district.

Columban Fr Michael Gormly continues to minister as chaplain to the Sisters of Mercy community at Upper Hutt.

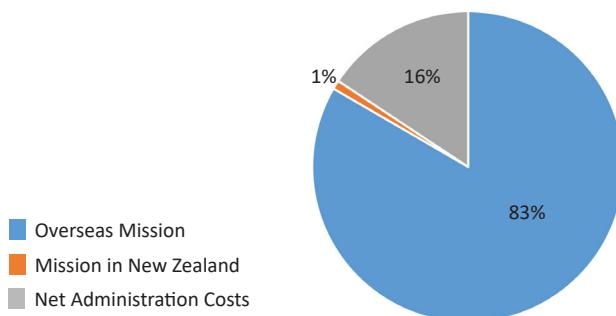
Fr Tom Rouse
Columban Leader New Zealand
trouse@columban.org.nz



Columban Fr Pat O'Shea (left), Anita Walsh, Columban Fr Tom Rouse, Vinita Naidu (right).

Financial summary

Application of donations received in 2021 year



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Annual report from Australia

From the Columban Leader Australia report

Dear Columban Friends,

Thank you for your ongoing support of Columban Mission across the world during these unprecedented times with the coronavirus pandemic. Your generous donations have helped provide the daily necessities of food and medicines to the vulnerable poor who have been most affected by the pandemic. We pray for the people who have tragically lost their lives to the virus and for their loved ones. We thank the health care workers who continue to courageously care for the sick and dying.

In February this year we witnessed the violent military coup in Myanmar. Our two Columban lay missionaries working in the Diocese of Banmaw were instructed by the bishop to return to the Philippines for their safety which they did. The four Columbans working in the Diocese of Myitkyina have been able to remain in Myanmar until this time. We pray for the people of Myanmar and for a peaceful resolution to the violence inflicted on them.

Columban Fr Patrick McInerney, Kim Chong and Ryan Epondulan at the *Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations*, together with *Youth PoWR (Parliament of the World Religions)* and other networking partners worked tirelessly during the year in publishing *The Sydney Statement* - building bridges between believers from different religions. The Media Launch was held at the Sydney Town Hall on March 11, 2021. As one of the participants at the Media Launch, I was captivated by the energetic facilitators from *Youth PoWR* and the inspirational speeches given by Fr Patrick and people from different faith traditions.

The October 2020 edition of *The Far East* magazine marked the 100th year since it was first published in October 1920. The first group of Columbans arrived in Australia in January of that same year. This iconic magazine full of stories of Columban Missionaries across the globe has found its home in many families throughout Australia and New Zealand. Archbishop Mark Coleridge from the Archdiocese of Brisbane sent a video message of thanks to the Columban Missionaries during this celebration.

The 100th year celebration of the *Columban Art Calendar* was launched in April with a 2-minute video by Archbishop Peter Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne. Preparations for the publication of the centenary calendar are now underway.

We thank you for faithfully purchasing a Columban Calendar every year to help raise funds for Columban Mission.

In Melbourne we have the *Columban Mission Centre (CMC)* whose primary aim is to promote Columban Mission and to raise funds. I thank all the CMC staff for their dedicated service to Columban Mission. Columban Fr Kevin O'Neill and Sr Caroline Vaitkunas rsm joined our *CMC Peace, Ecology and Justice Team* in February. They have written many articles on faith and ecology for our Columban publications and are preparing to give a two-day seminar on Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* for the priests of the Sale Diocese. Fr Kevin will continue to work in Australia until he is able to apply for a visa to return to China.



In response to the *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards*, we updated our Code of Conduct and have drafted our Complaints Handling Policy, Grievance Policy and Risk Management Strategy. The Missionary Society of St Columban in Australia is actively committed to fostering communities of safeguarding that recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children and adults at risk.

Frs Colin McLean and John Hegerty have returned to the Region of Oceania. Both were in hotel quarantine in Sydney before arriving in Essendon, Melbourne. Columban Fr Colin worked in the Philippines for ten years before joining the new team of Columban Missionaries assigned to Brazil where he worked for over thirty years. He is making contacts with organisations working with refugees and people seeking asylum. Fr John has now retired after spending most of his missionary life in Peru where he worked for over 40 years.

Columban Frs Dan Harding, Bernie Lane and Dominic Nolan are unable to return to Chile, Peru and the Philippines due to the closures of international borders. They share heart wrenching stories of the struggles endured by the people of Chile, Peru and the Philippines fighting for survival in the harsh pandemic lockdowns where there is minimum government support. Columban Priest Associate, Fr Michael McKinnon from the Diocese of Ballarat was ready to take up

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his assignment to Peru after Easter last year. However, due to the pandemic he is still waiting to fly to Peru. Fr Michael previously worked as a Columban Priest Associate in Chile and Peru.

The year saw Columban Fr Chris Baker celebrate his 70th year of ordination in September and Frs Warren Kinne, Robert McCulloch and Trevor Trotter celebrated their 50th year of ordination in July. We thank them for their many years of missionary service across the world in Peru, Philippines, Pakistan, China, Rome, Australia, Ireland and USA. Due to the lockdowns in Melbourne, we were unable to welcome family and friends to the celebrations at our Columban house in Essendon. Fr Nguyen Xuan Tien celebrated his 25th year of ordination in June. Fr Tien has been on mission in Japan for many years.

During the year two of our Australian Columban brothers passed away. Fr Noel Connolly died on June 6, 2020 in Sydney after a long battle with cancer. Due to the coronavirus restrictions, Fr Noel's Requiem mass was limited to only fifty guests. The mass was live streamed with nearly 3,000 people viewing the mass online. Fr Noel's prophetic vision, missionary zeal and honest humanity inspired many people across the globe. On the one year anniversary of Fr Noel's passing a memorial video was created, click link to watch: <https://youtu.be/IhNBBkrydUw>

Fr Francis Ferry died suddenly on November 9, 2020 in Cheju Island, Korea. Fr Frank devoted most of his missionary life to the people of Korea where he served for over 60 years. We offer our condolences to their families and friends.

I pray that God will continue to bless us and all those who support us in our carrying on the mission here in Australia and across the 14 countries we work in.

Fr Peter O'Neill
Columban Leader Australia
leaderaus@columban.org.au

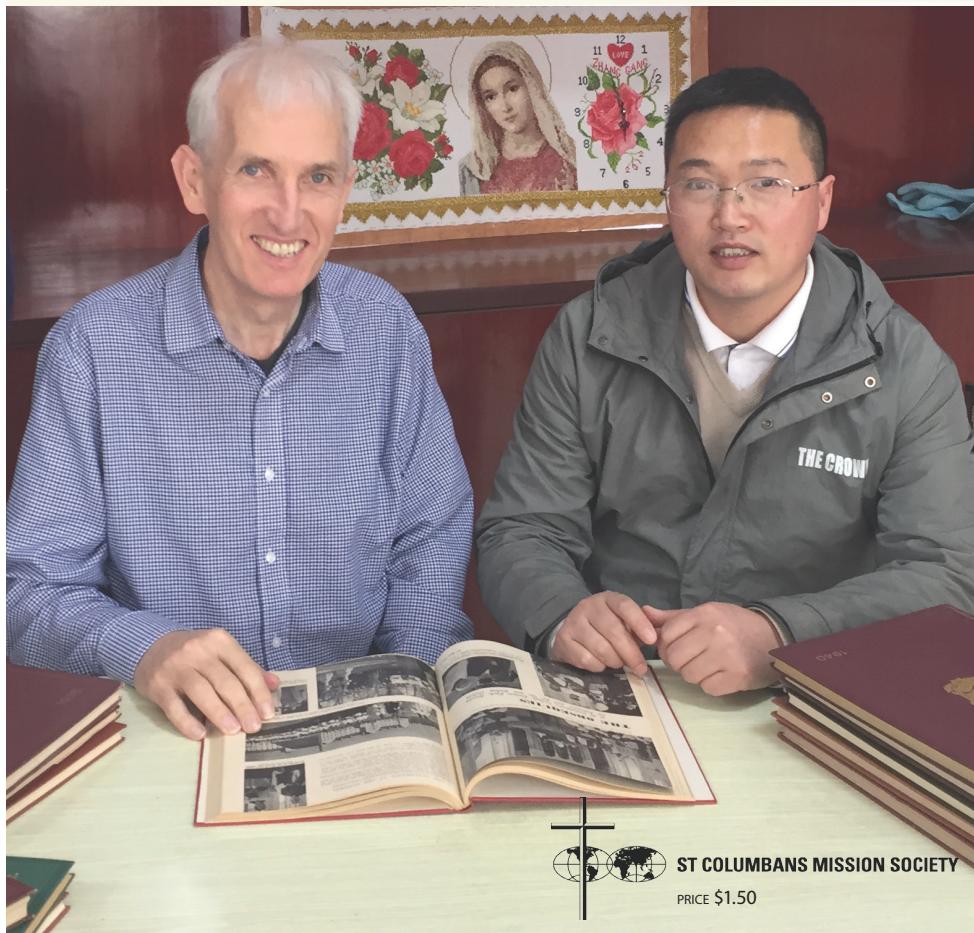
October 2020

SINCE 1920
100 YEARS
THE FAR EAST



THE FAR EAST

A PERIODICAL
DEVOTED TO THE CONVERSION OF CHINA



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

PRICE \$1.50

The front cover of the 100th year edition of The Far East magazine. The cover featured the header from the original copy of The Far East in 1920, along with an image of Columban Fr Dan Troy and the parish priest of Xiantao, Fr Joseph Li, examining the collection of bound copies of The Far East magazine that are a proud possession of the parish in China.

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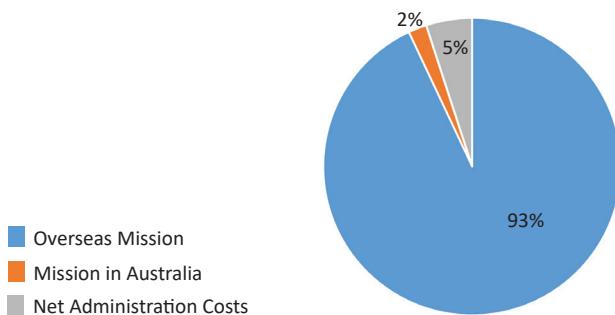
Annual report from Australia

Financial summary

During the year ended March 31, 2021 Columban benefactors donated \$4,513,408 (2020: \$7,733,638) to support the work of Columbans in Australia and overseas. The decrease in total donations received in 2021 can be sourced to a significant reduction in bequest revenue. In the 2021-year bequests made up 73% (2020: 86%) of donation income.

The pie chart below provides a high-level breakdown of how donations received in the 2021 year were expended.

Application of donations received in 2021 year



Overseas Mission Funds are remitted to the Society's General Council. The General Council allocates the funds received from Australia, Britain, Ireland, New Zealand and USA to the overseas mission units that require financial support.

Mission in Australia expenditure covers the work of Columbans in Australia. Income earned by Columbans and any contributions made to the Society by Columbans are used to reduce Mission in Australia costs. Also included is the financial support for the work of *Peace Ecology and Justice*, the *Columban Centre for Christian Muslim Relations*, the cost (net of subscription revenue) to publish *The Far East* magazine and the surplus from the sale of the *2021 Columban Art Calendar*.

Net Administration Costs is inclusive of the expenditure to administer the Society and its membership and the activities of the regional office located at Essendon in Victoria. Interest income has been allocated against this cost.

Thank you

We thank all Columban friends who so generously supported us during the 2020/21 year.



<https://youtu.be/wMgaRMosh1c>

Your Columban Legacy

St Columbans Mission Society has been able to work with the poor in many countries throughout Asia and South America because generous people had the vision to contribute to our work through a gift in their Will. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of all those who left a gift to the St Columbans Mission Society during the 2020/21 year.

Vocations

Missionary priests and lay missionaries are as needed today as ever they were in the past to bring Christ to the nations of the Earth. As Columban benefactors and friends, you can help promote vocations to the Columbans through your prayers, and by actively promoting vocations amongst young people.

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Peace, Ecology and Justice (PEJ)

The *Peace, Ecology and Justice* (PEJ) team of three members have been working together since February 2021. We prepare Columban communications for e-bulletins, Facebook posts and website features.

Through our *Laudato Si'* Animators Melbourne Group leadership, we continue to advocate for a coordinated response to care for creation in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. We meet regularly with the Diocesan Director of Mission and support Archdiocesan communications. The PEJ team supports the initiatives of local parishes on *Laudato Si'* education. Columban Fr Kevin O'Neill and Sr Caroline Vaitkunas rsm will be presenting at the priests of the Sale Diocese in-service on *Laudato Si'*.

Fr Peter O'Neill has visited seasonal workers to listen to their stories which helps him contribute to government policies and guidelines to ensure better legal protection for workers in the agriculture sector.

For the last five years, Columbans have provided free accommodation for over 50 refugees and people seeking asylum in the cottage on the grounds at Essendon. A refugee family are now living in the house next to the Columban Mission Centre.



Fr Peter O'Neill with the Timorese workers Warrnambool.

Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

The staff 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. Ryan Epondulan, Youth Coordinator, led *Youth PoWR*. Kim Chong, Media Coordinator, oversaw the development of the resources. Patrick McInerney, Project Executive Officer, led the consultations and collaboration with partners from other faiths.

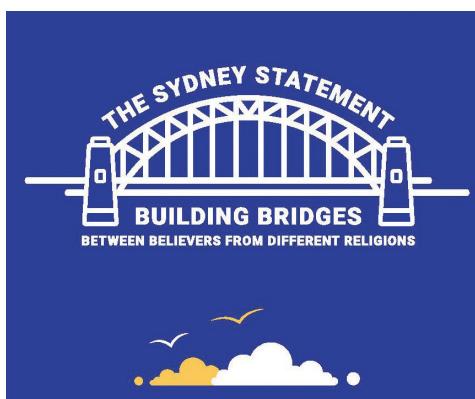
The result is an outstanding suite of interfaith resources, including A-4 and A-1 posters, a 32-page A-5 booklet, and a dedicated website:

www.thesydneystatement.org.au

They can also sign up for the values, principles and commitments.

The Sydney Statement is a world-class document of which all Columbans can rightly be proud.

Photos: Youth PoWR event 2020.



Annual report from Oceania

Multi-media productions 2020 -2021

Australia: The Sydney Statement - Building Bridges

A quick recap explaining what *The Sydney Statement* is, why it was developed and the meaning behind its existence; an invitation to reach out to one another, to discover a brother and sister, to love and to support, with whom to cooperate in transforming our multi-cultural, multi-religious society.

https://youtu.be/ZXhnfa5A_QU



Australia: Fr Peter O'Neill meet a Columban

The 'Meet a Columban' videos are a series of interviews featuring Columbans discussing their missionary experiences, projects, difficulties, and achievements that they have faced as members of the Society.

In this interview of 'Meet a Columban', Columban Fr Jim Mulroney speaks with Fr Peter O'Neill who is the Columban Leader in Australia and is also the *Peace, Ecology and Justice Co-ordinator* for Australia. He previously worked in Taiwan for 26 years with the poor and abused migrant workers and trafficked peoples.

<https://youtu.be/0ZgHuTmKY3E>



Australia: The Far East - Archbishop Mark Coleridge's message of thanks

In October 2020, Archbishop Mark Coleridge from the Archdiocese of Brisbane sent a message of thanks to the Society in celebration of 100 years of *The Far East* magazine.

<https://youtu.be/CNLx473Qci8>



Australia: "It's as Aussie as vegemite"- Archbishop Peter Comensoli

In March 2021, Archbishop Peter Comensoli assisted in promoting the *2022 Columban Art Calendar* as he made the link between the *Columban Art Calendar* and vegemite.

In this video he explains how the calendar was published in the same year that vegemite was produced, both Australian icons.



<https://youtu.be/1sh2QYfJTL8>

Fiji: Fr Frank Hoare interviews Francis Xavier Nbwi La Aung

Columban Fr Frank Hoare interviews Columban student Francis Xavier Nbwi La Aung from Myanmar about the different stages of his missionary experience in Fiji - the things he has learnt, the difficulties he has faced and the highlights he will carry with him.

<https://youtu.be/MbtNzpFdWho>

New Zealand: Fr Don Hornsey meet a Columban

In this interview of '*Meet a Columban*', Columban Fr Jim Mulroney speaks with Columban Fr Don Hornsey who worked in Chile, Brazil and Peru for more than 40 years. He is currently based in Aotearoa - New Zealand.

<https://youtu.be/h-puykDIDgc>



Annual report from Fiji

From the Columban Leader Fiji report

Dear Columban Friends,

The year 2020/2021 has been like no other, dominated by COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns; the perpetual challenge was to find new and creative ways of operating within their confines. Zoom meetings became the standard mechanism for communication.

A notable feature of our year was the havoc wrecked on our people by three tropical cyclones, one of which forced the ordination of Rev Aminiasi Ravuwai to be delayed from December 19 to December 22.

Although Columban enterprises managed to escape the worst of the damage, our parishes in Ba and Labasa suffered extensive hardship with some 60 families displaced in the latter.

Fundraising was also disrupted, as our flagship *The Echo Challenge* project is very much an outdoor, hands-on activity.

Activities built around the Season of Creation organised by the *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation* desk were successfully managed. Workshops and seminars entitled '*Journey into Laudato Si'* were organised in remote Village Island Communities. 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 women of this group.

The Fiji Columban Website www.columban.org.fj was revamped. This was achieved with cooperation from the Columban Mission Centre in Melbourne, Australia.

Three e-Kauloutu magazines were successfully published which told the stories of our young Pacifican Columbans on Mission overseas.

Our Interreligious Dialogue desk was also very active. Five major events were organised for youth groups of different religious faiths from around Suva. A development in this area was the forming of an organising committee to share ownership among participating faiths.

Our three Columban parishes had new parish priests appointed and Parish appeals were held in these Parishes administered by the Columbans.

Two Fijian students successfully completed the first-ever Spiritual Year in Fiji and two Columban students from Myanmar thrived on their 20 months of mission experience here. Four seminarians returned to the Pacific Regional Seminary in

Suva to continue their philosophy and theology studies. They also host open days at our Formation House for youths who are considering missionary life.

Fr John McEvoy
Columban Leader Fiji
jmcevoy@columban.org.fj



Columban Fr Taaremon Teatao Teieka (left), lay missionary Evangeline (Jink) Ucol, lay missionary Marjorie Encoy Columban JPIC Coordinator, and Columban Frs Teakare Betero and John McEvoy.



Naomi Naiubi - Columban House Keeper at the Central House and her nephews enjoying the harvest from their hard work of the 'Eco Challenge' at The Columban Isadore Eco Project.

*Columban Companion, Joana Qalo
admiring the fruitful tomato crop from
the Eco Challenge Project, Fiji.*



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