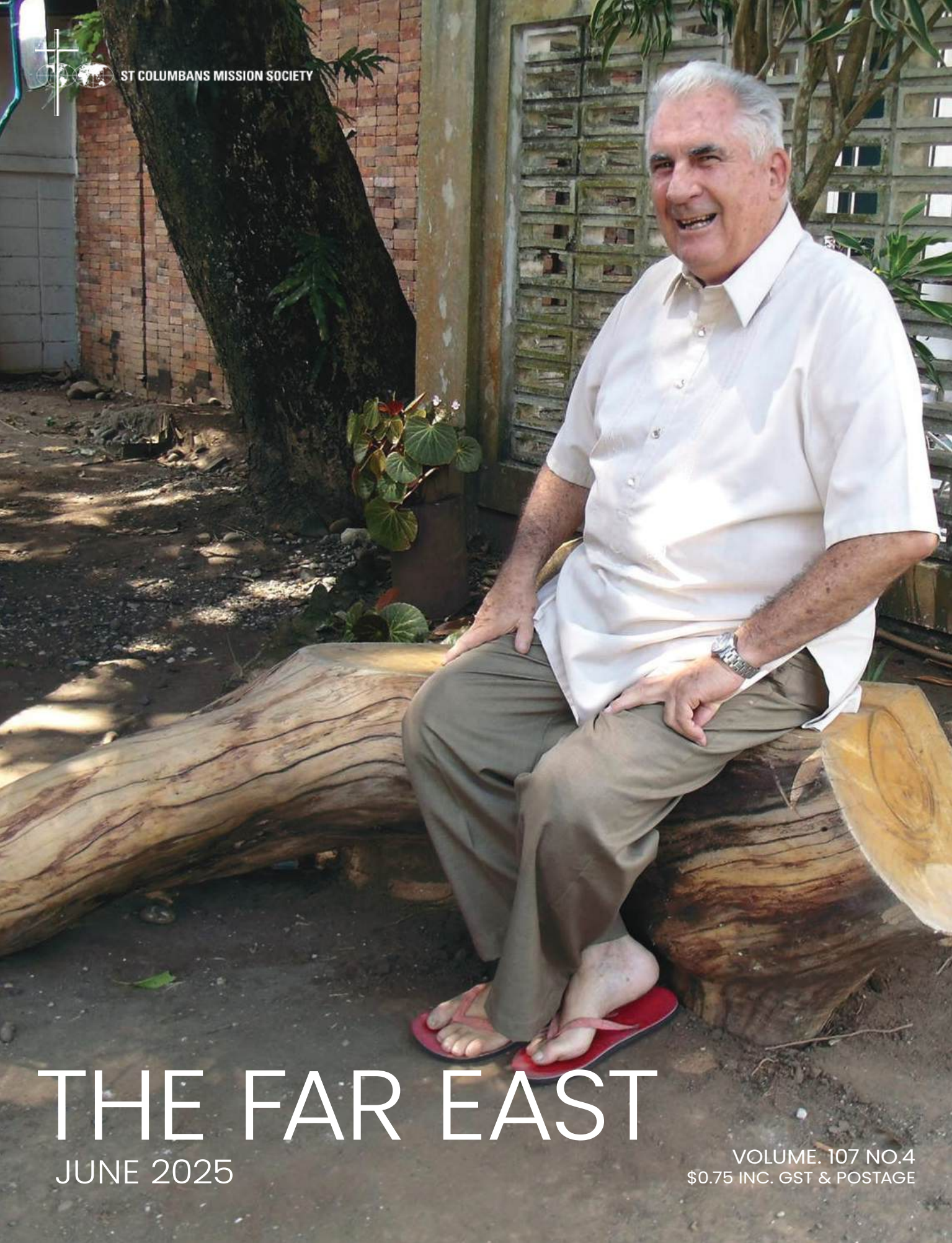




ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

THE FAR EAST

JUNE 2025

VOLUME. 107 NO.4
\$0.75 INC. GST & POSTAGE

CONTENTS

THE FAR EAST is devoted to furthering the missionary apostolate of the Church and has been published by the Missionary Society of St Columban since October 15, 1920.

The Society was founded in Ireland in 1918 as a society of secular priests dedicated to the evangelisation of the Chinese people.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$6.00 per year + \$9.00 postage (AUSTRALIA)

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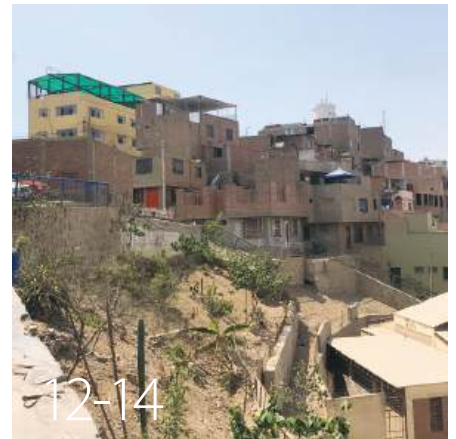
Cover photo: In loving memory of Fr Brian Gore. A faithful Columban who served people experiencing poverty in the Philippines with courage and love.

St Columbans Mission Property
Association A.B.N. 17 686 524 625

Printed by Doran Printing, Melbourne



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A LEGACY OF LOVE, A CALL TO PRAYER



The joy of Easter Sunday this year was tinged with sadness at the news of Pope Francis' death on Easter Monday. It made his Easter Sunday appearance on the balcony at St Peter's Basilica for the *Urbi et Orbi* blessing all the more poignant; also, his popemobile tour among the crowds gathered in the square. It was his final blessing and last farewell to the people whom he had loved and served during the 12 years of his papal ministry.

Catholics and other Christians around the world have mourned Pope Francis' death. Followers of other faiths have also grieved at his death. I was touched that the first condolence messages I received within hours of the announcement of the pope's death were from Muslim friends and partners in dialogue who appreciated the interfaith outreach of Pope Francis. People of goodwill likewise expressed sorrow at his death, recognising and appreciating his humility, service, leadership, and deep commitment to humanity, especially the poor, migrants, refugees, and those on the margins, and his care for the environment. Thousands of people streamed past the open coffin in front of the main altar of St Peter's Basilica where Pope Francis' body lay in state. Thousands of mourners - great and small, rich and poor, cardinals, bishops, monarchs, leaders of countries, and the ordinary faithful - attended his funeral in St Peter's Square, and millions more watched on TV. Thousands of people lined the streets for the journey to his final resting place in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. Thousands of pilgrims now visit his tomb daily.

Memorial Masses have been held in churches around the world, where Catholics, other Christians, and followers of other faiths gathered to remember a faithful servant of God, a humble follower of Jesus Christ, a man who listened to the Holy Spirit, an inspiring leader of the Church, and a humanitarian who cared deeply for all people and all creation. I have been struck by the millions upon millions of prayers of intercession - including my own small quotient - that have been raised to heaven asking God to grant Pope Francis eternal rest. Yet I know in faith that our prayers made no difference to God, who from eternity loved

Pope Francis wholly, completely, utterly! Our prayers did not make God love him more, for God already loved him perfectly. The shocking truth is, God would not have loved him less even if he had been a bad pope, a lay person, a follower of another religion, an atheist, or even a moral reprobate!

The scandal of Christianity, revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is that God is love, that God's trinitarian nature is a communion of love, that God shares God's prodigal love with all in creation and redemption, that God loves everyone and everything unconditionally: "Your Father in heaven makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous." (Mt 5:45). All - "*todos, todos, todos*" - as Pope Francis insisted - are equally welcome in God's Kingdom.

If God is perfect, unchanging, and everlasting faithful love, and our prayers make no difference to God, then why were we moved to pray for Pope Francis? There are two reasons. The first is that while prayer does not change God, prayer changes us. By praying for Pope Francis, we participate in God's eternal love for him, we are shaped and moulded by the love that God has for Pope Francis, and we are drawn more deeply into loving as God loves. The second is that while our prayer is phrased in terms of God being merciful for whatever may be lacking in Pope Francis' life, it is more a recognition of the gifts embodied by Pope Francis that are lacking in our lives! By praying for Pope Francis, we come to recognise his gifts; we grow in gratitude for all that he has given to the church and the world; we come to imitate more closely his humility, his service, and his commitment to humanity and to the environment. We take on his values, make them our own, and live them out in our lives.

Given that prayer will change us and make us more like God, and better "missionary disciples" more like Pope Francis, let us pray more fervently: God, be merciful to your servant, Pope Francis, and grant him eternal rest.

REV DR PATRICK MCINERNEY
Regional Director of Oceania

FAITH, FRIENDSHIP AND DISCOVERY IN PAKISTAN

The purpose of my visit to Pakistan in 2024 was to volunteer alongside my uncle, Fr Tomás King, who has worked there for over three decades. I wanted to immerse myself in a different culture and learn about local life to witness Pakistan's rich cultural diversity and experience the warmth of its people. This entailed travelling across the country from major cities to rural mountainous regions and meeting rural communities, including the Parkari Kohli tribe.

After Karachi, I visited Lahore. Then, it was northwards to Islamabad by bus, a five-hour journey. From Islamabad, I travelled further north by car to join the scenic Karakoram Highway along the Indus River. My driver brought us through the towns of Chilas, Gilgit, Balakot, and Karimabad. We stayed for a couple of days in Karimabad, using it as a base to explore the Hopper Valley and the Black Glacier. The scenery was just incredible: snow-capped peaks, panoramic views of the Himalayas and stunning valleys. I got to meet the unique Ismaili community in Karimabad, where the atmosphere was less conservative and more calm. Women seemed freer in their dress code, and local people were friendly. However, there was a strong security presence due to the area's proximity to the CPEC (China–Pakistan Economic Corridor), with many checkpoints and police escorts. The mountains and unique way of life had a profound impact on me.

In Quetta, I attended the wedding of a close school friend from our days at St Jarlath's College in Ireland. Originally from Afghanistan, his family had moved to Quetta before settling in Ireland. Situated in a valley with arid mountain views, Quetta offered dry heat, which was a relief after Sindh's humidity. There was a strong Pashtun cultural identity with unique customs and attire, such as the traditional shalwar kameez,

complete with a waistcoat and a round, flat-topped hat called a Pakol. The atmosphere was conservative, with fewer women visible in public; those seen wore face coverings. Many Pashtuns view themselves as a unified community across Afghanistan and Pakistan, often disregarding national borders.

At my friend's traditional Muslim wedding, the men and women sat in separate areas; I never even saw my friend's bride. A small family ceremony was followed by a large banquet, where the men danced the Attan, a traditional Pashtun dance. There was no alcohol, yet the energy remained high late into the night.



Cathal King at his friend's wedding in Quetta. Photos: Cathal King

While in Quetta, I taught English to some kindergarten students (ages five to seven) in a local primary school in small classes of eight to ten students. Their resources were scant: one shared textbook for the class and no whiteboard. Other challenges included no electricity from 9 am to 12 noon, which made the classrooms dark and very hot. There was a heavy reliance on rote learning; many students memorised words without understanding their meaning. Students often spoke Urdu and other regional languages, showcasing impressive multilingual skills from a young age.

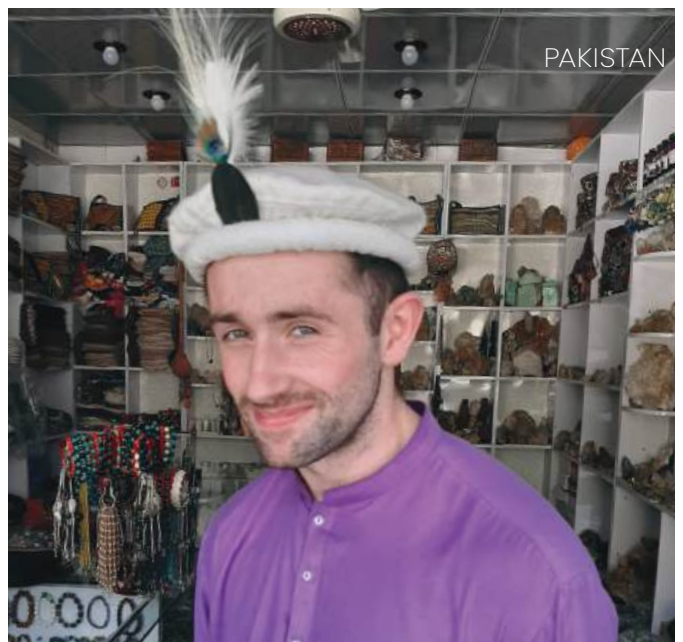
My uncle, Fr Tomás, runs the Joti Centre in Mirpurkhas, a centre for religious programmes, training, and gatherings for the Catholic community in Sindh.

Despite their hardships, the Parkari Kholis are known for their warmth and generosity, always ensuring guests are well-fed and welcomed.

Through his work, I met many Christian families and communities across interior Sindh, Lahore, Karachi and even Quetta. I witnessed my uncle's work supporting local communities, particularly housing projects for tribal people whose homes are vulnerable to flooding. Seeing him help those in need first-hand was deeply moving. Everywhere we went, the church community welcomed us, often hosting us in parish houses or at priests' homes.

Attending Mass in Pakistan was a powerful experience. In both cities and remote villages, people engaged with the service wholeheartedly - unlike in Ireland, where participation is more reserved. The congregations sang Urdu hymns with passion, accompanied by drums and shakers. Their deep connection to their faith was evident. Despite being a minority in a Muslim-majority country, Christians maintain a strong faith. Their dedication, even amidst societal challenges, is inspiring; they uphold their beliefs with pride and resilience.

Temperatures in this area reach up to 45°C in the peak of summer; daytime highs average 35–40°C. Night-time remains warm, with fans essential for comfort indoors. How difficult it must be for people without fans or air conditioning, especially with the mosquitoes! Climate change is impacting life in Pakistan. I witnessed heavy rain, which caused stagnant water to remain for weeks in many areas due to insufficient drainage and the soil retaining water. Pakistan's monsoon rains have been growing more severe - the catastrophic floods of 2022 caused widespread damage. I saw glacier shrinkage in the northern mountains, the impact of this becoming increasingly visible over the past two decades.

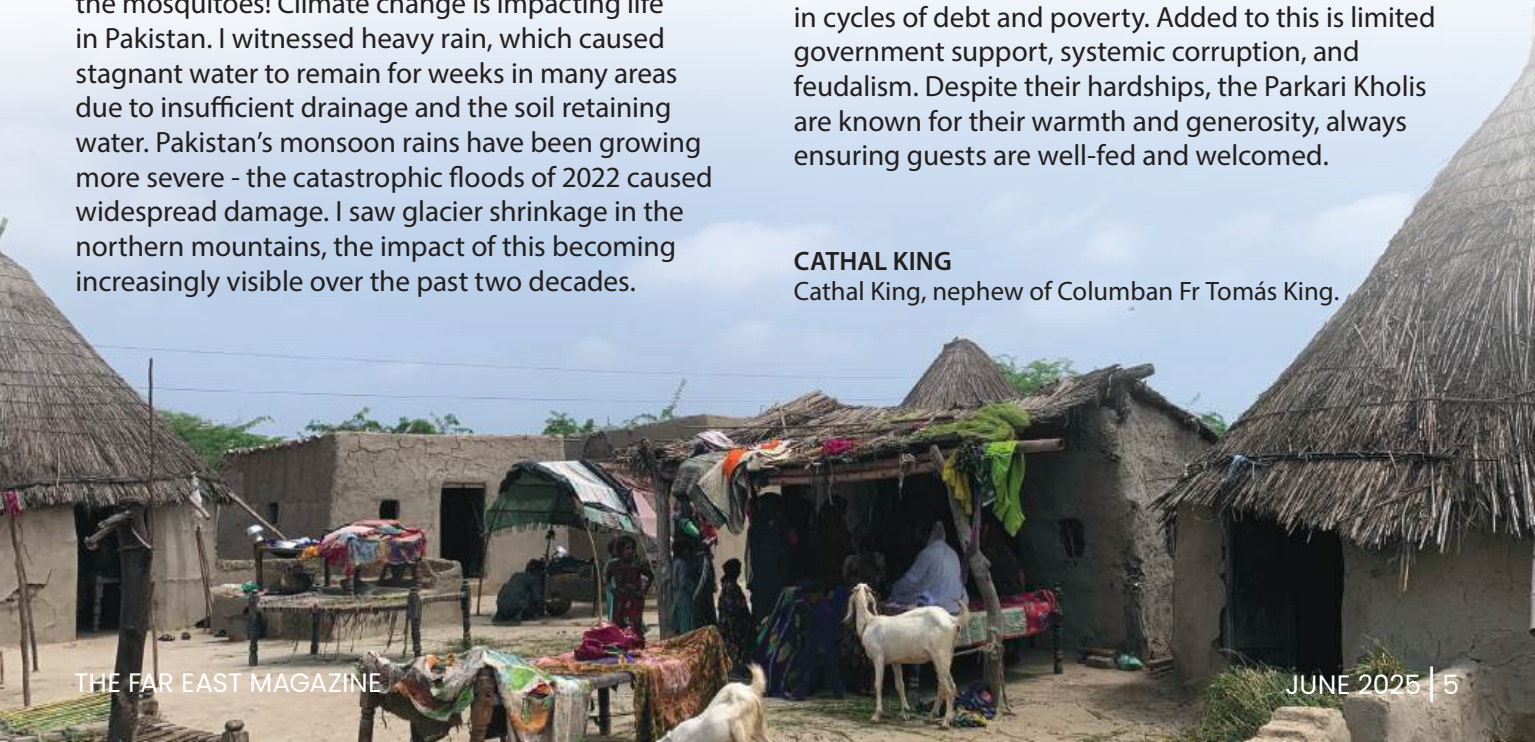


Cathal King in Pakistan.

The Parkari Kholis live simply in rural villages of small mud-and-straw huts of one or two rooms. Their homes are surrounded by farm animals such as goats, chickens and cattle, reflecting their agrarian lifestyle. Meals are often cooked on simple ground stoves, using traditional methods, with the staple food being roti and dal. The Parkari Kholi speak their own language, Parkari, though many also know Urdu. Women's clothing is colourful and patterned, reflecting a rich cultural identity. The Parkari Kholi are often viewed as low caste, resulting in discrimination and economic hardship. Some have been victims of "bonded labour", a modern-day form of slavery that sees them trapped in cycles of debt and poverty. Added to this is limited government support, systemic corruption, and feudalism. Despite their hardships, the Parkari Kholis are known for their warmth and generosity, always ensuring guests are well-fed and welcomed.

CATHAL KING

Cathal King, nephew of Columban Fr Tomás King.



EINSTEIN EDUCATIONAL CENTRE



A child at home in the village.



A child carrying school chairs.

Einstein village can hardly be called a village. It is a large, depressed slum area on the outskirts of the city of Yangon in Myanmar (formerly Burma). People live in abject poverty in hundreds of shanties, with neither water nor electricity. These shanties run along a muddy path that leads to the back wall of an ancient Buddhist monastery.

In 1964, when the military junta took over Myanmar, embassies, industries and factories were closed, jobs were lost, and families moved to villages like Einstein, where they set up temporary shelters made of four bamboo rods and a sack covering. These shacks soon became their homes. In these places, the men live in the hope of casual construction work, the women shift through garbage, collect discarded plastics, or sell food in the marketplace to provide for their children.

The nearest government school to Einstein is a 50-minute walk from the village. Pupils must provide their own uniforms and textbooks and pay a small annual fee.

The children of Einstein, who could not afford this meagre expense, did not go to school at all until Mary Man came along.

MARYS MAN'S COMMITMENT TO EINSTEIN

In 2003, Mary Man was in her senior year in college in Yangon when she saw a woman rummaging through a garbage bin. After an initial conversation, she accompanied her on the bus to Einstein, where she witnessed the devastating poverty of the area. When Mary graduated from college, she committed herself to educating these poverty-stricken children.

With a generous donation from Combined Services Third World Fund, Dublin, a more durable building was constructed from native materials. A brick foundation was added, and the gravel floor was cemented. A picture of the Buddha in the classroom assured the local leaders that we Christians were not building a church.

EINSTEIN EDUCATION CENTRE 2023

When Mary Man became director of the programme, she discovered that most of the children survived on only one meal a day. They needed nourishing food as well as education. With a generous donation from the Oblate Fathers, we began our Einstein Education Centre. Our goal was a nourishing snack for every child before class and a substantial meal at 3 pm before they went home.

A library with benches, books, and colourful charts was added, as well as a much-needed outdoor kitchen. Soon, the numbers increased, and over 300 children between the ages of three and nine years came every day for class and for food.

A BOWL FOR EVERY GRAN

Zaw, a six-year-old child, held on to his bowl but refused to eat. His grandmother had eaten nothing that day, and he wanted to share his dinner with her. To his delight, Mary Man gave him another bowl for his grandmother. By the end of the week, every Gran in Einstein was receiving a nourishing meal. That meant more chickens, more eggs, more rice, and more charcoal for the fire, so we went back with our begging bowls to our benefactors, who supported us generously for the next number of years.

As the school progressed, the children's health improved from the nourishment they received. They spent most of the day in the library with its colourful charts and books or outside playing ball by the side of the school.

As the number of children in the school increased, so did the needs of the youth who had graduated. When Indra, a 16-year-old girl, needed work, Mary Man bought her a sewing machine and found a seamstress to teach her to sew. Indra, in turn, taught other teenagers, so another machine was bought for them.

It was noted that Tera, a 15-year-old girl, was missing from class. After many inquiries and a home visitation, Mary Man learned that Tera had been promised well-paid employment. Suspicious, she followed the trail of this story until Tera was found in a safe house being groomed for prostitution with other girls. Mary Man secretly rescued Tera and one other girl, but a young officer at the door would not allow them to leave.

Mary talked to him briefly, and when she placed 100 kyats (\$15.00) under his collar, he released the latch.

THE 2021 MILITARY COUP IN MYANMAR

In the 2021 military coup, leader Ang San Suu Kyi was sentenced to 33 years in jail. The military carried out a brutal, nationwide crackdown on the millions of people opposed to its rule. The junta security forces carried out mass killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual violence and other abuses that amount to crimes against humanity.

When the military took control, the youth took to the streets. Many were killed or ended up in prison. Unfortunately, the situation today continues to worsen, and many have left for Thailand or India. The destruction of churches and schools where people hide or seek shelter from the military continues today.

THE SAD DEMISE OF EINSTEIN SCHOOL

The fear and cruelty of the military was severely felt in Einstein. A few months ago, while Mary Man was preparing for class, several strong men came in, took her wallet and phone and ransacked the school, taking with them many of the school's belongings, including the kitchen pots and pans. The writing was on the wall. Under the present military regime, classes and meals had to be cancelled; it was too dangerous to come to school or use its building. The first-ever Einstein primary school had to close. It was with great sadness that the parents received the news. How were they now going to educate and feed their children?

There was nothing left now for Mary to do but pack her few belongings. It was with a heavy heart that she walked down the muddy path along the local shanties to get a rickshaw to bring her to Yangon City. Her 20-year-old educational programme had come to an abrupt end.

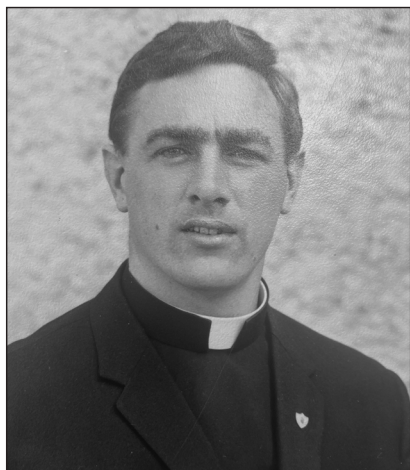
Mary can take comfort in the fact that two generations of children in Einstein can read and write and find employment. Hopefully, they, in turn, will encourage their children to study.

SR KATHLEEN COYLE

Sr Kathleen Coyle and the Columban Sisters continue to work with Mary Man as she discerns her future.

Photos: Sr Kathleen Coyle

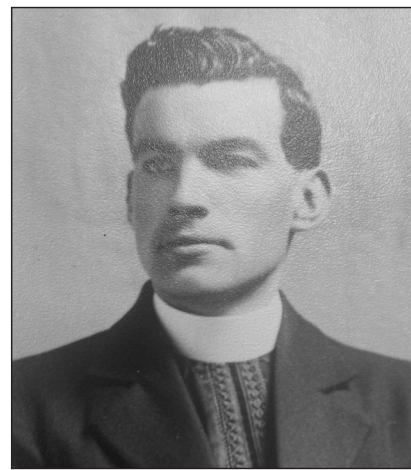
THOSE CRAZY COLUMBAN COLLIERS



Fr Raymond Collier at ordination.



Fr Kieran Collier at his ordination.



Fr Anthony Collier at his ordination.

“When his family heard about this, they said ... ‘he’s out of his mind’” (Mk. 3:21).

It’s not surprising that many of Jesus’ contemporaries felt he was crazy. All that stuff about “love your enemy, give away your possessions, lay down your life for others” must have sounded insane at the time. Yet, these are the ideas that we Christians hold dear, and that Columban missionaries have long sought to put into practice. Who cares if many think our mission is “A Mad Thing to Do” (the tongue-in-cheek title of Columban Fr Neil Collins’s 2017 book)? Yes. We Columbans are “crazy for Christ” - and proud of it.

Just look at the story of the Collier family, natives of Clogherhead, Co. Louth in Ireland. Three of their members became Columban priests - Uncle Tony, Uncle Kieran and nephew Ray. (If that wasn’t enough, Ray had two aunts who became nuns - Auntie Rea with the Franciscans and Auntie Freda with the Enclosed Dominicans.)

Tony went to Korea in the 1930s, survived four years of Japanese internment during the Second World War, and then - incredibly - agreed to return to Korea in 1950 despite the threat of another war. He refused to abandon his parishioners when hostilities finally broke out and, as a result, was executed by the invading Communist soldiers (so becoming the first recorded foreigner to die in the Korean War). It was four months before news of Tony’s fate reached Ireland.

Kieran served for over thirty years in the desperately poor Kachin state in the far north of Burma (now Myanmar), an area constantly riven by conflict between government and separatist forces. In due course, Burma’s military dictatorship imposed a restriction on foreign missionaries to the effect that, if they left the country, they wouldn’t be allowed back in.

Like his brother Tony, Kieran refused to leave his flock, staying until the Columbans were forced to close the Burma mission altogether in 1978. (Kieran died in Ireland in 1998.)

Many might regard the sacrifices of Tony and Kieran to have been ridiculous and unnecessary. However ... maybe God sees things differently! (As an interesting footnote, Tony and Kieran never met as priests. Tony was under internment in Korea at the time of his brother’s ordination, and by the time Kieran managed to get back on leave to Ireland, Tony was already dead.)

Ray was on mission in the Philippines from 1967 until 1978. He was based on the island of Mindanao, a territory plagued by unrest between Christian and Muslim communities. After ill health forced his withdrawal from the Philippines, he came to Britain, where he chose to work in the inner-city areas, first in London and then in Birmingham. He lived out his vocation by reaching out to immigrant communities and helping foster understanding between groups from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

In fact, he is still at it ... happy and active in his 80s and always stressing how much he's been inspired by the example of his uncles. As a boy, he remembers them as being devout, warm-hearted and "down to earth".

"Two things that influenced me were my uncles' dedication to daily prayer and the Eucharist and their joyful commitment to their people. We all grew very fond of Tony when he was home on holiday in '49-'50. I loved the humanity of the man. For the family, he was always known as 'Tony', not 'Fr Tony'. The same was true of Kieran. Tony was a quality Gaelic football player. He represented Louth many times." (Although, Ray adds, "he had a problem with 'self-starting': he needed a good thump before he would begin to play seriously!")

Did Tony's martyrdom influence Ray's faith and vocation?

"Initially, not much. But, as time went by, it planted a seed, an ideal, a desire within me to honour his memory."

More and more, Ray felt drawn to being a Columban priest who'd serve God by crossing boundaries of culture, nationality and faith. His father encouraged Ray but also helped him keep his feet firmly on the ground. "Dad said, 'Be your own man. Don't try to be Tony.'"

Given that 2025 marks the 75th anniversary of the Columban Korean martyrs (plus the 80th anniversary of the Columban 'Malate' martyrs, who died during the Battle of Manila in 1945) and that in this Jubilee Year, we are called by Pope Francis to be 'Pilgrims of Hope', how might the stories of people like Tony and Kieran be relevant today?

Ray feels that, since his uncles' time, the world and the Church have changed. "Back when I was ordained, we 'went out there' to spread the Gospel. Over time, I began to see things in a different way. Now, people from 'there' are coming here - refugees, migrants, asylum-seekers - and they are running into rejection."

He goes on to explain, "This reality came home to me very strongly when I worked in the parish of Beckton, East London. On any given Sunday, people of anything between forty and fifty different cultures and nationalities attended Mass. Today, our mission is just as much here, in our own countries, and it's to accept the stranger. We have to show everyone that



Fr Raymond Collier in the grounds of the Solihull house in Britain - present day.

'difference' is a blessing, not a threat. This is a new understanding of mission. The challenge of mission is now here, in Europe."

Sounds crazy? Not to Ray, because it is the RIGHT SORT of craziness. It is the craziness of Pope Francis. It is the craziness of Christ.

Were Uncles Tony and Kieran looking after Ray?

In 2010, Ray was returning from a visit to the United States when he suffered a massive heart attack at London's Heathrow Airport and collapsed unconscious. By remarkable good fortune, a Japanese nurse (who was on a scholarship and living in London) just happened to be on the scene. Finding that Ray had stopped breathing, she rendered emergency assistance and kept Ray alive until a defibrillator could be brought, thus saving his life.

Later, she visited Ray in the hospital. She told him a companion had asked her to accompany her to the airport that day. The nurse had decided not to go but then seemed to hear a voice saying, "Go to the airport". She'd hesitated, but the voice had kept repeating, "Go to the airport". So, finally, she gave in and went.

Who knows ... maybe Tony and Kieran were looking after Ray?

FR JOHN BOLES

Columban Fr John Boles is the Director of the Region of Britain.

RENEWING EARTH, RENEWING US



Living Soils Farm, at Sitio Kakawan, Patrocenio, Claveria, Misamis Oriental, conducted training on Regenerative Agriculture/Soil Regeneration over two days on February 22–23, 2025. The training was attended by no less than ten key leaders of organisations from different parts of Mindanao.

These key leaders, farmers, and faith-based organisations have been engaged in various initiatives to protect and care for the environment through agroecological, climate-resilient farming practices.

The training objective was to find new inspiration to rekindle and renew the interest of these key leaders, who have been working, practising, and promoting natural, organic agriculture in rural areas; obtain the latest updates on the Philippine agricultural situation as well as updates on organic agroecological and soil regeneration practices; and reflect on and deepen understanding of the roles and functions of soil microorganisms in sustaining agriculture and its strategies for application and wider adoption in communities.

The participants were amazed by the training. It was held in a venue where they could directly see the living proof of what it preached: healthy plants grown with the use of naturally produced indigenous

microorganisms. Different plants, such as corn, peanuts, tomatoes, string beans, sweet potato, and many more, grow strong and healthy at Living Soils Farm with the application of tailor-made, science-based compost and bio-solutions. Farmers witness the soil transformation process for better yield and healthier plants. This method has been developed and enhanced by the Living Soils Farm led by engineer Gerry Burdas, who recently studied the Soil Food Web System in California, USA.

The training navigated participants to current and updated soil tools and materials, from simple tools like tie-wires to determine the compaction of soils to sophisticated ones like microscopes. The “how-to” and “why” aspects of regenerating, revitalising, or healing the soil then followed. The current agricultural context and situation were discussed by Bobby M. Pagusara, former Coordinator of MASIPAG-Mindanao and Agroecology Consultant of the Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund (Fastenaktion) projects in the Philippines, which serves as the rationale for why this training is relevant and important.

The participants realised that it all boils down to the basic premise that God created everything good and perfect. The soil is perfect. It offers a complete and balanced ecosystem with beneficial and non-beneficial microbes, such as bacteria, fungi, and nematodes, that live on by eating harmful bacteria, fungi and nematodes, thereby neutralising or preventing bad microbes from causing sickness and diseases in plants.

As a result of this process, the wastes or excretes, which include minerals/nutrients eaten by bacteria and fungi, become the yummy food or available food nutrients for the plants - thus making plants grow very well. Billions of beneficial bacteria-protozoa, fungus-mycelium, and nematodes are found in soils not sprayed with synthetic agrochemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Each microbe or group of microbes must be connected to the other to perform this function or task. Different kinds of microbes and minerals should be together to produce the desired result, which is making minerals and nutrients available for plants and preventing bad microbes from harming or infecting the plants. This can happen only when they are

together as a community. However, agrochemicals disrupt this mutual and symbiotic functioning process because all microbes, good and bad, are destroyed by synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides. So natural organic farming is the correct way to manage agriculture.

Good soil is indicated by having many clusters of microbial communities bonded together, as observed by participants through the microscope during training. When organisms are in communion, good things happen. This is also the challenge to human organisms, the homo sapiens. We need to group ourselves and unite as universal clusters of communities with the common purpose of restoring the soil and caring for the environment. We strive to do this in the best way possible following the most perfect model of communion: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

The participants were highly inspired and motivated to continue doing organic farming and/or regenerative agroecological methods to help mitigate climate change and care for the environment, the health and life of the people and the world. According to one of the participants, Greg Tacbas, who is a farmer leader and a local Church Lay Minister: *For me, the training was the most reaffirming and extraordinary training I've ever attended in the sense that it reconfirmed and provided sufficient proof of my previously gained knowledge in the field of sustainable/organic/DIFS (Diversified and Integrated Farming System) agriculture. Because of this, I am so inspired to pursue and more motivated and aggressive towards agroecology. Thank you very much, Fr Oliver McCrossan and your friends, for organising/sponsoring/supporting this training, and to our scientist resource persons, Sir Gerry Burdas and Bobby Pagusara, for coordinating and organising this training.*

We strive to do this in the best way possible following the most perfect model of communion: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

FR OLIVER MCCROSSAN

Columban Fr Oliver McCrossan lives in Ireland.



OASIS OF HOPE

BLOSSOMING IN THE DUST

Everywhere, dust swirls in the hot and humid air, irritating one's eyes, nose and throat. This light brown sand, which covers most of the surrounding landscape, is easily taken up and carried by the breeze or driven to a frenzy by the sudden braking of vehicles. Of course, there is nothing surprising about this, given that Lima - the capital city of Peru - is built in a desert with just one-third of an inch (less than one centimetre) of rainfall per year.

Moreover, here at the edge of the city where Columban Fr Tony Coney has ministered for the past thirty years, the development of infrastructure is slow, while many of its poorer residents have much more

pressing concerns than caring for the surrounding environment. Consequently, not only is the air thick with dust and the dark black fumes of vehicles, but many open spaces - including the small plots in front of people's homes - are left barren or strewn with garbage.

What a joyful surprise it is then to come across small plots that are green and vibrant! Some have small trees or cactus plants; others have shrubs and flowers. However, to maintain their vitality and beauty, their owners must tend and care for them - on the one hand, preventing neighbourhood dogs and careless passers by from spoiling them; on the other hand, watering, fertilizing and pruning them regularly.

Maintaining one of these small oases in this desert landscape requires daily devotion and diligence, but the delight that it provides not only to its owner but to all who observe it as they pass by is immeasurable.

St Bernadette's Children's Centre is another kind of oasis in this desert. In an otherwise colourless array of buildings covering a steep, sandy hillside, this

bright yellow building perched at the top of the hill immediately catches one's eye and piques one's curiosity. Just as a wayfarer in a desert is drawn with hope and delight to an oasis, so do more than three hundred children and teenagers from the surrounding neighbourhood approach this children's centre daily with the expectant joy of having a safe place to play and make new friends, as well as exploring and learning new things.

Unlike their homes, the St Bernadette's Children's Centre is spacious and colourful. Compared to the very few recreational options in the narrow neighbourhood streets, here they can freely engage in a wide variety of activities, ranging from jigsaw puzzles to snooker, from indoor soccer to arts and crafts. Here, too, they can avail themselves of the gentle guidance and support of professional staff in order to develop reading skills, overcome a speech defect, or complete homework exercises. In a world where many parents struggle to provide the necessities of life for their family, where the education system favours those who are already privileged, and where public recreational facilities are minimal, the children's centre is an oasis where children and teenagers blossom as they engage in various activities, develop their unique gifts and talents, and grow in relationship with others in a secure and caring environment.



Columban Fr Tony Coney teaching students at St Bernadette's Children's Centre in Peru.



Student at St Bernadette's Children's Centre.

The provision of a supportive and nurturing environment where children can flourish is also an ongoing endeavour for Fr Michael McKinnon who ministers in a sprawling rural parish. Located more than 750 miles (1,200 kilometres) from the city of Lima and almost 13,000 feet (approximately 4,000 metres) above sea level, the air is thin and the sunlight harsh in this mountainous region.

Fr McKinnon, who belongs to the diocese of Ballarat in Victoria, Australia, has spent more than fifteen years on mission under the Columban umbrella in South America. In the town of Yanaoca where he currently ministers, one of his predecessors, Columban priest Fr Kim Young-In, established a children's centre called "T'ikariy" more than a decade ago and Fr McKinnon continues to oversee and manage it. "The name T'ikariy means 'to flower' in the local indigenous Quechua language," he explains, "and it is a joy to see the children of this area gradually blossom as they develop their potential and self-confidence".

He continues, "In the surrounding environment, they face so many obstacles - for example, during covid, the schools here were closed for almost two years, and the children had absolutely no alternative opportunities to learn, so they are still trying to catch up with their studies. Moreover, many of their parents are unable to assist them due to their own limited educational background as well as their ongoing

struggle to make ends meet in this harsh climate and bleak environment. However, we are blessed to have a community of the Poor Sisters of Jesus Christ, as well as a few semi-retired teachers living nearby.

The parish oversees and manages the children's centre, where those semi-retired teachers assist more than sixty children with their homework during evenings throughout the school year. Together with a few student teachers and some Sisters, they also facilitate the summer holiday programme, which consists of classes in literacy, mathematics and religious education on weekday mornings and then various games and activities - such as arts and crafts, cooking, music and dancing - in the afternoons. Last year, ninety children benefited from the summer holiday programme."

As we continue our walk together through the children's centre, the radiant smiles of the children in the classrooms and the brightly coloured displays of their artwork on the corridor walls are reminders that this place is indeed an oasis of care, support and hope, not only for those children but also for their families and the wider community.

Both Fr McKinnon and Fr Coney are deeply grateful for the generosity of so many people across the world who continue to provide the resources that are necessary to keep these oases irrigated and cultivated so that the children who avail of their services can grow and blossom. "Looking back on these past twenty-eight years since St Bernadette's Children's Centre was first established, each year there have been moments when I wondered - and sometimes worried - how we could make ends meet, and each year I have learned to trust a little more in God's providence since we have always succeeded in balancing the



Columban Fr Michael McKinnon with Mr. Harry Cahuana, a teacher and supervisor at T'ikariy Children's Centre, Yanaoca, Peru.



Columban Fr Michael McKinnon chatting with parishioners in the marketplace, Yanaoca, Peru. Photos: Fr Tim Mulroy SSC

books," Fr Coney muses. "Sometimes it's a gift from a family member or the people of a parish where I had previously ministered back home in Australia. At other times, it's a donation from Columban supporters or a church agency that keeps us operating in the black," adds Fr McKinnon.

Earlier this year, St Bernadette's Children's Centre celebrated the 28th anniversary of its foundation with a week of special activities for the children and teenagers. Already, Fr Coney is anticipating the 30th anniversary celebration and is engaged in various preparations for that occasion: "We have plans for the major reconstruction of one area as well as the significant refurbishment of several other areas of the children's centre, which we aim to complete before the 30th anniversary in February 2027. However, the only truly meaningful celebration of that important milestone will be to ensure that the centre becomes even more responsive to the various needs of the children and teenagers in this poor and barren neighbourhood."

Seeing the blessings that these two children's centres continue to provide younger generations, Fr Coney and Fr McKinnon remain committed to irrigating, cultivating and extending those oases in the hope that, little by little, the surrounding communities will be transformed into thriving, colourful flower gardens.

FR TIM MULROY

Columban Fr Tim Mulroy, after six years as the Columban Society Leader based in Hong Kong, spent part of his sabbatical year in Peru.



PEACE WITH CREATION

2025 COLUMBAN SCHOOL COMPETITION



This Season of Creation is a time to meditate, pray, and respond to the cry of Creation. The Columban Mission Centre invites students attending Catholic primary and secondary schools in Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia to enter the 2025 Columban Season of Creation Art and/or Essay Competition, held in September.

This annual competition offers a platform for the prophetic voices of young people to reflect deeply and creatively through artwork, essays, or poetry, as they explore and express what it means to care for and restore God's creation.

In a time when violence and war ravage our world, and the environment suffers ongoing exploitation, this year's theme, Peace with Creation, calls us to action. God invites each of us to participate in the healing of our planet and the restoration of relationships - among ourselves, with the environment, and with our Creator.

Drawing inspiration from Isaiah 32, we see a vision of hope: a ruined creation transformed into a fruitful forest by the outpouring of God's spirit. This biblical image reminds us that peace - Shalom - is more than the absence of war. It is the wholeness that comes from harmony, restoration, and justice.

Yet, human actions continue to wound the earth through deforestation, pollution, unsustainable industries, and conflict. In order to truly bring peace and healing, humanity must reconcile its relationship with the natural world.

For over 107 years, the St Columbans Mission Society has worked for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation across the globe. From planting mangroves in Fiji and hosting interfaith peace pilgrimages in Myanmar, to running eco-retreats in England and lobbying for climate justice in Korea, Columban missionaries serve as peacemakers.

In Myanmar's Kachin State - where civil war has endured for nearly 70 years - the Columbans operate a rehabilitation centre offering care and hope to young people struggling with addiction. In Fiji, Columban lay missionaries lead clean-up campaigns and educate youth about ocean health. In Australia, they promote

Laudato Si' in schools. In every corner of the world where they serve, Columbans work to restore peace - with people, with God, and with Creation.

BE PART OF THE MOVEMENT

As Isaiah envisioned, and the Columbans now live, peace begins when the spirit of God renews the earth - and when we, as stewards of creation, respond with courage, compassion, and creativity.

This year, we ask students to reflect on what "Peace with Creation" means by responding to one of the following questions through a drawing, piece of artwork, an essay, or a poem:

1. What does "peace with creation" mean to you?
2. What are some practical ways to be at peace in creation?
3. How can we reconcile our relationship with creation from destruction to peace?

Let this Season of Creation be a time where young voices lead the way, and together we transform today's wilderness into tomorrow's fruitful field of justice, hope, and peace. This Season of Creation, help restore God's Shalom. Together, through the Spirit, let's bring peace to our world - one voice, one brushstroke, one word at a time.

Don't miss the submission of your response by September 1, 2025!

FOR MORE INFORMATION SCAN QR
www.columban.org.au



A NEW ARCHBISHOP FOR NEW CALEDONIA



Archbishop Sionepoe (left) with Fr Donal McIlraith.

On Saturday April 12, 2025, Bishop Susitino Sionepoe SM (Society of Mary) was installed as the new Metropolitan Archbishop of Nouméa in New Caledonia.

The joyful and moving ceremony was held at the Cathedral of St Joseph and attended by Church leaders, clergy, and laypeople across the Pacific region. Archbishop Sionepoe - affectionately known as "Archbishop Tino" - is a graduate of the Pacific Regional Seminary in Fiji. I had the privilege of teaching him during his formation, and it was a great joy to join the Seminary Rector, Fr Augustino Ulupano SM, in representing the seminary at the installation.

Originally from Hihifo, Wallis Island, Archbishop Tino was ordained a Marist priest in 1993 and ministered in Tonga and New Caledonia. He later served as the Marist Mission Superior in New Caledonia and was elected to the Marist Provincial Council. In 2019, he was appointed Bishop of Wallis and Futuna. Early this year, Pope Francis entrusted him with the archdiocese of Nouméa, succeeding Archbishop Michel-Marie Calvet SM, who has served faithfully and is now 81 years old.

The installation Mass began at 3 pm in the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio. Kanak dancers led the opening procession to the cathedral, followed by altar servers, deacons, priests, and bishops. Archbishop Calvet presided at the beginning of the celebration but later handed over the bishop's staff to Archbishop Tino and led him to the episcopal seat, symbolising the transfer of pastoral leadership. From Suva to Nouméa, the journey was filled with the warm hospitality the Pacific is renowned for. While waiting for our flight at Nadi Airport in Fiji, we met a young Tongan priest - a recent seminary graduate returning from studies in the United States. It was a heartfelt reunion, especially for Fr Ulupano, who had been his Vice Rector, and for me, as his former Scripture lecturer.

Upon arrival in Nouméa, Fr Ken Bhorat, a young parish priest ordained just three years ago, who had arranged our stay, was there to greet us. That evening, his parish community welcomed us with a traditional kava ceremony and a generous banquet. Bishop Simon Mani MSC of Kiribati, a former rector of the seminary, was also present. Later that evening, I reconnected with Fr Bill Hergot SM from Vanuatu, now Marist Superior in New Caledonia and another seminary alumnus.

The next day, we visited the city's key sites with local parishioners Thierry and Colette Tuaula. These sites included the cathedral, a shelter for the homeless run by Fr George Sau, and the Archbishop's Residence. Along the way, I met more former students - now dedicated clergy in their own right - including Fr Jean-Patrick Callega and Bishop Bosco Baremes of Vanuatu. Our visit was not without reminders of the region's challenges. In Paita, we saw the remains of buildings recently destroyed by unrest. In response, parish communities have mobilised, with women guarding churches during the day and men at night.

The hospitality continued with a family fish feast hosted by the Tuaula family. At Mass that evening, I was reunited with Fr Vincent Vireal, a former student I had last seen at his ordination in 2000. It was a moving reunion, made more poignant by memories of his classmate, Fr David Bule Tangsu, who passed away from cancer three years ago. Saturday morning was peaceful, with an early Mass at the Cathedral and time to rest before the installation ceremony. As an official guest, I was seated just behind the bishops, with a clear view of the sanctuary. The Mass, celebrated in French, was deeply spiritual and beautifully enriched by congregational singing of the *Missa de Angelis*.

Afterwards, we shared a simple Lenten supper with the bishops and other guests. On Sunday morning, I boarded a flight home, marking the 54th anniversary of my ordination (April 13, 1971) in the air between New Caledonia, New Zealand, and Fiji. I returned just in time to resume teaching the Book of Revelation at the seminary on Monday morning. Please keep Archbishop Sionepoe - and all of us in the Pacific - in your prayers as he begins this important new chapter in his ministry.

FR DONAL MCIIRATH

Columban Fr Donal McIlraith lives and works in Fiji.

CROSSING BOUNDARIES, EMBRACING GRACE

Growing up in New Zealand (Aotearoa), I developed an early respect for the mana and the legacy of Bishop Pompallier and the Marists from France. The memory of the 1839 founding mission shaped the spiritual culture of my family, parish and school community.

In my youth, I was fascinated by the stories of Suzanne Aubert, Columban Fr Francis Douglas, Emmet McHardy and Tom Cunningham. They were people of faith ready to leave home, cross the oceans, face challenges and make sacrifices. Such was my fascination that my parents and friends were not surprised when I spoke of becoming a priest and heading for the missions.

After ordination in 1965, I was sent to contribute to the Church in South Korea. There, I learned to communicate with language and to build my understanding of customs and culture. In crossing boundaries of culture, faith and social realities, I soon discovered fresh dimensions of my own life and a fresh appreciation for the struggle in the lives of others.

My mission narrative runs in the shadow of the Second Vatican Council. From 1965, the global church was entering a process of change over which we Columbans had little control. The impact of change has been around me for every one of those 60 years. Some assured us that church and mission would eventually settle back to past understandings and familiar practices. Others reckoned that genuine reform and renewal would take decades to absorb, appreciate and integrate. The latter were right!

The Council was far more than a series of top-down decrees. It was an all-absorbing happening across the Catholic world in which the purpose and the practice of mission came under intense scrutiny. Two profound elements called for special recognition and emphasis. First: all mission is in the hands of God - *Missio Dei*. Second: mission is not a service to benefit the church. Mission calls us to reach out and respond to the needs of God's wider world.

Decades of reform and renewal have demanded radical changes in many ways: justice, peace, dialogue,

integrity, reconciliation, inculturation, dignity and rights, ecology, climate change, and now synodality and a whole lot more.

In 2025, I proceed with a "reverse mission" perspective. I resist the tendency to consign mission to distant places and past experiences. As a returned missionary, I keep God's mission alive in the home church.

*Please remember, my friends,
there is a place in my heart for all of you.*

*I give thanks every time you come to mind.
I retain a deep appreciation for all the people, places,
events and experiences.*

*Yes, I am shaped by what we shared on the way.
Thank you for your tolerance of my shortcomings.
I go now to what lies ahead - the call of God.*

FR MICHAEL GORMLY

Columban Fr Michael Gormly lives in Aotearoa New Zealand.



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY



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Columban Fr Kelvin Barrett
Vocations Coordinator
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Photo: St Columbans Mission Society

MY CLASSMATE BRIAN GORE

A REFLECTION ON FAITH, GROWTH AND MISSION

Columban Fr Brian Gore and I first met on March 1, 1962, when fifteen of us Spiritual Year students gathered at St Columban's, a former home of the Nicholas family in the Dandenong Ranges, east of Melbourne. Guided by three Columban priests, together we began our Columban journey. It was the beginning of our a missionary adventure and work in Asia was in our sights.

As young men ranging in age from 17 to 21, we came from every Australian state and New Zealand. Our ethnic makeup and family work backgrounds varied greatly.

Most of us were straight out of school with little worldly experience apart from what we'd absorbed from family, hometown or parish.

Playing Aussie Rules football became the first arena where we began learning about each other's character. The game was new for most of us, but Brian knew it well, coming from Perth. Tall with a frame to match, he taught us some skin-breaking first lessons.

It was obvious to us that Brian was a doer, his eyes ever flashing about to see what needed to be done - be it cleaning the dishes properly after a meal, providing haircuts or preparing the chapel for Mass.

I got to know Brian during seven years in the seminary. Six of our fifteen were ordained on the same day, June 29, 1968, in five states. It was the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Missionary Society of St Columban.

I visited Brian at work in the Philippines on my way to South Korea, where I was to work. I saw how newly formed Basic Christian Communities were emerging on Negros Island and empathized with their work, inspired by the call of Vatican II to new mission engagement with the major issues of the times (*Church in the World 10*).

Intellectually, Brian grew under the influence of Niall O'Brien and other Columbans in what came to be called "ortho-praxis". In other words, Brian was part of local groups of Catholics who were *growing a new way of being church*. Doctrine, interpretation of Scripture, and public commitment to social justice were all "developing", as Cardinal Newman had called it a century before.

If you want to care for the poor, look after the environment was an official Columban Society commitment at its 1988 Assembly. This development of "ortho-practice" emerged under people like Fr Tom Berry, Columban Fr Sean McDonagh and Fr Denis Edwards and has been endorsed by every pope since Vatican II. Brian acted on it. It seems provident that he and Pope Francis died only a day apart.

The Columban Society recognised Brian's leadership skills when it appointed him Australia/New Zealand Regional Superior. Over two terms, he chose



NEGROS NINE



Brian was always a realist. He faced Messianic temptations and learned when to stop pushing. In the last decade, he returned to Negros.

Columbans Fr Reg Howard and Fr Jim Mulroney to assist him. A decade later, he took up that role in the Philippines region. His ready smile encouraged lay staff and Columban priests alike to engage enthusiastically with Columban mission work. It was his idea to send certificates to long-time mission supporters.

Brian travelled Australia and New Zealand to reach parish groups focused on education, women, justice or peace dialogue forums. He engaged the secular media to promote a wider understanding of the Church's mission in the world. Brian grew in this area, tutored by journalist Shane Mooney and friends, from the time of the *Negros Nine* affair in the early 1980s. He was the focus of Columban efforts to make ordinary Australians aware of the impact of capitalist-backed military dictatorships. Street theatre in Melbourne's CBD saw campaigners behind mock prison bars. Columban Colin McLean, Presentation Sisters and Christian Brothers were key to this awareness raising.

Brian grew through disappointments. He learnt to live with some church people who ridiculed him as an intellectual lightweight. Some publicly criticized his promotion of economic honesty within church institutions; others were soured by his seemingly harsh decisions as a leader. A few people twisted the aims of the local social justice programme to revert to a mentality of, *I'm all right, Jack*.

Brian was always a realist. He faced Messianic temptations and learned when to stop pushing. In the last decade, he returned to Negros. Despite growing physical limitations, he continued to inspire

the work of two major educational centres, where he selected competent leadership teams to run both a diocesan formation centre and an ecologically focused residential centre to help farming families. He valued economic realities. The centre showed how to make organic fertilizers to save money and helped create markets for local weavers as supplementary income.

His ready smile encouraged lay staff and Columban priests alike to engage enthusiastically with Columban mission work. It was his idea to send certificates to long-time mission supporters.

I have no intention of making a saint out of Brian. He had his own personality and faults, like the rest of us. However, I am ever conscious that, over decades, he constantly grew as a person, believer and missionary. Most of us get stuck at some point in life, but Brian seemed to keep open to where God was leading him.

It is a source of great joy for me to have witnessed this quality of constant growth in his life. It is a great source of gratitude to appreciate how God works with each of our personalities, gifting us at the right time (Lk 2:52).

FR CHARLES RUE

Columban Fr Charles Rue lives in Canberra, Australia.



Photos: St Columbans Mission Society
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CHINA AND THE PAPACY: REFLECTIONS ON POPE FRANCIS AND THE RISE OF POPE LEO XIV

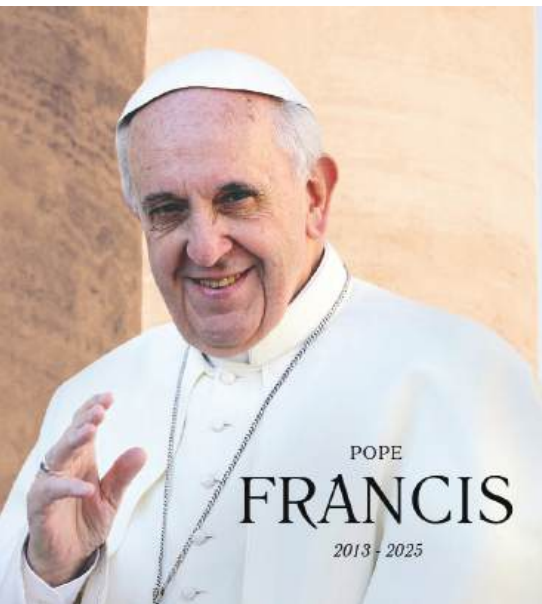


Photo: AAP image/EPA/Frustaci

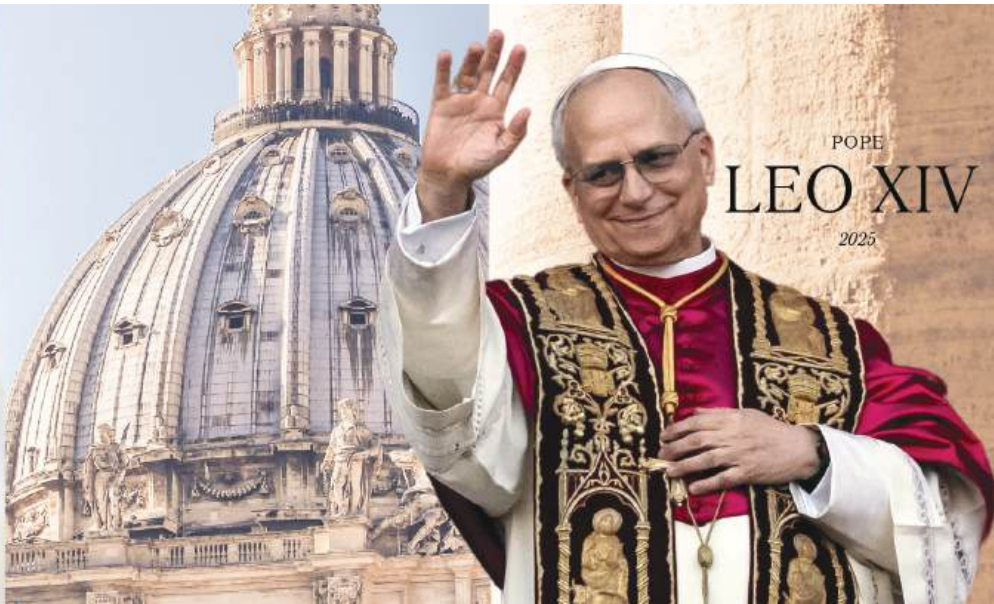


Photo: Habemus Papam - Pope Leo XIV, © Mazur/cbcew.org.uk/CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

The death of Pope Francis on Easter Monday was communicated with lightning speed among the Catholic community in China. Within just a few minutes of the sad announcement in Rome, social media groups at parish and regional level throughout the country were sharing the news in a way that was not possible twenty years earlier with the death of Pope John Paul II.

Pope Francis had a great love for the people of China and for the Church in China. He availed of many opportunities to express this love. In a long heart-warming message to the Catholics of China in 2018, Pope Francis wrote, "you are a small flock present and active within the vastness of an immense people journeying through history... Therefore, 'let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven' (Mt 5:16)".

On the Saturday afternoon following the death of Pope Francis, I was at Holy Family Church in Wuhan. A little unexpectedly, as a few friends and I walked by a room where a group of catechumens were gathered for class, we were invited to join them to look at the funeral Mass in Rome which was being viewed live.

The Mass was relayed on social media by a Catholic website in Beijing, the linking of a mobile phone to a projector in our room providing us with views of St. Peter's Square that were amazing for all to see. Completely unplanned, we seemed to have front row seats at an international event of historic proportions. One liturgical detail that delighted this group at Holy Family Church was that the final prayer of intercession at the funeral Mass was read in Chinese.

Earlier in the week, the Beijing government acknowledged the death of Pope Francis. During his papacy he sought to develop the relationship between the Vatican and China, both sides being familiar with progress that can be evaluated over centuries rather than shorter time-scales.

In the days following the funeral Mass, the attention of Chinese Catholics turned to preparations for the conclave. The possibility of an Asian cardinal being

selected as Bishop of Rome became a popular topic of discussion. Even in wider Chinese society, many people were also watching developments in Rome. One Chinese friend who is not a Catholic asked me for an opinion about the upcoming meeting of “red-clothes bishops” as they are known in the Chinese language.

The arrival of white smoke on the second day of the conclave happened soon after midnight in China. As with news of the papal death travelling fast, the midnight hour in China was no restriction on the circulation of news. In a humorous reflection of how midnight news might not reach everyone, one Chinese sister in Wuhan told me how another sister in her convent went to Friday’s early morning Mass in the parish church completely unaware of what had just happened in Rome. Her prayer of intercession for God to continue guiding the selection of the new pope was quickly interrupted by another sister, the update being a realisation that so much can happen in our world in one short night. For the next half hour one sister in the community was left wondering about the identity of the new pope.

In a long heart-warming message to the Catholics of China in 2018, Pope Francis wrote, “you are a small flock present and active within the vastness of an immense people journeying through history... Therefore, ‘let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven’ (Mt 5:16)”.

In recent days there has been plenty of discussion among the Catholic community in China about Pope Leo XIV and what his pontificate will mean for the Church here. People in wider society are also aware of his selection. The Chinese government’s foreign

ministry spokesman Lin Jian stated that “it is hoped that under the new pope’s leadership, the Vatican will continue to engage in constructive dialogue with China and conduct in-depth communication on international issues of mutual concern”. In a country where public statements are crafted with immense attention to detail, the content and tone of this message will be analysed carefully in Rome, it being a message that would not have been possible as recently as 50 years ago.

The Chinese government’s foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian stated that “it is hoped that under the new pope’s leadership, the Vatican will continue to engage in constructive dialogue with China and conduct in-depth communication on international issues of mutual concern”.

Pope Francis never visited China. However, his visits to neighbouring countries occasionally provided him with the opportunity to fly over China’s vast land, each occasion being accompanied by a message of goodwill that was sent to the Chinese president Xi Jinping and replies of appreciation being received in Rome in the weeks that followed.

As Pope Leo XIV assumes his role as Bishop of Rome, Catholics in China, as well as some in wider society, will pay attention to whatever messages he communicates about China. The Catholics will see these developments as part of a gradual unfolding of history, faithful to the Church’s long-held view of seeing God active in history, even if developments move at a speed that need to be patiently measured over generations.

FR DAN TROY

Columban Fr Dan Troy lives and works in China.

HOPE THAT WALKS WITH THE POOR



When Pope Francis died on Easter Monday, he left a lasting legacy, a message for World Mission Day 2025. It is intended to be read out on 18 October, World Mission Day 2025.

It will be like a message from beyond, and yet within or among, for those of us who joyfully continue the work of proclaiming the joy of the gospel. The theme of this message is that we be “missionaries of hope among all peoples”. To assist us, Pope Francis highlights some “aspects of our Christian missionary identity”. It is worth reflecting upon these because Francis designated this year to be the Jubilee of Hope and because hope is one virtue that is so desperately needed in our world today.

First of all, we are called to follow “in the footsteps of Christ our hope”. Francis challenges us to keep our eyes focused on Christ. Through the work and ministry of his missionary disciples, Jesus continues to accompany “all who are poor, afflicted, despairing and oppressed”, feeling their pain, listening to them and binding up their wounds. This means that we are called to go out into the streets of the world and become shepherds who, in those memorable words of Pope Francis, take on the “smell of the sheep”.

Secondly, Christians are called to be “bearers and builders of hope among all peoples”. Here Francis says, “Impelled by this great hope, Christian communities can be harbingers of a new humanity in a world that, in the most ‘developed’ areas, shows serious symptoms of human crisis: a widespread sense of bewilderment, loneliness and indifference to the needs of the elderly, and a reluctance to make an effort to assist our neighbours in need.” Given this situation, missionary disciples are called to do what

God does or to follow God’s “style”: “with closeness, compassion and tenderness, cultivating a personal relationship with our brothers and sisters in their specific situations”. In this way, “we will also convey the compassionate heart of the Lord.”

A third aspect of this sense of identity is the renewal of the mission of hope. This should come about through the celebration of the Easter Triduum and a sincere renewal of our baptismal promises. This renewal begins with prayer, “especially prayer based on the word of God and particularly the Psalms”. As Francis goes on to say, “By praying, we keep alive the spark of hope lit by God within us, so that it can become a great fire, which enlightens and warms everyone around us, also by those concrete actions and gestures that prayer itself inspires.” Finally, Pope Francis insists that “evangelisation is always a communitarian process”. We do it together. In this way we grow together and we build up the Christian community and so become a visible source of hope in the world.

Finally, Pope Francis insists that “evangelisation is always a communitarian process”. We do it together.

I hope this message will be read out on World Mission Day 2025. It will help to remind us of this man of great joy, who was also one who felt the pain, the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. But through it all, he urged us to hold on to hope.

FR TOM ROUSE

Columban Fr Tom Rouse is the Regional Councillor for Aotearoa-New Zealand.

MISSION INTENTIONS POPE FRANCIS

June - That the world might grow in compassion: Let us pray that each one of us might find consolation in a personal relationship with Jesus, and from his Heart, learn to have compassion on the world.

COLUMBAN ACTIVITIES Crossword puzzle

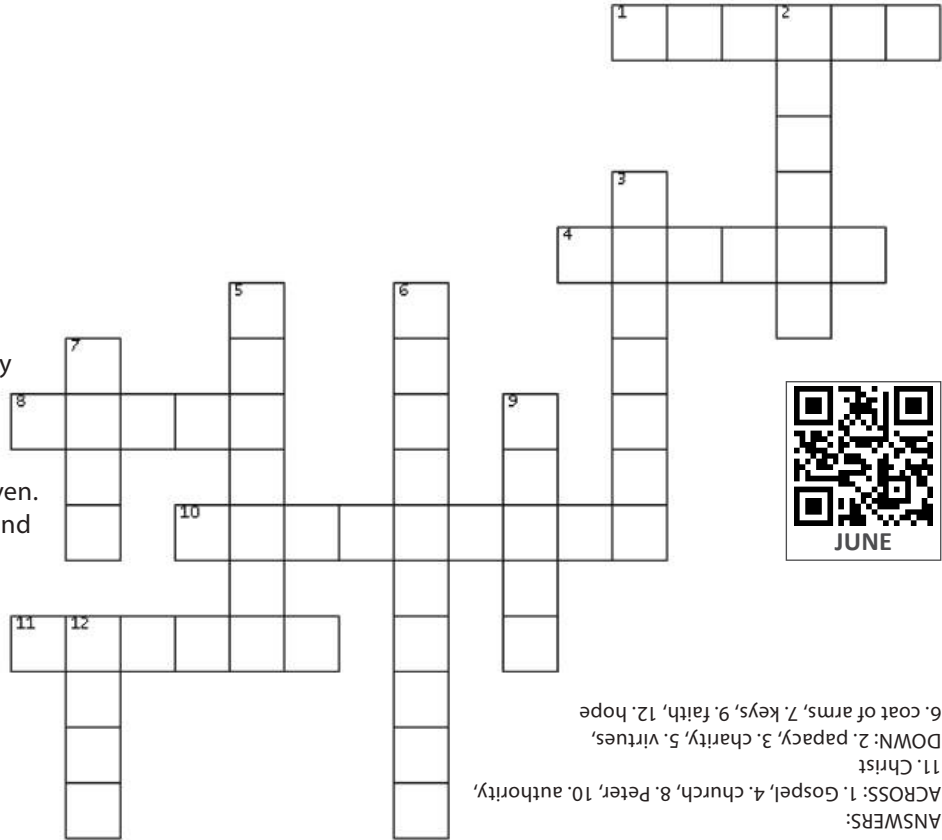
SCAN QR CODE to read the June 2025 Columban Calendar Art Guide and complete the crossword puzzle.

ACROSS

1. Reference to Matthew 16:18-19.
4. Built upon the rock, symbolised by Peter.
8. The apostle receiving the keys.
10. Granted by Christ to Peter.
11. Seated figure giving the keys.

DOWN

2. Role symbolised by the keys.
3. Theological virtue, robed in red-violet.
5. Faith, Hope, and Charity, watching the key exchange.
6. Papal symbol including the gold and silver keys (three words).
7. Symbol of authority and entrance to heaven.
9. One of the theological virtues, a central and luminous figure.
12. Theological virtue, wearing green.



ANSWERS:
ACROSS: 1. Gospel, 4. church, 8. Peter, 10. authority,
11. Christ
DOWN: 2. papacy, 3. charity, 5. virtues,
6. coat of arms, 7. keys, 9. faith, 12. hope



GIFT IN WILL

'Do what you can' Bishop Edward J Galvin



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