



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

VOLUME 107 NO.7
\$0.75 INC. GST & POSTAGE

THE FAR EAST

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025



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)

AUSTRALIA

St Columbans Mission Society
69 Woodland Street
Essendon Vic 3040

Postal address:
PO Box 752, Niddrie Vic 3042
PH: (03) 9375 9475
E: TFE@columban.org.au
W: www.columban.org.au

NEW ZEALAND

St Columban's Mission Society
PO Box 30-017
Lower Hutt 5040
PH: (04) 567 7216
E: info@columban.org.nz
W: www.columban.org.nz

PUBLISHER

Rev Dr Patrick McNerney
Regional Director of Oceania

EDITORIAL

Mrs Maha Shawky

PROOF READERS

Fr Kevin O'Neill
Fr Ray Scanlon
Fr Reg Howard

DESIGNER & ASSISTANT

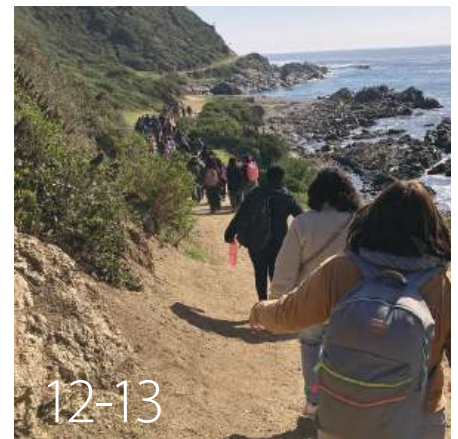
Mrs Assunta Arena

Cover photo: Columban Fr Dan Harding with participants from The Winter School Children's Holiday Programme in Santiago, Chile.

St Columbans Mission Property
Association A.B.N. 17 686 524 625
Printed by Doran Printing, Melbourne



- 3 FROM THE DIRECTOR
INTEGRATING OUR SHADOWS
TO HEAL THE WORLD**
- 4-5 TEN YEARS ON – THE CRY OF
REFUGEES STILL RINGS OUT**
- 6-7 HOPE BEYOND THE FIELDS**
On a mission to educate the
children of Pakistan.
- 8-9 THE CALL TO SERVE DOES
NOT GROW FAINT WITH THE
PASSING YEARS**
- 10-11 POPE LEO XIV'S PERUVIAN
ROOTS**
Columban Fr Ed O'Connell gives
a personal insight into why
Pope Leo is the right man at the
right time to lead the universal
Church.
- 12-13 RAISING AWARENESS
OF GOD'S BIODIVERSE
CREATION**
Growing a spirituality of God's
Creation among children from
disadvantaged backgrounds.
- 14-15 IN SEARCH OF OUR ROOTS**
The Chute family's
determination to find and
honour the country of their
ancestors.
- 16-17 AT 94, I'M STILL IN JAPAN!
WHY?**
Columban Fr Barry Cairns
recalls almost seven decades of
service to the Japanese people.
- 18-19 PLAY THE GAME OF YOUR
LIFE**
"There would be no other way
I could live." Columban Fr Frank
Hoare.
- 19 ON SALE NOW - 2025
SUBANEN CHRISTMAS
CARDS**
- 20-21 IN LOVING MEMORY OF
DAVID BUTLER**
A man of deep faith, vision, and
extraordinary action.



- 22 ARE DIGITAL MISSIONARIES
REAL MISSIONARIES?**
- 22 MISSION INTENTIONS**
September - October 2025
- 23 COLUMBAN ART
CALENDAR CROSSWORD
PUZZLE**
- 23 GIFT IN WILL**
Remember the Columbans
in your Will.

INTEGRATING OUR SHADOWS TO HEAL THE WORLD



This year marks the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On August 6, 1945, in Hiroshima alone, around 700,000 people were killed instantly, with the death toll doubling by year's end.

That moment of nuclear devastation changed the world forever. Or did it?

Today, wars rage across the globe: between Israel and Hamas, spilling into Lebanon, Yemen, Iran, and Syria; between Russia and Ukraine; and civil wars in Myanmar and Sudan; just to mention a few. Militant insurgencies and communal violence plague countries in Africa and Asia. Hundreds of thousands of combatants have been killed or maimed. Millions of civilians have been injured, displaced, or forced to flee. Poverty and injustice condemn millions to lives of relentless struggle and quiet suffering.

In Australia, antisemitism and Islamophobia are on the rise, along with right-wing white supremacist groups. A woman dies at the hands of her partner each week due to domestic violence. Criminal gangs carry out shootings in suburban streets. Verbal disputes escalate into stabbings. Add to this the environmental degradation, climate change, habitat loss, extinction of species, and the erosion of biodiversity. Hostility, violence, and destruction seem pervasive.

Reflecting on this worldwide carnage, I recalled a story: *A Native American grandfather was talking to his grandson about how he felt after a tragedy had befallen their tribe. He said, "I feel as if there are two wolves fighting in my heart. One is vengeful, angry, and violent. The other is loving, compassionate, and forgiving." The grandson asked, "Which wolf will win?" The grandfather replied, "The one I feed."*

Yes, if we feed on anger, stereotypes, and fear of others, and are all too ready to believe the worst about them, conflict, enmity, violence and killings will

continue to ravage our world.

But if we nurture mercy, kindness, compassion and forgiveness, peace can take root and grow. However, there is a deeper, more nuanced interpretation of the Native American story, one that is not just about "winning" or "losing", but about reconciliation and integration. Psychologically, if we favour only one part of our emotional energies and suppress others, if we attend to some dimensions of our lives and ignore others, the neglected parts will be resentful, fester and demand attention. Inner conflict leads to restlessness and a lack of peace.

True peace comes when we face our inner demons, reconcile with our shadow selves, and acknowledge their legitimate place in our lives. When the two wolves within us are no longer enemies but companions, we find true harmony. The pervasive violence in our world stems from the unrestrained pursuit of partial, sectarian interests. The perpetrators fail to see others as brothers and sisters - each made in the image of God, equally loved and of inestimable value. They dehumanize the objects of their ire, calling them brutes, animals, or vermin - words that justify their extermination. As Jesus said, "What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart... For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander." (Mt 15:18-19)

Living in this violent world, let us strive to reduce the hostility and animosity. Let us rise above the narrow sectarian interests that divide people and instead promote our common humanity. Let us transcend the tribal partisanship that separates us from others and find a perspective that unites. Let us listen deeply and attend to conflicting needs and concerns - even when they are confronting. Let us see the whole picture, where each person plays a necessary part. Let us reconcile the wolves fighting within our hearts - and within our world - and become true instruments of peace.

REV DR PATRICK MCINERNEY
Regional Director of Oceania

TEN YEARS ON

THE CRY OF REFUGEES STILL RINGS OUT

At the height of what became known as the “migrant crisis” in 2015, millions of people walked across and towards Europe in search of sanctuary. The world watched in shock and sorrow. Among the many images that seared our collective memory was that of a tiny Syrian toddler, lifeless on a beach - a heartbreaking reminder of the treacherous journeys families were forced to take to escape war, persecution, and poverty.

That image reached the Vatican. Deeply moved, the late Pope Francis wrote to the faithful, urging them to respond with practical compassion to the suffering of refugees. His call was clear and challenging: *“Every parish, every religious community, every monastery, every sanctuary”* has an obligation *“to be neighbours to the smallest and most abandoned.”*

Here in Britain, the Columban Missionaries responded to this challenge, joining forces with the Archdiocese of Birmingham, Father Hudson’s Care (then two separate charities), and the parish priest of St. Anne’s Church. Together, we began discerning how to give concrete expression to the Pope’s invitation.

After many meetings, careful drafting of policies and procedures, and months of preparing a building for its new purpose, St. Anne’s presbytery was transformed into Fatima House. In July 2016, its doors opened to welcome vulnerable women in Birmingham who were in urgent need of protection.

Fatima House is, in many ways, a small drop in an ocean of need. Yet for those who come through its doors, it is a safe harbour – a place of rest, dignity, and hope. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by mid-2024 an estimated 122.6 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide. Of these, 37.9 million were recognised

as refugees. Behind these numbers are countless personal stories shaped by conflict, the devastating impacts of climate change, extreme poverty and the unequal distribution of resources. These forces compel people to take unimaginable risks – crossing dangerous seas, traversing hostile lands, and often placing themselves at the mercy of ruthless smugglers and trafficking networks.

Some of these stories have been lived by the women of Fatima House. The Columbans have taken on the daily running of Fatima House, while our partner organisations manage other aspects of the project. Over the past nine years, we have welcomed nearly 60 women. Each one arrives with her own journey, her own wounds, and her own hopes.

Some come with their entire lives packed into a few bags – clothes, cooking pots, crockery – clinging to the remnants of a life left behind. Others arrive with nothing more than a small plastic carrier bag. Some carry photographs of loved ones; others carry only the longing to one day discover where their family is.

The Columbans have taken on the daily running of Fatima House, while our partner organisations manage other aspects of the project. Over the past nine years, we have welcomed nearly 60 women.

At Fatima House, they find a safe space where they can begin to rebuild. The environment is not just about providing shelter; it is about creating a community where women are welcomed, respected and valued. Friendships form quickly. Many describe the other residents as “family,” bound together by shared experience and mutual care.

When the time comes for a woman to leave Fatima House, it is often bittersweet. There is joy in moving



Columban lay missionary Nathalie Marytsch at Fatima House. Photo: Nathalie Marytsch

forward – finding work, enrolling in university, or setting up a new home – but there is also sadness in leaving behind the close bonds formed in this place of safety.

Throughout the years, 16 women – 27.6% of those who have stayed – have secured leave to remain in the UK. This legal recognition allows them to work, study, and live without the fear of deportation. Some have gone on to find employment, start higher education, or begin families.

Hearing from these women after they leave is always a moment of joy for us. Their stories remind us that even in the face of unimaginable hardship, hope can be rekindled and new life can emerge.

For those still awaiting decisions on their asylum claims, Fatima House remains a source of stability. Others continue to face the challenges of destitution, yet they know that here they are not alone – they are accompanied.

As we mark ten years since the so-called migrant crisis, the urgency for compassion and justice remains

undiminished. Displacement is not a crisis of the past; it is a human reality that continues every day.

At Fatima House, we see in every woman's story a reflection of the face of God – a God who, in Jesus, also experienced displacement, rejection, and the search for refuge. This vision shapes how we respond: not simply as a matter of charity, but as a response to the Gospel itself.

We know Fatima House is only one small light in a world of immense need. But for the women who have lived here, it has been a place where hope is restored, where dignity is upheld, and where the bonds of human solidarity are lived out daily.

Ten years on, the cry of the refugee is still loud in our world. And, as long as it continues, our call is to listen, to respond, and to make space for God's presence in the lives of those who seek safety and peace.

NATHALIE MARYTSCH

Columban lay missionary Nathalie Marytsch has been living and working in Birmingham for more than twenty years.

HOPE BEYOND THE FIELDS



Mother and child from the Parkari Kohli communities in Pakistan.
Photo taken by Columban Fr Pat Raleigh on his last visit to Pakistan.

In the dry, sun-scorched villages of southern Pakistan, amid cracked earth and makeshift homes, a quiet resilience blooms - most clearly seen in the eyes of the children.

These are the children of the Parkari Kohli, one of Pakistan's most marginalised ethnic communities, who live under conditions marked by poverty, exclusion, and generational hardship. And yet, when we arrive in their villages, they come running - barefoot, beaming, with arms outstretched in welcome. Their joy is disarming, their spirit unbroken.

Pakistan's population has grown to more than 252 million people, with nearly 50% under the age of 18, making it one of the youngest countries in the world demographically. Yet over half of its children are at risk from poor development. For communities like the Parkari Kohli, these figures take on urgent meaning. The lack of access to healthcare, food, and education leaves children particularly vulnerable. They are, quite literally, at the receiving end of poverty.

During one of our pastoral visits, I met a young girl named Angelina. She was only three years old, but her frailty was gut-wrenching. She could not walk and barely responded to those around her. Her eyes seemed to carry an invisible burden. When I asked whether she was in pain, she gave a slight nod, too weak to speak. A local doctor later confirmed what we feared - Angelina was severely malnourished, a condition that was impairing her growth and development. She was admitted to a government-run hospital and enrolled in a feeding programme.

Weeks later, we returned to the village. Angelina ran out to greet us. She was playing with the other children, her cheeks rounder, her smile radiant. She had been given a second chance - but so many others were not as lucky. Visit any village cemetery, and you'll see row upon row of tiny graves, stark reminders of lives lost too soon.

Despite the overwhelming challenges, what continues to surprise and move us is the capacity for joy that the children possess. They remain oblivious to the full reality of their poverty. In their innocent eyes, the

world is full of wonder. Their eagerness to take part in liturgical celebrations is contagious. Whether it's through song, dance, or acting out scenes from the Gospel, they are fully present in the moment, their voices rising in unison under the open skies. These gatherings are not just religious rituals; they are moments of pure hope.

These are the children of the Parkari Kohli, one of Pakistan's most marginalised ethnic communities, who live under conditions marked by poverty, exclusion and generational hardship. And yet, when we arrive in their villages, they come running - barefoot, beaming, with arms outstretched in welcome. Their joy is disarming, their spirit unbroken.

But as missionaries, we are called to see what lies ahead. Inflation continues to rise, and the increasing severity of weather patterns makes farming - a primary livelihood for most families - more precarious than ever. For struggling parents, putting food on the table each day becomes the priority. Education is often seen as a luxury, something to pursue "later", if at all. But later may be too late.

That is why education has become a central focus of our mission in Pakistan. Recently, the Columbans assumed responsibility for a new parish in the Diocese of Hyderabad, Sindh Province. It spans 12 villages and serves around 300 families, the majority of whom are Parkari Kohli. Within this new parish are six primary schools - basic, under-resourced, but full of potential. These schools have been entrusted to the care of the Columbans, and we see them as vital to our work of mission.

Our vision is simple but ambitious: to create schools that are not just places of instruction but sanctuaries of growth, possibility, and faith. We are working to improve the infrastructure - safe classrooms,

clean water, proper books, and adequate materials. We are training teachers to use effective, compassionate methods that are culturally sensitive. We are also encouraging parents to see themselves as stakeholders in their children's education, despite the daily financial struggles they face.



Columban Fr Louie Ybañez.

We believe the children of these villages belong in the classroom - not in the fields. Our hope is that they grow up proud of their identity, confident in their abilities, and free from the generational cycle of poverty and servitude that has bound their families for so long.

Of course, this work is not easy. It requires time, commitment, and resources. But every small victory - every child who returns to school, every parent who chooses to invest in their child's future - is a step towards lasting transformation.

In Matthew's Gospel 19:14, Christ reminds us, *Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them.* As missionaries, we are reminded daily that the Kingdom of God often begins in the smallest of places - in a rural school, in the soft voice of a child learning to read, or in the joyful cry of a child who can finally walk again.

This is the Gospel in action. This is our mission. And it is one we cannot undertake alone. With your prayers and support, we will continue to walk alongside these children - towards a future rooted in dignity, education, and enduring hope.

FR LOUIE YBAÑEZ

Columban Fr Louie Ybañez lives and works in Pakistan.

As missionaries, we are reminded daily that the Kingdom of God often begins in the smallest of places - in a rural school, in the soft voice of a child learning to read, or in the joyful cry of a child who can finally walk again.

THE CALL TO SERVE DOES NOT GROW FAINT WITH THE PASSING YEARS

These words of Jesus, quoted in Matthew 10:16, are both challenging and consoling. Jesus does not paint a romantic picture of discipleship. Instead, he tells the truth: to follow him is to be sent into a world that often misunderstands, resists and even threatens the message of the Gospel. But Jesus also reveals something deeper; vulnerability is not a flaw but a part of mission.

As I reflect on this passage, another question rises within me: *Now that I am older, physically weaker, and perhaps more limited than before, can God still use me?*

I hear this question frequently across many missionary societies and religious congregations, including the Columbans, who are witnessing an increase in ageing members. Those who once carried the mission across oceans, preached in distant lands, and stood in solidarity with the poor and persecuted are now moving more slowly, speaking more softly, and needing more care. And yet, the fire of mission still burns. The call to serve does not grow faint with the passing years.

Moses comes to mind. When God called him from the burning bush to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses did not feel ready. In fact, he resisted the call - not because he lacked faith in God, but because he knew his own limitations. "I have never been eloquent," he said. "I am slow of speech and tongue" (Exodus 4:10). Moses had a speech impediment, and he feared he would not be able to represent God effectively.

But God's reply is powerful: "Who gave human beings their mouths? ... Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say" (Exodus 4:11-12). In other words: "It is not about you - it is about Me working through you."

That message still holds. The Columbans, like many missionary societies and religious congregations, face the natural reality of an ageing membership. But ageing is not the same as retreating. The temptation may be to believe that our time to contribute has passed, that others - younger, stronger, more energetic - must now carry the torch. And yes, we must prepare and encourage the next generation. But that does not mean our mission is over.

Even in our weakness, God is still at work.

To be "sheep among wolves" means to walk into the world not with worldly power, but with deep trust. Sheep are not known for strength or strategy - they rely entirely on the shepherd. And so should we.

God never asked us to rely on ourselves. The world deceives us when it claims our value comes from productivity, youth, and strength. The Gospel tells another story. It is in our fragility that grace is revealed. When we can no longer "do" as we once did, we are invited to "be" - to be present, to be prayerful, to be compassionate. This is no less of a mission; it is simply a different form of it.

I think of elderly Columbans who spend their days praying for others, offering up their aches and sorrows as intercession for the world. I think of those who, even in pain, take time to listen to others, offering quiet wisdom gained through a lifetime of faith. These are not small acts. These are sacred ministries.

In our communities, we must resist the notion that ageing equals irrelevance. The Church, and especially

To be "sheep among wolves" means to walk into the world not with worldly power, but with deep trust.



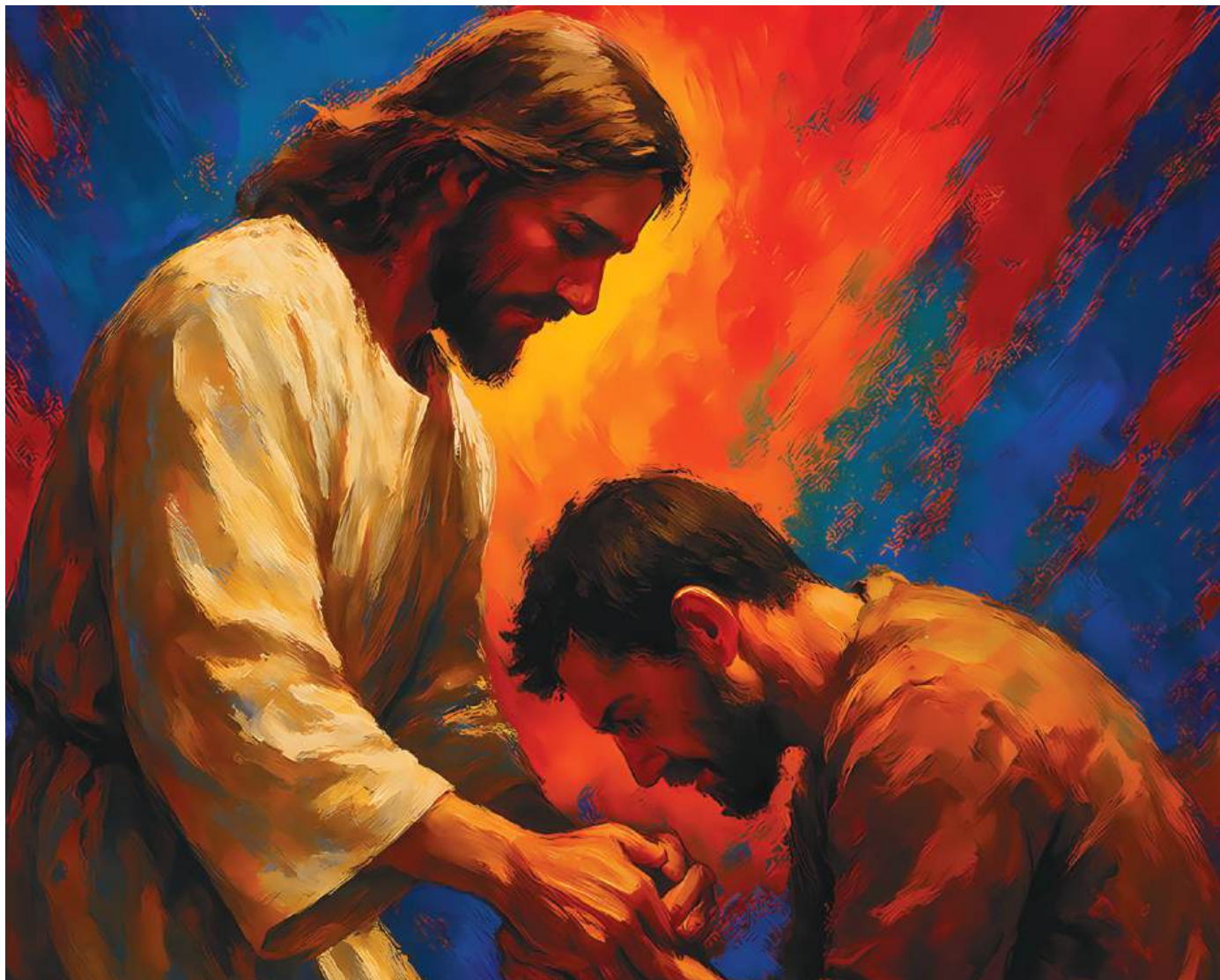


Photo: canva.com/CharlVera

our missionary societies and religious congregations, must be places where every life stage is valued, where elder members are not seen as burdens but as bearers of deep spiritual gifts.

The missionary spirit does not retire. It may take on new forms - less physical, more contemplative - but it remains vital. God still sends us. God still speaks through us. And perhaps, in our vulnerability, we become even more powerful witnesses to the Gospel. Because when the world sees someone frail yet faithful, someone no longer strong yet still joyful, they see a truth the world often forgets: our strength does not come from ourselves. It comes from God.

That is why Jesus sends us as sheep, not wolves. So that it will always be clear - the power, the endurance, the hope - it all comes from the Shepherd.

So, am I still useful? Yes. Am I still called? Absolutely. Like Moses, we may hesitate. We may feel inadequate. But God says, *"Now go; I will help you."*

And so, to all those on mission who feel age pressing in, who wonder if their time has passed - remember this: your very presence is a testimony to God's faithfulness. Your life still speaks. Your prayer still moves mountains. And your mission is not over. *"Here I am, Lord. Send me."*

Like Moses, we may hesitate. We may feel inadequate. But God says, "Now go; I will help you."

MAHA SHAWKY

Maha Shawky, Oceania Regional Business Manager.

POPE LEO XIV'S PERUVIAN ROOTS

Pope Leo XIV, otherwise known as Robert Prevost, was ordained in 1982 as a member of the Augustinian order. In Peru, the Augustinians have traditionally overseen the Prelature of Chulucanas.

He arrived in Peru in 1985, presumably to serve in Chulucanas, but instead, spent ten years in Trujillo, a city some distance away. There, he worked as a parish priest and taught in the regional seminary, likely at the request of the Archbishop of Trujillo, who was probably short of professors at the time.

I myself served as curate and parish priest in Peru during two periods: from 1973 to 1985, and again from 1999 to 2019. All of that time was spent in the pueblos jóvenes, the townships, on the north side of Lima, where poverty is widespread. In these densely populated areas, you are constantly in direct contact with the people, especially women, children, and the elderly, who form the core of the Church community. Adult men tend to participate less regularly, mostly attending traditional events such as patronal feasts, baptisms, first communions, wakes, funerals, and anniversary Masses.

The Peruvian people are incredibly warm and welcoming towards their priests. You are regularly invited to meals, to family celebrations, as well as communal festivities like Mother's Day, Christmas and the national holidays in July. The sacramental work is intense: a typical parish might see between 300 and 500 baptisms each year, along with around 300 first communions, 150 confirmations, 50 weddings, and many wakes and funerals. Of course, there are also many tragedies to support the people through, too.

In Peru, a parish priest is also seen as a local authority figure. Since the Catholic Church is the official Church, like the role of the Anglican Church in the UK, there is a



Children from Warmi Huasi in Lima, Peru. Photo: Fr Ed O'Connell SSC

public dimension to the priesthood. You must learn to balance your responsibility to speak up for the needs of ordinary people, who often face abuse or neglect from local authorities, while trying to build respectful relationships with and encourage those in power to act for the common good.

He arrived in Peru in 1985, presumably to serve in Chulucanas, but instead, spent ten years in Trujillo, a city some distance away. There, he worked as a parish priest and taught in the regional seminary, likely at the request of the Archbishop of Trujillo, who was probably short of professors at the time.

In November 2014, Fr Robert Prevost moved to Chiclayo to serve as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese and was consecrated as a bishop in December of that year. As is customary, foreign priests must first be naturalised before being appointed bishops, which had happened in his case back in 1985.

In his final two years in Peru, Bishop Prevost also administered the troubled Diocese of Callao, again acting as a trusted problem-solver. By then, he had also become Vice President of the Peruvian Bishops' Conference. Later, in 2023, Francis called him to Rome to take charge of appointing bishops, a role that brought him even closer to the Pope.

The people of Chiclayo are delighted that this man who was their bishop is now their pope. Pope Francis had appointed him to Chiclayo to bring stability after the retirement of the previous bishop, who was from Opus Dei. As Pope Leo himself said recently, it was the people who formed him as a bishop, through their affection, affirmation, and kindness.

Leo was my personal choice for Pope from the beginning, though I hardly dared dream that the Holy Spirit and the cardinals would come to the same conclusion. He represents continuity with Francis but also offers the possibility of greater unity.

Many bishops and cardinals did not fully grasp Francis' mindset, not having shared his pastoral experiences.



Photo: ©Vatican Media – All rights reserved

The people of Chiclayo are delighted that this man who was their bishop is now their pope. Pope Francis had appointed him to Chiclayo to bring stability after the retirement of the previous bishop, who was from Opus Dei. As Pope Leo himself said recently, it was the people who formed him as a bishop, through their affection, affirmation, and kindness.

Francis' language wasn't always accessible to everyone. I believe Leo will be better able to communicate with a broader spectrum of Church leaders and help build greater unity. Of course, there will always be some who are not open to listening, but he will do his best to reach across divides.

FR ED O'CONNELL

Columban Fr Ed O'Connell lives and works in Britain.

RAISING AWARENESS OF GOD'S BIODIVERSE CREATION



Columban Fr Dan Harding celebrating Mass at The Winter School Holiday Children's Programme in Chile.

THE WINTER SCHOOL HOLIDAY CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

For the first week of the winter school holidays in Chile, the Columban parish of San Matias in Santiago organised a special Children's Programme based on the theme of *"Caring for God's Creation and all its Biodiversity"*. San Matias parish is located in a socio-economically disadvantaged area on the southern periphery of the city of Santiago. It is an area known for its high rates of poverty, violent crime, unemployment, drug and alcohol use, etc.

The programme ran from Monday 23rd to Saturday 28th June 2025. This is a time of great cold, with early morning temperatures usually down around 0 degrees. The nearby Andes Mountain Range is covered in thick snow.

During the school holidays, many parents do not have anyone to look after their children while they work. Transport to and from the San Matias parish area to the principal employment areas of Santiago can take up to two hours each way each day by Metro or bus. This is why many parents were very happy to have their children participate in the parish Children's Programme.

WHAT DID THE PROGRAMME INVOLVE?

The programme involved prayer and liturgies each day, with the Eucharist celebrated on three occasions. These liturgies sought to give thanks and praise to God for Creation and the whole web of life, with its many interconnected species of human beings, animals and plants, on the land, in the sky, in the oceans, in the mountains, in the wetlands, in the cities, and in parks and plazas.

Different workshops sought to create awareness amongst the children of the enormously rich biodiversity where they live, the dangers that threaten this biodiversity, and the need to take care of all of God's Creation.

THE ORGANISERS

The steering committee from the parish that organised this Children's Programme comprised several parents and catechists, the parish youth group coordinator, the parish secretary, and Columban priests, Frs Genovio Cho (the parish priest – from Korea) and Dan Harding – from Australia, along with Columban seminarian Lydio Mangao Jr, from the Philippines, who has been appointed to San Matias parish as a part of his First Missionary Assignment. The other Columban seminarian, Juan Pablo Ro, from Korea, also on his First Missionary Assignment, came down to Santiago from his parish appointment in Iquique, in the north of Chile, to participate in the Children's Programme.

THE WORKSHOPS

Various workshops were offered to discuss with the children how biodiverse God's Creation is and how the web of life that connects all of Creation needs to be protected from all kinds of dangers. Different interactive workshops on taking care of the web of life were given by "Greenpeace Chile" and also by the Chilean Government's Ministry of the Environment. The participation of Greenpeace in the Children's Programme was mentioned and praised on the Greenpeace Webpage the following week.

In order to help the children understand the importance of taking care of local biodiversity, a small Botanical Gardens consisting of 20 plants native to the

central zone of Chile, where Santiago is located, was planted on Monday, the first day of the programme.

These plants were donated by CONAF, Chile's National Forestry Corporation, which administers and protects wilderness areas, including in national parks and reserves. The parish Youth Coordinator, who works for the Agricultural and Forestry Department at the University of Chile, conducted a workshop about the characteristics of each tree.

Also, on Saturday, the last day, the children helped plant 153 native trees in the nearby John Paul II park. This activity was organised by the local municipal council for the celebration of World Tree Day in Chile on June 28.

A Collective of Independent Artists offered the children workshops on music and art, while the Department of Culture and Sport from the local municipal council offered workshops on dance, Zumba and soccer.

THE EXCURSIONS

There were also two full-day excursions outside of Santiago. The first was to the Bатуco Wetlands, north of Santiago. This large freshwater wetland is home to 143 species of birds, reptiles and iconic water mammals, such as the Coipo and the Quique. Here, the children participated in a workshop and received a guided tour conducted by members of the Bатуco Sustainable Foundation, the NGO that administers the wetlands. The second excursion was to the Pacific Ocean at Algarrobo. Here, the Department of the Environment from the local municipal council gave the children a workshop highlighting the marine fauna and flora and the dangers they face. This was followed by a guided tour to see the habitats of sea lions, seals, sea otters and penguins.

THE CHILDREN WHO PARTICIPATED

Sixty children from the parish and its environs participated. The majority were children aged between 7 and 16 involved with their parents in the parish sacramental and other programmes.

Within the parish, there is a large, illegal shantytown, built on an old rubbish dump and populated by migrants to Chile. Around 12 Venezuelan, Ecuadoran, Colombian, and Haitian children living in the shantytown or nearby neighbourhoods also participated in the programme, along with their parents. In one of the poorer parts of the parish, there are several neurodiverse children and others on the



Columban seminarian Lydio Mangao (center back), on mission in Chile, with the children from the programme colouring native flora.

autism spectrum, who participate with their parents in the parish sacramental programmes. These children, accompanied by their parents, came along too and had a wonderful time.

SUPPORT TO HELP FINANCE THE CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

The overall costs of the Children's Programme were reduced by 50% through parish fundraising and donations from the Archdiocese, local municipal councils, and private businesses. We are still looking for support to cover the remaining 50% of the costs.

During our one-week Children's Programme, the children planted native tree species. They visited wetlands and the Pacific Coast to see and learn about native animal species. They attended a range of workshops on God's Creation and the need to take care of it in all its biodiversity. The children grew in awareness of God's Creation from a physical viewpoint. They also grew in spiritual awareness of it and the importance of a spirituality of creation.

FR DAN HARDING

Columban Fr Dan Harding lives and works in Chile.



Children and adolescents with some of their parents watching, as they plant native Chilean trees in the John Paul II park, near the parish.



Columban Fr Pat Colgan along with the Chute family at grave of Columban Fr Dick O'Sullivan.

IN SEARCH OF OUR ROOTS

In 1800, in Dingle, Co Kerry, a certain John Lindsey Chute was born. After studying for the Anglican ministry at Trinity College Dublin, John served in various Church of Ireland parishes in Roscommon, Kerry and Cork.

Church biographies of the time describe his "impressive preaching" and "good labours" during the Irish Famine of 1845–52. His good wife, Jane Lucinda Burleigh, also of Dingle, had her own share of "good labours" in giving birth to seven children before dying at the age of 51. John remarried and had six more children before dying himself in 1871.

One of their sons, William (b. 1837), was sent to the healthier and warmer climes of the South Pacific, either because he developed tuberculosis or was deemed useful for colonial service after his own studies at Trinity College, or both. He ended up in the then British colony of the Gilbert Islands (present-day Kiribati), where he married Ili Tekea. They had one son called John Chute, who migrated to the larger colony of Fiji, where he had 15 children (eight

from his Kiribati wife and seven from a Fijian woman, Salanieta Cakacakaimago). The family believe that it was probably in Kiribati, and due to the influence of his mother, Ili Tekea, that John embraced the Catholic faith. While the present-day Chutes obviously descend from the Fijian line, their cousins (the Reids, the Pickerings, the Simons, in fact, most of the Caqiri settlement) come from the Kiribati root.

John Lindsay is the great-great-great-grandfather of Vera, Lucy, Albert, Clara and Joe Chute from Fiji, all of whom, along with three of their children, took a trip to Britain and Ireland in late July 2025 to connect with any living relatives they could find, as well as search for any gravestone or memory of William or any of his progeny. They also came to honour the memories of many Columban priests who ministered to their grandparents, parents, and themselves in Fiji.

A series of extraordinary coincidences began almost immediately on their arrival at Dalgan Park, especially during their visit to the genealogy section of the National Archives in Dublin.

After praying at the graves of Frs Dick O'Sullivan, John Doyle and Martin Dobey - all of whom served in the parish of Labasa with their father Pat Chute often at

their side (Dick had celebrated Pat Chute's wedding to Rosie in 1965) - they discovered a living relative, Fr John (Jack) Chute, in our St Columban's nursing home! Although Jack is from Tralee, the proximity of the counties of Cork and Kerry, along with the relative rarity of the Chute/Tuite name, certainly points to a family relationship. The (Fijian) Chutes sang a beautiful Pacific "farewell song" to Jack, in case this would turn out to be their only meeting. Jack, in return, gave a lusty rendition of "The Rose of Tralee"!

Since half of the siblings now live in Los Angeles or San Francisco, they were also delighted to meet Frs TP Reynolds and Gerry O'Shaughnessy, both of whom served in St Hilary's Parish, Pico Rivera, California. The Chutes, along with other migrant community Columban friends (Peruvian, Korean and Filipinos), have been organising "Dancing for the World" - an annual fundraising event in Los Angeles - and other fundraising galas for the St Columban's Mission Society for many years. The Chute siblings and their families were very close friends of Serafina Ranadi, a Fijian lay missionary who sadly died in Los Angeles in 2012, and continue to support Columban Fr Diego Cabrera Rojas, the Administrator of St Hilary's Parish.

The serendipity kept flowing on a visit to the National Archives in Dublin when, to the surprise of all, there was no long queue of expatriate relatives with similar requests to see the one Irish government genealogist on duty, nor did anyone else join the line after them, allowing a full hour of private consultation and the discoveries of not just birth, baptism and marriage records for Rev John Lindsey but also those of many of his seven children, including William Burleigh. The family, after more searching in Cork, was also able to pinpoint the location of the gravestone of Rev. John at Pembroke, as well as that of their great-great-great-grandmother, Jane Lucinda, in Dublin.

Their search was helped enormously not only by the Chute family's exhaustive research before disembarking in Dublin but by the fact that many of the Chute ancestors were Anglican clergy, for whom (unlike their Catholic counterparts) records were kept (the former regarded as "State Records").

Tears flowed in the Archives office, including from the genealogist Sandra herself, in joy at the family finally "connecting the dots". I, too, felt privileged, as a Columban, to witness it. I could never forget the scrumptious Irish roasts that Vera's granny, Letitia,



Columban Fr John McEvoy with the Chute family at Dalgan Park in Ireland.

would make for all the Columban priests and students on Sundays in Suva. I also have happy memories of spending Christmases, and particularly New Year (since their property is on the international date line) at the Chute's ancestral island of Nakula, where the villagers would "throw" me into the sea at midnight, according to their custom, and then provide me, on my return to shore, with towels, new clothes, and fresh coconut oil with which to massage myself!

It was truly a delight to witness the Chute family's determination to find and honour the country of their ancestors, and to see their love for both the Columbans and their Catholic faith. May this bond continue to grow across the waves and the generations as we each continue on our pilgrim path.

FR PAT COLGAN

Columban Fr Pat Colgan lives and works in Ireland.



The Chute family surrounding their great grandfather John's grave at Pembroke, Co Cork, Dalgan Park, in Ireland.

AT 94, I'M STILL IN JAPAN! WHY?

I am 94 years old. I have been a Columban missionary priest for 70 years and arrived in Japan 69 years ago - at a time when the country was vastly different from today. The scars of war were everywhere: devastation, poverty, war widows, fatherless children, and limbless ex-soldiers, dressed in white, begging for alms at railway stations. Tuberculosis was rampant. These conditions were especially visible in rural areas outside Tokyo and Osaka.

After completing language school, I was assigned to Yakata parish in the mountainous province of Wakayama. During my first week, I participated in a team-teaching session for those preparing for marriage. That moment left a deep impression on

me - one that still resonates today and remains the reason I continue my mission in Japan. Many of the men in that group were non-Christians; the women were parishioners. Still new to the language, I relied on asking questions: "When you hear the word 'God', what words or images come to mind?" and "What is your main interest in life?"

The responses revealed that Buddhism and Shintoism had little influence on their lives. For some, God was a punisher of evil - how sad! For others, God was a vague, distant presence in the universe.

To the second question, the answers ranged from "the company I work for," to "the Hanshin Tigers" (the local pro baseball team), and "photography". I was struck by how superficial, unsatisfying, and fleeting these interests seemed. In contrast, I realised the treasure I had been given: my faith. It was then, and remains now, a gift I feel called to share.

Meeting Christ is a life-altering gift. That encounter has set the compass of my missionary life ever since. I want to dedicate my life to showing the Japanese people, in my own limited way, that God loves them.

St Joseph's Parish in Tokyo, Japan, where Columban Fr Barry Cairns occasionally celebrates Mass.
Photo: Columban Fr George Hogerty

I want to dedicate my life to showing the Japanese people, in my own limited way, that God loves them.

In my early years of mission, I suffered from what's called a Messiah complex. I thought everything depended on my strength and effort. And I did work hard!

Thankfully, I've since been cured - mostly. I now understand that I am Christ's representative, not His plenipotentiary.

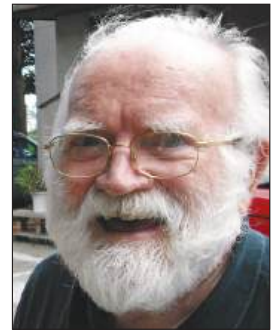
Today, at 94, I serve as "priest in residence" in a mission parish in Yokohama City. Many of my Columban confreres have returned to their home countries, continuing their mission through prayer, which knows no boundaries. I have chosen to stay in Japan - to live among the people I pray for and love.

A typical week for me begins with Sunday Mass, where we average around 70 attendees. In this digital age, I upload my homilies in both Japanese and English to our parish homepage. (There are more than two million foreign workers in Japan today.) I often end my homilies with a reminder: "Let us share the gifts that God gives us with others this week." My goal is to inspire parishioners to be missionaries in their own environments.

Today, at 94, I serve as "priest in residence" in a mission parish in Yokohama City. Many of my Columban confreres have returned to their home countries, continuing their mission through prayer, which knows no boundaries. I have chosen to stay in Japan - to live among the people I pray for and love.

Our parish also hosts Chinese and Indonesian communities, with priests from those countries celebrating their respective Masses. Monday is my recreation day. I enjoy DIY carpentry and tending a small vegetable garden. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, I lead baptism preparation classes, as well as a group called "Praying with the Scriptures". I move, as the Japanese say, at *my pace* - a slow one.

I am not busy! I'm also part of a formation group, along with five Japanese priests, for diocesan seminarians in Yokohama. Each weekend, a seminarian joins the parish for hands-on pastoral experience.



Fr Barry Cairns

The current seminarian is the 19th I've mentored, which means I now know many of the young priests in the diocese.

I believe in delegation and shared responsibility. Our bishop promotes the principle of subsidiarity. A British labour union leader once described it this way: "Sharing out jobs with others - and trusting the blighters to do them!" In our church, this approach has helped build community - and reduce stress! Just by being in residence, I've found I can contribute meaningfully to faith and mission. Despite having three stents in my heart, I remain in Japan, still sharing the most precious gift given to me - my faith. Psalm 97:7 best expresses why I am still here: "Among the nations, I will praise you, Lord. Your love reaches to the heavens."

FR BARRY CAIRNS

Columban Fr Barry Cairns lives and works in Japan.

ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY



COLUMBAN IWANE NAIG

COLUMBAN VOCATIONS

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

JOIN US

Columban Fr Kelvin Barrett
Vocations Coordinator
PH: (03) 9375 9475
E: vocations@columban.org.au
www.columban.org.au




ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

PLAY THE GAME OF YOUR LIFE

I was standing by the bed of a Hindu ascetic dying of cancer in a monastery in North India when he shared with me the call he heard from God to leave behind his university degree, a girl his parents had chosen to be his bride, and even the monastery he had joined. He felt called instead to search for God in meditation in a small hut in the high Himalayas, where the Ganges River rises.

During the 20 years he lived in Gangotri, he and a half dozen hermits scattered throughout the snow-filled valley were completely cut off from the rest of the world for six months of every year. "If you were 21 years old again, would you still choose that life?" I asked him. "Yes, I would," he replied, "I'm mature in this life now. I am saturated in spirituality. There would be no other way I could live."

Recalling this, I remember as a 17-year-old student trying to decide what to do with my life. I wanted to do something so that when old and preparing to die, I could feel that my life had been worthwhile - of service to God and people. Pictures of African babies on a collection box in a local shop touched me. Money was needed to send missionaries to baptise the children so they could reach heaven.

The theology was pre-Vatican II, but my concern was genuine. Later, I heard of the millions of Catholics in Latin America who, because of a shortage of priests, could only receive the sacraments once a year. So, I thought of joining the Columban missionaries.

But celibacy raised a red flag. It hit me one day at a football game when I noticed a young girl in front of me nestling in the arms of her boyfriend. Would I be lonely for life? Could I live without a wife and family, without a home of my own? Would my life be deprived of warm intimacy with people because of the role, the uniform, and the exile from my homeland?

I obsessed over the decision for some weeks. Then one evening at dusk, having despaired of thinking through the conflicting ideas, I sat limp at the back of my parish church. The red light in front of the Blessed Sacrament seemed to reach me in the darkening church. I felt an unexpected peace enveloping me. Yes, I would give it a go.

Years later, I met Fr Philip Manthara, an Indian Jesuit priest who was totally committed to justice for the impoverished Dalit (or outcast) people in North India. He was out most nights at meetings, helping them to analyse their problems and overcome the injustices they endured. I asked him if he missed not being married or having a family. "I couldn't ask any woman to put up with my way of living" he said. I was surprised to hear myself say, "I feel the same." Of course, if we are generous with God, God is more than generous with us. "Then Peter spoke up, 'Look,' he said, 'we have left everything and followed you. What





In 2023, Columban Fr Frank Hoare celebrated his Jubilee Mass in Portlaoise, Ireland.

will we have?' Jesus said to them, '... And everyone who has left houses, or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake, will receive a hundred times more and will be given eternal life.'"

I have experienced the truth of Jesus' promise in many fulfilling relationships with people in Fiji. They have enriched me greatly.

Life is a journey in search of God and of our true selves. Missionaries leave home to share the love of God through Jesus Christ. In meeting the Other, I come to know myself, and I get a glimpse of the Other. Love is experienced in both the giving and the receiving. Human love points to the greater love of God to which we are privileged to witness.

In the pluralistic world of today, most of us have the opportunity to journey with others who receive different rays of the divine truth. Moreover, supporting missionaries in any way makes us part of God's and the Church's missionary outreach. We share in its graces.

I administered the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick to an old Fijian man. He sat up in his bed then and announced, "Father, I have done my duty to the community, to the government, and to the Church." He was looking back on a life in which he had been faithful to his responsibilities.

I hope I can say at the end, "I have done what I could; there is no other way I could live."

FR FRANK HOARE

Columban Fr Frank Hoare lives and works in Fiji.

ON SALE NOW

2025 SUBANEN CHRISTMAS CARDS



All ten card designs online: www.columban.org.au

The Subanen crafters are now making all ten designs that will be in our 2025 Christmas card sets. All ten designs are new, highlighting the caring actions of Joseph, Mary and the shepherds.

We have chosen actions that are common in Subanen households - washing clothes, gathering and cutting firewood, cooking on an open fire, fetching water, sharing food, washing our children, putting them to bed, and keeping them safe and warm ... Such actions are more than ordinary when preformed in times of duress, like those faced by Mary and Joseph (giving birth in a stable far from home and fleeing Herod's death squad).

Subanen crafters have experienced such stressful times. One of our crafters, Andonie, died in childbirth in her remote hut just last year. And many older Subanens remember how they had to flee armed groups during times of conflict in Mindanao.

The Christmas Star plays an important role in our cards. In some cards, it's a guiding light that directs the shepherds to the manger, and later, it guides the fleeing Holy Family to a sheltering oasis in the desert. In other cards, it's a spotlight that shines on the caring actions of Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. The cards also point to our Columban mission priorities (outreach to migrants and refugees, and biodiversity protection and restoration). Mary and Joseph are seen struggling to find a bed for the night in Bethlehem and, later, taking refuge in a foreign land. We frame each nativity scene within a globe of the Earth to show how all living things share this one planetary oasis that needs our care and protection.

FR VINCENT BUSCH

Columban Fr Vincent Busch lives and works in the Philippines.



AUSTRALIA

ORDER NOW

Scan QR or use back cover coupon.

\$20.00 per pack (10 pk)
inc. GST & postage



NEW ZEALAND

IN LOVING MEMORY OF DAVID BUTLER



David with a child at a Health Centre in Mannya, Uganda.

David's connection to the Columbans began early. He grew up with the *Columban Mission Box* and *The Far East* magazine as familiar and formative presences in his family home. These were not just tokens of religious life; they ignited in him a curiosity about the world and a call to mission. He read *The Far East* eagerly, captivated by the lives and works of missionaries serving in far-off lands. These stories planted the seeds of faith and global solidarity that would come to define his own journey.

Professionally, David was an electrical engineer - a man known among colleagues for his quiet reliability and diligence. "When David was trusted with a task, it would be done - done well and on time," a former workmate shared. More than a dependable professional, he was also remembered as a friend. Yet his identity as an engineer was only one part of who he was. David integrated his skills and insights into all areas of his life, offering them generously for causes far beyond his workplace.

A lifelong learner, David continually pursued studies in theology, pastoral outreach, languages, and finance.

Recently, we were honoured to welcome Sr Carmel Butler, sister of the late David Butler, to the Columban Mission Centre. During her visit, I had the privilege of hearing about David's remarkable life - a story not only inspiring in its depth and breadth but also deeply connected to the missionary spirit we hold dear. Listening to Carmel, it became clear that David's life was one of extraordinary service, quietly lived yet globally impactful. It is only fitting that we share his story with the wider Columban community, who, knowingly or not, walked alongside David through his lifelong mission.

But it was his way of putting knowledge into action that left a lasting impression. Every year, David used his annual leave not for rest but for global outreach. He would book a round-the-world ticket, carefully map out his travel plans, and set off to visit communities in need - living among the local people, listening to their stories, and returning home with renewed purpose and first-hand understanding.

David's missionary spirit was lived. He was not afraid of difficult places or unfamiliar cultures. Indeed, he sought them out, believing that only by walking beside the poor could he truly respond with justice and compassion. His visits were purposeful, and travel was often risky, even dangerous. Yet he returned with stories, data, and hope - and a quiet determination that the people he met would not be forgotten.

His enduring commitment to the *St Vincent de Paul Society* began in his teenage years and spanned decades. Recognised in 2023 as an Emeritus Vincentian, David served at local, state, and national levels, including as part of the National Overseas Partnerships Team. He was especially passionate

REST IN PEACE

about the Society's Twinning Program, coordinating partnerships with communities across Asia and Africa. He visited partner countries using his own resources and personal leave - always advocating for *a hand up, not a handout*.

David had a special connection with Myanmar. The National President of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Myanmar, Brother Alphonse Kyaw Min, described David as "a supportive leader" and "a reliable person" who had earned the love and respect of Vincentians across the region.

David also served Catholic Mission in Victoria, delivering annual appeals at parishes and preparing well-researched reports with accompanying photographs to present the real needs of people across the globe. One of his most impactful initiatives was his role in linking St Bernard's Parish in Belmont, Geelong, with St Luke's Parish in Mannya, Uganda - a partnership that continues to this day. Fr Nestus of Mannya reflected on David's influence, sharing how he transformed what was once considered a "Mission Impossible" into a sustainable and thriving collaboration. "David," he wrote, "was never comfortable unless something better was being done in other people's lives."

Closer to home, David was deeply involved in community service. He was a long-standing member of the Kiwanis Club of Geelong, served as a Eucharistic Minister in his parish, and visited the sick and housebound weekly, offering communion, company, and sometimes groceries.



David at Blessing and Opening of Vincentian House, Geelong – an aged care home, now sold. Photos: Sr Carmel Butler

"David," he wrote, "was never comfortable unless something better was being done in other people's lives."

He was a quiet companion to men in shelter housing, a supporter of international students, and the visionary behind two seaside units in Torquay that for decades offered families affordable holidays. His contributions extended to the Geelong Interfaith Network, where he engaged with members of other faiths, always respectful and open-hearted in his approach. He also gave back to the institution that helped shape him by volunteering as treasurer of the Old Collegians.

In his relationship with the Columbans, David maintained a personal and profound connection. On three separate occasions, he visited Columban Fr Robert McCulloch's projects in Hyderabad, Pakistan, and maintained regular contact with Columban missionaries worldwide. He offered time, written communication, encouragement, and prayer. He didn't just support the Columbans - he stood with them.

David's life was captured beautifully in the title of his book: *A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out*. This simple phrase encapsulates his belief in dignity, partnership, and sustainable change. He urged others to move beyond doing for people and instead to ask what needs to be set in place with them - for safety, continuance, and life. In his final act of thoughtfulness, David left detailed notes for his funeral, choosing the Gospel of Matthew 25:34-40. The reading, a clear reflection of his life, reminds us that in serving the hungry, the sick, the stranger, we serve Christ Himself.

David Butler was a gentleman - gracious, humble, kind, and quietly courageous. He lived, gave generously, and loved deeply. He was visionary, resilient, patient, and profoundly compassionate. And he had a wonderful sense of humour - often accompanied by a twinkle in his eye. To those of us who were blessed to know him or to be touched by his work, David's life is both a legacy and a challenge. He made his life a blessing for others. May we, too, find the courage to live in such a way.

ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

Article written on behalf of Sr Carmel Butler (sister).

ARE DIGITAL MISSIONARIES REAL MISSIONARIES?

Have you ever heard of “digital missionaries”?

These are Christian men and women (often but not exclusively lay people) who use the tools of modern technology, especially computers and the internet, to fulfil their vocation as proclaimers of the Gospel in cross-cultural contexts. This is a far cry from the work of religious missionaries who, only a hundred years ago, went to the ends of the earth with their Bibles, catechisms and mobile Mass packs (which contained all that was needed to celebrate Mass in an isolated village). They spent years learning the local language, toiled in grim situations, endured primitive living conditions, and often died young from the effects of poor hygiene and the physical demands of serving communities scattered throughout mountainous terrain where there were few roads and little communication. Many became martyrs.

In recent times, there has been much reflection by various Christian organisations on the role of modern technology in the work of mission. Most would say that technology provides new solutions to that fundamental challenge that has faced the church since its foundation – how can we most effectively spread the Good News?

However, the widespread use of internet technology and AI has raised a new set of questions. These relate to the contexts within which “digital missionaries” carry out their vocation. They no longer need to go to the ends of the earth. All they need is a computer and an internet connection, and they can work from the comfort of their own homes. Often, they don’t have to learn new languages – an app can simultaneously translate scriptural reflections and Gospel messages into whatever language they require. They certainly don’t have to wrestle with poor living conditions or hostile locals. Their messages are transmitted across airwaves through satellite communications.

Zoom meetings provide face-to-face encounters with people from around the globe. Liturgical events can be live-streamed to a worldwide audience.

On July 28 and 29, in Rome, the Jubilee of Digital Missionaries and Catholic Influencers took place. In his address to this Jubilee, Dr Paolo Ruffini, the Prefect of the Dicastery for Communications, noted that “What truly binds us is not the web, but something that transcends us: God himself”. In the same vein of thought, Pope Francis once wrote, “How do we sow hope amidst despair? How do we heal division? Is our communication rooted in prayer, or have we allowed ourselves to adopt the language of corporate marketing?” In his concluding address to this conference (St Peter’s Basilica, 29 July 2025), Pope Leo XIV urged digital missionaries to promote peace and commit themselves to nourishing “Christian hope in social networks and online spaces”. Secondly, he urged them to “look for the ‘suffering flesh of Christ’ in every brother and sister you encounter online”. Pope Leo said, “It is not simply a matter of generating content, but of creating an encounter of hearts”. His third piece of advice was to take up the scriptural text “go and mend the nets” (ref. Mark 1:19). Today, we are called to create new networks. But these networks should give voice to the weak; they should seek to liberate and save. They should be “networks that help us to rediscover the beauty of looking into each other’s eyes; networks of truth”.

Yes, digital missionaries resemble real missionaries, but they still have to rely on the “foreign” missionaries, those who physically go to the “ends of the earth” for the stories that can give substance and authenticity to the online messages by which they carry out the call of Jesus to “proclaim the Good News” (Mark 16:15).

FR TOM ROUSE
Regional Councillor of Oceania

MISSION INTENTIONS

POPE FRANCIS

September - For our relationship with all of creation: Let us pray that, inspired by Saint Francis, we might experience our interdependence with all creatures who are loved by God and worthy of love and respect.

October - For collaboration between different religious traditions: Let us pray that believers in different religious traditions might work together to defend and promote peace, justice and human fraternity.

COLUMBAN ACTIVITIES Crossword puzzle

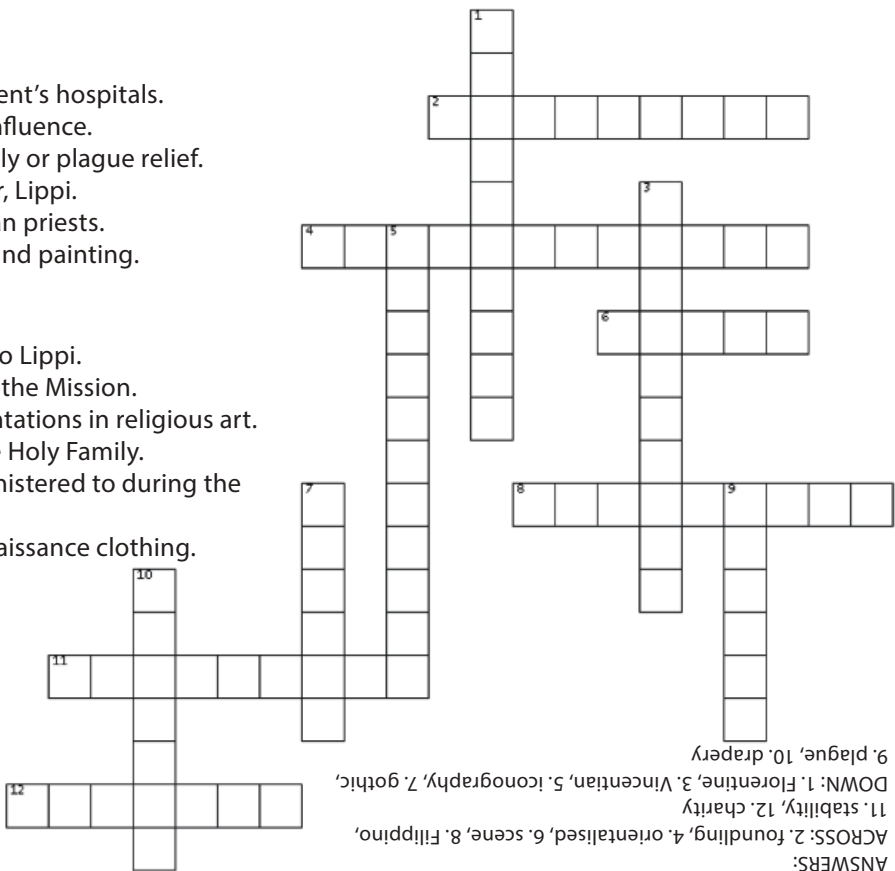
SCAN QR CODE to read the September & October 2025 Columban Calendar Art Guide and complete the crossword puzzle.

ACROSS

- 2. Refers to orphaned children cared for by Vincent’s hospitals.
- 4. Style seen in Mary’s scarf, hinting at Eastern influence.
- 6. A specific painted moment, like the Holy Family or plague relief.
- 8. First name of the acclaimed Florentine painter, Lippi.
- 11. One of the monastic vows taken by Vincentian priests.
- 12. Central virtue in St Vincent de Paul’s legacy and painting.

DOWN

- 1. Refers to someone from Florence, like Filippino Lippi.
- 3. Relating to the priests of the Congregation of the Mission.
- 5. The visual symbolism and traditional representations in religious art.
- 7. Architectural style in the cityscape behind the Holy Family.
- 9. The deadly disease that St Vincent de Paul ministered to during the 1628–1631 epidemic.
- 10. Flowing fabric, especially seen in Mary’s Renaissance clothing.



ANSWERS:
ACROSS: 2. foundling, 4. orientalis, 6. scene, 8. Filippino,
11. stability, 12. charity
DOWN: 1. Florentine, 3. Vincentian, 5. iconography, 7. gothic,
9. plague, 10. drapery



GIFT IN WILL

'Do what you can' Bishop Edward J Galvin



Please fill in your details below:

Title	First name	Last name
Address		
Suburb	State	Postcode
Mobile	Email	

Remember the Columbans in your Will

We cannot take our earthly possessions with us, but we can so dispose of them that our good works will continue after we are . By leaving a gift to Columban Missionaries in your Will you become a partner in our work and you are leaving a lasting legacy for the future. Why not speak to your lawyer about it?

Form of Will

"I give and bequeath the sum of \$..... to the Regional Director of Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and Fiji), St Columbans Mission Society to be used for the Society's general purposes as seen fit."

AUS: (03) 9375 9475 NZ: (04) 567 7216 FIJI: + 679-330-8290
E: bequest@columban.org.au E: info@columban.org.nz E: infofiji@columban.org.fj



SUPPORT COLUMBAN MISSION

Columbans work and live in fifteen countries: Australia Britain Chile China Fiji Ireland
Japan Korea Myanmar New Zealand Pakistan Peru Philippines Taiwan United States



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

TFE@columban.org.au

2025 COLUMBAN CHRISTMAS APPEAL



DONATE



AU: 03 9375 9475
NZ: + 64-4-567-7216



Please fill in coupon below
and return via mail.



Australia
www.columban.org.au



New Zealand
www.columban.org.nz



SHOP AND SUBSCRIBE ONLINE

Discover inspiring Catholic resources from St Columban's Mission Society. Explore our range of educational books, booklets, Columban Art calendars, posters, and beautifully handcrafted Subanen crafts. Every purchase directly supports the mission and ministries of Columban missionaries worldwide.

Australia: www.columban.org.au/shop
New Zealand: www.columban.org.nz/shop



LEAVE A TESTIMONY

We'd love to hear from you!
Share a short testimony about what The Far East magazine means to you. Your words may inspire others to support our mission.

Email your testimony or video message.

Australia: info@columban.org.au

New Zealand: info@columban.org.nz



YOUR GIFT

The Far East Subscription \$15.00 per year
(\$6.00 per year + \$9.00 postage)

My gift to the 2025 Columban Christmas Appeal

☐ \$40 ☐ \$70 ☐ \$120 ☐ \$240 Other \$_____

I wish to donate ☐ QUARTERLY ☐ MONTHLY ☐

AUSTRALIA

2025 Subanen Christmas Cards (\$20.00 inc. GST & postage)

2026 Columban Art Calendar (\$14.00 inc. GST & postage)

Additional calendars \$11.00 each inc. GST & postage

NEW ZEALAND

2025 Subanen Christmas Cards (NZ\$20.00 inc. GST & postage)

2026 Columban Art Calendar (NZ\$17.00 inc. GST & postage)

Additional calendars NZ\$12.00 each inc. GST & postage

Total Amount Enclosed

Gift in Will

☐ Please send me information on Columban legacy

☐ I have included the Columbans in my Will

I send my gift by: ☐ Cheque ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa  www.PayPal.Me/StColumban3040

Card holder name: _____ Card holder number:

Signature: _____

Expiry date: ____/____

CVC (NZ ONLY):

PLEASE FILL IN YOUR DETAILS BELOW:

Title	First name	Last name
Address		
Suburb	State	Postcode
Mobile		
Email		

An acknowledgement will be sent by email.

Vocations: ☐ Please send me information on
Columban vocations

AUSTRALIA return coupon to: St Columban's Mission Society, PO Box 752, Niddrie VIC 3042 E: info@columban.org.au

NEW ZEALAND return coupon to: St Columban's Mission Society, PO Box 30-017, Lower Hutt 5040 E: info@columban.org.nz

TFESEP0CT25