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THE FAR EAST

AUGUST 2026

VOLUME 108 NO.6 \$0.75 INC. GST & POSTAGE

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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: Columban lay missionary Sai Tamatawale with students from Good Samaritan Primary School in Roxburgh Park participating in the Columban Partnership Program, Australia. Photo: St Columbans Mission Society

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

Printed by Doran Printing, Melbourne



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BEFORE ALL ELSE, WE ARE HUMAN

At the start of his meeting with migrants in Spain on June 11, 2026, Pope Leo made a profound gesture. "Dear migrants," he said, "before saying anything else to you, I want to bow before your dignity."

In other words, before we are any ethnicity, nationality, religion, economic or social class, we are first of all humans. As Elias Chacour, the Melkite Archbishop of Galilee, said many years ago on a visit to Sydney, "I was not born a Christian, or an Israeli, or a Palestinian. I was born a baby!" We are, first of all, human. Only after that do we take on family, social, ethnic, linguistic, educational, economic, national, and religious identities. Our basic humanity confers on us an infinite dignity. We are made in the "image and likeness of God". No one, no authority, no other belonging, no other conferral of identity, nothing done to us, nothing we do, neither achievement nor even any major sin we may have committed, can rob us of that fundamental human dignity. We are forever God's beloved.

From June 14 to 20, 2026, Australia observed Refugee Week. This year's celebration marked a significant milestone. Counting the first intake of 4,000 refugees from Europe after World War II, nearly one million refugees have settled in Australia over the last eighty years. In fact, apart from the indigenous peoples who have inhabited this land for more than 65,000 years, all of us are recent migrants or refugees and their descendants. We, our parents, our grandparents, and perhaps a handful of generations beyond that who dreamt of a better future for themselves and their children, arrived on these shores only over the last 240 years. Migrants and refugees built this country as we know it today - the farms, the factories, the roads, the railways, the cities. They brought their cultures, faiths, foods, and traditions. They created a rich, diverse, multicultural, multi-religious society.

By and large, our diversity is enriching, strong, resilient, respectful, and tolerant. It is not perfect: there is racism, prejudice, and division. We have yet to

acknowledge and reconcile fully with the indigenous peoples of this land. In recent years, there has been a surge in antisemitism, Islamophobia and white supremacy, but apart from these fringe extremists, overall, Australian society works reasonably well.

This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the UN Refugee Convention. Globally, there are an estimated 42 to 43 million refugees, one and a half times the population of Australia. In addition, there are some 9 million asylum seekers and nearly 70 million internally displaced people. This sea of suffering humanity deserves respect, welcome, hospitality, and protection so that they too can live their lives to the full and raise their families in peace and security.

In the 2024 General Assembly, Columbans named migrants and refugees as a missionary priority. This commitment is grounded in the Gospel: to show mercy to our neighbour, particularly those who are suffering, like the traveller beaten, robbed, and left at the side of the road in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. This concern has been honed by first-hand experience. Just like the ancient Irish missionary monks whose motto was *exilii pro Christo* (exiles for Christ), we Columbans have also been exiles. We have lived in other countries. We have known the pain of loneliness, isolation, and not understanding or being understood. We have learned new languages, new cultures, new ways of relating, and through this paschal process, our lives have been enriched. That is why Columbans stand in solidarity with migrants and refugees, and the religious and civic agencies that support them. All people of every ethnicity, nationality, and religion are entitled to live a life consonant with their inviolable human dignity as beloved children of God. Let us bow before their infinite dignity. Let us welcome them as our sisters and brothers, made, like us, in the image and likeness of God, one family, one nation, a magnificent diversity that enriches us all and is truly a blessing from God.

REV DR PATRICK MCINERNEY

Regional Director of Oceania



FINDING NEW WAYS IN PROMOTING LAUDATO SI'

Through his encyclical *Laudato Si'* (*Praise be to you*), Pope Francis continues to inspire and move the Church to care for our common home. In the Diocese of Myitkyina, the journey of ecological conversion is taking new forms through listening, formation, dialogue, and collaboration.

For me, promoting *Laudato Si'* is not only about protecting the environment. It is about renewing our relationship with God, with one another and with all creation.

ACCOMPANYING COMMUNITIES THROUGH LISTENING AND DISCERNMENT

One meaningful experience recently has been my accompanying the La Salette Sisters on their retreat. At it, I introduced Conversation in the Spirit (CIS), a practice that encourages prayerful listening, sharing, and communal discernment. It reminds us that ecological conversion begins with learning to listen - to God, to the cry of the Earth, and to the cry of the poor, which is the very invitation of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*.



It is about renewing our relationship with God, with one another and with all creation.

FORMING FUTURE PASTORAL LEADERS THROUGH INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

I also introduced CIS to students of the Diploma in Socio-Pastoral Studies as they reflected on integral ecology and their responsibility towards creation. Together with Roger Barelli of the Fondacio movement, I helped facilitate a five-day online class on integral ecology as part of the diploma program. Students comprise priests, religious sisters, and lay people - future pastoral leaders who can bring this environmental awareness to their communities. The diploma, which is offered by St Joseph's National Catholic Major Seminary in Yangon, now has its fourth batch of students. We hope to revive the *Laudato Si'* Movement-Myanmar with the help of these students.

Together with the Columban Mission Office team, composed of Columban lay missionary Michael Javier and Philip, we share about *Laudato Si'* and integral ecology with catechist-students at St Luke's Pastoral College in Myitkyina using the See-Judge-Act method. We also reach out to different groups in the diocese through the Columban Mission Office to promote our mission priorities.

BRINGING LAUDATO SI' SPIRITUALITY TO LOCAL PRIESTS

Another important area has been to share *Laudato Si'* spirituality with priests. At the monthly priests' meetings, I present the importance of ecological conversion and invite the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission to share its work.

One priest asked, "When will *Laudato Si'* be completed?" This question reflects a misunderstanding that *Laudato Si'* is only a project. It is much more than a project - it is a lifelong journey of conversion, both personal and communal.

COLLABORATION WITH THE JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION AND OTHERS

The collaboration with the Justice and Peace Commission is also growing as we work towards developing a Diocesan Integral Ecology Framework. Caring for creation is deeply connected with justice, peace and human dignity. I also joined a multi-stakeholder workshop organised by the Kachin



Columban Fr Kurt Zion Pala promoting *Laudato Si'* at Naushawng College.

Resources Concern Group on responsible mining and the impact of rare earth mineral extraction on the people and land of Kachin. Engaging other faith groups, like Baptists and other religions, is a growing need if we truly want to address the environmental crisis.

INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE OF ACTION

Young people continue to be an important part of this mission. During World Environment Day 2026 at Naushawng College, I spoke of bees as a model for young people - working together, serving the community, and protecting creation. I also introduced integral ecology using the See-Judge-Act framework during the Diocesan Youth Conference, where around 300 young people gathered from different parishes.

A new youth initiative called BEES (Better Environment through Education and Service) was also formed, bringing together young people from different faith communities for clean-up and tree-growing activities. This shows that caring for creation can be a bridge between people, creating unity. The new movement consists of members of the Myitkyina Council of Churches (Christians) and the Interfaith Youth Network Myitkyina.

Through these experiences, I continue to learn three important lessons. First, ecological conversion begins with listening. We need open hearts to hear God's voice and respond to the needs of our common home and the poor.

Second, *Laudato Si'* is about integral human development. It connects care for the Earth with faith, justice, peace, and the dignity of every person. And lastly, collaboration strengthens the mission. Caring for creation cannot be done by one person or one group alone. Sisters, priests, students, young people, commissions, and communities all have a role to play.

As we continue this journey in the Diocese of Myitkyina, the challenge is to remain open to new ways of promoting *Laudato Si'*, not only among Catholics but also reaching out to other faith groups, trusting that every encounter can become an opportunity for transformation.

Together, we can recognise creation as God's gift and commit ourselves to protecting our common home.

FR KURT ZION PALA

Columban Fr Kurt Zion Pala lives and works in Myanmar.

PLASTIC, JUSTICE AND THE MORAL TEST BEFORE THE WORLD

Plastic pollution is often framed as an environmental or economic problem. For faith communities, it is also a moral and spiritual one. As nations negotiate a UN Plastics Treaty, religious leaders and grassroots networks are making a simple case for protecting creation, defending human dignity and standing with the vulnerable. All require an ambitious agreement.

The case begins with a conviction shared across many traditions that creation is sacred. Oceans, rivers, land and all living beings are gifts entrusted to human care. Yet plastic pollution now reaches everywhere, from the deepest ocean trenches to the human bloodstream. For faith communities, this is not just a policy failure but a sign of a broken relationship with the Earth. It demands what many call *ecological conversion*: a turn towards simplicity, restraint and right relationship with the natural world.

That is why faith groups insist the treaty address the *full* life cycle of plastics. Recycling alone will not solve the crisis. A credible treaty must curb production, redesign materials, eliminate toxic additives and expand reuse systems. At the centre of that agenda is overproduction, which drives pollution, climate harm and environmental injustice. Therefore, faith coalitions have called for steep cuts in virgin plastic production, a phaseout of single-use plastics and policies such as Extended Producer Responsibility and Deposit Return Systems that align economics with accountability.

Justice must also be at the treaty's core. Plastic pollution falls hardest on low-income communities, indigenous peoples, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and countries across the Global South. As the Columban water statement reminds us, damage to water systems is never abstract; it threatens health, sanitation and daily life, especially for the poor. The statement also affirms that safe drinking water is a universal and inalienable human right and that

public policy and corporate practice must be judged by whether they protect or violate that right. A serious treaty must therefore provide strong protections, financing for cleanup and restoration and a just transition for workers, especially waste pickers.

Faith actors also bring something politics alone cannot: moral authority and global reach. Through sermons, schools, parish networks and public witness, they can move both conscience and action. Columban Missionaries are part of that witness, linking care for creation with solidarity for those communities most harmed by plastic pollution. Their work in education, advocacy and the defence of clean water shows how faith-based action can connect ecological concern with public responsibility.

The treaty process began in March 2022, when the UN Environment Assembly adopted Resolution 5/14 to negotiate a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution across the full life cycle of plastics. Since then, talks have moved through multiple rounds of negotiations, but the resumed fifth session in Geneva in August 2025 ended without consensus. Major disagreements remain over binding global rules on production, chemicals of concern, financing and implementation. The choice is now stark: a treaty built around voluntary national measures, or one equal to the scale of the crisis. A strong UN Plastics Treaty is not only sound policy. It is a test of whether the world is willing to protect creation, uphold human dignity and act before another generation inherits a crisis that we already know how to confront.

AMY WOOLAM ECHEVERRIA

Amy Woolam Echeverria is the Columban International Coordinator for Justice, Peace and Ecology.



Turn off the Plastic Tap art installation by artist Benjamin Von Wong at the UN Oceans Conference in Lisbon, Portugal 2022.

Photo: Amy Woolam Echeverria

FROM FINDING THEIR VOICE TO TRANSFORMING THEIR COMMUNITIES

For many children growing up in Peru's poorest communities, life is shaped by poverty, social exclusion and limited opportunities. Too often, their opinions are overlooked and decisions are made for them rather than with them. Through Warmi Huasi and supported Columban partners, that story is changing.

Across communities in Carabayllo and Ayacucho, children and adolescents are discovering that they have both the right and the ability to shape their own future. Warmi Huasi is training them in leadership, citizenship, life planning and care for creation. They are becoming confident young leaders who are improving life in their schools and neighbourhoods and even influencing public policy. Rather than simply learning about civic responsibility in a classroom, these young people are putting it into practice. They identify the problems affecting their communities, investigate the causes, design solutions and lead projects that make a real difference.

Some initiatives focus on issues that directly affect young people, including bullying, mental illness, drug prevention and teenage pregnancy. Others respond to environmental concerns such as climate change, protection of green spaces and promotion of sustainable living. At Mariano Melgar School in Ayacucho, primary school students now host their own community radio program, "The Voice of School Prefects". What began as part of a training program has become a nationally recognised initiative, giving children a platform to discuss issues that matter to them while developing confidence, communication skills and critical thinking.

In Carabayllo, secondary students created "Recreation with Feelings", which has transformed school breaks into opportunities for friendship, inclusion and respectful relationships. Through games and activities, students encourage their peers to reject bullying, drug use and violence while building a culture of care within their school.

Another inspiring initiative saw children reclaim an unused piece of land and transform it into a community football ground. The project, known as "Goals by Nature", is about more than playing football. It encourages teamwork, inclusion and healthy lifestyles while breaking down barriers between boys and girls through equal participation.

Caring for creation also features strongly. On World Environment Day, children organised a community march, calling families and neighbours to recycle, protect green spaces and care for the environment. In a rural secondary school where access to clean water remains a daily challenge, students established a medicinal plant garden, preserving traditional knowledge while creating a greener and healthier school environment.

Perhaps the greatest achievement, however, extends beyond these community projects. The young participants are now taking their voices into local and national decision-making spaces. Through Children's Consultative Councils and advocacy forums, they meet with government officials, contribute to public discussions and ensure that children's perspectives are included in decisions affecting their lives. Two adolescent girls even represented their communities at the Regional Consultative Meeting of Latin America and the Caribbean, speaking about the impact of climate change on children and advocating for the rights of young people across the region. For children who have often experienced exclusion and vulnerability, these opportunities are life-changing. Children are no longer seen simply as recipients of assistance but as active citizens capable of creating positive change. Their journey reflects an important lesson for all of us. When young people are trusted, listened to and supported, they do not wait for tomorrow to become leaders. They begin transforming their communities today.

This is the mission of Warmi Huasi: walking alongside children and adolescents so that their voices are heard, their dignity is recognised and they become agents of hope in a world that needs their courage more than ever.

ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY PERU

REFLECTION

A JOURNEY OF TRUST AND COMPANIONSHIP



Columban co-worker alongside the late Chris Kleine.



The altar at Chris Kleine's funeral.



One of the greatest privileges of working with St Columbans Mission Society is witnessing the Gospel lived out in quiet and often unseen ways. The story of our benefactor, Chris Kleine, is one such example.

As we journey through life, there comes a time for many when independence begins to fade. Decisions that once seemed simple become overwhelming, especially when there is no family to lean on. For Chris, that moment came when he realised it was time to leave his unit at the retirement village and move into residential aged care. It was one of the most difficult decisions he had ever faced.

Chris had no immediate family to accompany him through this transition. Instead, he placed his trust in the Columbans. When Chris was growing up as a child his family lived opposite the Columban house in Essendon, Melbourne. He knew many Columban priests in his lifetime.

I vividly remember visiting Chris with Columban Fr Patrick McInerney as we discussed his move to Mercy Place Rice Village. Like anyone facing such a significant change, he was anxious about what lay ahead. There were many practical matters to resolve, but beneath them all was a deeper question: *Who will walk with me?*

As we spoke with Chris and assured him that the Columbans would remain by his side, an enormous sense of relief came over him. He realised he would not be making this journey alone. From that moment, a relationship built on trust continued to grow.

Chris had no immediate family to accompany him through this transition. Instead, he placed his trust in the Columbans. When Chris was growing up as a child his family lived opposite the Columban house in Essendon, Melbourne. He knew many Columban priests in his lifetime.

"I was with you." Sometimes, those four simple words are the greatest expression of God's love we can offer another person.

Throughout his years at Mercy Place Rice Village, Chris remained part of the Columban family. Our priests regularly visited him, celebrated with him, listened to him and ensured he was well cared for. These visits were not simply pastoral obligations; they were expressions of friendship, compassion and the Gospel's call to accompany one another.

I was also privileged, together with Columban Fr Trevor Trotter, to visit Chris on the day he passed into eternal life. It was a deeply moving experience to be present during his final hours and to commend him to God's loving embrace.

We are profoundly grateful to the wonderful staff at Mercy Place Rice Village, whose dedication and kindness made Chris feel safe, respected and at home. In a special way, we thank Sr Aileen Moloney RSM, who remained faithfully by Chris's side until his final breath. Her gentle presence and compassionate care reflected Christ's love in a profound way. Sr Aileen, a Sister of Mercy, is a younger sister of Columban Fr Maurice Moloney RIP who worked as a missionary in Japan for most of his missionary life.

We also acknowledge the faithful friendship of Columban Fr Peter O'Neill, the Society Vicar, who visited Chris whenever he returned to Australia from Hong Kong. Their relationship became one of genuine affection. Chris often spoke of Fr Peter with the love of a father, treating him as though he were his own son. Those visits brought him immense comfort and joy.

Chris's story reminds us that family is not always defined by blood. Sometimes it is found in those who choose to walk beside us with love, faith and compassion.

At St Columbans, we often speak about mission as accompaniment - being present with people, especially in times of vulnerability. Chris's life beautifully illustrates what that accompaniment can mean. It is not simply about providing practical assistance, it is about offering friendship, dignity and hope.

Chris entrusted the Columbans with his final journey and we were honoured to walk alongside him. In doing so, he also gave us a precious reminder that the Gospel is often proclaimed most powerfully through quiet acts of presence and faithful companionship.

As we remember Chris with gratitude, we give thanks for the trust he placed in us and for the many benefactors who, like him, become part of the Columban family. May he now rest in the eternal peace of the God whom he trusted throughout his life.

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MAHA SHAWKY

Maha Shawky, Oceania Regional Business Manager.

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CARING FOR CREATION, ONE PROMISE AT A TIME

A GLIMPSE INTO A PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM SCHOOL VISIT AT ST MARK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, FAWKNER



Columban lay missionary Sai Tamatawale and Columban co-worker Jacqui Russell at St Mark's Primary School.

This day was truly memorable for me because it was the first time I'd facilitated a session with students entirely on my own - and in English.

I'd practised a lot beforehand, repeating words and working on pronunciation, twisting my tongue to avoid slipping into Spanish or Tagalog. I stayed fully focused on speaking English with the children.

I knew I wasn't a perfect facilitator but felt relieved that I had taken the initiative to lead with confidence and passion. I led the session, but I was not alone. Columban co-workers Ajesh Abraham and Jacqui Russell were there as part of our team. The teachers welcomed us warmly and with great hospitality. We worked with Grades 1 and 2 on the topic "Caring for Our Common Home", adapting the session to suit the children's learning level. Jacqui helped the students with the Creation Song.

Photos: St Columbans Mission Society

We started by exploring the creation story in Genesis Chapter 1 and then watched the *Laudato Si'* video together. The video is a simple, engaging retelling of the Genesis creation story, which highlights the reality of environmental degradation and the importance of ecological responsibility.

Pope Francis's message to us is about caring for God's creation in our common home. The video helped the children understand that the destruction of our common home is real. Teaching them at this young age helps build awareness of climate change and encourages them to care for creation.

Then we guided the children on a walk outside, where we encouraged them to observe, touch and appreciate elements of nature within their school environment.

The class ended with class promises. In this activity, students made collective promises on how they would care for our common home. We wrote the promises on large sheets of paper with the Columban logo and gave them to their teachers to display in their classrooms as a reminder. These promises were important. They weren't just about learning but about committing to action.

The children's engagement and enthusiasm in the activity were inspiring. They shared thoughtful and creative ideas that we were sure they would take home to their families. Sessions like this are essential because the small actions children undertake to care for our common home can inspire them to guide and teach others. Children remember what they learn and they often correct or encourage their peers when they see something wrong.

This partnership program strengthens our relationship with schools and supports mission education and ecological awareness. It is a meaningful way to plant seeds of responsibility, compassion and stewardship in the hearts of young learners.

This program was also delivered at Good Samaritan Primary School in Roxburgh Park prior to St Mark's. Students and teachers shared similarly positive feedback, highlighting the engaging activities and the program's ability to inspire a deeper understanding of care for our common home.

SAI TAMATAWALE

Columban lay missionary Sai Tamatawale lives and works in Australia.



LIVING WATER

This September, students from primary and secondary schools across Australia, Fiji and New Zealand are invited to creatively share their response to Ezekiel's vision of living waters by entering the Columban Season of Creation Competition.

Students can submit artwork, video or poetry on the theme of "God's living water." Students can also submit essays that answer ONE of the following questions:

1. Why is it so important for us to keep water clean? How does clean water affect not just human, but the whole of creation?
2. As young people, what are some simple things you can start doing to take care of God's creation and in particular the earth's oceans and waterways?
3. What does it look like for humans to become a "channel" of God's living water? In other words, how can we help bring healing and reconnect with creation instead of harming it?

Enter submissions by September 1, 2026!

May God's living waters renew your spirit to care for creation and our common home!

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO WATCH 'What is the theme for Season of Creation 2026' video SCAN QR



LET THE MIGRANTS SPEAK

LISTEN TO THE MIGRANT VOICES AT THE GATHERING OF EX-RESIDENTS OF THE COLUMBAN MIGRANT HOUSE IN SANTIAGO, CHILE

THE GATHERING

On Sunday, May 24, 2026, twenty migrant ex-residents of the former Columban Migrant House, “Bobbio” in Santiago, Chile, along with their families, gathered to share their experiences living in the Migrant House as newly arrived migrants to Chile.

This gathering was organised by Venezuelan migrant Javier Núñez and Columban Dan Harding. Javier had been the Administrator of the Columban Migrant House for its five-year existence and Dan had been its chaplain during that time. Also participating in the gathering were Columbans Iowane Gukibau, Michael Howe, Rafael Ramirez and Columban seminarian Lydio Mangao Jr.

Other participants included Sandra, the psychologist from the Scalabrini Migrant Foundation, who specialises in family migration trauma and Marjory, the Coordinator of the Assumptionist Fathers Migrant Ministry. Several local parishioners from the Columban parish of San Matias, interested in setting up a Migrant Ministry, also participated. The gathering ended with a meal and each ex-resident receiving a mug as a memento.

TESTIMONIES OF THREE EX-RESIDENTS

Testimony of Juan Carlos: One-year residency at the Columban Migrant House, Santiago.

I was very close to committing suicide and had lost all faith in God. I had just arrived in Santiago from Venezuela, sleeping out in the open in a town plaza during the freezing Santiago winter with temperatures near or below 0 degrees. I was sick and in desperate need of medicine. I had been suffering for a long time because this medicine was not available in Venezuela.



Specially designed gift mugs for the Gathering of Ex-Migrant House residents.

My twin brother and I had been adopted as small children. When I left Venezuela, he was suffering from hunger and illness. Our parents, who had adopted us, were elderly and without any income to buy food, pay for electricity and water - that is, when they were functioning - or buy medicine, which usually was unavailable anyway.

During 2016–2018, 76% of the Venezuelan economy collapsed, marking the biggest economic collapse in modern history of any country. As a result, 25% of us Venezuelans - eight million people - had to leave Venezuela, the biggest migration in modern times.

I believe that grieving for my brother and my parents helped keep me alive, at least a little longer. It was so hard to leave them behind when I left. My twin brother soon died from a treatable disease because medicine was not available. My parents also died a short time later due to the lack of care and support.

But leaving Venezuela saved my life. What also saved my life was being referred to the Columban Migrant House in Santiago by the Archdiocese of Santiago, where I lived for over a year. There, I found love, friendship, community, support and a new family in a foreign country. I also received the medical attention I urgently needed.

From the bottom of my heart, I cannot thank the Columbans enough for the hospitality shown to me during my time in the Migrant House. It saved my life. And it restored my faith in a God who cares about me.

Testimony of Juan: One and a half years at the Columban Migrant House, Santiago.

My wife, Veronica and I arrived in Santiago from Venezuela with our two small children. Like many

other newly arrived Venezuelan migrants, we had nowhere to live, no employment, no food, no winter clothing, no health care and no support.

After desperately looking for somewhere to live and for employment, we were referred by the Archdiocese of Santiago to the Columban Migrant House where we happily settled in. Our eldest child soon began attending a local kindergarten and I (Juan) found some intermittent work.

When Veronica became pregnant soon after with our third child, she was taken to the local medical centre near the Migrant House. Nine months later, baby Santiago was born, with both mum and baby healthy and doing well.

Santiago is now two and a half years old. Along with his elder brother Pedro and sister Maria, he is happy to be back for this gathering. Veronica and I will be eternally grateful for our stay at the Columban Migrant House which gave us much-needed time to settle into life in a new country, including finding employment, a permanent place to live, medical care and schools for our children.

May God bless the Columbans for this important ministry!



Ex-Migrant House Residents gather as a community and as a family.

Testimony of Marco: One and a half years of residency at the Columban Migrant House, Santiago

After fleeing Venezuela, I stayed a little while in Quito, Ecuador, cleaning windscreens at traffic lights. I then moved on to Santiago, Chile, where I was referred to the Columban Migrant House by the Archdiocese of Santiago.

While living at the Migrant House I did a pastry-cooking course and began making donuts in the Migrant House kitchen to sell at Metro and bus stations and after Sunday Mass.

After saving enough money, I managed to pay for my girlfriend and our young son to come from Venezuela to Chile and live at the Migrant House. Today, we are no longer a couple but remain friends. We are all here together.

The Columban Migrant House gave us the opportunity to start a new life here in Chile. We are very grateful to the Columbans. May God always bless them!

The Columban Migrant House gave us the opportunity to start a new life here in Chile.



Poster advertising the Gathering of Ex-Residents.

CONCLUSION

Migrants and refugees coming to a new country frequently suffer trauma and grief for all they have left behind and the new situation in which they find themselves. They have strong feelings of vulnerability and isolation from friends, family and support structures at home and hypersensitivity to their new social reality.

The Columban Migrant House offered migrants and refugees community, family, friendships, connections, job-skill training and legal support. It offered them the space and time to work through their sense of loss and trauma and begin to re-establish themselves in a new and different country - Chile. Importantly, it also offered them an opportunity to discover Christ, the Migrant, in their faith journeys, who was and is always at their side, walking with them, accompanying them, empowering them. The next gathering of ex-residents will be at Christmas time.

FR DAN HARDING

Columban Fr Dan Harding lives and works in Chile.

A DREAM JOURNEY TO LAKE DUMINAGAT



Lake Duminagat in 2026.



Subanen couple who trekked with Marjorie to Lake Duminagat in early 2026.

As a child, I often found myself gazing at the majestic silhouette of the Mt Malindang Range on the Zamboanga Peninsula in Mindanao. Rising above the horizon, it evoked a sense of wonder and mystery. I imagined the countless species hidden within its forests and marvelled at its grandeur. More than anything, it stirred within me a profound gratitude for the Creator, whose artistry is reflected in every mountain peak, forest canopy, and flowing stream.

Among the many stories I heard about Mt Malindang, one captured my imagination more than any other - the story of Lake Duminagat, the sacred lake nestled deep within the mountain ranges and revered by the Subanen people. The dream of seeing this mysterious lake took root in my childhood after my mother returned from Barangay Gandawan, a village at the foot of Mt Malindang, where she had conducted a livelihood seminar for the women in the community. Through her stories, Lake Duminagat became more than a geographical location; it became a symbol of beauty, mystery, and sacredness.

That childhood dream became a reality in November 2024 when I was blessed with the opportunity to visit the lake for the first time. Invited by Columban Fr Dodong Matulac, I joined a trek via Don Victoriano,

following in the footsteps of another Columban missionary, Fr Brendan Kelly, who spent fourteen years accompanying the Subanen people of Don Victoriano, whom I know well.

The journey to the lake was filled with anticipation. Yet as I approached this long-awaited destination, my emotions grew unexpectedly mixed. The beauty of Lake Duminagat was undeniable. Surrounded by forests and mountains, it radiated a sacred tranquillity, untouched by time. It was easy to understand why generations of Subanen people have revered this place. Yet alongside wonder came sorrow.

At the local registration area, I heard a remark that reflected a growing vision for the area: "Soon, tourists will swarm here to Lake Duminagat, and we will try to make it more beautiful." That statement lingered in my mind.

How can one make more beautiful what God has already made beautiful beyond measure?

Long before roads, tourism plans, and development projects, the Creator had already adorned this place with beauty no human intervention could improve. The sacredness of Lake Duminagat does not arise from infrastructure or commercialisation but from its deep connection to creation, culture, and spirit.

As I walked along the newly constructed road leading to the lake, I could not ignore the wounds etched into the mountains. The road carved through slopes that had once stood undisturbed. Trees that had silently witnessed centuries of history had been felled. Habitats were fragmented. Countless species of flora and fauna had been displaced. And what of the small vegetable farms of the Subanen people at the foot



Former Columban lay missionary Crisente Talitayan (left to right), his wife Merlita, Marjorie Engcoy, Columban International JPIC Coordinator, Amy Woolam Echeverria and Doroteo Alum Jr.

of the mountain? Some of these small farms lie in the path of rock cuts coming down from the top of the mountain, where construction is underway.

In the moment, the mountain groans. The Subanen couple I walked with on my second visit to the lake in early 2026 could not help but despair and express their grief. I remember my encounter with a Subanen woman who faces death threats day in and day out. She has worked alongside Columban missionaries for decades in reforestation and in protecting their home on the other side of Mt Malindang.

Mt Malindang has been their pharmacy, market, hardware store, and library for many decades. But in recent years, they have witnessed, under the guise of development, the wanton destruction of the young forest they have toiled in for most of their lives.

Her granddaughter asked her, "Why do we risk our lives protecting this mountain? Why do these people with big backhoes and trucks come to tell us that what we do is wrong and that what they are doing is right?"

The cries of creation are often silent, yet they are no less real. The fallen trees, disturbed soil, and disrupted ecosystems speak of a cost rarely acknowledged in development narratives. What many celebrate as progress can sometimes mask a deeper ecological loss.

This experience led me to reflect on the challenge facing many sacred and protected sites today. Development and tourism are often promoted as pathways to economic opportunity. While these goals are understandable, they must be approached with humility and discernment. Places like Lake Duminagat are not merely tourist destinations; they are living ecosystems and sacred landscapes. They are homes



Going up to Lake Duminagat passing through the ongoing constructed road.

to countless species and repositories of indigenous wisdom and spiritual heritage.

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis reminds us that everything is interconnected. When forests are cleared, habitats disrupted and sacred places reduced to commodities, we wound not only the Earth but also ourselves. Ecological degradation is ultimately a spiritual crisis, reflecting a failure to recognise creation as a gift rather than a possession.

The journey to Lake Duminagat became more than the fulfilment of a childhood dream. It became an encounter with both the beauty and the suffering of creation. It revealed the tension between preservation and exploitation, between reverence and consumption, and between seeing nature as sacred and as a resource.

As God's children and members of the Earth community, we are called to listen attentively to creation's songs and laments. The beauty of Lake Duminagat invites us to praise the Creator, while its wounds challenge us to examine our assumptions about development and progress.

Perhaps the most faithful response is not to ask how we can make such places more beautiful, but rather how we can protect the beauty that already exists. Lake Duminagat does not need to become more beautiful. It needs people willing to recognise, respect, and defend the sacred beauty it has always possessed.

MARJORIE ENGCOY

Marjorie Engcoy is a Columban co-worker in the Philippines.



Columban Fr Iowane Naio celebrates Mass with the Sindhi Bheels community in Pangrio Village.

THE BURNING BUSH

It has been sometime now since I arrived in Pakistan. I have just completed the formal language studies, which took around eight months, and now I await my pastoral placement.

While waiting for the final arrangements to be carried out at my new pastoral placement, I am helping out in Badin Parish, where Columban Frs Pat Visanti and Elbert Balbastro are serving with Kim Jinwook, a Columban seminarian from Korea, who is here on his First Mission Assignment. I am pretty sure that these pastoral experiences in Badin parish will serve as a good orientation for me as I prepare to formally begin my ministry in a part of Kotri parish, at the outskirts of Hyderabad city.

It's indeed a blessing to witness my Columban brothers fully and sincerely engaged in the mission of God's love, despite the difficulties and uncertainties they encounter. My initial missionary experiences here are similar to Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush (Exodus 3). I see the fire of missionary zeal in my fellow Columbans and other missionaries who are trying their best to accompany the faithful here.

As I move closer to this burning bush by gradually immersing myself in various ministries in Badin parish, I see flames of humility, openness, love, understanding, patience, and perseverance in my fellow missionaries. Indeed, every fire produces heat and smoke. So, in these experiences, I see the faith

of my fellow missionaries as the fire's heat and their hopefulness as the smoke that rises from it.

The journey of the Catholic Church has never been without difficulties and struggles, even persecution, somewhat similar to the journey of the Israelites, who tried their best to live according to the laws of God. From the beginning, it was never easy. It's indeed difficult to imagine a Church without difficulties, both internal and external. But as I compare my initial missionary experiences here with those in other countries, the challenges of mission in Pakistan are immense, unique, and at times overwhelming.

Yet, as I observe and listen to my fellow Columbans and other missionaries who have been here for a while, I get the sense that their faithfulness to God and their love for his beloved people have kept them hopeful and optimistic. Their insights have helped me to realise that if we are humble, open, and flexible enough, these challenges and struggles can bring out the best in us. It can help us grow stronger in faith, trust more in God than in ourselves, discern his continuous presence among the faithful, and continue His mission of love with great joy despite all the struggles.

Initially, it was very discouraging and confusing to know that this fire had been burning for a while. The Columbans have been working in this parish for more than forty years, but it feels like we are just starting our mission. Pessimism began to kick in, and unconsciously I started judging and criticising every experience in light of my past missionary experiences. Instead of facing this burning bush with faith, humility, openness, love, and understanding, I began perceiving

it negatively through the lens of my previous pastoral experiences in Fiji, the Philippines, and Peru.

However, as I continued to observe the burning bush with curiosity and anxiety, I was surprised to notice that the tree, which has many branches (namely, poverty, school dropouts, unemployment, addiction, malnutrition, discrimination, suppression, abuse by the wealthy landowners, and many more), was not being consumed by the fire.

As I move closer to this burning bush by gradually immersing myself in various ministries in Badin parish, I see flames of humility, openness, love, understanding, patience, and perseverance in my fellow missionaries. Indeed, every fire produces heat and smoke. So, in these experiences, I see the faith of my fellow missionaries as the fire's heat and their hopefulness as the smoke that rises from it.

In my confusion, frustration, and hopelessness, I talked to my fellow missionaries, who had been here for a long time, about my initial impressions. I asked them questions, even throwing criticisms at them about the missionary work here. A common answer I would receive was *Yeh Pakistan hei* ("This is Pakistan").

At first, I did not understand what they were trying to tell me. I thought they were just being sarcastic. However, as I continued to pray and reflect deeply on my experiences here, I began to realise I was actually hearing the voice of God. Just as God spoke to Moses in Exodus 3:5, God was asking me, through these fellow missionaries, to take off my sandals because the ground where I stood was holy.

This was a moment of awakening because I realised that to be effective and meaningful in ministry, I first needed a better understanding of the church in Pakistan. To achieve this, I had to be humble and learn from the people. I had to really take off my sandals to empty myself of all the familiar models of the church I had and to open myself to learning a new way of being a church. With the help of the Holy Spirit, my fellow missionaries, and God's beloved people, I am now settling in comfortably.

I want to conclude by sharing some insights from my initial missionary experience here in Pakistan. First of all, we need to trust that God has chosen us to be part of his mission. We know how limited we are in many ways - but God still offers us this privilege so that we may understand his love and faithfulness and share it with others. Secondly, be confident in yourself and do not hesitate to analyse, ask questions, or even criticise what you see or experience, because this will help you grow in your understanding and creativity. Thirdly, be humble enough to ask for advice and help. This practice reminds us that the mission belongs to the Holy Spirit alone, and it also enlightens us to realise that God has blessed us with different gifts and talents, meant to be shared in building up His Kingdom here on earth.

Fourthly, be open to complaints, criticism, and correction; do not take them personally. Rather, see them as the best opportunities for renewal. Finally, keep praying and continue to offer every experience to God, pleasant and unpleasant alike. God, who has chosen us, is always with us; he is always ready to hear from us, and he is ever ready to help us, but he never forces himself upon us.

FR LOWANE NAI0

Columban Fr Lowane Naio lives and works in Pakistan.

ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY



COLUMBAN LOWANE NAI0

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Families of the Nanuku Nine gather for a commemorative Mass, holding photos of their missing loved ones in prayer and hope.

THE NANUKU NINE

WE'RE GOING FISHING

One morning at the beginning of May this year, nine men, ranging from 20 to 57, farewelled their families in Nanuku, an informal settlement in low-lying marshy ground close to the sea in Suva, Fiji. The men readied the boat they had hired from a local woman and set out towards the island of Kadavu to fish in waters where they had fished before. They rested at a lighthouse on the way.

From there, one of them phoned a friend and was advised to ask permission from the local owners where they intended to fish. "No, we don't need to do that because we often come to this place to fish," was the answer.

None of them have been heard from since. The boat was found in waters off the main island of Viti Levu a few days later. There has been no sign of the men. The Fiji naval service and a helicopter searched the area where the men were last heard from and where they were going for three days. They had no success and regretfully gave up.

THE VILLAGE

Nanuku mostly consists of tin shacks built close together. The few people who have electricity share it with their neighbours.

THE FAMILIES

The nine men were closely related. The eldest was Osea and with him were his three sons, a nephew and other relatives. All the men except the youngest of Osea's sons were married. Two of the wives are pregnant. Other wives have multiple children.

COMMUNITY PRAYER

Ten days later, a special commemorative Mass was held in the Columban parish of St Pius X, Raiwaqa. All the wives, children and families of the nine men were present, bringing framed photos of their lost ones. The large congregation heard Fr Vincent Ratnam, the parish priest, speak words of consolation and hope. The choir and people sang touching hymns from their hearts. Afterwards, a large crowd packed the

With their breadwinners gone, the families are struggling to survive. Osea's wife told me she is selling her husband's tools to provide food for her children.

FJI

Methodist Hall in Nanuku to drink kava, the traditional drink and eat together as a community.

The parish community invited the grieving relatives to the parish hall for a commemorative function about a week later and parishioners gave generously to a collection for the families. Some parishioners requested a team from the Department of Social Welfare to visit them.

TRAUMA COUNSELLING

I invited a group of counsellors to visit the families in Nanuku with me on two successive Saturdays. The counselling was to help them support each other by sharing their grief. The wives, some with babies in their arms, shared in one group. Three men, two of them brothers and fathers of some of the missing men, shared in another group. A third group comprised supportive relatives and friends.

Some of the wives cherish the hope that their husbands are still alive. Others told of neighbours speculating about what traditional taboos the men must have broken for this tragedy to have happened. Grandparents spoke of the pain of seeing the effect on the children - some young ones waking up asking where their dads were. The three men said that they no longer felt like attending social functions. They just drank kava and kept their grief to themselves.

A week later, I listed some of the common signs of trauma to normalise their experience. I advised them to pay no attention to speculations about why the tragedy had happened. The wives all shared about how they were trying to cope. Some said they prayed a lot; others said they could not pray. One twelve-year-old girl, with tears in her eyes, asked who would now help her through secondary school.

HARDSHIP AND LOVE

With their breadwinners gone, the families are struggling to survive. Osea's wife told me she is selling her husband's tools to provide food for her children.

We distributed some money to the men's wives. I wrote to the Minister of Women, Children and Social Protection, who is a friend of mine, asking for her help in getting the families registered for aid. She replied immediately, assuring me that she has a team working on it.

What brought the most joy to the women's faces was the gift of a beautiful handmade rosary in a pouch, which a counsellor gave to each woman. The rosaries had been made the previous week by her aunt, who is suffering from stage four cancer and can barely walk. She spends her time making rosaries from materials bought online. Her only condition in giving out the rosaries is that they are not sold.

The families of the Nanuku Nine are going through a heartbreaking journey. But they are being accompanied by Fiji's strong community spirit. They need and deserve our continued support and practical help.

FR FRANK HOARE

Columban Fr Frank Hoare lives and works in Fiji.



Electric wires criss-cross the homes of Nanuku, an informal settlement in Suva, Fiji.



Kelemete mourns the loss of his son and another relative among the Nanuku Nine. Photos: Fr Frank Hoare SSC

FAREWELL!

Writing this farewell article, the final article on my journey as a Columban lay missionary, is not easy. As my mission ends, I feel both sad and emotional, yet my heart is full of gratitude - to God, to the Columbans, and to all the people I have journeyed with.

I remember when Kush, my fiancé, and I were once asked by a Catholic priest, "If you could choose a bible reading, what would it be?" Before I could answer, Kush said it was the last verse of 1 Corinthians 13. This was exactly what I had in mind, too. Although Kush is not a Christian, I was so happy that our thoughts aligned.

Since high school, this chapter of the Bible has been my favourite. As a lay missionary, it has remained close to my heart because it speaks to me about my journey and what remains in me - especially now, as my time as a Columban lay missionary comes full circle.

Reflecting on almost sixteen years of service, I realise that these three remain in me: faith, hope, and love. When I first told my mother that I would join the Columban Lay Missionaries, she cried and said it was not the dream she had for me. Her dream was for me to settle down and have a family. Although I shared that dream too, I also felt deeply called by God to mission. During my final retreat before accepting my assignment, I struggled with questions and doubts, especially because of my mother's fears.

At that time, I found comfort in a pamphlet of the Infant Jesus of Prague and in the words beneath a Divine Mercy image: "Jesus, I trust in You." Sitting quietly in prayer, I felt God asking me to trust Him with childlike trust, even without having all the answers. In the end, I said yes to God and took a leap of faith.

Over the years, my faith has matured and strengthened alongside my love for Jesus. Earlier this year, Kush and I visited the Infant Jesus of Prague to give thanks for the many blessings and guidance received throughout my missionary journey.

As a missionary in Birmingham, especially among asylum seekers and refugees, I witnessed how God becomes a source of hope when everything seems impossible. I remember seeing people finally receiving papers after years of waiting and repeated refusals. I witnessed healing, unexpected recoveries, and moments when despair turned into joy. These experiences reminded me that with God there is always hope, and that miracles can happen when we hold on in faith.

Throughout those years, another Bible verse stayed with me: "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). Looking back now, I realise God was quietly answering my prayers in His own time. Amid ministry, intercultural experiences, and service, God brought Kush into my life - first as a friend and eventually as my fiancé. God truly listens to the prayers of our hearts.

As my journey as a lay missionary draws to a close, I feel deeply emotional because I love this life so much. I love the ministries I have done and continue to do. I love serving the poor and marginalised. They have become my friends. I love being a Columban, and I am proud of it.

Indeed, the final verse of 1 Corinthians 13 has sustained me throughout the years: "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." Jesus' example of unconditional love carried me especially through difficult moments and taught me that love should be the reason behind everything we do.

As Kush and I begin a new chapter together, my prayer is that we continue to love beyond boundaries of culture, faith and race, and to carry forward all that God has taught us through this journey.

GERTRUDE C. SAMSON

Columban lay missionary Gertrude C. Samson lives and works in Britain.



Photo: Gertrude C. Samson

SHAOLIN:

A MOVIE OF REDEMPTION AND SACRIFICE

The Irish poet and playwright, Oscar Wilde, wrote: “Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life” (*The Decay of Lying – An Observation*, 1889).

There is a certain amount of truth in Wilde’s observation, particularly in relation to technology, mores and propaganda. For a time, Hollywood produced war movies that glorified and idealised violence and war as a means to its political agenda, without examining the cost of suffering to the innocent victims of war. The Chinese movie *Shaolin*, with its underlying Buddhist message of redemption, sacrifice and peace, does not shy away from violence. However, it also shows the consequences for the general populace of corruption, violence, internal conflict and foreign exploitation.

Shaolin is set during China’s Warlord period (1916–1928). During this tumultuous era of fragmentation, regional military leaders vied for power, wealth and territory. The protagonist, Hou Jie, is portrayed as a ruthless warlord who uses anyone and anything to his advantage in amassing wealth, power and position. He plots to assassinate his sworn brother to gain full control, but his plan is thwarted by the betrayal of his ambitious second-in-command, Cao, who sends assassins to kill them all. Hou’s sworn brother is killed, as are many of Hou’s men and Hou’s innocent daughter is critically injured as she attempts to escape the violence.

His love for his daughter and his desperation to save her lead Hou to a *Shaolin* temple, where he seeks the monks’ help, but their efforts are in vain. His daughter dies. His wife blames him for her death and leaves him. He has lost his family, his army of men and his power base: in one night, he lost everything. In his grief, he wanders aimlessly and encounters the temple cook who provides him not only with food and shelter but also the beginning of his conversion. During his stay at the temple Hou gradually sees the error of his ways, embraces the monastic lifestyle of calm and serenity and finally finds peace.



Shaolin temple.

As the film unfolds, Cao, the new warlord, forms an alliance with foreign powers who supply weapons that cause even more havoc, suffering, human trafficking and the death of innocent people. Hou, torn between his newfound peace and the need to end Cao’s reign of terror, decides that Cao must be stopped.

Hou and the Shaolin monks plan a diversion. Hou is to distract Cao while the monks enter the camp to save the many innocents imprisoned there. The monks succeed in freeing those imprisoned and Cao, driven by revenge, attacks the temple with heavy artillery supplied by his foreign allies. In the course of the battle, many are killed, both soldiers and monks. The temple is destroyed. In the final scene, Hou saves Cao from being crushed by a heavy falling beam, at the cost of his own life. Hou is seen gently falling into the hand of the statue of the Merciful Buddha, where he dies peacefully. Cao steps out of the temple ruins and sees the total devastation and death that surround him. Guilt seems to overshadow him. From a distance, the surviving monks, with the many saved innocents, look down and move on to new hope and a new beginning.

The film’s message of redemption is seen through the lens of forgiveness. Hou’s wife forgives him; he forgives himself; and in the end, he forgives Cao. Redemption leads to sacrifice. His wife releases him to return to a monk’s life, sacrificing the life she once imagined for them. Hou’s self-sacrifice to save Cao leads to Cao’s redemption. The movie ends with the note that personal and communal sacrifices lead to peace.

In our current world, where violence, internal conflicts and wars are constant themes in the news, perhaps we can reflect on the consequences of our choices that lead to chaos and strife. If Wilde is correct that life imitates art, then let us be hopeful that we can still find redemption in the hearts of good people willing to make sacrifices that bring about our peace. I pray that, in the hands of God, we will all find peace.

FR GEORGE DA ROZA

Columban Fr George Da Roza lives and works in the USA.

MISSION WORLD

THE FACE OF MISSION

The opening article, “The failure of the Cross”, in *The Tablet* of April 19, 2025, includes a photograph of Jorge Mario Bergoglio. Above the article is an outline of its content, which reads, “During a period of humiliating exile, the Jesuit priest who was later to become Pope Francis discovered that in order to enter deeply into the mystery of the Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus, we must accept that our only hope is in God.” The photograph, taken in a Buenos Aires subway, is of a man who looks disappointed and sad.

It is hard to believe that this same man became Pope Francis, someone rarely seen without a brilliant smile lighting up his face. Yet this was the journey that Fr Jorge needed to take. As he wrote in an article originally printed as “El fracaso de Jesús” (“The failure of Jesus”), “The historical failure of Jesus and the frustrations of so many expectations (“We had hoped ...” Luke 24.21) are for Christian faith the way par excellence by which God reveals himself in Christ and brings about salvation.” (The article was among those found in *Reflexiones en Esperanza* by Jorge Mario Bergoglio and translated by Austen Ivereigh.)

This article reminded me of a book that impressed me as a seminarian, called *A Theology of Failure* by John Navone SJ. Since they were both Jesuits, this book influenced Pope Francis in his reflections upon a dimension of Jesuit spirituality that draws upon the spirituality of suffering. As Pope Francis said in his first

public interview after becoming pope, “In pastoral ministry we must accompany people, and we must heal their wounds.” In other words, one must feel the pain before one can begin to help people rediscover joy in their lives.

This brings me back to Francis’s exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (“The Joy of the Gospel”). In the introduction, there is a memorable sentence, which reads, “an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!” (the exclamation mark is his own).

And yet, the photograph of Fr Jorge from his years of “humiliating exile” is like one of someone coming back from a funeral! He knew what it was like to be stripped of his title and authority and sent to a distant parish to reflect on his future as a Jesuit and a priest. I suppose he had to learn how to smile again. He had to encounter Jesus once more in his life. He had to rediscover “the joy of the Gospel”. Along this journey, he also reclaimed the true face of mission.

Many a Columban, as a cross-cultural missionary, has known disappointment and sadness. As I further explore the wisdom found in *Evangelii Gaudium*, I will draw upon the insights of Pope Francis, who saw the need for the church to undergo radical change to meet the enormous challenges we face today. The challenge is to enter into the pain and brokenness of our world. But to do so, we need to encounter Jesus, who, by filling our hearts and minds with the joy of the Gospel, enables us to meet this challenge with the confidence of faith-inspired missionaries.

Many a Columban, as a cross-cultural missionary, has known disappointment and sadness.

FR TOM ROUSE

Regional Councillor of Oceania

MISSION INTENTIONS

POPE LEO XIV

August - For evangelization in the city: Let us pray that in large cities often marked by anonymity and loneliness we find new ways to proclaim the Gospel, discovering creative paths to build community.

COLUMBAN ACTIVITIES

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

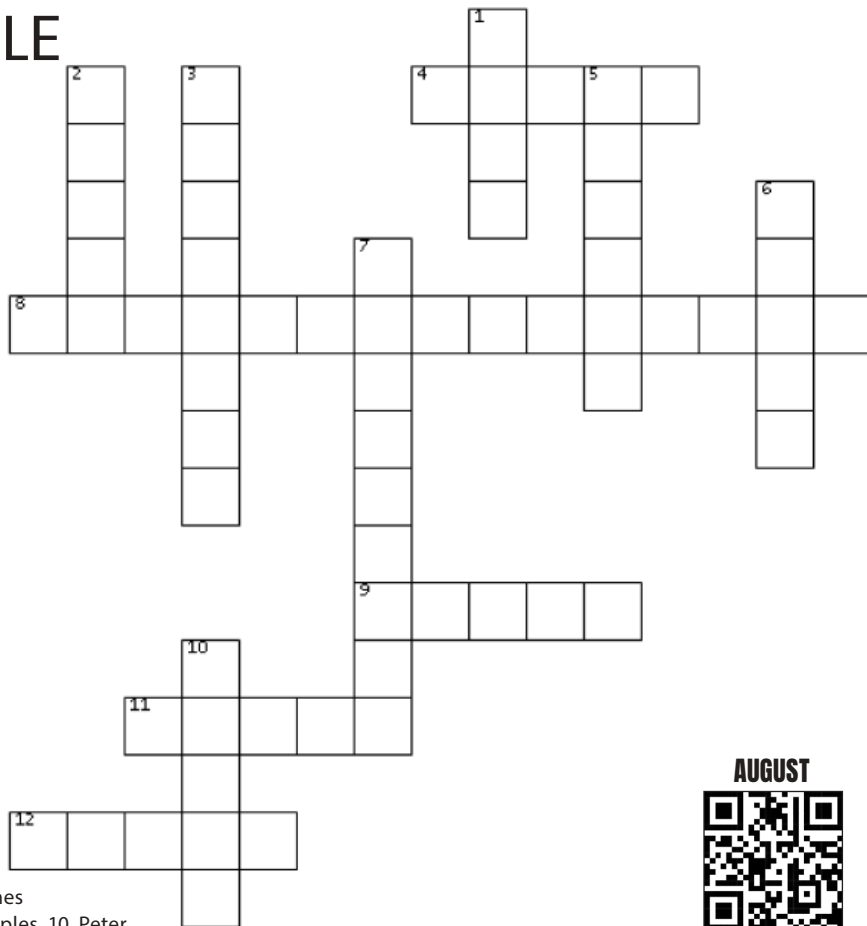
SCAN QR CODE to read the August 2026 Columban Calendar Art Guide and complete the crossword puzzle.

ACROSS

4. Figure holding the tablets.
8. Biblical event shown in the painting.
9. Jesus' clothes became white as this.
11. Central figure revealed in glory.
12. Disciple taken up the mountain.

DOWN

1. Brother of James.
2. Mountain traditionally linked to the event.
3. Christ is shown as the New
5. Prophet shown beside Jesus.
6. God's voice came from this
7. The three followers below the vision.
10. One of the three disciples.



ANSWERS:

ACROSS: 4. Moses, 8. transfiguration, 9. light, 11. Jesus, 12. James
DOWN: 1. John, 2. tabor, 3. covenant, 5. Elijah, 6. cloud, 7. disciples, 10. Peter

AUGUST



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'Do what you can' Bishop Edward J Galvin



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Photo: Columban Fr Eamon Sheridan supports communities in Myanmar, bringing hope, compassion and care to children and families affected by conflict and poverty.



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