

far east



MAGAZINE OF THE COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES



FROM THE ASHES

Rebuilding DaGuan church in Taiwan

COLUMBAN MARTYRS

Honouring the memory of 24 brave missionaries

ENCOUNTERING HIDDEN TREASURE

Sr Ashwena Apao recalls her time in Myanmar

04 Columban Martyrs 1929-2001

This is a jubilee year for a number of our Columban martyrs. Fr Cyril Lovett writes about these anniversaries and a new booklet on the 24 Columbans who died violently for the Gospel.

06 Sound of Music

Fr John Boles celebrates Columban missionary, Fr Gabriel Rojas, who uses music as part of his ministry with residents of a poor Lima neighbourhood.

08 Mission and the Visual Arts

Fr Jason Antiquera is an artist from the Philippines. He explains how his God-given talent aids his ministry in Korea.

10 Encountering Hidden Treasure in the Field

Columban missionary Sr Ashwena Apao recalls her time in Myanmar where she accompanied young people with addiction issues at a Church-run rehabilitation centre.

12 From the Ashes

Fr Larry Barnett of the Taiwan Mission Unit writes about the devastating fire that destroyed DaGuan church and the local community's efforts to rebuild from the ashes.

14 God Speaks to us in Mysterious Ways

Fr Barry Cairns draws on some of the faith stories he has heard while ministering in Japan to show how God speaks to us through the events of our lives.

16 A Missionary's Prayer

Sarah Mac Donald talks to Fr Malachy Hanratty about his missionary life in Japan and his 'Good Things Prayer' format.

18 Mission is an Act of Love

Gilda Comayas recalls some of the lessons she learned as a lay missionary assigned to the Columban Parish of the Sacred Heart in Alto Hospicio in the Atacama Desert.

19 Reflection

20 Obituaries

21 Stories from the Bible

22 Children's Section

23 Nature: Bewitching Buzzards



04



06



10



12



14



16



18

THE FAR EAST

Published seven times yearly by the Missionary Society of St Columban (Maynooth Mission to China).

THE PURPOSE OF THE FAR EAST IS

To promote an awareness of the missionary dimension of the Church among readers; to report on the work of Columban priests, Sisters and lay missionaries; and to seek spiritual and material support for missionaries.

far east

Subscription

£10 a year.
Contact the Mission Office:
Tel: (01564) 772 096
Email: fareast@columbans.co.uk

Editor

Sarah Mac Donald
editorfareast@gmail.com

Assistant Editor

Sr Abbie O'Sullivan

Layout & Editorial Assistant

Breda Rogers

Manager

Stephen Awre

Original Design

Gabriel German Carbone
ggcarbone@gmail.com

Printers

Walstead Bicester, Oxfordshire

Columban Websites

News, reports, reflections etc.
www.columbans.co.uk
www.columbansisters.org

Follow us

Twitter: @fareastmagazine
Facebook: www.facebook.com/fareastmagazine

Missionary Society of St Columban

Widney Manor Road, Solihull,
West Midlands, B93 9AB.
Tel: (01564) 772 096

Columban Sisters

6/8 Ridgale Street, Bow,
London E3 2TW.
Tel: (020) 8980 3017

Front Cover

Fr Larry Barnett baptises a child from DaGuan parish in Taiwan.



Pope Francis recently suggested that the most important book to read if we are talking about renewing the Church is the Acts of the Apostles. The beauty of the Acts of the Apostles is that it shows that the early Christian communities had plenty of conflicts and struggles. Maybe we should not be trying to make the perfect Church, maybe we should be working with the Holy Spirit to allow ourselves to be led like the people of God were through the desert.

Earlier this year I had the good fortune of spending three weeks with our Columban missionaries in Fiji. I met with older Columban priests who had been working in the country for years as well as young Filipino women who had just completed a three-year term living in the villages as lay missionaries. I came away with a very positive impression of the commitment and achievements of the Columban Society over the years. We could not have done it, of course, without our supporters. So this story of good news is also your story. Thank you for all that you do for us.

What was quite a surprise for me was the three parishes that we have there. For those of you who know Fiji we have a parish in Raiwaqa in Suva, another in Labasa and another in Ba. They are spread across the country. The villages with their small chapels are up in the hills far from the Pacific Ocean and all those images of the country that attract the tourists.

I travelled with a Columban priest and celebrated Mass in one of these small chapels. The singing and the prayer were

very impressive. After Mass, one man spoke up and said, "Father you have to remember the catechists. The priests only come here about once a month but it is the catechist who is with us all the time."

These communities collectively agreed to send one of their men off to Suva to spend some months training to be a catechist. He would then come back and be a religious leader in that community for the rest of his working life. A wonderful commitment by dedicated people. The strength of these Christian communities is due to the work done by them. In Fiji we have great examples of the role played by the laity.

One of the most common practices in the communities in Fiji is *Lectio Divina*. People gather and someone reads the Scripture passage over a few times while everyone listens and pays attention to what is happening within them. The same Scripture passage says something different to us each time we read it. Believing that the Holy Spirit is with us at these times we find our own spirits responding to the Word of God. In this we are being fed and led. To listen and to follow is to be a missionary disciple of Jesus and is the way forward for all of us. ●

Fr Trevor Trotter

Fr Trevor Trotter is Regional Director of the Columbans in Oceania.

01. Columban missionary Fr John McEvoy with local parishioners in Raiwaqa parish, Suva. Pic: Fr Pat Raleigh.





COLUMBAN MARTYRS

1929-2001

This is a jubilee year for a number of our Columban martyrs. Fr Cyril Lovett writes about these anniversaries and a new booklet on the 24 Columban missionaries who died violently on mission.

On the back wall of our college chapel here at St Columban's, Navan, there are twenty-four framed black-and-white photographs. They represent the twenty-three Columban priests and one Columban Sister who died violent deaths while living out their missionary commitment in foreign lands. We refer to them as our Columban Martyrs.

The memory of this group lives on among us. They are our best, those who generously gave everything to the cause. They are a constant stimulus, a reminder to us of the words of the hymn "Go in my name and because you believe, others will know that I live".

This year is a jubilee year; seventy-five years ago, Frs Patrick Kelly, John Henaghan, Peter Fallon, Joe Monaghan and John Lalor, known collectively as 'The Malate Martyrs' were slain in 1945 in the Philippines. This year is also the seventieth jubilee year of a group of

seven Columbans who died in 1950 in the Korean War: Frs Tony Collier, Jim Maginn, Paddy J. Reilly, Tom Cusack, John O'Brien, Frank Canavan and Monsignor Pat Brennan.

Some of them were older: John Henaghan was sixty-four, but the majority were in their mid-thirties, early forties. Some had already many years of ministry in the country in which they died, others, delayed by World War II, had barely arrived, and were still striving to become fluent in the local language. In recent years we have dedicated a page of the **Far East** to each one's story. Now we have published them all together in a booklet entitled **Columban Martyrs 1929-2001**, which we advertise on the opposite page.

In the Foreword to the booklet, Fr Tim Mulroy, our Society Leader, makes many interesting points. He writes, "As missionaries, all of them experienced their own vulnerability and limitations as they learned a new language and adapted to a

different way of life in another country.”

“However such fragility would have served to remind them that the mysterious power of the Gospel message came not from themselves, but rather from God. Through their missionary way of life, then, they were gradually prepared to see that God’s power is made perfect in human weakness, that God’s providence becomes more visible in moments of human failure, and that God’s light shines through the darkness of defeat by this world”.

Becoming a missionary in a very different culture is indeed a daunting task. It takes a lifetime to be fully at ease in a new language and culture, so that if God chooses to accomplish something through us we experience something of what St Paul felt when he wrote, “We have only earthenware jars to hold this treasure, and this proves that such transcendent power does not come from us; it is God’s alone” (2 Cor. 4:7). So, these Columban Martyrs would in no way have regarded themselves as ‘heroes’. They would probably have said, “We were sent to live

and to share with these people; we could not desert them in their hour of need”.

Fr Tim, in his Foreword, has another important challenge for us. He writes, “The stories of Columban martyrs in these pages... serve as an invitation to ponder the depths of our own faith. As our world becomes a global village, we are offered numerous opportunities to encounter people from other cultures and other faiths. Do we see these encounters as opportunities to build bridges, to form new friendships, and to embrace the wonder and diversity of God’s world? As missionary disciples of Christ, do we see ourselves as messengers of God’s unconditional love and mercy to all those who cross our paths in everyday life? Do we believe that our inadequacies and our failures are invitations to develop a greater trust in God’s providence and generosity?” ●

Fr Cyril Lovett is the former Editor of the Far East magazine and served on mission in the Philippines and Brazil.

To make a comment on this article go to:

 facebook.com/fareastmagazine

 [@fareastmagazine](https://twitter.com/fareastmagazine)

COLUMBAN MARTYRS 1929-2001

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

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

Order Now! Call 01564 772 096 or email office@columbans.co.uk or send a cheque payable to 'Columban missionaries' to St. Columban's, Widney Manor Road, Solihull B93 9AB.



ORDER NOW
£10
including postage & packing

COLUMBAN MARTYRS 1929-2001 • ORDER FORM

<input type="checkbox"/> Visa		<input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard		<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
Name:		N° of copies:		Name on credit card:	
Address:		Card N°:		Expiry date:	
Tel:		Email:		Signature:	
		CVV:			

