

# 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

## CONTENTS

### 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



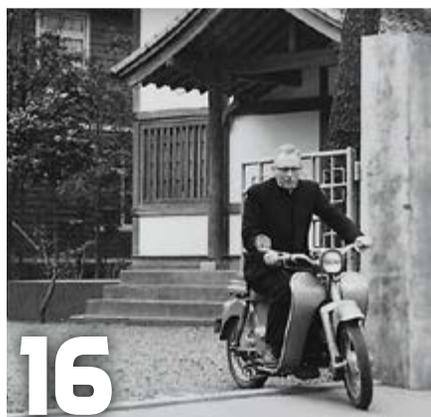
10



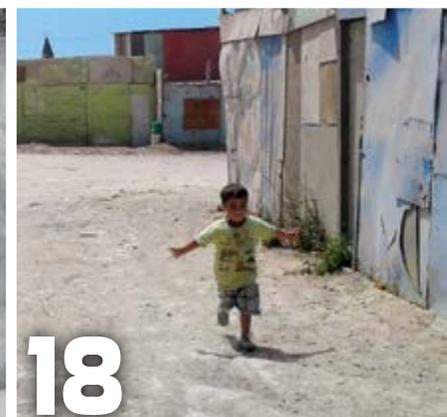
12



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.



**P**ope 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.

**O**n 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 Heneghan 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



# SOUND OF MUSIC

His choice of the title *Memorias* for the band is significant. His musical style is based on the enchanting melodies of his native home. "Music is part of the DNA of my family," explains Gabriel. He is from humble peasant farming stock in the Andean province of Cajamarca (where Pizarro famously captured the Inca ruler Atahualpa and, in taking him, took an empire for Spain), the fifth of six children born to Serafín and Francisca.

Gabriel recalls how, from 5.30am each day, his parents laboured - Serafín in the fields and Francisca at the loom. His mother is an expert weaver, transforming locally produced cotton and wool into cloaks, bags and ponchos. She continues to do so today, albeit well into her nineties.

From this happy family background came love of God, love of nature and love of music. "As far back as I can remember there was the sound of a guitar," remembers Gabriel fondly. His late father loved to sing. "From when he mounted his horse to leave, until his return in the evening, you could hear him singing. He could be heard for miles. He was the best singer of my village. His voice could make the mountains tremble."

Serafín was also a catechist in the village

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

**M**emories Are Made of This,' go the words of the old song. Well, this certainly is the case with Fr Gabriel Rojas, a Columban from Peru who for many years has brought the wonders of God and Creation into the lives of parishioners in the deprived outskirts of Lima, Peru's capital, through the sound of the music of his folk group *Memorias* (Memories).

Music is in Gabriel's blood. He was born and raised to the notes of song and guitar. From his home in the high Andes to the teeming cities of Pakistan and now to the poverty-stricken 'barrios' of Lima, music has been his constant companion. Moreover, it has served him as an indispensable pastoral tool.



chapel, where he led the choir. Gabriel imitated him in everything. "At 13 I made my first flute out of bamboo," something he'd seen Dad do. He began to play the guitar. "There were no formal music lessons. You just learnt by watching." At 18, he was composing. When he entered the seminary, the Columbans encouraged him, seeing his musical talent as a valuable means of evangelisation.

By the time he was ordained a priest he had formed *Memorias*. Apart from guitars, the favoured instruments were the traditional Andean ones of *charango*, *zamponia* and *quena* - kinds of banjo, harp and flute respectively. According to Gabriel, the notes they blend, "evoke the relationship of the mountain-dweller with the trees, the animals, water, sun and wind," all the glories of God's Creation.

As part of his missionary service, Gabriel was appointed to Pakistan, where he spent seven years. This could have put paid to his music career, but as it turned out, it was just the opposite. In between ministering to the tiny groups of Catholics in this overwhelmingly Islamic country, he took the opportunity to enrich his repertoire by immersing himself in Eastern music. He began practising with unfamiliar

instruments, such as the sitar. In so doing, "I was filled with emotion. It confirmed for me that music comes directly from God."

Returning to Peru, he re-formed *Memorias* and now mixed traditional Andean sounds with Eastern ones, something that gives the group its unique style. The band was soon much in demand. Cassettes and audio were produced. The word spread.

Appointed to an underprivileged area on the edge of Metropolitan Lima, Gabriel and his *Memorias* became a familiar aspect of the local Church scene, touching people - and especially the young - in ways that more conventional pastoral methods could not.

"This is what music means to me as a missionary," affirms Gabriel. "It is a form of pastoral work with opportunities and demands that go further than mere sacramental preparation. It is a space where people can grow and develop and find themselves during their journey through life. It is a school of values."

It also gives a great deal of pleasure to people. The sort of pleasure we'll be so much in need of in our post-coronavirus world. The pleasure that comes from the Sound of Music. ●

Fr Gabriel Rojas SSC is from Peru and ministers in the parish of Los Santos Arcangeles (The Holy Archangels) in the Diocese of North Lima.

Fr John Boles SSC is from Britain and has worked in South America for the last 25 years.

01. Images of Fr Gabriel Rojas playing music with his group *Memorias* in Lima where he ministers as a Columban missionary and also from his time as a missionary in Pakistan.

To make a comment on this article go to:

 [facebook.com/foreastmagazine](https://facebook.com/foreastmagazine)

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



# MISSION AND THE VISUAL ARTS



Fr Jason Antiquera is an artist from the Philippines. He writes about how he is using his God-given talent in his ministry in Korea.

**A**fter ordination in the Philippines in January 2015, I came to Korea and worked in two parishes as a curate in Jeju Island while also helping out at the diocesan migrant centre. As the local Korean Church is very much alive and capable of accompanying the faithful through parish ministry, I wondered what I, as a Columban missionary from the Philippines, could contribute that would be crossing into an unfamiliar field of mission. After a year and a half, I refocused on 'art ministry'. For some Koreans, this was the first time they had heard of such a ministry.

September 2018 marked my first public ministry through the visual arts. It involved a day-long art recollection which I facilitated for Seoul's Filipino Catholic community. It was followed by other recollections using the same approach with other migrant communities in Korea and also in our Columban Formation House in Seoul with our seminarians. Art recollection is about praying, reflecting and meditating through drawing and painting, as well as through art appreciation. This approach enables Christians to experience creative and non-conventional ways of reflecting on their faith and also to learn something about themselves and God through the arts.

As I have explored various channels of art ministry, I have learned that through this ministry I can serve the wider Columban community, not just Columbans in the region of Korea where I have been assigned. We have developed an art page in the Korean Region's mission magazine, where I contribute my own artworks accompanied by a short, written reflection on this art. Feedback from the readers shows they like the art page as it is a space where they can rest from words and relax while contemplating the art. I also contributed the cover artwork for a book on the life of Fr Rufus Halley for a Columban publication in the Philippines region.

Visual art allows me to reach out and provide for the needs of other communities and organisations like Transparency International Korea with whom I worked on a project in the area of the environment and climate change. Climate justice is one of the Columbans' priority ministries and in promoting our Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation ministry, visual art has become a tool with which to connect with other institutions.

Visual art is able to create new and different spaces for encounter between





Columban missionaries and people in secular society. When I took part in a public exhibition of art in Seoul with other artists, I invited my fellow Columbans to the art gallery. The artists got to meet Columban missionaries and exchange ideas. People may find the experience of meeting religious missionaries memorable since the encounter is not in a religious setting like a church. The encounter may only be a one-off, but who knows how that meeting could change the lives of the people involved. Isn't that how the parable of the sower works?

Visual art works with time and history to express the thoughts, sentiments and principles of people as they experience crucial events. In this time of the Coronavirus pandemic where people have been locked down or quarantined in their own houses, art has provided them with relief, comfort, solace and hope. The Columbans in Korea came up with a 'Thank You' art poster inspired by a children's colouring book. The poster enables participants to express their various emotions through colours while saying a creative 'Thank You' to Covid-19 frontline workers. Photos of the artworks

have been shared on social media. This initiative allowed us, as a church and missionary society, to be at one with the wider suffering world.

Visual art has become a direct channel in my present ministerial engagement as a Columban. The exploration of new ways of engaging in mission has allowed me to discover that art is able to minister to people in many creative ways. Art is the work of the Spirit; it mirrors a reflection of our first and ultimate Creator. When we become artistic and creative in ministry, we concretely live out the image of the One who created us. And we preach the Gospel of Joy! ●

Fr Jason Antiquera is from Binalbagan, Negros Occidental, in the Philippines. He was ordained in 2015 and is now working in Korea.

- 01. Art page of the Summer 2020 edition of Columban Mission Magazine for the Korean Region showing the human faces of Covid-19.
- 02. One of the participants in an art recollection, drawing a portrait of Christ while meditating on it.
- 03. Fr Jason Antiquera illustrating the life and ministry of Christ through drawing during an art recollection.
- 04. Fr Jason (second from left) with his professor and classmates from art school at their exhibition in Seoul.

**POPE FRANCIS  
IN EVANGELII GAUDIUM  
CHAPTER IV**

“Each particular Church should encourage the use of the arts in evangelisation, building on the treasures of the past but also drawing upon the wide variety of contemporary expressions so as to transmit the faith in a new ‘language of parables’. We must be bold enough to discover new signs and new symbols, new flesh to embody and communicate the word, and different forms of beauty which are valued in different cultural settings, including those unconventional modes of beauty which may mean little to the evangelisers, yet prove particularly attractive for others.”





**MAKING  
YOUR  
WILL?**

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

Please remember the needs of Columban missionaries and their missions.

Without your help we cannot continue our work.

Your gift could help some of the most marginalised and neediest.



Missionary Society of St Columban, Widney Manor Road, Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB.



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

## ENCOUNTERING HIDDEN TREASURE IN THE FIELD

Life is a series of beautiful encounters. My encounter began the moment I was born and baptised. I received the gift of the Holy Spirit and the special calling to be a missionary. When I became a Columban Missionary Sister I was ready to be sent to a foreign land. 'You did not choose me, I chose you' (St John Ch 15). This was the Word of God that helped my faith and helped me to accept the invitation of Jesus.

My first missionary assignment was to Myanmar (Burma). I was one of the five Columban Sisters who returned there in 2003. All missionaries had been expelled by the Burmese Government forty years earlier. I will never forget how happy I was when I arrived in Myitkyina in Kachin State. The prevailing atmosphere at that time was one of fear and passivity because of the military government. However, I was overjoyed when I found the people to be friendly and hospitable.

I was assigned to accompany young people who lived in poverty and had no freedom. There were very few opportunities for education, employment, life skills, leadership, human development or faith formation. Many young people

had no direction in their lives. Many died prematurely from their reckless way of living.

I started visiting young people in different villages. I listened to their stories and built relationships with them. I developed a programme that was based on faith and life formation. I tried to motivate them to understand their own value and dignity, to create dreams and hopes and to find a purpose in their lives. They were helped to discover their hidden potential and their gifts and talents given to them by God. They acquired a sense of confidence and freedom. They were hopeful that they could one day bring healing to their wounded country. One of the young men said, "Sister, if only all young people could experience what we have here in this centre I think we could change our country."

Pope Francis has told missionaries to go out and encounter and take on the smell of the sheep. That's what I did during my 13 years in Myanmar. In his encyclical *Gaudete et Exultate*, Francis said, "We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do wherever we find ourselves." Finding the 'sheep' is like finding the treasure in a field.

I believe that it is only through the eyes of God that we are able to seek and find those who are lost. We can no longer separate ourselves from people who are shattered and broken. We empathise with them in their pain and suffering. Only then can we appreciate their beauty and worth.

After some study, I was asked to run a Church-based drug rehabilitation centre in Myanmar. In 2011, civil war broke out again. People were displaced and separated from their loved ones. Many young people began using drugs. It led to violence and delinquency. Some were infected with HIV/ Aids, Hepatitis, TB and other infectious diseases. One of our aims was to empower our clients to claim back their personal dignity and worth.

I met Augustin who told me, "I'm nobody and I have no value. I have HIV and Hepatitis B. I'm an addict and a sinner. No one loves me anymore." I was so sad to hear him speak like this. I talked to him and listened to his story. I told him about our compassionate God who always loves us in spite of our sins and shortcomings. After some time, he started to hope again and now he is one of the wounded healers in the rehabilitation centre who helps others to change and value their lives.

At one point we introduced Animal and Garden Therapy to our centre and this brought therapeutic help to many clients. We brought in pigs, chickens, cows and ducks to help us raise income and provide some food. Augustin and another client, Martin, took care of raising the animals. This therapy was very beneficial to them and they reflected on how their lives had changed because of the animal therapy.

They became responsible, more



articulate and happier. Their vegetable gardens bloomed and they were able to harvest and enjoy fresh organic produce.

They are hopeful now that in the future they will be able to run their own farms and provide for themselves. Reynaldo, another recovering volunteer told me, "I am focused and feel connected to creation. I'm happy and proud of myself because I'm working. I thank God for leading me to this centre and I hope that many more young people like me will get the opportunity to spend time here."

For myself my encounter with the hidden treasure in the lives of young people in Myanmar has certainly been fruitful and I am very happy. When we see God in all people and in all living things, we are able to revere and respect their presence whoever they are and wherever they are. We are able to see them as treasure. We are able to get a glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven. ●

Sr Ashwena Apao is a Columban Sister from Jimenez, Misamis Occidental in the Philippines.

She was assigned to Myanmar for 13 years. She is now based in the Philippines serving in leadership and accompanying young people and working with and for those on the margins.

01. Columban missionary Sr Ashwena Apao.
02. Sr Ashwena in the centre in dark printed blouse with Kachin friends, Myitkyina, Myanmar.
03. Sr Ashwena at the Rehabilitation Centre in Myitkyina with Augustine and Martin.
04. Visiting families in Kachin State in Myanmar.

To make a comment on this article go to:

 [facebook.com/foreastmagazine](https://facebook.com/foreastmagazine)

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



# FROM THE ASHES



02

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.

The phone woke me from a deep sleep. I turned on the light. The clock said: 2.35am and the caller was Saiyun, a church leader in DaGuan village. Her mother is elderly and in poor health. I thought something had happened to her mother and I answered the call. "Father, the church has burned down," Saiyun said through sobs and tears. I thought I had misheard and asked her to repeat the message. Sure enough, it was true. The chapel in DaGuan village was no more.

DaGuan is part of the eight-village DaAn pastoral area of Hsinchu Diocese where Columban Fr Taaremon Matauea and lay missionary Bae Sihyeon and I work with the parish secretary/social worker

and a fulltime local catechist. The pastoral area, in the mountains along the DaAn River, is split between two dioceses and DaGuan village is part of the neighbouring TaiZhong Diocese.

The chapel was a small wooden structure built by a Maryknoll priest 65 years ago. He supplied the materials and village men built the chapel in a design typical of the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945). The chapel could seat 60, had carved wooden Stations of the Cross, hardwood pews, and an ambo (lectern) made of a solid piece of hardwood cedar tree trunk. It had a piano and electric keyboard. Behind the sanctuary wall was a sacristy and a small room for the priest to stay overnight. All that was left after the fire was the concrete pad on which the chapel was built and the remains of the brass tabernacle reduced to a metal ball the size of a baseball. It was heart-breaking. A police investigation concluded that the fire started from a wall-socket where the electric tabernacle light was plugged in.

In the aftermath of the fire and the shock of it for the Catholic members of the village, the regular Mass-goers gathered to take stock. I was deeply impressed with their faith in the face of the tragedy. They spoke about the good things and

03



thanked God for the graces that came with the disaster. The fire was only noticed when one parishioner got up to use the toilet and woke her husband who saw the smoke rising from the chapel in the village below their house. They called others and then raced down to the church. The wife attempted to enter the chapel to rescue the Blessed Sacrament but was restrained by her husband who could see the roof ablaze and knew the rescue was impossible. The Pastor of the Presbyterian Church near the chapel woke to the smell of smoke and raced over to help. Knowing that there was a gas canister in the kitchen complex adjacent to the burning church and knowing the danger if it exploded, he ran into the smouldering building and dragged the canister to a safe distance.

In examining the devastation, parishioners talked about how it was a good opportunity to clarify problems over chapel land boundaries, the title on electricity supply, and getting a more secure water supply to the site. They quickly established a roster of families to host Sunday Mass and said it was a way to strengthen the faith of villagers and encourage them to be more active in their faith. They immediately started a village collection to repair the meeting room/kitchen/toilet building on the site so that Mass could quickly resume there.

It has been over a year since the fire. The villagers have cleaned the site and we held the 2019 combined eight-village parish Christmas celebration there under tents to kick-start fundraising for a new chapel. The parishioners and diocesan dean have agreed on a design and a budget, and the local bishop has given his permission

to start fundraising. They accepted an architect's design that imitates the rocks and mountains of the place and gives a feeling of solid strength that reflects the cultural personality and faith of the local Atayal indigenous people. The design includes a church, sacristy, and sleeping quarters for the priest, parking area and a new kitchen/toilet/meeting room complex. The budget is set at US\$270,000.

The diocese will try to raise the bulk of the cost and the dean is already reaching out to funding agencies. However, the villagers must themselves raise the sum of US\$70,000 for furnishing and decorations. This will be a difficult task for the 30 Catholic families in the village who rely on their fruit orchards and bamboo shoot harvest annually for income. They are already discussing ways and means, and I am sure they would be grateful for any assistance in reaching their goal.

The ladies of the village are all good singers and our weekly Mass in the village, held now in a variety of settings, is full of spirit as the ladies give voice to their faith that God will provide even in midst of disaster. Their faith is strength and encouragement to this Columban missionary, and I thank God daily for the privilege of ministering among such a people. ●

Fr Larry Barnett from Takaka in New Zealand was ordained in 1981. Currently missioned in Taiwan, he serves in DaAn parish where Columbans provide pastoral care to local indigenous farming communities along DaAn River in Hsinchu diocese. The parish, which is made up of 8 chapels, serves 350 indigenous families.

01. The remains of the burnt down chapel.
02. The chapel ablaze.
03. The architect's design for the new chapel in DaGuan village in Taiwan.
04. DaGuan villagers after Easter Mass 2020 in a meeting room. Fr Larry holds baby Odo, whose godmother is Columban Lay Missionary Bae Sihyeon.

To make a comment on this article go to:

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





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.

# GOD SPEAKS TO US in MYSTERIOUS WAYS

**G**od speaks to us through Scriptures but also through events in our lives. For example, Jeremiah the Old Testament prophet, was locked in his room depressed about the progress of his life and mission. Then he decided he needed a change of atmosphere. He went to watch a potter at his wheel. At times the potter built up his work on the wheel in soft clay, then sometimes squashed it down to start anew. God spoke to Jeremiah through this scene: “Jeremiah!

You are on my potter’s wheel.

I can rebuild you anew” (cf Jeremiah 18:1-12). Jeremiah was encouraged and invigorated. God speaks to us too in mysterious ways.

As a pastor I team-teach in some of the parish classes for those preparing for baptism. We ask the participants to meet themselves and to accept themselves because God loves them one hundred percent as they are. When the group feels at ease with themselves, with God, and with each

other, we ask them to answer and share this question: “What was your first contact with the Church?” The aim is not mere information, but rather to concretely demonstrate how God speaks to us in mysterious ways – and different ways for different people. Here are some answers.

Isobe-san’s job was mail delivery. Each Thursday in his mail bag he noticed that a few households received ‘**The Catholic Weekly**’. It came with an address wrapper that still showed the leading article. Mr Isobe read the headlines each week. He was fascinated by what he read. When he retired he decided to visit this Catholic Church. He liked what he saw and those he met, enrolled in the catechumenate and one year later received baptism. An avid reader, Isobe-san is now in charge of the parish library. It all started with a mail delivery of a Catholic newspaper. God speaks in mysterious ways.

Wada-san’s family were Buddhist and she attended a Buddhist sponsored high school. In the school corridor there were various famous paintings including Millet’s ‘The Angelus’. It fascinated her. What was this ‘Angelus’? Who would stop to pray in the middle of work? Twenty years after graduating she still remembered this painting. In sickness her life had become empty and she decided to go to the church to which she had been invited by



03

a friend. Mrs Wada was baptised taking the name Angela. It began with Millet's 'Angelus'. Indeed, God speaks to us in mysterious ways.

Anda-san as a young woman was fascinated with the tartan pattern plaids of Scotland. As background she even delved into the clans, each with its distinctive pattern. Anda-san went even further, studying the general history of Scotland. It was here that she met Queen Margaret of Scotland, a saint of the Catholic Church. Anda-san married but after the birth of her second child her husband left her for another. Anda-san was devastated. It was in her desolation that she recalled Queen Margaret and her faith. So Anda-san went to the church just to sit and be quiet. A kind woman saw her tears and gently asked could she help. This led to the catechumenate and later, baptism. Her baptismal name? Margaret of Scotland of course! It began with tartans... Indeed, God speaks in mysterious ways!

Here is the story of Sakurai-san - now Sister Misao of the Visitation Sisters. In the 1950s Misao-san worked as what was

then called 'an office girl' in the Sumitomo Bank on the Ginza. At that time Maryknoll Mission staffed a chapel on the seventh floor of the Ginza Mitsukoshi Department Store. Misao had (and still has!) an inbuilt sense of curiosity. She also liked to browse in the nearby Mitsukoshi Department Store and maybe buy something small.

One day curiosity led her to the seventh floor chapel, and later to the catechumenate. Still later, faith led her to baptism and further on to the religious life. Sister Misao became a parish assistant and led one of the catechumenates in Katase Church where I was pastor. In a sharing session Tanaka-san, an elderly gentleman in her class, spoke up and said: "Sister! You puzzle me! Have we ever met before?" "Yes," replied Sister in a quiet voice, "I was an office girl in the Ginza Bank and you were the manager!" The saga began with curiosity. Indeed, God speaks to us in mysterious ways. What led Tanaka-san the bank manager to the church? Well he didn't have much chance! Two of his daughters were Carmelite nuns praying for him. ●

Fr Barry Cairns was born in New Zealand in 1931. After studying to be a Columban missionary in Australia, he went to Japan in 1955 after ordination. After eleven years in parish work in Japan, he spent the next 13 years on the staff of the Columban seminary in Sydney before he returned to Japan in 1983. At 88 years of age he continues to serve in a small parish in Yokohama City.

01. Salvation Gospel in Japanese Kanji. Image: Shutterstock.
02. 'The Catholic Weekly' which fascinated Isobe-san and led him to join the Catholic Church. Image: Fr Barry Cairns.
03. Oura Catholic Church in Nagasaki, Japan. Image: Shutterstock.

To make a comment on this article go to:

-  [facebook.com/foreastmagazine](https://facebook.com/foreastmagazine)
-  [@foreastmagazine](https://twitter.com/foreastmagazine)





01

# A MISSIONARY'S PRAYER

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

**F**r Malachy Hanratty is a spritely eighty-eight-year-old. Fifteen years ago he retired back to Ireland after working for 40 years as a Columban missionary in Japan. Growing up in Armagh in the 1940s, he seemed destined for priesthood, studying Greek and Latin at St Patrick's College in the Northern Ireland city. Like many a boy scout, young Malachy Hanratty was attracted to missionary priesthood by a sense of adventure. He read avidly, particularly about places like the Zambezi. But while Africa was a draw, his family were subscribers to the **Far East** magazine and the Columban calendar. Plus, the eldest son of neighbours, Malachy McElroy, had been ordained a Columban in 1940 and was missioned in China.

After his Leaving Certificate in 1949, Malachy was brought to Dalgan Park by his local parish priest. "When Fr McDonald drove me in through the front gates, I couldn't believe it. It was August, the sun was shining and the building had these big long corridors. It was beautiful and

I was feeling both very important in one sense and a bit scared in another." There were 23 students in his class, the smallest intake for a number of years as most classes had over 30 seminarians.

In his fourth year, Malachy and two other Dalgan students were sent to study theology in the US region. He spent one year in Omaha and two years in Boston. "There were three Americans in the corresponding class, so with the three of us from Dalgan it became a class of six. I had a year in Omaha where there were only 54 students across seven classes. That meant you knew everybody much better than in Dalgan, where classes were much larger."

He was ordained in Ireland in December 1955 along with 14 other Columbans and though he might have wanted to be missioned in Korea or the Philippines, he was sent to Japan, embarking on his new mission at the beginning of 1957.

Japan was still grappling with the aftermath of World War II. "Our headquarters had been the Apostolic Nunciature before the war. It survived but straight opposite it was a space where a building had been totally flattened."

After three years of language studies, which he found "difficult", he embarked on ministry. In a country where Catholics were



02

just 0.3 percent of the population, the Columbans had to be inventive about how to engage with people. They got involved in kindergartens and teaching catechism as a way of making contact with families.

"A parish might be 30 people in total. You weren't sent for the Catholics, you were sent for the millions around you. You had to learn to depend on others. I was learning right up to the day I retired in 2005."

Over his years in Japan, Fr Malachy worked in Kanagawa, Wakayama, and Chiba. "I was about 25 years in Japan when I realised that one of the big things was loneliness. It was hard to admit it to myself. I thought priests can't be lonely because there's the blessed sacrament. The Japanese are lovely but there is a reserve before you come close and experience their loyalty."

Part of the challenge was the pre-Vatican II approach to catechism with an emphasis on the philosophical proofs for the existence of God. "It was awfully frustrating. I'd say out of the first 100 people who came to me for catechism, I only baptised about three. We were using the catechism the way we had learned it: 'Who made the world?' 'God made the world' etc. It wasn't engaging them. Only later, thanks to inculturation and Vatican II, we were able to widen the understanding to 'Meeting God in Nature', which is so instinctively part of the Japanese psyche."

A major influence on Fr Malachy was American Jesuit Fr Robert Doherty. "He said there were three privileged places for finding God. One is in the events of your life; another is in nature; and the third is in scripture. He taught us about finding God in scripture - what is scripture saying to me in this situation." Fr Malachy was also influenced by the Indian Jesuit, Fr Anthony De Mello.

He embarked on his *Yokatta Koto* or 'Good Things Prayer' after discovering that there were no books on prayer specifically for those who had just been baptised. Through this prayer format, he explains, "I try to draw close to the Lord, speaking to him, and asking him to make me aware of the good things he is doing in my daily life today." He began a prayer circle in Fujisawa church using the 'Good Things Prayer' format and it continues to the present day through leaders who studied under Fr Hanratty.



Since returning to Ireland, Fr Malachy has published two books, 'Discoveries in Praying Scripture' Volume I and II. Both provide a series of 'Guided Meditations' that he used with groups in Japan to show what can happen in a 'praying scripture' session. His hope is to complete the third volume. "I am convinced that my whole life has been about what I am doing now. I am grateful I was a missionary in Japan," he adds reflectively. ●

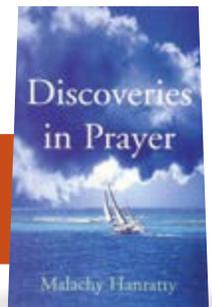
To make a comment on this article go to:

facebook.com/fareastmagazine

@fareastmagazine

'Discoveries in Praying Scripture' Volume I and II are FREE to download from our website: [www.columbans.ie/spirituality/praying-scripture](http://www.columbans.ie/spirituality/praying-scripture)

01. Members of the Church group at Katase, Yokohama Diocese.
02. Fr Malachy Hanratty.
03. Fr Malachy on a motorbike outside Katase Church which was built before World War II by French missionaries in the style of a Japanese temple.
04. Fr Malachy chatting with a parishioner in Ryujin Mountain parish, Wakayama Ken, Osaka Diocese.



## YOKATTA KOTO OR 'GOOD THINGS PRAYER' FORMAT

**Listening attentively to God is a very important part of prayer.**

- Before starting prayer, take a minute or two to decide the length of this prayer time.
- Have a relaxed posture. Speak to the Lord, "Show me a favour (a good or a gift) that you have given me today." No effort is made to recall or remember anything in particular. All is placed in God's hands.
- Recite over and over again, "Show me, show me the gift".
- Wait patiently with a totally receptive heart.
- Even when nothing happens, when the time is up, bring the prayer time to an end. It is important to use the full time allotted as fixed at the start.

When distractions invade the mind, put them aside and recite the refrain, "Show me" over and over and turn the mind to God. Practice of this prayer every day. Remember it is God who gives all good things and pray that you will be grateful. In that way, you will change for the better.



# MISSION IS AN ACT OF LOVE

Gilda Comayas writes about 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.

Love is the measure of our faith and the inspiration of our obedience to God. The decision to serve will shape the spiritual journey of our missionary work. We do it because we have something meaningful that motivates us.

I started my mission in Chile in May 2015. I was assigned in Alto Hospicio, Iquique, in northern Chile. Some people don't like the place because it is a desert. Green trees do not grow here only palms and a few plants. But I see the beauty of the place. It's not the physical aspect that I see, but the beauty of the people around me. Most of the people who are living here are migrants. They come from neighbouring countries looking for greener pastures. They believe Chile can give them a good life.

My work is not only concentrated in the parish. I teach children and adults who are interested in learning to play instruments such as guitar, tambourine, bongo etc. I also teach catechism in the school and teach English to anyone who wants to learn it.

Together with a Columban priest, we visit sick people and families in the community and celebrate Mass in a squatter settlement called *La Toma*.

We also go out from Iquique to the interior to do a mission together with the priest and nun or sometimes with the permanent deacon. We help animate the Mass and at the same time visit the local Andinos. It is in this place we see the beautiful Andean Mountains and wild animals such as llamas, deer, flamingo and sheep.

Since the majority of the people I worked with are not from Chile, each has their own way of doing things, from their faith to their culture. When I started my ministry, I had a lot of ideas of what I wanted to do for them, but I would end up feeling frustrated because my plans didn't work out the way I expected them to. This was a struggle.

Parishioners found it hard to commit to church activities. So, I decided to go out and meet people and go with the priest to visit families and the sick. I also learned from the missionary nuns who have been here for quite some time.



It was a big challenge on my part to learn their language. Eventually I began to understand their culture and their attitudes. I became mindful and more sensitive. Generally, the Chileans I've met are loving people and most of them are laid back and just want to enjoy the moment. I learned to just 'go with the flow' and continued to pray for my work and the people.

It was then that I began to enjoy mission and value the things I took for granted before, like the concern parishioners have for one another. For example, whenever someone arrives late for an activity, they don't complain, instead, they thank God that the person has arrived safely.

With this experience, I discovered how to be more patient whenever people did not arrive on time or did not even show up.

I have learned a lot in my mission. I've learned to wait for others, to be more creative, to appreciate other cultures as well as my own, to count my blessings and stop complaining; but most of all, I learned that I am truly dependent on God. He alone can give us the wisdom to accept the things which are hard to understand and love those who are difficult to love.

Indeed, love is the root of mission. Out of this love come certain sacrifices from us which bear fruit in the works we do in mission. ●

Gilda Comayas from the Philippines served as a Columban lay missionary for three years in Chile.

01. The challenging desert conditions of Alto Hospicio, Iquique, in northern Chile, the driest desert in the world. Image: Oisín Kenny.
02. Green trees do not grow here only palms and a few plants. But I see the beauty of the people around me. Image: Oisín Kenny.
03. All are welcome in the comedor (Spanish for dining hall) in the shantytown of Alto Hospicio, which has expanded rapidly from a population of 5,000 in 1992 to over 100,000 today. Many are attracted by the prospect of a better life and work in the mining or fishing industries nearby. The shantytown is home not only to Chileans but also migrants from countries such as Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and others. Image: Oisín Kenny.

**S**eptember and October skip into our lives almost unnoticed after a delightful season of sunny lazy days. There is a certain lethargy in the air. The scents and perfumes of Summer linger around us. They tell us to take it easy, to rest after the work and activities of previous months and to look around at a changing vista in nature. The farmers' barns are over-flowing with well-seasoned crops and food for all, people and animals and birds. The cycle of growth has ceased and the land lies fallow resting before Spring comes again. Migratory birds wend their way with their young back to where they came from several months earlier. It is a time for Thanksgiving - a time to allow oneself to be engulfed in the stillness of the Divine.

This sacred season of Autumn calls out to us to appreciate and take delight in the abundance of the simple things of life. These are the real source of joy and peaceful contentment. In this "season of mists and fruitfulness" Nature goes into a Winter rest. The days shorten and the world quietens. The hustle and bustle of busy lives are hushed. Autumn is a season like no other. It encourages us to cry out with joy:

**"O all you works of the Lord O bless the Lord.  
To Him be highest glory and praise forever."**

The poet Patrick Kavanagh, in his rustic way, invites us to exclaim with him:

**"That beautiful, beautiful, beautiful God  
Breathing His love by a cutaway bog."**

During the sultry days of Autumn we have time to contemplate the self-expression and the self-giving of the generous providence of our Father God. His bounty has no end.

October has been traditionally the Month of the Rosary and for many of us it still is. The Rosary is a contemplative pathway through our lives. Each decade gives us a great opportunity to move back from our daily tasks and examine our lives as we recite and reflect on each decade. It's a wonderful prayer. It can be a reflective meditation on our own lives or a request for someone in need or a prayerful consideration of the life of Mary our Mother. It is a most flexible prayer and will surely be answered if we have Faith. Mary never refuses our requests.

At the wedding feast at Cana when the wine became depleted Mary asked the waiters to fill the urns with water. Then she said to the waiters, "Do whatever He tells you." She simply said to Jesus, "They have no wine." The young couple were unaware of this and were surprised when someone said, "You kept the best wine until last." Jesus had made sure the young couple would not be embarrassed. He could never refuse His Mother anything. In Faith let us go to Him through His Mother in our time of need. She will never let us down. ●

**Sr Abbie O'Sullivan**

**"October has been traditionally the Month of the Rosary and for many of us it still is."**

# REST In PEACE



Sr Julianna O'Neill

**Sr Julianna O'Neill** was born in Dublin on 3 October 1934 into a family of ten. After school, she did a secretarial course and worked in a clothing factory. On her birthday on 3 October 1957 she entered the Columban Sisters in Magheramore. After her profession in 1960, Julianna was assigned to the catering service in Magheramore and she did this with great efficiency. Her creative and culinary talents and warm hospitality were recognised. After two years, to her great delight, she was sent to Korea. Korea was recovering from the war and many lived in great poverty. Julianna worked in Sam Chok. Later she continued her ministry in Mokpo and in Seoul.

As local superior and later as regional superior she encouraged the communities to a deeper awareness and sharing of their giftedness. As one who loved the liturgy, she delighted in using her artistic talents and her beautiful singing voice to ensure that the beauty and power of the Word of God was celebrated with joy. Her interest in Korean culture made her a favourite with the people. In 1981, Julianna was elected to the Central Leadership Team in the congregation. In 2006, as her health deteriorated, she came to Ireland for treatment. But it was to no avail. She gradually lost her ability to speak and her final years were marked by declining health. Those silent, suffering years were her final offering to God. She died in the Columban Sisters' Nursing Home in Magheramore on 1 November 2019, aged 85 years.

**Fr Peter Kenny** was born in Ballydangan, Athlone, Co Roscommon on 13 July 1933. He was educated at Camcloom NS and St Joseph's College, Garbally, Ballinasloe. He came to St Columban's, Dalgan Park, Navan in 1952, and was ordained priest on 22 December 1958. After ordination he was sent to Rome for post-graduate studies in Canon Law. Having acquired his Licentiate in 1961, he was assigned to the Philippines, and served in the parishes of San Narciso and San Antonio in the district of Zambales for the following six years. After this first term, he was appointed a member of the staff at St Columban's, Navan; this was a challenging assignment at a time of great ferment in seminaries all over the world. In 1974 he was appointed once more to the Philippines. He spent the next twenty years

in the parishes of Santa Rita, St Joseph's and San Jose Ruiz, all in Olongapo City. The last four years were dedicated to the indigenous Aetas in Poonbato.

From 1995 to 2003, Peter was assigned to Mission Awareness in Australia. In 2003, he was assigned to Mission Awareness in Los Angeles. He spent the following fifteen years in this ministry. During this period his eyesight began to deteriorate and he suffered with a number of other medical problems. In 2018, he moved to the Retirement Home in Dalgan. He was always blessed with a capacity to adapt to different situations, and to make a wide variety of friends, and maintain those friendships. His death on 11 March 2020 at Our Lady's Hospital, Navan, came suddenly and unexpectedly. We will miss his gentle presence.

**Fr Seamus O'Connor** was born in Tullamore on the 25 February 1926. He was educated in St Brigid's NS and St Finian's, Mullingar and joined the Columbans in Navan in 1944. He was ordained on 21 December 1950 and was part of the first Columban group assigned to Fiji. He spent his first term on mission in the area of Varoka, Ba and then in Samabula until 1961.

He became pastor of Varoka, Ba in that year and worked there until he was appointed as chaplain to Overseas Students in Australia in 1966.

In 1973 he joined the Columban mission in Peru and worked in Ingenieria, a poor area of Lima where rural migrants tried to establish homes on the barren hillsides. During this time he was also responsible for the Overseas Training of Columban seminarians in Peru and acted as assistant director for the Columban mission in Peru.

In 1986 he was appointed for four years to the staff of the Columban training programme in Ireland after which he returned to Peru to help develop a new programme for Peruvians who wished to go on mission as Columbans. After ten years in this role he returned to Ireland and worked in the Society headquarters in Donaghmede, Dublin. Returning to his home parish of Tullamore, he continued to work in the parish and as a chaplain in the Regional Hospital. Seamus lived to be the oldest Columban in Ireland at 94 years when he died on 29 March 2020 after a full and generous missionary life.

May they rest in peace.



Fr Peter Kenny



Fr Seamus O'Connor



# JESUS AT THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE PHARISEE

**W**hile Jesus was in a town called Nain, one of the leading Jewish men there - a man called Simon - invited him to his fine house for a meal. Simon was a Pharisee, which meant that he lived very strictly according to the Jewish law. Jesus, however, was a friend to everyone - rich or poor, alike.

There were a number of customs usual in those days when a guest went to someone's house. The guest would be greeted with a kiss of friendship. His feet would be washed, and perfumed oil offered to freshen his face and hair. Simon, however, did none of these

things when Jesus arrived at his house.

As a Pharisee, he was anxious to show just the right amount of honour in front of his other guests. He thought that despite what people were saying, Jesus might not be a true prophet of God, after all.

When Jesus took his place at the table, something unusual happened. A woman came quietly into the room, unnoticed by anyone, carrying a jar of expensive ointment. She knelt behind Jesus, at his feet, crying softly. Her tears fell on his feet and she wiped them away with her hair. Then she covered his feet with kisses and spread the perfumed ointment over them with her hands.

Simon watched all of this happening and wondered what he should do about it. The woman had a bad reputation in the town. "Surely, if Jesus really was a prophet," thought Simon, "he would know what a bad name she has and would not let her touch him?"

Jesus, however, knew just what Simon was thinking. ●

**Read also: Lk 7; 36-50.**

Illustration by Val Biro from One Hundred Bible Stories for Children. Published by Award Publications Ltd.

## BIBLE QUIZ

NUMBER  
**87**

**1** In Matthew ch.2, from what direction did the wise men come?

---

**2** In Genesis ch.18, who welcomed three visitors when his tents were pitched near the great trees of Mambre?

---

**3** In Acts, ch.18, how long did Paul stay in Corinth when he founded the church there?

---

**4** In Matthew ch.14, after Jesus walked on water, where did the boat come ashore?

---

**5** In Ephesians ch.6, who did the writer promise to send to Ephesus?

---

**6** In I Kings, ch.9, what did Solomon's men bring him when they sailed back from Ophir?

---

**£15 vouchers for the first three correct entries received!**  
Consult your Bible, answer the questions above and send your entry to: Bible Quiz N° 86, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Bible Quiz N° 85 Winners: Jane Burrows, York. Catherine Riordan, Ruislip, Middlesex. Allison Dean, Tyne & Wear.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



# WORD SEARCH

Match these words with their correct spaces. They can be found straight across or down:

- PANDA
- FOX
- DEER
- BEAR
- OWL
- GIRAFFE
- LION
- ZEBRA
- MONKEY
- PARROT
- PENGUIN

# crossword

animals

## PUDSY'S DIRTY - FIND THE 10 SPELLING MISTAKES

They say we will be back to school next week so Grandad said I suppose you fellas are happy because you are eggshhausted with all the long hols. But I said Grandad don't you know it was'nt just hols at all we had to do our lessons online and Ms Flinn would know if we were paying attenshun and not just making squiggles on our books cept I don't know how she did. And Grandad said I dunno about this online thing I heard the young cuzzins were baking buns and things and eating them as well and how do you eat a bun online its

very strange entirely. And I sed Grandad I'm confused too but I'll ask my friend Bump when we're back at school. But if we hafta wear masks we can't be whispering because the virus can run along whispers too. And I'm thinking mebbe cousin Conor, will tell us how to make signs and things that Ms Flinn won't spot because she'll be in a box like the man in the shop down the road. We can pretend we're cowboys or something with the masks! Won't that be really fab!



Help Pudsy correct his spelling to win a £15 voucher.

Rewrite the story and send to Pudsy's Dirty, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands B93 9AB, before 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

## HA! HA!

1. What do you call a pig that knows karate?
2. Why did the man run around his bed?
3. What has ears but cannot hear?
4. How are false teeth like stars?
5. How do scientists freshen their breath?
6. What animal is always at a game of cricket?

1. A pork chop!
2. Because he was trying to catch up on his sleep!
3. A field of corn.
4. They come out at night!
5. With expert-mintsi!
6. A bat.

## COMPETITION WINNERS

MAY / JUNE 2020

<p><b>Connie</b> Chiswick, London</p> <p><b>Clemency Ryan-Stout</b> Warrington, Cheshire</p>	<p><b>Gracie MacDulson</b> Co Donegal</p> <p><b>Orlaith Quinn</b> Altringham, Cheshire</p>	<p><b>Rachel Rose Ibus</b> Barnet, Herts</p>
1	2	1
Colpaint - Aged 7 and Under	Colpaint - Aged 8 and Over	Pudsy's Dirty

# Bewitching Buzzards

By Elizabeth McArdle



**O**n warm sunny days, when thermals are rising, you may hear the flight calls of buzzards overhead. Most birds of prey remain largely quiet, but buzzards are more vocal. Males call to females and females call to males and as young buzzards take to the air there will be even more calling. This vocalization creates great solidarity within the family, each bird taking strength from the other. They also call to let other buzzards know where they are thus ensuring they will not encroach on their territory. It is all about the family staying together with some social distancing at the same time.

These stocky raptors (birds of prey) are opportunistic feeders which means they are not fussy eaters. However, you will not find any vegetarian buzzards. Carnivorous is the word used to describe their meat-only diet and their short, hooked beaks are perfect for tearing flesh from bones. They are also happy to dine on other delicacies which include roadkill, birds, insects, frogs and wait for it: dung beetles. Earth worms can sometimes form part of their eclectic diet and buzzards have been known to

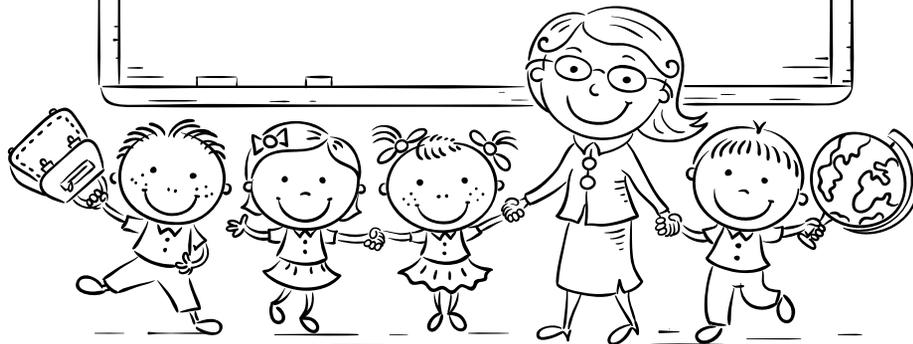
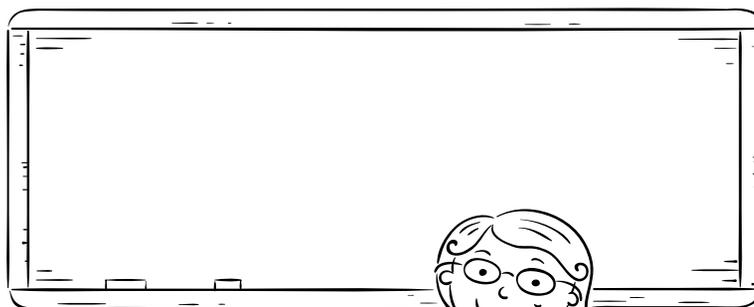
follow the plough in search of them. Their wonderful eyesight, which is eight times better than humans, ensures that they can spot prey on the ground from a very high distance.

Their numbers are increasing, which is good news, as in the 1960s their numbers declined to dangerously low levels due to the widespread use of the harmful pesticide, DDT. Let us hope this very welcome trend continues as it is heartening to see these wonderful birds in our skies again.

Time for you to head outside to get your eye and your ear tuned in to the sounds and sights of these bewitching birds. God is beckoning you, so hurry up to get your outdoor gear on as it would be a pity to miss these very special moments. ●

www.shutterstock.com

## WIN A VOUCHER WORTH £15/£10!



Colpaint

Colpaint

Colour the drawing and send it with your name and address to: COLPAINT, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Name:

Age:

Address:

FOUR PRIZES TO BE WON!



# END RACISM

## SCHOOLS MEDIA COMPETITION

We are looking for students (aged 14-18 inclusive) to submit an original piece of writing or an original image on the theme:

### 'LET'S CREATE A WORLD WITHOUT RACISM'

The winning entries will be published in the Far East magazine and online on Columban websites in Ireland and Britain and shared on Columban social media.

This is a chance to engage with an issue that addresses equality, justice, inclusion and also draws on faith and personal experience.

#### PRINT PRIZES

1<sup>ST</sup> £300  
2<sup>ND</sup> £150 • 3<sup>RD</sup> £100

#### IMAGE PRIZES

1<sup>ST</sup> £300  
2<sup>ND</sup> £150 • 3<sup>RD</sup> £100

“We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.” POPE FRANCIS, June 2020

THE COMPETITION IS BEING LAUNCHED ON MONDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020



**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES: SATURDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**

For more information on entry guidelines see: [www.columbancompetition.com](http://www.columbancompetition.com) or email [hello@columbancompetition.com](mailto:hello@columbancompetition.com)

# SUBANEN CHRISTMAS CARDS

Connecting the nativity story with the story of the Subanen people in the Philippines

The Subanens face eviction from their homes by logging and mining companies. With assistance from the Columbans, they use their traditional crafting skills to make jewellery, mandalas, children's books and cards to sell. The income generated provides food, education, housing and healthcare for their families.

Why not support the indigenous Subanen people of the Philippines by buying their traditionally crafted cards?



To place your order contact: Marie in the Mission Office • Tel: 01564 772 096 or Email: [office@columbans.co.uk](mailto:office@columbans.co.uk)  
Or write to: Subanen Christmas Cards, Columban Missionaries, Widney Manor Road, Solihull B93 9AB.

\* Subanen Christmas cards are sold in packs of five, with envelopes. They cost £5 per pack (£6 including postage). Cheques payable to Columban Missionaries.