

far east



MAGAZINE OF THE COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES



ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

A Vision
for a
Synodal Church

THE NEXT MOUNTAIN

Mission to Korea's
intellectually disabled

DESTRUCTIVE PLASTIC

Dire
consequences
for the planet

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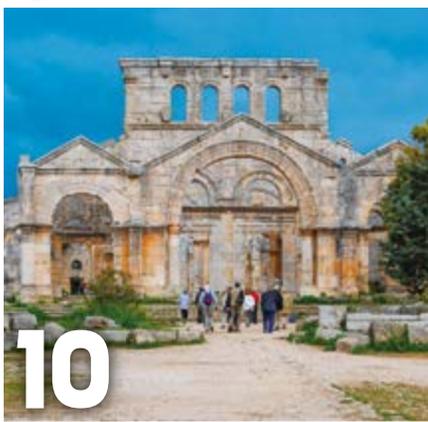
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THE FAR EAST

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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.

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Front Cover

Columban Fr Noel O'Neill with Kim Youn Cheong on the day of her graduation.



In the parish of Hodogaya in Yokohama City in Japan, I was teaching a class of ten who were preparing for baptism. For prayerful reflection I presented them with the Gospel passage: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11: 28 - 30)

Hodogaya is a ward in the very centre of Yokohama, a city of 3.7 million. There is little farmland left. One of those in the class asked me, "Father, what is a yoke?" I asked the other nine, who were all younger than 50 and city dwellers, if they could explain it. None of them had the vaguest idea what a yoke was!

I came to Japan in 1956, that's 65 years ago. For ten years I was stationed in rural towns and villages. At that time there was no machinery, as there is today, to cultivate the rice paddies. In early spring the paddy was flooded and then ploughed. A cow pulled the plough. On the animal's shoulders was the yoke made of heavy, straight-grained woods from which two chains connected to the plough itself. A yoke in the time of Jesus was similar.

Yokes of their very nature are exceptionally heavy and burdensome. Yet, Jesus says: "My yoke is easy." Here "easy" means it fits well. That is, the carpenter takes the measurements and notes the contours of each cow's neck and makes the wooden yoke fit snugly. There is a non-biblical legend that Jesus, as the carpenter of Nazareth, was known as a skilful yoke-maker.

Another very important point to understand what Jesus is telling us is this: the yoke Jesus refers to is a double harness yoke. So even though the yoke was heavy, when it is carried by two, the load becomes light and easy to carry. The important point is this: it is Jesus Himself who is teamed with us. This gives a deep and encouraging meaning to the text.

Having given this background to my Japanese class of city dwellers, I asked them in the quiet of their hearts to ponder Jesus' living words to each of them. "Everyone who is tired, and weighed down with heavy burdens, come to me. I will cause you to be refreshed. Take my yoke upon you. My yoke is easy to carry, and my burden is light."

Tiredness of both body and heart are endemic in our modern society. We are so competitive! We get so busy. We all have burdens. We all need the rest, the encouragement, the meaning and the new energy that Jesus gives. Let us go to Him with confidence. ●

Fr Barry Cairns

Fr Barry Cairns was born in New Zealand in 1931. After studying to be a Columban missionary in Australia, he went to Japan in 1956. 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 90 years of age, he still serves in a small parish in Yokohama City.

01. An Indian farmer using oxen to plough a paddy field for planting rice. Image: Shutterstock.



Fr John Boles writes about the Columbans' response to Pope Francis's dream of promoting evangelisation and justice in the world's greatest rainforest.

THE DREAM OF THE AMAZON

I dream of an Amazon region that fights for the rights of the poor, the original peoples and the least of our brothers and sisters, where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced.

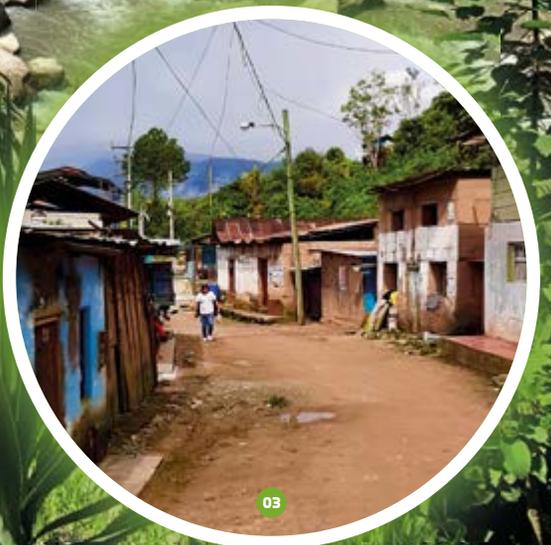
I dream of an Amazon region that can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways.

I dream of an Amazon region that can jealously preserve its overwhelming natural beauty and the superabundant life teeming in its rivers and forests.

I dream of Christian communities capable of generous commitment, incarnate in the Amazon region, and giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features.



02



03

In the introduction to his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation **'Querida Amazonia'** or 'Beloved Amazonia' of February 2020, Pope Francis outlines his dreams for the Amazon region – a multinational and interconnected whole, a great biome shared by nine countries. He explains how he is addressing the Apostolic Exhortation to the whole world so as to awaken their affection and concern for that land which is also 'ours', and to invite them to value it and acknowledge it as a sacred mystery.

Even before the Pope convoked the Synod on the Amazon in 2019, and issued his dramatic exhortation, Columbans in South America were engaged in campaigns to support the local Church, and to protect the ecology and peoples of the Amazon against injustice and exploitation.

In one initiative, Columbans – both foreign priests and Peruvian lay missionaries from the capital, Lima – have been reinforcing local Christian communities in the aptly named jungle locality of Monobamba, 'The Place of the Monkey' in the ancient Quechua language.

Monobamba is a truly glorious place. It is not located in the steamy Amazon Basin, but in what in Spanish is known as *Ceja de Selva* – 'The Eyebrows of the Jungle' – that part of the rainforest which clings to the slopes of the Andes mountains. Thus it combines the rich vegetation of the Amazon with the spectacular views of the high sierra.

The history and people of the area are as varied as its geography. "An Amazon... where shine cultural forms as diverse as humanity," writes the Pope, and this is certainly the case with Monobamba.

Before the Spanish arrived, the native inhabitants were under the rule of the fabled Inca Empire. Once the *conquistadores* from Spain drove the Incas out and left the indigenous population to be decimated by disease, people from the highlands began to drift down to the 'Jungle Eyebrows'. Then, in the mid-nineteenth century, the president of the young Republic of Peru, Ramón Castilla, encouraged immigrants from central and southern Europe to settle the territory. Most came from Germany, but there were also Austrians, French and others.

In the case of Monobamba, they were Italians! They cleared portions of the jungle and established fruit, sugar and coffee plantations. When I visited the area I was welcomed by the mayor, a fourth-generation Italian rejoicing in the surname 'Murgi'.

So far this paradise has escaped the threats menacing the rainforest further down in the basin, those of reckless and often illegal logging, mining and oil drilling resulting in deforestation, pollution and the displacement of indigenous peoples. However, the local Church does need help. Villages are small and widely-dispersed. Roads are awful, and often impassible after heavy rain. Priests and religious are few in number.

The plan of the Pope and bishops is to train and support lay catechists in each settlement, who can keep the Faith alive by celebrating liturgies, undertaking religious education and preparing people for the sacraments.

These are the efforts that the Columbans are supporting. On my visit from Lima, I was privileged to accompany our lay missionaries as they journeyed from hamlet to hamlet, often on foot, in order to identify, train and encourage these local leaders.

The challenge is enormous but, with God's help, we can rise to it, and in so doing maybe fulfil Pope Francis's fourth and final Amazonian dream "of Christian communities" that might "bestow on the Church a new face, with Amazonian features." ●

Fr John Boles is a Columban missionary priest from England who worked in Peru from 1994 until earlier this year when he returned to the UK.

01. View on the Rio Urubamba near Aguas Calientes, Cusco region, Peru. Rio Urubamba is part of Amazon Basin. Image: Shutterstock.
02. Columban Fr John Boles with people after an open-air liturgy in the Monobamba district.
03. The village of Rondayacu, typical of the small settlements in this part of the Amazon.
04. Señora Emilda, a Columban lay missionary from Lima (in blue), assisting with liturgies and celebrations.

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ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: VISION FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH

Where is the Spirit leading the Church? That is the underlying question in the Acts of the Apostles according to Fr Tom O'Reilly, who suggests it is also the basic question of the synodal process today.

The Vatican does not postpone major events without very good reasons.

Just before Pentecost this year, Pope Francis postponed for one year the next Synod due to be held in Rome in October 2022. The theme chosen for the Synod is synodality itself, which Francis says is God's wish for the Church of the third millennium.

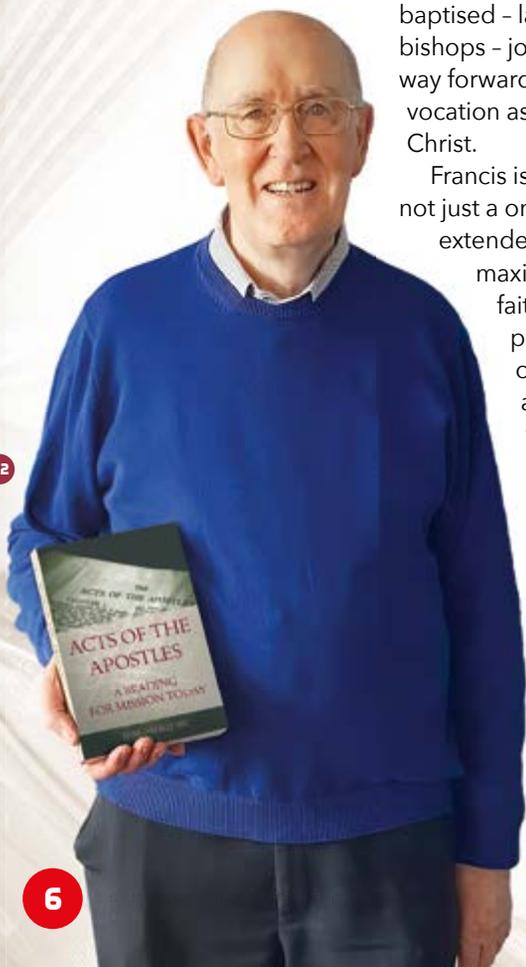
The basic meaning of the word 'synodality' is 'journeying together.' What is envisaged is a Church in which all the baptised - laity, priests, religious and bishops - journey together in seeking the way forward as we respond to our common vocation as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.

Francis is saying that the Synod is not just a once-off event in Rome but an extended process in which there is maximum participation of all the faithful. For this reason, he is now providing ample opportunity for conversations at local, national and continental levels before the Rome meeting in 2023. There are three interrelated focal points for the upcoming Synod: communion, participation and mission. In teasing out the meaning and implications of these, we can find inspiration and guidance from the Acts of the Apostles.

Let's begin with mission. The Church is not a club for the benefit of the members. Its basic reason for being is

to continue the mission of Jesus Christ in our world. Jesus gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples so that they could be his witnesses "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). On almost every page of the Acts of the Apostles we read the story of Spirit-filled disciples courageously witnessing to the good news of God's all-inclusive salvation through Jesus Christ. As they faced opposition, they experienced the Holy Spirit empowering them (Acts 5:32). As they set about their plans, they sometimes came to realise that the Holy Spirit had other plans for them (Acts 16:6-10). They also learned that setbacks, uncertainties and adverse circumstances can be taken up by the Holy Spirit into the working out of God's plans (Acts 20:22-23). Engaging in the synodal process means trying to discover what the Holy Spirit is doing in the ongoing mission of Jesus today and cooperating with that.

Mission and communion are inseparably connected. Communion has to do with how we relate to one another in the Church. In the early chapters of Acts, we hear how the Holy Spirit is creating a prayerful, discerning community which is open to what God is doing in its midst and in which there is a great spirit of sharing and practical care for the poor (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35). However, we are also told of a counter spirit which sows seeds of division, deceit, hypocrisy, self-glorification, collusion and possessiveness (Acts 5:1-11; 6:1). If Christian mission is about the promotion of loving, compassionate, forgiving and



02

just relationships, then we must be a sign of that by the way we relate to one another in the Church. In a world where people are often divided on the basis of class, culture and race, we need the witness of Christian communities in which people with different backgrounds, cultures and viewpoints can relate in a mutually enriching way. During the synodal process we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit drawing us into open, hospitable communion, where all are included and each one's contribution is valued.

A synodal Church promotes the participation of all in its life and mission. Here also we can draw inspiration from the Acts of the Apostles. When ministerial structures proved inadequate to meet community needs, "the whole community of disciples" selected seven Spirit-filled persons who were then approved for ministry by the apostles (Acts 6:1-6). When the apostles and elders met to discuss the implications of the increasing influx of Gentiles into what had been a predominantly Jewish-Christian Church, "the whole church" had a part in reaching basic decisions about Christian identity and communal life (Acts 15:6-29). These

decisions were taken with the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28), who is given to every baptised Christian. Here we are touching on a basic principle of synodality - the *sensus fidelium*, that is, the instinct of the whole Church in recognising true Christian faith and discerning new ways that the Holy Spirit is revealing to the Church.

Where is the Holy Spirit leading the Church? That is the underlying question in the Acts of the Apostles. It is also the basic question in the synodal process today. This process differs from the parliamentary procedure of debate and argumentation where the loudest or most articulate voices often prevail. A mind-set interested only in defending positions or pushing agendas is detrimental to the synodal process. A synodal Church is a listening Church in which everyone has something to learn. A synodal Church is a praying Church, open to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit and aware of the prejudices and resistances which make us deaf to the Holy Spirit. A synodal Church recognises and values different roles in the Church where, in the words of Pope Francis, "the only authority is the authority of service." ●

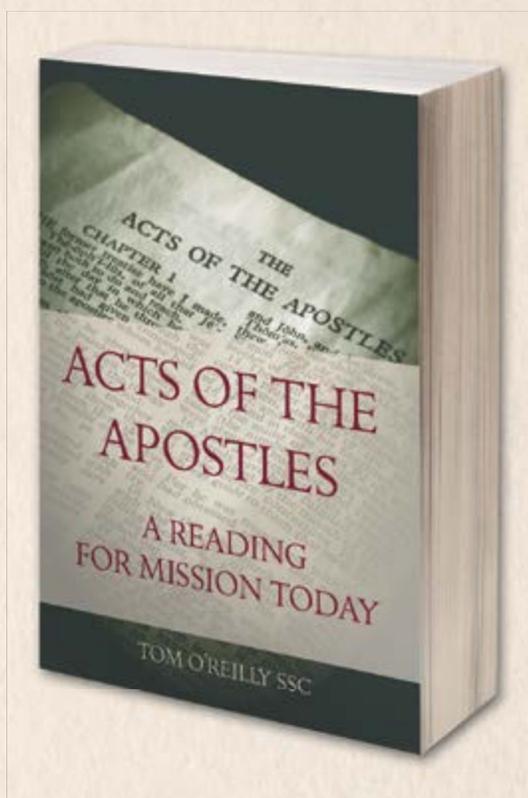
Fr Tom O'Reilly is a Scripture scholar. He holds a degree in scripture studies from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and has lectured in St Columban's Seminary, Navan, and in the Kimmage Mission Institute in Dublin. He also worked as a missionary in Pakistan and as regional director of the Columbans in Britain. His new book, '**Acts of the Apostles - A Reading for Mission Today**' is published by Veritas. www.veritas.ie

01. Co Laois-born Fr Tom O'Reilly celebrating Mass in the chapel in Dalgan Park, home of the Columbans in Ireland.
02. Fr Tom with a copy of his new book on the Acts of the Apostles.

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MIGRANT MINISTRY DURING COVID-19



I told him I would help him out. It was the start of something new for me. The following Sunday I went along to the Catholic Migrant Centre to celebrate Mass in English. I was shocked by the number of different nationalities who gathered for Mass. This was how I started in the migrant ministry. I really embraced this new calling and asked the Columbans to allow me to be appointed to this ministry in Suncheon. No Columban priest had served here for 60 years.

In the beginning, before the Covid-19 pandemic, I visited people that had come to Korea from Vietnam and helped them with challenges like having their medical needs seen to. I was doing this with a Korean Sister. In one case, we helped a Vietnamese woman who was expecting a child, to get the medical attention she needed. Migrants are often very poor in Korea. Their working conditions and lack of rights, leave them vulnerable. If they end up in hospital, they can lose their job because their employer does not want any problems with the migration office.

Part of my ministry is celebrating Mass and preparing the children of migrants for the sacraments. Most of the migrants come from the Philippines, then Vietnam and East Timor. A few are from the United States, Britain, Ireland, Eastern Europe and South Africa.

Sadly, due to Covid-19, my ministry was interrupted in a way I could never have anticipated and so I had to rethink how I could reach out to this diverse community. I was not able to go to the hospital anymore, and I was not able to celebrate public Masses. However, at a certain point it became possible to meet in small groups to share biblical reflections and to do

Fr Gonzalo German Borquez Diaz is a Chilean Columban working with migrants in Korea. He believes the Spirit is pushing the Church through the Covid-19 pandemic to reach out to new peripheries.

Every year thousands of people around the globe are forced to leave behind their family, friends, accommodation and dreams in order to try and find a better life somewhere else in the world. I am a Columban priest working with migrants in Suncheon, South Korea.

In April 2019, I was working with young people at the university in Mokpo city, when I received a phone call from a number I did not know. I thought it might be a call centre offering me something I didn't need, so I did not answer. However, the phone number called again about an hour later. I did not answer for a second time. But then the number called a third time. I decided to answer and intended to tell the caller I was not interested in what they were selling - but I got a big surprise.

The caller introduced himself as a priest from Gwangju diocese called Fr Anselmo. He was working with migrants. He asked me if I would be willing to help him in this parish on Sundays because he was struggling to communicate with this community of migrants. Though he could read English, his parishioners could not understand him when he spoke.

01. Columban missionary Fr Gonzalo German Borquez Diaz celebrates a house Mass during lockdown.
02. Members of the migrant community in Suncheon, South Korea welcome Fr Gonzalo to a small home gathering.
03. A small group talk about faith and the impact of Covid-19 on migrants at an outdoor gathering in Suncheon city with Fr Gonzalo.



house Masses or blessings and to listen to people's problems and share their worries.

I have come to the realisation that our lifestyles and way of life are not going to be the same again in the future and we, as a Church, need to understand that and go with the times. It is true that our faith is based on the Eucharist and the real presence of Christ.

In order to make this more tangible when churches are closed to public Masses, we have to seek out that presence. I believe the Spirit is pushing us to go to the peripheries,

not only the physical peripheries but also the existential ones. We must follow the example of Christ who spent most of his time on the peripheries.

I believe that by being with people, sharing their food, by listening and sharing God's Gospel with them, we are celebrating the presence of Jesus in people's daily lives. So, when we celebrate the Eucharist in the Church, Jesus is not only present in the sacrament and the Church, but also in life, love, compassion, mercy, understanding and patience. ●

Fr Gonzalo German Borquez Diaz is from Chile. He was ordained in 2016 at San Columbano Parish, El Bosque, Santiago de Chile. He has been missioned since ordination in Korea where he currently works with the migrant community.

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Fr Dan Troy recalls a fascinating article in the *Far East* magazine in 1934 by Syrian-born Fr Peter Gabriel, a Columban missionary who lived in China in the 1930s.

A SYRIAN-BORN COLUMBAN MISSIONARY in CHINA

As the spring rain poured down on Wuhan during the first week of February, I was quite happy to delay my departure at the end of the evening meal with the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Hanyang.

The possibility of waiting a little longer for a break in the clouds was partly facilitated by a local historian who was researching the historical details of church property in the area. His visit to the convent seeking old photographs led to one of the Sisters inviting me to go to the nearby office to contribute to the search, with the sound of rain providing background music to our conversation.

Our random search for photographs through thirty years of *Far East* magazines published by the Missionary Society of St Columban led to a few items of interest for the local historian. The persistent rain seemed to encourage the search to go on for longer than originally planned.

Leafing through the 1934 volume, a page in the March issue attracted my attention, a page that had

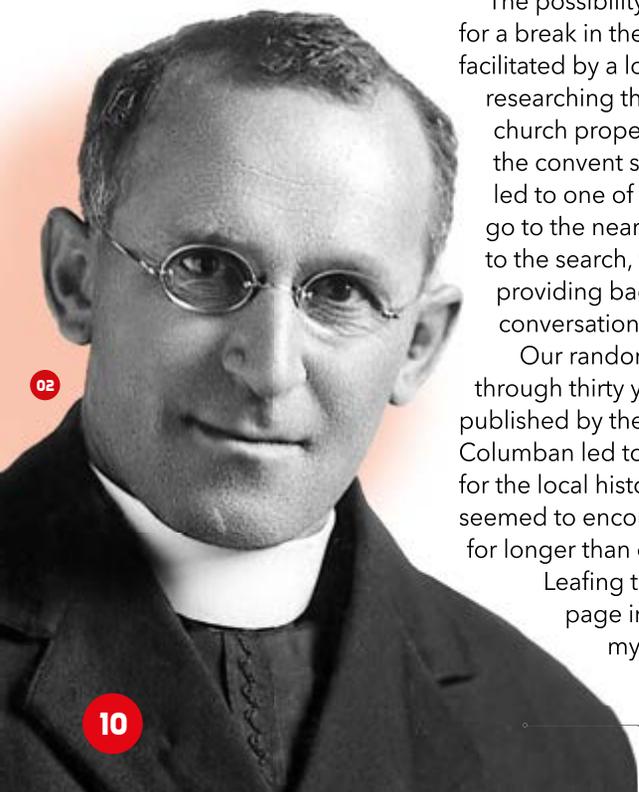
very little to do with the local historian's area of interest. The title of the page was 'A Trip through Palestine and Syria'. The article written by Fr Peter Gabriel, a Columban missionary in this part of China at that time.

As early as the second paragraph he writes, "I was born in Syria but have lived in Australia for many years." What follows is a beautifully written account of his journey, as a newly ordained priest, from Ireland to Port Said and then onwards to Jerusalem and northwards through Beirut.

Another issue of the magazine fills in the details of other parts of his journey with a description of his determination to reach Anto, the village of his own people in Syria. The first person he met on the village's street coincidentally turned out to be his uncle.

Although Peter Gabriel had left Syria with his parents as a toddler to emigrate to Australia, he was fluent in Arabic as an adult, a fact that surprised his extended family who were now meeting him for the first time in over thirty years.

The curious differences that stood out for him during his two-day visit to Anto were reflected in the question asked by a few



people who wondered how he could be a priest if he did not have a beard. However, despite the lack of a beard, the villagers turned out in large numbers the next morning for Mass which was celebrated in an area just a few miles from the renowned Cedars of Lebanon which were visited later in the day.

The eventual onward journey to China brought Fr Peter to the modern-day city of Wuhan where he ministered in Hanyang Vicariate with other Columbans. By 1937 he was struck down with tuberculosis and returned to Australia where he died in 1938.

A missionary who had seen the Holy Land, the heights of Lebanon, the Syrian land of his birth and the central plains of China was also faced with the unwelcome cross of fatal sickness while still a young man.

This year the world marked the painful



tenth anniversary of the beginning of the Syrian Civil War, a conflict that has shattered a nation and its people. I wonder if Fr Peter could ever have thought that such suffering would be possible in the land of his birth?

Perhaps the closing words of the description of his visit to the Middle East can offer some hope even in this most complicated and tragic of situations, words that link different parts of the world, poignant words expressed by a person of faith who would eventually endure the excruciating pains of Tuberculosis throughout his own body, almost a foretelling of the pain that would convulse his homeland.

“So I retraced my steps and before long was once more on shipboard, bound for China and thanking God for having given me the opportunity of seeing a little of the country in which He Himself had traversed and that other land of Syria, so rich in Christian tradition.” ●

Fr Dan Troy is from Newtownshandrum in Co Cork. He studied civil engineering at university and later joined the Columbans in 1991. He was ordained in 1999. After serving in St John's Parish in Limerick city for a year, in 2000 he was sent to China, where he has ministered ever since.

01. A vista of the Syrian city of Aleppo, destroyed by the decade-long conflict. Image: Shutterstock.
02. Columban missionary Fr Peter Gabriel in 1929.
03. Fr Peter Gabriel's article in the March 1934 of the Irish Far East magazine.
04. The ancient Byzantine Church of St Simeon - Qal'at Sim'an in northern Syria. Image: Shutterstock.
05. Fr Peter Gabriel's gravestone in Australia.



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“WHAT IS THE NEXT MOUNTAIN YOU WOULD LIKE TO CLIMB?”

Fr Noel O'Neill pioneered a network of community-based homes for people with intellectual disabilities in South Korea. He writes about the mountains conquered by Kim Youn Cheong.

I took the call. An over-excited voice told me, “Sinbunim (Father) I have passed the college entrance exam”. It was 22-year-old Kim Youn Cheong on the phone. I think I was more excited than she was as I tried to convey to her how delighted I was about this good news.

Youn Cheong has no memory of her mother or father. She was abandoned as a baby and placed in an orphanage. The only memory she has of the orphanage is that it was bitterly cold in the winter. They slept on the floor, there was no central heating - only the bodily heat of the other twenty-nine in the dormitory giving some warmth. The summer months were not much better as there was no air conditioning or electric fans to help with the heat. It meant opening the windows which resulted in an onslaught of mosquito bites.

At the age of six Youn Cheong was

transferred to another orphanage in Gwangju city. This building had central heating and also air conditioning during the summer months. However, it had its own demons, not material demons but human demons. For some unknown reason the ten-member staff seemed to be of one mind, make life hell for the residents. Youn Cheong recalled, “We did not have any new clothes. The clothes were always hand-me-downs from the older residents. A hairdresser came in once a week and you dare not tell her how you wanted your hair cut. Without exception, everyone’s hair was cut short. You had little or no privacy. If you stepped out of line you were punished by a beating on the shins with a rod or deprived of a meal or even deprived of your sleep. Yes, it was hell on earth.”

It is not clear who - a member of the staff or one of the visiting volunteers - blew the whistle to the press, resulting in an investigation. Almost all the staff got prison sentences or were dismissed. Fortunately, they were replaced by more humane and caring staff.

At this stage Youn Cheong was attending high school. She was approaching her eighteenth birthday and her future in the orphanage was being discussed. According to the regulations, after the age of eighteen she could no longer be a resident in the orphanage. Youn Cheong was registered as a person with special needs, and so the



authorities at the orphanage contacted the Emmaus Group Homes.

Youn Cheong joined three other young women in one of the sixteen group homes run by Emmaus. Rhee Gemma, the assistant in the home, was a very caring and loving person. While the other three residents attended Emmaus Industries during the day Youn Cheong continued her schooling.

There was great excitement and celebrations on her graduation day, plenty of photos and flowers. In the warmth and family-like atmosphere Youn Cheong experienced the motherly love of Rhee Gemma and really began to blossom and began to believe in herself.

Whenever there were group home functions Youn Cheong would act as MC and perform her task with much gusto and full of self-confidence. It came as no surprise to Gemma, the group home assistant, when Youn Cheong confided in her that she would like to go to college. "I would like to climb another mountain" was the way she put it.

Gemma, after consulting with others, decided that it would be good for Youn Cheong to spend a year at one of the learning institutes to prepare for the college exam. She enrolled for night classes at one of the local learning institutes and in the meantime was fortunate to get a part-time job in a high school where she worked in the headmaster's office serving refreshments to visitors.

Two years ago, Youn Cheong was accepted at a nearby college for night classes and began a two-year course in social work. She continued with her part-time job at the high school and earned her own pocket money and was able to buy her own books. Because of her circumstances, the college authorities generously exempted her from paying college fees.

It was also providential that she became very friendly with a fellow college student who lived in the apartment block next door. This student used invite Youn Cheong to her home where she would be welcomed by her friends' parents and siblings. This also helped her grow in self-esteem. The few times I saw both of them, walk side by side, carrying their satchel of books, as they headed for the college, were joyful sights.

Due to Covid19 restrictions, there was no special college graduation celebration. The college president presented the graduation certificate to each individual privately. I and others were waiting outside to express our "chukhahamnida" (congratulations).

For me it was a moment to be cherished forever. As I posed with Youn Cheong for a photo, I turned to her and asked, "What is the next mountain you would like to climb?" With a big smile on her face she looked at me and said, "Independent living." ●



Please help Fr Noel O'Neill's work with the Intellectually disabled. Under the umbrella of the Rainbow Community, scattered all over Gwangju city, are many Emmaus centres. These include 16 group homes, a speech therapy centre, and vocational training workshops which help participants secure employment. Nearly one third of the residents in the group homes, like Kim Youn Cheong, were abandoned by their families. To support Fr Noel O'Neill's work please send a cheque payable to 'Columban Missionaries' to: Far East Appeal, St Columban's, Widney Manor Road, Solihull B93 9AB. Alternatively, donate online at www.columbans.co.uk or call **01564 772 096**. Please mention this article when making your donation.

Columban Fr Noel O'Neill went to South Korea in 1957. After 24 years in parish work, he answered the cry of the 'Forgotten Ones' in Korean society and founded the 'Rainbow Community' in 1981 to offer community-based services to people with intellectual disabilities. In recognition of his contribution to the welfare of the disabled over many decades, the Korean government honoured him with Korean citizenship in 2016.

01. Columban Fr Noel O'Neill with Kim Youn Cheong at her graduation party.
02. Fr Noel with members of Emmaus on a day's excursion. In 1981, Fr O'Neill was the first to introduce community-based services for people with intellectual disabilities in Korea through the Rainbow Community.
03. Officiating at Mass with Kim Youn Cheong and friends.
04. Fr Noel offers 'Chukhahamnida' or congratulations to Kim Youn Cheong.

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DIALOGUE: A WAY OF BEING ON MISSION

Sr Rebecca Conlon writes about the dialogue of life which the Columban Sisters live in Pakistan, a majority Muslim country.

Pope Francis' pastoral visit to Iraq in the midst of the pandemic as a Pilgrim Penitent and as a Pilgrim of Peace put me thinking. Age and diminishing health did not stop him from taking on this pilgrimage which started in the ruins of Ur, the 5000-year-old Mesopotamian city that was the birthplace of Abraham; the place he once called 'home'. That to me was ingenious as it is the root and 'home' of our monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, which on many occasions do not see eye to eye.

Just as Abram left Ur and pitched his tent along the way, we Columban Sisters pitched our tent in the midst of Muslims in Pakistan 31 years ago, making dialogue our way of life. In Pakistan we breathe Islam day and night as we hear the Call to Prayer five times each day, wake up to the sirens calling the nation to get up at 3.30am as it is Ramadan and time to get ready for the fast, and where the presence of God is tangible in the midst of many differences.

Our plan to live among Muslims was frowned on because of fear for our security but keeping the vision of dialogue alive

and focused gave us strength to face the many challenges over the years. Twenty-nine years ago, we branched out to the tribal Christians of Hindu background in the interior of Sindh. This brought another rich dimension to our dialogue which now included Hinduism as well as Islam. This enriched our mission immensely.

Our first Christmas in Pakistan was memorable as our Muslim neighbours gave us our first Christmas tree with a 'Happy Christmas' decoration, which they stuck up on the wall. It is important to note that this was a time of great political tension and turmoil in the area where we lived. They protected us in our vulnerable moments and were always with us in good times and difficult times. On Christmas Day, family and friends arrived to celebrate with us. It was a eureka moment of welcome and the dialogue of life was opened up for us effortlessly. We attended their marriages and deaths as family, and when tragedy hit them, we were the first called, and we supported them. This relationship continues to this day. Their friends became our friends and this experience showed us how life can

be, as a tiny minority in a sea of Islam.

One dream was to have a shelter for women as the plight of women was one of our top priorities when we were missioned to Pakistan. We visited a renowned Muslim lawyer in Karachi seeking advice and there we met a young Muslim lady doing her law internship in his NGO; she was a native of Hyderabad, where we lived. This encounter worked out as a partnership for life to the extent that when the Irish Bishops came to Pakistan with Trócaire, she was introduced as a 'Columban Sister' as she is of one mind and one heart with us in our mission to reach out to the people on the margins.

As foreigners, we could not open a shelter, so she became our hands and feet. She successfully opened her shelter and worked at grassroots with women, visiting them in their villages as well as accompanying them to the courts and giving them shelter. It was thanks to our relationship with her and her contacts that we were able to visit the women's jail for about fifteen years as an ongoing twice-weekly presence, running income-generating projects with the women prisoners. Their children stayed with them in prison and we saw to their education. Our Christian children from outside always visited for Children's Day and played and danced with the mothers and their children.

One American Dominican priest who was a missionary here for many years was once asked how many people he converted in Pakistan? His answer was "One. Myself." That's it! Our neighbour comes in with a tray of food, just cooked for our Eid (Festival). This has been a pattern all our years here



and we in turn do likewise. We meet the women and children on the roof and chat across to each other, but this does not mean that as a minority there are no problems among us in this society. Muslims have stood at out gate in dangerous times of war and controversial cartoons, to make sure we were not attacked.

As foreigners we cannot take a prominent role fighting for justice, but we remember Shakeel Patan, a neighbour and an outspoken human rights activist opposed to bonded labour who was killed in a car accident. When his body arrived at his home, we were there for his bewildered children who did not understand anything of what had happened.

Our mission mandate to "go to the margins" would not have happened without a vision of dialogue with other religions as being a way of life. God's kingdom is alive and well in and through all this and hopefully through our daily intermingling of life together we will continue to care for each other as children of the one God for, "It is in Him that we all live and move and have our being." ●

Sr Rebecca Conlon is from Co Clare. She was involved in formation work both in Ireland and Korea. Currently, she is a member of the Central Leadership Team of the Columban Sisters and is on mission in Pakistan.

- 01. Columban Sisters Sophia Kim, Rebecca Conlon and Ann Carbon who are all on mission in Pakistan.
- 02. The local environmental group in Hyderabad with Srs Rebecca Conlon and Ann Carbon (3rd and 4th from the right).
- 03. Diocesan meeting on dialogue: delegates include Bishop Samson Shukardian.

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DESTRUCTIVE PLASTIC

Our modern world depends on plastic to sustain its present lifestyle. But the plastic revolution has many dire consequences for the planet, warns Fr Shay Cullen.

Plastic was and is a magical invention. It is a material based on oil and has thousands of excellent and life-saving uses. In the medical world, in construction, in tool-making, the manufacturing of phones and other gadgets, cars, household items, furniture - almost everything has plastic in it.

Our modern world depends on plastic to sustain its present lifestyle. But that lifestyle built on the plastic revolution has its dangerous dark side. Everything we humans use and discard can have dire consequences for the planet. Garbage is everywhere and it is damaging our health. Plastic pollution is destroying many creatures and poisoning our air, rivers and oceans; yet people don't seem to care.

It is dangerous to health because it is a destructive chemical-based pollutant. It is the one-time use of disposable plastic that is so dangerous and damaging to our lives, health and environment. The fish we eat have plastic in them because the vast oceans are filling up with discarded plastic.

If you Google 'Plastic Pollution in Manila' you will get a sight that will make

you cry or angry. You will see photos of the estuaries, canals, rivers and Manila Bay choked with millions of discarded plastic bottles, cups, straws, bags, nets and wrappings. Eventually some drifts into the far ocean.

These single-use plastic items make up 40 percent of all annual plastic production worldwide. They are with us forever, you might say, and will not disintegrate for about 400 years. The millions of tons of floating plastic will eventually join the great Pacific garbage patch that covers a surface area that is 1.6 million square kilometres. That is three times the size of France. It is swirling in ocean currents between California and Hawaii and elsewhere. There are many other lesser-known floating garbage islands where our discarded single-use plastics end up.

The ocean currents sweep up the floating plastic in gyre regions as they are called. An estimated 297 million tons of plastic is out there on the ocean currents distributed as follows: in the North Pacific (36 percent), Indian Ocean (22 percent), North Atlantic (21 percent), South Pacific

(8 percent) and the South Atlantic (4.5 percent). The Mediterranean Sea has 8.5 percent. We humans sure dirty our own planet.

What is most dangerous to all living creatures in the short and long term is the damage to our health from micro-plastics. The plastic bottles, cups, straws and bags eventually breakdown into tiny microplastic particles and even nano-plastics.

A massive eight million tonnes every year float into the oceans and tons of plastic dust are blown into the atmosphere from the tons of plastic in open pit garbage dumps. We breathe the dust into our lungs. It may be necessary to always wear a mask.

The micro-plastics get into everything - our throats, lungs and stomachs - and they harm wildlife, too. Fish are found dead, their stomachs filled with plastic bags. Tests have shown micro plastics are in many fish on our dinner tables. I have gone vegetarian.

Birds are dying by the thousands from eating plastic items. Penguins, albatrosses and many sea gulls have died as a result of eating floating or submerged plastics. Thousands of dolphins, sharks, whales and turtles are caught in the drifting discarded plastic fishing nets of the commercial fishing industry. What incredible damage we are doing to nature, ourselves and our children by such irresponsible 'I don't care' behaviour.

Discarded one-use-plastic is a culture of death and destruction. Researchers have found items from almost every continent floating in the garbage that is cast up on remote Pacific islands. They have been found in the deepest part of the ocean to

the highest point on earth, Mount Everest, no less. Europe and the United States have their garbage and plastic disposable and recycling challenges, yet Asia is the source of most of the plastic garbage.

The plastic garbage monster is coming not only from the Pasig in Manila where most of it stays in coastal waters but mostly it is coming down the 5 major Chinese rivers and also from the Nile in Egypt, the Ganges in India, the Indus in Pakistan, the Niger in Africa and the Mekong River that passes through Laos, Thailand and Cambodia.

There is one way to solve this: a worldwide ban on single-use plastics like plastic bags, cups, bottles, drinking straws, stir-sticks, cutlery and food containers. There are laws in place in some countries banning plastic bags. In the Subic Bay Freeport Zone, plastic bags are banned in stores and supermarkets. More restrictions are coming in the US and the EU but not soon enough. The Philippines needs such laws to save our beautiful islands and rivers and beaches. Burying the garbage in the sand is not the answer. ●

Fr Shay Cullen grew up in Glenageary, Co Dublin. In 1969 he was ordained a Columban priest and was sent on mission to Olongapo City in the Philippines. It was then home to a large US Navy fleet and thousands of women and children were systematically sexually exploited. Fr Shay founded the PREDA Foundation in 1974 to provide a safe haven for child abuse victims. He has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize four times.

01. Beach pollution at Kuta beach, Bali, Indonesia. Image: Shutterstock.

02. Micro plastic pellets on the finger. Image: Shutterstock.

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02

**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.



01

Columban Lay Missionary Angelica Escarsa explains how she has sought positives from the Covid pandemic.



02

FINDING POSITIVES IN THE PANDEMIC

Looking up the difference between the word 'change' and 'transformation' on the internet recently, I came across the following statement: 'Change is a response to external influence, where modifying day to day action achieves desired results. Transformation, on the other hand, is about modifying core beliefs and long-term behaviours - sometimes in profound ways to achieve the desired results.'

Transformation is what I would call the experience happening to many, if not all of us, as we face the reality of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many things have been shared about how this pandemic is affecting us in a negative way. But have we ever thought about how it is having a transforming effect on our lives.

I am still flabbergasted by this Covid-19 virus which has already taken millions of lives. This pandemic is transforming my whole sense of life on earth. If I can't learn something new as a result of this pandemic, then I never will! In Article 35 of *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis writes, "If only this may prove not to be just another tragedy of history from which we learn nothing... If only we might rediscover once and for all that we need one another, and that in this way our human family can experience a rebirth."

For many months, Ireland was in lockdown and people's movements were severely restricted; no one was permitted to travel outside their own county and could only travel within a 5km radius. Only in May did the government start to ease the restrictions and allow intercounty travel.

I live in a council house in Ballymun, which is only an hour's walk from the Columban Centre in Dublin city centre. Due to lockdown, my ministry and meetings with different groups like Youth Ministry in Dublin Diocese and the Lay Mission Group all went online. My movements were limited to the house, the park, Glasnevin Cemetery and the shop. For many months these were my world and, in a positive way, this also brought change into my life. The changes included:

- Being more connected, through technology, with family, friends and those in the ministry because I am physically distant from them.
- Being spiritually nourished because I had a deeper longing for God while I couldn't go to the church.

- Being more aware of the vulnerability of life because I have no control over Covid-19.

- Being more aware of my mortality when I contracted Covid-19. This brought me to a deeper surrender of my life to God, as I considered the possibility that every night could be my last. I experienced a deeper gratitude for the gift of life.

- Becoming spiritually connected to my family as we prayed the rosary every day no matter what our situation was. I have also begun to set aside time for silent prayer.

This is not just a change that I see happening now and which will disappear. This is a transformation that is going to be with me due for the remainder of the pandemic. We need one another to realise the truth that we are not alone, even if we have been physically isolated while in-person gatherings were prohibited. This is a transformation that is going to be with me for the remainder of the pandemic.

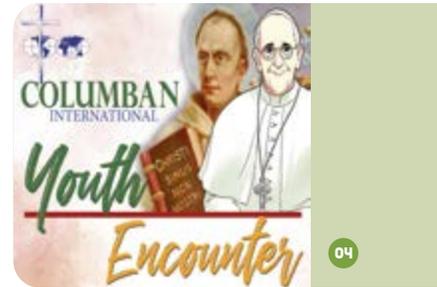
I truly hope that the worldwide tragedy of the Covid-19 pandemic has strengthened our sense that we are a global community... "we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another." (*Fratelli Tutti*, Article 32)

"God willing, after all this, we will think no longer in terms of 'them' and 'those, but only 'us!'" (*Fratelli Tutti*, Article 35)

This brought me to see how perfect the timing of the Columban International Youth Encounter is. Young people need this venue as a platform to be with their



Angelica Escarsa is a Columban Lay Missionary from the Philippines. She joined the Society in 1999 and works in Ireland. She is involved in the Columban Centre; Youth Ministry in Dublin Diocese; working for the young people in parishes in the Ballymun area and as an assistant chaplain at Cherry Orchard Hospital. Recently Angelica has been involved with the virtual Columban International Youth Encounter and AMRI's Lay Mission Committee.



peers not only from their own country but from other parts of the world.

I hope this pandemic will bring transformation within all of us, modifying our core beliefs and long-term behaviours in a profound way, so as to awaken within us the desire of becoming whole by recognising our need to be connected to others.

"Amid this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about appearances, has fallen away, revealing once more the ineluctable and blessed awareness that we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another" (*Fratelli Tutti*, Article 32) ●

01. Columban Lay Missionary Angie Escarsa is from the Philippines. She joined the Columbans in 1999 and works in Ireland.
02. Angie outside St Benildus' Pastoral Centre in Dublin. She is involved in Youth Ministry in Dublin Diocese.
03. Angie and friends masked up against Covid-19.
04. Columban International Youth Encounter 2021.

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THIS CANDLE

An article titled 'This Candle' by Fr Tim Mulroy which was published in the March/April 2021 issue of the Far East incorrectly referred to Haiti Muller's candle-making project in the Philippines as being the work of Latai Muller. The fault lies with the Editor of the Far East and not Fr Mulroy. Hoping that Haiti can accept the Editor's apologies for mixing her up with her cousin Latai, who is also from Tongo.

PHILIPPINES

THIS CANDLE

During the celebration of the Easter Vigil last year, the verse from the Psalms resonated deeply within me. As Fr Tim Mulroy, speaking the words of the story, I realised the words were about the presence of death. Thanks to Christ's sacrifice for us sinners, hell captives by our own selfishness and sin, we have been set free in order to begin a new life filled with hope and promise.

As I continued going on the Paschal Candle, I also became aware that this particular candle had its own unique story to tell about prayer and friendship, about hope and promise.

I Latai Muller is from the island kingdom of Tonga in the South Pacific. In 2015, she became a Columban lay missionary and was assigned to the Philippines. After hearing of the candle-making project, she joined the ministry team that visits the poorest areas of the city of Cagayan de Oro. In addition to attending to the spiritual needs of the residents in that impoverished locality, the ministry team also offers pastoral support to their families.

The prisoners shared with Latai their feelings of loneliness, frustration and depression. They also shared about how much they miss their families, as well as their longing to make a new start in life. As their relationship deepened, they became more open, trusting and trusting. While they cherished great hopes, they also realised that there were many obstacles on the path ahead.

Having made a decision to stay and work again, and seeing how some of the prisoners had been quickly back into their old way of life, Latai realised that something had to be done to help them make a new start. Since one of her

This is the night, when Christ broke the prison-bars of death and rose victorious from the underworld.

Columban lay missionary colleague Latai Muller, a candle-making handbook project for prisoners in the capital city of Manila, Latai decided to try to do it in Cagayan de Oro. Some weeks later, having received the handbook, Latai returned to the candle-making project, but also encouragement and support from the Columban lay ministry in Cagayan de Oro. There, with a generous budget and the care of a women's room at the archdiocesan centre, she started a candle-making project with a small group of former prisoners.

A year ago, I had the privilege of visiting the Philippines and seeing this handbook project and meeting Latai and her co-workers in my conversations with them. I learned how this project functions as an important bridge between prison life and the outside world. It provides the workers with a weekly wage that prevents them from falling into poverty and desperation.

This is the night, when Christ broke the prison-bars of death and rose victorious from the underworld.

Columban lay missionary Angie Escarsa is from the Philippines. She joined the Columbans in 1999 and works in Ireland. She is involved in Youth Ministry in Dublin Diocese.

Angie and friends masked up against Covid-19.

Columban International Youth Encounter 2021.

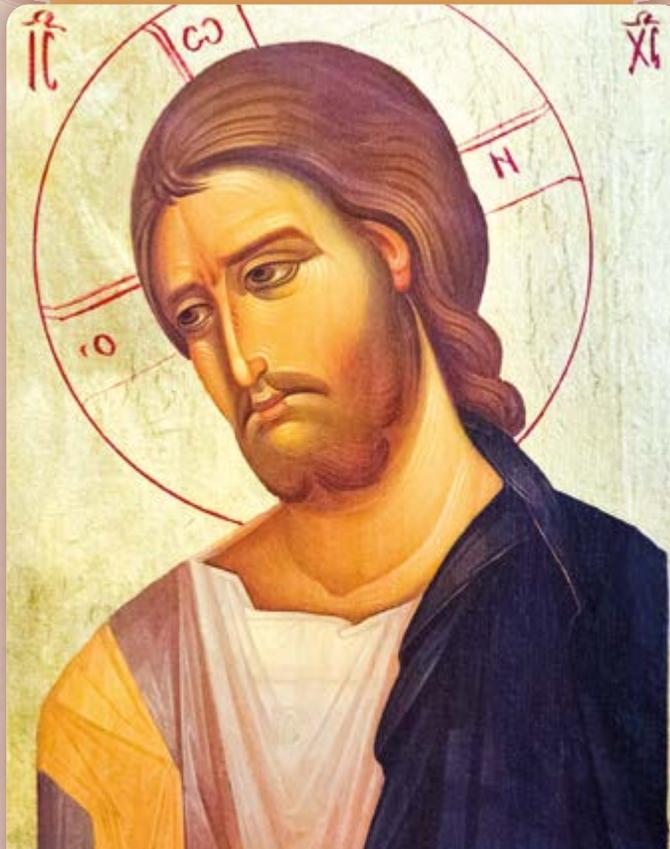
*All you who seek a comfort
sure in trouble and distress
Whatever sorrows vex your mind or
guilt your soul oppress
Jesus who gave Himself for you upon
the Cross to die
Opens to you His Sacred Heart
Oh, to that Heart draw near.*

If I could stand before the crucifixion of Jesus on Calvary, what would I feel or think? What would I do or say? What would you do or say? The connotation of the word crucifixion in the Old Testament was terrible and dreadful. This type of execution was reserved by the Romans for those who were found guilty of sedition against the State.

Public criminals, traitors and rebels were also meted out this same type of punishment. It was the most ignominious of deaths. It stripped the human person of his dignity and of all that he was entitled to. The Book of Deuteronomy Ch. 21 says, "If a man is found guilty of a capital offence you must put him to death by hanging him on a tree." Elsewhere it says, "Cursed be anyone who hangs on a tree."

Jesus hung on a tree - two beams of wood, one vertical and one horizontal. The soldiers even opened His heart with a sword lest any vestige of life be left in His emaciated body. But even then, after all He had suffered, He whispered, "Come back to Me with all your heart."

For a moment let us look at the crucifix. This is perhaps one of the greatest acts of Faith we can ever make. It is the deepest contemplative prayer we can ever lose ourselves in. We are looking at the Son of God who freely became human like us and who suffered intensely for me and you. He knows our needs and



The icon of Jesus Christ in the Church of Saints Gervasius and Protasius the Martyrs in Pavia, Italy

sufferings. When we look into His sad and weary eyes, we hear Him say, "Was there ever any suffering like Mine?" His arms are wide open inviting us to, "Come to Me all you who are weary and heavy burdened, and I will refresh you."

Let us make the effort to return to Him. He knows us better than we know ourselves. What a great sense of security and belonging we can have as we quieten ourselves and look into His face. His sad eyes are full of compassion and mercy imploring us to accept His tremendous love. We don't have to

say or do anything. He knows our needs.

Let us allow our worries and anxieties, our sorrows and sufferings be absorbed into His. Then the everlasting peace will flow into our hearts and souls. Jesus seems defeated. He has lost everything and has been abandoned by many. Why believe in Him then? Surely because He overcame death and rose again from the tomb in His glorified Body and returned to His Father.

He opened the way for everyone to rise from the dead and be united in the Heart of the Blessed Trinity for all eternity with all our loved departed ones who are waiting for us. They are already in the heart of the Trinity.

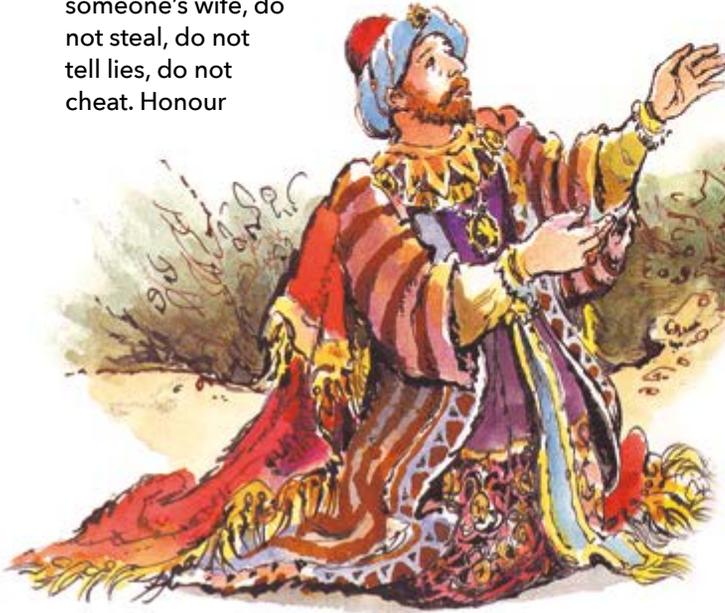
Sacred Heart of Jesus I place all my trust in You. ●

Sr Abbie O'Sullivan

THE RICH YOUNG MAN

A rich young man came up to Jesus and asked him, "Master, what must I do to be sure of eternal life?"

"If you want to be sure of eternal life," said Jesus, "you should keep the commandments: do not kill anyone, do not take someone's wife, do not steal, do not tell lies, do not cheat. Honour



your father and mother and love others as you love yourself."

"I have kept all of these," said the young man. "What else should I do?"

Jesus looked at him steadily and then said, "If you want to be perfect, sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor. That way you will have treasure in heaven. Then come back and follow me."

The young man was saddened by these words. He was very wealthy, and he simply could not give up his riches even for the kingdom of God.

Jesus turned to his disciples. "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God," he said.

When they heard this, the disciples were astonished. They asked Jesus, "Then who can be saved?"

"For God, all things are possible," Jesus told them. ●

Read also: Mark 10:17-30

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

BIBLE QUIZ

NUMBER 94

1 In Genesis ch.11, when Abraham and his family left Ur, what city did they travel to?

2 In Acts, ch.14, were Paul and Barnabas in Lystra, Iconium or Antioch when they were called Hermes and Zeus?

3 In Numbers ch.13, how many men did Moses send out to explore the land of Canaan?

4 In 2 Chronicles ch.36, which king of Persia allowed God's people to leave Babylon and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem?

5 In Mark ch.11, what town was Jesus leaving when he saw the fruitless fig tree?

6 In Mark ch.16, name the three women who brought oils to anoint the body of Jesus?

Name:

Address:



£15 vouchers for the first three correct entries received!

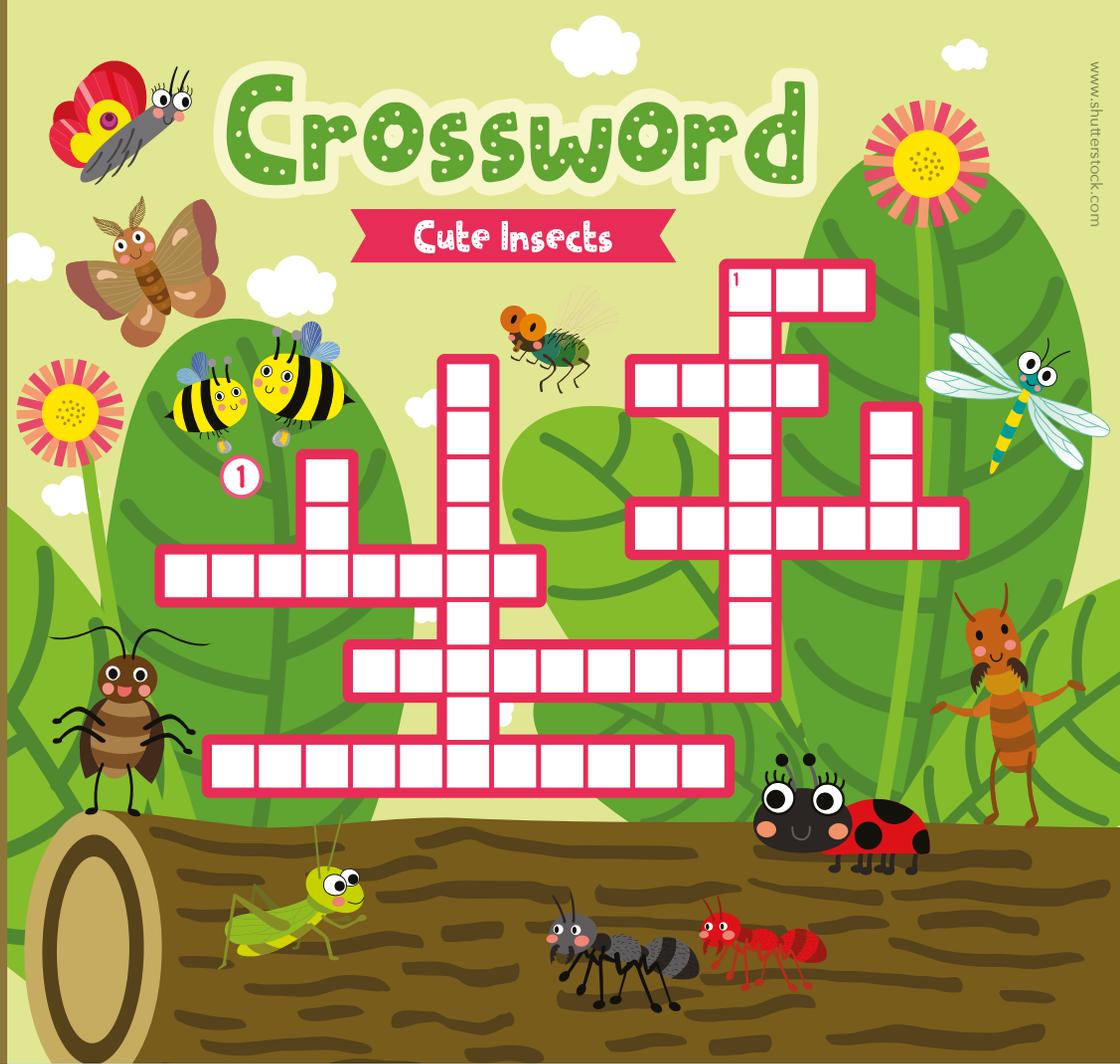
Consult your Bible, answer the questions above and send your entry to: Bible Quiz N° 94, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 29th October 2021.

Bible Quiz N° 92 Winners: Effie-Jane Wallis, Kippax, Leeds • Margaret Eldridge, Ashford, Kent • Josephine Wilkinson, Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

WORD SEARCH

Try and match the insects in this crosswords puzzle:

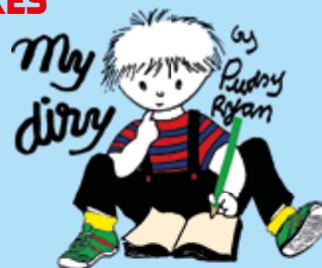
- BEE
- COCKROACH
- MOTH
- ANT
- BUTTERFLY
- TERMITE
- LADYBIRD
- FLY
- DRAGONFLY
- GRASSHOPPER



PUDSY'S DIRTY - FIND THE 10 SPELLING MISTAKES

Everybody is telling us isn't it happy for ye going back to school cept what's so great bout havin to do essays and spelling tests and Ms Flinn saying be on your best behaviour. And everybody will be saying they had a great time even if they could go nowhere becos of the virus thing. Shud I be telling them about me and Bump going on the survival course with cuzzin Colm? He said youll hafta know what to do if you ever get lost. And he said see all the lovely snails and frogs and slippery things you can eat so you won't starve. Imagine that

for your dinner Yuck! If Granny hadnt snuck sandwiches into our bags we'd have died of hunger. Our pal Frederico from that foreign place with coconuts and monkeys was telling us about all the snakes you can eat but you have to be quick in case the big ones gobble you first. And cousin Colm was saying to us if skool might close again we could do part two of the survival course - its a bit harder and no sneaking sandwiches and things next time. And I thought he didn't know! Mebbe school mightn't be too bad after all.



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 29th October 2021.



1. Why do maths books always look so sad?
2. What dinosaur had the best vocabulary?
3. Why did the teacher wear sunglasses to school?
4. Why do magicians always do so well at school?
5. Why can't pirates learn the alphabet?
6. Why do calculators make great friends?

1. They are full of problems.
2. The thesaurus.
3. Because her students were so bright.
4. They can handle trick questions.
5. Because they keep getting lost at C.
6. You can always count on them!

COMPETITION WINNERS

MAY / JUNE 2021

<p>Philip Lee Leamington Spa</p> <p>Sienna Ford Crowborough, East Sussex</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>Colpaint - Aged 7 and Under</p>	<p>Cara Ferrier Newton Mearns</p> <p>Victoria Kalenga London</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>Colpaint - Aged 8 and Over</p>	<p>Anthony Tye Harborne, Birmingham</p> <p>1</p> <p>Pudsy's Dirty</p>
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Ruby Red Squirrels

By Elizabeth McArdle



If you are walking among trees and spot a leaping, hopping, scampering little animal with a bushy red tail, chances are it will be a red squirrel. This adorable little mammal can leap at high speeds from tree to tree and can even hang upside down. Red squirrels are very dextrous and are both right-handed and left-handed. Favourite foods include pine seeds, acorns, beech nuts, fruits, fungi and a host of other human foods such as peanut butter, carrots, pumpkins and even Oreo cookies.

Their nests, referred to as dreys, are made from moss, twigs, grasses and other materials. In one case, shredded plastic and bailing twine were included and, in another instance, foam, which the squirrel had stolen from a nearby bicycle seat. Imagine the shock you would get if, unknowingly, you hopped up on your bicycle only to find that a squirrel had used the seat's contents to build its drey.

Baby squirrels, called kittens, are born blind and deaf and are completely reliant on mother squirrel to care

for their every need. After about seven weeks the young begin to venture away from the nest and by nine to twelve weeks, they are fully independent. We humans are still newborn babies at twelve weeks.

Since red squirrels do not hibernate, they gather and store food over the summer months. These experts in forward thinking ensure a good supply of food for the winter months. They are 'scatter hoarders' which means their acorns and other foodstuffs are buried in different locations. The surplus acorns and seeds which are not eaten often germinate in spring and red squirrels play a very important role in woodland regeneration.

Nature is full of joy and delight. To fully participate, outside is the place to be. Evidence of God is everywhere and you might just be lucky enough to spot a Ruby Red Squirrel. ●

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WIN A VOUCHER WORTH £15/£10!

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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 29th October 2021.

Name:

Age:

Address:

FOUR PRIZES TO BE WON!

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.

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To place your order contact the Mission Office at: Tel: **01564 772 096** or email: 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 ten, with envelopes. They cost £10 per pack plus postage, incl VAT. Cheques payable to Columban Missionaries.

“No one is too small to make a difference, everyone can do something. If everyone does something, then huge differences can happen.”

Climate activist
Greta Thunberg
to Channel
4 News.

SCHOOLS MEDIA COMPETITION

We are looking for students (Year 9 to Year 13) to submit an original piece of writing or an original image on the theme:

ANYONE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

21ST CENTURY CHANGEMAKERS

Who in the world today is doing something about inequality, injustice, exclusion and environmental degradation? What can they teach us? How can we draw on our own faith and personal experience to be changemakers?

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES:
FRIDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2022**

For more information on entry guidelines see:
www.columbancompetition.com
or email hello@columbancompetition.com



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