

# far east



MAGAZINE OF THE COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES



## **BOMBED BUT NEVER BROKEN**

A parish with a remarkable tale to tell

## **CHRISTMAS VISITORS**

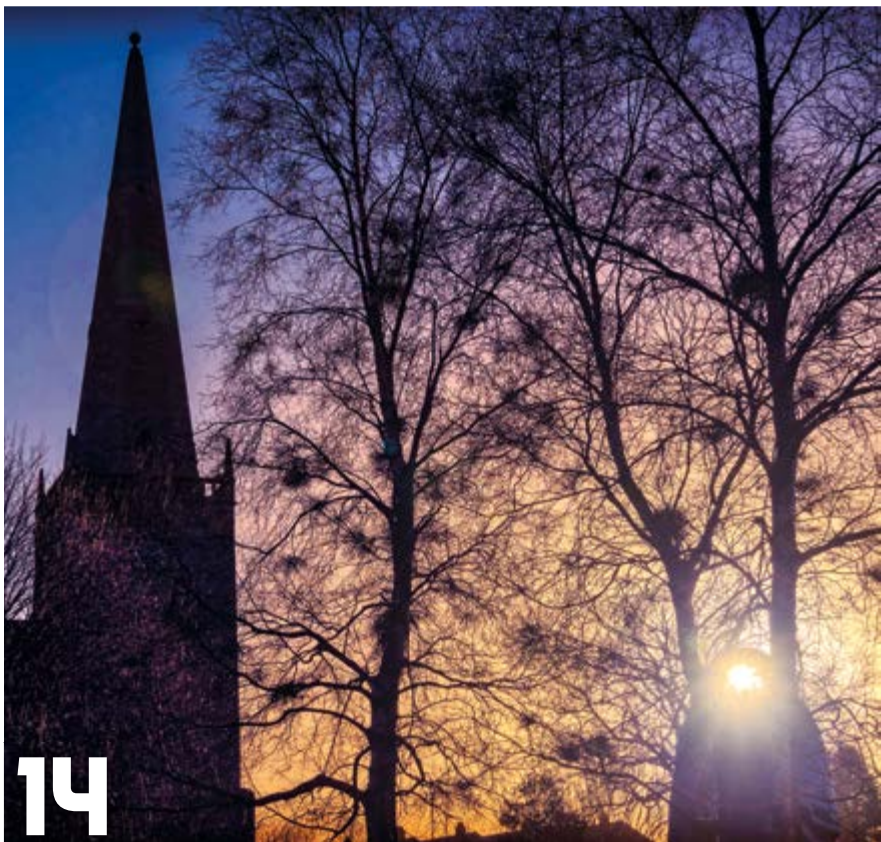
Who is Being Excluded?

## **A LEGACY WORTH REVISITING**

Fr Hugh MacMahon's new book

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# THE SHIMMERING PROMISE OF BETHLEHEM



## 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

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### Front Cover

Praying and protecting candlelight.  
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In 2013, after twelve years in administrative assignments with the Columbans, I was given the chance to take a sabbatical. I seized the opportunity and chose to do a six-week course at the Tantur Institute south of Jerusalem.

Near Tantur there was a main bus route and along that road were the ruins of an ancient church. One day I stopped to look closely at the ruin that I had spotted from the bus window. I was curious about it because it was the same shape (octagonal) as the last church where I had been pastor, Sts Simon and Jude in Fujisawa, Japan.

I discovered that the site held the remains of a church built in the byzantine period of history (about 1,500 years ago). Its location was also very interesting. If you were travelling from Nazareth, via Jerusalem to Bethlehem as Mary and Joseph did, this would be the spot where you would walk uphill and catch your first glimpse of Bethlehem.

The church was built there on the theory that it would have been a logical place for weary travellers to stop and take a little rest, now that their goal was in sight. Maybe as contemporary Christians, that is where we are in December too. It is a time where we catch a glimpse of Bethlehem and its promise shimmering in the distance.

Like Mary and Joseph, we too are indeed on a journey, a pilgrimage towards heaven. In another sense we are just a short distance from Bethlehem, a short way from Christmas. We can catch a glimpse of it today if we pause and look and drink in the sight, since it is so near.

Our glimpse must include Mary. Mary, as we know, was a young woman to whom an angel appeared to reveal to her God's plan

for her life, chosen by God to be part of the great miracle of God's entering into human history, taking on human flesh. The Son of God would be born to her even though she had never known a man. Thankfully, Mary said 'Yes' to God's plan.

Advent is a time for anticipation, but also a time to remember some important basic truths. Each time the Gospel is preached to us, we are reminded that God has a plan for our lives. He plans for us to know Him. He plans for us to serve Him by serving others, and He plans to forgive our sins.

But God does not force Himself on us. Just as He waited for Mary's yes, God's plan for each of us involves an invitation and our response. Will we accept God's forgiveness? Will we love and follow Jesus?

For many people, Christmas is a joy-filled time with family and friends, but for others (perhaps someone reading this) it can be a difficult time due to illness, or the recent death of a loved one. Some carry with them high expectations of "the perfect Christmas" only to be disappointed when things don't work out as they had hoped and planned.

The problems of this life can sometimes be overwhelming. Yet isn't this the reason Jesus came? At Christmas we celebrate that the sinless Lamb of God came to this earth to offer His life in our place, and for our sinfulness. Pause, sit, take a breath, look up... Bethlehem is near. And may this be a peace-filled Christmas for you. ●

**Fr John Burger**

Originally from the Philadelphia area, Fr John Burger was ordained in 1973 and spent many years on mission in Japan and Hong Kong. He was regional director in the US until 2021.

01. Bethlehem at night. Image: Shutterstock.

*Wishing all our subscribers, readers and supporters  
a very happy and peaceful Christmas and every blessing for 2022!*



# “BOMBED BUT NEVER BROKEN”

Deep in the industrial heartland of northern England, Fr John Boles encountered a parish with a remarkable tale to tell.

“E very picture tells a story,” the expression goes. However, it could just as well read, “Every parish tells a story.” That is certainly the case with Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Birkenhead, a town set on the opposite side of the River Mersey to its more famous neighbour, Liverpool.

Visiting the parish as part of the fundraising and mission promotion programme for the Columban Fathers, I was captivated by the story of the place, recounted in detail by secretary Carol Covers and former parish priest, Fr Phil McGovern.

Originally a sleepy riverside harbourage, Birkenhead exploded into prominence in the nineteenth century with the Industrial Revolution. It quickly developed into a major port and one of the world's biggest shipbuilding centres. Many of the workers were Irish Catholics, their homeland a short hop across the Irish Sea.

The Irish population here swelled as a result of the Great Irish Famine of 1845-48, and in 1854 the parish of Our Lady was founded to serve them. The church dates from that time and is an exuberant celebration of the ‘neo-Gothic revival’. It was designed by Edward Pugin of the famous Pugin church-building dynasty, who pioneered that style.

The church was surrounded by endless rows of terraced housing, hemmed in between Camell Laird’s naval dockyard and Birkenhead Park. The park was laid out by Joseph Paxton in 1847 and is reputedly the first municipal park in the world - certainly in Britain. Among its admirers was eminent American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who used it as an inspiration for his Central Park in New York.

However, dark days lay ahead. The area bore the brunt of the Great Depression and was the scene of the notorious three-day “unemployed men’s riot” in 1932. Worse was to follow. In 1941 Birkenhead became a target of the Luftwaffe’s blitz campaign. On 12<sup>th</sup> March 1941 the parish took a direct hit. The church was badly damaged and the presbytery was completely destroyed, leaving the parish priest and housekeeper dead under the rubble.

Rising from the ashes of war, the parish complex re-opened in a spectacular show of devotion ten years later, with a torchlight procession of 30,000 of the faithful parading through the streets amidst an estimated 135,000 onlookers.



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Recent history has brought more changes. The size of the congregation has fallen markedly. Many people moved away from the area in the 1970s as swathes of old housing was demolished and unemployment reared its head once more, the result of declining activities in the port and shipyards.

However, now merged with two nearby parishes, things are looking up again. The parish community might be smaller than hitherto, but in spite of that - or maybe because of that - it is ever more intimate and vibrant, and remains a great friend of the Columbans. Carol and Fr Phil assured me that Our Lady's has endured worse, and always bounces back. "Bombed, not broken," indeed. ●

Fr John Boles is a Columban missionary from England who worked in Peru from 1994 until earlier this year. He is the newly appointed Director of the Region of Britain.

01. Columban missionary Fr John Boles and former parish priest Fr Phil McGovern outside the neo gothic Pugin facade of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Birkenhead.
02. Firemen fighting a blaze on a bombed street in London after a Luftwaffe night raid in 1941 during the blitz. Image: Shutterstock
03. Fr John Boles meeting parishioners before Mass.

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# ARE YOU BEING CALLED TO COLUMBAN MISSION?

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# A LEGACY WORTH REVISITING

Fr Hugh MacMahon explains how the Elders of the Desert and the Skelligs inspired and motivated him to write his new book.

**W**hat prompted me to write *Voices from the Desert: The Lost Legacy of Skelligs* was the need to find answers to questions that had long bothered me. It began with a visit to Skelligs some years ago. It was a beautiful, clear summer's day, bringing to life the sparkling seascape around the island rock. Combined with the audacity of the simple cells clinging to its summit, the impression was lasting.

But it also posed a question: why did they do it? Why would anyone want to go there, living between sea and sky, cutting themselves off completely from people and the world? Obviously they had a religious purpose but did this demand a life of solitary prayer rather than finding and serving God in others? It would be easy to dismiss these trailblazers as fanatics but it was people like them who successfully spread Christianity across Ireland through their monasteries and schools.

They set the pattern for what was to be a distinctively Irish Church. Perhaps their

uncomplicated vision of what it means to be a Christian was closer to the original spirit of the gospels and has something to tell us today? This question had implications not only for my own idea of what it means to be a Christian but as a missionary trying to present the basic Christian message to people encountering it for the first time.

The monks of Skelligs had a clear image of Christianity that might appeal directly to people unfamiliar with complicated Western thinking. Its directness might even restore interest among those disassociating themselves from the modern Church.

I also belong to a Missionary Society whose patron is St Columban - an Irish monk-missionary who brought the Irish monastic form of Christianity to the devastated regions of Europe in the 'Dark Ages'. What inspired him, what message did he bring? Even for us Columbans he seemed a distant and ambiguous figure.

The Skellig monks could provide an answer to many of these questions but how much do we actually know about them? The



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scarcity of information from that period is due to the chaos caused by the migrating of non-literate tribes into Europe. Records either ceased or were destroyed. An information vacuum had been created.

Then one day I came across the account of a young monk named John Cassian who journeyed across the Egyptian deserts in 384AD to meet famous 'Desert Fathers', men who had devoted their lives to understanding and practicing the Christian message. As I read Cassian's discussions with them I could see their value for today.

The topics they discussed were of universal human concern. Why is there evil in the world? Is it possible to overcome human weakness in our effort to be better? What are the goals of a Christian and what steps must be taken to achieve them?

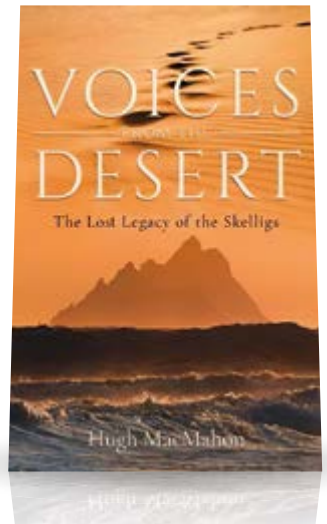
From the beginning the Desert Fathers were the inspiration and spiritual guides for the early Irish Church. Images of their two pioneers, Anthony the Great and Paul of Thebes, are to be found on early High Crosses in Moone, Monasterboice and

elsewhere. Their influence is recalled in every parish in Ireland, in place names beginning with 'Kil', meaning 'cell' (as in monastic), and 'disert' meaning 'desert' (as in Egyptian).

Their legacy is full of humanity and common sense, presenting an approach that appears fresh and energising to us today. After listening to them I began to view the world around me in a different manner and understand the questions that had troubled me.

I decided to jot down a shortened version of each of the twenty-four interviews, focusing on the main topics and preserving the original wording and thinking as much as possible. With an introduction, a short commentary on each chapter and a conclusion, it became a book - ***Voices from the Desert: The Lost Legacy of Skelligs***.

I have written other books and admit I never got around to rereading them but this is one I will be revisiting because the voices in it are not mine but those of the Elders of the Desert and the Skelligs. ●



***Voices from the Desert: The Lost Legacy of Skelligs*** by Fr Hugh Mac Mahon is published by **Columba Books**. It can be ordered here: [www.columbabooks.com/product/voices-from-the-desert](http://www.columbabooks.com/product/voices-from-the-desert)

Fr Hugh MacMahon is from Dublin. He was ordained in 1962 and spent fifty years on mission in Korea and China. He returned to Ireland in 2012 and was Executive Secretary of the Irish Missionary Union until 2016. He previously published, 'The Scrutable Oriental' and 'Guest from the West.'

01. View from Skellig Michael to Little Skellig and Valentia Island, Ireland. Image: Shutterstock.
02. Fr Hugh MacMahon
03. Cover of ***Voices from the Desert: The Lost Legacy of Skelligs***

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On the feast of St Clare, the community in Dalgan gathered to thank Columban co-worker Claire Carey for her many years of dedicated service to Columban Mission and to wish her every blessing and good health in her retirement.

## IN PRAISE OF COLUMBAN CO-WORKERS

**“W**e got the **Far East** magazine when I was younger. My family had strong links to the Columbans. My father had been a seminarian with the Columbans, though there wasn't much said about it. And we had a family

friend, Fr Sean Conneely, who spent most of his mission in Korea. So I knew who the Columbans were and what they did.”

After teaching for a number of years, Claire took a career break and did a lot of travelling. “The travelling and the journey opened my eyes to the broader Catholic Church. To go to Mass and see the fervent faith of the people in Malaysia or Thailand was most inspiring. By the time I had finished my travels, I was asking myself if I could volunteer overseas in some way. When I came home, there was a stack of **Far East** magazines that had been sent to the house and in one of them, I found an ad for the Columban Lay Mission programme.”

The programme offered six months training in Dalgan after

which participants could be sent overseas for three years. “In September 1993 I applied and joined a group of seven. Five of us went overseas, three women and two men. I was the eldest, in my mid-30s and the youngest was 23. We formed very close friendships. I think it was the key to the programme. It gave us the resources to get used to relying on other people, rather than on ourselves. We were the first lay missionaries to go to Korea.”

From 1994-1997, Claire worked as a Columban Lay Missionary in Korea on Migrant Outreach work. “When we landed in Seoul we were blown away. Korea was a fabulously developed country in terms of planning, technology and infrastructure - they had huge industrial complexes and they needed workers. There was a lot of illegal workers from all over Asia working in factories. I worked with a group who helped migrant workers.”

Returning to Ireland in 1997, Claire returned to teaching for the next four years. Then in 2001, the Columban regional director in Ireland at the time, Fr Neil Magill, asked her to take on the role of Columban Lay Missionary Co-ordinator. “There was a big crowd of lay missionaries in Ireland at that time. There were Fijians, two teams of Filipinas, then the Koreans arrived, and Chileans also came to Ireland during those four years. It was very fulfilling work, I really enjoyed that time.”

Claire continued in that role of Columban Lay Missionary Co-ordinator until 2005. She then embarked on an MA in Pastoral Theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.





"One of the things that bothered me was that I didn't have a qualification in theology. So, I re-mortgaged my house and headed for studies in America. It was probably the highlight of my career. I spent a third year doing a training programme in spiritual direction."

"After Chicago, I came back to Ireland in 2008 and Fr Noel Daly approached me about developing the Columban supporters' network." From 2008 up to this year, Claire took on many roles within the Region: Companions in Mission, Mission Promotion and Mission Appeals, which involved visiting parishes and schools around the country. Claire also joined the Mission Education team with Ger Clarke, Fr Pat Raleigh and Michael O'Sullivan.

In 2011, Claire became part of a new venture at the Columban Centre in Dublin, where she worked with Michael O'Sullivan, Sr Monica Kelly, Sr Lucia So, and Angie Escarsa. The main focus of the work at the Centre is pastoral outreach to migrants and interfaith


work. "Welcoming the stranger and being open to people of different cultures was something we badly needed in Ireland at that time and still do. Fr Bobby Gilmore was one of the lead people who stressed at that time the need to identify ourselves as available to migrants. That's how another Columban project, the Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) developed. I think it is a great legacy - a great witness."

Looking back over her time working with the Columbans, Claire says, "They have been my mentors, friends, and work colleagues. In my hour of need - they were my support. I don't think my faith life would have been as rich without the engagement I had with the Columbans. They gave me a way of expressing my faith and my call to mission. They gave the laity and, especially women, an opportunity to be involved in their work. They facilitated that to happen and for that I am very grateful." ●

01. Claire Carey in Dalgan on the day of her retirement with (from right) Columban co-workers, Ger Clarke and Michael O'Sullivan, as well as Fr Pat Raleigh.
02. Marking Care for Creation at Cabra West parish in Dublin, Claire Carey, Columban Fr Liam O'Callaghan and the parish team.
03. The five lay missionaries who were sent from Dalgan to Korea in 1994: (left to right) Helen Farrell, Michael Kenny, Chrissie Fitzpatrick, Padraig Hurley and Claire Carey.
04. Claire Carey with former lay missionaries Save Momo and Eden de la Cruz, as well as lay missionary Angie Escarsa on the Knock to Croagh Patrick walk.

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## FAREWELL TO GER CLARKE

Ger Clarke, one of the best-known faces around Dalgan, retired in June 2021. Through his work with Columban Mission Outreach he worked with thousands of school students over his 26 years.

Originally from Mayo but living in Meath since 1980, Ger Clarke speaks warmly of the Columbans. "This is a group of people, both men and women, who are very intelligent without lording it over you. You can be relaxed in their company. That's due to a confidence that they have in the journey they are on in their own lives. They welcome you to join them on the journey but they are never critical of your choices. That openness and generosity of spirit I'll bring with me. The vast majority of those I came to

know were very happy people."

"My experience was with a lot of the older guys who were retired. They would have been going through a period of reflection on their lives in retirement. That's the way I would like to be in my retirement - still open to learning new stuff but happy that good things had been achieved. And to be welcoming and generous. Those are the things that stand out in my mind."

While he pays tribute to many Columbans, there are a few that Ger particularly remembers. These include Bishop John Howe, who served in Burma. "There was just something about him. When you were in his company you knew you were talking to a great person."

Another Columban was Fr Bill Halliden who used to teach in Dalgan and would bring students to Luxeuil where they would work on repairing

the monastery in Annegray in the 1950s and 60s. "He spoke French fluently and because I spoke French, we used to converse together in French and he enjoyed that because it brought back good memories to him. He was such a gentleman."

Fr Sean Holloway was "another great man" who never really asked permission to do anything. "He just went ahead and did it and then told people it was done. He always had a smile. There wasn't a critical bone in his body." He adds, "Fr Pat Fahey - you miss people like that."

His outreach to schools on behalf of the Columbans will be hard to replace. "I have encountered anything up to 40,000 students over the last 25 years, and I have had the unique experience of meeting every Fifth Year class in one particular convent in Navan over the last 20 years as part of their introduction to Columban spirituality." ●

# BEHIND THE BARS OF BANGKOK

Columban missionary Fr Alo Connaughton speaks to Fr Miguel Garaibazal, a colleague at Saengtham College in Bangkok, about his role with a team that visits nine prisons in Thailand.

**Q. Prison visitation is one of your own many pastoral roles. Could you summarise what you actually do?**

We have an office in Bangkok which coordinates visits to about 1,200 prisoners. We used to attend more but we discovered that the cleverest prisoners were able to get help from various groups while others could not get any help. Prisoners are now 'distributed' among visiting groups. All those we visit are foreigners or Hill Tribe people; those who have little or no support. At present, with our team of helpers, we visit nine prisons.

**Q. About how many prisoners are there in Thailand?**

About 375,000. A serious problem is that there is space to house only about 250,000 prisoners. In most other countries women prisoners average about 7% of the total; in Thailand there are 44,000, about twice the average.

**Q. Do you, as a Spaniard, focus on the Spanish speakers?**

There are people from 35 countries in prisons in Thailand. The team I work

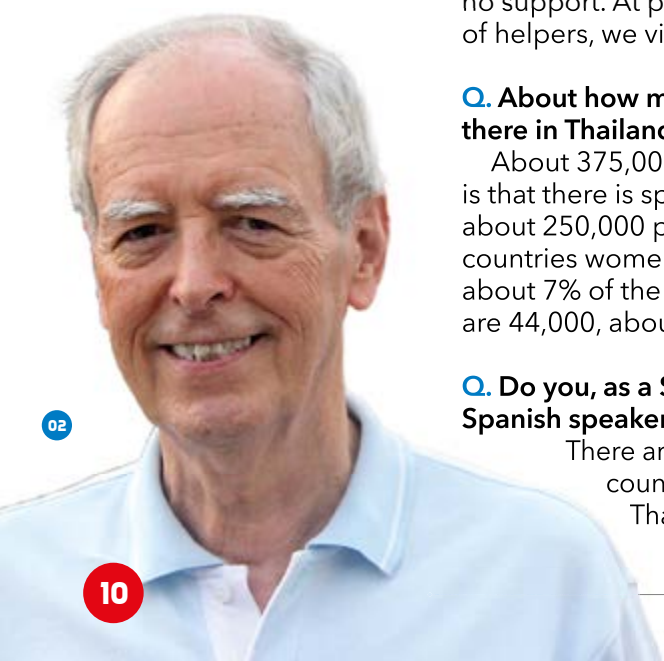
with focuses on the Latinos. Usually, when they arrive, prisoners are in shock. They don't know the culture or the language; they don't even speak English. Frequently they don't know exactly what the charges against them are. They may have been used by drug gangs. Often their embassies don't help.

**Q. Some time ago an article in the Bangkok Post quoted an anonymous prison official who said he believed that many prisoners were not guilty of the crimes they were imprisoned for?**

I can't comment on that. I did meet a prisoner some time ago who insisted that the small amount of drugs found on him were planted and he would have been freed if he gave a bribe of about a thousand euro. He refused. He said he would never confess in order to be released because he was innocent.

**Q. Few people who read this will ever have been inside a prison. What do prisoners say is the hardest thing for them in their daily lives?**

First the overcrowding, no space. At present some of them are given camping mats, the rest sleep on the floor with a blanket. There are prisons where some prisoners are chained to a bar at night. They can't go to the toilet and so must use bottles. Many places are so crowded that if they turn 'in bed' they disturb those beside them. This of course causes friction. Add to this the fact that for



many months of the year the temperature until midnight can be 28°C. Boredom of course is another problem. Women can often get something to do. There are not many prison jobs for men. For foreigners, the spicy Thai foods are also a problem.

**Q. I read a story by a released prisoner on his return home. He said he appreciated the visits of a priest and a sister 'the only ones who didn't push religion' at him. What is your policy in this respect?**

Our basic goal is to convey to the prisoners the message that they are not alone, that someone cares. We ask, 'How can we help.' Most of the talk is about their family at home and their personal problems. We help find money for them, get medicines, dental treatment or glasses for example. If a Catholic wishes to talk about a religious subject or wants a book, we are happy to do that. Some Protestant visitors bring Bibles. Prisoners get bonus points if they attend courses on any religion.

**Q. Prisoners are, and will be, locked up. What can you offer them?**

One day a prisoner told me 'I was going to kill myself this morning but then I heard that you were coming.' Not an idle threat. There is one suicide and three deaths every day in Thai prisons. Our listening is therapeutic for them. They trust us and we avoid judgments.

**Q. No doubt some of the prisoners have done bad things, injured other people. Did you at the beginning, or do you now find it difficult to leave judgment aside?**

The prisoners are very open with us. Some of them tell us all they have done, which is more than the judge knows. I try to understand their mentality. I feel compassion for them. Some of them do not experience

guilty feelings. I think it is something pathological. I do not judge them.

**Q. Your post box in our college often has a lot of letters from prisoners!**

That's for a good reason and here modern technology is a blessing. They post their letters to us, as many pages as they like, for about fifteen cents. International mail would cost them too much. We scan the letters and email them to their families. The families email letters and pictures back to us. We can post the reply here in Thailand by local post. We cannot hand letters over on prison visits. All letters have to be censored.

**Q. Are there 'battery-charging' experiences?**

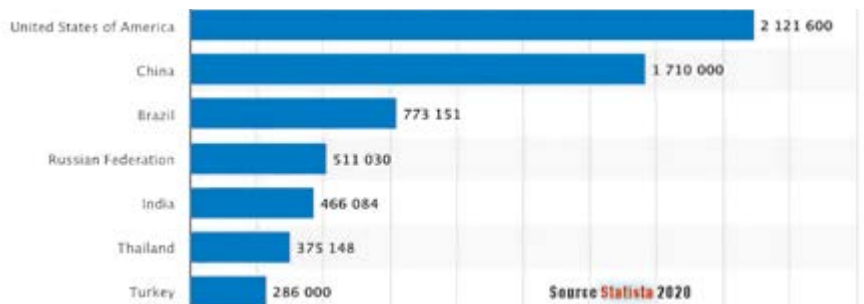
Some time ago a man from Bolivia organised a Christian group in the prison. It had a mix of religions and he was delighted when I endorsed the constitutions of this 'Church'. When Pope Francis visited Thailand in 2019, they had three days of fasting and prayer that the visit would be a success. They wrote many letters to Pope Francis and, since I was a translator for the papal visit, I was able to tell the Pope, whose very last words at the Mass in Bangkok Cathedral were, "I thank the prisoners who have prayed for me." ●




03

Fr Alo Connaughton is from Ballinacree, Co Meath. A former editor of the Far East magazine, he worked as a missionary in Chile from 1974 until 1993 and in Myanmar from 2004 until 2007. He is now based in Thailand where he teaches at Saengtham College, Bangkok.

01. Chiang Mai Central Prison, Thailand. Image: Shutterstock.
02. Spanish Jesuit Fr Miguel Garaibazal, who works at Saengtham College in Bangkok, and is part of a team that visits nine prisons in Thailand.
03. The mail service which Fr Miguel operates on behalf of prisoners in Thailand.
04. Countries with the highest prison populations.



04




# MAKING YOUR WILL?

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Please remember the needs of Columban missionaries and their missions.

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# CHRISTMAS VISITORS

Fr Bobby Gilmore recalls an unexpected arrival on Christmas day and challenges us to ask who is being excluded this Christmas?

Christmas in the Philippines is a busy time. It begins with nine days of preparation leading up to the celebration of the birth of Christ on Christmas night. Each Christmas morning people gather for a mass at cockcrow, the *Misa de Gallo*. As dawn is breaking people appear out of the darkness heading to the church and at first light, at about four-thirty, mass begins. Churches usually cannot contain the crowds attending on these days leading up to Christmas. On Christmas night the church and surroundings overflow with people in a festive mood. Then again on Christmas morning the church and plaza are overflowing with people.

This is a day when people bring their babies for baptism. They celebrate the baptism of the child in association with the birth of Jesus. Usually, we priests are busy up until midday. Then having completed all the various tasks we sit down for the Christmas meal. This usually comprises chicken or pork or fish, with rice and a variety of vegetables. Filipinos have a great capacity to make a tasty

meal out of very little. The consumerism of the West is only apparent in affluent urban areas and much of the affluence is imported.

One Christmas Day when all had gone home, or so we thought, we sat down for the Christmas dinner. Just as we were about to begin, an extended family, men, women, children and a dog made their way into the ground floor of the rectory and, seeing the stairs to where we lived, proceeded to climb up and enter the dining area of the rectory. Their clothes and general physical demeanour indicated abject hunger and poverty. Their clothes hung off their bones. They were bare-footed and gaunt. They had hungry stares.

We got them seated, got extra plates and shared the meal with them. As we conversed with them we discovered the area in the hills where they lived. They were tenants on land that belonged to wealthy people living down the street from the rectory. We knew these landowners. Their house was not ostentatious nor was there any evidence



**“Just as we are never sure that we love God unless we love our fellow men and women, so too are we never sure that we have love at all unless our love produces works of justice.”**

Pedro Arrupe SJ



of opulent lifestyles. Yes, they were comfortable, had Catholic high school and university education. One would have gleaned from conversations with them that they were intelligent people and from observation would have lived pious lives. Yet, these poor, emaciated people were their tenants who worked and maintained their properties. I have no doubt that as landlords they visited their property regularly and had to be aware of the living conditions of their people. As landlords they would have taken their share of the fruits of the property in the form of coffee, coconuts, bananas spices and vegetables. But, how could they have been unaware of the dismal condition of their tenants?

Sadly, one of the characteristics all too often seen in graduates of Catholic education is the absence of a social conscience and social awareness that would lead to just relationships between employer and employee. This characteristic is present in spite of the fact that the social teaching of the Catholic Church has been in the public arena through specific encyclicals for more than a century.

One may ask the question, why is this? All too frequently the European Christian churches and by extension their global affiliates have been and indeed still

are associated with wealth, power and aristocracy. History is a witness to the European Church's role in colonisation and its hesitation to question power and its abuse. This was particularly evident in Western-supported dictatorships during the last century. Of course on a regular basis there are teachings and statements about unjust structures but these statements supported by biblical teaching have largely been ignored and have not permeated the commercial high streets of corporate finance, the local church or the values of those who manage the financial systems. Note the fines imposed on the global financial institutions in the recent past. I am sure that many of the people managing these systems are well-educated pious people.

Nevertheless, in the face of modern injustice, Church leadership seems to be more comfortable promoting a devotional brand of Christianity much of which has no basis in scripture. It concentrates on rescuing the victim rather than asking the question, why are there victims? Surely, if one is rescuing people on a beach one has to ask, why are they coming ashore and who or what is pushing them to leave?


Who are being excluded this Christmas? ●

Fr Bobby Gilmore writes and campaigns on migrant issues. He was ordained in 1963 and worked in the Philippines from 1964-1978. From 1978 to 1992 he was Director of the Irish Emigrant Chaplaincy in Britain. He was on mission in Jamaica between 1992 -1999. On returning to Ireland, he founded the Migrants Rights Centre Ireland.

01. A Palestinian youth, dressed as Santa Claus, in the Khan Yunis refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. Image: Abed Rahim Khatib/Shutterstock.
02. An old man begs on Avenue des Champs Elysees in Paris, France. Image: Shutterstock

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# A CHRISTMAS TALE



02

Jacques Prudhon, President of the Association of Les Amis de St Colomban, based in the French city of Luxeuil les Bains, where St Columban founded a monastery in 590AD, retells a local Christmas tale about the Christmas tree and St Columban.



03

For further information on St Columban and the Columban Way visit Turas Columbanus on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/turascolombanus](http://www.facebook.com/turascolombanus)

01. Winter Solstice sun beaming through the Bangor Bell at Bangor Abbey, Co Down. From here, St Columban set out on a 1400-mile journey across western Europe in 585AD. Image: By NorthLight PhotoArt/Shutterstock

02. Christmas tree in the cloister in Luxeuil which is lit up in the Irish colours. Image: Jacques Prudhon/Les Amis de St Colomban.

03. Logo of Association Internationale des Amis de St Colomban.

In the Vosges Valley a beautiful story is told on Christmas Eve. Irish monk, St Columban, during his first Christmas with his brothers in his monastery of Annegray, noticed that the birth of the baby Jesus went unnoticed by the local population.

He decided to climb the hill of the Church of St Martin where a majestic fir tree spread its branches and imposed its presence and strength. The druids saw in it a sacred tree.

St Columban decided to light torches and lanterns to hang on the branches of the tree. The local people, surprised by this light, interpreted it as a call to gather under the tree where St Columban told them about the Nativity, the birth of the baby Jesus.

Today on St Martin's Mountain, a fir tree presides alone near the chapel on the hill.

In France, the ruins of St Columban's first monastery at Annegray are legally protected through the efforts of the Association Internationale des Amis de St Colomban, which purchased the site in 1959. The Association also owns and protects the site containing the cave which acted as Columban's cell, and the holy well, which he created nearby.

Happy Christmas to all under the protection of St Columban and all the saints of the monastery of Luxeuil! ●

# GRATITUDE IS THE MEMORY OF THE HEART

Fr Frank O'Kelly recalls an elderly apostolic worker who travelled a distance by bus to drop off a weighty donation of coins.

It was a bleak Sunday afternoon. I was out walking in front of the college in Dalgan Park. Suddenly I saw a woman wheeling a small suitcase down the avenue heading for the front door. When she reached the college, I noticed that she was unsure what to do. So, I went over to her and asked if I could help. She told me she was looking for Fr Peter O'Neill to give him some coins that were in the suitcase. I asked the lady where she had come from. "Dublin," she replied.

I said to her to follow myself and opened the front door. The receptionist, Claire, was in the office and so I explained to her, "This lady is looking for Fr Peter as she wishes to give him some money for the Society."

While Claire was busy contacting Fr Peter, I suggested to the lady that we would bring the suitcase into the office and deposit the money on the table, and afterwards have a cup of tea. She agreed. When I opened the suitcase, I saw inside three large bags filled with coins. I struggled to place them on the table. They were very heavy.

In the dining room, we sat down and had tea together. She told me that the coins did not belong to her but to a friend

whose brother was a priest and he had left the coins to her when he died. She wished to donate them to the Columban Fathers and had asked my visitor to bring them to Dalgan as she herself was unable to travel.

I asked the lady how she knew the donor and she explained that they were Apostolic Workers and there were four other women in the group. Then she told me her life's story. It was one of hardship and struggle. I sat there mesmerised as she gave me an insight into her life's journey.

After bringing her on a tour of Dalgan, we returned to reception, and she explained that she had to catch a bus back to Dublin. Claire and I thanked her for travelling all the way to bring a donation on a cold miserable Sunday afternoon.


It was late now and dark clouds had begun to roll in as I walked her to the bus stop. I offered to stay with her until the bus arrived, but she insisted that I return to Dalgan as it was beginning to rain. "Don't worry Father," she said. "I will say my Rosary while waiting for the bus." I crossed the road and at the entrance to Dalgan, turned and waved, and she waved back.

As I made my way back to the front door, I pondered what had just happened. An 84-year-old woman, travelling by herself from Dublin, had brought a very heavy suitcase weighed down by coins to donate to the Columban Fathers. The lesson I learned that day was this: the manner in which it is given is worth more than the gift. ●

Fr Frank O'Kelly was ordained a Columban in 1960. He is now retired in Ireland.

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*Thank you Lord*  
for the gift of Your love.  
May i be a shining example of  
that love to others.  
*Amen.*

# A FOREVER MISSIONARY

“Two roads diverged in a wood and I took the one less travelled and that has made all the difference.”

Robert Frost

from a young age. She was born in Cahirlistrane in Co Galway in 1945. She took part fully in life as it was at that time, but even at this stage she was interested in the foreign missions.

As a very young girl she took out her bicycle in all weathers and cycled up and down the rural parish roads within a radius of ten miles. She knocked on every door and shyly asked for money for the foreign missions. If she got no answer, she knocked again on her way home. She didn't realise then that for the rest of her life the missions would be a priority for her. After finishing secondary school, she worked for a year in the post office to make sure her vocation to missionary life was genuine. She believed with conviction that missionary life with the Columban Sisters was for her.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 1964 Margaret, along with a group of other young women, arrived in Magheramore, the motherhouse of the Columban Sisters. She knew about the Sisters as her mother's first cousin, Fr John Blowick, was co-founder of the Columban Sisters and Columban Fathers. She had a great interest in his life.

From the beginning Margaret was dedicated to her vocation and never flagged in her zeal during her 57 years as a Columban Sister. She graduated from UCD with a BComm in 1973, and the following year she was assigned to Mokpo Hospital in Korea. At that time Korea was still struggling from the Korean War (1950-1953) which had devastated the country. There was a great lack of medical facilities and medical personnel. As she entered Mokpo Hospital, Margaret was very impressed by a beautiful decoration on the tiled floor. It said, 'Love, Peace, Service in the mind of Christ.' Her whole



Sr Abbie O'Sullivan recalls Sr Margaret Moran's 57 years as a Columban Sister, 50 of which were spent on mission in Korea.

Since the beginning of Christianity untold numbers of missionaries have gone to every corner of the earth with the desire and conviction of following Jesus and bringing the Gospel story to every nation. In so doing they hoped to enrich and improve the lives of the poor and oppressed.

This is the story of just one Columban Sister who left her home and family and worked for 50 years as a missionary in Korea. She was Sr Margaret Moran who seemed to have had a missionary vocation





life afterwards was based on service.

She felt at home in Korea and prepared herself thoroughly for whatever service she could render. Where she saw a need she tried to do something about it, often in sacrifice to herself. After settling into Mokpo Hospital she became the Financial Administrator. It was a hospital with 150 beds. The Columban Sisters had built a Nursing School in 1967 and they built the hospital in 1968. Margaret, who had collected money for the missions when she was young, couldn't be refused donations for the new hospital! She learned the Korean language which was invaluable later when she taught English to bishops, priests, seminarians, doctors and students.

In 1990, the Sisters gave the hospital to the Archdiocese and pursued their vocation of solidarity with the poor, and their work for justice, peace and human rights. Margaret was a very zealous missionary who loved the people to whom she ministered. Her companions throughout her life were Jesus and His Blessed Mother. In their company she had no fear.

In June 2021, Margaret became very ill. When her doctor told her that her illness was terminal, her response was, "I will accept whatever comes." She was well prepared and happy to have been called home to Heaven from her mission where

she had spent 50 years among the people who loved her and whom she loved. She died peacefully in the loving care of her Columban Sisters in Chuncheon. The Korean people came in crowds to say goodbye. They had adopted her as their own and she had lived out her Religious Motto among them - '*Seek first the Kingdom of God and all else will be added to you*'. She died very peacefully among her Columban Community as her favourite hymn 'The cry of the deer' was playing. She is buried among the Korean people. ●

**Margaret wrote a poem many years ago which she tried to live by for the remainder of her life:**

The ideals put before us by our Lord  
in the Gospels  
Saint Paul explains in his letters  
The sublime ideals may well seem  
unattainable  
We strive to live up to them  
But we often fail.  
That is not too important  
Our part is to try to keep doing  
our best.

Sr Abbie O'Sullivan is Assistant Editor of the Far East magazine and Archivist for the Columban Sisters. She is based in Magheramore, Co Wicklow.

- 01. Working as Financial Administrator at 150-bed St Columban's Hospital in Mokpo, Korea.
- 02. Sr Margaret Moran (1st left) in Magheramore on the day she was received into the Columban Sisters Congregation. Beside her is Sr Patricia Sweeney, Novice Mistress, and Sr Margaret's cousin, Fr John Blowick, Co-founder of the Columban Fathers and Sisters, and Sr Joan Gumbrielle.
- 03. Sr Margaret Moran holds up a poster encouraging parents to bring children for immunisation.
- 04. Looking after medical supplies for the hospital in Mokpo.
- 05. Teaching English to Mrs Chung.

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Columban missionary Fr Oliver McCrossan set up an organic farm to help struggling tricycle workers in the Philippines. Virgie Vidad writes about the latest developments at the farm including a new training centre.

## NEW TRAINING CENTRE AT PEDALLING ECO FARM

In 2019, the Pedalling Eco Farm was set up for tricycle drivers. The aim was to create an organic farm managed by the families of the tricycle drivers which would help support them as well as those with disabilities.

On the farm, organic vegetables such as kangkong, radish, lettuce, kale, beans, pachoi, herbs, fruit trees, ornamental, eggplant and many more are grown. A portion of the farm is utilised for aquaponics, where waste from fish is used to fertilise the vegetables.

During the pandemic, this Pedalling Eco Farm programme showed how growing vegetables, even in a small area, helped a lot to the families. It is run as a profit-sharing venture.

Recently, people have begun coming to the farm for training in organic vegetable production, organic fertiliser production and to learn how to grow vegetables using aquaponics. Seeing their needs, we tried to share our expertise to help them with income generation but also to teach people about care for the earth and protecting the environment through farming that avoids chemicals in the growing of vegetables.

On the farm, we use compact features such as raised beds, container gardening, and a vertical garden using bamboo and organic materials. We also produce organic fertilisers and concoctions using fruits, plants, seaweeds, fish amino and indigenous microorganisms (IMO).

Our previous training programmes were run using a small cottage as our

venue or sometimes under a banyan tree. Now there are more people coming who want to learn about our technology, and so we needed a larger training centre to accommodate them. With the help of Fr Oliver McCrossan and his supporters we were able to start construction on this new centre.

The training area will cater for up to 50 people, with a mini library for those undertaking the courses in farming, two dorms for male and female students, a kitchen, a dining area, a storage room for farm tools and equipment and a dedicated room for the preparation of the organic fertilizer. At the moment we need help in finishing the roof and constructing the first floor to enable us to use it.

The Pedalling to Live programme is grateful to those who have financially supported us and helped us to fund this construction. Your support has made our dream come true and helped us support many poor families to produce their own food. ●

01. Blessing the land for the new training centre.
02. Construction work underway at the new Training Centre at Pedalling Eco Farm.
03. The training centre will cater for up to 50 people when completed.

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02



03

# REST in PEACE



Fr Frank Carr

Fr Frank Carr was born in Athenry, Co Galway on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1935. He joined the Columbans in Navan in 1953. He was part of our student exchange programme and studied theology for three years in Milton MA returning to Ireland to be ordained a priest on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1959. Frank arrived in Korea in 1960 and after initial language studies he was appointed to Kwangju diocese and spent a year in the parishes of Chindo and Mokpo before going to Huksando, an island parish in the Yellow Sea. In 1967 he was appointed pastor in Yeon Dong, a new parish in Mokpo City, where he worked for four years. He availed of the renewal programme in the EAPI Manila before becoming pastor in Kwang Chun Dong and Im Dong in Kwangju City until 1976. His previous experience in the USA led to his appointment to Chicago until 1983 where he covered many miles promoting Columban Mission. He returned to Kwangju for a further three years in the parish of Kwang Chun Dong before continuing his mission in Ireland. He joined the Promotion team for a few years and also did pastoral work in the parish of Monivea, Athenry. In 1993 he accepted the role of Bursar and House Superior in Dalgan, and he became a valued member of the Regional Council for many years. Until he retired in 2014, he devoted himself generously to the service of residents, visitors and staff. Frank died suddenly in Dalgan on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Up until the end, he had insisted on keeping going and looking out for others.

Religious Life. She tried to put the Spirit of Fr John Blowick into practice. She had great regard for him and for his spirituality. He was a cousin of her mother's and the co-founder of the Columban Sisters. Margaret became very sick at the beginning of June 2021. During her last weeks many Koreans came to visit her including Bishop Simon Kim and some Korean priests whom she had taught English to. She felt blest when she saw so many Korean friends who had adopted her as their own. She died on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and is buried in Korea.



Sr Margaret Moran

Sr Margaret Moran was born in Bunamarry, Cahirlistrane, Co Galway in 1945. She attended Presentation Convent Secondary School in Headford and worked in the General Post Office in Dublin. In 1964 she entered the Columban Sisters in Magheramore, Co Wicklow. After her profession, she studied at University College Dublin and graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce Degree. She was then assigned to the Language School in Seoul to study Korean in 1973. She became Hospital Secretary in Mokpo in 1975. From 1978 to 1980 she worked in the hospital in Chunchon. In 2000 she gained an MA in Linguistics and English Language Teaching. From 1991 to 2021 she was back again in Chunchon. Sr Margaret was a very zealous missionary, and her main objective was to be of service to people and to spread the Good News of the Gospel and to promote vocations and

Fr Gerard Bellew was born in Dundalk on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1938. He joined the Columbans in Navan in 1955 and was ordained on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1961. His first appointment was to post graduate studies in UCD while also acting as dean at St Columban's House of Studies in Templeogue, Dublin. In 1965 he was appointed Dean of the major seminary in Dalgan Park. In the early 1970s he taught English literature both in Dalgan and Kimmage. In 1977 Gerry went to Santiago, Chile. For the next 43 years he made his home there only returning to Ireland due to deteriorating health in February 2020. In Chile, he was assigned to the parish of El Olivo in the Northern Zone of the Archdiocese of Santiago. When the parish was handed over to the Archdiocese in 1988, he became parish priest of the neighbouring parish of Nuestra Señora del Rosario. Throughout his ministry Gerry collaborated closely with three Archbishops of Santiago, occupying key positions of leadership in the Archdiocese. He became Episcopal Vicar of the Northern Zone in 1988 and continued in that role until he was named Director of the Pontifical Mission Society (World Mission) in Chile. He was later appointed Episcopal Vicar for Religious. He was Vice Director of the Chilean Region from 1992-1996. During the Papal visit to Chile, he was Master of Ceremonies to Pope John Paul II in the youth event in the National Stadium in Santiago. There, he navigated a particularly difficult situation in a ceremony that was filled with tensions between the Military Government of General Pinochet and the suppressed voices of the youth of Chile. He would have celebrated his Diamond Jubilee of ordination on 20<sup>th</sup> December but died in the Columban Nursing Home in Dalgan on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

May they rest in peace.



Fr Gerard Bellew

**S**he was a young Jewish girl who was engaged to the young village carpenter. Her parents, Anna and Joachim, were very happy with her choice. Mary loved Joseph who was an upright man, gentle, well known and well liked in the village. He made the best furniture and farm implements. But God had other plans for them.

Mary was a woman steeped in the Scriptures and the stories of her ancestors. St Augustine said, "Mary conceived Christ the Word in her heart before she conceived Him in her womb." The God she knew was a God full of compassion and love. He had freed her people and brought them out of bondage. So when the Angel Gabriel came to her and asked her to become the Mother of the Saviour, she did not ask for a sign as Zechariah did. For Mary acceptance and willingness to cooperate with the plan of God was enough. She responded, "Be it done to me according to Your word." (Luke ch1 v38) Mary didn't fully understand the implications of what she agreed to but she made herself available to God's plan.

But isn't that what faith is? It is a leap from what is rational to what is beyond understanding. All her life Mary had to ponder and reflect on the events of her life and especially to ponder the meaning of her Son's life and His role in the salvation of the human race. Like Him she too grew in "wisdom, age and grace". Jesus Himself said, "No one knows the Son except the

Father." The faith of His Mother had to embrace the mystery of His divine origin. Through the events of their lives Mary came to understand her own divine vocation more deeply. She wrote no books nor did she leave us any recorded messages. How we would love to be able to read the record of the lives of the Holy Family! She never made the headlines or stood out in the crowd. Hers was an ordinary life hidden away as she lived it out in Nazareth. The Evangelists give no details of her life throughout the formative years of Jesus.

Her Faith, ever unwavering, encourages us as we go on our earthly journey. To give of oneself all throughout one's life to the truth of God's Word and to suffer the trials and pains of life is to model oneself on Mary the perfect model and faithful disciple. An elderly woman was once overheard saying, as she stood before the Statue of Mary, "You beat them all, Mother of God. You beat them all."

Blessed are you who believe. It seems that faith creates a space in us to receive the gifts of God. He did great things for Mary. He can do great things for us too if we believe. He can take away our meanness and our selfishness and give us a heart that's full of compassion and love. All we need is to have the faith that risks all. It is no easy thing so we need Mary's help to keep going. She is our loving Mother and her concern is for our wellbeing and happiness. Who knows better than Mary the cost of faithfulness? ●

Sr Abbie O'Sullivan

O Maid conceived  
without a stain  
Come thou within our  
hearts to reign  
And grace shall  
triumph there.

# THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

**W**hen the wise men had left, Joseph was warned in a dream to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt, where they would be safe from King Herod. The king was furious that the wise men had deceived him. To make sure that there was no rival king to challenge him, Herod ordered his soldiers to kill every young boy under the age of two living in and around Bethlehem.

Not long after this, King Herod died. The angel returned to Joseph in another dream and told him it was safe to return to Israel.

Joseph took Mary and Jesus back with him to Nazareth. They made their home there, with a workshop for Joseph's work as a carpenter.

Jesus grew up in a loving family devoted to God. Mary would have taught him all about his heavenly father, through the stories and books of the Bible, and the traditional songs of praise and thanksgiving. Joseph would have taken him to the temple for worship and taught him all about making things in wood, so he too could earn his living as a carpenter when he grew up.

As the boy Jesus grew older, he also grew in the knowledge and love of God. Everyone liked him, and God was pleased with him. ●

**Read also: Matthew 2: 13-18**



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

## BIBLE QUIZ

NUMBER 96

- 1 In 1 Kings ch.17, we learn that Elija came from which city in Gilead?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 In Acts ch.20, why did Paul, on his last missionary journey decide to sail past Ephesus?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 In Numbers ch.22, what animal accompanied Balaam on his early morning journey with the princes of Moab?  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 4 In Joshua ch.7, when Joshua was in Jericho, to what town did he send spies?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 True or False? In Acts ch.28, as Paul was throwing wood on to a fire in Malta, a tarantula fastened itself on his hand?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 In John ch.3, where was Jesus when Nicodemus came to see him secretly at night?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**£15 vouchers for the first three correct entries received!**  
Consult your Bible, answer the questions above and send your entry to: Bible Quiz N° 96, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

Bible Quiz N° 94 Winners: Michael Braid, Altrincham • Patrick Mills, Burnham-on-Sea • Margaret Burfield, Cumbria.

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

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



# WORD SEARCH

Match these words with their correct space in the Puzzle:

**ACROSS:**  
 STAR  
 SNOWFLAKE  
 SNOWMAN  
 TREE  
 HAT  
 CANDLE

**DOWN:**  
 SANTA  
 MITTEN  
 PRESENT  
 BELL  
 FIREPLACE  
 COOKIE  
 BALL



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

Yesterday at school Ms Flinn was saying imagine Christmas is almost here again and we have an awful lot of things to do. And we all said yes of course Ms Flinn we are dying to help. And Ms Flinn said anything is better than lessons for some and she was looking down at me and Bump. So we were told we'd have to be doing the decorations and the Crib and everything as well as collecting the waste paper for the missions. So I was telling old aunt Mamie we'd be collecting newspapers from our old neighbor Mr McHugh and

everybody else but we'd be wearing our masks and she said don't forget your ear-plugs too. And I said why and she said because he'll be telling you the usual tall tales when he was a young fella and other nonsens. I was telling my pal Bump he said what's a tall tale I said I dunno except they are great stories. But then I was thinking even if Ms Flinn makes us do an essay wouldn't these tall tales be just brilliant ... and then we'd be ready for the Xmas holidays ... but only if the small cousins don't ask me to write to Santa Claus for them.



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

Rewrite the story and send to Puddy's Dirty, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands B93 9AB, before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

### HA! HA!

- Who delivers presents to baby sharks?
- What music do Santa's elves like the best?
- What do Santa's little helpers learn at school?
- What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?
- What do you call a grumpy reindeer?
- Did you hear about the kid who was scared of Santa?
- What do snowmen eat for breakfast?

- Santa Jaws!
- The elf-abet!
- Wrap music!
- Christmas Quacker!
- Rude-olph!
- He was Claus-trophobic.
- Snowflake!
- A Christmas Quacker!

## COMPETITION WINNERS SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2021

<b>Sophia</b> Middlesex <b>1</b>		<b>Lexi Brownlow</b> St Helens <b>2</b>		<b>Amelia Gribble</b> Stockport <b>1</b>		<b>Maryn Kumara</b> Birmingham <b>2</b>		<b>Conor Malone</b> Banbury <b>1</b>	
Colpaint - Aged 7 and Under				Colpaint - Aged 8 and Over				Puddy's Dirty	

# The Christmas Bird

By Elizabeth McArdle



**F**ar, far away in North America lives a bird called the Christmas Bird. This is not a fairy tale as the bird is very real. Its association with Christmas is linked to its crimson feathers, since red is the universally recognised colour for Christmas.

The spectacular, red plumage of the male, especially when seen against a background of snow has earned these birds another name: the Cardinal. This is because his colour matches the bright red ecclesiastical robes and hats of the cardinals of the Catholic Church. Of course, the bird is totally unaware of this elaborate symbolism and is more interested in crunching down the seeds at your bird table: that is, if you live in America. Cardinal Birds are classified as "granivorous" feeders, which means their diet consists mostly of seeds. Their short, stout, cone-shaped beaks are specially designed to crack open the hulls on seeds and the shells on nuts.

Unlike many species of songbirds, both male and

female sing. Normally, it is the male of a species which sings during courtship and to defend their territories. Female Cardinals are also known to sing when they are nesting and they call to their mates to bring them food. While on the nest, the male feeds seed to the female by a method known as "beak to beak". Try not to let your imagination run away with you: it may appear that they are kissing but they are really feeding.

Chances are, we will not see Christmas Birds in our gardens this December. However, try heading outdoors to look for our own equally spectacular birds such as robins, goldfinches, siskins or mistle thrushes. God has not skimped on their beauty. You will be surprised at how many delightful birds you will see among the bare winter branches. They are our very own Christmas birds. ●

01. Male and Female Cardinals sit together on a snowy rose bush.



Image: Shutterstock

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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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

Name:

Age:

Address:

FOUR  
PRIZES  
TO BE  
WON!

“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 21<sup>ST</sup> 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 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022**

For more information on entry guidelines see:  
[www.columbancompetition.com](http://www.columbancompetition.com)  
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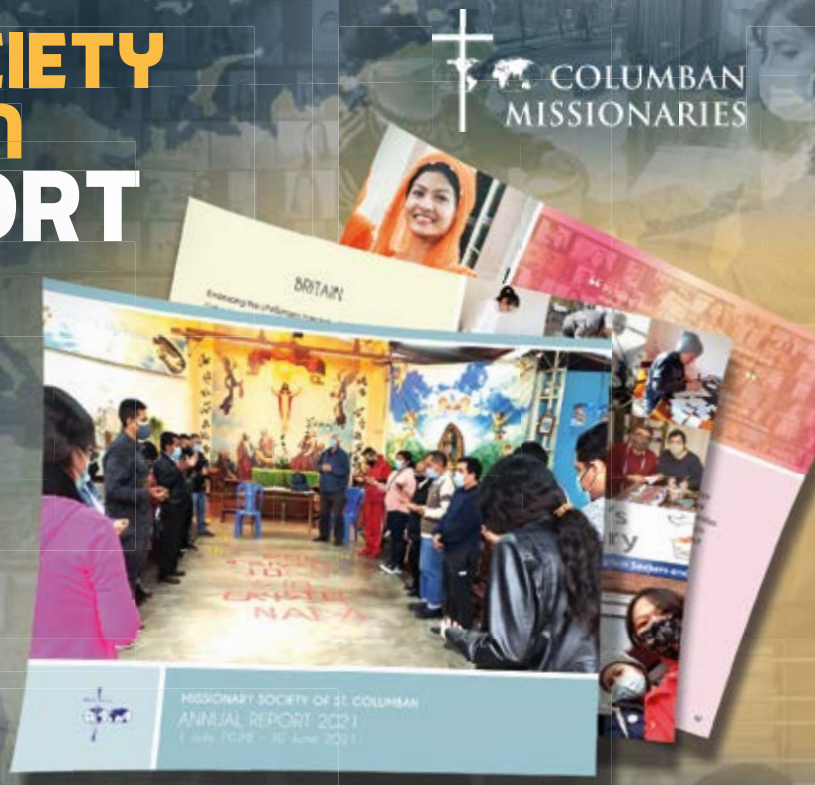


# MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST COLUMBAN ANNUAL REPORT

Despite the many challenges that you, our supporters, have experienced during this past year, Columban missionaries have been overwhelmed by your fidelity and generosity towards our mission. Thank you!

“During this past year, our world has experienced profound and widespread suffering as well as extraordinary compassion and resilience. This has led us to a deeper realization of the truth of our Christian faith: that all of us belong to one family and share a common home.”

Fr Tim Mulroy, Society Leader



Review our life and mission work over the past year by reading our '2021 Annual Report'.

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