

far east



MAGAZINE OF THE COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES



RIISING SEA LEVELS

Is Anyone
Paying
Attention?

CHILE MIGRANT CRISIS

Columbans offer
Hospitality

FAITH CALLS US TO ACTION

Partnership is
our way of being
on mission

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THE FAR EAST

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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.

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Front Cover

Migrants at the Columban House of Hospitality for men in the Parish of San Columbano, Chile. Photo: Fr Alvaro Martinez.



Often we missionaries are assigned to areas that are poverty-stricken and lack the basic needs that many are accustomed to, such as employment, water, food, housing and more. One might think that when we encounter such gloom and doom that it would crush our spirits. Yet, the joys of mission are discovering that in spite of the many difficulties, we find much hope and beauty in the mission.

As a seminarian I received my first assignment to a small coastal town in Chile where I was struck by the rampant alcoholism among the people, including one man called Ronnie, whom I never saw sober. As a drunk, he was aggressive and loud. I heard that when sober, he was meek and quiet. Personally, I had to throw him out of the church twice because he began destroying property and frightening people. Truly, I believed he would die in the streets like a stray dog.

However, God thought otherwise. I left the area for three years on another assignment and then returned. When I celebrated my first Mass, I noticed a perfectly groomed man coming to the altar to read. As he genuflected at the altar, the man looked at me timidly as if I was going to throw him out. When he spoke, I recognised the voice - it was Ronnie! Dumbfounded, I inquired about him after Mass.

The people told me that one day Ronnie drank so much that he fell into an alcoholic coma for three days. Upon waking, he

vowed never to drink again thus breaking a 19-year addiction. He decided to dedicate his life to God and the Church. He began to visit the infirm, take food to the poor and more. Ronnie's recovery became so noted that he won a place to attend the canonisation of St Alberto Hurtado, Chile's second canonised saint, in Rome.

Ronnie flew with a delegation that included the President of Chile and other notable people. He had the honour of seeing Pope Benedict XVI. He couldn't believe how his life had changed so much. This poor man from a small town was standing with a pope and a president. Truly he was living the resurrection after 19 years on the cross of alcoholism.

What Ronnie's testimony taught me was that nothing is impossible with God. Hope flourishes anywhere if someone is ready to receive it. Often it is those less fortunate than ourselves who teach us what we lack. I had given up on Ronnie but God did not. In this, I was very glad to be proven wrong. ●

Fr Chris Saenz

Fr Chris Saenz is Director of the Columbans in the US region.

01. One of the 1.5 million impoverished migrants who has arrived in Chile from Venezuela or Haiti in recent years. This man is being helped by the Columban Migrant Ministry in Chile and was photographed at the Casa San Columbano, the House of Hospitality for men, by Columban missionary, Fr Alvaro Martinez.





THE *SANTO NIÑO* AND MY FORMATION JOURNEY

Deacon Elbert Balbastro writes about how devotion to the *Santo Niño* has been central to his faith journey and his formation as a Columban missionary.

The celebration of 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines was a momentous event. The commemoration provided us with an opportunity to consider the insights, graces, and faith that our ancestors cultivated and passed on to us.

Amongst the articles and events recalling this centenary, the image of the *Santo Niño* (better known in the West as the Infant of Prague) stands out for me. As an Illongo, who grew up as a devotee, I regularly see the icon at home, in the market, in business offices, restaurants or even shopping malls. *Santo Niño* has always been there, guiding me, so I give thanks to God for all the gifts He has bestowed on me, especially in my seminary formation.

The statue of *Santo Niño* influenced me

in my formation journey, as it guided my ancestors to grow in their faith when they first received the statue 500 years ago. Now that I have completed my formation journey in the seminary and have embarked on a new one as a deacon, it is time for me to give back. I can only do that through my loving presence and my lifelong commitment to the service of God, His people, and all of creation. As Pope Francis said, "Faith is passed on by contact, from one person to another, just as one candle is lighted from another."

Formation in the seminary takes time, effort, and hard work. I remember entering the Columban House of Studies in 2012 and felt like I was so far from the finishing line. As time went by, I realised that it is not reaching the finishing line that matters



most but savouring the journey along the way. All those years were worth it so as to foster my personal and spiritual growth and an awareness of God's love in me. After nine years of participating in prayer life, community life, apostolate work, and study, I have been formed and moulded into someone ready to commit and offer his life for the sake of the mission.

Reflecting on my formation journey in the light of the celebration of 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines draws me back to the statue of the *Santo Niño* because it feels like meeting Him again. According to history, the statue of the boy Jesus was a baptismal gift to Humaway, the chief wife of Rajah Humabon. Of all the material things that Magellan and his group brought, I asked myself, "Why give the image of the *Santo Niño*?"

Then I realised the importance of the symbol that it represents. *Santo Niño* is an image that best represents my journey as a Columban. The Child Jesus depicted in the statue reminds me of the childlike attitude that I need to cultivate as a seminarian. A

child's heart is sincere and generous. At the same time, his mind is open to learning. Years of immersing myself in seminary formation made me inculcate several essential values.

I was taught that like the boy Jesus, I need to be reformed, to have a deeper faith in God, and a wider understanding of mission. After all, I cannot minister to people and share the joy of the Gospel with others if I am not equipped with the knowledge and awareness of the presence of God in my life. It would be like the blind leading the blind. Furthermore, the virtue of humility is an important quality. Knowing when to apologise, being able to recognise the aspects of our life we are ignorant about, and recognising our strengths and weaknesses, helped me to develop into a person who is in touch with the reality of life.

In my journey, there were times when academic studies were demanding and difficult. There were moments when academic papers overwhelmed me, and I was at a loss for ideas. However, my openness to learn aided me in refining my motivation to be a missionary priest. My studies are not only for my personal interests, but for the people of my future ministry.


Open-mindedness is one of the values I developed in formation. I remember working in prison and hospital ministry and being confronted with difficult questions. Why does God let these people suffer? Where is the hand of God in the tragedies of their life? As much as I would like to answer them, I am not a messiah; I do not have the knowledge that could answer them. At their times of distress, I could only be a companion, a brother, friend or pilgrim to them.

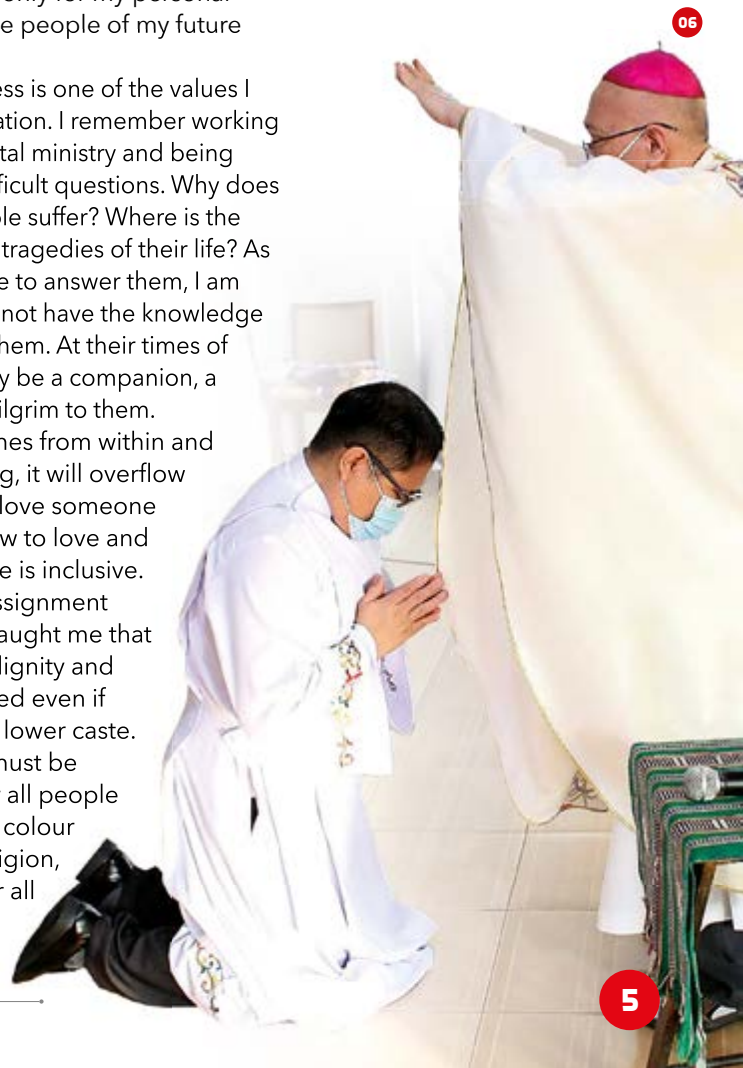
Love always comes from within and from that wellspring, it will overflow to others. I cannot love someone if I do not know how to love and forgive myself. Love is inclusive. My First Mission Assignment (FMA) in Pakistan taught me that every person has dignity and deserves to be loved even if they belong to the lower caste. As a missionary, I must be capable of love for all people regardless of race, colour of skin, gender, religion, and culture and for all created beings. ●

01. Deacon Elbert Balbastro at the Columban formation house in the Philippines holding a statue of the *Santo Niño* to which he has great devotion.
02. Elbert with fellow Columban seminarians and formator Fr Fatu.
03. Apostolate work at Pasay Cemetery in Manila together with Columban missionary, Sr Julie.
04. The feast of San Lazaro. Elbert did his apostolate work at San Lazaro hospital ministering to HIV/ AIDS and TB patients. He is photographed with some OMI brothers and the secretary of the church.
05. A pilgrimage to a Marian shrine with fellow Columban seminarians.
06. Elbert's ordination to the diaconate by Bishop Honesto Ongtioco of Cubao, Philippines.

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RISING SEA-LEVELS: IS ANYONE PAYING ATTENTION?

Sea levels are rising and more than 150 seaside cities around the world, with populations of more than a million, are threatened. Britain and Ireland will be affected warns eco-theologian, Fr Sean McDonagh.

For the past two and a half centuries, humans have burned fossil fuels to heat their homes and travel by train, cars, and planes. Burning fossil fuel has caused climate change and a rise in sea levels. If, during the next three decades, the average temperature reaches two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels this will have a profound impact on our oceans.

Looking at the commitments made by politicians attending COP26 at the climate change conference in Glasgow in November 2021, the average global temperature is expected to rise by between 2.7 to 3 degrees Celsius in the next 30 years. This would be a disaster for our world and our oceans. As the oceans get warmer icecaps in the Arctic, Antarctica, Greenland, the Himalayas, the Andes, and the Alps will melt.

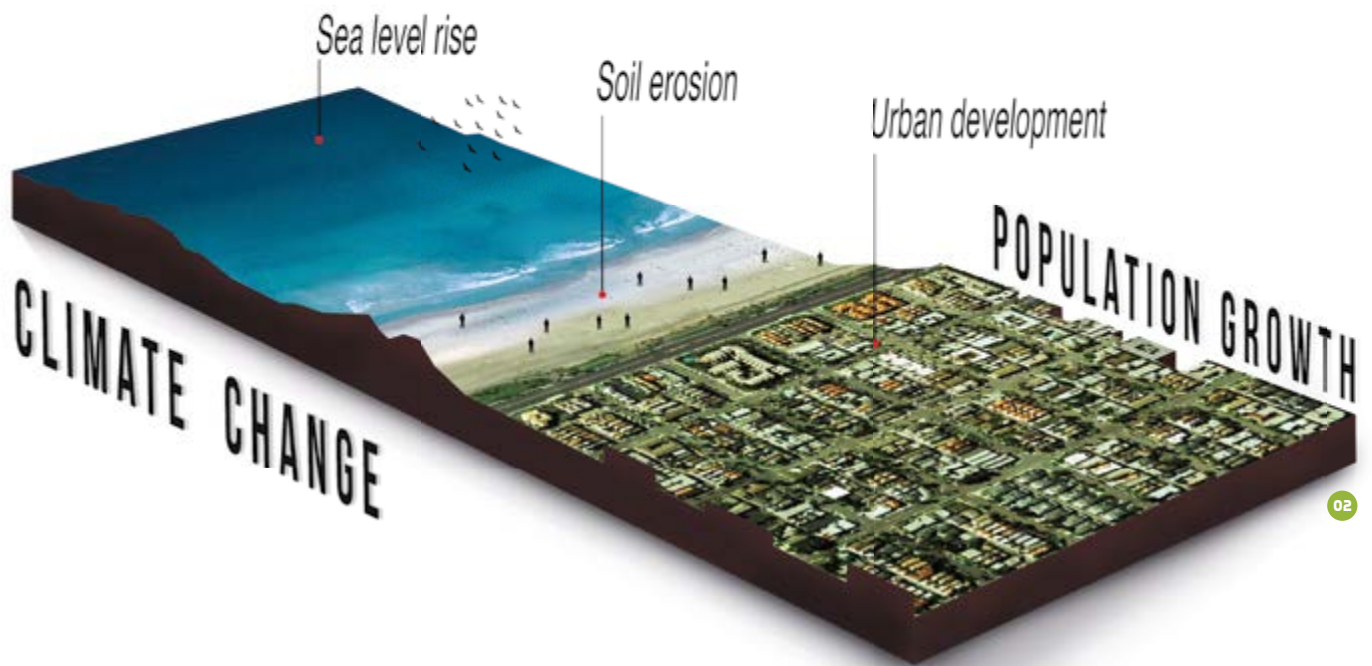
As a result, many scientists fear that the Florida-sized Thwaites glacier in the Antarctic will collapse and release huge amounts of ice into the southern oceans. Writing in *New Scientist* in February, Simon Osborne warns that this would lead to more than a half metre rise in sea-levels

by 2050 which would be a disaster for the planet. Today, the Thwaites glacier's 160-kilometre face is totally exposed to the warming ocean.

Oceanographer, Stefam Rahmstorfat from the University of Potsdam in Germany, points out that there are more than 150 seaside cities with populations of more than a million residents situated around the world. Cities such as Jakarta, Manila, Rio De Janeiro, and Miami would be flooded. In the Maldives in the Indian Ocean, half a million people live a metre above the sea-level. Scientists now believe that in a worst-case scenario, sea levels could rise by 2.5 metres in the 21st century.

The former president of Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed pleaded with global politicians attending COP26 not to compromise on the 1.5-degree Celsius rise above industrial levels. He told the media that we cannot sign a suicide pact. Current commitments are putting the world on track for a calamitous 2.7 degrees Celsius rise, according to the United Nations.

With the unprecedented heatwaves at



02



03

both Poles this year climate breakdown could happen more quickly. Such an outcome would be tragic for the quarter of a billion people who live less than two metres above sea level. Sea levels in Florida have risen by about one inch per decade. Scientists predict that the southern third of Florida could be under water by the year 2100. Across the globe in Bangladesh, that country could lose 11 percent of its land and this will affect and estimated 15 million people by 2050.

But Europe is also vulnerable. The non-profit organisation Climate Central reminds us that Britain will be one of the countries most affected from changing sea levels. In London, for example, rising sea levels could cause the Thames to flood and submerge vast areas of the city of London.

Ireland will not be spared. In Dublin a special map has been made to explore sea level rise and coastal flood threats. Howth could become an island and places like Fairview, Clontarf, Sandymount and Dalkey may also look extremely different in the future because of severe flooding.

In Donegal, Letterkenny is expected

to lose landmass to the oceans. The seaside town Bundoran, one of Ireland's chief surfing spots, could also be flooded. Cork, Ireland's largest county will also be affected by the rising tides, with areas such as Cobh and Youghal in danger. The areas in Cork City which will bear the brunt of the damage are the famous Marina Market, University College Cork and Páirc Ui Chaoimh.

In 2020 and 2021 we learned a lot about how severe weather caused wildfires, droughts and floods affecting many people around the world. But we also need to take the threat of a rise in sea-levels more seriously and take steps to avoid it as much as possible. Even during Russia's brutal and illegal war in the Ukraine, the only way we can do this is by lowering our greenhouse gas emissions and by not following the advice of populist politicians such as West Virginia Democratic Senator, Joe Manchin, who would seem more focused on protecting the fossil fuel industry than on protecting the planet.

Tackling climate change will not be easy, but unless we do it competently, we will leave an irreparable damaged planet for all future generations. ●

Columban missionary and eco-theologian, Fr Sean McDonagh, advised the Vatican on the first draft of '**Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home**', Pope Francis' ground-breaking encyclical on the environment. He celebrated his golden jubilee of ordination in 2019. His most recent publication is '**Robots, Ethics and the Future of Jobs**', published by Messenger Publications (2021).

- 01. People grapple with flooding in the slum area of Muara Karang shoreline, Jakarta, Indonesia in December 2020. Image: Shutterstock.
- 02. The effects of climate change and of global warming on urban development. Image: Shutterstock.
- 03. Image: Shutterstock.

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“The history of salvation has known unpredictable and mysterious integrations of peoples, cultures and races.”

Cardinal Carlo M. Martini SJ
(1927-2012)



PATMOS, ODESSA, TEXAS

As he watches the horror of war in Ukraine, Fr Bobby Gilmore is reminded of Larry and his forebears who escaped Odessa to a new life in America. He asks if those fleeing Ukraine today will be given an opportunity to flourish in the countries they end up in.

The man sitting in the next table at the Olympia Grill in Galveston, Texas, on hearing my accent asked where I came from. I told him that I was holidaying from Ireland. He introduced himself as Larry Kritikos, the owner of the restaurant. During our conversation and observations about various issues he related the history of his family in America and where they originated. It was an enthralling story laced with unpredictability, historical turmoil and its consequences.

In 1905, his grandfather and granduncle, Greek refugees, were resident on the Greek island of Patmos. They earned a living as fishermen. One day while in their small fishing boat offshore they noticed a small ship making its way into Patmos harbour. The ship was edging close to where they were and with their knowledge of the shore and the harbour, they knew it was off course. They waved at it to stop but to their consternation it sailed slowly on eventually running aground on the rocks nearby. They hurried over to offer help.

The ship's captain asked them to standby which they did. After some time, a rope ladder came over the side. The captain

requested the two fishermen to take a woman and her three children ashore. They climbed down the ladder into the boat and the two fishermen rowed them the short distance to the safety of the shore. When they had deposited their passengers, the mother profusely thanked them.

Getting back into their boat they returned to their nets and went about life as usual. They had no inkling as to the origins of the ship, its owners, passengers or their purpose in coming to Patmos. About three months after the incident Larry's grandfather received a formal letter in the post. It was seldom, in those days, that a letter arrived at the houses of ordinary people. His grandfather was so surprised that anybody knew his name or address.

The letter frightened him, his brother and the family. For days they kept it secret, unopened. After long discussions, hesitantly, they took it to the local priest. On looking at the envelope, the stamp and seal, the priest discerned that this was a very formal letter. It had a Russian postmark and the seal was an official government wax seal.



He carefully opened the letter written in Russian. It was from the palace of the Czar in Moscow. It started out by thanking the two men for rescuing his wife the Czarina and her three children from the sea as they made their pilgrimage to the shrine of St John the Evangelist. It was there that he wrote the Apocalypse. It is a centre of pilgrimage for all Christians especially for those of the Orthodox Church.

Apart from thanking them, the letter contained a formal invitation for both men to go to the Royal Palace in Moscow all expenses paid. This whole episode was getting too much for them. The island officials persuaded them to go and that it was an honour to have received such a formal invitation. They decided to go.

Arriving in Moscow they were formally

received by the Czar and the Czarina in the palace. They were overwhelmed. That was not the end of the story. The Czar, in recognition of their rescue of his wife and children, appointed them as administrators of the Port of Odessa. The outcome of this appointment gave them access to both wealth and prestige beyond their wildest dreams. Both families were held in high esteem by the population of Odessa. It gave them access to the highest power in the land. That was until 1915.

The Russian Revolution gradually reached the Port of Odessa. Larry's grandfather, granduncle and their families had little option other than to take flight. They arrived in America and settled in Texas. Both grandfather and granduncle were immediately drafted into the United States army and served under General Pershing on the Western front. After the war they both returned unharmed. They went into business in Texas. Their offspring, Larry's father, went into the restaurant business. Larry inherited the business and successfully extended it to become a flagship restaurant in Galveston which has won many awards both local and national.

As I watch the horror of war in Ukraine, I am reminded of Larry and his forebears. Seeing a revolution coming, they gathered their families and escaped to a new life in America. Will those fleeing today be given that opportunity in the countries they end up in? They need a welcome. ●

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.

“The gravitational pull of an imperial history that is just as illustrious as it is imposing will continue to define Russia's character and its conduct, both at home and abroad.”


Samir Puri, 'The Great Imperial Hangover'



01. Odessa City, Ukraine.

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**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.



FAITH CALLS US TO

The Columbans in Britain's Justice and Peace Education Worker, Dr James Trewby, writes about some of the initiatives he has been involved in which demonstrate how "partnership is our way of being on mission".

One great privilege of my work as the 'Justice and Peace Education Worker' for the Columbans in Britain is having direct (if virtual) contact with missionaries around the world. During the various COVID-induced lockdowns, a new initiative began, building on these online communications: the Columban International Youth Encounter. Facilitated by Columban missionaries (lay and ordained), this brings together young adults connected to the Columbans from many countries around the world for prayer and discussion about faith and social justice issues.

At a session in the autumn of 2021, climate change and care for creation were particularly 'hot topics'. It was moving to hear from young adults in Taiwan, Pakistan, Peru ...

one by one talk about the devastating impacts of the climate crisis on their countries and call for change. The sharing by a young woman in Myanmar stayed with me.

Filmed on her mobile phone in a camp for the internally displaced where she lives, it made clear the

links between human and environmental suffering; poverty, migration, conflict and exploitation of natural resources. As Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si'*, "we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental" (LS139).

Given these experiences, the holding of the 26th annual summit of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in the UK challenged me - what contribution could we make? COVID made pre-existing imbalances of power and voice worse. Talking with friends and colleagues, the seed of an idea was planted: might we take a group of young adults to Glasgow and in some way, together, create a platform to share voices and stories from around the world?

This was the motivation behind the 24-hour vigil we went on to coordinate. In a very Columban way it was rooted in collaboration; for us "partnership is our way of being on mission". 24 hours of prayer, climate stories and advocacy, broadcast live from Glasgow, made possible by working together with friends from so many organisations, including the Jesuits, CAFOD, Justice and Peace Scotland, the Assumption Sisters, Don Bosco Green Alliance, the *Laudato Si'* Movement and Columban





ACTION

missionaries from around the world.

But by far the most important voices were those living on the frontline of the climate crisis. We had the privilege of sharing stories from, for example, elderly people in a Filipino slum community, students in Uganda and children in Peru. Particularly poignant for me, linking back to the sharing from the IDP camp, was a submission from Columban Fr Kurt Zion Pala from Myanmar. The 14-minute video shows the members of Catholic Student Action in Myitkyina living in the midst of both the pandemic and a military occupation, all wearing face masks, setting off into the countryside and then taking part in a prayer service for creation, for COP26, and for peace. The young adults, wearing traditional clothing, shared personal reflections on care for creation and the impact of climate change. They read from scripture, sang hymns, prayed and committed to ongoing action for our common home.

What a privilege to have helped bring their voices to Glasgow. Our vigil was planned so that the last part saw our group process out of the church to join a protest march as part of the 'Global Day of Action for Climate Justice', bringing with us symbolically all that we had heard and broadcast over the 24 hours.

Of course the story doesn't end there.

PRAYER WRITTEN DURING THE 24-HOUR VIGIL BY MEMBERS OF OUR YOUNG ADULT TEAM



We pray for our world, abused and exploited. That as a global community we may come together and stand for our common home with all areas of society, especially indigenous and minority communities who experience it first-hand.

Creating God, Help us change our ways.

During our '24 Hours for the Climate' vigil, we have been united in prayer seeking to bring global voices to these climate talks. We pray for those voices on the margins, so valuable and yet so often silenced, that they may be placed at the centre of our response.

Creating God, Help us change our ways.

We pray that we may end our dependence on gas and oil and transition to a green economy.

Creating God, Help us change our ways.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis declares that young people demand change; we only need to look to the young people marching on our streets. May they continue to inspire, create and be the change we want to see in the world.

Creating God, help us change our ways.



The commitments made by governments at Glasgow were disappointing, and there is so much more that needs to be done. But through our involvement in the vigil and the march, and in the people we met in Glasgow, we saw a glimpse of something beautiful, the climate justice movement, the 'other' COP: people of all ages listening and learning from one another, hearing stories from the margins, sharing joy, sadness, anger, growing in commitment and conviction, then taking action and making change.

So the work continues. Since our time in Glasgow, we have been sharing the story of what we did and why we did it during visits to schools. We show students some of the submissions from around the world, pray together and then support them in building relationships with their MPs around these issues. Faith calls us to action. ●

01. James Trewby, Columban Faith in Action Volunteer, Tobi Oyedele, and other members of the team who delivered '24 Hours for the Climate', a 24-hour prayer vigil that sought to bring the voiceless to COP26.
02. The Columban team set off for COP26 in Glasgow from Birmingham.
03. "Our vigil was planned so that the last part saw our group process out of the church to join a protest march as part of the 'Global Day of Action for Climate Justice', bringing with us symbolically all that we had heard and broadcast over the 24 hours."

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A STRANGER ON THE ROAD

Fr Daniel Harding is Coordinator of the Columban Migrant Ministry in Chile. He writes about the massive challenges faced by migrants in Santiago and the two hospitality houses run by a Columban parish.

It is impossible to walk around the streets of Chile without running into foreigners. Around the different markets of our Columban parishes in Santiago, it is normal now to hear two languages spoken – Spanish and Haitian Creole. All rental residencies, within our parish territories, are full of Venezuelans, Haitians, Colombians, Bolivians, Peruvians and Dominicans.

In Chapter Two of his Encyclical Letter, **'Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendships,'** Pope Francis speaks to us of "A Stranger on the Road", of being "Abandoned by the wayside" and "Neighbours without borders" as a way to put into practice the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

From March 2020, Chile has received almost 1,500,000 migrants, which is 8% of the entire population of the country of 19,222,527. In recent years, the number of migrants has increased each year by 20%.

Like many other congregations and church organisations, we Columbans in Chile are in the process of developing a credible response to the reality of 1.5m migrants arriving into the country in recent years.

For this reason we are developing our Migrant Ministry in order to respond to the many challenges of this massive migration. We are trying to welcome strangers lost on the road as "Neighbours without borders".

The great majority of migrants live in

overcrowded conditions, renting small rooms, often in dangerous and unhygienic circumstances.

At the moment, the Columban Migrant Ministry in Chile administers two migrant houses in San Columbano parish, one with 15 homeless men, and the other, for homeless women and their children, victims of domestic violence.

The Coordinator/Administrator of St Columban's migrant house for men in the parish of San Columbano is Venezuelan Javier Núñez. He also coordinates our department of communications and the different educational programmes for migrants.

Columban missionary Fr Martin Koroiciri coordinates the migrant house for women, Bethany House. We hope to form the Migrant Ministry in each of our four Columban parishes in Chile, with a whole range of courses, activities and formation programmes.

Once the pandemic is passed, we will be able to start again our different formation courses such as the High School Certificate course, conversational Spanish for Haitians, and other work-related courses to help train migrants so they can find work more easily.

The Columban Migrant Ministry in Chile works directly with around 15 church organisations and NGOs in the service of "our neighbours without borders", the



migrants. We are a part of a network of organisations that together try to respond to the needs of our neighbours, the migrants.

According to recent reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 5.9 million people have fled Venezuela in the last few years. This flight from repression, hyperinflation, shortages of food and medical supplies, as well as essential services represents one of the largest displacement crises in the world.

The majority of Venezuelans arriving in neighbouring countries are families with children, pregnant women, elderly people and those with disabilities. Their journeys across more than one national border to safety are often made over irregular routes that leave them at the mercy of people

traffickers, smugglers and illegally armed groups.

The displaced Venezuelans arrive with precious few possessions, completely exhausted and in urgent need of help. In many cases, they are in a precarious situation, as they lack the official documentation that would give them security of residency and access to services in the host country. They are, therefore, particularly susceptible to xenophobic attitudes, as well as sexual and labour exploitation, trafficking, violence and discrimination.

Host countries across Latin America have been generous in receiving the Venezuelans, but their ability to receive is rapidly reaching saturation point, their resources overstretched. ●

Columban Fr Daniel Harding is the parish priest of San Columbano parish, Santiago, Chile.

To support the Columban Migrant Ministry in Chile please send a cheque payable to 'Columban Missionaries' to The Mission Office, St Columban's, Widney Manor Road, Solihull B93 9AB. Alternatively, call 01564 772 096 or go to www.columbans.co.uk/donate. Please mention this article when making your donation.

MARCELA'S STORY

"My three children had no food, nothing to eat, no nappies and there was no work. With my three children, we crossed into Colombia and from there began a seven-day trip to Peru. We suffered cold, heat and hunger during those seven days in order to arrive in Peru."

"I was highly emotional when I arrived in Peru, with great expectations of having a much better quality of life there. However, my children could not even study in public schools because they were undocumented foreigners."

"My eldest daughter suffered greatly, victimised by xenophobia, she refused to leave our rented quarters for fear of abuse. We were called bad people, who had come to take away jobs from the locals, and thieves."

"After three years of surviving all of this in Peru, I decided to leave my three children with their father in Peru and go onto Chile, to try to find a better quality of life for us there. Once established in Chile, my husband and three children would then reunite with me."

"The journey from Peru to Chile was very difficult and it is a good thing that my children were not with me. Many people took advantage of us. We were tricked, lied to and swindled. We were sold bus tickets that never existed. We had to walk through the Atacama Desert in the full sun of day and the freezing cold of night."

Marcela

01. Makeshift migrant accommodation in Santiago, Chile. Photo: Luis Felipe Araya.
02. The Columban House of Hospitality for migrant men in the Parish of San Columbano, Chile. Photo: Fr Alvaro Martinez.
03. A study by the Catholic Institute of Migration and the University of Talca on migrants in 2020 showed that 4% had permanently lost their employment and that the majority had been employed in precarious temporary jobs before Covid. Photo: Fr Alvaro Martinez.
04. Making their home in a public park in Santiago. Photo: Luis Felipe Araya.

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ONCE YOU ACT, HOPE IS EVERYWHERE



Columban missionary Sr Kate Midgely writes about a new group which held the 'Beyond Fossil Fuels Together' vigil outside the UK Parliament earlier this year. The group aims to pressure the UK government to end its dependence on coal, oil and gas.

There was a midwife, a psychotherapist and a solicitor.... No, this isn't the beginning of a joke! These three inspirational and joyful women came together over a very serious matter: the existential threat to humanity from climate and ecological breakdown.

The three are members of the organising team behind 'Beyond Fossil Fuels Together', a newly formed independent group that recently held a two-week, 24-hour, 7 days a week vigil and fast outside the UK Parliament. The vigil was supported by **Laudato Si** Animators with a banner used at the COP26 in Glasgow: 'Stand with the Pope, Stand up to Fossil Fuels'.

We know that 86% of greenhouse gases are caused by burning fossil fuels. We know that we need to reduce 45% of our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The group is calling for a halt to new licenses for coal, oil and gas, and an end to subsidies to fossil fuel companies.

Supporters prayed, meditated and fasted in support of these aims throughout the vigil.

The tragic war in Ukraine has raised questions about the source of our energy supplies. This awful destruction in Ukraine could turn into a *kairos* moment when we finally make the choice to move away from fossil fuels. Could we once and for all treat the climate emergency like it really is an emergency, as Greta Thunberg has so often urged us to do? Bill McKibben has noted that during World War II, production was speeded up so that bombers were produced every day. He points out that wind turbines are much easier to make than bombers.

Dr Hoesung Lee, quoted by Dr Carmody Grey in her recent Hook Lecture, has said that what keeps him awake at night is not what to do, or how we need to solve the climate crisis but, "Why do we not do what we know we should do?"

Earlier this year the temperature in the Arctic was 30C above normal, and in the Antarctic it was 40C above normal. God's creation is being destroyed before our very eyes. Commenting on the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned, "Humanity is sleep walking towards a climate catastrophe." The previous IPCC Report told us it was Code Red for humanity.



So back to our vigil and our praying and meditating.... Is there any hope?

One of the organising team, Jo Hindley, gave up her full-time midwifery role once she realised the gravity of the climate crisis. She sees her activism as a continuation of her duty of care to the babies she has helped to bring into the world over 30 years.

Satya Robyn is the psychotherapist, and she did a solitary vigil on the streets of her home town one hour every day, for a whole year. Melanie Nazareth is a solicitor and a 60-year-old mother of four who walked 500 miles to Glasgow as part of the 'Camino to COP'.

As Greta Thunberg says, "Once you act, hope is everywhere". I am thinking of all those who participated in the vigil in person or prayed or fasted at home. All the small conversations that were had, including with a few MPs. It is Satya's opinion that people are like a bucket with water and we never know at what point that bucket will overflow and that person will get it and be moved to take action.

I have recently been encouraged by a quote of Marianne Williamson mentioned by Fr Richard Rohr in his daily reflections. "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure." My hope is that each of us can "step into our power" as Melanie likes to say, and believe another world is possible.

And "bring the whole human family together... for we know things can change." (LS13 and **Laudato Si** Action Platform rallying cry to us all to begin a journey of ecological conversion and action for societal change).

Then the dream of Teilhard De Chardin SJ may come true: "The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides, and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire." ●

Columban Sr Kate Midgely from Britain has been missioned in Chile, Peru and China. She currently lives in London and volunteers with charities supporting asylum seekers and women who have been trafficked.



01. The vigil was supported by the Columbans. Sr Kate Midgely with James Trewby, Columban Education Worker, Columban missionary Fr Daniel O'Malley and Juliette Bone, a Columban Faith and Justice Volunteer. Image: Columban Mission
02. The organising team of 'Beyond Fossil Fuels Together' (left to right) Satya Robyn, Jo Hindley, Louise Scrivens and Melanie Nazareth. Image: Beyond Fossil Fuels Together.
03. Sr Kate Midgely (second from left) with two members of Bow parish *Laudato Si* gardening group and Melanie Nazareth of the organising team of Beyond Fossil Fuels Together.
04. Those taking part in the vigil highlight: "Our Earth is in peril and millions are already suffering as a result of the climate crisis. As our world heats up, the UK government is pouring £10 billion a year into the fossil fuel industry. We need to move beyond our addiction to fossil fuels now with an immediate end to new oil exploration and licences, and to fossil fuel subsidies." To find out more visit: beyondfossilfuelstogether.info

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Columban missionary Fr Kevin O'Boyle worked for many years in Santiago, Chile. He spoke to Fr Alo Connaughton about a synod that radically changed and reinvigorated the Church there.

Q: There is a lot to talk in Church circles these days about a synod. Many years ago, you participated in an interesting one.

A: Yes, in Santiago in Chile in the 1960s. In the 1950s, visitors to Chile went away with the belief that the Catholic Church there was dying fast. Few people participated in any of its activities, and it was divorced from the lives of most people, especially the tens of thousands of newly arrived rural migrants. Many of these, however, did have a strong brand of popular religiosity with its beliefs and practices. The Chilean Church also had a group of new bishops with vision. They were, at the time, participating in the Second Vatican Council.

Q: So they decided to organise a Synod?

A: I'm not sure if Archbishop Raúl Silva of Santiago and his team had a synod in mind at the beginning, but they started a process that ended in the pastoral Synod of Santiago. The early steps of the process were what made the final one and its positive outcome, possible.

Q: What was the first step?

A: This was the General Mission of 1963/64. The objective was to give ordinary people a basic, updated, education in the faith and an experience of community. I remember how the advertising poster struck a chord. In a Church where people had heard a lot about the severity of God, the poster depicted a

A SYNOD THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE

man looking over a wall enquiring, 'Do you know God loves you?' The mission itself was not the traditional mission with preachers coming for a week or two. The preachers would be local, committed people. First of all, scores of potential group leaders, lay and religious were invited to take part in training sessions organised by the archdiocese. Many leaders were required since the mission was going to take place in private houses and backyards. When the leaders were ready, volunteers went to the highways and byways inviting people to take part in the mission. The invitation was to go, not to the church, but to a meeting in the house of one of the neighbours starting on a certain evening. Numbers were kept to a manageable size. Typical Columban city parishes organised fifteen or more such groups.

Q: What was the format of the meeting?

A: The mission lasted for two weeks. The session usually began at a time when everyone was home from work. Booklets with prayers and songs/hymns were printed. The opening part of the session was a half-hour talk on the core elements of the Christian faith given by a speaker who was attractive and convincing. A number of local radio stations had agreed to broadcast this talk. After the talk the group leader would invite those attending to share their reactions and reflections. The session would end with some prayer and an appropriate hymn/song. Chileans like to sing.

Q: What do you most remember from those sessions?

A: First of all, I was struck by the extraordinary, and often unexpected, enthusiasm of the people. Many of what

might be considered unlikely candidates were happy to be invited and came.

Q: Did the mission produce long term results?

A: It was an unbelievable experience to see what was buried in the ashes come alive. People had a new awareness that they were people with a voice, not just silent spectators. They had a new experience of what the Church was, not just a distant institution but a community where they too had an important place and role. In the years that followed, in spite of the permanent shortage of priests and sisters, many Christian communities continued to thrive because of the promotion of the leadership abilities of the ordinary people.

Q: There's always a danger that something like this will soon run out of steam?

A: It didn't because of the solid enthusiasm of so many of the people. Many people got involved as volunteer lay catechists, basic Christian community groups, charismatic renewal etc. Also those 'at the top' gave great encouragement and believed in the need for profound change. With their words and actions they accompanied what was evolving.

Q: Apart from what we have mentioned, were there other factors that helped?

A: The process was helped by political changes taking place in Chile at that time; popular participation was being encouraged. This was the time when Latin in the liturgy was being replaced by the Spanish vernacular. The archdiocesan department of catechesis began producing wonderful publications. It was a time of great creativity in music, not only pious new hymns but some with words like those of the psalms that touched on reality. Archbishop Raúl Silva, a man who had played an important role at the Vatican Council, decided, with his team, that the priests and religious of the diocese were in need of serious updating. All priests were told to 'down tools' and take part in an intensive nine to five six-week course of theological and pastoral renewal at a large centre location.

Q: So where does the synod come in?

A: I have talked mostly about what happened 'before' because this gave a

renewed education in the faith. The synod came a year or so after the mission and met periodically for two years. As far as I remember, of the 400 delegates, 360 were lay people elected by the parishes and Christian communities.

Q: Did that synod make a difference?

A: Even today people would remember it as an event that reinvigorated the Church in Santiago. A vital part was the honest diagnosis of the real 'sickness.' People admitted that unless change happened, the Church was dying. Celebrations of the Mass were often cold and unattended. Sacraments were being 'administered' without context or preparation. A pastoral plan emerged which gave guidelines for future action.

For example, the age for celebrating First Communion and Confirmation was raised. Sacramental preparation would now take place in parishes, led by lay people and with the participation of parents in regular Christian formation meetings. This continues today.

Q: What stays with you today as you remember the mission and the synod?

A: It wasn't just a time of business-type meetings but one of prayer and discernment; a listening to the Holy Spirit. The attempt to read 'the signs of the times' was vital. The detailed *Pastoral Plan* with guidelines for things such as sacramental preparation, basic community development, justice and peace work etc became a handbook for years to come. At synod meetings the voice of the lay people was heard, and their votes were counted. They could say, 'This is what we decided.' ●



02

Fr Alo Connaughton is 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. Columban missionary Fr Kevin O'Boyle.
02. The late Archbishop Raúl Silva Henríquez of Santiago.
03. Synodality: a time of prayer, discernment and listening to the Holy Spirit in an attempt to read 'the signs of the times'. The slogan on the poster reads: 'Communitarian experiences which humanise the big city'.

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03

REST in PEACE



Fr Patrick (Paddy) Dooher



Fr Richard O'Sullivan



Fr Aodh Eamonn O'Halpin

Fr Patrick (Paddy) Dooher was born on 21 January 1943 in Donaghedy, Co Tyrone and was educated in Loughash PS and St Columb's, Derry. He joined the Columbans in Dalgan Park in 1960 and was ordained on 21 December 1966.

Paddy then did postgraduate studies in Rome before being appointed to the staff in St Columban's College, Navan where he spent the next ten years. In that period, he served as Dean of Studies, Vice Rector, Regional Education Officer and he also lectured in Maynooth. At this time, he also began his involvement in the Faith and Mission Programme provided by the Irish Mission Institute in Dalgan. In March 1980 he was assigned to Peru and he worked in Lima for seven years based in the parish of Ermitano. He was a delegate to the Society's General Assembly in 1982 and was appointed as Vice Director of Peru in 1984. He provided theological support for the Overseas Training Programme for Columban students and for the Theological Institute for Religious Orders (ISET).

He returned to Dalgan in 1989 to take on the role of director the Irish Missionary Union Institute. He remained in that role for the next 27 years and together with Sr Norah Davey RSM made an enormous contribution to the mission of the Church by providing updating and renewal courses for hundreds of missionaries of many nationalities.

Paddy died suddenly on 25 March 2022 and left us all shocked and reflecting on the essential place he held in our community and in our mission for so long. May God reward his generosity and his constant care for us all.

Fr Richard (Dick) O'Sullivan was born at Kilgarvan, Co Kerry on 17 February 1936. He was educated at Kilgarvan Boys School and St Brendan's College, Killarney, Co Kerry. He came to Dalgan in September 1953 and was ordained priest on 21 December 1959.

He was appointed to Fiji and during his first term he served in the parishes of Lautoka, Labasa and Nabala. After his first home vacation, Dick was appointed to India to study Hindustani and to develop the Columban missionary outreach to the Indian population - Christians, Hindus and Muslims - of Fiji.

Dick was a scholar and a gifted teacher. Study at the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila (1972-74), and at Vidyajyoti Institute of Religious Education, Delhi, India (1980-1983) culminated in a Masters and Doctoral degree in Theology.

He was a member of the staff of St Columban's Seminary, Dalgan Park from 1975-1980 where he taught Mission Theology, Asian Religious Traditions, Liberation Theology and Missionary Spirituality. He also served on the teaching staff of the Faith and Mission Institute, the Justice and Faith Institute, and the Milltown Institute. From 1992-1995 he was a member of the teaching staff at the Pacific Mission Institute, Turrumurra, Australia. He was a member of the staff of the Pacific Regional Seminary in Suva from 1996 to 2016, when he retired to Ireland due to failing health. Dick died on the morning of 26 March 2022. He was meticulous in his preparation for classes, gifted with a capacity for explaining and simplifying difficult concepts and blessed with unique Kerry humour.

Fr Aodh Eamonn O'Halpin was born in Dundalk on 31st January 1934. He was educated at Presentation Brothers, Letterkenny, St Columban's NS and St Eunan's College, Letterkenny. He came to St Columban's, Dalgan Park in September 1952 and was ordained priest on 21st December 1958. The following year he was appointed to the Philippines to the southern island of Mindanao. Over the next nineteen years, he served in Oroquieta, Misamis Occidental, Ozamis City, Misamis Occidental, and Tukuran, Zamboanga del Sur. In all three parishes he was remembered for his cheerfulness, love for the poor, and willingness to advocate on behalf of those who were oppressed.

By the late 1970s, Aodh was in Ireland, working on behalf of the indigenous Filipinos whose way of life was threatened by a projected Chico River Dam on the island of Luzon. The Irish ESB Group successfully bid as consultants for the projected dam and Aodh organised trade unions and other concerned citizens in protest. The project was eventually shelved.

In the early 1980s, Aodh moved to London. He would spend the next forty years working with Filipinos and other minority groups advocating on their behalf for housing, just working conditions, providing safe haven for refugees, and for persons held in slave-like conditions. During those years he worked from the Columban house in Reddington Road, East London where he served as pastor in St Anne's Parish (1997-2006) and at the Ealing house. Aodh came to the Dalgan Retirement Home already quite ill and he died peacefully on the morning of 2 April 2022. The thousands of people who were helped by him over a lifetime will join us in grieving his loss.

REST in PEACE



Fr Daniel O'Gorman



Fr Owen Doyle



Fr Noel Doyle

Fr Daniel O'Gorman was born on the 4th March 1932 in Tullaherin, Bennetsbridge, Co Kilkenny. He received his early education in Bennetsbridge NS and St Kieran's, Kilkenny. He joined the Columbans in Navan in 1950 and was ordained there on 21 December 1956. Korea was still a war-devastated country when Dan arrived in 1957. After language studies in Seoul, he was assigned to Cheju Island off the south coast. He worked in parishes in Cheju City, Hallim and Mosulpo and as a willing assistant to Fr PJ McGlinchey in the multi-faceted Isidore Development Association in Hallim. After twenty years in Cheju, he moved to the mainland parish of Yong Kwang. The new nuclear power plant nearby was the focus for many but what Dan saw was food being left outside homes to be taken by people now cured of leprosy, but still living in a village on the edge of the town. This led to his involvement in replacing their shacks with decent housing and the continuing care for their families. After a sabbatical, Dan returned to Yongam parish in Kwangju Archdiocese and although he needed medical care in Ireland in 1985, he was able to continue his work in Changhowon in Suwon diocese until 1992. Back in Ireland he was given charge of the Dalgan farm and helped to continue its modernisation with a large dairy herd. He made himself available to help the sick and provide transport for those in the Nursing Home until he had to join them there himself in 2014. Dan died peacefully in the Dalgan Nursing Home on 3 April 2022. May God reward the commitment and generosity that marked his life.

Fr Owen Doyle was born on 29th June 1934 at Moylough, Co Galway. He was educated at Moylough NS and Garbally Park College, Ballinasloe. He entered Dalgan in September 1952 and was ordained priest on 21st December 1958. The following year he was appointed to further studies in Rome where he was conferred with an STL degree at the Gregorian University in 1960. Owen was assigned to Korea in 1961 and would spend the following 38 years in that country. After language studies, he spent the first eleven years in the Diocese of Chunchon. His assignments included the Parish of Samcheok, chaplain and lecturer at Sacred Heart College and the Parish of Mukho. In 1973-1974 he did a refresher course in Rome before returning to Korea in 1976. From 1976 until 1999 he was appointed to

various apostolates in the Archdiocese of Seoul. These included years as secretary and later as consultant to the Apostolic Nunciature, and many years as lecturer in Foreign Studies at Hankuk University. In 1999, Owen was appointed to Ireland. Initially he spent three years in the Parish of Woodford/Luscaun in Clonfert Diocese and later he spent eight years as chaplain to the St John of God Community in Drumcar, Dunlee, Co Louth. He retired to Dalgan in June 2013. Owen died on 10 April 2022. He was a kind person, an independent thinker who encouraged many of the younger Columbans to develop new apostolates.

Fr Noel M. Doyle was born in Mullingar on 24 September 1935. He was educated in Ballinea NS, and at the Christian Brothers' School in Mullingar. He came to Dalgan in September 1953 and was ordained a priest on 21st December 1959. Assigned to Japan in 1960, once his language studies were completed, Noel served in the following parishes over a period of 33 years: Kamakura, Arao, Ryujin, Hiratsuka, Katase and Ninomiya. With classmate Fr William Curry, Noel did an MA in Anthropology at Jochi University (Jesuit), Tokyo, in order to better understand Japanese people, culture, religions etc. He was appointed Regional Bursar in 1983. He was an effective and competent bursar and continued in the job until 1998. When his successor Fr Michael Healy became seriously ill, Noel returned to Japan and did a further four years as bursar. In April 2003, he headed back to Ireland with the intention of getting involved in adult catechetics. He had admired the work of Columban Fr Gerald Griffin (died 2010) who had pioneered a new approach to adult catechetics in Japan. Noel produced his own version of Gerry's work entitled, '**Christ, Christianity, Church: A Study Course for Groups and Individuals**' and published it in 2012. He taught this course to parish groups in Slane and Trim. As his health continued to cause him problems, Noel completed the story of his own missionary journey and published it under the title, '**A Columban Missionary in Japan**' (2018). In recent years he was confined to the Nursing Home where he died on 15 April 2022.

May they rest in peace.



MADE TO FEEL WELCOME

A few months ago, I had the strange experience of having my hands washed by an old lady in a village in rural Pakistan. She grabbed my hands and started washing them. I did try to stop her, but then I decided to surrender to the moment.

It was an ordinary day of visitation to the villages. Our team usually includes an ordained priest, a catechist, a lay missionary and/or a Sister. While the priest and the catechist are talking with the village men, I mingle with the women. That day was my first time to meet this old lady.

It was a pleasant day, and everyone seemed happy, going about their business of preparing our lunch before Mass. I was like a grasshopper, jumping from one *chulah* (clay stove) to another to chat a little with the women while they were doing their cooking. At the end of my hopping about I landed on a *charpay* (stringed bed) where an old lady was sitting. We had a good chat about her family and life in the village. She was so enthusiastic about telling her story which I enjoyed listening to. We exchanged questions. I felt she wanted to tell me something - a story of joy and blessing!

We were killing time, laughing and storytelling, when a basin was placed in front of me by a woman holding a jar of water. Suddenly the old lady grabbed my hands, smiled at me, and started washing them. I tried to pull my hands away and protested that I

could do it myself, but my defence was not strong enough. She held them with her hands and while she was caressing them, I could only gaze at her and smile.

Her hands were neither soft nor manicured. They were hands that had sown seed and reaped the rewards after long months of patiently nurturing the land. Hands that bleed during a hard rush harvest. Hands to be proud of and grateful for because of their hard work. Hands that tell a lot of stories about life's lessons.

I still remember her face smiling at me while saying something which I couldn't make out, even though I was just in front of her. Maybe I was so struck by what she was doing that what she was saying just didn't register. At that moment, deep inside me, I was experiencing mixed emotions. If this was Jesus washing my feet, this would possibly be the feeling I was experiencing.

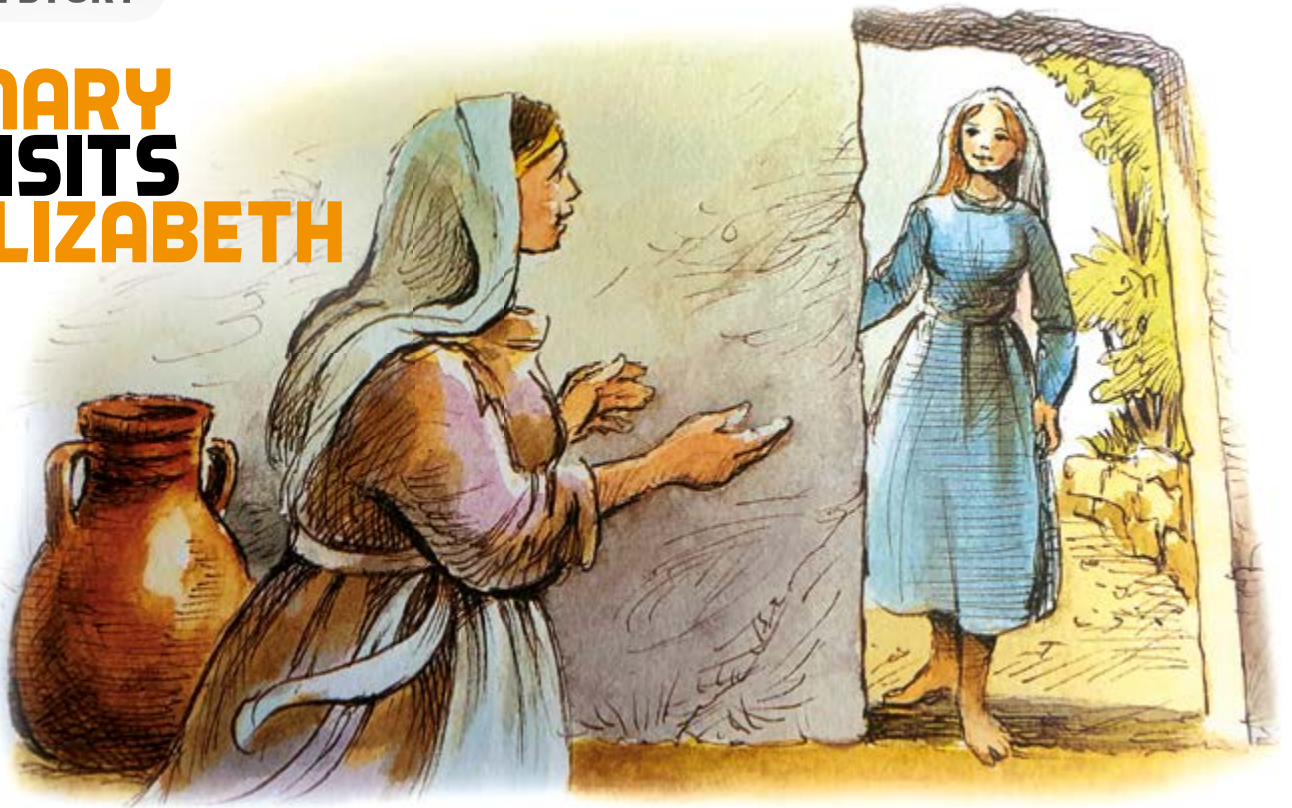
I am in awe that I got to witness this kind of love from people I had just met for the first time. Her humble witness to a complete stranger really made me feel welcome. ●

Monalisa Esteban

Columban lay missionary Monalisa Esteban lives and works in Pakistan.

01. Columban missionary Sr Susanna Choi with members of the Parkari Kolhi tribal community in Sindh province, Pakistan. Image: Fr Pat Raleigh.

MARY VISITS ELIZABETH



After the angel had left, Mary went as quickly as she could to visit her cousin. As soon as Mary entered Zacharias's house and greeted Elizabeth, Elizabeth felt her baby leap for joy inside her womb. Suddenly, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

"Of all women, you are the most blessed!" she cried.

"And blessed is the child you carry! As soon as I

heard your voice, I felt my baby move inside me. How honoured I am that you have come to visit me."

Mary sang a great song of praise to God:

"My soul sings of the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God who is my saviour."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months, and then returned home. ●

Read also: [Luke 1:39-56](#)

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

BIBLE QUIZ

NUMBER 100

1 In Ezra, ch.8, what did Ezra and the people do on first arriving in Jerusalem, feast, fast, rest or worship?

2 In Matthew ch.8, what town did Jesus enter when a centurion came asking for help?

3 In Luke ch.8, the people in the country of the Gerasenes begged Jesus to stay, true or false?

4 In Acts, ch.8, to which city had Paul travelled when he preached in the Areopagus?

5 In Matthew ch.15, at what coastal region did Jesus heal a woman's little daughter?

6 In Psalm 23, supply the missing word: "He leads me beside waters"?

£15 vouchers for the first three correct entries received!
Consult your Bible, answer the questions above and send your entry to: Bible Quiz N° 100, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 31st August 2022.

Bible Quiz N° 98 Winners: Lorraine Magee, St Andrews, Fife • Ian Denham, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire • Veronica Hammond, Coventry.

Name:

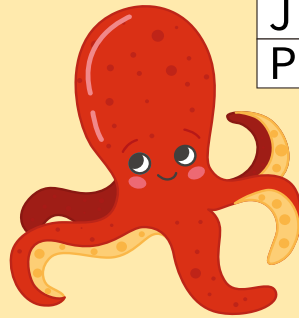
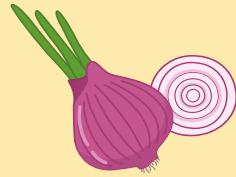
Address:



WORD SEARCH

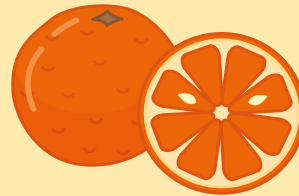
Find these words in the puzzle. They can be found straight across or down:

- OCTOPUS
- ORANGE
- ONION
- OWL
- OLIVES
- ORCHID
- OIL



letter O

G	S	A	O	L	I	V	E	S	R	P
L	O	E	R	R	G	L	O	V	E	S
A	C	U	O	R	A	N	G	E	E	R
S	T	C	N	J	C	J	L	Y	O	E
S	O	S	A	B	L	T	K	N	R	E
E	P	E	R	O	W	L	E	E	C	S
S	U	B	W	K	C	R	A	E	H	N
P	S	M	H	I	K	R	U	D	I	O
G	I	N	O	N	I	O	N	L	D	T
J	I	S	L	E	N	G	I	E	H	E
P	E	T	E	O	I	L	A	S	V	S



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PUDSY'S DIRTY - FIND THE 10 SPELLING MISTAKES

We have our hols again from school so all the cuzzins are aful busy doing this and that. The big ones are so important they have lots to do except they wo'nt tell anybody becoss we wud'nt understand they say. And the small cousins are saying they want to be riding horses and things like that. Or is it talking to the horses they mean? So I dunno what I should be doing because I'm too small for the big cousins and too big for the small ones. And when we were visiting Grandad last week I was asking him if he was riding horses

when he was a young fella and he said sure cept them times horses were for work and not galloping around. And he said the trouble these days is they have things like drones and robots to do all the work for them like Unkil Edward's new tractor and look at all the time it takes for polishing and cleaning. You never had to do that with the horse. So I am thinking that instead of trying to ride horses I can be just driving that luvly new tractor I was telling you about and I betcha back at school they'll be saying I am a great guy!



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 31st August 2022.

HA! HA!

1. Why did the newspaper talk to the ice cream?
2. What do bees say in summer?
3. Why do bananas use sun cream?
4. Why did the teacher put on sunglasses?
5. What does the sun drink out of?
6. Where do cows go on their summer holiday?

1. It was looking for the scoop!
2. It's swarm, isn't it?!
3. So they don't peel!
4. Because their students were so bright!
5. Sunglasses!
6. Moo York!

COMPETITION WINNERS

MARCH / APRIL 2022

Grace Richards
Sutton Coldfield

Alexa Thorburn
Erskine

Connie Smith
London

Ellen McHugh
London

1

2

1

2

Colpaint - Aged 7 and Under

Colpaint - Aged 8 and Over

Herculean Hercules Beetles

By Elizabeth McArdle



Among the Earth's most abundant life forms and representing a staggering 80% of all animal life, are the insects. Often seen as small, unimportant creatures, we do not give them a second thought, that is unless they bother us. However, unknown to us, they provide essential ecological services such as pollination of our fruits and food crops, decomposition of waste, and pest control. Their lives are lived to the full and they experience their own share of joys, challenges, trials and tribulations, which is all part of living on planet earth.

If you believe that insects are insignificant, the Hercules Beetle, which hails from the rainforests of South America, would not agree with you. They would argue that they have been around for much longer than we humans and indeed, they have. A 45-million-year-old fossil of a Hercules beetle ancestor was found in central Oregon in the USA. The remains of the first humans date back only two million years.

The Hercules beetle would also point out that they are the longest and largest flying insect in the world. They are also the strongest creatures on earth for their size and wait for this, they can carry 850 times their own weight. That would be the equivalent of you or I, carrying seven elephants. Wow!

For some of us, beetles and especially the Hercules beetle are super-interesting. Not all of us share these sentiments but the reality is that we share the planet with them. God must have a special place in His heart for beetles because, after all, He created at least 350,000 species and there are many more waiting to be discovered. Their story is not over yet.

It is summer and beetles are out and about and at their most active. Why not go outside in search of these awesome creatures. Their variety of shape and colour will not disappoint and who knows what you might find. ●



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And he said to them,

“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.”

Mark 16:15

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