

far east



MAGAZINE OF THE COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES



**BUILDING
PEACEFUL
FUTURES**

Schools Competition
Winners

**CLIMATE
JUSTICE FOR
THE POOR**

The Guilty Rich Must Pay

**IS THE
CHURCH
REDUNDANT?**

Synodality
and Renewal

04 Columban Schools Media Competition Winners

The winning article and images in our Columban Schools Media Competition 2023 for which students were invited to write an article or create an image on the topic: 'Building Peaceful Futures'.

06 Sunday on Sanday

Fr John Boles meets two inspirational Columban supporters from Myanmar (Burma) who are keeping the faith alive in a remote corner of Scotland's Orkney Islands.

08 Sowing New Seeds

Columban Sisters have been working in Hyderabad Diocese in Pakistan for more than 30 years. Sr Yoon Mi Kim writes about her ministry and outreach to the Hijrat Colony, a mixed community of Muslims, Hindus and Christians.

10 Is the Church Redundant?

Columban lay missionary Nathalie Marytsch believes the Church today has the opportunity to rediscover and reformulate itself through the synodal process.

12 Climate Justice for the Poor

Climate injustice impacts the innocent poor much harder than the guilty rich, writes Columban missionary Fr Shay Cullen.

14 Synodality and Formation for Mission

Fr Frank Hoare spoke to the Federation of Conferences of Catholic Bishops of Oceania earlier this year. Synodality and formation for mission were two of the three major themes of the bishops' assembly. The third was the effects of the changing climate on the oceans.

16 The Laws of War

Fr Dermot Carthy considers a prophetic 7th century Irish law which sought to protect civilians in time of war. The *Cáin Adomnáin* is known as the 'Geneva Accords' of the ancient Irish and it is Europe's first human rights treaty.

17 A Life in the Dark

Virgenia O. Vidad recently met the mother of a young woman whose life has been destroyed by domestic violence.

18 Obituaries

20 Reflection

21 Stories from the Bible

22 Children's Section

23 Nature: Awesome Ants



04



06



12



08



14



16



17

**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

The Aeta are indigenous people of the Philippines who live in isolated mountainous parts of Luzon Island.
Image: Shutterstock



One of my abiding memories of my Spiritual Year while I was studying for missionary priesthood is of being told – and reminded again and again – not to wait at the front door of Dalgan until a friend appeared and then go for a walk with them. Rather to head off with whoever happened to be ready and waiting at the door for a companion to join him.

The purpose of actively engaging with whoever was around was intended to expand my circle of friends and enlarge my world, thus developing a habit that would be helpful for my future missionary life in which I would have very limited ability to choose my friends.

Apparently, the above practice had been emphasised by John Blowick to Columban students since the earliest days of the Society and so, even after his death, was handed on as a meaningful part of one's preparation for Columban life and mission.

I was reminded of this during a recent workshop on synodality when one of the presenters argued that we should drop the word 'synodality' and replace it with 'walking together', since it is in fact the same activity, but the latter phrase can be grasped much more readily by the woman in the pew as well as by the man in the street.

Cultivating the habit of opening oneself up to those who cross one's path stands in sharp contrast to the approach of modern media. Internet search engines – like

Google – are designed to yield results that reinforce your previous choices (or the choices of the majority of people around you), thereby limiting your exposure to new or different ideas. Similarly, thanks to algorithms, social media platforms are designed to connect you with like-minded people, thereby ensuring that you feel supported and affirmed.

The result of all this is that, even though many people spend a great deal of time online, learning about the world around them and engaging in commentary with others about it, they are in fact preserved in a bubble which has little resemblance to the complexity of the real world or of the variety of people who inhabit it.

Against this backdrop, the practice of synodality or of 'walking together' is a radical way of living. John Blowick understood its enduring value for Columban missionaries a century ago, and now Pope Francis envisages it as providing significant benefit to the universal Church throughout the third millennium. ●

Fr Tim Mulroy

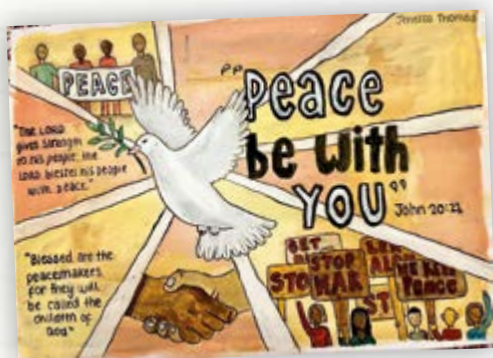
Society leader, Fr Tim Mulroy, is from Meelick, Co Mayo. Prior to his appointment to this leadership role he worked on mission in Japan and in El Paso, Texas. He was also Regional Director in the US.

01. Co-founders of the Missionary Society of St Columban, Bishop Edward Galvin (l) and Fr John Blowick walking in the grounds of Dalgan Park in the early 1950s.





01



02



03

BUILDING PEACEFUL FUTURES

COMPETITION RESULTS

Students were invited to write an article or create an image on the topic 'Building Peaceful Futures' for the 2023 Columban Schools Media Competition.

The competition was run by the Columbans and the **Far East** magazine. Young people aged 13-18 years were asked to produce an article or image that demonstrated an awareness and understanding of conflict in the world today. Also, to spotlight people, communities and organisations trying to make the world a better place for everyone by building peaceful futures.

A student from All Saints in Sheffield, **Oaratwa Tebelelo**, won this year's print category while a student from St Mary's in Bishop's Stortford, **Cara Mashumba**, won the image category.

Second place in the print category was awarded to **Thea Smith** of Loreto Grammar School in Altrincham and third place in print went to **Ezekiel M'lmea** of St Mary's in Bishop's Stortford.

Second place in the image category was awarded to **Jenessa Thomas** of Loreto Grammar School in Altrincham and third place went to

Julia Szewczyk of St Augustine's in West London.

Congratulations to all the winners! We would like to thank every student who took the time and made the effort to enter the competition. The judges paid tribute to the very high standard this year. Thank you also to all our judges for their time and expertise. ●

The full list of winners can be seen here: www.columbancompetition.com

LET'S DEMOLISH THE WALL

By Oaratwa Tebelelo.

I don't remember the exact facts of the story but what I do remember is that it was someone who did everything 'right' and by that I mean had followed the unwritten safety precautions we as society have. Don't go out at night and if you do, go in a large group. Don't do that. Don't do this. I remember thinking this could be me and when I looked at my mum, I could tell she felt the same.

Oftentimes when I see or hear about conflict I instinctively build a wall between me and the person experiencing the conflict as a way of protecting myself. But that journalist's report demolished my wall and reminded me that conflict can happen to anyone even if they do everything 'right'.

Following this we did not watch the news for a couple of days and then when we did, the same story featured but this time we did not stop and give each other that look people who are grateful that the tragedy is not happening to them make. Instead, this time the conversation we were having carried on and the wall went undamaged. Had I somehow grown 'strong' over the couple of days we had stopped watching the news? The answer to that was 'no' and I don't think anyone with any empathy can become 'strong' enough to hear the suffering of others and not feel any kind of emotion. So why was my mum's and my attitude seemingly detached?

To understand our reaction you need to understand our failed attempt at not watching the news as a way of blocking out the story but we did not stop hearing about the news story. I was reminded of it on the bus, when I walked past newspapers, on my recommended videos on YouTube, and in conversations with colleagues. So when the story came up again on the TV screen it was hard to feel sadness, but that is not to say we did not feel any emotion. We felt anger but it was the kind of anger that was laced with the impression that we could not do anything and that all we could do was to let the story play in the background as we spoke and to listen to it for what felt like the hundredth time.

This story was not the only story I felt I had heard repeatedly; it felt like a loop in the news cycle. Feel sadness. Feel anger. Feel helplessness. Do nothing. So when I saw the question 'is conflict inevitable?', my immediate answer was 'yes'. As sad as that is, that is how I

felt the world we live in is.

According to Global Trends 89.3 million people are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, fear of persecution and human rights violations. The world we live in justifies this. And how do we justify it? With excuses such as the ones I made: I am helpless, that I can't do anything about conflict. In fact, I know deep down that I am not helpless. Because of the school I go to I am surrounded by images and stories of people who have made an impact on the world. Despite all of that I build the wall in an effort to excuse my lack of action. They are saints. They are perfect. They are old.

I am none of the above but the wall is demolished this time by a face radiating youth – St Therese of Lisieux, the saint of my school house. At age 15 she became a Carmelite nun and gave her life to God. St Therese of Lisieux did small things with love and without expecting anything in return. This became known as 'The Little Way'. St Therese of Lisieux said, "Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, or even the difficulty, as at the love with which we do them." I like that quote because it shows we do not have to make a massive impact in the world but to do something little with love in our hearts.

Anthony Olaseinde runs a non-profit organisation called 'Always An Alternative' and through this he has begun an anti-knife campaign called 'Keep Sheffield Stainless'. Olaseinde has put weapons bins around Sheffield in which people can hand in their weapons without fear of persecution.

According to the Ben Kinsella Trust the police recorded 50,434 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in the last 12 months to September 2022, and a 50 percent increase in knife crime in England and Wales in September 2022 compared to March 2012. Anthony alone cannot end knife crime but his small actions are an example of what can be done to create a peaceful future.

The wall has been demolished and without it there I can see why I don't take action. Fear. Like I said, I am lucky to go a school where I am surrounded by examples of people who have made a change but I am also surrounded by the answer to my fear. I walk past the answer on the way to the canteen. I wear the answer on my school tie underneath the shield; the letters are small but if you look you will see them: Fortis in Fide. It is Latin for 'From Faith comes Strength' and I know that in the words of St Therese of Lisieux, "God would not make me wish for something impossible and so in spite of my littleness..." ●

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SUNDAY on SANDAY

Fr John Boles meets two inspirational Columban supporters from Myanmar (Burma) who are keeping the faith alive in a remote corner of Scotland's Orkney Islands.

“A land lost in the mists of Time” might reasonably describe Sanday, an eerily beautiful speck of land set in the Atlantic at the northern edge of Scotland's Orkney Islands. Its strategic location astride ancient sea-lanes means it displays a wealth of archaeological remains, from Neolithic, Celtic and - most notably - Viking times.

Sanday is sparsely populated and few of its 500 inhabitants are Catholic. Remarkably, for many years the faith has been kept alive here by Columban supporters and Eucharistic Ministers Maurice and Jean Soord. Even more remarkably, Maurice and Jean are not originally from the Orkneys, nor from England, Ireland, not even from Scotland but from Myanmar (Burma)! Their story is as fascinating as that of Sanday itself.

Both were born in Burma during the days of the British Raj. When Japan invaded in 1941 Maurice's family opted to stay, but Jean's decided to escape. They joined one of the last caravans making up the Great Trek over the foothills of the Himalayas into India. For most of the refugees this was a harrowing experience, but Jean's only memory of it is a happy one. “I'd never seen snow before,” she told me. “It was wonderful. I remember making snowballs and throwing them at my brother.”

They returned after the Liberation but fled again - this time to England - after the abortive military coup in 1947 which occurred during the chaotic run-up to independence. “We were living right opposite the Administration Building,” Jean recalls. “We heard the shooting, and I ran to the balcony to watch what was happening, until Mum came and dragged me back.”

These were the shots which killed Aung San, Burma's first leader. His daughter, Aung San Suu Kyi, also became the country's leader, but - in a cruel twist of fate - she currently languishes in prison following the latest military coup.

Maurice's family came to England at



the same time, and he began to make his way as an engineer and a keen amateur photographer. On meeting Jean, he was determined to give her the wedding he felt she deserved. Jean recounts how, "Maurice sold all his photographic equipment so we could have a honeymoon. We went to Torquay." She proudly showed me the Torquay sugar spoon they have kept as a memento ever since.

Jean became an auxiliary nurse and Maurice rose to become a cabling inspector on the London Underground. Once they had retired and their seven children had left home, they looked around for a rural place by the sea. "One day I was glancing at 'Exchange and Mart' and there it was, the perfect home", Maurice told me. 'Saville' is an imposing 18th century former seat of a Sanday "laird".

Jean loved 'Saville' as much as Maurice did. They bought it and moved up. They felt they were in paradise. Only one thing was lacking. There was no Catholic church! Undaunted, they gathered the other Catholic islanders about them and began organising Celebrations of the Word. Soon, the priest on the main island of the Orkneys made them Eucharistic Ministers. The bishop in far-off Aberdeen heard about them. Impressed, he visited and granted permission for them to convert a room of their house into a chapel. Nowadays, they host Mass there whenever a priest can visit and, meanwhile, they hold daily Eucharistic Services, take communion to the sick, and generally keep the faith alive.

I'm one of those lucky priests who has had the privilege of presiding at Mass in this marvellous place. Celebrating Sunday on Sanday at 'Saville' with the Soords makes

a fittingly impressive mouthful. The little congregation was eager to divulge to me more of the magic of the island. Its neolithic tombs are world famous. Christianity came to the Celtic Pictish inhabitants in the 7th century courtesy of Irish and Northumbrian monks. In 2011, a rare Pictish Christian stone was unearthed, in a house now owned by parishioners, Wendy and Allan, which features a cross on one side and Celtic spirals on the other.

Pride of place goes to the Vikings, however. They conquered the Orkney Islands in the 9th century and Norway only formally ceded them to Scotland in 1472. In 1991, a spectacular Viking find was made close to 'Saville' when the remains of a boat burial were discovered. A Norse ship had been interred along with the bodies of three individuals and a hoard of ornaments, weapons and other treasures.

In 1997 another boat burial excavation was featured on national television. One morning Maurice was surprised by people knocking on the kitchen door. "They were Tony Robinson's 'Time Team' from the BBC. They had stumbled on something important and were desperate to borrow my wheelbarrows."

Funny how God works things out. Not only does he use these wonderful do-it-yourself missionaries Maurice and Jean to link together Burma, the Orkneys, the Columbans and the Vikings, but He also avails of their talents to keep the light of the Church shining on a windswept outpost in the cold North Atlantic. ●

Fr John Boles is Regional Director of the Columbans in Britain.

01. Fr John Boles with Maurice and Jean Soord and other parishioners after Sunday Mass on Sanday. Images: Fr John Boles.

02. Jean and Maurice on their wedding day in 1957.

03. Rosie, Maurice and Jean's dog, in the garden in front of their house 'Saville' on the island of Sanday: the chapel lies behind the yellow door.

04. After their conversion to Christianity, the Orkney Vikings built the wonderful Cathedral of St Magnus in Kirkwall.

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SOWING NEW SEEDS

Then Jesus said,

“The kingdom of God is like someone who plants seed in the ground. Night and day, whether the person is asleep or awake, the seed still grows, but the person does not know how it grows. By itself the earth produces grain. First the plant grows, then the head, and then all the grain in the head. When the grain is ready, the farmer cuts it, because this is the harvest time.” Mark 4. 26-28



Columban Sisters have been working in Hyderabad Diocese in Pakistan for more than 30 years. Sr Yoon Mi Kim writes about her ministry and outreach to the Hijrat Colony, a mixed community of Muslims, Hindus and Christians.

As the seed in the ground spreads and grows, it echoes the way life can twist and turn leading us to where we are now. That's how I felt when we opened our new mission in Karachi. It started when I was still a young missionary based in the Andes mountains of Peru. I used to joke with another young Sister that we would work in Pakistan when we had both become seasoned missionaries. I was happy in Peru but this intuition was a seed planted in my heart which grew over the years.

Almost 15 years later, I arrived in Pakistan and one year later, another young Sister, Anne, also joined the mission in Pakistan. Columban Sisters have been working mostly in Hyderabad Diocese for more than 30 years in education, health and tribal ministry. Our Sisters have accompanied and lifted up so many lives through their various ministries.

After language studies in Urdu, I worked with one of the underprivileged communities in St Elizabeth Parish in Hyderabad. My first three years there were very tough. I felt the language, culture and extreme climate exceeded my ability to adapt. I struggled to learn the language, to adapt to the culture and acclimatise to the harsh weather. At one stage, I almost threw in the towel. But slowly, I began to see meaning in this work with the people who experience hardship and discrimination for being Christians.

Meanwhile, another seed was mysteriously growing in me. When I was in Karachi learning Urdu, I met the Sisters of Charity, Mother Teresa's Sisters. They invited me to visit a Christian village located on the outskirts of Karachi city on the weekends. This village had recently been developed by poor Christians who could not afford to pay rent or buy a

house in the city. There were no facilities - no water or electricity and, at that time, most houses were only half built and had no roof. Even today, new areas like this continue to grow as the urban poor look for an affordable place to live. Many rural farmers who cannot sustain their life due to the impact of climate change on their farms leave their villages to look for housing and better opportunities in the city. I thought it would be a good place to open a new mission.

A few years later, we finally started our new mission in Karachi, but God had another plan for us. Archbishop Benny Trivas of Karachi advised us to start in a safe area and to begin by making contact with people. So, we were sent to work in St Anthony Parish where we could find good support from the parish priest and meet all walks of life. I chose to concentrate my time on a few communities within the parish's twenty communities.

One of these communities is the Hijrat Colony which is a mixed community of Muslims, Hindus and Christians. Through visiting homes, I found that the people had a desire to read and understand the Bible. But as many of the women have never gone to school we decided to start with Urdu classes for adult women. We now have 23 women registered in our

adult literacy programme, all of whom have a great desire to read the Bible. We are also planning to start Urdu classes for adolescent girls in the hope of offering training and skills to help them secure a livelihood in the future.

I am also starting to organise Bible sharing groups in people's homes. As Pakistani Christians have regular prayer time with their family and a great love for the Bible, I am introducing Lectio Divina prayer to the communities I visit. As I am getting to know the realities of the people, I can see many possible future ministries, especially in the field of education, empowering women and spiritual accompaniment for families who are coping with busy stressful lives.


This is an exciting time for me to explore and discern where God is calling me to be. I continue to plant different seeds and wait quietly to see how they grow. Over the years, I have learned that God does everything. As the scripture says, "Night and day, whether the person is asleep or awake, the seed still grows, but the person does not know how it grows." I am fulfilled and happy to be here with God's beloved people, collaborating and witnessing how our Father God makes them grow and how I harvest in my quiet waiting. ●

Sr Yoon Mi Kim served on mission in Peru before studies in the USA and then a few years in leadership in Korea. She is currently on mission in Karachi, Pakistan.

01. Adolescent girls learn Urdu in preparation for training in livelihood skills for the future.
02. Sr. Yoon Mi and a group of women learning Urdu in order to practice Lectio Divina
03. Sr. Yoon Mi gets to know the women in the local community.

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Columban lay missionary Nathalie Marytsch believes the Church today has the opportunity to rediscover and reformulate itself through the synodal process.

Towards the end of last year, I came across two 'For Sale' signs outside church buildings in the area where I live. These churches belonged to different Christian denominations and are less than a mile apart in Sparkhill, Birmingham.

I found the terminology used in one of the notices interesting. It advertised the property as 'redundant church and land'. Over a period of several weeks, as I commuted to my ministry, my eyes were always drawn to that sign. Every time I passed by these buildings I could not help but wonder about the communities which, down the years, used these buildings, and the way they had lived out and witnessed to the Christian message. I also wondered about the value and relevance of the Christian message today.

Today, the world is seeing unprecedented political, economic, and social turmoil. There are innumerable examples of countries that are experiencing violence and exile. Over seven million people have left Venezuela since 2013, making it one of the largest displacement crises in the 21st century. It is over a year since Russia invaded Ukraine. This conflict has seen the needless loss of life, widespread

destruction of infrastructure, and nearly eight million Ukrainians seeking refuge in Europe.

Today, minorities worldwide are being persecuted. The Uyghur people are suffering in China. In Myanmar, the catastrophic coup d'état of 2021 is ongoing. Because of their sexual orientation, people in several countries are severely punished and discriminated against. On his visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pope Francis heard horrific first-hand accounts of sexual violence, mutilation, and kidnapping which affect numerous communities in East Congo.

There is no doubt about the urgency to act on climate change. Last year, extreme flooding in Pakistan destroyed entire communities, eradicated livelihoods, and uprooted thousands of people. Meanwhile violence and division still exist in many places, just think of recent attacks on a Pakistani mosque and an Israeli synagogue. These occurred around the time that humanity commemorated the horror of the Holocaust. The world is just recovering from a pandemic and now facing significant economic challenges with the cost of living crisis affecting millions of people globally.



The tragic list can continue endlessly. But then, I ponder about those churches in Sparkhill, and I am drawn back to the core foundations of our Christian faith. God himself became human, suffered death, and was buried. Yet, the story does not end there. God rose from the dead, promising to stay with us on the journey. And of course, God does not live in a building. God is among God's people.

This is precisely the exercise that Pope Francis has invited us to undertake through the Synod on Synodality: to walk together. We are called to make the effort to walk alongside one another, listening to the

voices of people who are marginalised, feel excluded, or are experiencing hardships or conflict. I believe the Church today has the opportunity to rediscover, to reformulate itself through this process of synodality. This is a chance to address with open and inclusive eyes the concerns of our local and global communities, moving from a clerical, hierarchical church to one that is community-centred; one in which the Christian message is integral to our daily activities rather than redundant or incidental. Perhaps there will be smaller faith communities, but they will be more relevant, vibrant and meaningful. ●

Columban lay missionary Nathalie Marytsch is from Chile. She has worked with disadvantaged communities in Birmingham including refugees, asylum seekers and migrants for 20 years. Nathalie and her husband Mauricio run Fatima House on behalf of Birmingham Archdiocese and the Columbans, which offers shelter for women asylum seekers.

01. Stratford Road Baptist Church in Sparkbrook, Birmingham.

Image: Nathalie Marytsch

02. Former Sparkhill Methodist Church, Birmingham. Image: Nathalie Marytsch

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COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES BRITAIN



CLIMATE JUSTICE FOR THE POOR




01

Climate injustice impacts the innocent poor much harder than the guilty rich, writes Columban missionary Fr Shay Cullen.

Celebrate Laudato Si Week (21-28 May) with the Columbans and reflect on the 'cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor'. See page 24 for details of the Columban Way Pilgrimage.

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When I hike into the hills and mountains of Zambales with the Aeta indigenous farmers, their children and their families, we are usually on a trek with the Preda fair trade team to plant grafted mango saplings, calamansi or rambutan trees. The mangoes are certified organic according to EU standards. This is a great achievement for the indigenous people.

The Aeta people claim the mountains as their ancestral lands but around the world the rights of the indigenous peoples to ancestral lands are challenged by mining companies and land grabbers supported by corrupt politicians and officials.

These mountains were once lush rainforests where the ancestors of the Aeta people (once called Negritos, their DNA traced them back to Africa) lived and survived in peace as self-sufficient hunters and gatherers. They loved and respected their forests, they cared for the natural world and the birds and animals. The climate was secure, steady, predictable and trust-worthy for the past generations.

The Aeta people knew when it would rain, when it would not. They knew where and when they should hunt abundant wild boars and chicken and harvest honey and gather fruits and berries. They could dig up root crops like cassava and camote (sweet potato) and harvest mangoes and bananas. Having never met a human from

outside their own small family groups, they were healthy and had developed their own extensive herbal medicinal healing practice. There was discipline and order to the life of the forests and rivers where they caught fish and shrimps. Their climate was fair and balanced.

That natural life in harmony with the natural world came to an end for the indigenous people of the Philippines and indigenous people all over the world with the arrival of colonisers. The first migrants into the Philippines after the Negritos had settled in the islands came from Indonesia about 5,000 years ago. Then the Europeans from Spain came when Magellan landed in March 1521. In 1898, the United States took over the Philippines by force from the Filipinos who had overcome the Spaniards.

The Aeta indigenous people and the Filipino people began to suffer previously unknown diseases which had been brought by the Europeans. From the start of the colonial period came great climate injustice when the rain forests were cut down, notably after 1945 to rebuild Europe and Japan after World War II. Later, serious climate change began for the Philippines.

The illegal logging continues up to the present despite laws banning logging. There is not much left to cut down. As the rainforest that once covered the entire archipelago was eroded - only three percent remains - the climate began to change, and



CO2 and global warming has continued to increase dramatically worldwide.

Climate change has brought more intense rainfall and more typhoons, which have displaced hundreds of thousands of people, 80 percent of whom are women, according to the UN Development Programme. There are many more droughts in the hot season and floods in the wet season. Damage to fruit trees through infestation by insects has increased and pesticides now rule the agricultural sector endangering the health of people, agri-workers and consumers. Cancers are on the increase, too, as a result.

The great climate injustice is that the poor of the world have to suffer great losses because of the decisions of the rich elite that over-exploit the earth's natural resources in developing countries for their own enrichment. They cause 79 percent of the CO2 emissions that are hurting the poor.

The annual \$400 billion government subsidies given by rich nations to oil companies to invest in oil and gas

exploration would be better spent as a climate justice compensation payment to the victims of climate change caused by the polluting activities of the rich, industrialised nations. All must see that climate damage is a justice and human rights issue.

"Our rains do not come at the correct time," Juanito, one of the Aeta subsistence farmers told me. Speaking in Ilocano and translated by Preda staff he explained, "Nowadays, we suffer greatly because the blossoms of the mango trees are washed away, it was never like that until recent years."

He understands how the negative effects of global warming and climate change are robbing him of his livelihood. He related how the mango fruits were splitting open from excessive heat. It was unnatural, he said. Then there were the smaller harvests of wild bananas, less wild honey, fewer bees and birds and no mango harvest for three years. They were growing poorer year by year.

Climate injustice impacts the innocent poor much harder than the guilty rich and the problem is social, environmental and political. The people of the developing world must elect officials that have strong green credentials and have the political will to change to renewable sources of energy and phase out their dependency on fossil fuels.

The rich industrialists and their cronies in the developed world have favoured government officials that allow them to continue burning fossil fuels and damaging the environment, causing global warming and damaging the health, lives, crops and fruit trees of millions of poor people. ●

Fr Shay Cullen was ordained in 1969 and has served in the Philippines ever since. He co-founded the Preda Foundation: www.preda.org and established Preda Fair Trade to alleviate poverty and support indigenous people such as the Aeta. He has been nominated four times for the Nobel Peace Prize, and has received other human rights awards including the Hugh O'Flaherty International Humanitarian Award for his work with children who have been forced into sex slavery.



01. Portrait of a young member of the Aeta indigenous people near Mount Pinatubo in Santa Juliana, Capas, Central Luzon, Philippines. Image: Shutterstock.
02. Columban missionary Fr Shay Cullen at a Preda Fairtrade stand.
03. Preda Fairtrade Mango.



THE LETTER: A MESSAGE FOR OUR EARTH

Caring for our common home starts with you!

Pope Francis published his encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* in 2015. It encourages us to see how "everything is connected." The way we treat the Earth, our common home, is a reflection of how we treat each other. Caring for each other means caring for the home we share. 'The Letter' is an incredibly moving documentary about Pope Francis' call to action on climate change. His message is even more urgent today.

Produced by Oscar-winning producers Off the Fence (My Octopus Teacher) and the Laudato Si Movement. It was directed by the Emmy and BAFTA-winning documentary film director, Nicolas Brown. The Letter explores indigenous rights, climate migration, and youth leadership in the context of climate action. The highlight of the film is the dialogue the protagonists have with Pope Francis.



SYNODALITY AND FORMATION FOR mission

Columban missionary Fr Frank Hoare spoke to the Federation of Conferences of Catholic Bishops of Oceania (FCBCO) earlier this year. Synodality and formation for mission were two of the three major themes of the bishops' assembly along with the effects of a changing climate on the oceans. This is a shortened version of Fr Hoare's address.

The The Working Document of the Continental Stage of the Synod of Synods is titled '*Widen the Space of your Tent.*' It has a focus on mission. It emphasises listening, welcome and radical inclusion – no one is to be excluded. The tent is a space of communion, a place of participation, and a foundation for mission. All the baptised are co-responsible for the one mission of the Church, the one *Missio Dei*. But can our Church provide spaces of radical inclusion when it is in crisis?

Many reasons are given for the Church crisis: secularisation, consumerism, radical individualism, globalisation, moral relativity, media, and other socio-cultural forces. But the Church's own sins contribute to this silent earthquake; issues such as clerical child abuse and the treatment of women as second-class citizens in the Church.

Theologian, Peter Hunermann believes that Church structures must be compatible with the fundamental values of social life where the Church finds itself.

The Second Vatican Council tried to go beyond the hierarchical model in *Lumen Gentium* – the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church. Chapters One and Two spoke of the Church as mystery and as the People of God. However, the hierarchical nature of the Church followed in Chapter 3. Its juridical application remains the concrete experience of Church members. For example, lay people can give advice but

may not participate in decision-making in pastoral councils.

Missionary theologian Jose Comblin claims that the Church discovers its true nature when on mission in a new context. For instance, through mission to the Greek world St Paul discovered that faith in Jesus Christ need not be tied to Judaic culture and traditions. But later the Church tended to add new elements and incorporate aspects of Greco-Roman and other European cultures. It then accepted these institutional and cultural accretions as integral to Christianity.

Inculturation means, for Comblin, simplifying institutions that are not biblically necessary. A new era of Christian mission will be grounded on a return to the gospel message and a simplification of these accretions of past centuries.

The Holy Spirit, the instigator of mission, helps us to recognise the signs of the times. We live in a globalised mainly urban technological society facing a climate crisis. Signs of the times are seen in the responses of particular persons to societal crises e.g. the Samaritan woman in John's gospel. Jesus Christ himself, in his life, death and resurrection, was a sign of a new stage of sacred history. Saints Benedict, Francis of Assisi and Thomas Aquinas, were signs of their times calling the Church to proclaim the gospel message to the world in a new way. Greta Thunberg, in resisting



02

Fr Frank Hoare is from Ireland. He has been on mission in Fiji since 1973, where he has been involved in parish work and student formation. He is the author of 'The Turning Wheel', a history of the Columban missionaries' work in Fiji.

climate change, is a sign of our times.

Pope Francis gives witness that Christianity is not a corpus of laws, doctrines, and rites. It is a relationship with Jesus Christ which frees us from sin and death and leads to freedom, love, and full humanity in community, here and hereafter. This is our inspiration for evangelisation according to the Pope in *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG).

He writes: "I dream of 'a missionary option' that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything so that the Church's ... structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world rather than for her self-preservation." (EG 27) He also said, "Mere administration can no longer be enough. Throughout the world, let us be permanently in a state of mission." (EG 25)

Pope Francis, agreeing with Hunermann and Comblin on simplification of structures says, "There are ecclesial structures which can hamper efforts at evangelization ... (EG 26)." And "the Church has rules or precepts which... no longer have the same usefulness for directing and shaping people's lives (EG 43)." Instead "the message has to concentrate on the essentials (EG 35) ...aware of a 'hierarchy' of truths (EG 36).

Pope Francis says, "Missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church's activity (EG 15)." He affirms, quoting St John Paul II, that *Ad Gentes* mission is "the first task of the Church." However, through migration, the 'gentes' are now coming to us. This will increase as climate change worsens and it could spark violence. Yet, migrants, like the Magi, often bring gifts of deep faith which can inspire local Christians and enrich

the local Church. Migrants have a great longing for an equal relationship.

For a fruitful interaction the host population must be open to migrants. Openness and friendship are a sign of a Church with a missionary outlook. Jesus broke down barriers by calling his disciples friends (Jn. 15:15). Jesus Christ now missions us to create Christian and human communities based on intercultural and inter-religious friendship and mutual love. Intercultural and interfaith dialogue can inspire a deeper spiritual life in participants and become a witness to God's Kingdom.

The Old Testament prophets and Jesus have shown that speaking the truth to power is part of the Church's mission. Our most urgent present issue is the climate crisis of global warming and the extinction of species. The science is clear about the crisis. The challenge is to motivate people and governments to bring about radical change now, rather than kick it down the road when it will be too late. *Laudato Si* has lit the torch. We must spread the light. ●

01. "Pope Francis gives witness that Christianity is not a corpus of laws, doctrines, and rites. It is a relationship with Jesus Christ." Image: Shutterstock.
02. Fr Frank Hoare addressing the Federation of Conferences of Catholic Bishops of Oceania (FCBCO) earlier this year.
03. An illustration of Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well. Image: Shutterstock.



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03

THE LAWS OF WAR

Columban missionary Fr Dermot Carthy considers a prophetic 7th century Irish law which sought to protect civilians in time of war. The *Cáin Adomnáin* is known as the 'Geneva Accords' of the ancient Irish and it is Europe's first human rights treaty.

01. A photograph from June 2022 of Lev and his cat. He was the only man who stayed in this apartment building in Kharkiv, Ukraine after it was struck by a Russian missile.

Image: Shutterstock.

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The 20th century saw two world wars in one generation, and a lot of conflicts in which countless millions were killed, maimed and forced into exile. Mankind is one of the few species which destroys its own kind.

Over the centuries in Europe, philosophers, theologians and lawyers have debated the criteria for a 'just war', but it was not until the 19th century that they considered the rights of non-combatants - all the unarmed civilians.

However, in Ireland in the late 7th century one Irishman did consider this reality in depth and succeeded in having the protection of the un-armed accepted in law. *Adomnán* (Eunan), a Donegal man and abbot of the influential monastery of Iona who died in AD704, wrote the law known as *Cáin Adomnáin*. It is also called the *Lex Innocentium* meaning the Law of Innocents.

It protected civilians, notably women and non-combatants, in time of war. It was solemnly promulgated at the Synod of Birr in AD697 as binding on Ireland and Scotland, and thus was an early example of international law. The 91 signatories included regional kings, Tara's King of Ireland, bishops and abbots.

The *Cáin* was thirteen centuries ahead of its time. It was only in the early 20th century that protocols and international legal standards were drawn up on the rights and protections for civilians and non-combatants. Through organisations such as the League of Nations, the International Red Cross, and the Geneva Conventions, the UN Declaration on Human Rights efforts were made to reduce war and avoid the industrialised slaughter and massive destruction of World War II.

The media brings us daily examples of indiscriminate bombing and drone attacks on civilians and non-military targets in Ukraine. *Adomnán's* attempts to limit warfare are therefore as relevant today as they were in AD697.

The fact the *Cáin* was written in Irish and not in Latin may explain why this groundbreaking law is not as universally known as it ought to be. ●

Further reading: 'Adomnán's Lex Innocentium and the Laws of War' by James W. Houlihan (Four Courts Press 2020).

Fr Dermot Carthy was ordained in 1959 and went on mission to Peru in 1960. He retired to Ireland in 2022.

LIFE IN THE DARK



Virginia O. Vidad, who manages the Pedalling for Life project founded by Columban missionary Fr Oliver McCrossan, recently met the mother of a young woman whose life has been destroyed by domestic violence.

01. Image: Shutterstock

02. Virginia O. Vidad and a friend with Melanie's mother (second from left) and her sister (third from left).

Please help Columban missionaries to support people like Melanie by making a donation to our Pentecost Appeal. Go to www.columbans.co.uk/donate or call 01564 772 096

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Sadly, domestic violence appears to be everywhere.

In the town of Sominot, Zamboanga del Sur I met the mother of 34-year-old Melanie Omerez. This is an area in the Philippines where the Columban missionaries have worked in the past. Melanie's mother told me about her daughter's life after her marriage. In 2014, Melanie delivered her third child. It was then that her husband started to hit her and the trauma of this violence resulted in Melanie falling into a deep depression. The violence was compounded by a lack of sleep and insufficient food. Her husband is a farmer. He drank every day and seldom provided for the needs of his three children. As Melanie was a fulltime housewife, she was also reliant on her husband's income.

Suffering with severe depression, Melanie was advised to take medication and she began to recover. But then her husband decided to remove her from the care setting she was in and he brought her back home to look after the children. Another incident of domestic violence occurred while her husband was drunk and Melanie fell into a deep depression. She was then confined to a small room and

chained so that she could not leave. Later, Melanie's husband took the children and left her alone.

Melanie's mother, along with her sister, who has a disability, took on the role of looking after her and now take food to her at mealtimes. But she is still chained inside the room in order to prevent her leaving and the room is dark. She can only walk around the bed. The door to the room is locked every day.

Due to a lack of money, Melanie's mother cannot afford to bring her daughter to a doctor to get her medication, to get her proper accommodation and to pay a companion who can look after her without chaining her and confining her. She needs basic medical care to help her with her depression. Her three children need her to be well and part of their lives. This is their hope, for their mother's wellbeing and some sort of livelihood to help her live with dignity. ●

REST in PEACE



Fr Austin McGuinness



Fr Michael ('Mick') Doohan



Fr Jeremiah ('Jerry') Cotter

Fr Austin McGuinness was born on 25th November 1940 at Clonard, Co Meath. He was educated at Clonard N.S. and Belcamp College, Dublin. He entered Dalgan in September 1959 and was ordained priest on 21st December 1965. Austin was appointed to Korea in 1966. Over the following thirteen years, after language studies, he served in Hampyeng, Kwanju Archdiocese; in Kyung Dong, Mokpo; in Pang Nim Dong, Kwangju; and in Sasang, Pusang. From 1979 to 1981 he studied at the Richmond Fellowship in London. He was then appointed to three years on Mission Promotion, followed by two years as assistant in Navan Parish. He returned to Korea for a further three years, serving in Inchon. Austin returned to Ireland in 1990 in poor health. His studies at the Richmond Fellowship, his social skills and his own sufferings prepared him to be a sympathetic and helpful chaplain to the sick. Over the following years he served as chaplain successively in Ballinderry, Mullingar, at the Mater Hospital in Dublin, at St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin, at Tallaght Hospital, Dublin. From 2003 to 2005 he was pastor at Drumlion, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Roscommon. From 2005 onwards he served as chaplain at St Joseph's Hospital, Trim, Co Meath until ill-health confined him to the Dalgan Nursing Home where he died unexpectedly on 29th December 2022.

Austin had a warm personality. He was very generous in supporting various Columban mission projects, was at ease in relating to people and had a wide range of interests. He is buried in the Dalgan cemetery.

Fr Michael ('Mick') Doohan was born on 4th March 1928 at The Hand, Connolly, Ennis, Co Clare. He was educated at Doolough N.S., Connolly, Ennis and St Flannan's College, Ennis. He came to St Columban's, Navan in 1946 and was ordained priest on 21st December 1952. He was appointed to the Philippines in 1953 and assigned the island of Negros where he would spend the following sixty years. Michael worked in the parishes of Candoni, Kabankalan, Sonedeo, Bacolod and Cauayan. Apart from his pastoral ministry, Michael started some very valuable projects. He had always been interested in mechanics and when he saw so many unemployed young people, he set up a free school where boys could study mechanics. Logging had wiped out the forests of Negros Occidental in the 1950s. Michael began to collect seeds and to plant them in small plastic bags of soil. The Japanese

Government helped, and he was given 200 acres of Government land with the condition that he would return it after five years fully planted. That gave employment to local men and women. In all almost a million seedlings were planted, and that part of the reforested mountain is now known as the 'Doohan Forest'. He finally returned to Ireland in 2014 where he alternated between Dalgan and Clare until his health deteriorated. Michael died on 30th December 2022 at the age of 94.

Fr Jeremiah ('Jerry') Cotter was born at Dunlisha, Douglas, Cork on 1st June 1930. He was educated at Christian Brothers N.S. and Christian Brothers College, Cork. He came to Dalgan in 1948 and was ordained priest on 21st December 1954. Jerry was appointed to Korea in 1955. The country was still recovering from the devastation caused by the Korean War. His first assignment was Naju Parish in Kwangju Diocese. There followed appointments in Pukdong and Ham Pyeng Parishes. By 1962 he was pastor in Jin Do Parish before returning as pastor to Ham Pyeng and later to Pukdong Parish. After some further language studies, Jerry was appointed to Sosa Parish in Inchon Diocese.

He was appointed to Vocations and Mission Promotion in Britain from 1975 to 1980. Back in Korea he served in Kuri Parish in Seoul. His retreat work showed him there was an urgent need for a counselling service for priests and religious. He prepared himself by doing a course in religious spirituality at Regis College, Toronto and some units of Clinical Pastoral Theology at Methuen, USA.

On returning to Korea, he established the Centre for Spirituality and Counselling. He also served as Spiritual Director of the Initial Formation Programme in Korea up to 2003. Jerry celebrated his Golden Jubilee in 2004 and by 2007 he had passed his Centre on to a new leadership. He returned to Dalgan in recent years and still hoped to go back to Korea, but he died peacefully in the Dalgan Nursing home on 30th December 2022.

Fr Thomas Michael Murphy was born in Castlebar, Co Mayo on 3rd of August 1949. He was educated at St Patrick's Primary School and St Gerard's Secondary School in Castlebar. He joined the Columbans in September 1967 and was ordained priest in Dalgan on Easter Sunday, 14 April 1974. Tommy's first assignment was to Korea. After an initial year of language study, he served in the parish of

REST[†] IN PEACE



Fr Thomas Michael Murphy



Sr Maureen Grant



Sr Bridie Lough

Huk San Do. Later he served in Yonsandong, Pusan. Following a vacation in Ireland in 1978, Tommy was assigned to the Taiwan Mission Unit. He was a member of the first group that arrived there in 1979. He served in a number of parishes including Ta Nan and St Michael's Taoyuan. He set up a day care centre for Special Needs Children. He also served as the Executive Secretary of the Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) office for the laity. In 1993 Tommy was appointed to the Region of Ireland as Coordinator of the Vocations team. In March 2001 he was appointed as Regional Director of the Irish Region, a role he held until September 2006 when he was elected as Superior General. During his term as Superior General the Society's Generalate was moved to Hong Kong. His continued support and encouragement of the emerging Society involvement in Myanmar was crucial, as was the decision of the Society to seek Columban vocations in China. When his term as Superior General ended in 2012, Tommy did a one-year sabbatical and was then appointed to the China Mission Unit in 2013, living in Beijing. He gave spiritual direction at the National Seminary in Beijing and travelled widely giving retreats. He became CMU Coordinator from 2019 to 2021, moving to Hong Kong in June 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He died at the CMU residence in Hong Kong early on 6th January 2023.

Sr Maureen Grant was born in Downpatrick on 25th September 1938. She was educated at Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch and then trained for teaching in St Mary's Training College, Belfast. This was followed by two years of teaching in St Colmcille High School, Crossgar where she is still remembered today. Sr Maureen entered the Columban Sisters in 1962, professed her First Vows in 1965 and her Final Vows in 1971. Following catechetical studies in Corpus Christi College in London, she returned to Magheramore where she was one of the writers for and editor of the Columban Sisters' **Star of the East** magazine for three years. This was followed by mission to Hong Kong where she helped set up Bianchi College. In preparation for an assignment to Peru and Chile, Maureen studied at St Louis College, Chicago as well as undertaking language studies in Peru. She did several years of mission in Chile where she gave her all. 1981 Maureen returned to Ireland where she served in leadership at Area and Congregational

level for many years, during which time she visited all the missions of the Congregation. During this time, she was responsible for the writing of the Introduction to the updated Congregational Constitutions which were then approved by Rome in 1984. In 2001, she set out for Hong Kong and from there went to Guangzhou in China where she was a very popular and accomplished teacher of English. Towards the end of 2012, she returned to Ireland where she assumed responsibility for the Congregational website and later was appointed Community bursar. Making full use of her artistic talents, Maureen designed the emblem for the Columban Sisters. She was a true gift to the Columban Sisters and to the world. She died on 10th January 2023.

Sr Bridie Lough was born on 29th May 1931. A native of Roscommon, Bridie entered the Columban Sisters in 1955. A year after profession of her First Vows in 1957, she was sent to the USA where she ministered in our Students' House in Chicago, our Novitiate in Hyde Park and later in the Nursing Home in Silver Creek, New York. After many years of service in the USA, Bridie undertook studies in 1985 in Spokane, Washington in preparation for a mission assignment to Peru. After studying Spanish, she began ministering high in the Andes in Recuay where she accompanied the very poor and marginalised who were living in remote areas. Here, she became aware of the need to initiate a Family Catechetical programme which she then set up. At a later stage, Sr Bridie, with another Sister, responded to the request received from the Bishop to initiate a new mission in Ica. Here, she once again introduced the Family Catechetical programme. In addition, she assumed full responsibility for the pastoral needs in the area where there was no resident priest. In 2010, Bridie returned to Magheramore and served for several years as Sacristan in the Motherhouse where she was known to do all things well. As her health began to fail, she moved to the community Nursing Home where she strived to continue to participate in community activities and celebrations. All her life, Bridie was a shining example of total commitment and was always prepared to be at the service of others. With her love for nature and all that is beautiful, she loved and enjoyed life. She died on the 5th of February 2023.

May they rest in peace.

“All our cares and troubles cease, as we kneel with love before You...”

Since the month of May and Marian devotion go hand in hand, in this reflection, we pay a personal visit to the Marian Shrine in Knock. There we find our blessed Mother watching for us, waiting for us, always supremely welcoming.

On arrival, we encounter Mary, with arms raised in prayer, petition, praise and we know deep within, that all our petitions and intentions are held in her heart as she gathers us in, enfolding us, her needy children, in her mantle of care. As we kneel there before her in the Apparition Chapel, “all our cares and troubles cease”.

Though content to be there with Mary, our Mother, we find our gaze being guided towards the centre of the Apparition scene to the Lamb, the One whose singular mission, we are told, is about ‘lifting burdens’. Filled with compassion and tenderness for us, Jesus the Lamb, waits to lift our burdens. How He longs to heal the suffering being borne by so many of his children across the globe. He holds and hears our stories and the stories of our worn-torn countries and our hurting planet earth.

Our attention, our prayer and our praise move easily from the Lamb to Mary, all the while being held in their embrace. Jesus, it would seem, so very happy that we find in Mary a ‘Mother’ unequalled, unparalleled. And Mary gently urging us as she did in the Gospels: “Do whatever He tells you.”

And so as our visit comes to an end and we prepare to take our leave, we are filled with gratitude that our blessed Mother and her Son are journeying with us ... accompanying us at every turn and twist of the road, and that our families, friends and our troubled world are safe in their keeping and their care, always. ●

Sr Rose Gallagher



01. The Apparition Mosaic at Knock Basilica, Co Mayo, which measures 14x14 metres. Designed by Irish artist and illustrator PJ Lynch, the mosaic was constructed and installed by Trivisanutto Mosaics in Spilimbergo, near Venice, Italy. Ireland's National Marian Shrine is visited by over 1.5 million people each year, and is the site of an Apparition in August 1879.

“And the Lamb will conquer and the woman clothed in the sun will shine her light on everyone.”

IN THE UPPER ROOM

Later that day, the disciples met together in the room where they had eaten their last supper with Jesus. The door was locked, because they were afraid of what might happen to them if the Jewish leaders found them.

Suddenly, Jesus was there with them.

"Peace be with you," he said. "Why are you so afraid? See my hands and feet. It's really me!" The disciples were speechless with joy.

Jesus told them he was going to send them out to do his work, just as the Father had sent them. They were to stay hidden until he could send the Holy Spirit to them.

One of the disciples, Thomas, had not been in the room at the time. When the others told him Jesus had actually appeared to them, he did not believe them.

"I won't believe until I have seen and touched him for myself," he said.

A few days later, Jesus came again to the room where the disciples were staying. The door was still locked. This time Thomas was with them.

"Peace be with you!" said Jesus, and he turned to Thomas. "See my hands, Thomas. Here, touch my side and believe in me."

Thomas fell to his knees. "My Lord and my God!" he cried.

"You believe because you can see me," said Jesus. "Happy and blessed are those who cannot see me yet believe in me." ●

Read also: John 20:19-29



BIBLE QUIZ

NUMBER
106

- 1 In John ch.20, which disciple responded to the risen Christ with the words, "My Lord and my God"?
- 2 In Samuel ch.17, which young boy said to a king, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine, your servant will go and fight him"?
- 3 In 2 Kings ch.4, who said to Elisha, "The boy has not awakened"?

- 4 In Mark ch.5, who prayed and restored life to a young girl with the instruction, "Talitha, arise"?
- 5 In Judges ch.6, which mighty warrior said, "If the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us"?
- 6 True or false? It was the high priest, in John 18, who said to Peter "Did I not see you with him in the olive grove"?

Name:

Address:

THREE
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Consult your Bible, answer the questions above and send your entry to: Bible Quiz N° 106, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 30th June 2023.

Bible Quiz N° 104 Winners: David Hind, Derbyshire • Carmel Boyce, Haywood, Lancs • Leila Aranha, Harrow.

WORD SEARCH

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

SNAIL
CATERPILLAR
BUTTERFLY
BEE
MOSQUITO
GRASSHOPPER
LADYBUG
DRAGONFLY
WORM
BUMBLEBEE
FLY
SPIDER
BUG
ANT



PUDSY'S DIRTY - FIND THE 10 SPELLING MISTAKES

Last week at school the girls were already talking about how they'd be playing football and tennis and everything in the holidays and us guys were saying nuthin at all. And my fren Bump was aful sad and I said what's bitin you and he said it's all them that's saying what they'll be doing and going to foreign places and everything for the hols. And when we were visiting our Grandad the other day I was saying I dunno why them girls hafta be talking like that. And he said you might as well ask why does the cat go 'meow' and the dog go

'woof woof' and even the cows go 'moo-moo'. Because that's their nature and they can't help it. And I was thinking myself mebbe that's why Ms. Flinn is always makin us spell them hard words. So when I was telling my pal Bump this next day he said mebbe when we have to spell again we can just say like our old naybor Mr McHugh's dog woof woof! And we started laffin but Ms. Flinn was looking at us and saying something about our next essay...or something...why can't them holiers come quicker...



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 30th June 2023.



1. Why is grass so dangerous?
2. Why did the sun go to school?
3. What did the tree do when the bank closed?
4. Why did the gardener plant light bulbs?
5. What did the little tree say to the big tree?
6. What did the limestone say to the geologist?

1. Because it's full of blades
2. To get brighter
3. It started its own branch
4. She wanted to grow a power plant
5. Leaf me alone
6. Don't take me for granite



COMPETITION WINNERS JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2023



Loretta
Bryers
Shrewsbury,
Shropshire

Ruth
Shaw
London

Beatrix
Ashby
Northampton

Isabelle
Windsor

Gabriel
Dickson
Deame
Hamilton

1

2

1

2

1

Colpaint - Aged 7 and Under

Colpaint - Aged 8 and Over

Pudsy's Dirty

Awesome Ants

By Elizabeth McArdle



Before we begin to explore the topic of how amazing ants really are, I want to reassure you that they have nothing to do with your beloved aunts or uncles. Yes, they are beloved in God's eyes but sometimes, because of their sting, we humans give them a bad press. We will now clear up all misinformation about ants and, in a jiffy, you will be singing their praises and eager to get outdoors to seek them out.

According to some insect books, ants are regarded as common insects but there is nothing common about them. More than 10,000 known ant species occur around the world. While they may be small, they are ridiculously strong and can carry 10 to 50 times their own weight. However, this depends on the particular ant species, as the Asian weaver ant can lift 100 times its own body mass. If we humans tried this impossible feat, our backs would crumble and that would be the end of us.

Not only are ants very strong but they are also very old.

From scientific studies, it is shown that ants are related to bees and wasps. They evolved from wasps 140 to 168 million years ago, during the Jurassic period, a time when dinosaurs roamed the land. Their closest relatives come from the family of 'mud dauber' wasps, which build their beautiful nests from mud on sheltered sites such as walls and old buildings.

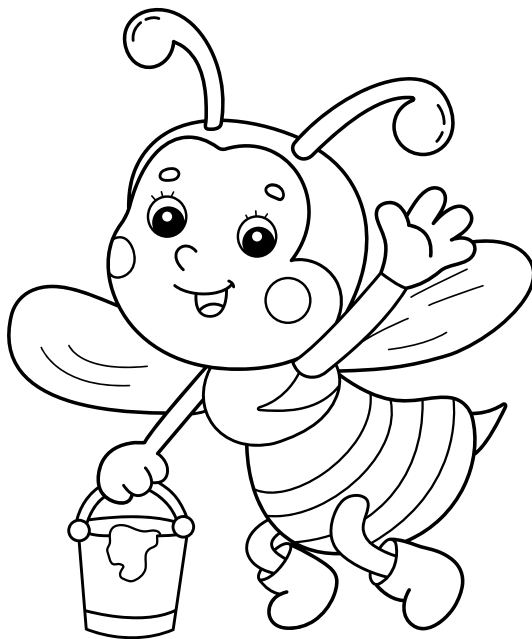
Myrmecology, from the ancient Greek, is the study of ants. These very social insects form small to large colonies, with an egg laying queen, many adult workers and their brood. When they find food, a chemical trail of pheromones (scent) is formed, so that other ants can find their way from the colony to the food.

Let us not dismiss these tiny, wonderful creatures. In God's eyes they are awesome and if we look at them differently, we too will see that they are awesome. ●

Image: Shutterstock

WIN A VOUCHER WORTH £15/£10!

Colpaint



Colpaint

Colour the drawing and send it with your name and address to: COLPAINT, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 30th June 2023.

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Age:

Address:

FOUR PRIZES TO BE WON!

THE COLUMBAN WAY PILGRIMAGE

24-27 MAY 2023

Columban Missionaries are celebrating Laudato Si' Week by following in the footsteps of St Columban to reflect on 'the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor'.



COLUMBAN
MISSIONARIES
BRITAIN



LAUDATO SI'
WEEK 2023

Scan the QR code to sponsor the pilgrims and to find out how you can take part or email columbanway2023@columbans.co.uk

Call **01564 772 096** to sponsor the pilgrims by phone. All proceeds will support Columban Missionaries living in solidarity with the poor and our common home.

CATHOLIC LEGACY WEEK

28 MAY TO 3 JUNE 2023

We will all leave memories. How many of us will leave a legacy?

Columban Missionaries respond to the cry of the poor and leave a legacy for future generations. What will your Catholic legacy be?



COLUMBAN
MISSIONARIES
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Scan the QR code for help with making a gift in your Will to the Columban Missionaries, including our NEW Free Wills Service, or email yourlegacy@columbans.co.uk



Join us to celebrate people who have left a legacy of faith, hope and love.

Mass of Thanksgiving

SATURDAY 10 JUNE 2023 AT 2.00PM

For more details and to register email yourlegacy@columbans.co.uk

Our Lady of Victories parish, Kensington, London. ☎ **01564 772 096**

