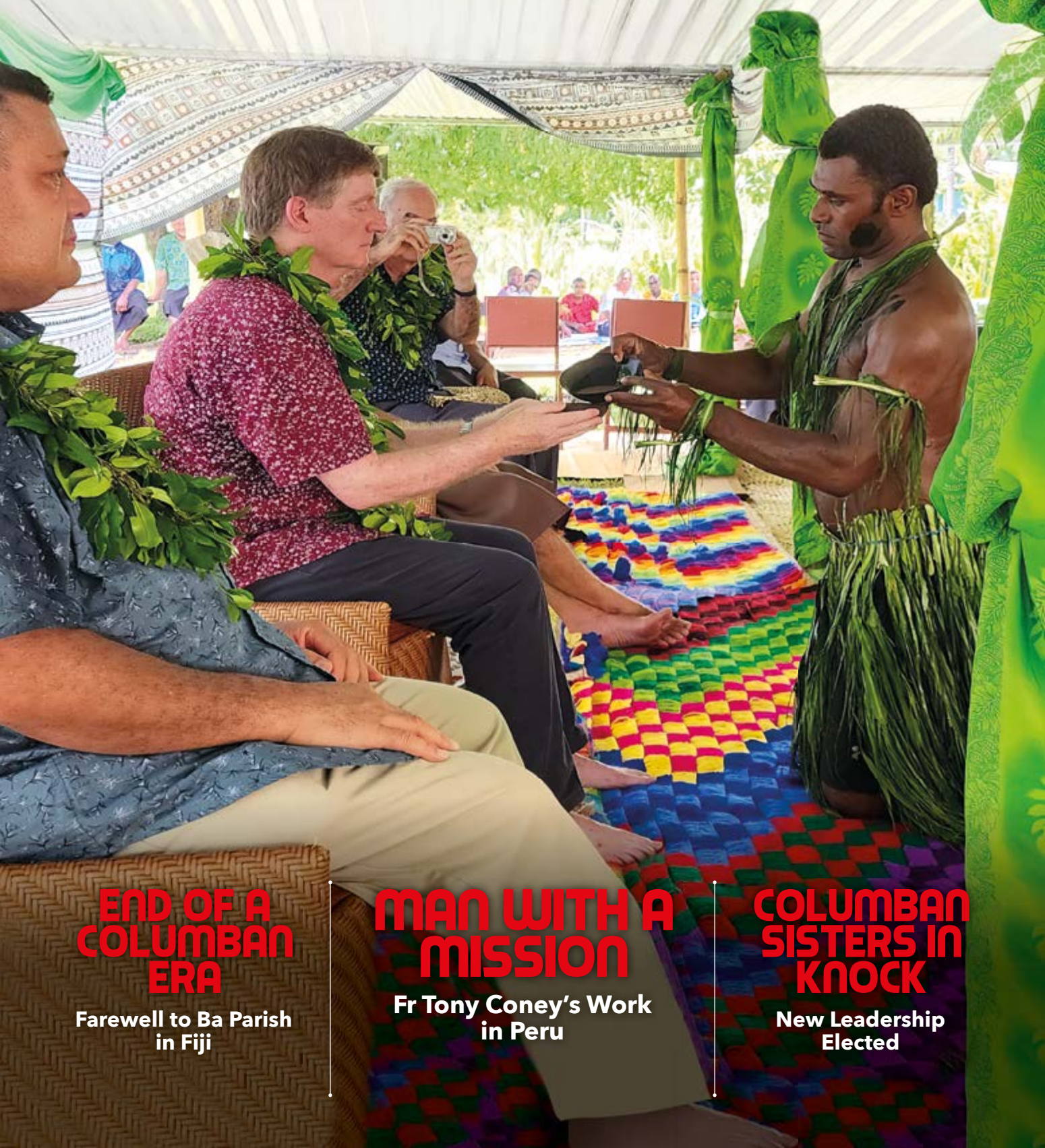


far east



MAGAZINE OF THE COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES



**END OF A
COLUMBAN
ERA**

Farewell to Ba Parish
in Fiji

**MAN WITH A
MISSION**

Fr Tony Coney's Work
in Peru

**COLUMBAN
SISTERS IN
KNOCK**

New Leadership
Elected

CONTENTS

04 Farewell to Ba

It was hard for the Columbans to say 'goodbye' to Ba Parish after 70 years of service, writes Fr John McEvoy.

06 Teacher Ou

Earlier this year, James Trewby visited Taiwan to meet Ou, a teacher who has accompanied many Columban missionaries taking their first steps in the Chinese language.

08 My Dream of Priesthood

Sarah Mac Donald speaks to Columban seminarian Laurencio Woobin Lee about his call to missionary priesthood.

10 New life in Sierra Madre

The Sierra Madre is the longest mountain range in the Philippines, protecting people from fierce typhoons and providing them with food, writes Sr Virgie Mozo.

12 Man With a Mission

Fr John Boles profiles Fr Tony Coney's work with disadvantaged children in the Peruvian capital Lima.

14 The First Columban to Die in China

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Fr Charles Cullen, the first Columban buried in China. Historian Fr Neil Collins recalls his life and death.

16 The Pilgrim Journey of Mission

Sr Ann Gray reports on the Chapter held by the Missionary Sisters of St Columban and the new leadership team elected ahead of the centenary of the congregation's foundation in 2024.

17 Kilfenora's Korean Connection

Fr Michael O'Loughlin recalls a fortuitous meeting in Kilfenora which played a role in the freeing of a Korean bishop.

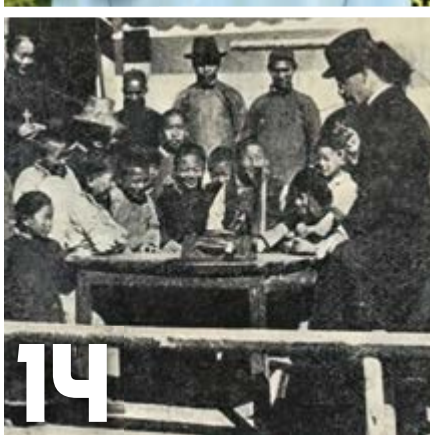
18 Obituaries

20 Reflection

21 Stories from the Bible

22 Children's Section

23 Nature: Super Stoats



THE FAR EAST

Published seven times yearly by the Missionary Society of St Columban (Maynooth Mission to China).

THE PURPOSE OF THE FAR EAST IS

To promote an awareness of the missionary dimension of the Church among readers; to report on the work of Columban priests, Sisters and lay missionaries; and to seek spiritual and material support for missionaries.

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Front Cover

Fr Peter O'Neil receives a traditional Fijian farewell on behalf of the Columbans in Ba Parish.
Photo: Fr John McEvoy.



PROVERBS IN MISSION

Proverbs are the ancient wisdom of a country's culture expressed in pithy sentences – often with humour. Proverbs give us expatriates an indication of how our adopted people think and act. To an aged person (I am over 90) this proverb gives me courage: “Even an old rope can be useful.” Or as incentive: “Even an aged one can learn calligraphy.” And when I have a ‘senior moment’: “Even a monkey can fall from a tree.” And after a disappointment or failure: “Fall seven times, get up eight.”

Personally, I use proverbs in homilies and in instruction, but I add a Christian nuance to them. For example, in talks to parents at a church-sponsored kindergarten, where many are non-Christian, I tell them that we will teach Christian values in a gentle way. I quote the proverb: “The heart of a three-year-old child lasts until the child is a hundred.” In a class for those preparing for Baptism I speak of our inbuilt human frailty and our need of a Saviour. All of us has some weakness: “Even a new tatami straw mat when beaten will give out dust.”

I am thinking of the proverb: “A nail that stands out gets hammered”. But this proverb also tells me something of Japanese culture. People are reticent to take leadership roles in the parish community, or even read the Scriptures in our Mass. So here we need to emphasise St Paul's teaching: “I can do all things through Christ who gives me the strength.” (Philippians 4:13)

But perhaps the proverb that I feel most strongly about is: “Suffering makes a jewel of you.” When I was 40, I was missioned in the island fishing village of Sakitsu. My

people were descendants of those who had been through 250 years of persecution for their Christian faith. When religious freedom was granted in 1873 French missionaries returned to build a church on the ground where their ancestors had been tried and at times executed. I really delighted in the mission apostolate of Sakitsu. But then sickness hit me. It was diagnosed as Beri Beri.

I was hospitalised as side effects and complications set in. After nine months in hospital, I was sent home. I was devastated. I had asked God for healing, but I got worse! I felt very bitter against God. With no faith, how could I continue as a priest. My cry was: “My God! Why have you forsaken me?” It took me two years to realise that in fact Jesus had been at my side all along – especially through the friends he sent to my bedside. Looking back, it hit me that the suffering and sickness had matured me as a person, as a follower of Jesus, and as a missionary priest. I had been fashioned as a jewel, but was still rough and in need of further polishing!

I can now thank God for the experience. After 16 years away I returned to Japan over 40 years ago. One fruit of the hospital bed is expressed in the proverb: “People with sickness can feel empathy.” Indeed “suffering makes a jewel of you.” ●

Fr Barry Cairns

Columban Fr Barry Cairns is from New Zealand. He was ordained in 1955 and has been a missionary in Japan since 1956.

Image: Shutterstock



FAREWELL TO BA

Seventy years ago, at the end of 1952 and the beginning of 1953, the Columbans took over the spiritual administration of Ba Parish. Over the years our relationship with the people of this huge parish was forged through hard times and good times, through trials and cooperation, through struggles and togetherness. On Saturday 25th February 2023 we severed these bonds with Christ the King parish in Ba and with the people so many Columbans walked and worked with over the past seven decades.

Columban priests working in Fiji, together with our students and lay missionaries, made their way to Ba for this farewell. Fr Peter O'Neill, Columban Regional Director of Oceania, travelled from Australia. Many diocesan priests from the Archdiocese of Suva and many parishioners from the surrounding parishes graced the occasion with their presence.

Parishioners gathered at the parish centre from the ten large villages in the highlands, the six villages on the coastlands and the six communities that make up the town area of the parish. The Church of Christ the King was packed for a concelebrated Mass of thanksgiving. The main celebrant was Regional Director Fr Peter O'Neill, while the homily was given by Fr Felisiano Fatu, Fiji Councillor and Vice Director of Oceania.

The people of the parish said their goodbye to the Columbans with a solemn Fijian Traditional Ceremony. This entailed

offering whales' teeth (*Tabua*), the yagona plant, mats, and a pig and root crops for the feast (*magiti*). The parishioners offered a whale's tooth to seek forgiveness from the Columbans for any neglect or wrongdoing over the years. This is called *matanigasau* in Fijian. Fr Pat Colgan on behalf of the Columbans accepted their *Tabua* of forgiveness speaking in the Ba dialect. The Columbans then reciprocated offering their *matanigasau* to the people seeking their forgiveness for our mistakes and the hurts we may have caused the people of the parish.

Every aspect of the occasion was done to perfection costing time, sacrifice and expense on the part of the people and the parish itself. A special Columban Gate was erected to the entrance of St Teresa's School, so we would be remembered in Ba Parish, and a commemorative plaque was unveiled on the wall of the parish church. The liturgy, singing and the readings were flawless: a hallmark of the day under the direction of Fr Pat Colgan, the last Columban parish priest of Ba. The previous week Fr Pio Matotolu of the Archdiocese of Suva had been installed as the new parish priest.

After the formal ceremonies were complete, representatives from other ethnic communities; the Indo-Fijian and the Rotuman communities, and others from the town and villages, personally expressed their thanks and memories of the Columbans who worked among them, an indication of the

It was hard for the Columbans to say 'goodbye' to Ba Parish after 70 years of service, writes Fr John McEvoy.





multi-ethnic and racial mix of this parish.

Before lunch the Columbans present were obliged to cut the 'Thank You and Farewell' cakes. Between 500-600 people were fed effortlessly by the women's groups of the parish. Then the entertainment started with dance and song provided by the youth of the parish. A live band from a nearby town was a real hit and had the people dancing almost nonstop until well after dark. But as dark descended, parishioners from the villages reluctantly boarded their buses for home, bringing with them their empty pots and food baskets but well satisfied with the celebrations of a long day.

On the previous night the Board of Governors of Xavier College invited Columban priests to a meal in the auditorium of the college. Again, this was in recognition that the Columbans founded Xavier College back in 1953 and staffed the college until 1987 when they handed over the management to the Montfort Brothers of St Gabriel. The college is now governed by a Board of Governors/Trustees from the parish for the Archdiocese of Suva.

Now that the dust has settled and we are all back home at our respective ministries I can reflect again what this farewell meant to those present. The fact that the people put on such a farewell for us showed how much they appreciated the sacrifices and contributions the Columbans made to the parish and in other parishes in the West of Fiji over the years. They really put their hearts and souls into those ceremonies, which I have rarely seen done with such solemnity and dignity.

We will miss Ba Parish, but we can be proud of our legacy in the fields of education, evangelisation, interfaith dialogue, championing justice and peace issues, promoting inter-religious and interracial harmony, and our concern for the plight of the poor. Yes, indeed, it was hard to say goodbye after 70 years. ●

Fr John McEvoy was ordained in 1972 and went to Fiji on mission, where he has been involved in parish work and Columban leadership. Last year he celebrated his golden jubilee. He is now based in Suva.



Images: Fr John McEvoy. A selection of photos from the three celebrations which marked the end of the Columban era at Christ the King parish in Ba.

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THE LETTER: A MESSAGE FOR OUR EARTH

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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.

theletterfilm.org/watch 🔍

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.

TEACHER OU

Earlier this year, James Trewby visited Taiwan to meet Ou, a teacher who has accompanied many Columban missionaries taking their first steps in the Chinese language.

The first I heard of Teacher Ou (pronounced 'Oh' in English) was when I was talking with a young Peruvian Columban priest, Fr Henry Amado Serván Vallejos. The way he lit up when he mentioned her struck me, he seemed so enthusiastic. So I did a little investigating. It turned out that she has been teaching Chinese (Mandarin) to Columbans, including students on their First Missionary Assignment, priests and Lay Missionaries, for 30 years.

We met in a coffee shop in the city of Hsinchu. Her humour and generosity were immediately evident as she smiled encouragingly at my bumbling attempts at greeting her in Mandarin.

Although Teacher Ou has always been a Buddhist, many of her educational experiences have been in Catholic institutions. As a child she attended a

Catholic-run school, and then went on to teach Chinese to (non-Columban) missionaries at a university in Taipei. Her enthusiasm for teaching foreigners is rooted in her passion for Chinese culture; she studied Chinese literature at university, and is keen on Chinese Opera, calligraphy, theatre, music and many other aspects of the culture.

After marriage she needed to move from Taipei to Hsinchu. For a year she commuted back to the capital to teach, but this was exhausting. At that time there was no opportunity to teach foreigners in Hsinchu so she looked for other work, "but nobody would hire me - I'm not a good secretary!" she explained with a huge smile. An introduction via a friend led to her first meeting with the Columbans.

Columban Frs Kevin and Peter O'Neill were planning to move nearby and were

02



6



looking for a teacher – to start in 6 months. She remembers that this was agreed at their first meeting and then there was no communication for half a year. Her friends were concerned and encouraged her to look for other opportunities – what if these foreigners didn't show up? But she trusted that they would; "Priests don't tell lies!" she said.

Her faith was rewarded, and the rest is history! In fact, her neighbours were amazed at how often they turned up, saying "Teacher Ou, your student, he really studies hard, he comes twice every day," not realising that Kevin and Peter are identical twins! Teacher Ou is still close to Kevin and Peter, and she and her husband have visited them and their family in Australia. This theme of friendship and family runs through the conversation.

Most Columbans continue to learn Chinese throughout their time in Taiwan, so some of her students have been with her for over ten years. She explains that as an educator she becomes a companion, and that "when I accompany people, I really feel I use my gifts." She finds this enjoyable and satisfying and explains that all her teacher friends have gone through times when they wanted to quit, but she never has. She strikes me as someone clearly living her vocation.

She described seeing her students go through culture shock, a common experience for people living in a culture outside their own. She says that for the first months everything is enjoyable and interesting, the 'honeymoon' period. Then, "they cannot hide it," a time of homesickness, poor sleep and frustration, before they settle down. She supports them

by listening, and through compassionate teaching.

On arriving in Taiwan, a Columban spends a year learning Chinese full-time, after which Teacher Ou focuses on relevant language for their ministries. This involves listening to them, understanding what they do, reflecting on this and then creating bespoke learning appropriate for their specific mission and ministry. "My living room is like a library," she says. The breadth of her library truly speaks to her commitment, and to the changing face of Columban Mission in Taiwan, including English, Korean, HIV/AIDS and special needs educational materials.

It is evident that Teacher Ou admires the Columbans. "They are doing something I could never do." She describes them as open, patient and humble, and notes that, "They really love the people they serve. It's not only a job. It's mission," a sentiment I can't help but notice is also true of her. She was particularly impressed with their commitment in the face of the pandemic: "When I saw them adapting during COVID, I felt happy. Nothing can knock them, nothing can stop them, they find a way to fulfil their mission."

My final question is about how knowing the Columbans has affected her. She responds that they have changed her life and "expanded her heart - because of my relationship with the Columbans, I love HIV patients, I love Indigenous peoples, I love migrant workers, I love people with special needs. Their love makes my life richer... the Columbans are the pen, trying to write something God wants them to write. I'm not the pen. Maybe I'm one kind of ink?" ●

James Trewby is Justice and Peace Coordinator for the Columbans in Britain.

01. James and Ou chat about her long commitment to teaching Mandarin to Columban missionaries.

02. Teacher Ou and Columbans students in Taiwan.

03. Ou with her first two Columban students Fr Kevin O'Neill (left) and Fr Peter O'Neill (right), who have since become family friends. The photo was taken outside the Holy Spirit church, Geelong, Victoria, Australia, where Peter and Kevin's parents were married in 1959 and Fr Peter was ordained in 1990 and Fr Kevin was ordained in 1992.

04. Fr Peter O'Neill and students visiting a temple in Taiwan.

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MY DREAM OF PRIESTHOOD

Sarah Mac Donald speaks to Columban seminarian Laurencio Woobin Lee about his call to missionary priesthood.

Thirty-two-year-old Laurencio Woobin Lee is sitting in the homely community room at St Columban's in Dalgan Park (Ireland). He has taken some time off from his English classes to chat to the **Far East** magazine about his vocation story. Language studies are part of his preparation for a spiritual year in the Philippines.

Originally from Daejeon in South Korea, he explains how important the Catholic faith was to his family. "On my Mum's side of the family we are an old catholic family." Both of his parents are still alive, and he has one younger brother.

Growing up, "I had a dream: to be a priest. I was involved in the parish when I was young. Every Saturday I went to the Children's Mass. The priest was a really good man and seeing him at the altar, I wanted to be like him. So I began to dream about being a priest."

His family respected his decision to pursue priesthood and so did his friends. He recalls being a poor student in school. "I didn't like studying - I really liked freedom and having fun." His decision to become a priest saw him change, and his friends noticed that. "I also respected them because being a lay person and being married has a lot of challenges."

Laurencio joined the diocesan seminary in Daejeon in 2009. Over the next four years, he studied for priesthood and also did his military service (2011-2012). Military service is mandatory in South Korea. All able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 28 are conscripted into the armed forces for up to 18 months.

But by 2013, he no longer felt that the seminary was his path. "Military service was difficult for me. I was attached to the artillery corps and worked on cannon duty in

2011. But the chaplain needed an assistant and he chose me. I had no option and had to agree." He politely hints that he was unimpressed with the chaplain's attitude towards the military hierarchy, clearly favouring the officers over the ranks. "I was very disappointed," he admits.

"After I came out of the seminary I tried to find another job." His family understood his decision but were "very worried" for him because in Korea leaving the seminary is seen by some as "a failure". He began to think about becoming a police officer. "But I never forgot about priesthood."

In fact, he had begun to think about mission while in the seminary. "In the diocesan seminary we had the first Mongolian seminarian studying to be a priest. One professor told him he was a 'Mongolian Kim Daejeon Andrew' - the first Korean-born Catholic priest, who is patron saint of Korean clergy. I was very curious about Mongolia and I started to think about mission and missionaries. The Mongolian seminarian really seemed Korean, he spoke the language really well and even joked well in Korean with the other seminarians. I became curious about missionaries because there are many foreign priests, nuns and missionaries in Korea."

However, having left the diocesan seminary, he had to find a new path. He took the national test for the police, but that idea was undermined by the political context in which the then president Park Geun-hye was impeached. The police handled the protests over corruption badly, attacking protestors with water cannons and even firing on demonstrators.


"I very disappointed by their behaviour and so the idea of becoming a policeman ended." He had seen that many seminarians, nuns and priests had taken part in the protests and had experienced the heavy-handed police tactics. That was when he began to seek out information on religious congregations to try and understand if missionary priesthood was his calling. "I

01. Columban seminarian Laurencio Woobin Lee on a visit to Dalgan ahead of his spiritual year in the Philippines. Photo: Sarah Mac Donald.

02. In June 2023, Korean Regional Director, Fr Seo Kyunghi and Formation Director, Fr Kim Young-In concelebrated Mass at the Formation House for Columban seminarians renewing their membership vow and going on First Mission Assignment as well as those undertaking a Spiritual Year in Manila.

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02

think it was God's will that I did not become a policeman."

Laurencio had been impressed by Columban Fr Seo Kyunghi Stefano who served as a deacon in the Cathedral in Daejeon diocese. In 2017 he contacted Columban Fr Joseph Kang who is now on the Columban general council in Hong Kong but was then working in Korea. "I told him that I wanted to join the Missionary Society of St Columban." He did that in 2019. "Before I entered the Columbans I discussed it with my family and they really encouraged me."

Laurencio explains how his first year of studies with the Columbans was spent getting to know the Society and what its priests, sisters and lay missionaries do, and the role played by Columban missionaries

in Korea, and other countries such as the Philippines, Pakistan and Myanmar. The second year was spent discerning why he chose the Columbans. His supervisors, Fr Donal O'Keeffe and Fr Jude Genova, were a good help to him in this. During his third year of studies he was "really impressed" to learn about Fr Kim Young-In Gregorio's work in Peru. "He is on the regional council in Korea and is very passionate about mission. As my rector we discussed mission many times."

Due to the Covid pandemic, his spiritual year in the Philippines had to be postponed. Speaking ahead of his departure for Manila, he described himself as "feeling really excited about the Philippines because I want to try and understand the culture of another country. The Columbans are an intercultural and a multicultural Society."

Please pray for all our Columban seminarians who are on the journey to become missionary priests. Please pray for vocations. ●

Sarah Mac Donald is Editor of the **Far East** magazine.

“The priest was a really good man and seeing him at the altar, I wanted to be like him. So I began to dream about being a priest.”



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NEW LIFE IN SIERRA MADRE



The Sierra Madre is the longest mountain range in the Philippines, protecting people from fierce typhoons and providing them with food, writes Sr Virgie Mozo.

At the foot of Sierra Madre Mountain, I had a month to reflect and to discern my future ministry when I returned to the Philippines after my experience of working with refugees in Mexico. I felt so blessed to be surrounded by such a majestic and beautiful environment. This place opened my mind and spirit to finding meaning and responding truthfully to today's mission, given the uncertainties of the recent pandemic.

During those days, I found the scripture reading in St Matthew's Gospel: "put your complete trust in God", resonating with me. That trust was rewarded when a couple in Laguna offered to give us a vacant family house at the back of their own property and also a piece of farmland so that Sr Eufrasia and I could sow some hope in our common home by sharing our efforts to put Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* into practice. Our plan was to replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing and an ascetism which would entail learning to give and not simply to give up.

As we kept in mind the introduction of our Columban Sisters General Chapter of 2017, "We are grateful to God for the gift and constant cycle of dying and rising of

all creation. We rejoice in the communion of all being, aware that we are a small and vulnerable but conscious part of this relational universe," we set out to emphasise the fundamental connection that exists between the environmental crisis and the social crisis that we are currently experiencing. Sr Eufrasia and I felt called to work with the people who were living at the foot of the Sierra Madre Mountain.

To facilitate this, our pastor, Fr Christian, invited us to work with the small basic community of Pinak located at the foot of Sierra Madre. Our hope was to enhance, to empower and to encourage so that people could live in a more sustainable way in their community at this time following the pandemic, where people had no work and were experiencing increased hunger and poverty. When we arrived in the town of Balian, we immediately sensed a life-giving energy in the Sierra Madre mountain range which is the longest mountain range in the Philippines. Here, the mountains both protect the people from fierce typhoons and assure them of possibilities of food production.

We were warmly welcomed by the families, both parents and children, during our house visitations. Getting to know them, creating a sacred space of trust and



establishing relationships, we discovered that they were living in this mountain area because of the work being done to widen the nearby national road. We discovered that the people were not originally from this area but had migrated here in the hope of a better life. Some of them had lost their jobs and were displaced as a result of the pandemic.

In dialogue and consultation with the people, mostly mothers and their children, we realised that the people wanted to work but there were no jobs available. The children were also interested in lessons in basic catechism. To improve nourishment, a group of mothers were willing to cook and provide a feeding programme for the children, so we started a community vegetable garden so that the basic needs of the families would be met. Once a month, we also shared with the mothers basic information about health, nutrition and hygiene which proved a big help in preventing sickness.

Each family was also given a pig to raise. If, after a few months, five piglets were born, two of these would be given

to another two families to ensure the sustainability of the project. Imagine the joy and excitement when seven piglets were born.

Sr Minerva also joined us to share her wisdom and talent in the preparation and making of a local indigenous fertiliser (the Indigenous Micro Organism [IMO]) that does no harm to the environment. All those interested in the backyard farming came to listen and learn from Sr Minerva's wisdom and practical experience.

In our living and working with the people at the foot of the Sierra Madre mountain range, we have experienced the deep concern of Pope Francis: "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. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature." *Laudato Si* (#139). Our hope is that the people, through these planting and pig projects, will be more self-sufficient and life-giving to one another. ●

Columban missionary Sr Virgie Mozo is currently on mission in her home country of the Philippines. She has also served in Chile, Pakistan, Mexico and the USA.

01. The Sierra Madre Mountain range viewed in Tanay, Rizal, Philippines. Image: Shutterstock.
02. Sr Minerva shares her skills for producing indigenous fertiliser. Image: Sr Virgie Mozo.
03. Children attending Sr Eufrasia's catechism lessons. Image: Sr Virgie Mozo.
04. Sr Virgie Mozo (left) with the incoming congregational leader of the Columban Sisters, Sr Anne Carbon. Image: Columban Sisters.

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MAN WITH A MISSION

Fr John Boles profiles Columban Missionary Fr Tony Coney whose work with disadvantaged children in a poor area of the Peruvian capital, Lima, has transformed many young lives.


“For me, life began at 40,” laughs Fr Tony Coney, remembering how he arrived in Lima on the 30th


August, the Feast Day of the city’s patron, St Rose of Lima, which also coincided with his fortieth birthday. Tony came as a man with a mission. For years he had dreamed of setting up a project to help needy children. He knew all about children, coming from a family of seven. However, his interest in disadvantaged children sprang from his experiences as a newly ordained priest working in his native Belfast during the early 1990s, where the poverty and violence of the ‘Troubles’ had taken its toll especially on the young.

Tony was also inspired by the writings of pioneer Scottish educationalist AS Neill who, in his seminal work **Summerhill**, had advocated a whole new approach to rearing ‘difficult’ children. “The idea was for those children to be given freedom and scope for self-expression. This really resonated with me,” Tony recalls.

In Peru he found himself in a huge parish on the northern outskirts of the capital, where shanty towns sprawled endlessly over the barren hills. Here, the children suffered from poor diet, poor housing, poor education - poor everything. Tony’s

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chance came in 1997. “A house became available. I bought it with my ordination money.” He made it into a day centre for needy youngsters. “We started with six volunteers and about 100 children. In a few months, we had 300. After a year, we had to extend. Irish Aid paid for the extension.”

Tony also increased the services on offer, employing psychologists, speech therapists and social workers. The latter staffed a “defence desk” to cater for children at risk. “Nowadays we receive up to 400 kids a day from a weekly pool of 1,200.” As to the day-to-day activities, Tony has adopted the ‘AS Neill system’. “The kids do whatever they want - arts and crafts, play, homework, reading, theatre, music, dance, computers, the lot. There are no ‘closed doors.’ Children get the chance to be children, with no adults telling them what they have to do.” Instead, the children themselves





come together to agree their own norms and rules.

Tony called it, 'St Bernadette's Children's Centre'. "After buying the house, I had no money to renovate it, so I wrote to my home parish in Belfast – St Bernadette's. Theirs was the first donation I ever got, so I adopted their name." Unfortunately, it soon became clear that child sexual abuse was rife in the area and the abuser was often living under the same roof as the child-victim. "The subject was taboo, no-one wanted to listen. Meanwhile, the kids remained in abusive situations." Consequently, "the idea arose that we needed a residential home, where the child could be separated from the abuse and get therapy until the legal set-up in the family could be resolved". And so it was that a second centre was born: St Bernadette's Home, with a 36-place capacity.

"Now, attitudes have changed," explains Tony. "People are more conscious of the problem and open to doing something about it. We work with the government. It is they who refer cases to us. We still meet with resistance from the police for instance, but that's where our defence desk comes in. We more or less force them to act." Meantime, St Bernadette's Child Protection Programme seeks to combat the threat of child abuse in the wider community. "We go into schools, do formation courses for pupils, teachers and parents, get them to set up protection teams." They have gone into some 30 schools and prepared thousands of children. "In 2019 we reached exactly 10,016 children," adds Tony proudly.

But, as you address one issue, another appears. Tony's team quickly noticed that many of the youngsters in the day centre displayed learning difficulties, not necessarily because they weren't bright, but because of the emotional difficulties they were experiencing at home. This awareness moved Tony to found a third premises, St Bernadette's Remedial School. Here, he explains, children can, "attend for a year or so, come up to standard and go back into mainstream education, given that they've often been thrown out of the state system because of low grades." Up to 120 pupils at a time reap the benefits of this initiative.

Taking stock after over 25 years, Tony's dream has realised itself in the form of three centres, 65 paid staff and a child protection outreach programme, almost all financed by overseas donors, many of them **Far East** readers. He says that the priority now is, "to sustain all this. The goal is to make it permanent. We've achieved a lot, but there is a way to go yet!" ●

Fr John Boles was ordained a Columban priest in 1996. He ministered in Peru and Chile from then until 2021, when he returned to Britain to take up the role of Regional Director.



To support Fr Tony Coney's ministry in Peru 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.

01. Fr Tony Coney in front of a Peruvian mural in St Bernadette's Centre, Lima.
02. Children in the playground at St Bernadette's Home, Lima.
03. St Bernadette's Children's Centre is the yellow triangular construction.
04. St Bernadette's Home is the red brick building in the foreground, with St Bernadette's bus parked outside. St Bernadette's Centre (yellow) is visible in the background on the hill.



THE FIRST COLUMBAN TO DIE in CHINA

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Fr Charles Cullen, the first Columban buried in China. Historian Fr Neil Collins recalls his life and death.

Charles Cullen was born in Dungiven, Co Derry, on 18th April 1896 and died suddenly in China on 23rd July 1923. His father, also Charles, from Ballyknockan, Co Wicklow, taught in the Dungiven Boys' School from 1892. He married Mary Teresa O'Neill, a native of Co Derry, on 9th November 1893. They had two sons, James and Charles, before moving to Hilltown, Co Down, in 1897. Ten more children were born there.

Young Charles studied in St Columb's College, Derry, where his mother's first cousin, Walter O'Neill, was dean, and went to Maynooth in 1914 for the Diocese of Derry. Edward Galvin arrived home from China in August 1916 and the Irish bishops gave him permission to recruit missionaries for China. Charles "thought it my duty to go where priests are most needed" and when the Columban seminary Dalgan Park in Shruloe, Co Mayo opened on 29th January 1918 he was one of the first group of nineteen students.

David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, decided to introduce conscription in Ireland and the Irish bishops, meeting in Maynooth on 18th April 1918, opposed it. They rushed the ordinations of all senior classes, and included the Columbans, so that Charles became a sub-deacon on 26th April 1918. He was ordained priest on 9th June 1921.

The first group of Columbans went to China in 1920. Charles Cullen and ten others, the second batch, sailed from Cobh on 8th September 1921 on RMS Albania.



IN MEMORY OF
FR. CHARLES CULLEN
COLUMBAN MISSIONARY
b. 1897 IRELAND
d. 1923 CHINA
WHO IS BURIED HERE.
MAY HE REST IN PEACE



查理·科伦神父 1897
年出生于爱尔兰北部
(DUNGIVEN, CO. DERRY)
1918年加入高隆那会。
1921年晋铎。同年12月13
日东来传教。1923年7月
13日葬于天门县郭家
庄。他是第一批来华主
教。他是第一位死于中国的高
隆那会传教士。愿主
赐予他永恒的安息。

03



04

Charles and his companions arrived in Shanghai on 13th December 1921. The next morning they were on the steamer *Tuck Wu* reaching Hanyang on Saturday 17th December.

Charles described the Columban mission, as big as Munster, with a population of five million, 14,000 of them Christian, and 26 priests. Travel was not easy. "Here if you cannot get a boat you have to walk it, but luckily there are many waterways and it is easy to get most of the way by boat; yet these travel often at a rate of a mile per hour so you can easily account for a week's journey up country."

The new arrivals settled into houses at Bai Yai Tai together with four Christian Brothers, and began to study Chinese, with five classes a day. In February Charles left the comforts of Hanyang to travel to Ko Cha Dzae, where he joined Richard Ranaghan from Killough, Co Down. It was a district of 1,200 sq miles "and scattered in clumps are some 1700 Christians, so you see there is a big area, and almost only one Christian to the square mile". The people lived in villages.

The church seated four hundred, the priests' house had five rooms with a separate kitchen, and there were schools and a boarding house for 20 boys. Straightaway Charles told his mother of some of the hazards: white ants which went for the woodwork; for malaria he planted sunflowers in their little garden since they were supposed to prevent it; bandits struck in April, carrying off three Catholic children and holding them for ransom. On another night he "stayed out until about 11.30pm armed with a revolver that was lent to us and a big electric torchlight".

His first task was to learn more Chinese. Neither he nor Ranaghan knew enough to hear confessions. Sick calls might involve a

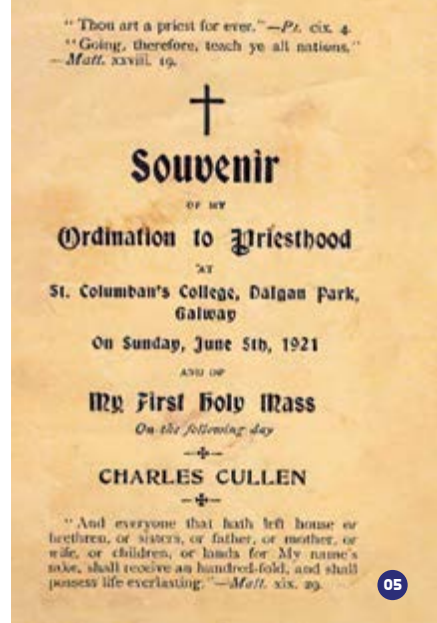
hike of 15 miles. The normal practice was to bring your bed and a Mass kit and stay overnight, but he preferred to return the same day.

In June 1922 he took the place of the priest in Tsan Dan Kow, surrounded by flooded rice fields and mosquitoes. He got malaria and was ordered down to Hanyang. "When I arrived I looked pretty bad but it wasn't serious; now after about ten days all traces of the illness have gone away".

Towards the end of December Father Galvin sent him to Tai Lin Miao to relieve John Dawson. He had an attack of dysentery and on Dawson's return went to hospital in Hanyang.

In July 1923 Ranaghan was in Hanyang and Charles was alone. He complained of pains in his head and stomach but continued his work. On Friday, 13th July, he said Mass as usual but didn't want any breakfast. At about 5.30pm he was found dead. Dr Patrick J. O'Donoghue thought the cause was heart failure due to acute gastroenteritis. The people in Ko Cha Dzae kept vigil with the body. One man, who was not Christian, gave his own coffin for the burial. The funeral took place on Wednesday 18th July 1923.

Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the communist People's Republic of China on 1st October 1949. In the following years many churches were destroyed. The grave of Charles Cullen disappeared. Then in July 2012 Frs Dan Troy, Joseph Li Changjie, and Zeng Xionghua found Ko Cha Dzae, now named Bai Guo Shu (White Fruit Tree). It's a small village, with about 50 houses. About 30 years ago a school was built but is now disused. Local residents told Fr Joseph that the church once stood on the property, and that a priest had been buried just beside the south wall of the church. On 9th May 2013 a stone mason erected a plaque in memory of Charles. ●



05

Fr Neil Collins is from Co Derry. He was ordained in 1962 and served on mission in the Philippines. He is History Coordinator for the Columbans and the author of a number of books, including, **A Mad Thing to Do – A Century of Columban Missions (1916-2016)**.

01. Fr Charles Cullen (1896-1923)
02. Fr Charles with pupils at Ko Cha Dzae school, China.
03. The commemorative plaque which was erected in May 2013 in the small village of Ko Cha Dzae, now named Bai Guo Shu, China. The year of Fr Charles' birth is incorrect.
04. The grave in Dungiven where Fr Charles wanted to be buried.
05. Fr Charles Cullen's ordination prayer card.

THE PILGRIM JOURNEY OF MISSION

Sr Ann Gray reports on the Chapter held by the Missionary Sisters of St Columban and the new leadership team elected ahead of the centenary of the congregation's foundation in 1924.

Sr Ann Gray is Assistant Editor of the **Far East** magazine.

01. The new leadership of the Columban Sisters (left to right) Srs Young Mi Cho, Margaret Murphy, Josephine Hong and Anne Carbon following their election at the 2023 Chapter in Knock, Co Mayo.

02. Co-founders of the Missionary Sisters of St Columban, Mother Mary Patrick (Frances Moloney) and Fr John Blowick, co-founder of the Missionary Society of St Columban.



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At the beginning of April, 25 Columban Sisters set out from our places of mission in Ireland, England, Philippines, Korea, China, Myanmar, Pakistan, and the USA to gather in Knock Shrine, Co Mayo to hold the 16th Chapter of the Congregation. This is a meeting which is held every six years to set out plans for the years ahead and to elect the Congregational Leadership Team.

Having travelled from all over the world to come together, we took to heart and sensed an invitation in the words of the prophet Jeremiah, "Thus says the Lord: 'Stand at the crossroads and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; walk in it, and find rest for your souls.'"

At Knock shrine, where Our Lady appeared to the people of Ireland at a time of great distress, we soon became aware that we had chosen an ideal place in which to hold our meeting. Not only did we discover interesting places in which to walk and relax, we felt the presence of Our Lady with us all the time and we were continually inspired by the faith and devotion of the many pilgrims who came to pray in Knock.

Since the foundation of the Missionary Sisters of St Columban in 1924 and as we prepare to celebrate our centenary in 2024, we have been on a pilgrim journey as a congregation, listening to the signs of the times and the call from God in an ever changing and evolving world.

During our days in Knock, we reflected on how our charism to spread the Gospel has evolved to include dialogue with other religions and, over the years, we have also been greatly enriched through our contact with indigenous cultures and their living in harmony with the natural world. At this



time, we sense we are particularly called to deepen our reciprocal relationship with the Earth and to respond to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the Poor. We acknowledge that the reality of our world today is inviting us to new expressions of mission, so all our plans for the coming years centre around this challenge facing us today.

As Columban Sisters, we have always been drawn to areas of greatest need. We have come to realise that today the greatest need to which we feel drawn is the climate and ecological crisis. We recognise that this goes beyond national boundaries and affects us all, although it most affects those living in the global south who have done least to cause the crisis. As missionaries we are deeply aware of this and feel called to respond.

To lead us as we continue our pilgrim journey of life and mission, we have elected **Sr Anne Carbon** as Congregational Leader, with **Srs Margaret Murphy, Josephine Hong** and **Young Mi Cho** as her team members. Sr Anne has mission experience in Peru and Pakistan, Sr Margaret in the Philippines and Myanmar, Sr Josephine in China and England and Sr Young Mi in Peru and the Philippines. We ask you to remember them in your prayers as they begin their ministry of service. ●

KILFENORA'S KOREAN CONNECTION

Fr Michael O'Loughlin recalls a fortuitous meeting in Kilfenora which played a role in the freeing of a Korean bishop.

The year 1974 was a turbulent one for the Catholics of Wonju Diocese in South Korea. Bishop Tji Haksin (Daniel) was tried for violating national security over his condemnation of human rights abuses by the military government. For over a year the country was unduly harassed by the military dictatorship which imprisoned those who voiced opposition, purging the students' protests and monitoring church officials who stood in defence of the victims.

Bishop Tji publicly denounced the government for these actions and was subsequently tried by military court and handed a prison sentence of eight years. As I was due to take a vacation, Cardinal Kim suggested that I travel to the US and speak to some key bishops about the situation in Korea. In the US, I met three eminent cardinals, but I received only token sympathy. The exception was the Cardinal Archbishop of New York, who promised to bring the matter to the notice of UN personnel.

Returning to Ireland, I felt somewhat down as I knew Bishop Tji, with whom I had worked in Korea, was behind bars and was subject to the rigours of prison life. During my vacation I happened to visit the Co Clare home of a Columban Sister, who was a medical doctor and worked in a hospital in Mokpo in South Korea. Her home town, Kilfenora, is renowned for Irish traditional music.

While conversing with the Sister's father, who was a publican, I overheard a conversation in one corner of the pub. One of the group was obviously American. He approached me and asked if I was the local pastor. I explained to him that I was a

missionary on vacation from South Korea. He became very interested and revealed that his son had been killed during the Korean war - and so he was interested to know more about what was happening there.

I told him about the adverse impact of the military dictatorship. I also recounted to him the plight of Bishop Tji. The man revealed he was Tady Gleeson, born in Toomevara in Co Tipperary, he had emigrated to the US at the age of seventeen. He told me that he was President of the International Long Shoreman's Association. "I have the power to close both docks in Inchon and Pusan," he revealed. He had got a job as a docker at Brooklyn Docks when he arrived in the US and then he went to night school and studied law and qualified as an attorney.

As we parted, he assured me that he would follow up on the Korean situation on his return to New York. He had influence with people in the US State Department. Some weeks later, I received a copy of his autobiography in the post titled, 'Men Along the Shore'. He also enclosed a copy of a letter he had written to General Alexander Haig, White House Chief of Staff, and to US President Gerald Ford. There was also a copy of President Ford's reply with the assurance that he would bring the matter of Bishop Tji to the notice of the Korean authorities on his upcoming visit to South Korea.

A few months later, news came through that Bishop Tji had been released though he was in poor health. He received a tremendous welcome from his people. There can often be a fortuitous outcome when we share our concerns even with strangers - strangers whom God puts in our way on our journey. Kilfenora has a unique place in the history of Wonju, South Korea. ●

Fr Michael O'Loughlin was ordained a Columban in 1960 and went on mission to Korea. He is now retired in Ireland.

01. Columban missionary Fr Michael O'Loughlin with Bishop Tji Haksin (Daniel).

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REST in PEACE



Fr Cyril Murphy



Fr Brendan Hoban



Fr Parig Digan

Fr Cyril Murphy was born in Belfast on 5th November 1928. He was educated in St Teresa's PE, Belfast, CBS Newry, and St Mary's CBS Belfast. He came to Dalgan in 1946 and was ordained a priest on 21st December 1952. He was assigned to Japan and after initial language studies served in Katase and in St Patrick's, Tokyo. In 1961 he was assigned to temporary promotion work in Ireland and this was followed by promotion work in Britain in Portsmouth Diocese (1962), in Hexham and Newcastle (1963), as chaplain to the Irish Emigrant Team in Manchester (1964), and in London 1964-1966.

From 1966 to 1969 he served as Vice-Superior to the District of Britain, as Director of the Irish Emigrant Chaplaincy and as superior of the London House in Ovington Square. In 1969 he was transferred to Ireland where he served as Vice-Director until 1977 and as Director of the region 1977-1983.

In 1984 Cyril was re-appointed to Japan where he served at St Patrick's, Tokyo from 1984-1995 and then in Chibadera, Chiba City. His last appointment in Japan was as assistant in Fujisawa, Kanagawa. In 2004, Cyril returned home to Ireland. He was assigned to Mission Education/Promotion in Solihull in Britain. As his health deteriorated Cyril was appointed to Ireland in 2011 where he took up residence in Dalgan until his death in the Dalgan Retirement Home on 8th February 2023.

Fr Brendan Hoban was born in Castlebar, Co Mayo on 27th June 1946. He was educated by the Mercy Sisters, Castlebar, De La Salle Brothers NS and St Jarleth's College, Tuam. He came to Dalgan in September 1964 and was ordained priest on 11th April 1971.

Appointed to Korea, after language studies he was assistant in the parish of Young Wol, Kang Wang Province. Later he was engaged in administration in Won Ju Diocese with responsibilities for a radio programme, chaplaincy in a boys' secondary school, chaplain to the Young Christian Workers and director of catechetics for the diocese.

After his first home vacation, he did a year's pastoral work in Britain and then he returned to Korea and did pastoral work in Sam Bong and Sa Da Dong in Seoul Archdiocese, and later in Sam Cheong, Bu Cheon City, in the Diocese of In Cheon. From March 1981 until May 1984 he established the Parish of Man Duk in Pusan.

Back in Ireland he was a participant in the Justice and Faith Workshop, and later became

a staff member for the same workshop in Hua Hin, Thailand. From 1986 to 1990 he was involved in the Labour Apostolate and City Poor Apostolate in Kwang Ju Archdiocese. He established the 'House of St Joseph the Worker'. From 1990 to 1996 he served as Director of the Addiction Education/Awareness Centre in Seoul, Korea.

In June 1996, he was appointed to Australia and worked on mission awareness in Paramatta Diocese. He was also involved in working with Koreans. He qualified with the Australian Institute of Addiction Counselling and counselled clients in Paramatta and later in Sydney. In 2008 he was assigned to Ireland and worked on Mission Awareness as long as his health permitted. He died on 24th February 2023 at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda.

Fr Parig Digan was born in Ballinahowen, Athlone, on 24th February 1929. He was educated at Rashina NS, and St Mel's College, Longford. He came to Dalgan in 1947 and was ordained priest on 21st December 1953.

His first appointment was to further studies in history and anthropology at the Catholic University of America, Washington DC. In 1956 he was appointed to the Philippines where he served in San Marcelino, and later in Cabangan, Zambales.

In 1970 he did a further MA in Asian Studies at the School of African and Asian studies, London University. From 1972 to 1978 he served as Asia Secretary at the prestigious Pro Mundi Vita Centre in Brussels. These were very happy years for him and resulted in numerous publications as editor and part-author of PMV booklets notably the 1975 publication, 'China and the Churches in the Making of One World' and in 1978, 'The Christian China-Watchers: A Post-Mao Perspective'.

In 1978 he returned to studies in Sociology at the Catholic University of Louvain and in 1984 he earned a Doctorate in Cultural Anthropology from the Catholic University of Nijmegen, Netherlands. That same year Orbis published his book, 'Churches in Contestation: Asian Christian Social Protest'.

In 1993 he was appointed to Britain to work in liaison with the Asia Desk of the Council of Churches of Britain and Ireland. Initially he worked from St Cecilia's in Sussex and in 2000 he took up residence in Reddington Road. He served there until he moved back to Ireland and to the Dalgan Nursing Home in March 2016. Parig died peacefully in the Dalgan

REST[†] in PEACE



Fr Michael Augustine O'Farrell



Fr Donal Bennett

Nursing Home on Sunday 5th March 2023. He requested that his body be donated for medical research.

Fr Michael Augustine O'Farrell was born 14th July 1938 at Lismore, Co Waterford. He was educated at Presentation Convent, Lismore, CBS Lismore and St Joseph's College, Ballinasloe. He came to Dalgan in 1956 and was ordained priest in 21 December 1962. In March 1963 he was appointed to Greyfriars College, Oxford to study history. He and two of his classmates were destined to join the staff of St Columban's School, Whitby, Yorkshire. This Columban venture was begun in 1963 but was closed in 1966 when Michael graduated.

In 1966, he was appointed to the staff of St Columban's, Silver Creek, NY, a Columban high school for prospective students but this closed in 1968 and Michael was appointed to St Columban's College, Oconomowoc, WS. This also closed within two years and he at last received an appointment to Japan in 1972.

After language studies, there followed appointments to Odawara, Kikuchi and Hitoyoshi. From 1982-1984 he taught in the Marist Brothers High School in Kumamoto, followed by three years at their school in Kengun. In 1985, he was pastor of Hiteyoshi, and in 1987 he was nominated as the representative from Japan on the Commission for the Chinese Apostolate, working from the Tokyo Procure.

Michael was appointed the Central Research and Information Coordinator in 1992, with residence in Dalgan. He undertook the Columban History Project. In 2001, Michael was again appointed to Japan. He worked in research on China from the Tokyo procure until 2010. From 2010 to 2014 he was appointed once again to his favourite

parish Hitoyoshi and laboured there until his deteriorating health led to his return to Dalgan in 2016. He suffered from aphasia in his later years and died in Dalgan Nursing Home on 14th March 2023.

Fr Donal Bennett was born in the Parish of Drumragh, Omagh, Co Tyrone on 28th October 1932. He was educated at St Mary's, Killyclogher, and CBS Omagh and entered Dalgan in 1954. He was ordained priest on 21st December 1960.

Donal was appointed to the Philippines and after studies in language and culture was assigned to Zambales where he would spend most of the following 37 years. He worked in Massinloc for three years, before becoming pastor of Castillejos, Iba, followed by the first of two periods as pastor of St Joseph's, Olongapo City.

From 1982 to 1986 he was assigned to promotion and vocations work in Ireland. Then he returned to Zambales once more until 2000. During all those years, Donal, who was a splendid host and an adventurous chef, loved to invite his Columban neighbours to join him for Sunday night supper.

In 2000, he was invited to return to Ireland to take over as Director of the Nursing Home. In 2005 he offered to minister to Filipino migrants in Northern Ireland. Five bishops responded very positively to his offer, and he enjoyed that ministry until 2014 when he retired to Omagh where he helped the local clergy on weekends and at funerals.

His sight began to trouble him, so he retired to the Dalgan Nursing Home in November 2021. Donal was a joyful, friendly and extrovert person, and a splendid singer. He died on 13th May 2023 in the Dalgan Nursing Home.

May they rest in peace.

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In the Gospel of John, we hear Jesus telling his disciples, "The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63) I ask myself if the same can be said of the words I speak - are my words always life-giving? We know the saying, "Actions speak louder than words." And indeed, this can be true in many circumstances but the words we use can also be of the utmost importance - they can either heal or hurt, bring joy or sorrow.

Many of us are fascinated by words, often working diligently on a daily crossword or word search. Last year, 2022, was known as the Year of Wordle - the daily word game which has been described as 'fun and simple'. It became the daily staple for people around the world, with over 300,000 people reputed to have played it at one stage.

Thinking of words, I am often reminded of the blind man who sat on the hard pavement of a busy, bustling city, his cap and a piece of cardboard placed in front of him, his plea shakily scrawled across it, "I am blind. Please help." All morning, he listened to the office workers rushing past him, hardly anyone dropping coins into the cap placed in front of him. He was not hopeful he would receive much to add to the basic invalidity pension he received.

At one point he did hear the clip, clip of stylish heels of one young woman who stopped in front of him, lifted his piece of cardboard and then return it to its place a few seconds later. From that moment on, he could hear the clink of many coins dropping into his cap and sometimes even the rustle of notes. It seemed as if everyone who passed him wanted to offer some support. The man returned home, wondering what had happened.

In the evening, he returned to the same spot, his ears tuned to listening for the sound of the heels. When the young woman once again stopped beside him, he asked her, "What did you write on my sign?" "I only changed the words" she replied and told him that what was now written on the piece of cardboard were the words, "It's a beautiful day and I can't see it." Words that succeeded in touching the hearts of everyone who passed and were moved to reach out to the man.

That young woman had taken to heart the words of the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, "Every day we are engaged in a miracle we don't even recognise; a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves. All is a miracle." And she wanted everyone to share this. ●

Sr Ann Gray

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

Jesus sent his disciples off in the boat while he sent the crowds away. He promised to join them at Bethsaida, but in the meantime he went off by himself to pray.

By evening, the boat was far out on the Sea of Galilee. There were strong winds blowing, and very soon the disciples were worn out trying to row against them.

Jesus knew that they were in trouble, so he walked across the surface of the sea towards them.

When the disciples saw him approaching, they were terrified. "It is a ghost!" they cried.

"Take courage!" said Jesus. "It is I. Do not be afraid."

Peter then said, "Lord, if it is really you, then tell me to come to you across the water."

"Come!" said Jesus, holding out his hands.

Peter cautiously stepped out of the boat and put

his feet on the water. He took a few steps towards Jesus and sure enough he, too, was able to walk on the surface of the sea. It felt marvellous! But suddenly Peter felt the strength of the wind against him, and he became afraid. Then he started to sink.

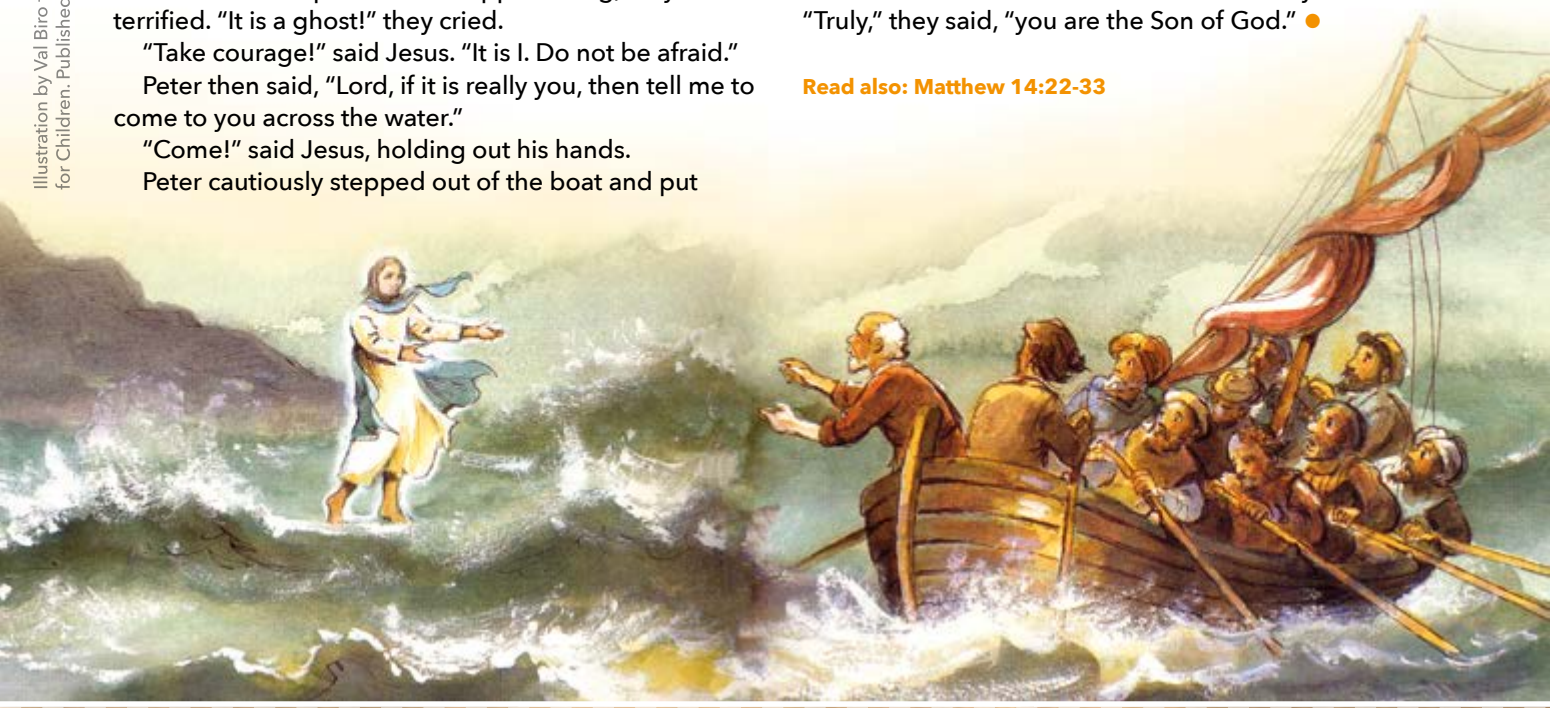
"Help me, Lord!" he cried. "I'm sinking!"

Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. "Oh Peter!" he said. "Why did you doubt? You have such little faith."

As they both got into the boat, the wind dropped. The others in the boat were stunned at what they had seen.

"Truly," they said, "you are the Son of God." ●

Read also: Matthew 14:22-33



BIBLE QUIZ

NUMBER
107

1 In John ch.4, whose servant carried the news, "the fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour"?

2 In Job ch.2, whose advice was this, "Curse God and die"?

3 In Genesis ch.22, which son asked his father, "where is the lamb for the burnt offering"?

4 In Matthew ch.19, who asked Jesus, "Good master what must I do to inherit eternal life"?

5 In I Kings ch.10, which queen exclaimed, "I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed not even half was told."

6 In I Samuel ch.15, which king made this excuse, "I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them"?

Name:

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Consult your Bible, answer the questions above and send your entry to: Bible Quiz N° 107, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 31st August 2023.

Bible Quiz N° 105 Winners: Mary Doran, Newcastle-on-Tyne • Paul Whyman, Leics • Nanette Lewis, Swansea.

WORD SEARCH

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

PENCILCASE
CALCULATOR
GLOBE
SCHOOL
POINTER
LAPTOP
PAINTS
SCHOOLBAG
BOOK
PEN
SCHOOLBUS
TEACHER
CHALKBOARD
PENCIL
BALL
RULER
PUPIL



ANSWER: 1.Ball 2.pupil 3.Globe 4.Paints 5.School 6.Pointer 7.Schoolbag 8.Book 9.Laptop 10.Pencil 11.Pencilcase 12.Calculator 13.Chalkboard 14.Ruler 15.Teacher

PUDSY'S DIRTY - FIND THE 10 SPELLING MISTAKES

We'll be getting hols this week and imagine no essays or spelling them hard words or anything for ages and ages Yippee!! And Ms. Flinn was telling us how to behave and be aful good altar servers at the procession and everything. But I was busy telling my friend Bump what our mammy's old aunt Mamie was saying when she was visiting. She sed she didn't know what the world was coming to these days becos the cuzzins, them big ones, are going to Summer School what that is for she dunno. Mebbe they didn't learn

enuf or work hard or whatever at the usual school. And she looked at me and said young fellow from what I hear you might need a bit of more schooling not that it would make any difference. And when I told Bump he said we'd hafta be tied up to make us go. But then we could learn to escape like that guy in the movie and run up the hills and they'd never catch us. And I betcha that'd be mity fun entirely. Maybe that's what Grandad meant when he said you don't need school to learn a lot of useful things... how about that!!



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 2023.



1. What do you get when you combine an elephant with a fish?
2. Which letter is the coolest?
3. Why do bananas use sunscreen?
4. What do sheep do on sunny days?
5. What does the sun drink out of?
6. Which is the favourite holiday spot of ghosts?

1. Swimming trunks!
2. Iced T
3. Because they peel
4. Have a baa-baa-cue
5. Sunglasses
6. Lake Erie



MARCH / APRIL 2023

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Leics

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Uxbridge

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Pudsy's Dirty

Super Stoats

By Elizabeth McArdle



What are stoats and why do we find these adorable, little animals so hard to spot? Their long, thin bodies, covered with beautiful chestnut fur, are seldom seen. This is because stoats avoid spending time in open spaces where they are vulnerable to attack from predators, such as foxes and birds of prey. Animal experts tell us that the black tip on the end of a stoat's tail is thought to distract birds of prey. The moving tail tip is where the bird of prey focuses its attack, rather than on the more vulnerable parts of the stoat's little body. This clever ploy ensures that the stoat has a better chance of escaping its enemy and living for another day.

They may be small animals: 30-40cm in length, but this doesn't stop them from being ferocious predators. The stoat is not afraid to take on prey more than five times its size. Up trees or underground, there are few places this skilled predator will not go in search of its next meal.

Stoats are also good swimmers, surefooted climbers and are perfectly adapted for squeezing into small holes and burrows. Its varied diet includes rabbits, rats, pygmy shrews, mice, voles, fish, insects, birds and bird's eggs.

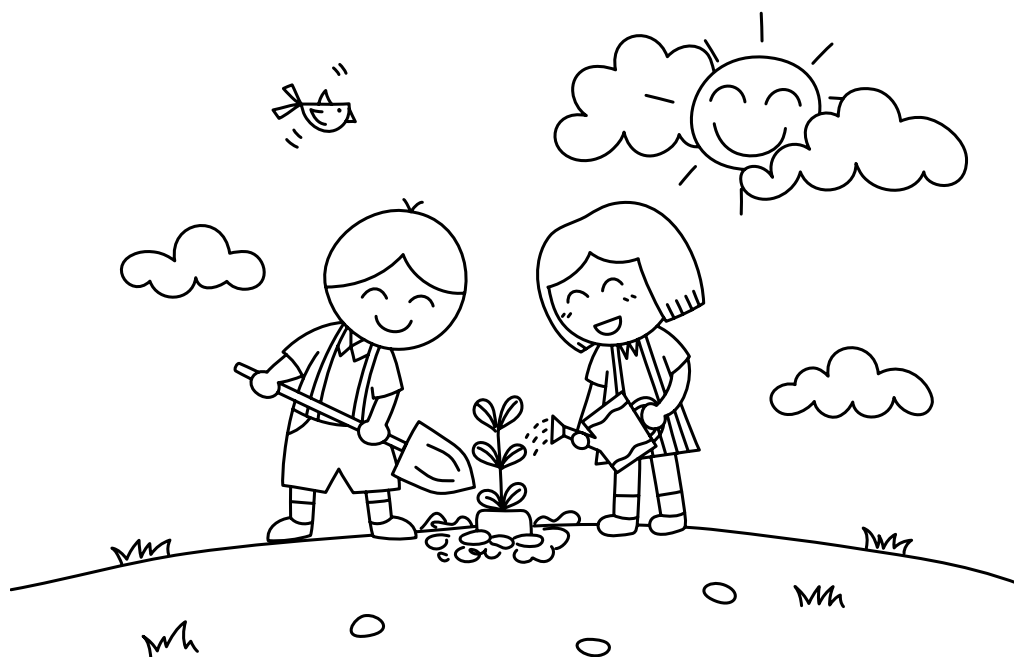
In northern parts where snow is more widespread and predators could easily target them in their brown summer coats, stoats change into their winter coats of white fur known as ermine. This helps them to blend into their snowy surroundings. However, the black tip on their tail always remains.

Because stoats are truly wild and have very high energy levels, they cannot be kept as pets. They are better in the wild anyway where they can fulfill their lives as God intended them to do. Although seldom seen, it does not mean that they are less important to God. All of life is very important to God, who loves all of creation. ●

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Mark 16:15

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