

far east



MAGAZINE OF THE COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023



SEASON OF CREATION

Columban Way
Pilgrimage

FAST FASHION

Fuelling Climate Change

THE OTHER 9/11

Pinochet's Coup
in Chile

04 The Columban Way Pilgrimage

Fr Pat O'Beirne writes about the Columban Way pilgrimage in Cornwall - an "encounter with the divine" in the places and people met along the way.

06 Health and Welfare in Lahore

Fr Liam O'Callaghan pays tribute to the Health Welfare Project, an interfaith initiative in Pakistan which ensures healthcare for those in need in Lahore, be they Muslim or Christian.

08 Nowhere to Go

Those welcoming desperate migrants, bereft of everything, remind Fr Bobby Gilmore of Columban Fr John Meaney's generosity towards a destitute Filipino family.

10 The Other 9/11

Fr Alo Connaughton spoke to Fr Pat Egan about that fateful day in Chile's history when the military, led by General Pinochet, seized power in the 1973 coup.

12 Fast Fashion Fuels Climate Change

We must buy less clothes argues Fr Sean McDonagh as he highlights the climate cost of over-producing plastic-based textiles and the plight of workers in the fast fashion industry.

14 Synodality 10: Journey to the Periphery

In the first of two articles, Fr Tom O'Reilly explains why synodality means listening to voices on the periphery as we journey together as a Church.

16 Columban Centenarian

Sarah Mac Donald speaks to 101-year-old Sr Bríd Kenny about missionary life in Korea and her memories of Fr John Blowick and Mother Mary Patrick, co-founders of the Columban Sisters.

18 Walk in Faith

Columban Lay Missionary Latai Muller writes about being part of a Basic Ecclesial Community in the Philippines and how it has helped her to see God everywhere.

20 Reflection

21 Stories from the Bible

22 Children's Section

23 Nature: The Arctic Tern



04



06



14



08



10



12



16

**THE FAR EAST**

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

THE PURPOSE OF THE FAR EAST IS

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

far east**Subscription**

£10 a year.
Contact the Mission Office:
Tel: (01564) 772 096
Email: fareast@columbans.co.uk

Editor

Sarah Mac Donald
editorfareast@gmail.com

Assistant Editor

Sr Ann Gray

Layout & Editorial Assistant

Breda Rogers

Manager

Stephen Awre

Original Design

Gabriel German Carbone

Printers

Walstead Bicester, Oxfordshire

Columban Websites

News, reports, reflections etc.
www.columbans.co.uk
www.columbansisters.org

Follow us

Twitter: @fareastmagazine
Facebook: www.facebook.com/fareastmagazine

Missionary Society of St Columban

Widney Manor Road, Solihull,
West Midlands, B93 9AB.
Tel: (01564) 772 096

Columban Sisters

6/8 Ridgdale Street, Bow,
London E3 2TW.
Tel: (020) 8980 3017

Front Cover

Bumblebee on lavender.
Photo: Shutterstock



SEASON OF CREATION

The theme for 2023 Season of Creation is: Let Justice and Peace Flow. The Prophet Amos cries out: "But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Amos 5: 24) The Genesis text tells us that human sin destroys our relationship with God, severs human bonds and disfigures creation. We must work together on behalf of all Creation and speak out with and for the communities most impacted by climate injustice and the loss of biodiversity.

Over 450 scientists were involved in *The Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (2019). It confirms that we are now living through the sixth largest extinction of life on earth since life began 3.8 billion years ago. Future generations of species are at risk, unless radical action is taken by humans. The last time such a catastrophe struck the earth was 66 million years ago when an asteroid crashed into the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico causing the extinction of 75 percent of animal life, including the dinosaurs.

In 2019, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature estimated that 41% of amphibians, 25% of mammals, 34% of conifers, 13% of birds, 31% of sharks and rays and 17% of crustaceans are threatened with extinction. In 2017, a study by German scientists found that insect species, including pollinators, had decreased by 75% since 1987. One third of the world's food depends on pollinators. If these become extinct,

agricultural yields would plummet globally causing widespread famine.

Dr Liam Lysaght of the National Biodiversity Centre in Ireland has warned that Ireland is not immune from biodiversity losses. Of the 3,000 species that have undergone red list conservation assessment, one in four species is threatened with extinction. Among the species he mentions are the Atlantic Salmon, the Curlew, the Freshwater Pearl and many more. He recommends the setting up of a Government Department for Biodiversity and the rural economy.

In the encyclical '*Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home', Pope Francis quotes Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. He writes, "for humans to strip the earth of its natural beauty or destroy the wetland; for humans to contaminate the earth's waters, land, its air and its life - these are sins." (Par 9). This is a new teaching for the Christian Churches which was not there when I studied moral theology many years ago.

Christianity needs an Extinction Liturgy in which sadness over the extinction of many wonderful creatures created by God can be expressed. Such liturgies might inspire us to protect biodiversity locally and globally in everything we do. ●

Fr Sean McDonagh

Columban missionary Fr Sean McDonagh served with the T'boli people in the Philippines and is President of An Taisce.

Image: Shutterstock



01

Fr Pat O'Beirne writes about the Columban Way pilgrimage in Cornwall - an "encounter with the divine" in the places and people met along the way.

THE COLUMBAN WAY PILGRIMAGE

It was during the Season of Creation in 2022 that Stephen Awre, our Mission Office Administrator, first suggested we go for a walk in Cornwall. Plans were underway to visit the dioceses of Plymouth, Leeds and East Anglia for the annual Mission Appeal in 2023. According to tradition, Cornwall, the most westerly part of the Plymouth diocese, is believed to have been traversed by St Columban and his 12 companions on their missionary journey from Ireland to Europe.

And thus, the Columban Way Pilgrimage was born. It would take place during 'Laudato Si' Week in May and so we wove together the themes of mission and ecological conversion in our prayers and reflections along the way, featuring the voices of Columbans in China, Pakistan, South America, the Philippines, and Britain. We worked closely with Caritas, CAFOD and the Youth Ministry in the diocese, and the parish of St Mary & St Petroc in Bodmin, to plan a pilgrimage for us, for the local Church and for anyone who wished to join us in person, in spirit and in prayer.

We do not know the exact path St Columban took as he crossed Cornwall, so we followed the route researched by organisers of the Columban Way, a long-


distance walking path being plotted from Bangor in Ireland, where Columban spent 20 years as a monk, to his final resting place in Bobbio, Italy. Columban travelled by boat, so we would follow the rivers, from the Camel estuary at Padstow in the north, to Fowey in the south, where the river of the same name flows into the English Channel.

On the morning of 24th May, a group of nine Columbans, co-workers and two young Columban friends, aged 21 to 75 years, set off for Cornwall praying the words of St Columban as we journeyed south. We would walk 28 miles over three days, blessed with bright sunshine.

St Columban would likely have stayed in Bodmin, and we too chose Bodmin as our base. Fr Ciaran, Fr Robbie, and Kate, the parish secretary of St Mary & St Petroc's parish gave us the warmest of welcomes, providing us with shelter and space to unwind each evening and to prepare for the next day's challenge. The beautiful church of St Mary's was the intimate setting for a commissioning service on the first night at which we committed to pray for Columban benefactors and their intentions. The next day it was a joy to celebrate Mass with the parish community, who then treated us to a delicious supper in the parish hall.

To make a comment on this article go to:

 facebook.com/fareastmagazine

 [@fareastmagazine](https://twitter.com/fareastmagazine)

"Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures..."

(Laudato Si' #92)



02

Fr Pat O'Beirne is a member of the Columban Mission Awareness Team in Britain. He previously served on mission in Taiwan, Fiji and China.

01. Columban pilgrims find their way along the banks of the River Camel.

02. Led by Columban priests Fr Denis Carter and Fr Pat O'Beirne, the pilgrims are given a rousing send off by the children and staff of St Mary's Primary School in Bodmin, Cornwall.

03. The pilgrims arrive in Fowey accompanied by Sebastian from St Mary's parish in Bodmin.

04. Build bridges not walls: the pilgrims lend their support to people seeking asylum in the UK.

04

A high point on the journey was visiting the children in St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Bodmin at the end of the first day's walk. Fr John Boles and James Trewby, our Justice, Peace and Ecology co-ordinator, spoke to the pupils about the walk and care for the earth. Welcomed by the teachers, we were led to the classrooms to be quizzed by curious pupils keen to learn about our experience as pilgrims and missionaries. Next day, the whole school turned out to send us on our way!

In every religion and in every age, pilgrimage has a special place. For every person who goes on pilgrimage it will have a different meaning and purpose. At its heart is our human search for God. For me, it was an opportunity to walk part of the path taken by St Columban, who became a life-long wanderer for Christ. Pilgrimage is a metaphor for the Christian life. When we are on pilgrimage, we can find ourselves in vulnerable situations where our defenses are down and our hearts are a little more open to allowing ourselves to be taken by God. The experience of encounter with the divine in the places and the people we meet along the way, hopefully leads to some transformation within us where we are given the grace to shed old ways of being for the

new life that God holds out to us.

We were joined on the pilgrimage 'in spirit' by more than 50 people who signed up as 'virtual' pilgrims and followed our progress, prayers and reflections via email and social media. On the final day we were joined by Sebastian, a young man in the middle of his exams, whom we first met at the parish Mass and social on the first night. He decided to walk with us from Lostwithiel to Fowey and his presence and company were a blessing to us all. Join us in praying for the life that God holds out to him.

A huge thanks to our sponsors, whose prayers and generous donations were an inspiration. Alongside its many other benefits, the pilgrimage proved to be a great way to raise funds for the work of the Columban missionaries and you may yet be invited to make your own pilgrimage walk next year! ●



5



HEALTH AND WELFARE in LAHORE

Fr Liam O'Callaghan pays tribute to the Health Welfare Project, an interfaith initiative in Pakistan which ensures healthcare for those in need in Lahore, be they Muslim or Christian.

Since 2004, the Health Welfare Project has been taking patients to the Pakistan Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (PSRD) Trust hospital in Lahore for treatment. The relationship we forged with the hospital was quickly cemented by the relief work we did following the terrible earthquake of 8th October 2005. For the six months that we brought earthquake victims there, the hospital continued to offer free treatment to all of the patients we brought in who had been injured.

A number of top orthopaedic surgeons work in the Pakistan Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled hospital holding consultations on different days. We had already established a relationship with Dr Afzal Hussain, one of the top orthopaedic surgeons in the country, a year or so before the earthquake and it was to this top medic and his assistants that we took almost all of the patients.

Looking back, I think Dr Afzal and the authorities at PSRD were amazed at us, Christians, who brought Muslims for treatment over those months; their

admiration for that effort was one of the foundations on which our relationship and this health project was strengthened. In April 2020, Dr Afzal, a wonderful doctor and a wonderful human being, retired from PSRD after 20 years of service. We and countless patients were so blessed in knowing him and working with him over all those years.

Once the work with earthquake victims ended, we continued to take patients, mainly Christian but also Muslims, every Tuesday and Friday, to the hospital. I would estimate that over 90% of the poor people we brought for treatment were granted 'Category E' status. What was instrumental in achieving this category status was the admiration of the clerical staff, especially social welfare officers, for the work we were doing. 'Category E' has enabled us to get enormous value for money for a relatively small financial outlay every year and has resulted in countless patients receiving quality health care.

George Taj is the full-time health worker with the Health Welfare Project in Lahore. I have deep admiration for him, from



to the poor, including Christian sweepers and cleaners, who rarely if ever experience that in their lives.

Dr Saleem Bashir, who replaced Dr Afzal, is equally good and we have an excellent relationship with him also. Apart from the doctors, we have wonderful relationships with all staff whose cooperation is vital to the project. We celebrate Eid and Christmas with gifts. The Health Welfare Project is a gem of a project and the jewel in the crown of my efforts in Christian-Muslim dialogue. It is all you would dream about for dialogue efforts; mutual respect and appreciation, working together

in harmony and cooperation to achieve incredible results. It is a really good example of the dialogue of life working well and what is possible. ●

To support Fr Liam and Columbans around the world please donate to our 2023 September Appeal. See the letter enclosed with the magazine, call 01564 772 096 or go to www.columbans.co.uk/donate

when we first met in 1995 and then as we worked closely from 1999 up to the present day – in parish work, earthquake relief work, and in health work. He is a man of deep faith, and his faith is the motivation for his work. I have rarely seen such commitment. He often goes above and beyond the call of duty. As kindred spirits, together we have managed to do many significant things, with the help of countless others. His friendship is a constant blessing in my life and I feel like part of his family.

The Health Welfare Project carries out its work in an atmosphere of respect and mutual admiration at the Pakistan Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Trust hospital. The doctors and administration are Muslim, while most of the nurses are Christian, including the matron. One of the most pleasing things about the project is that the poor get top quality treatment. This is rare as the poor are invariably treated poorly in government hospitals and institutions. It is heartening to witness top doctors giving quality time and care



Fr Liam O'Callaghan is from Portlawn in Co Waterford. He was ordained in 1997 and has spent most of his missionary life in Pakistan.

- 01. Health Worker George Taj (centre) with Columban missionary Fr Liam O'Callaghan (left) and a local pharmacy store owner, Aslam (right) in Lahore.
- 02. Patients from Fr Liam's Health Welfare Project recuperating in the Pakistan Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (PSRD) hospital.
- 03. Dr Afzal Hussain (second from right) with a patient attending the Pakistan Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (PSRD) hospital.

To make a comment on this article go to:

 facebook.com/fareastmagazine

 [@fareastmagazine](https://twitter.com/fareastmagazine)

**MAKING
YOUR
WILL?**

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Please remember the needs of Columban missionaries and their missions.

Without your help we cannot continue our work.

Your gift could help some of the most marginalised and neediest.

“Whoever welcomes a child welcomes me.”

(Mk 9-37)

NOWHERE TO GO

Those welcoming desperate migrants, bereft of everything, remind Fr Bobby Gilmore of Columban Fr John Meaney's generosity towards a destitute Filipino family.

01. War refugees from Ukraine: women, the elderly and children evacuated from Irpin. Image: Shutterstock.

02. A woman looks out of her impoverished shack in the city of Cagayan de Oro in the Mindanao, Philippines. Image: Shutterstock.

03. A mountain in the Philippines remains half bare following extensive logging. Image: Shutterstock.

04. Refugees protest against poor living conditions at Camp Lipa, Bihac, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Image: Shutterstock.

05. Columban missionary Fr John Meaney from Co Mayo who died in the Philippines in 2006.

To make a comment on this article go to:

[facebook.com/fareastmagazine](https://www.facebook.com/fareastmagazine)

[@fareastmagazine](https://twitter.com/fareastmagazine)

Watching the collision of hope and horror in Ukraine played out on television screens, people fleeing with their whole belongings in suitcases and plastic bags, I am reminded of stories of settlers from various parts of the Philippines flocking into Mindanao after the Second World War. As I see women and children arriving in safe havens in European Union Member states, including Ireland, I am reminded of Fr John Meaney's arrival in Mindanao and the tragedies of Settlers there.

After the liberation of the Philippines from the Japanese, Mindanao, a sparsely populated island about the size of Ireland became the destination of thousands of Filipinos from the Northern part of the country and the islands in between. It was labelled the promised land giving the impression of being unpopulated with plenty of arable land available for settlement. Most of the population of Mindanao lived along the coastline making a living from fishing and subsistence farming. The hinterland of Mindanao was thinly populated by groups of indigenous people. A significant Muslim population occupied a large section of the island making a living from farming, fishing, trading and a variety of crafts.

First to arrive after the war were logging companies taking advantage of the pristine

forests laden with some of the most valuable timber anywhere in the world. As the loggers cleared the forest the new settlers staked a claim, ran up temporary shacks, began to clear the debris and produce basic foodstuff necessary for survival. There were few if any government services in the hinterland. The nearest town on the coastline was accessible usually after a long walk along an abandoned rutted logging road or on horseback.

This was the situation that John Meaney, a young Columban missionary, experienced on his arrival in the coast town of Baroy in Lanao del Norte in 1947. Being the provincial capital, it had the usual government offices with few resources to meet the needs of the unplanned arrivals seeking a new future. There were some services available but these were understaffed, lacking resources and stretched to the limit. There was no electricity, public water supply or sanitation services. Disease, tuberculosis, diphtheria, cholera, typhoid, hepatitis, scabies and worm infections were rampant. There was a local doctor, midwife and a small clinic in the town. People struggled to survive from one planting season to the next.

One day as John was going about his pastoral tasks he encountered a young destitute widow, her two little boys of about six and seven years old and their baby sister.

“Whoever gives a drink of water because he belongs to Christ he will not go without reward.”

(Mk 9-41)

John blessed the corpse of her husband who died of typhoid the previous day. Not only was she destitute but like all migrants she had no extended family to lean on. She pleaded with John to take the two boys and the baby girl. After a conversation with the widow, he called his general factotum, Philipe and his wife, Maria.

After discussing the plight of this family John suggested that the mother leave the two boys with Philipe and his family. He suggested that the mother and baby girl should return to her hometown in Cebu at his expense. John promised that he would take responsibility for the education and welfare of the two boys who would reside next door with Philipe, his wife and their children. That he did.

The two boys attended the local elementary school with Philipe's children. Each evening after school John would sit the children around the kitchen table in the rectory where he would help them with their homework. When they graduated from elementary school John sponsored them at the local high school. Graduating from high school John sent them to the prestigious San Carlos University in Cebu where they both graduated with degrees in engineering.

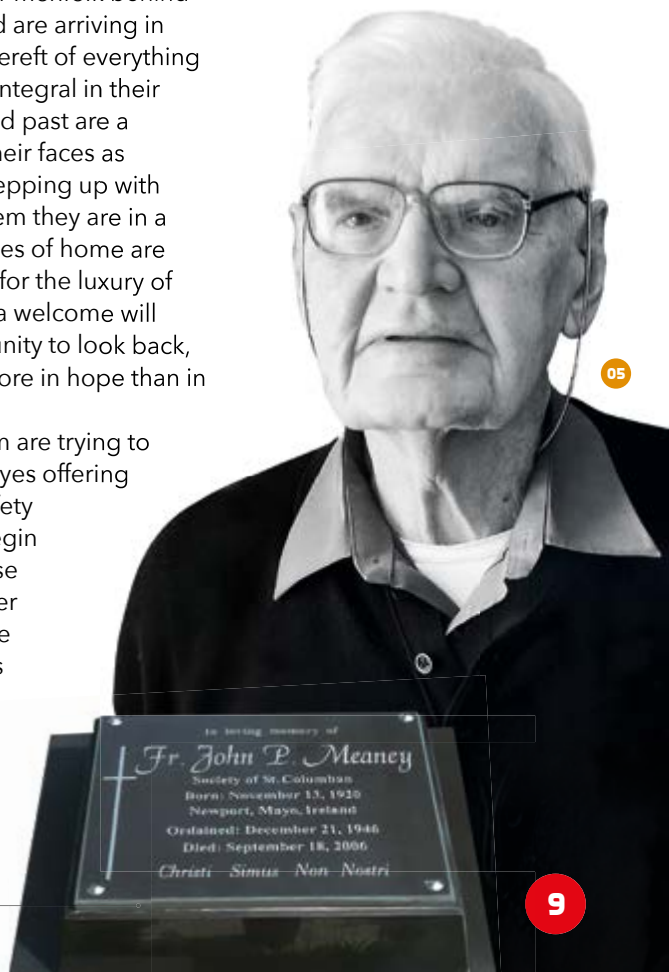
Meanwhile he sponsored their baby sister though high school at home in Cebu with her mother and then to university from which she graduated as a state registered nurse. After they graduated and were employed, they returned annually with their families to visit John and help with any repairs needed in his house or in the church.



What John did all those years ago is repeated in Europe and elsewhere in a troubled world today. Mothers fleeing with children leaving their menfolk behind to defend their homeland are arriving in adjacent free countries bereft of everything they took for granted as integral in their lives. Memories of a horrid past are a savage reality visible in their faces as they arrive. People are stepping up with a welcome which tells them they are in a safe haven. Their memories of home are raw. They have little time for the luxury of looking back. Hopefully, a welcome will open to them an opportunity to look back, heal, and look forward more in hope than in anguish.

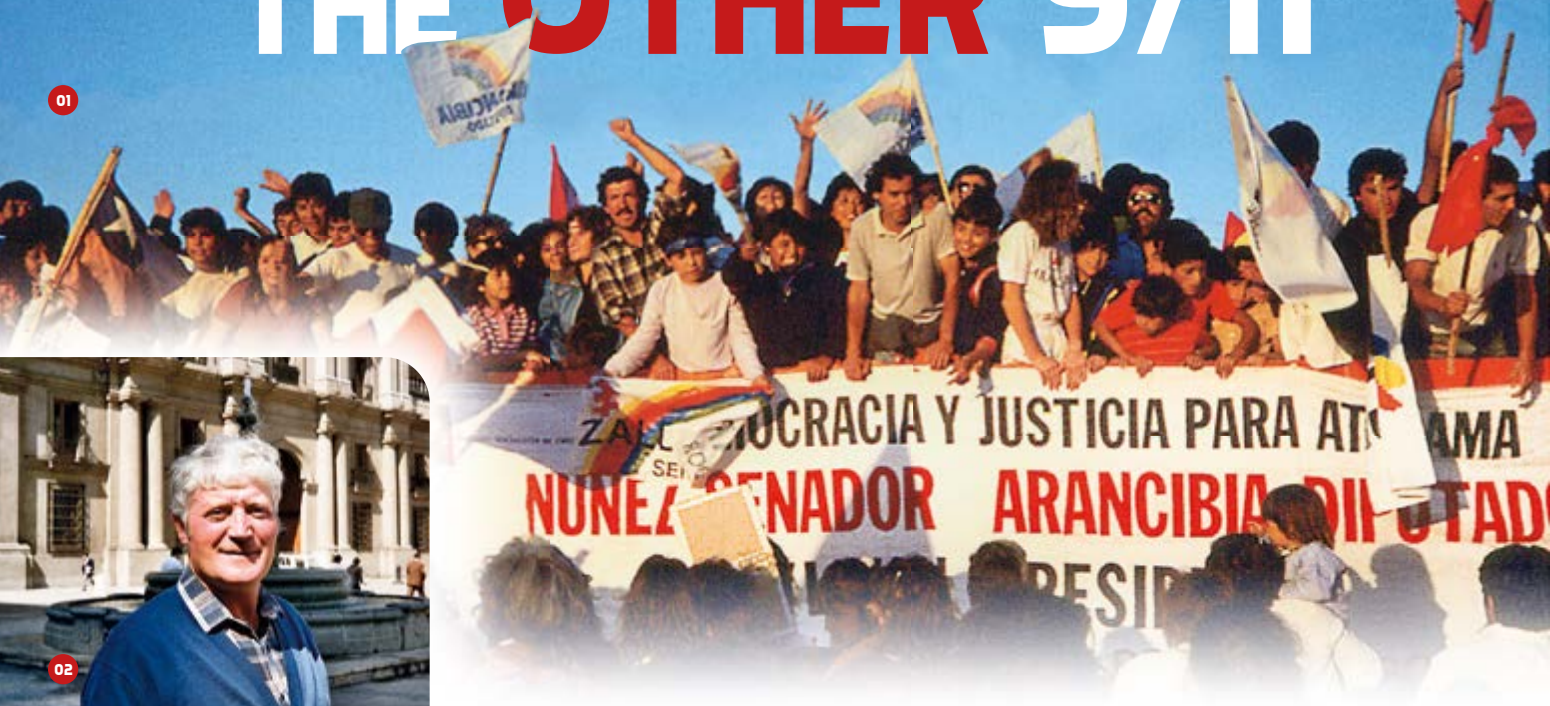
Those welcoming them are trying to match the hope in their eyes offering them not just physical safety but the opportunity to begin trying to make some sense of the turmoil in their inner landscapes. Sadly, Europe is not as civilised as it was thought to be. It seems the only certainty we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history. ●

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



In loving memory of
Fr. John P. Meaney
Society of St. Columban
Born: November 13, 1910
Newport, Mayo, Ireland
Ordained: December 21, 1946
Died: September 18, 2006
Christi Simus Non Nostrum

THE OTHER 9/11



Fr Alo Connaughton spoke to Fr Pat Egan about that fateful day in Chile's history when the military, led by General Pinochet, seized power in the 1973 coup.



For Pat Egan remembers Chile's 9/11 well. The 'Eleventh' (El Once) can mean only one thing: the coup of 11th September 1973. Pat was there for years before and after the military takeover that brought the government of President Salvador Allende to a bloody end. This left-wing coalition had come to power in 1970 after a fair election. Although the parties won enough seats to form a government, they never had an overall majority.

Did Fr Pat see the coup coming? "A failed coup attempt in June and a state of political paralysis created a sense of dread; the government couldn't function. Most weekdays some big group was on strike – today the teachers were out protesting against the government, tomorrow the students were on the streets against the teachers and supporting the government. The day after it would be the truck drivers against the government and the day after, the factory workers... There were queues for all the basic necessities and runaway inflation. Although the atmosphere was tense, freedom of information wasn't curbed, even if the views were extremely polarised."

Was Allende's government popular? "It was enthusiastically welcomed by over 36% of voters, and generally supported, at the beginning, by maybe half the people. It had many good plans. The nationalisation of the country's copper mines, and tighter control

of the banks was widely supported. Internally the coalition had irreconcilable tensions; mistakes were made. But it had to deal with legal and illegal opposition, sabotage, market manipulation, hoarding of essentials and opposition from most of Chile's wealthy elite and sections of the military. There were international boycotts. Covert actions of foreign multinationals and the CIA were subsequently well documented.

On the morning of Tuesday 11th September 1973, Fr Pat arrived early to the Columban city centre headquarters. It was only then he discovered a meticulously planned coup was in progress; radio announcements ordered people home. He walked two miles through back streets to get a lift home with some Irish Cross and Passion Sisters. Once back in the poorer western suburb of Lo Prado rumours began to filter in. The presidential palace had been set on fire by Air Force rockets. Those who could listen to Radio Magallanes, the last free radio on air, heard, sometime after midday, an emotional farewell message from President Allende who saw what was coming. He was dead within hours.

Arrests began almost immediately – political and community leaders and trade union officials were the first. About six in Pat's area were taken away never to be seen again; others were released after torture. Order of a sort was quickly restored but now

fear was everywhere. In Pat's first parish, the Port of San Antonio, dockworkers had gone to a meeting with the new military officials to discuss the protection of their rights. Four of them were found dead the following day - terrorists shot while trying to escape the military said. The National Stadium in Santiago and the large indoor Estadio Chile were turned into detention centres - places of torture and death for many. A nightly curfew was imposed for years to come.

Back in the 1960s the Catholic Church had experienced a great revival after the Santiago General Mission and Synod. During Allende's Unidad Popular government participation dropped a lot in the poorer areas, in part because of the huge increase in social and political activity at grassroots level; everyone was busy at weekends. People in poor neighbourhoods and the religious who worked with them were, in general, pro Unidad Popular. Many of Chile's bishops were sympathetic but with some reservations. The lines of communication between President Allende and Cardinal Silva remained open and on a few occasions Allende asked for his help. About three weeks before the coup Allende came secretly one evening to the Cardinal's house to have dinner with him and Patricio Aylwin, leader of the opposition. As they sat down for an after-dinner drink Allende joked, "This is Chile: the President of the Republic a mason and a Marxist, meets with the leader of the Opposition in the house of the Cardinal. This wouldn't happen in any other country."

The first Sunday after the coup, San Gabriel church in Lo Prado was packed as Fr Pat read a letter from Cardinal Raul Silva to all parishes. The Cardinal spoke of the immense pain he felt for the bloodshed and the tears of so many people. He wrote: "We ask for respect for those who have fallen in the struggle and in the first place for he who, until 11 September, was President of the Republic... Let there be no unnecessary reprisals. The sincere idealism which inspired many of those who are now defeated should be taken into account... It is a time to end the hatred and begin a time of reconciliation... We hope that the progress achieved by the previous governments with regard to workers and small farmers will not be put aside ..."

Cardinal Silva did not limit himself to stirring words. Within days the ecumenical

Committee for Peace (Comité pro Paz later to become the Vicaría de la Solidaridad) was up and running. This offered legal aid, protection and often, places to hide, for those in danger of arrest, torture or death. It grew to employ scores of lawyers, counsellors, social workers, medical personnel -and annually attended the needs of tens of thousands of people. All this was important under a new regime with little or no respect for basic rights.

After the coup the Church experienced another resurgence. The new rulers allowed little meaningful participation in the life of the country. This left many talented men and women without an opportunity to make a contribution to civil society. Many of them began to participate in the Church, a lot as Mass-goers but also as participants in welfare activities, culture groups, awareness raising groups, liturgy, education and so on. All of these functioned under the umbrella of the Church and in spite of efforts to limit or control them.

Over the next 17 years some 3,200 people were killed by military agents, 1,200 of those are still among the disappeared. About 40,000 were imprisoned as political prisoners.

How did the return to democracy come about? Fr Pat underlines that with the passing of time and a lessening of repression the people's courage began to return and with it, demands for a return of democracy. At the start there were small expressions of the will of the people - things like the beating of pots at a fixed time of night. This led to street protests and strikes. In 1988, convinced he would win, Pinochet allowed a plebiscite - yes or no to a continuation of (disguised) military power. He lost but conceded. A new coalition government came into power in 1990 with Patricio Aylwin as president.

Looking back, was anything learnt from those years? Pat speaks of the 63% defeat in a plebiscite in 2022 of a new Constitution drafted by a heavily left-weighted Assembly. An election last May produced a drafting assembly now dominated by right wing candidates. Acknowledging his defeat Chile's young, radical President Gabriel Boric said in summary, "We squandered an opportunity because we did not listen to those who thought differently to us. We appeal to the winners not to make the same mistake." A high price for some wisdom already freely available in the history books. ●



Fr Alo Connaughton is a former editor of the Far East magazine. He worked in Chile between 1975 and 1993 as a parish priest, in the education of young religious and in administration. He also served as regional director of the Columbans in Chile.

Read more on the Columbans and Chile under Pinochet in: 'I Surrender: A Memoir of Chile's Dictatorship' by Kathy Osberger (Orbis Books 2023).



01. Celebrations in Vallemar, Chile after the defeat of Pinochet in 1989. Photo: Alo Connaughton.
02. Columban missionary Fr Pat Egan outside La Moneda, the Presidential Palace in Santiago, Chile.
03. A miners march in Chile 1973. Photo: Alo Connaughton.
04. The democratically elected President of Chile, Dr Salvador Allende. He headed a coalition of the Communist, Socialist, National Democratic and National Vanguard parties. He was ousted from power on 11th September 1973 by a military coup led by General Pinochet. Photo: Lynn Pelham/Camera Press.
05. A cover of Mensaje from July 1983. Published by the Jesuits, it was one of Chile's most esteemed magazines. Columban Fr Alo Connaughton took this photo of Cardinal Raul Silva which was used to mark the Cardinal's retirement.

FAST FASHION FUELS CLIMATE CHANGE

We must buy less clothes argues Fr Sean McDonagh as he highlights the climate cost of over-producing plastic-based textiles and the plight of workers in the fast fashion industry.

Research published in May 2023 by the University of Exeter's Global System Institute in Britain and Nanjing University in China predicted that two billion people globally will be exposed to extreme weather towards the end of this century. The reason is simple. The use of fossil fuels in our homes and transport will produce an average rise in temperature of 2.7 degrees by the year 2100.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis calls this another example of the "ecological debt" which rich nations have contracted through colonialism and the use of fossil fuels to drive their industries for almost two centuries. Climate change affects the poor most, especially in Africa and Asia, because, among other things, it is devastating farming. And the numbers of humans affected are huge: 300 million people in Nigeria and 600 million people in India will face extreme weather conditions.

It doesn't have to be like that. Humans can limit the increase in temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius as suggested by the Paris Agreement in 2015. This would mean that only 400 million people would experience extreme temperatures globally.

When speaking of fast fashion, we forget that it's very unjust to those who work in the industry. 10 years ago, the Rana Plaza factory collapsed in Bangladesh killing 1,134 people. Most of them were women. Parts of the building were completed without proper permits.

According to Helie Abelvik-Lawson, it is estimated that 75 million women are involved in this industry and are very poorly paid, even though some of them have extraordinary knitting and embroidery skills.

It is also clear that the explosion of fast fashion clothes is adding to the waste crisis. The sheer volume of fast fashion clothes means that a lot the clothes are either incinerated or sent to countries in Africa. In 2019 alone, 185,000 tonnes of second-hand clothes were imported in Kenya.

But fast fashion is also causing climate change. Oil and gas are used to create polyester which is used in half the clothes produced today. And the change is taking place quickly since the





Fr Sean McDonagh was ordained in 1969. He worked in Mindanao in the Philippines amongst the T'boli indigenous people near Lake Sebu where he witnessed first-hand the destruction of the local forests. His most recent publication is 'Robots, Ethics and the Future of Jobs' published by Messenger Publications: www.messenger.ie/product/robots-ethics-and-the-future-of-jobs

volume of polyester has doubled in the past 20 years according to Ben Chapman in an article ('Fashion industry has developed danger addiction to fossil fuel, say campaign groups,' 4th February 2021) in the Independent newspaper in Britain.

At the moment it is estimated that fast fashion is responsible for between 8-10% of fossil fuel use today and the percentage is rising every year. So, while governments and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCCC) is trying to get us to use less fossil fuels, we are using more and more in polyester clothes, much of it we do not need.

Each year, more than half a billion tonnes of plastic microfibres from washing plastic-based textiles such as nylon, acrylic and polyester end up polluting the oceans and rivers. When the clothes are brought to landfills, they pollute the soil, water, and air with plastic microfibres and hazardous chemical compounds. Microfibres are now found in the Arctic Ocean as well as in 80% of the world's tap water, in people's lungs and even in the placentas of unborn babies. Unfortunately, we are not sure how plastics will affect our health in the long run, but it is very worrying.

In Ireland, Pippa Hackett, a member of the Green Party and the Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, says the most effective way to stop this fast fashion industry is to buy second-hand clothes.

"In my role, I feel it's important to

highlight the potential damage there is, not only to the environment in the manufacturing and the disposal of clothing, but also to the human and the workers' rights issues associated with the people that make these clothes," the Minister told the Irish Examiner newspaper in May 2023.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul has over 230 local Vincent's charity shops located in every county in Ireland, so shopping in these stores should not be difficult. Young and old must be challenged to buy less and less clothes. I will leave the last line to Pope Francis. "Purchasing is always a moral - not simply an economic - act. Today, the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle. (*Laudato Si'* 206) ●

01. Extinction Rebellion protestor covered in fake oil protesting against Fossil Fuel Fashion outside Selfridges, London.

Photo: Shutterstock

02. Members of the Bangladesh Federation of Worker Solidarity at a protest rally demanding justice for Rana Plaza building collapse victims at the High Court in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in May 2023.

Photo: Shutterstock

03. Image: Shutterstock

To make a comment on this article go to:

facebook.com/fareastmagazine

[@fareastmagazine](https://twitter.com/fareastmagazine)



JOURNEY TO THE PERIPHERY

In the first of two articles, Fr Tom O'Reilly explains why synodality means listening to voices on the periphery as we journey together as a Church.

Pope Francis is convinced that the path of synodality is God's wish for the Church of the third millennium. Synodality has many dimensions, but its basic meaning is 'journeying together.' The Pope often says that the Church must go to its own peripheries and those of society in general, where it can rediscover its true identity by listening to those on the margins.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we learn how the early Jewish Church was transformed by its experiences of meeting those outside its own circle. We first consider Peter's call to go to the house of the Gentile Cornelius and how that raised questions for the Church's identity and mission (Acts 10:1-11:18). In the following article, we will see how these questions led to crucial decisions at the Council of Jerusalem in the wake of Paul and Barnabas' missionary outreach to the margins (Acts 15:1-35).

The Cornelius episode is a great drama in which God directs his plan of salvation for all people without distinction. Cornelius, the Gentile God-fearer on the margins of the Jewish religion, responds immediately and without question to God's promptings. By way of contrast, Peter, who had just been visiting newly-established Jewish Christian communities, is finding

it very hard to understand and keep pace with what God is doing. He moves slowly from resistance through confusion to conviction about God's designs.

We usually understand this episode as the story of Cornelius' conversion. But it is equally the story of Peter's conversion, that is, his turning to and acceptance of what God is doing in unexpected ways and in ritually unclean places. Peter has to be converted from a mind-set deeply ingrained by his Jewish cultural and religious identity. His conversion is brought about through God's direct intervention in a vision, by the Spirit's action, and by listening attentively to Cornelius' experience of a heavenly messenger.

Notice how Peter, who had been told by the Spirit to go with the messengers from Cornelius, first pauses to listen to what they had to say. When he arrives in the house of Cornelius, he first speaks of his own initial resistance to God and then listens and learns as Cornelius relates his own religious experience. Only then does Peter preach the Good News of Jesus Christ to Cornelius and his household. The initiative of God is again highlighted by the descent of the Holy Spirit even before baptism, which convinces Peter that Gentiles are having the same experience that he and other Jewish believers had at Pentecost.



FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH
communion | participation | mission

When Peter returns to the Jerusalem church, he is strongly criticised by some for transgressing strict religious boundaries and associating with ritually unclean Gentiles. Peter does not debate points of law with them but simply shares his experience at the periphery. He identifies with his critics by saying that initially he too strongly objected to any transgression of traditional practices. But God led him to a Gentile house where he listened to others and discovered the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in an 'unclean' place. As the community listens to Peter, objections are replaced by praise for God's marvellous and unexpected deeds among the Gentiles.

When the followers of Jesus were in danger of remaining a closed ethnic group, the Cornelius episode led them to recognise their identity as an inclusive community, open to all races, cultures and classes. This event challenged the view that the activity of God's Spirit is confined within the limits of one's own tradition. And it also reminded leaders at the centre that they do not have a monopoly on the experience and guidance of the Spirit. Rather, God chose the peripheries as the place of his saving presence and, in discerning where the Spirit is leading the community, we must always listen to people on the margins.

Today we are trying to recover our identity as a synodal Church, an inclusive Church guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, as we journey together on our common missionary path. This means listening to voices on the peripheries through which the Spirit speaks today, such as the voices of minorities, migrants, victims of injustice and racism, and those who are excluded in present social and

economic systems. We must also listen to the voices of those who can easily be marginalised in a clerical Church – laity in general and women and young people in particular, ethnically different minorities, Catholics who no longer practice their religion, victims of clerical abuse, and those in irregular moral situations. These are our companions on the journey as we walk the synodal path together. ●

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

01. A priest working with Salvadorans fleeing poverty and gang violence speaks to a family on the Mexican border.

02. Image: Shutterstock

To make a comment on this article go to:



facebook.com/fareastmagazine



[@fareastmagazine](https://twitter.com/fareastmagazine)

ARE YOU BEING CALLED TO COLUMBAN MISSION?

Do you have a dream of doing some service that's pleasing to God and good for God's struggling people? Is your faith important to you? Could God be calling you to be a Columban missionary?

If you see yourself today making a difference and feel drawn to work as a missionary overseas, come and explore the possibilities as a Columban Priest or Lay Missionary.

For Further Information: Fr Denis Carter, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands B93 9AB
telephone: 01564 772 096 email: vocations@columbans.co.uk website: www.columbans.co.uk



COLUMBAN CENTENARIAN

Sr Bríd Kenny from Coolmeen in Co Clare joined the Missionary Sisters of St Columban on 9th April 1942. She got to know the Sisters because her cousin Laura lived close to Cahiracon, where the congregation first established itself in 1922, ahead of receiving papal approval in 1924. Laura was born in Ceylon as her father served there with the British Army and Bríd was intrigued by this faraway place. She was also reading about Columban missionaries in places like China through the **Far East** magazine. As she was often "called on to look after Laura" when her uncle and aunt were busy or away, these visits to Cahiracon enabled her, "to get to know the Columban Sisters and Mother Mary Philomena" and to learn about the Sisters who had gone to China from 1926 onwards.

Sr Bríd took her First Vows on 17th October 1944 and her Final Vows on 3 October 1949. In the novitiate, Sr Bríd was on her own in her year but there "were nine or ten" ahead of her which helped create a sense of camaraderie. During those formative years in Cahiracon, her brother Paul, who was eight years younger than Bríd came to visit "very often". She believes the seed of his vocation as a Columban Father was planted in those visits. "He was only a little young lad. Mother Mary John would give him bamboo for a fishing rod." Later both Sr Bríd and Fr Paul spent time on mission in Korea and were able to meet up. "It was lovely," she recalls of one Sunday when "about six of us drove in the van belonging to the Sisters to where Paul was, and we all had a lovely meal."

After First Profession Bríd was initially based in Cahiracon between 1944-45, before she moved to Dalgan where she worked with the Columban Fathers between 1945-1960. "There was six of us looking after the kitchen and the college. It was wonderful to see a group of 30 men being ordained. But you had to work hard that morning to get a meal ready for them for after the ordination ceremony." Her cooking was legendary within the Columbans!

Sr Bríd was based in Magheramore between 1961-2. Her first assignment to Korea was to Hallim on Jeju Island, where she stayed between 1962-1971. The Korean War was not long over and many of the people were poor and in need of medical care. "It was very sad, there wasn't a thing you could buy. People suffered a lot. But they were determined to get on; they went to school, and they were ambitious and worked at it - they were really lovely."

Columban missionary, Fr PJ McGlinchey, was parish priest of Hallim. He set up projects to help raise people's standard of living. One of these was a woollen factory that would offer employment mainly to women. Mother Mary Gemma appointed Sr Bríd, along with Sr Elizabeth

Sarah Mac Donald speaks to 101-year-old Sr Bríd Kenny about missionary life in Korea and her memories of Fr John Blowick and Mother Mary Patrick, co-founders of the Columban Sisters.

Taaffe and Sr Mary Rosarii McTigue, to Hallim to work with Fr PJ. They were to oversee the project from the time the wool arrived at the mill, through the various steps of weaving, to the sale of textiles and garments. "It was mainly hand-knitting and weaving. Sr Rosarii was very well up on weaving and I was very good at knitting. Sr Elizabeth did a lot of administration work for Fr McGlinchey. By the time I left Jeju there were about 300 people in different places on the island involved in the project, some of whom were special needs. They did the knitting in their own homes. There was a US military base on the island and the Americans used to buy items to bring home."

Following her spell in Hallim, Sr Bríd moved to Seoul, where she worked at the Columban Sisters' central house from 1971-2003. Visiting Columbans were always assured of a taste of Ireland thanks to Sr Bríd's culinary skills. She remembers Fr Noel Daly and Fr Jimmy McMahon rejoicing when she produced a small loaf of homemade soda bread, some scones and a cup of tea. "I had just taken the soda brown bread out of the oven and you could smell it all over the place. We used to make our own marmalade. Jeju Island was full of oranges."

At 101 years of age, Sr Bríd is one of the few Columbans today to have known both of the co-founders of the Columban Sisters,

Fr John Blowick who died in 1972, and Mother Mary Patrick who died in 1959. She describes Fr Blowick as "a lovely man" who was "gentle" and would "always stop on the corridor for a little chat - he was friendly and very charitable". She remembers Mother Mary Patrick recounting how the ocean liner she was travelling aboard was torpedoed in the Atlantic in 1940 during World War II. "She was coming home because they were cut off in the missions. She was very nice, a strong but gentle person who liked to have things right."

Looking back over her long life, Sr Bríd gives thanks to God. Being a Columban Sister, she says is like being part of "a family where everybody helped". It was "like being at home. We had wonderful people who directed us and taught us prayer. There was a great family spirit." ●

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



01. Columban missionary, Sr Bríd Kenny, with the commemorative silver medal President Michael D. Higgins sent her along with a congratulatory letter to mark her 101st birthday.
02. Sr Bríd and her brother, Columban missionary, Fr Paul Kenny who also spent time on mission in Korea.
03. Sr Bríd and Fr Paul at the Dalgan nursing home shortly before Fr Paul died in 2021.
04. Images of Sr Bríd's time in Hallim and Seoul in Korea. Courtesy: Columban Sisters Archive Magheramore.

To make a comment on this article go to:



facebook.com/fareastmagazine



[@fareastmagazine](https://twitter.com/fareastmagazine)

04





WALK IN FAITH

Columban Lay Missionary Latai Muller writes about being part of a Basic Ecclesial Community in the Philippines and how it has helped her to see God everywhere.

See God everywhere and you will have a deeper faith in Him. See Him in the sunrise and sunset, in mountain streams and the mighty oceans, in storm clouds and rainbows, floods and droughts. Every experience has an impact on our lives.

I regularly visit a community in an isolated barrio in the Philippines, known only as Landless, for a gathering of a Basic Ecclesial Community, a movement inviting bishops, priests, religious and lay people to come together and reflect on their lives and their response to the Gospels.

The group in Landless meets frequently. Everyone knows each other by name and shares the Word of God, the Eucharist, as well as the material and spiritual concerns of their daily lives. There is a strong sense of belonging and mutual responsibility.

As I arrived one wet day, I found things in disarray; everything was under water. Our numbers were down because of the havoc caused by the flooding. We faced a conundrum; should we postpone or press on?

The determination of the small group to continue as usual despite the disruption surprised me and gave me an insight into the depth of their appreciation for these gatherings and how they support the

very people who are the lifeblood of the community.

Their desire and longing for God to be part of their community life was enormous even amid the floods. The decision was unanimous: press on as planned.

I was moved when one mother said, "With God, all things are possible." Despite the limitations imposed by the weather, something is empowering these people to have faith in God no matter what. Their sharing that day inspired me. The struggle to find jobs or ways of supporting their families during the pandemic absorbed a huge amount of their energy. The floods were not going to get in the way of the mutual support they receive through their small gatherings. They still had smiles on their faces.

That day, I realised I have learned a lot from these people. Sometimes I need to pause and reflect on my faith, because faith is not an option for us as people of God; it is, and must remain, a way of life. If we believe and trust God, all things are possible, so as we walk the path of our faith, we see not obstacles, but opportunities. The people of Landless are teaching me to fear nothing and pray about everything. ●



Latai Muller is a Columban missionary from the Kingdom of Tonga. She is currently living and working in the Philippines.



01. Latai Muller (L) from Tonga and Mereani Nailevu (R) from the Fiji Islands in Davao City, Philippines.
02. Latai (left) listens intently during an orientation session on tree-growing in Brgy. Dansolihon, Cagayan de Oro. Photo: Columbans Philippines
03. Companions in Mission: A group of Columban Lay Missionaries. Latai Muller is first from the right.

To make a comment on this article go to:

 facebook.com/fareastmagazine

 [@fareastmagazine](https://twitter.com/fareastmagazine)

SUBSCRIBE TODAY TO OUR FREE eNEWSLETTER

Receive mission updates, stories and reflections direct to your email from Columban missionaries in Britain and around the world.

And he said to them,

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

Mark 16:15

SUBSCRIBE HERE



**COLUMBAN
MISSIONARIES
BRITAIN**



WWW.COLUMBANS.CO.UK



ALL ARE WELCOME



01

These days, I live a life of deep happiness in Pakistan, appreciative of many small things. Before I arrived, I was worried about the weather, living in a different culture with different food, and a new community life. But then I realised I was focusing only on my fears. After recognising this, I decided to focus on how to overcome these fears. I felt a change in my way of thinking and an invitation to relax and be myself.

In the past, when fears appeared, I tried to face them and believe that I had the power to overcome them. As I reflected on those past experiences, I learned to trust that God would give me the strength I need and to trust in God's providence which sent me here on mission.

A few months on since I first arrived in Pakistan, I now feel less nervous in what is a totally different atmosphere and environment. I go with the flow because I know the Lord will give me the energy when the time comes.

A visit to a neighbourhood where one of our Sisters ministers reminded me of my mission experience in Pasay cemetery in the Philippines: it was dirty, crowded, and there was garbage everywhere creating a terrible smell! It was a really grimy place.

The people were very poor and had little education but they were honest, warm and hospitable. I felt very happy and comfortable with them and with their children. I decided to learn Urdu as quickly as possible as I wanted to

be able to interact with the people and convey Jesus' love both in action and in words.

This challenging setting reminds me again and again that we all need fewer material possessions. Everything here is simple, there is nothing fancy, people have little, but I can see their hope and passion. There is a warm hospitality among the poor and I like the simplicity in their smile.

The day we visited, some asked us to pray for them. While we were praying, I could see how earnest they were - the piety in their faces. I realised that it is up to all of us to live the life of Jesus, who visited and spent time with the poor, the marginalised and the suffering. For Jesus, all are welcome; no one is left out. ●

Sr Julietta Choi

01. Vegetable market in Lahore, Pakistan. Image: Shutterstock.

02. Columban missionary Sr Julietta Choi learning Urdu in Pakistan.



02

IN THE BEGINNING

Many years ago, there was just God. He made everything. At first there was just water and empty darkness.

Then God made light. He divided light from dark and called the light "day" and the darkness "night".

Then God made the sky and the mighty heavens.

God looked at all he had made and was pleased with it.

Then God made dry land rise up out of the water. God called the land "earth" and the water "sea". He made plants and trees to cover the earth.

Next, God put lights in the sky: the sun to brighten the day and the shining moon and stars to light up the night.

Then God made all kinds of animals and birds to live on the earth and fill the skies, and fish to fill the seas.

God looked at all these things and was pleased with them.

Then God made men and women to live on the earth. He made them just like himself, to be his friends. God blessed the people he had made and told them to have families and fill the earth, and to take care of all the plants and animals.

When God had finished making heaven and earth, he had a rest. He looked down from heaven on everything he had created, and saw that it was all very good indeed. ●

Read also: Book of Genesis 1:1-31

BIBLE QUIZ

NUMBER
108

1 In John ch.19, which group said to Pilate, "We have a law and according to that law he must die"?

2 In Esther ch.5, True or false, Mordecai asked, "What is it Queen Esther, what is your request"?

3 In Matthew ch.8, who said to Jesus, "Master, master, we are going to drown"?

4 In Ruth ch.3, who said, "My daughter, I want to see you settled happily"?

5 In Genesis ch.24, which two family members asked Rebecca, "Do you want to go with this man"?

6 In Genesis ch.47, who asked Jacob, "How old are you"?

£15 vouchers for the first three correct entries received!

Consult your Bible, answer the questions above and send your entry to: Bible Quiz N° 10, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 31st October 2023.

Bible Quiz N° 106 Winners: Joel Dalis, Fife • Denis Collins, Essex
• Feliciano Barboza, Manchester.

Name:

Address:

THREE
£15
VOUCHERS
TO BE WON!

- HELP THE FARMER FIND THE WAY TO THE FARM HOUSE



Image: Shutterstock

PUDSY'S DIRTY - FIND THE 10 SPELLING MISTAKES

We're just back to school and I dunno why them hols go so fast. When I was telling cuzzin Conor the guy who is aful smart he started eggspaining its becos the axis of the earth is slanted and the world only spins this way and not the other way and a whole lot of other things too. And I am wundering if this axis is like a bit of unkil Edwards new tractor except I didn't say so because he might think I am not smart. And when I was telling my friend Bump and the others this and said cuzzin Conor would luvta come to our class

and show pictures and everything. All the girls were saying goody that'd be just fab and things like that. But Bump and us boys said no way because you know what suppose Ms Flinn thinks he's fab too then we'll be having to do essays about them axis things and everything not to mention all the hard words. So I'm thinking what'll I tell cousin Conor cept maybe no need to come because we know these things already.. but I won't say I was explaining them. And as Grandad said when we won the match...now how about that!!



WIN!

PRIZE
£15
VOUCHER!

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 October 2023.



1. What is a snake's favourite subject?
2. Why is glue bad at maths?
3. What is the smartest insect?
4. Why is history the sweetest subject?
5. Why can't pirates learn the alphabet?
6. Why did the kid cross the playground?

1. His story
2. It always gets stuck on the problems
3. A spelling bee
4. Because it's full of dates
5. They keep getting lost at C
6. He wanted to get to the other slide



COMPETITION WINNERS



MAY / JUNE 2023

Faye
Macfarland
Ayrshire

Lola
Young
Selby

1

2

Colpaint - Aged 7 and Under

Gabby
Shahpazova
London

Ava
Martin
St. Helens

1

2

Colpaint - Aged 8 and Over

The Arctic Tern

By Elizabeth McArdle



If birds could clock up their frequent flyer air miles, the Arctic Tern would earn (by far) the most points. These incredible birds hold the record for the longest migration flights of any living creature on the planet. Their yearly journey, (without causing any climate change) takes them from the Arctic circle in the north, to the Antarctic circle in the south. This is a journey of over 35,000km (22,000 miles) and does not include the air miles which the birds clock up on foraging trips to feed their young.

Arctic Terns mate for life. In their Arctic breeding grounds, they take full advantage of the polar summer with its 24 hours of daylight. There are no lunch breaks or relaxing evenings for Arctic Terns as they work around the clock to catch small fish, shellfish, sand eels and small marine invertebrates to ensure that their darling chicks are safely reared.

When the summer breeding season finishes, the birds

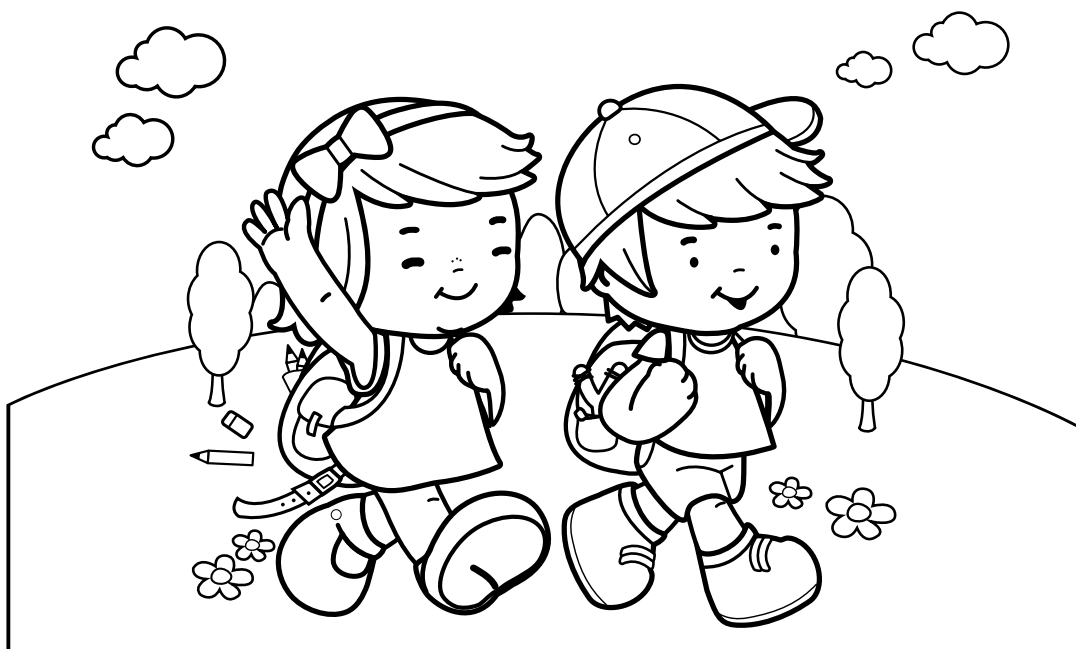
head south to better feeding grounds before the Arctic is gripped in the glacial embrace of winter. Their journey is an incredible one as the birds (young and old) fly the entire length of the north and south Atlantic Ocean to overwinter in the Antarctic summer. On their way, they can sleep and even eat while gliding and arctic terns, along with hummingbirds are one of the few birds that can hover in mid-air.

How do these wonderful birds know how to navigate these very long distances? It is thought they follow the coasts of Europe and Africa. The long journey does not seem to faze them as studies have shown that the average Arctic tern lives about 15-30 years. This is phenomenal and points to only one thing: the great wonder of God. No words can express it, no mind can comprehend it and all we can do is give thanks and praise for the marvel of all God's creation. ●

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, Navan, Co Meath, C15 AY2Y, before 31st October 2023.

Name:

Age:

Address:

FOUR PRIZES TO BE WON!

SUBANEN CHRISTMAS CARDS

Connecting the nativity story with the story of the Subanen people in the Philippines

The Subanens face eviction from their homes by logging and mining companies. With assistance from the Columbans, they use their traditional crafting skills to make jewellery, mandalas, children's books and cards to sell. The income generated provides food, education, housing and healthcare for their families.

Why not support the indigenous Subanen people of the Philippines by buying their traditionally crafted cards?



To place your order contact the Mission Office at: Tel: **01564 772 096** or email: office@columban.co.uk or write to: Subanen Christmas Cards, Columban Missionaries, Widney Manor Road, Solihull B93 9AB.

*Sold in packs of ten with envelopes. Price + £2.95 postage (£3.95 for 3-8 packs) incl. VAT. Cheques payable to 'Columban Missionaries'.

SCHOOLS MEDIA COMPETITION 2024

Columban Missionaries invite students aged 13-18 to submit an original piece of writing or image on the theme:

Biodiversity Matters

Explore Biodiversity, which humanity relies on for health, food and well-being.

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS SATURDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2024

For entry details:
www.columbancompetition.com



COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES
BRITAIN

WRITTEN PRIZES
• 1ST £500
• 2ND £250
• 3RD £150

IMAGE PRIZES
• 1ST £500
• 2ND £250
• 3RD £150

