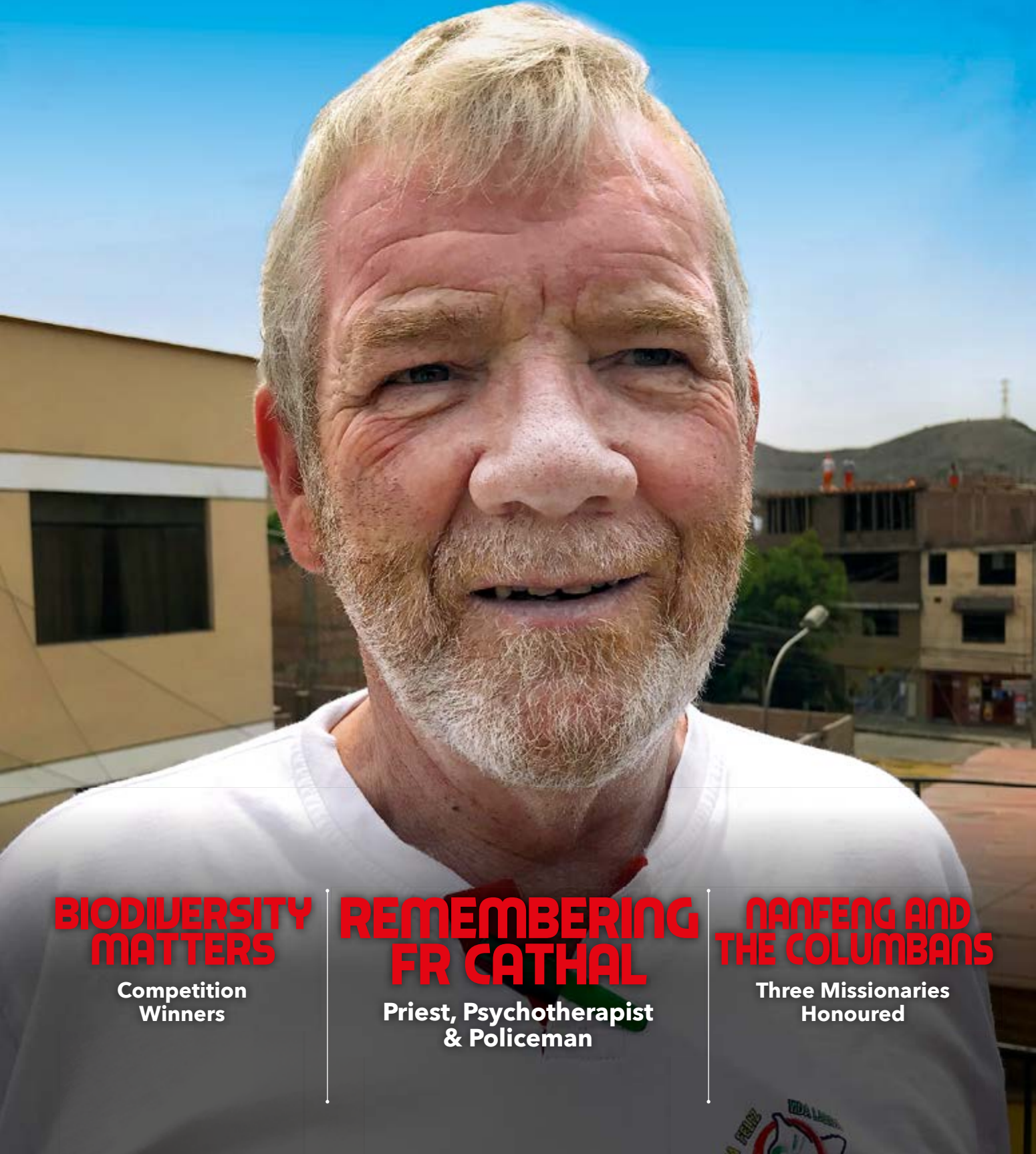


# far east



MAGAZINE OF THE COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

MAY / JUNE 2024



## BIODIVERSITY MATTERS

Competition  
Winners

## REMEMBERING FR CATHAL

Priest, Psychotherapist  
& Policeman

## NANFENG AND THE COLUMBANS

Three Missionaries  
Honoured





**04 Death of a Subanen Crafter**

Fr Vincent Busch pays tribute to Andonie, one of the four original Subanen Crafters who died earlier this year in childbirth.

**06 The Common Good**

Fr Ed O'Connell considers why so many voters in different parts of the world today feel such apathy. He believes we must all discern how to play an active part in society.

**08 Pilgrim's Progress**

As the Columbans gather in Peru for their General Assembly, one person who was due to play a pivotal role is missing - Fr Cathal Gallagher. We publish Fr John Boles' profile of this priest, psychotherapist and ex policeman as a tribute.

**10 Biodiversity Matters**

The winning article and images in this year's Columban Schools Media Competition.

**12 Nanfeng and the Columbans**

Fr Dan Troy writes about Nanfeng, a small corner of China that is forever Columban, where three of our missionaries worked in the parish and are now featured in the parish church's stained glass windows.

**14 The Spiritual Journey of St Patrick**

Fr Maurice Hogan looks at the development of Patrician studies in recent years and the Columban contribution to this, notably Fr Aidan Larkin's book, 'The Spiritual Journey of St Patrick'.

**16 Message of Joy**

Sr Gloria Santos recalls the beginnings of the Columban Sisters' mission in the Philippines and how it has evolved over time.

**18 Sisters in Profile 3**

Oscar Bryan writes about the first Filipina to join the Columban Sisters - Sr Mary Consuelo Mercado (1914-1991).

**19 Reflection**

**20 Obituaries**

**21 Stories from the Bible**

**22 Children's Section**

**23 Nature: The Glass Frog**



**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**

Columban missionary Fr Cathal Gallagher (1951-2023) who founded 'SÍ, da Vida' in Peru. Photo: Fr Gabriel Rojas SSC.



# THE BREAD OF LIFE

**T**he struggle of any missionary is to give effective aid to those who are in need. Yet, it is sometimes difficult to determine how best to aid others. In the 1990s when I was a seminarian, a man came knocking on the door of our Columban house. He wanted to speak to a priest. I informed him that none was around. He asked who I was. "A seminarian," I replied. "Great! Can I talk to you?" he asked. I let him in and we conversed.

The man said he was dying of an incurable cancer and didn't have the money to pay for his medicines. He produced several medical documents confirming his condition. After that he talked about Columbans in other areas of Chile. Feeling pity for him, I gave him \$50, a good sum in those days.

Months later, the man returned asking for me. Another Columban saw him and told me, "that guy has been dying for years." Meaning he was a conman. I felt angered that I had fallen for his story. I refused to see him, but he insisted. Finally, I decided to confront him. The man poured out his heart to me saying that his family and wife all thanked me for being so generous and compassionate. Then he came to the point, could I give him more money. I said I had none. He asked if I could get it from the other priests, I said yes, but I wouldn't disturb them. With this, he knew the game was over, got up, shook my hand and left. I never saw him again.

Years later as a priest, I was working in a parish in Santiago (Chile). We had opened a communal kitchen where we offered cooking classes for women so they could sell their baked goods. We also organised a children's summer camp. The camp was

a way of getting the children off the streets so that they would not be exposed to gangs and other harmful elements and they would also receive a good meal.

One evening, rioters looted our compound and stole the refrigerator, oven and many utensils from the kitchen. It was disheartening that some from the community had destroyed this communal venture. I didn't think we would recover. However, the following day, parishioners donated a used refrigerator and an oven and other items. It was great to see the solidarity of the people.

Are there deserving poor and underserving poor? The Gospel mandate is simple: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you invited me in; naked and you clothed me; I was in prison and you visited me." (Matthew 25: 35-36)

Obviously, the conman angered me. Did he deserve what I gave him? As missionaries we try to be effective in our aid to those in need like the parish communal kitchen. However, there are moments when we have to take a leap of faith. The following quote from Dorothy Day helped me let go of my resentment against that man: "The Gospel takes away our right forever to discriminate between the deserving and the underserving poor." ●

**Fr Chris Saenz**

Fr Chris Saenz is from Bellevue, Nebraska. He was ordained a priest in 2000 and served on mission in Chile. He is currently regional director of the Columbans in the US.

01. A hot meal for those in need at a community kitchen. Image: Shutterstock



01



Fr Vincent Busch pays tribute to Andonie, one of the four original Subanen Crafters who died earlier this year in childbirth.

03



4



02

# DEATH OF A SUBANEN CRAFTER

In a hut on a remote hillside in the Philippines in the middle of the night Andonie died in childbirth. Her husband, Golyo, was with her. She and her unborn child were later buried together on the same day, mourned by Golyo and their two children, 14-year-old Melanie and 11-year-old Bernabe. Jesus proclaimed that the least among us will be the greatest in the Reign of God (Matthew ch18). Andonie is one of those "least" who, with her unborn child, are now in the embrace of our Creator.

The Subanens are an indigenous people whose ancestral land lies in the mountains of the Southern Philippines. Like other Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines, the Subanens see their homeland as a sacred gift from God and relate to their habitat through their songs, stories, dances, and rituals. Most of us in the Philippines have come to depend upon an economy that hungers for the water, minerals, and timber that happen to be on the homelands of Indigenous Peoples.

In the past logging and mining activities were allowed to freely plunder their homelands. It was common to think that Indigenous Peoples were primitive (the least among us) and that they stood in the way of national prosperity and progress.

Now, we are beginning to realise that Indigenous Peoples here have highly evolved cultures and lifestyles that nurture the upland rivers, forest and soil of the Philippines. Such nurturing cultures are much needed in the Philippines if we want to have an ecologically stable and economically sustainable future.

One day, twenty-three years ago, Andonie and her three companions hiked many hours from their remote hillside homes to get to the site of our first Mandala-crafting workshop in the town

of Midsalip. It was there, during our first crafting session, that I noticed a smiling Andonie squatting in front of an electric fan. It was the first time she had seen a device that could create the wind.

At that workshop I marvelled at how quickly and skilfully these young women could thread beads into the complex designs of our Creation Mandalas. Clearly, they grew up in a culture that had a long tradition in weaving skills. The designs in the Creation Mandalas represent nine evolutionary births in the Story of God's Creation. It is a Story that would eventually lead to the birth of humans and the birth of the Earth Community.

I feel blessed to be working with the Subanen People whose cultural way of life respects and nurtures our human bond with God's Creation. May Andonie and her unborn child live life in its fullness in the embrace of our Creator. ●

## THE CREATION MANDALA SONG



### The Birth of the Universe

In the beginning the Spirit sang:  
 "My Love's ablaze and from its warmth  
 Let all creation come flaring forth.  
 Let matter and energy converse  
 And sing the hymn of the Universe,  
 And through the course of time and space  
 I'll cherish all in my embrace."





### The Birth of the Galaxies

Then the Spirit sang:  
"Let Creation begin to dance  
In cooling clouds of elements  
Where the tug of gravity  
Draws atoms into galaxies,  
And hugs the stars till they ignite  
To fill the darkness with their light."



### The Birth of the Earth Community

Then the Spirit sang:  
"From desert sand to mountain snow  
Let habitats emerge and grow  
Where plants and beasts participate  
In nature's rugged give and take  
And every creature plays a role  
In keeping Earth alive and whole."



### The Birth of the Solar System

Then the Spirit sang:  
"Let stars blaze till they consume  
The nuclear fire in their wombs,  
And bursting forth as they collapse  
Sow the elements in their grasp,  
And from their dust let new stars grow  
With moons and planets in their tow."



### The Birth of Humans

Then the Spirit sang:  
"Let the glory of nature's chorus,  
Its raging storms and mighty forests,  
Its pounding seas and soaring peaks,  
Its blazing skies and teeming reefs,  
Touch human hearts with its splendour  
And forge their souls in awe and wonder."



### The Birth of the Earth

Then the Spirit sang:  
"Along with planets near and far  
Let Earth take shape around its star.  
While its crust solidifies,  
Let molten rock throb inside,  
Lifting the mountains, spreading the seas,  
Moulding and folding its geography."



### The Birth of the Ecological Age

Then the Spirit sang:  
"Let life entwine the land and sea  
In the web of its community  
Where humans keep in good repair  
The habitats all creatures share  
And sing with every leaf and stone  
'This is our Earth, our sacred home'."



### The Birth of Life

Then the Spirit sang:  
"Let Earth and Sun warm the seas  
To animate its chemistry,  
And from that swirling pool of genes  
Let Earth give birth to living beings,  
Sprouting forth all kinds of things  
With roots and legs, fins and wings."



### The Birth of Your Story

And then the Spirit sang:  
"The habitats that grace the Earth  
Were there to hold you at your birth,  
May they guide your life and journey,  
And weave your voice into the story  
Of my love which grew to be  
A wondrous blue-green symphony."



Fr Vincent Busch was ordained in 1974 and has served on mission in the Philippines since then, notably with the Subanen people of Mindanao.

1. RIP Andonie. She was one of the first four Subanen women who became crafters 23 years ago.
2. Subanen crafters and Andonie's family at her burial alongside that of her unborn baby.
3. Andonie's children, Melanie and Bernabe, in front of their home in Mindanao.
4. The four original Subanen crafters in 2001 (left to right) Jovie Balido and her sister Rodilyn Balido, Columban missionary Fr Vincent Busch, Marcelita (nee Balives) Balido, and her sister, Andonie Balives, at the first Mandala crafting workshop.

To make a comment on this article go to:

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

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



YOUR  
VOTE  
MATTERS

# THE COMMON GOOD

Fr Ed O'Connell considers why so many voters in different parts of the world today feel such apathy and argues that we must all discern how to play an active part in society.

It certainly has become a small world! I was talking recently, on Zoom, with young adults from the parish where I worked in Peru. I asked them about the political situation and what could be done to improve the life of the ordinary folk. Their reply was stark. They were and are disenchanted with politicians who are caught up with their own interests or the interests or those who put up the money for them to be politicians. These young people are not interested in getting involved, other than individually showing solidarity to those in need or maybe signing petitions in defence of those suffering human rights abuses.

Then the other week, in South London, I was talking to an old school friend from the early sixties. When I asked him about the forthcoming elections, he said he thought he would not vote, as he sees no difference between the parties and little chance of change. In both cases, Peru and Britain, it is not so much a case of apathy but rather that democracy in practice seems to have let them down. Politicians seem to be behaving more according to their own needs and interests and have lost contact with the sufferings of ordinary folk. In short, there is little to no confidence in them.

I have had an interest in politics since my days in the Young Christian Workers (YCW) in Brixton, way back in the sixties. Many YCW members in the fifties and sixties, formed in a "see, judge and act" methodology, went on to be local councillors and active trade unionists and for me, I discovered my vocation to be a missionary priest. They, like me, got their strength and direction from their faith.

The use of Gospel reflection and a study of the Social Teaching of the Church gave us our lead. I have always been drawn to the concept of the Common Good, defined by the Bishops of England and Wales as "the whole network of social conditions which enable humans - individuals and groups - to flourish and live a fully, genuinely human life." This comes about by implementing the need to respect the human dignity of all and using the values of solidarity and subsidiarity to guide decision-making.

Many countries around the world face elections this year or next. I can only hope that people will take time to review the meaning of the Common Good, and, so as to achieve it, see the need to be active citizens in some way or another within their societies. And when the time comes to vote, to look out not only for their own

01. Image: Shutterstock


02. Fr Ed O'Connell at Mass in his parish in Peru.

03. The homework club in Cuz del Norte.

04. The reading club in the Warmi Huasi centre.

To make a comment on this article go to:

 [facebook.com/foreastmagazine](https://facebook.com/foreastmagazine)

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



well-being but also for the well-being of others too, especially the most vulnerable. It is not just about tax cuts, it is also about investing to improve our services: health, education, public housing, social services, as well as demanding meaningful action on climate change and fair and just treatment of migrants and refugees.

We can gain insight and strength from the struggles Jesus faced in getting to know His Father's Will. The Temptations showed Jesus turning down power, wealth and self-importance for Himself. He chose the path of humility, poverty in the form of a simple lifestyle and the service of others instead of self-serving. Our call to follow Jesus, as Christians, no matter our age, is an invitation to assume His attitudes and Way of life. How we do it is a challenge each has to face and do so in the context of our relationship with God, with others and with our common home, the planet.

May the Spirit of Jesus Christ be with each of us, as we discern how to play an active part in society, as the responsibility for politics is not just with the politicians. In recent years in Peru, I worked with the head teacher of Manuel Duato Special Needs School to help prepare parents to get involved in advocacy work: For the parents to talk with officials, councillors and mayors about the need for support of their special-needs children and how the councils can help provide facilities, training programmes and leisure activities for their children.

More recently the team at Warmi Huasi, a small NGO I set up with others to accompany families living in poverty, accompanies and enables children and young people to have a voice at local council level, so that the local mayor and councillors hear the needs of the young and the plans the young have to improve their lives and that of their communities. It is slowly working, local councils are beginning to see the value of young people's involvement. And maybe it is also the first step to breaking apathy and getting a new generation involved in politics, which in the end is about achieving for all the basics of life. ●

Fr Ed O'Connell was ordained in 1973. He worked with marginalised children and women in Peru. He is now based in Britain.





# PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

As the Columbans gather in Peru for their General Assembly, one person who was due to play a pivotal role is missing - Fr Cathal Gallagher. As a tribute, following his untimely death, we publish Fr John Boles' profile of Fr Cathal where he explained how two brothers changed this priest, psychotherapist and ex policeman into a health campaigner.

Fr Cathal Gallagher recalled the incident vividly. "It was in 1998. I was working in a poor parish in Lima. I got a call from a local clinic, run by the Mercy Sisters, saying someone was having a serious panic attack. I went over. The man was in a real state. He kept saying, 'My brother died last night!'" Cathal, recognising him and thinking he was confused with grief, assured him, "No, he died last Friday. I did the funeral." "NO," the man insisted, "my *other* brother. He died last night!" The man had lost his two brothers in a week. Both had died of Aids.

This was the pivotal moment which Cathal reckoned changed his life. It was in fact one of a series of life-changes that saw him move from being a policeman in his native Ireland to a Columban missionary priest in Peru, where he dedicated much of his time caring for people infected with - or affected by - HIV/Aids. Yet, by Cathal's own admission, this remarkable journey began in a very conventional fashion.

Born in 1951 in Co Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, Cathal grew up in what he remembered as a "typical Irish Catholic family" of the time. "Rosary every night, Confession every Saturday, a boarder at the local Catholic grammar." Being from Northern Ireland, justice issues were always important to him. Maybe it was because of this that he felt attracted to public service, and at the age of 20 he hopped over the border to join the *Garda Síochána*, the

police force in the Republic.

"I enjoyed my time in the Gardaí immensely," he remembered, in spite of a few "hairy experiences". It was the 1970s, the height of the Troubles. Yet, after just six years, he took the radical decision of leaving the Gardaí and entering the seminary to train for missionary priesthood with the Columbans.

"I'd had an inkling of 'something else' calling me, ever since I'd been an altar boy back home," Cathal recalled. Also, I'd always been interested in mission. The **Far East** gripped me." Another factor was that Dalgan Park, home of the Columbans in Ireland, was only a stone's throw from Navan, where Cathal was based as a policeman. He used to pass the entrance to Dalgan nearly every day. "Finally, I decided to drive in. Just turned up at the door. Asked to speak to a priest. Took it from there."

One step led to another, and he joined the Columbans in 1979, did his priestly formation in Ireland and overseas mission training in Chile, was ordained in 1985 and appointed to Peru. For most people, Cathal had already run up enough vocation changes to last a lifetime, but more was to come.

"Accompanying suffering was the key," he explained. He had seen suffering caused by the Troubles in Northern Ireland. He had seen it in Chile, the product of a brutal military dictatorship. He met it on arrival in Peru, where the Maoist insurgency of the



01

02



notorious *Sendero Luminoso* ('Shining Path') group caused havoc from 1980 to 1995. Finally, he saw the suffering inflicted by the Aids epidemic which was ravaging parts of his parish in the 1990s - epitomised by that heart-rending tragedy of the death of the two brothers.

He decided to act. Again. "Two main driving forces in my life have been justice and rights," he affirmed. "As a priest. As a cop." So, he went twice to London, first becoming a psychotherapist and then gaining experience as co-ordinator of the multi-disciplinary team working to protect the health and promote the rights of those with HIV.

Returning to Lima, Cathal set up an organisation to put into practice all he had learned. He called it, '*Sí, da Vida*' (roughly translated as: 'Yes to Life'). "Human dignity was the focus, fighting the discrimination that people living with HIV/Aids experience in Peru." His guiding light was 'responsibility', or rather, 'response-ability' - helping people respond to new situations in their lives, and giving them the tools to do so.

He implemented the Positive Self-Management Programme, developed at Stanford University in the US. This promotes a "social model of health care". People are taught how to manage their own chronic health conditions. They are also educated in



04

prevention, with former participants going on to become instructors.

When I spoke to Fr Cathal, the results of almost 20 years' work were impressive. Supported by funding from the Irish government, the Columbans and private benefactors, '*Sí, da Vida*' boasted a centre and a dozen staff, including doctors, psychologists and social workers. Some 400 instructors had been trained, and around 4,500 people had benefitted from the programmes and a much wider population had received prevention-education through talks, literature and the centre's own radio station.


The staff liaise with government agencies and the police. Volunteers go into places as varied as universities, hospitals, prisons and discos. They always concentrate on the poorer areas. "We go to the people, we don't wait for them to come to us," Cathal explained.

When I met Cathal, he was dividing his time between '*Sí, da Vida*', his role as Director of the Columbans in South America, and being the driving force behind an inter-agency network responding to the effects of the Covid emergency in North Lima. It seemed as though he has been ticking off all the 'p's from police to priesthood to psychotherapy to Peru. It was an extraordinary 'pilgrim's progress' for Fr Cathal Gallagher. ●

01. Columban missionary Fr Cathal Gallagher (1951-2023) in conversation with Victor, Director of '*Sí, da Vida*', on the upper terrace of the centre. All photos by Fr Gabriel Rojas SSC and Columban seminarian Antonio Saula Seeto.
02. Garda Cathal Gallagher and a friend in Ireland in 1970s.
03. Cathal with '*Sí, da Vida*' personnel outside the organisation's centre in Lima. The foundation helps those living with HIV/Aids, especially those from the neediest parts of the city.
04. Fr Cathal in the 1990s celebrating an open-air Mass in the parish in Peru where the two brothers died of Aids in the same week.



To make a comment on this article go to:

 [facebook.com/foreastmagazine](https://facebook.com/foreastmagazine)

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



03

# 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.**

Missionary Society of St Columban, Widney Manor Road, Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB.



01. Chidera Anyakora from Loreto Altrincham
02. Megan-Rose Ibus of Loreto College St Albans
03. Charlotte Moyes of St Edward's in Poole



01

02

03



## BIODIVERSITY MATTERS

### COLUMBAN COMPETITION WINNERS

Students aged 13-18 were invited to produce a piece of writing or create an image on the topic 'Biodiversity Matters' for the 2024 Columban Schools Media Competition. Their work had to demonstrate an awareness and an understanding of the issue of biodiversity and highlight people, communities and/or organisations trying to build a sustainable future.

Protecting biodiversity - which humanity relies on for health, food and well-being - is a mission

priority of Columban missionaries. The competition was run by the Columbans and the **Far East** magazine.

In the print category, **Austin Beenham** of Holy Cross Catholic High School in Chorley, Lancashire secured first place; **Anna Cookson** of Notre Dame Sixth Form College in Leeds came second; and **Sarah Ashcroft** of Loreto Grammer School in Altrincham came third.

Image winners were **Chidera Anyakora** from Loreto Altrincham

who was awarded first prize; **Megan-Rose Ibus** of Loreto College St Albans came second; and **Charlotte Moyes** of St Edward's in Poole came third.

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

The full list of winners can be seen here: [www.columbancompetition.com](http://www.columbancompetition.com)



# THE NEED TO CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

By Austin Beenham, Holy Cross Catholic High School, Chorley, Lancashire.

**B**iodiversity refers to the extensive variety of different species, helping the Earth to function. According to National Geographic Magazine there are 8.7 million species of plants, animals, and other life forms on the planet. When some of these species decline in number, ecosystems can become unstable as each species has its own unique role in contributing to the world that we live in. In the words of Pope Francis "all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another." God's creations provide us with food, materials and even purify the air that we breathe. Nevertheless, as we sit in our man-made homes there is a clear divide between us and nature and it is easy to feel separated from the natural world. Society should be more mindful of this quote from St Francis of Assisi: "All things of creation are children of the Father and thus brothers of man."

St Francis of Assisi's beliefs have shaped the Church's views on stewardship and inspired the Pope so much that he chose the name 'Francis' when he was elected to honour the saint. Pope Francis has also been instrumental in helping the Church act on the climate change and biodiversity crises. The encyclical *Laudato Si'* has had a major impact on raising awareness of the need to protect our common home. One of the most important messages of this document is: "All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents." To me, this means that everyone, regardless of gender, race or background can work together to preserve God's creation.

However, it is not just saints and leaders of the Church that can take action on the biodiversity crisis - everyone can. But how? Previously, I thought that biodiversity was only an issue for exotic species on the other side of the planet and I felt helpless to do anything. Then I thought back to how our school made a difference to our viewpoint on the climate change crisis. We built a boat out of plastic bottles, raising awareness of how much plastic our school was wasting. It was massively successful in making many members of our school community reflect and there is now much more recycling in our school. Additionally, we tested the boat at a local reservoir and various local newspapers came to write articles and spread our environmental message.

What made our idea work? There were two things that came to mind. Firstly, we had worked as a community to

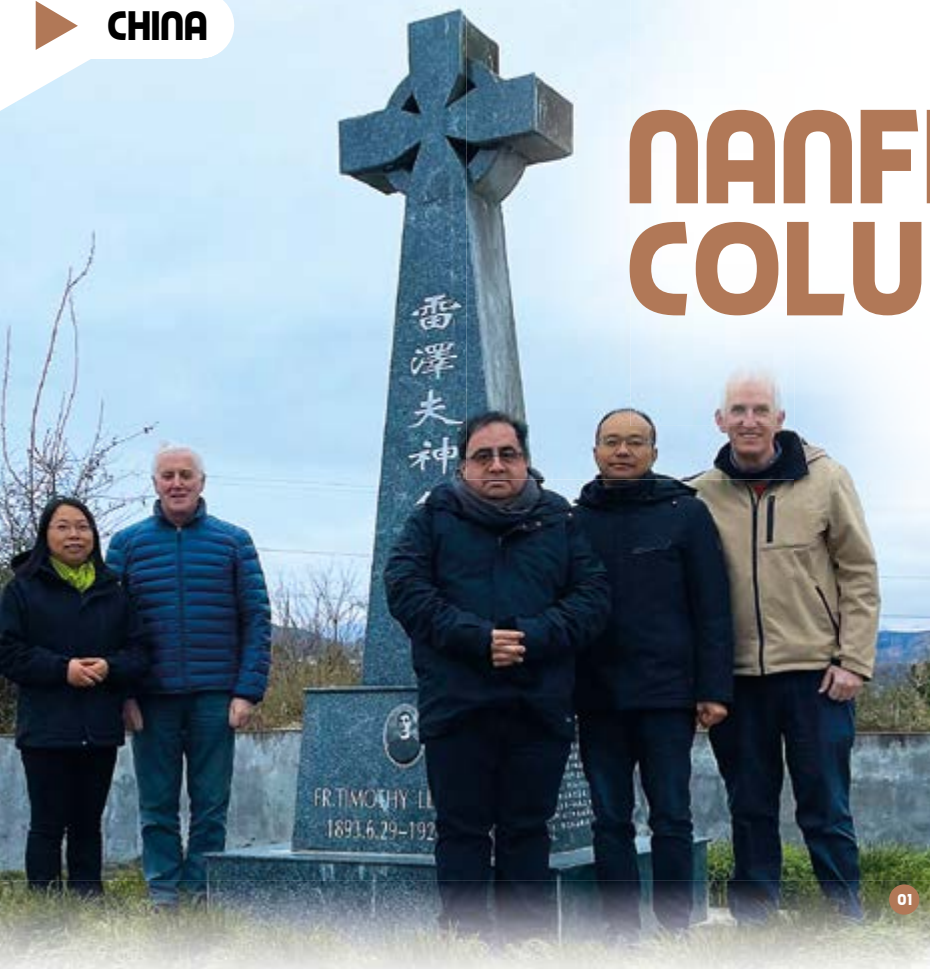
construct the vessel, and we were able to do this in just 12 weeks, something that would have taken countless months by one person. To me, this emphasises how the Church as the body of Christ has the ability to make great change (There are well over 1 billion Catholics in the world today). Secondly, I realised that building a boat out of plastic bottles would prove how much we were wasting as a school, but it didn't magically solve the issue; we managed to reduce our waste by raising awareness. Understanding modern-day issues is so important because we all get so caught up in our own problems that we need a reminder that our actions can make a massive difference to the issues that we as a society face which may be detrimental to the earth's future if we do not act.

The same two principles apply to biodiversity. Although one person can make an impact, only a community can create lasting change. The problem is that most people don't know what biodiversity is or have misconceptions that they cannot do anything to help, like I did. This couldn't be further from the truth. According to the Natural History Museum, Britain only has 50.3% of its biodiversity left - the lowest in Europe and in the bottom 10% of countries throughout the world. Raising awareness enables everyone to see a clear picture of the scale of the biodiversity crisis and what they can do to help. But just knowing about the biodiversity crisis is not enough. We need to take action.

So here are some things that you can do that would make an extraordinary impact on preserving biodiversity. Firstly, we can encourage wildlife in our back gardens by providing food, water and shelter. Helping to clean up local habitats is also important to protect wildlife hotspots like forests and parks helping habitats to thrive. Shopping for good quality items that will last and have not harmed wildlife and food chains in production will not only help to preserve biodiversity and will save you money as well! You can spot this by looking for Rainforest Alliance certified and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) products. Another contribution you can make to aid biodiversity is to take shorter showers and turn the water off when you are brushing your teeth. This helps species which rely on local freshwater by saving resources. Additionally, growing wildflowers which produce nectar for bees helps ecosystems. Finally, remembering to reduce, reuse and recycle prevents waste and tackles a destructive throwaway culture which has led to many habitats being destroyed and species being threatened due to landfill.

My message to readers is: make some environmentally friendly changes and remind people around you about the biodiversity crisis whilst raising awareness. By doing this you can make a positive chain reaction and become an example of how to live with respect and care for our world and all its inhabitants. If you do this, you will be a steward protecting our world, therefore you are caring for all of God's creation. "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy." (Psalm 96:11-12) ●

# NANFENG AND THE COLUMBANS



01

surrounding area during some of the years from the late 1920s until the early 1950s.

Fr Tim Leonard was killed in Nanfeng on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1929. His grave is located at the edge of the town in a setting that has also been recently renovated, the scenic space gradually developing into a place of pilgrimage for the Catholics of the diocese. His grave is surrounded by hundreds of orange trees, all of them witnesses to the fact that Nanfeng oranges have a reputation that is recognized in many parts of China.

Fr Jerry Buttimer died in this area of China due to the unforgiving heat of the summer of 1948. His grave is located at a different side of Nanfeng. For many years his resting place has been a place of pilgrimage for the Catholic community. The large number of kneeling mats stored

Fr Dan Troy writes about Nanfeng, a small corner of China that is forever Columban, where three of our missionaries worked in the parish and are now featured in the parish church's stained glass windows.

Two years ago, as restrictions around Covid-19 were being relaxed in Jiangxi province in China, the Catholics of Nanfeng parish came up with plans for much-needed renovations of the Church of the Sacred Heart. Fr Dominic Zhang drew on his own experience to negotiate the initial stages of the project with a local builder.

The first phase of the project was the reroofing of the church which had remained untouched for about 100 years. As well as the new roof, a decision was made to design and install new stained-glass windows. Fr Dominic was keen that the history of the parish would be reflected in the new stained-glass windows. This involved installing the images of three Columban priests in the windows. Each of these Columbans had served in the parish or its



Tim Leonard



Jerry Buttimer



Paddy Dermody

03

in a big plastic bag near his grave is an indication of how popular this location is for people who visit the area to pray for their own needs. The remains of many candles at the side of the grave are also testament to how Fr Buttimer's final resting place has a special place in the hearts of Catholics in this part of China.

Fr Paddy Dermody ministered in this area of China until the early 1950s. Following nearly 30 years as a missionary in China, he



02



eventually took up an appointment in the US and later ministered in Ireland.

Chinese people have a deep appreciation of history, whether it be the history of the nation, a district or the history of a family. Many people can point out that their family has written records that stretch back a few hundred years. In their own efforts to record history, the Catholics at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Nanfeng were keen to include the images of three of its priests in new windows in a way that highlights their treasured history. These windows provide the Catholics of the area and many visitors with a clear reminder that the story of the Church in this part of China is linked to the sincere efforts made by Columban missionaries in olden times that were both unpredictable and challenging.

For the families of Frs Leonard, Buttimer and Dermody, the new stained-glass windows at the Church of the Sacred Heart are a reminder that the faith-filled commitment made by these three Columban priests is still remembered so many years after their passing.

In February of this year, I had the



opportunity to bring two members of the international leadership team of the Columbans to Nanfeng. Fr Tim Mulroy and Fr Alvaro Martinez were visiting mainland China for the first time. Our visits to the graves of Frs Leonard and Buttimer were an opportunity for them to see how the graves of two Columban missionaries continue to stand as a witness to one part of the Church's missionary history in central China.

We also celebrated Mass in the Church



of the Sacred Heart. With the images of three Columban priests gazing over us from the newly installed stained-glass windows, the gentle echoes of history seemed to unite us in a way that affirmed how God can faithfully link the unfolding story of the Church in China across the generations. ●

Fr Dan Troy is from Co Cork. He was ordained in 1999 and now lives and works in Wuhan, China.

01. Fr Dan Troy with Society Leader, Fr Tim Mulroy and a member of the leadership team, Fr Alvaro Martinez along with Fr Dominic Zhang and Sr Teresita Yu, visting the grave of Columban martyr, Fr Timothy Leonard, who was killed in Nanfeng on 17th July 1929.
02. Fr Tim Mulroy and Fr Dan Troy in front of the stained-glass window of Fr Timothy Leonard in the Church of the Sacred Heart, Nanfeng.
03. The design for the three windows commemorating Columban priests: Fr Jerry Buttimer, Fr Patrick Dermody and Fr Timothy Leonard.
04. Parishioners inside the Church of the Sacred Heart, Nanfeng.
05. A photo of Fr Patrick Dermody in the *Far East* magazine 1 December 1926. The caption states: "Fr Patrick Dermody, who went to China in 1924, has cultivated a beard as well as his allotted section of the harvest field."
06. In Fr Dermody's report 'Christmas Morning in the Missions', this photo is captioned: "Scattered throughout China are little oases in the desert of paganism, where the Infant Saviour will receive a warm welcome on Christmas morning."
07. Another photo from the *Far East* magazine 1 December 1926 in which Fr Dermody writes about his work on mission in China. The caption reads: "Group of recent converts in Nanfeng, a parish of the Kien Chang Prefecture. Fr Patrick Dermody, the pastor, is on the right."

To make a comment on this article go to:

 [facebook.com/foreastmagazine](https://facebook.com/foreastmagazine)

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

# THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF ST PATRICK

Fr Maurice Hogan writes about the development of Patrician studies in recent years and the Columban contribution to this, notably Fr Aidan Larkin's book, 'The Spiritual Journey of St Patrick'.

The middle of the twentieth century witnessed a revolution in the study of St Patrick. It served to awaken a renewed interest in his person and work for a new generation of scholars. We know that Patrick existed because of two short works written by him in Latin which are among the earliest documents in Ireland's literary heritage. Although his letters are brief, we get a glimpse of the kind of person he was when we encounter him more directly for ourselves through his correspondence.

The earlier and shorter one is his **Letter to Coroticus**, a Christian British chieftain who with his soldiers carried out a raid in Ireland, killed some of Patrick's newly-made converts, and sold others into slavery. Patrick expresses his anguish over the fate of his newly-baptised and denounces Coroticus in the hope that he would come to his senses and repent. His great love for his Irish converts shines through.

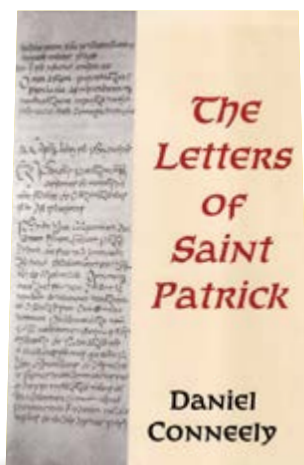
The **Confession** is a later document written towards the end of his life. A "confession" is an account of events whose truth is vouched for by the person who has lived through them. The letter is a spiritual testament primarily concerned with the inner life of Patrick in his search for God. It is rich in reflection and interior depth -

his encounter with God, a defence of his life, his moral and religious struggles. He acknowledges God's mercy and grace which he experienced throughout the course of his life despite his own failings and shortcomings.

As a slave in Ireland, he tells us, he searched earnestly for God through daily prayer. The God whom he encountered there never abandoned him and he finds his heart overflowing with gratitude to a God who guided him in all his sufferings, dangers, and labours. Looking back on a life crowded with bodily and spiritual trials but equally with great joys, he sees the hand of Providence at work in all of it.

Fr Dan Conneely's research on St Patrick began when he was editor of the special centenary issue of the **Far East** in 1961. To his great surprise, he found that scholars until that time had given little attention to the rich spiritual, theological, and missionary content contained in the letters. They had combed the documents in search of material for a biography of Patrick, on fifth century Ireland, and remarked on the poor quality of his Latin. They dismissed Patrick as a person of little stature.

Fr Conneely realised that such scholarly work on Patrick's correspondence was incomplete unless studied in their textual connection with Sacred Scripture, the





writings of the early Church Fathers, and the teachings of the Church. His research added a completely new dimension to Patrician studies.

Fr Conneely compiled an exhaustive list of scriptural, patristic, and ecclesiastical quotations and allusions to provide evidence of Patrick's familiarity with the Old and New Testaments as well as linking him with patristic authors, especially St Augustine. His wish was to communicate his research not only to scholars but also to present to ordinary people his new translation of the two pastoral letters together with their rich spiritual, theological, and missionary content.

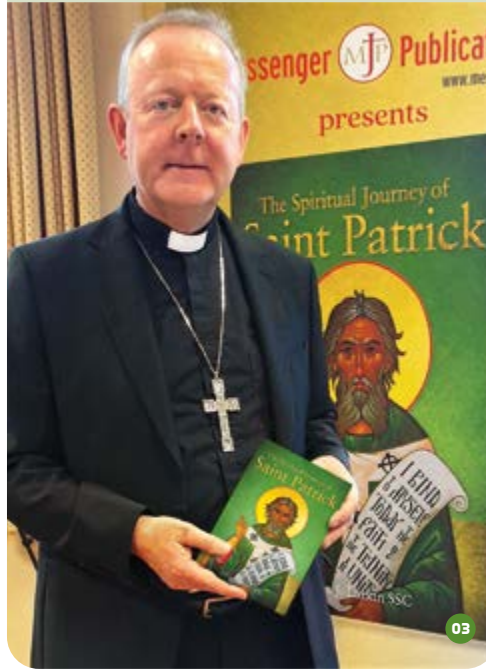
Ordinary people would then be able to see for themselves that Patrick was indeed a great missionary, a person of intellectual stature, and above all an apostle of faith-life that revealed a deep connection between knowledge and holiness of life.

Faith-life is a manner of human living with Christ in our minds, hearts, and actions and Patrick availed of biblical language to articulate it. His favourite source was the Psalms which voiced the living faith of God's people. We may distinguish faith-life from faith-belief. The former describes how the Gospel is lived in daily life as a personal encounter with the Triune God.

For, as Pope Benedict XVI pointed out: "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice, or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction."

Faith-belief, on the other hand, affirms and protects faith-life through its decrees and doctrines to defend against false accusations and heresies. Patrick lived towards the end of the Golden Age of the Fathers who witnessed to the living presence of the faith and contributed to the development of the Church's Tradition. Over twenty Fathers are linked to Patrick's writings which shows his clear dependence on them.

In the apparent haphazard events of his life, Patrick saw the hand of God at work in which the hidden plan for the salvation of the Irish people was realised. No extraordinary wonders marked his evangelizing work, nevertheless he touched the hearts of many young people who flocked to him to follow Christ in



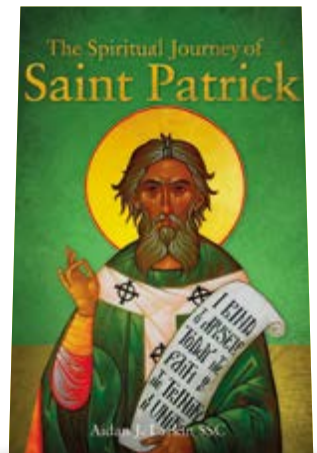
the religious life. Although we know little about dates and places where he worked, what shines through is his holiness of life which he regarded as a gift of God that leads him to wonder and gratitude.

Fr Aidan Larkin has generously responded to Fr Conneely's wish that his research on Patrick be made available to the general reader (*The Spiritual Journey of Saint Patrick*, Messenger Press, Dublin, 2023). He reproduces both letters in their entirety together with the background necessary to appreciate their full contents.

His engaging and erudite presentation of Patrick's spiritual journey may stir up in readers a desire to begin a religious search like Patrick's that would bring about their own conversion and return to God. Patrick tells us that although he had been baptised, he had distanced himself from God and did not observe his commandments. He highlights God's undeserved mercy that led him to a change of life.

His writings are an eloquent testimony to God's love and mercy to wayward human beings. A re-reading of Patrick's writings is of special relevance at a time of rapid social change in Ireland where Christian faith and values that formerly shaped our Irish identity are now under constant challenge. It can guide us to recognize who we are as a people and inspire us to remain true to the faith-life that has made us who we are. ●

Fr Maurice Hogan served as a missionary in Japan and Hong Kong and taught Sacred Scripture at St Patrick's College, Maynooth. He is a former Director of World Missions Ireland (Missio Ireland). His most recent book, 'A Little Less Than Angels: Sketch of a Biblical Anthropology' was published by Veritas in 2022.



01. The statue of St Patrick at the base of Croagh Patrick in Co Mayo. Image: Shutterstock.
02. The cover of Columban Fr Dan Conneely's book, 'The Letters of Saint Patrick'.
03. Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate of All Ireland, at the launch in Dalgan of Fr Aidan Larkin's book.
04. The cover of Fr Aidan Larkin's book, 'The Spiritual Journey of Saint Patrick'.

To make a comment on this article go to:

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



Missionary Sisters of St Columban



01

## MESSAGE OF JOY

**Sr Gloria Santos recalls the beginnings of the Columban Sisters' mission in the Philippines and how it has evolved over time.**

In February 1937, the 33<sup>rd</sup> International Eucharistic Congress was held in Manila and brought a renewed religious fervour within the country. Bishop Madriaga of Lingayen-Dagupan wrote to Mother Mary Patrick, Superior General of the Columban Sisters, inviting the Sisters to open two new foundations in his diocese. One, in the town of Lingayen, was to administer a dormitory for high school girls, give religion classes in the schools, and run a training centre for catechists. The second was in the town of Malasiqui where he felt there was a need for a Catholic school and for a catechetical ministry.

This request was a new missionary venture for the Congregation. The call was not to China, but to a land and people where Christianity has been practiced since the 16th century. It called for a different way of listening and responding. Five Sisters from the Hanyang and Nancheng missions in China arrived in the Philippines on 24 May 1939 against the backdrop of the Chinese-Japanese war which had been raging for two years.

These courageous pioneering women were Srs Bernadette Connolly, Teresa Devins, Aloysius Lenihan, Colmcille McCormick and Monica Finn. They established the first Columban Sisters community in Malasiqui, and by August, the second

community was opened in the coastal town of Lingayen. Two years later on 20 April 1941, three Sisters arrived in Ozamis City at the invitation of Bishop James Hayes. The Sisters took over the administration of the Immaculate Conception School. They were Srs Francis de Sales Hogan, Mary Campion McCarthy and Mary Teresa Devins. With these three foundations in Luzon and Mindanao, the Columban Sisters took their first steps in the educational apostolates.

When Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and subsequently occupied our country, all schools were closed and the Sisters left their communities for safety and stayed with the people in the barrios. This was an opportunity for a deep encounter with the people, where through their life of witness they taught the Gospel values, not in classrooms but in their neighbours' homes. When the war was over more schools were assigned to the Sisters to administer in Olongapo City, Malate Manila, Pangasinan, Zamboanga Sur and Misamis Occidental.

The Sisters' way of life inspired some young Filipino women to join the Congregation. The first to enter was Sr Consuelo Mercado in 1949. She and other Filipina Sisters who followed in those early years went to the novitiate in Boston, USA for their





02



03

initial formation. In 1974, as more Filipina young women accepted the call to religious life as Columban Sisters, the Philippine novitiate was opened.

When the country was placed under martial law in the early 70s, there was a massive number of arrests, as well as torture and executions of those who denounced these injustices. Some Sisters became active in ministries to prisoners and detainees, putting themselves at risk of being detained. Other Sisters worked with the urban poor and became more active in the field of human rights as well as justice and peace groups. Some Sisters opted to live and work in solidarity with the people in the slums.

Due to changes in the government's education policies, we began to hand over the formal education apostolates to the dioceses. We then worked in the formation of the laity, seminarians, religious, and future formators as mentors, counsellors and spiritual guides.

In 1983, a group of four Sisters started to work with the tribal peoples, in particular with the Subanen people in Midsalip, Zamboanga del Sur. The focus was to walk with the people, respecting their ways, culture and beliefs, to help them regain their dignity and place in society and assist them in protecting their ancestral lands.

Differences in beliefs, religion, and ideologies brought constant tensions and conflicts between Muslims and Christians living in the south of the country. Believing that lasting peace can only be achieved through genuine dialogue, a couple of Sisters joined this ministry in the prelature of Marawi, where they lived and worked with both Muslims and Christians.

In the mid 80s a ministry to people with special needs was started by a Sister, who, having trained in speech therapy, visited children with speech problems,

encouraging them and their parents out of their isolation in order to integrate within society. As we entered the new millennium, the number of Sisters in the area had become smaller. Today, the Philippine area is host to our international novitiate where we have novices from Myanmar and Filipina postulants.

In 2011 we were invited to work in the parish of Pasay. While being involved in various parish programmes, the Sisters came to know an unlikely section of the parish - the cemetery where hundreds of homeless families live. The Sisters started a feeding programme for school children living there and later a scholarship scheme was offered to deserving students. Responding to Pope Francis' encyclical **Laudato Si'** and exhortation **Laudate Deum** a Sister and some lay associates started an ecology programme in Pangasinan.


This year, as we celebrate the centenary of our foundation, we look with gratitude to all the Sisters who came and brought GOD's message of JOY to the Filipino people. We celebrate all whose names are now written not only in the congregation's annals and in our nation's history, but in the hearts of generations of Filipinos. ●

Sr Gloria Santos, a native of the Philippines, has served on mission in Hong Kong and Peru. She has recently returned to her home country after a Sabbatical in Ireland and the USA.

01. Sr M. Anthony reads with students, Sr Teresa Devins chats with a student, a Columban Sister on a family visit, and Sr Cecilia teaches piano.
02. Sr Ashwena Apoa working on the land with young Subanean girls.
03. Sr Eufrasia Garcia chats with mothers in the cemetery in the parish of Pasay.
04. Sr Cecilia Cuizon advises a mother in the Community of Hope.

To make a comment on this article go to:

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

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



04

# SISTERS IN PROFILE 3

Oscar Bryan writes about the first Filipina to join the Columban Sisters -  
Sr Mary Consuelo Mercado (1914-1991)



01



02



03

The century-long development of the Missionary Sisters of St Columban resembles that of a carefully cultivated mosaic - brightly illuminated by the growth of its constituent parts. Each tile added has left its own unique imprint on the character of the Congregation.

The Missionary Sisters of St Columban has had many Filipina Sisters - including the present Congregational Leader, Sr Anne Carbon. Her accession serves as a poignant reminder of the trailblazing spirit embodied by the Congregation's first Filipina Sister, whose legacy continues to guide the Congregation towards the fulfilment of its abiding objectives.

Casimira Mercado, the daughter of a livestock inspector, was born on 4 March 1914, in Tondo, Manila. During her formative years, Casimira's parents instilled a strong emphasis on education. After graduating from Torres High School, she qualified as a teacher in 1935. Initially she worked at Balagtas Elementary School, and balanced her career with ongoing studies at the University of Santo Tomas, where she earned her BSE by 1941.

Amidst the trials and tribulations of the Japanese invasion during World War II, Casimira's faith and patriotism were shaped profoundly by the resilience of her people. After the war, she wanted to assist her newly-independent nation in the propagation of the national language. Consequently, she obtained an MA while teaching Filipino at Jose Abad Santos High School. Promoted to the role of Filipino supervisor in 1948, she inspected educational facilities across North Mindanao.

During the course of her work, she encountered several religious congregations involved in education. She admired their commitment and vocation. A seminal meeting with the Columban Sisters in Immaculate Conception College, Ozamiz, left a lasting impression, and Casimira began contemplating religious life. After discovering that the Columban Sisters were seeking Filipina candidates for their new American novitiate in

Hyde Park, Boston, Casimira decided to embrace her calling.

She arrived in the US in 1949 to commence her postulancy, and she made her First Profession on 3 July 1952 - taking the name Sr Mary Consuelo. By 1953, she received an assignment to oversee St Joseph's School in Olongapo, Zambales, as school principal. She made her Final Profession in 1957.

Consuelo's natural aptitude as a teacher took her across the length and breadth of the Philippines. Between 1959-66, she served in St Michael's, Tangub, before transferring to St Columban's, Labrador for 1967-71. Thereafter, Consuelo went on to San Isidro High School, Tudela between 1970-71, and in Malate Catholic School, Manila from 1971-76. Much loved by young people, one observer commented, "Sister is like the Pied Piper... youth are drawn to her!"

In the late 1970s, Consuelo returned to the US and paid a visit to Ireland for renewal. Due to declining health, in 1984 she moved away from teaching, and took up a pastoral assignment in Malasiqui. Drawing upon her vast experience as an educator, Consuelo seamlessly transitioned into providing spiritual counsel. Following the conclusion of the Malasiqui mission in 1986, she moved to the Sisters' convent in San Juan, Manila. It was here that she passed away after a prolonged illness on 10 April 1991. During her lifetime, Consuelo radiated an indomitable reserve of warmth, understanding, and self-sacrifice. In every facet of her being, she embodied the core values of the Columban spirit. ●

Oscar Bryan is the Archivist of the Missionary Sisters of St Columban.

01. Sr M. Consuela Mercado
02. Sr M. Consuela with members of the Legion Of Mary
03. Sr M. Consuela and co-founder of the Missionary Society of St Columban, Bishop Edward Galvin



# A PEOPLE in LOVE

Out of 3,558 Catholic churches in the Philippines, more than 800 have the Blessed Virgin Mary as their titular patron. She is a familiar face in almost every Catholic home. Her image or the rosary grace markets, buses, cars, jeepneys, boats and even motor cabs. Mary is *Ang Mahal na Ina* - the Beloved Mother.

“A people in love with Mary” is a phrase often quoted in reference to Filipinos’ devotion to the Mother of God. For over five centuries our love for Our Lady, whom we call ‘Ina’ (Mother), has been the force that has brought us through periods of trial, darkness and uncertainty in our country’s history and in our personal lives. It is because of her human connection to Jesus, from the moment of his conception to his death and resurrection, that we identify with her. Our love for her is real.

How deeply Mary is part of our heritage goes back to the beginnings of Christianity in our country. Early forms of devotion were expressed through the veneration of her images that were brought by the Spanish and Portuguese explorers. For example, the image of the *Nuestra Señora de Guía* in Ermita, Manila is the oldest Marian statue in the Philippines. Brought by Spanish soldiers in 1571, it was venerated for a long time by the people of a village on the shores of Manila Bay. While not knowing who Mary was, the villagers saw that the serene face created a deep calm and, as they venerated the image, they felt a deep

trust and protection drawing them to her.

Many older images of the Blessed Virgin like Our Lady of La Naval de Manila (1587), Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in Antipolo, Our Lady of Pinafrancia in Bicol or Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag have been a loving presence for the people not only of the town she is associated with but for all of us Filipinos. She is a refuge and shelter for wanderers, for those who are lost and a joy for those who are found. Even if we leave our hometowns for the city or to go abroad, when the opportunity comes, we often come back to thank and pray before the image of our Mother.

The first foreign missionaries who came to the Philippines introduced other forms of devotion to Mary, like the rosary and the Angelus. The “Flores de Mayo” allows children to shower the Queen of May not only with flowers but with love, songs and dances. Pilgrimages to the Marian shrines, the celebration of her feast day in villages or barrios, bring people together as one family, brothers and sisters under Mary’s care. The processions of her images, especially in times of natural calamities, have helped many people to remain in the faith. ●

Sr Gloria Santos

01. Statue of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag, Pangasinan, Philippines. Image: Shutterstock.

# REST in PEACE



Fr Frank O'Kelly

**Fr Frank O'Kelly** was born in Derry, on 27th September 1935. He was educated at Clady NS, St Eugene's and St Columb's, Derry. He came to St Columban's, Dalgan Park in September 1954 and was ordained priest on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1960. Frank was appointed to the Philippines and to the Zambales Region of that country. In his initial years he served in Olongapo, Subic, Castilejos and Palaung. There followed a four-year appointment in Coto Mines, and a ten-year period in Sta Cruz. He was assigned in Cabangan in 1991-92 when Mount Pinotubo erupted and he was deeply involved in efforts to help the people after that disaster.

He served for a long periods in Candalaria beginning in 1993 before being assigned to the Central House in Zambales. There he did much valuable work visiting prisoners in the local jail in Olongapo.

As his health was precarious, Frank was reassigned to Ireland where he worked with prisoners in Mountjoy Jail. He celebrated Sunday Eucharist in both the men's and women's prisons; he cherished this ministry and was much appreciated by the prisoners.

Frank was confined to the Nursing Home from 2016 until his death. He loved to sing and had a remarkable tenor voice, he was always well dressed, and the walls of his room were filled with an eclectic collection of framed pictures that he had collected over the years. Frank died on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

**Sr Ana Maria Mulqueoney** (known as Maureen to her family and friends and as Ana Maria to the Columban Sisters and the people of Peru) was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1930 in Kilfenora, Co Clare.

After completing her Leaving Certificate in 1948, Ana Maria joined the Columban Sisters in Cahiracon and professed First Vows in 1950, followed by Final Vows in 1955. Two years previously, she had been assigned to Hyde Park, Boston where she assumed the role of Assistant Novice Directress for four years, after which she taught in the Columban Sisters' school in Westminster, California.

In 1960, when an editor of the **Star of the East** magazine was required, Ana Maria studied journalism in Marquette University after which she worked for four years as assistant editor of the magazine. With the

opening of the mission in Peru, there was a need for more teachers, so Ana Maria studied at Mundelein College, Chicago for a Degree in Education. She was then assigned to Lima, where she developed a strong connection with the youth of the parishes in which she worked. She also initiated a programme of Family Catechesis.

Ana Maria spent a total of 47 years teaching and involved in pastoral work in Lima, only returning to Ireland in 2014 as her health began to weaken. She died peacefully in the Nursing Home in Magheramore on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe).

**Fr Gerald ('Gerry') Joseph French** was born on 6 August 1937 in Mayo Abbey, Co Mayo. He was educated in Facefield NS and St Colman's College, Claremorris. He came to Dalgan in 1956 and was ordained priest on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1962.

He was appointed to Chunchon Diocese (Korea) in 1963 where he worked until 1970 apart from a year studying CCD in St Louis, USA. He was then assigned to promotion ministry in England from 1970 followed by a period in Hotels Chaplaincy. From 1984 to 1987 Gerry was chaplain to the Youth Rehabilitation Centre in Rush, Co Dublin and was also involved in counselling and formation ministry at the Conference of Major Superiors Programme over the next twenty years.

He spent two years as a Theology Lecturer at the Milltown Institute from 1994-1996.

Then followed a period of five years in Britain as Director of the Irish Immigrant Chaplaincy before a final move back to Ireland for parish ministry in Ballymun.

He continued to be a member of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants and the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas.

Gerry studied Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy in Dublin, Education in Boston, Group Therapy at Tavistock Institute, and Ministry at All Hallows. He shared his learning at the Dublin School of Psychotherapy, the Irish Group Relations Organisation, and the Religious Formation Ministry in Dublin as long as his health permitted. Gerry died on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at the Mater Hospital, Dublin.

May they rest in peace.



Sr Ana Maria Mulqueoney



Fr Gerald ('Gerry') Joseph French



# FAITHFUL TO THE END

One of the last letters that Paul wrote was to Timothy, who became one of the leaders of the early church and whom Paul loved as a son.

Paul gave a great deal of advice and encouragement to Timothy, for he knew that his own life was drawing to a close, and he was anxious that Timothy should not grow discouraged during the difficult times ahead. There were people in Rome working against Paul, and when he attended his first defence hearing, all the witnesses who had promised to give evidence for him failed to turn up.

"Be careful always to choose the right course," wrote Paul. "Be brave under trial. Make the proclaiming of the Good News your life's work."

"As for me," he continued, "my life is already being poured away as an offering, and the time has come for me to be gone. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith. All there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that Day - and not only to me, but to all those who have longed for him.

"The Lord will rescue me from all evil and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen." ●

Read also: **2 Timothy 4:1-22**



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

## BIBLE QUIZ

NUMBER 113

- 1 In Matthew ch.2, which king gave the order, "Go and make a careful search for the child"?

---

- 2 In 1 Samuel ch.14, which servant of God said, "As for me and my house, I am with you whatever you do"?

---

- 3 In Matthew ch.9, who muttered against Jesus, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them"?

---

- 4 In Judges, ch.3, which left-handed man came with tribute to Eglon, King of Moab saying, "I have a secret message for you, O' King"?

---

- 5 In 2 Samuel, ch.9, True or false?, Salul said to Mephibosheth, "I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan"?

---

- 6 In Acts ch.26, was it Agrippa, Felix or Festus who said to Paul, "Your great learning is making you insane"?

**£15 vouchers for the first three correct entries received!**

Consult your Bible, answer the questions above and send your entry to: Bible Quiz N° 113, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Bible Quiz N° 111 Winners: Paul Cahill, Birmingham • Charlotte Moore, Carlisle • Roger Payne, Nuneaten.

Name:

Address:

THREE  
**£15**  
VOUCHERS  
TO BE WON!

# WORD SEARCH

Find the following words in the puzzle. They may be across, down or upwards.

- AVOCADO
- BLUEBERRY
- STRAWBERRY
- BANANA
- APRICOT
- FRUIT
- CHERRY
- PEACH
- RASPBERRY



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

Image: Shutterstock

## PUDSY'S DIRTY - THE END OF AN ERA!

As schools close for the summer, thousands of young people are graduating from primary school and preparing to start secondary school in the autumn. Among them our own Pudsy! Graduation to the next level brings responsibility and challenges, even for our own little rascal! Pudsy would like to thank all of his faithful readers for their support and interest over the years - he is stepping up and moving on. Sadly, secondary school will leave no time for his dirty. So we must bid farewell and salute a legend! Ad Astra Pudsy!

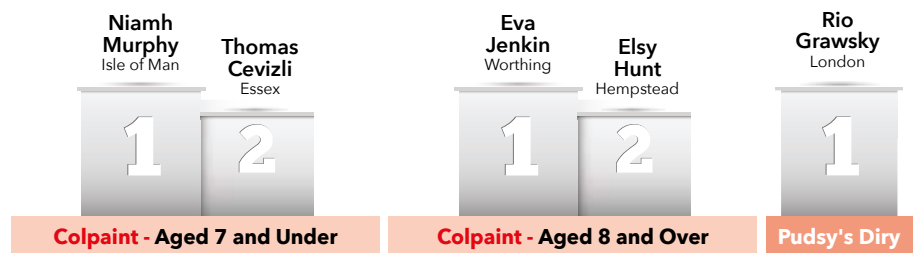


### HA! HA!

1. What does a book do when it's feeling cold?
2. Why do magicians always do well in math class?
3. What animal isn't allowed to take an exam in school?
4. How do you make 7 an even number?
5. What building has the greatest number of stories?
6. What plant is mathematical?

1. It puts on a jacket!  
 2. They can handle trick questions.  
 3. A Cheat-ah (cheetah).  
 4. Remove the first 's'.  
 5. The library.  
 6. Anyone with square roots!

### COMPETITION WINNERS JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2024





# The Glass Frog

By Elizabeth McArdle



To encounter the glass frog, we must go all the way to the humid regions of the Central and South Americas, an area known as the neotropics. This is the territory of glass frogs. While their name might conjure up images of a fragile ornament on a relative's mantelpiece, these little frogs are anything but fragile. Their lives are filled with many challenges. They are so called because of the translucent skin on their abdomen which is presumed to resemble glass. It is exciting to know that of the 158 species of glass frog already known, new species are still being discovered.

When we look from above, glass frogs are lime green. It is their underside which is translucent, so much so, that with your unaided eye, you can see their tiny beating heart and their internal organs. Their homes, in the neotropics, are high in the trees above mountain streams. The female lays her eggs on the underside of leaves. The male will guard them until they have hatched, at which time the tadpoles slide from the leaves and drop into the water below.

Scientists are not entirely sure why it is possible to see these little frogs' internal organs. They believe it helps them to blend more easily with their surroundings, thus aiding better protection from predators. Incredibly, they can live up to 14 years and these tiny carnivores will eat anything small enough to fit into their mouths. This includes flies, crickets, moths, ants, spiders and even smaller frogs.

Most of us will never see glass frogs in the wild. However, you can take time to look them up in your local library or on the internet with parental supervision. These funky frogs might even motivate you to go outdoors to explore the wonders of God's creation. Lots of fun and adventure await you and who knows what you might come across. ●

01. Reticulated glass frog on green leaf tree, Drake Bay, Costa Rica.



Image: Shutterstock

## WIN A VOUCHER WORTH £15/£10!

Colpaint★



Colpaint★

Colour the drawing and send it with your name and address to: COLPAINT, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Name:

Age:

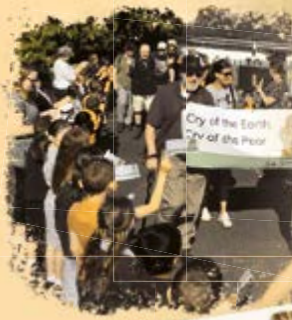
Address:

FOUR PRIZES TO BE WON!



# BE A PILGRIM FOR CHRIST

For Laudato Si' Week in May 2023, nine Columban pilgrims walked in the footsteps of St Columban in Cornwall listening to 'the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor' through the voices of St Columban and Columban Missionaries around the world. This summer, we invite you to use their prayers and reflections to organise a 'pilgrimage', retreat or recollection day for family, friends, your parish or community.



Scan for more information and to download The Columban Way Pilgrimage booklet.



CONNECT WITH US



Tell us about your pilgrimage!

Email: [pilgrim4christ@columbans.co.uk](mailto:pilgrim4christ@columbans.co.uk)



*"Everything is related and we human beings are united... on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures..."*  
(Laudato Si' #92)



# FAITH IN ACTION VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

LEARN AND SERVE WITH THE COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

We're recruiting young adult volunteers to support Columban projects connected to refugees and asylum seekers, interreligious dialogue and justice and peace education.

The year-long programme will commence in September 2024.

As a volunteer you will:

- Engage in projects supporting refugees and asylum seekers
- Assist young people to explore the relationship between justice and peace
- Engage in a journey of learning and reflection on your own faith

APPLICATION DEADLINE: **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at midday.**



Scan for more about the programme and how to apply. Email to request an informal chat with a Faith in Action volunteer. Interviews will be in central Birmingham on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June.

[invitationtomission@columbans.co.uk](mailto:invitationtomission@columbans.co.uk)

[WWW.COLUMBANS.CO.UK](http://WWW.COLUMBANS.CO.UK)



COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES BRITAIN

