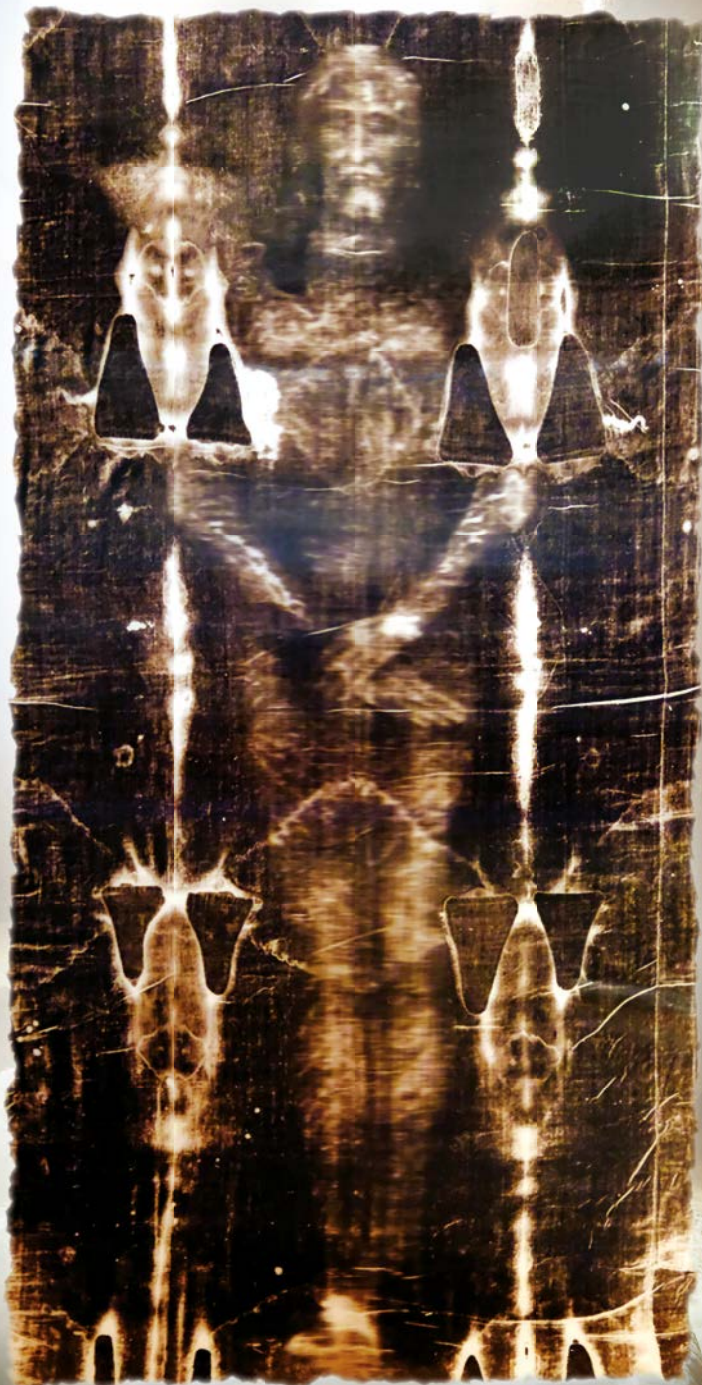


far east



MAGAZINE OF THE COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

MARCH/APRIL 2026



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Inculturation
in Fiji

THE TURIN SHROUD

New Scientific Evidence

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THE FAR EAST

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

THE PURPOSE OF THE FAR EAST IS

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

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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 Peterborough

Columban Websites

www.columbans.co.uk
www.columbansisters.org

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Missionary Society of St Columban

Widney Manor Road, Solihull,
West Midlands, B93 9AB.

Reg. charity 221594 (England & Wales) and SCO38948 (Scotland)

Columban Sisters

Magheramore, Co Wicklow,
A67 HY02. Tel: +353 (0404) 67348

Front Cover

The Shroud of Turin is itself a negative image so a photographic negative of the Shroud displays its positive image, allowing people to see more clearly the appalling wounds suffered by the man who was wrapped in the cloth. Image: Shutterstock



EDITORIAL

In our Easter issue of the **Far East** magazine we are featuring a depiction of the Crucifixion by Fijian artist Peni Vuniceva. The women in the painting are in Fijian attire of *Masi* cloth and white *sulus*, while Christ and the menfolk have Fijian features. The young men in the background (soldiers) who sit casting lots for Christ's garment are all in grass skirts. The background depicts the hills and mountains around Vanuakula and Namosi.

Vatican II explored the relationship between faith and culture in *Gaudium et Spes*. It recognised the Church's historical experience of inculturation, as far back as the Greco-Roman world. The Council emphasised the importance of engaging with cultures in the process of evangelisation. Pope John Paul II stressed that the inculturation of the Gospel enlightens, purifies, and elevates cultures without imposing foreign cultural models.

Inculturation means the Gospel takes root in local traditions, languages, symbols, and ways of life, transforming them from within while also being enriched by these cultures. It makes missionary work more effective, authentic, and respectful. It allows the Gospel to be truly at home in every culture, while also challenging missionaries and local communities to deeper faith and understanding. When the Gospel is inculturated it ceases to be seen as a foreign import and becomes the faith of the local people. This fosters a sense of ownership and authenticity, making the Christian message more credible and attractive.

Columban Missionary Fr John Mahoney was well versed with the teachings of Vatican II and worked tirelessly to impress the importance of inculturation among his catechists and parishioners in the huge rugged interior parish of Vanuakula Parish on Viti Levu (Fiji's main island). He encouraged a local man Peni Vuniceva to paint biblical scenes in the parish church in Vanuakula. Peni had contracted leprosy at an early age and developed his artistic skills while staying at a leprosarium.



Fr John wanted these paintings to reflect Fijian lifestyle and culture rather than traditional European artistic expressions. He had long conversations with Peni and read scripture stories to him and showed him Chinese, Japanese and African Catholic art. Peni realised what was demanded of him and engaged in conversations with the village people about why his paintings would not be modelled on traditional European Catholic art.

Peni painted four large biblical scenes for Fr John: the Nativity (published on the cover of the **Far East** magazine in December 2024), the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan, the Wedding feast of Cana and finally the Crucifixion. Peni later wrote to Fr John about what these paintings meant to him: a new artistic experience, a deeper understanding of his faith and the joy of watching the people as they studied his paintings and sat in quiet prayer and meditation before them. Both Peni Vuniceva and Fr John Mahoney have now gone to God, the maker and creator of all. ●

Fr John McEvoy

Fr John McEvoy was ordained in 1972. He served on mission in Fiji and is now based in Ireland.

01. Depiction of the Crucifixion in Vanuakula Parish by Fijian artist Peni Vuniceva. Photo: Fr John McEvoy.



Fr John McEvoy writes about St Francis Xavier Parish in Fiji where the Gospel has been inculcated through the medium of art.

THE CHURCH OF THE BLACK CHRIST



01. The mural of the Black Christ in Naiserelagi, Fiji.

02. View of the mural from a pew in the Church of St Francis Xavier.

03. St Francis Xavier Church in Naiserelagi

04. Fr Denis Fitzpatrick, First Superior of the Columbans in Fiji, Bishop Foley, Monsignor Frans Wasner and Fr John Clerkin SM.

Image courtesy 'The Turning Wheel' by Columban Fr Frank Hoare.

05. Columban Fr Kieran Moloney.

06. Nakauvadra Mountain Range.

Travelling on the King's Road between the cities of Lautoka and Suva in Fiji one passes the daunting Nakauvadra Mountains in Ra province on the northwestern side of Viti Levu, Fiji's largest Island. This mountain range is a cultural and spiritual site considered to be the 'cradle of the Fijian people'. It is therefore deeply important to the country's identity. According to legends, gods and ancestors walked here. This is the resting place of their ancestral spirits.

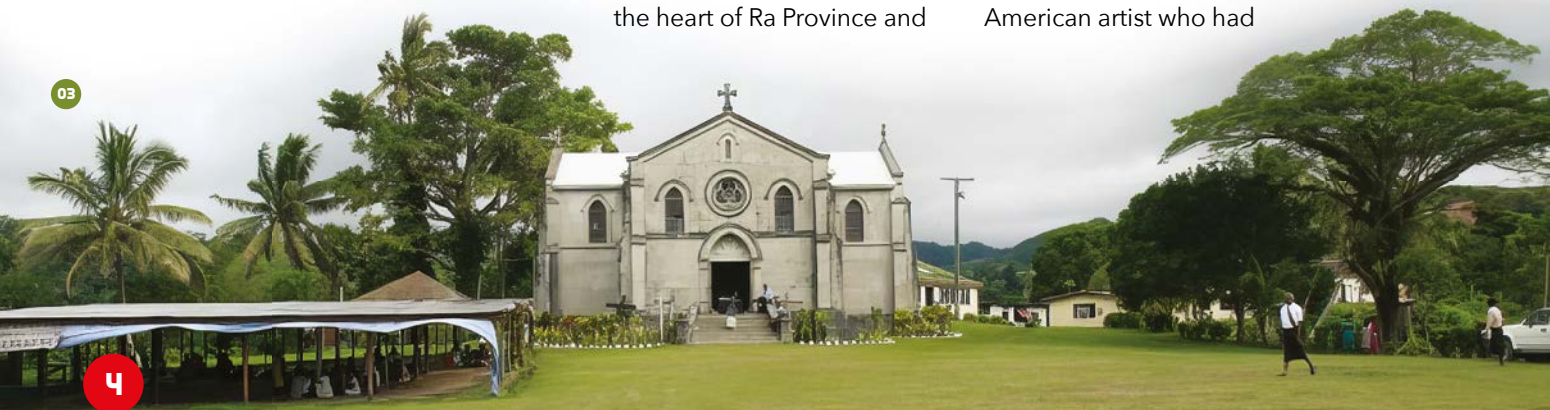
Nestled under the Nakauvadra Range is the Parish of St Francis Xavier, with its church and school. An Indian-born priest named Fr Claudius Lurkhur, who was ordained in 1922, recognised the spiritual and communal needs of the local population, and purchased land beneath the sacred Nakauvadra Range. His vision was to create a foundation for Catholic pastoral ministry and education and this led to the setting up of the parish.

It anchored the Catholic faith within the heart of Ra Province and

fostered a sense of belonging among the local Fijian community. This early commitment by Fr Claudius paved the way for future pastoral leaders to build upon his legacy and further develop the parish as a centre for faith and culture. These included Monsignor Franz Wasner, an Austrian priest who was music director and spiritual advisor to the 'real' Von Trapp Family as well as Columban priests such as Fr Martin Dobey and Fr Kieran Moloney who spent many years as pastors of this huge rural parish.

After his time with the Von Trapp family, Monsignor Franz Wasner chose to devote himself to missionary work in Fiji. He served at the Catholic mission in Naiserelagi in the 1960s, which was in fact the parish of St Francis Xavier. Sometimes nowadays it is called the Church of the Black Christ. It was Monsignor Wasner who invited the artist Jean Charlot to Fiji and commissioned him to paint the iconic Black Christ mural.

Jean Charlot was a French-American artist who had



painted murals throughout Mexico and in Hawaii. His wife Zohmah and his son Martin assisted and helped him with fresco technique and wall preparation. In Fiji, Monsignor Wasner oversaw the theological direction of the artwork and ensured the murals reflected Fijian culture, landscape, and people.

He believed strongly that: Christianity should be inculturated, not imposed; the local Fijians should see themselves reflected in sacred art; and that art could serve as a form of catechesis, teaching the faith visually. This was radical and revolutionary for its time, challenging Eurocentric religious imagery long before Vatican II. The Vatican Council later encouraged exactly this approach.

The mural in St Francis Xavier Parish consists of three panels. The central panel depicts the Crucified Christ on the cross with dark skin and Melanesian features. The mourners and worshippers are Fijian villagers, and the setting reflects local vegetation and village life. The Black Christ on the cross is wearing *Masi* cloth around his waist – *Masi* is an important Fijian traditional symbol. Behind him are breadfruit trees and his heart is a breadfruit. (The Fijian word for breadfruit is *Uto*, but it is also the Fijian word for the heart). At the bottom of the cross is a kava bowl or *Tanoa* where the kava is mixed and served. People sit around the kava bowl and drink in turns from a common cup. It has often been compared to the Eucharist or the one cup of the Eucharist.

Fijian figures pay homage to Christ. On the left-hand side there is a Fijian girl in a blue school uniform – she was attending the parish mission school at the time of the painting. Next to her is the figure of St Peter Chanel who was martyred on the Island of Futuna and is the patron saint of the Pacific. Next to him in white is Fr Petero Mataka, who was the first Fijian Catholic priest to be ordained. He was stationed in Naiserelagi after his ordination for some time and

became the first indigenous Fijian Bishop of Suva in 1974 and in 1976 the Archbishop of Suva. A Fijian woman brings Christ an offering of woven mats, and a Fijian man with arms outstretched is offering Christ a bowl of kava.

To Christ's left, an Indo-Fijian woman in a sari is offering a garland of flowers. Behind her is an Indo-Fijian man with two oxen (very symbolic for the Indo-Fijian community who worked the sugar cane fields for years). In the foreground is the figure of St Francis Xavier offering Mass and an acolyte who serves his Mass. Of course, the parish is called after this Jesuit missionary who is also the patron saint of Goa in India. Fr Claudius Lurkhur would have learned all about St Francis Xavier when studying for the priesthood in India.

The mural clearly teaches us that when 'Christ is lifted up on the Cross' he draws everyone and all things to himself. This is important in Fiji where the two main races are Fijians and Indo-Fijians, who are often suspicious of each other's ways, cultures and customs.

The mural of the Black Christ at Naiserelagi is part of a global tapestry of images that locate Christ within the life of a particular people. It is not merely about skin colour, but about representing Christ as truly present in the world's many cultures – a theme shared across Latin America, Africa, Asia and beyond, yet expressed uniquely in each culture's art and devotion.

When the mural was complete the entire parish of St Francis Xavier, Naiserelagi held a feast in honour of Jean Charlot. Cows were slaughtered and the traditional kava or *yaqona* ceremony took place at which the artist was presented with Fijian mats as depicted in the mural. ●



Fr John McEvoy was ordained in 1972. He served on mission in Fiji and is now based in Ireland.

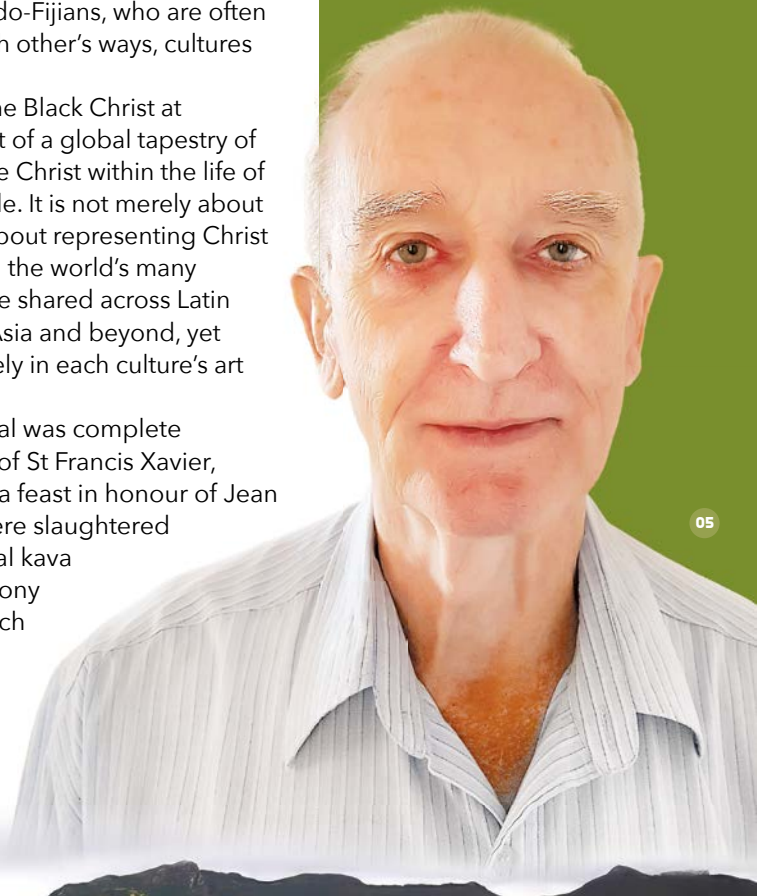
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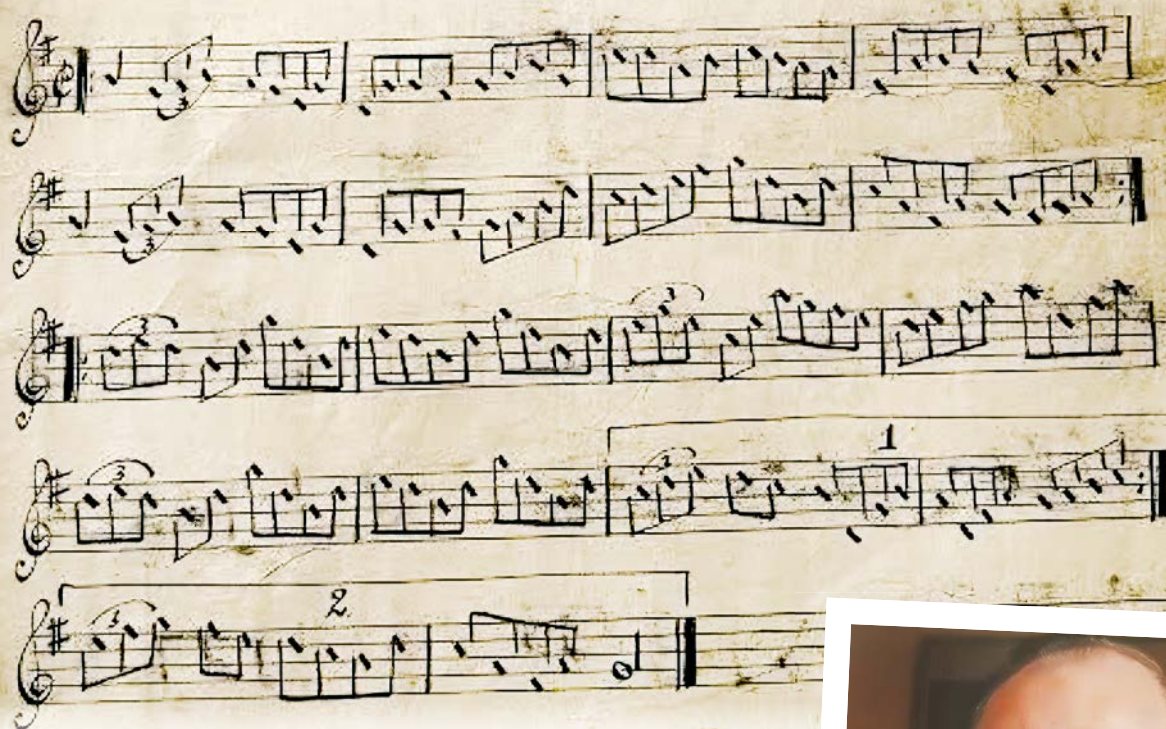
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Fr Kelly's No. 2 Copyright May 1960
The Rossmore Jetty

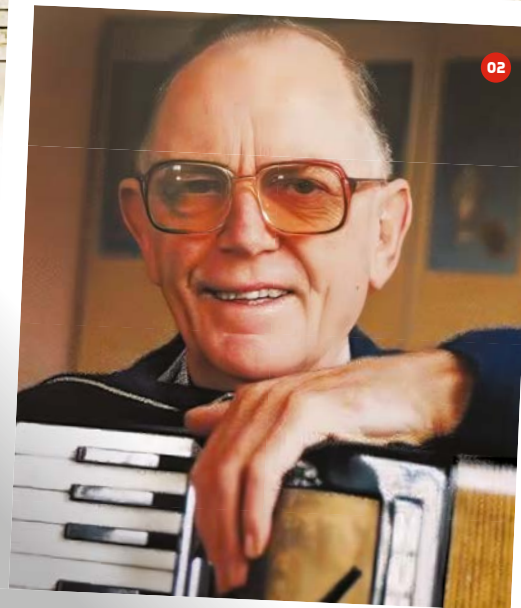


FR KELLY'S JIGS AND REELS

Fr Alo Connaughton attended the launch of a new album of Columban Missionary and piano accordion player Fr PJ Kelly's music. He recalls how the **Far East** magazine played a role in preserving some of Fr PJ's traditional tunes and how the new album is bringing his compositions to a new generation.

Musicians young and old who play traditional Irish music are familiar with tunes called 'Fr Kelly's Jig' or 'Fr Kelly's Reel'. They are session favourites. The first was given the name 'The Lough Derg Jig' by the Fr Kelly in question; the second he called 'The Rossmore Jetty'. The composer and piano accordion player Fr PJ Kelly was a native of Woodford Co Galway. He joined the Missionary Society of St Columban and was ordained a priest in Dalgan in 1950. In his younger days in St Joseph's, Garbally Park, Ballinasloe he was a champion athlete and a good hurler. He was also a talented musician.

Fr PJ Kelly was a member of the first group of Columban missionaries sent to Fiji in the South Pacific. He spent 18 happy years there, six of which he worked as Columban director. Then he was appointed back to Ireland for 10 years where he served two terms as Columban director. After that it was on to Australia for six years followed by Pakistan for ten years. Fifty-three years after his ordination he returned to St Columban's in Dalgan



and was involved in planning an extension to the Columban retirement home. Once again, he had the opportunity to get involved in the world of traditional music.

During his years of voluntary exile his love of music remained alive but much of his best traditional tunes were composed during the long holidays in Ireland home from the mission. He recalled in his later life how he first played 'The Lough Derg Jig' a few days after he composed it for a small group of traditional musicians that used to occasionally meet in a house in Cappycun near Woodford, close to the shores of Lough Derg. The group listened and asked him to play it again, and again... and again! One of the older musicians,

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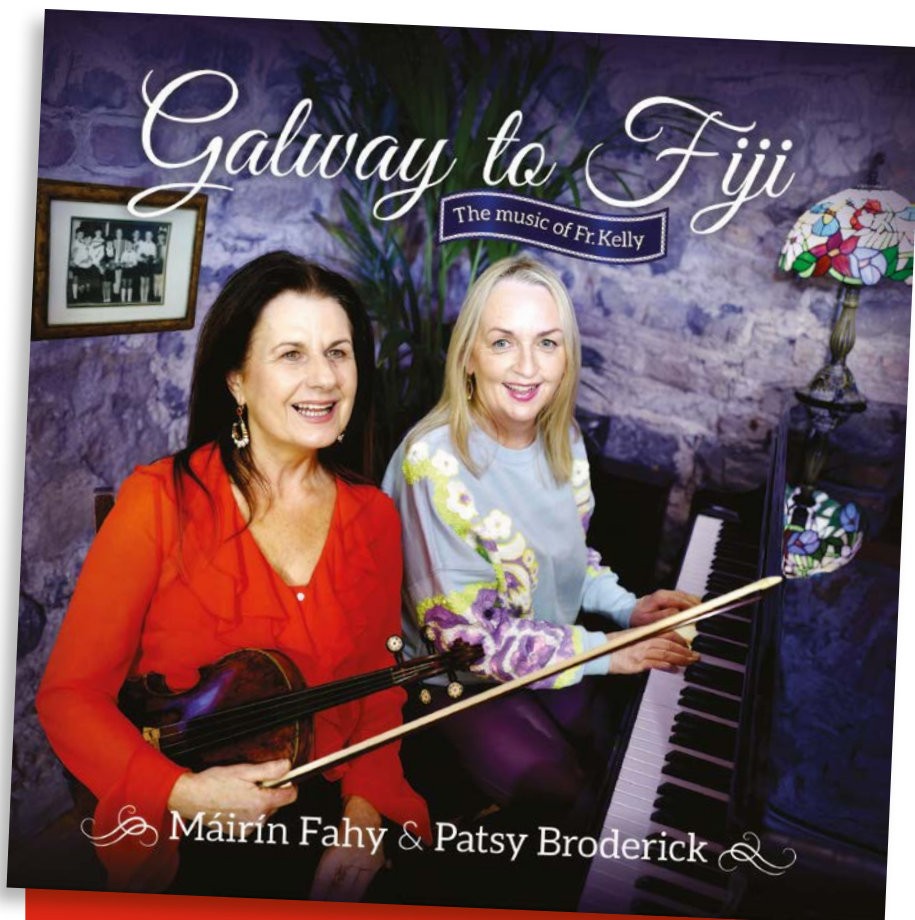
Stephen Moloney, declared, "That tune will travel!" It did. The traditional music website 'The Session' notes that it has been printed in 127 different tune books.

When Fr PJ died in 2006 people began to enquire about his music; did he write much? Luckily, through his sister Máire, a manuscript of his collection of compositions, which had been mostly carefully copied by Sr Declan Kelly, found its way to the **Far East** magazine in Dalgan. In 2007, with the help of Offaly-based Bryan Ryan, these 33 jigs and reels were published with their proper names and notation in a book titled, 'Fr Kelly's Favourites'. While the book sold out over the years, newly available tunes were seldom heard in media. In the world of traditional music, books are an important help, but the music must be known, played and heard to become popular.

In recent months Fr PJ's compositions have received another boost due to the wonderful talent of East Galway musicians Máirín Fahy, Patsy Broderick and friends who launched 'Galway to Fiji', an album of 24 of Fr Kelly's compositions in CD and digital formats. The album brings to life many tunes that merit the same popularity as the ones already known and loved.

There was a packed house in the auditorium of the Mercy College in Woodford last November for the launch of the album with many talented musicians and dancers sharing warm memories of Fr PJ. But the majority of those in the hall were hearing some of his lively tunes for the very first time. One touching moment saw young students from Woodford College play Fr PJ's accordion during a rendition of 'The Rossmore Jetty', probably his best-known composition. There are 83 listed recordings of this reel, and it is found in 1,349 tune books.

Many years ago, Joe Burke, a famous accordionist and a long-time friend of Fr PJ's remarked that the tunes had a lovely structure and were suitable for a wide range of instruments. At the Woodford concert, Máirín Fahy echoed a similar sentiment when she said that a musician is tempted to smile when playing Fr PJ's music. "There's just something about it," she said. Stephen Moloney's prediction in Cappycun many years ago looks set to be fulfilled again as many of these 'new' tunes also deserve to travel. ●



The cover of the new album: 'Galway to Fiji - The Music of Fr Kelly' by musicians by Máirín Fahy and Patsy Broderick with friends. The digital album can be streamed or downloaded (€15) or a CD can be purchased (€20) via this link: www.mairinfahypatsybroderick.bandcamp.com/album/galway-to-fiji-the-music-of-fr-kelly



Fr Alo Connaughton is from Ballinacree, Co Meath. He was a missionary in Chile from 1974 to 1993 and then worked as the Editor of **Far East** magazine. He later served in Myanmar from 2004 to 2007 and taught at Saengtham College, Bangkok until 2022.

01. Original manuscript of 'Fr Kelly's Reel' or 'The Rossmore Jetty'.
02. Columban Missionary and traditional music composer Fr PJ Kelly.
03. A collection of 33 compositions of piano accordion player, Fr PJ Kelly published by the Far East magazine. "A much sought after publication by collectors and connoisseurs of Irish music."

A HEART OVERFLOWING WITH GRATITUDE

Alexah Mae Baladad recalls the economic challenges of her childhood and how the Columban Sisters' Mosaic Centre Scholarship gave her "the gift of hope and the opportunity to pursue my dreams" of becoming a criminologist.

The Columban Sisters support students like me who live in the cemetery in Pasay City through their Mosaic Centre scholarships. I am eager to share with you a chapter of my life's journey with heartfelt gratitude. I spent my childhood in the tranquil province of Visayas, Northern Samar in the Philippines, raised by my grandparents. I never knew my father. My mother entrusted me to the care of my grandparents and my aunt after I was born. Life was simple and the community was close-knit. As a child, I spent my days playing in rice fields, climbing trees, and helping my grandparents with our small family farm. Education was always a priority in our household, despite the challenges we faced. My grandparents worked tirelessly to provide for our needs and ensure that I had the opportunity to attend school. I recall walking barefoot to the nearest elementary school. I had no complete uniform, no shoes - just slippers. I didn't even have food or money for lunch. During lunch break, I would run all the way from school to home to eat and then rush back to school to finish my classes.

Resources were scarce, but my determination to learn never wavered. I excelled in my studies, driven by the dream of a better future for myself and my family. This meant I had to leave the comfort of my hometown and study in Manila. It was a difficult adjustment, being away from my home and familiar surroundings. However, I persevered, knowing that education was my ticket to a brighter tomorrow. Life in Manila presented significant challenges. The cost of living was high, and there were times when I felt overwhelmed and homesick. However, I never lost sight of my goals. I knew that I had to study diligently and work hard to make the most of the opportunities that came my way. After moving to Manila, I met new people, made new friends, and was eventually introduced to the Columban Sisters who support students like me who live in the cemetery in Pasay City.



After finishing senior high school, I went to college to study for a BSc in Social Sciences. This opened up a new path and opportunities for me. During my first year, everything was new and traveling a great distance from home to my university was challenging. Being a criminology student requires good time management skills and sacrifice. The Mosaic Centre, which was set up by the Columban Sisters, profoundly impacted my life, especially my education. The Sisters supported me and provided everything I needed for my studies. I am deeply grateful to Columban benefactors for their support which helped with my tuition, allowances and materials. This eased the financial burden on my family.

After several years with Sisters Julie, Bella and Sofia at the Mosaic Centre, we now have Sr Hasuk, a Korean Columban missionary who continues to support us to this day with love and care. The Mosaic Centre space has not only nurtured my academic growth with invaluable resources and guidance but has also connected me to a diverse community of thinkers who inspire me daily. Every conversation, every workshop and every moment of support has shaped me into a more confident and curious learner, and I am truly thankful to be part of such a vibrant and caring environment.

During my first year in college, I was introduced to another course called ROTC or Reserve Officers' Training Corps. The programme is a requirement for all first year criminology students to instil military conduct, discipline, and advanced training.

Being part of the ROTC has been an incredible journey filled with unforgettable moments - from the precision and pride of competing in drill competitions, where every step taught me discipline and teamwork, to the eye-opening educational tour at the scout ranger and special forces facilities. Here, I gained a profound appreciation for the courage and skill of our service members. These experiences have shaped, not just my sense of responsibility, but also my respect for the dedication it takes to serve.

To our generous benefactors, my heart overflows with gratitude for your incredible support which has made my scholarship possible. You have not only eased the financial burden of my studies but have also given me the gift of hope and the opportunity to pursue my dreams. I also want to extend my deepest thanks to the Columban Sisters, whose gentle guidance, unwavering encouragement, and wise counsel have been a beacon of light throughout my journey, helping me grow not just as a student but as a person. Your kindness and care have left an indelible mark on my life, and I am committed to honouring your trust by striving for excellence and giving back to others one day. ●



03

01. Alexah Mae Baladad on the day of her graduation as a criminologist.
02. Mosaic Centre graduation with certificates presented by the Columban Sisters including Sr Hasuk (1st on right).
03. Mosaic Centre group graduation.

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FROM DEATH TO LIFE IN SALFORD

On a visit to the home of the Bishop of Salford Fr John Boles and a group of Columbans learned how a 16th century saint presides over the resurrection of nature in this corner of Northwest England.

“Before you do anything, you must go and greet Ambrose Barlow”. So said Marie, secretary to Bishop John Arnold of Salford, as she opened the door to us, a visiting group of Columbans. Now, as a rule, going to greet an esteemed resident would just be a case of common courtesy – until you realise that the gentleman in question was executed nearly four hundred years ago.

Intrigued, we were directed to the main staircase of Wardley Hall, the Tudor manor which today serves as the bishop’s house, and there, set in a glass case, we were confronted with the skull St Ambrose Barlow, serenely gazing out at the grounds, which, as it happened, were the reason for our visit. For non-believers, this sort of thing could appear somewhat macabre. However, from the Catholic point of view, relics are a source of inspiration. They remind us of great and holy people from the past who are not dead, but very much alive, enjoying eternal happiness with the Lord and interceding for our efforts in the here and now.

One effort in particular had brought this Columban delegation to Wardley Hall. We were there to see the ‘*Laudato*

Si’ Centre’, which occupies the gardens and woods around the building, and is described by the diocese as, “a flagship for effective action on climate change”. The Diocese of Salford, which covers much of the Greater Manchester conurbation in the north of England, under the guidance of Bishop John Arnold, established the centre in 2019 in response to the 2015 papal encyclical, *Laudato Si’*. In that document, Pope Francis warned that the planet – our “common home” – was being destroyed by irresponsible human action and had urged the world and the Church to adopt radical measures to combat the evils of environmental catastrophe and increasing world poverty.

The Columbans had come to Salford to see what this initiative could teach us. First, though, we wanted to know more about the remarkable connections between the saint, the hall, the diocese and the centre. Ambrose Barlow was born in 1585 on the banks of the River Mersey in what is now the Manchester suburb of Chorlton. His birthplace, Barlow Hall, still stands. Although, a sign of how times have changed, it is now the club house of the local golf course!

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This was the high point of the English Reformation and Ambrose Barlow grew up as an Anglican, but in 1607 he converted to Catholicism, travelled to France to study for the priesthood, was ordained as a Benedictine and returned home secretly on mission in 1617. For the next 24 years he ministered to the Catholic population of Lancashire, moving covertly between the houses of Catholic gentry. One of these houses was none other than Wardley Hall, at that time the home of his cousin Francis Downes. Finally in 1641, with Civil War looming and tensions rising, Ambrose's luck ran out. He was arrested while celebrating Mass on Easter Sunday and taken in chains to Lancaster Castle, where he was imprisoned, tried, condemned and subsequently hanged, drawn and quartered on 10th September 1641.

His loyal cousin Francis Downes managed to recover the head from the dismembered body and spirited it away to Wardley Hall, little suspecting that almost 300 years later, in 1930, quite independent of all this background, a new owner would be moved to donate the hall to the Diocese as the seat of its bishop. It seems Ambrose Barlow had worked a miracle.

What we saw in the grounds of Wardley Hall suggested he was working another one. Under professional horticultural guidance these grounds have been transformed. The gardens and woods have been seeded, planted and renewed with native species of flowers, plants, trees and shrubs. Habitats have been revived, soil conservation improved and water features introduced. Furthermore, the centre has been opened to the public and developed as an "open air classroom", in this way, as our guide

enthusiastically explained, "creating a space for all to learn how to take practical action to tackle climate change" and so "work towards a sustainable world". In the first half of 2024 alone, some 2,300 people visited the centre from schools, parishes and community groups, taking part in workshops, retreats and, as in the case of us Columbans, "how-to-do-it-yourself" seminars. Where Salford has led, we are following.

In June 2024 the worldwide Columban General Assembly adopted as a priority of the Society the care of our common home, and specifically committed the Columbans to promoting the protection and restoration of biodiversity. Already we are engaging in a major project around our Columban house and offices in Solihull, West Midlands, where we are reintroducing natural meadowland, planting up to 6,000 trees and opening the property to groups. We hope to go much further over the coming years.

Ambrose Barlow must surely be proud of us. They thought they'd killed him, but he's alive, and instrumental in fostering new life – spiritual and natural – from the local church in Salford, to the Columbans in Solihull, and far beyond. ●



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

01. Wardley Hall in Greater Manchester was rebuilt in the 16th century and is currently the residence of the Catholic Bishop of Salford. Photo: Fr John Boles.

02. The Columban group that visited the Salford *Laudato Si'* Centre at Wardley Hall (from L to R) Fr Denis Carter, Fr John Boles and Columban JPE Co-ordinator James Trewby.

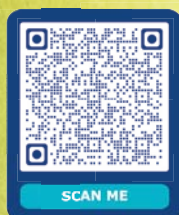
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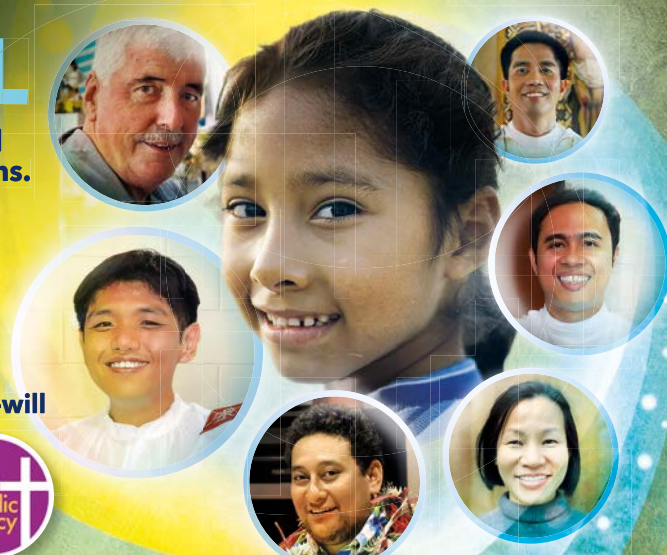
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THE TURIN SHROUD AND PASCH

Fr Maurice Hogan considers new scientific evidence on the Shroud which is believed by many to be the burial cloth of Jesus. He highlights how the injuries sustained by the body wrapped in the cloth corroborate Gospel accounts of Jesus' crucifixion.

The Shroud of Turin has been venerated for nearly two millennia as the burial cloth of Jesus. The linen cloth measures 4.4 by 1.1 metres (14.5 by 3.5 feet). It has been displayed in Turin Cathedral (Italy) since 1578. Recent scientific, medical and technological tests point to its authenticity. The mysterious image on this non-photosensitive linen was produced by a process not fully understood or producible by modern technology, lending credence to the argument that this is the burial cloth of not only the historical Jesus but of the risen Christ.

A photographic negative of the cloth shows a three-dimensional image of a crucified man so accurate in anatomic detail that scientific tests today can diagnose his multiple injuries. Its 372 bloodstains point to a crucifixion resembling that of Jesus by Roman authorities in 33 AD. The Shroud reveals details that correspond to the wounds described in the Gospels and hints at bodily transparency suggestive of the resurrection.

The authenticity of the Shroud was challenged by carbon dating in 1988 which dated its origins in the Middle Ages, suggesting it had been produced by a medieval forger. However, the sample tested by carbon dating was compromised by repairs to the cloth after a fire in 1532. Newer tests date the Shroud around the middle of the first century AD. Pollen grains embedded in the Shroud indicate it spent much of its time in Palestine.

What is intriguing is that the image

SHROUD AL EVENTS

was not produced by any paint, dye, or chemical; it has no brush strokes. Scholars have identified coin imprints on the eyes of the man in the Shroud as very likely images of coins specially minted by Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem around 30 AD. Placing coins on the eyes of the deceased was a common practice at the time. When all the findings are combined, they present strong evidence that the Shroud originated in first century Palestine around the time of Jesus' crucifixion.

Real bloodstains on the Shroud (blood type: AB) congealed on the cloth before the image was formed and likely came from the tormented man in the Shroud. Insofar as the blood is real, and the image created after the bloodstains were embedded on the Shroud, it seems that the cloth enveloped a real man who was crucified in a manner similar to the crucifixion of Jesus.

THE SHROUD OF TURIN AND THE PASSION OF CHRIST

The man in the Shroud was scourged by two soldiers using a Roman whip consisting of three thongs with lead pellets at the end of each thong. The scourging left multiple lash marks that covered the man's back, thighs and calves, reaching around to his sides and part of his chest, causing him to bleed profusely. Three of the Gospels specifically mention that Jesus was scourged (Mt.27:26) which was a common Roman practice for criminals. Pilate wished to have Jesus scourged so that the Jewish crowds would be satisfied that Jesus had been punished for alleged blasphemy. He hadn't committed a capital offense according to Roman law. Despite Pilate's protestations of Jesus' innocence, the crowds still demanded his crucifixion and Pilate gave in to their request (Jn.19:1-16; Lk.23:13-25).

The man in the Shroud was also severely wounded by a crown of long thorns that penetrated the scalp. It was woven like

a cap so that the crown would penetrate the top of the man's head as well as the forehead, temples, and back of the head. The thorns would have produced excruciating pain and considerable bleeding. The crown of thorns is unique to Jesus' crucifixion because of a charge levelled by the chief priests that Jesus claimed to be king of the Jews (Mt.27:27-31 and par.).

A dislocated shoulder has been identified which indicates that the man in the Shroud had a large blunt object on his right shoulder. When he fell forward it hit him so hard that it caused a dislocated shoulder and paralysis on the upper right side. Scrapes on the man's knees confirm the fall as well. With his upper body paralysed, it would have rendered him incapable of carrying a cross. These injuries would have exacerbated the pain of the man when later he hung on the cross, making his breathing difficult and thereby shortening his life. The injuries may be explained by circumstances surrounding Jesus' crucifixion. Although the Gospels do not mention a fall, the Gospel of John states that Jesus carried his own cross (Jn.19:17) but that along the way, the other Gospels relate, the soldiers compelled Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross for Jesus enabling him to reach Golgotha (Mt.27:32).

The man in the Shroud was fixed to a cross with nails that went through the palms but exited through the wrist to sustain the weight of a human body and agrees with the nail wounds on the hands of the risen Christ as the Gospels report (Lk.24:39; Jn.20:20,25,27). The nails would have caused unbearable distress. It is difficult to determine whether the feet were nailed side by side to the upright beam or if one foot was placed on top of the other using a single nail.

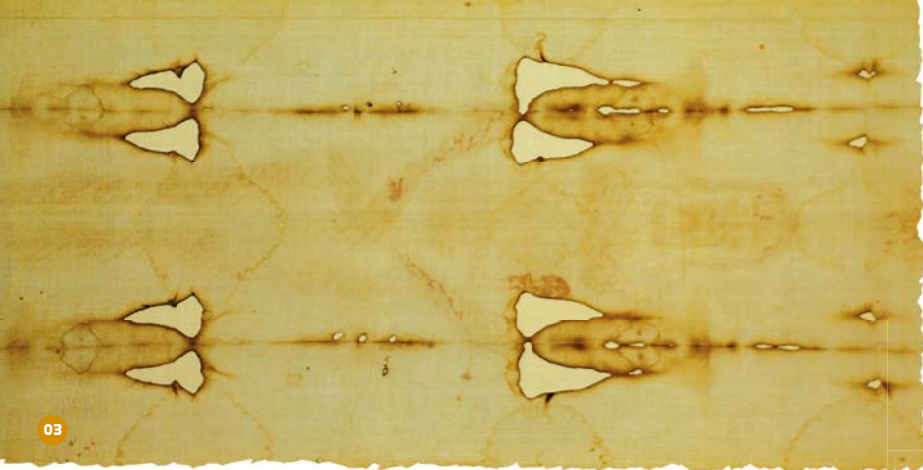
The man in the Shroud was pierced on the right side by a spear resembling a Roman lance. The wound exuded both blood and a watery substance detectable on the Shroud and points to a unique feature of Jesus' crucifixion. The Gospel of John reports this feature and insists that it was seen by reliable eyewitnesses (19:34-35), indicating thereby both the likely authenticity of the Shroud as well as the accuracy of John's account of the crucifixion.



Fr Maurice Hogan was ordained in 1965. He served on mission 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).

01. The image on the linen is barely visible to the naked eye. It wasn't until Secondo Pia took a photograph in 1898 and examined the negative that it became apparent that the cloth had enveloped a man whose wounds aligned with those of Jesus as recounted in the Gospels.
02. Is this the face of Jesus? The faint image of a crucified man on a linen cloth, which only became visible through a photographic negative, reveals a bearded man with shoulder-length hair and shows signs of crucifixion wounds as well as thorn marks, flogging, and a potential jaw injury. The debate over its authenticity as a miraculous imprint or a medieval artifact continues.

The Catholic Church takes no official position on the Turin Shroud, and has avoided claiming that it is anything more than an "icon" of Christian devotion.



03. The shroud is rectangular, measuring approximately 4.4 by 1.1 metres (14 ft 5 in x 3 ft 7 in). The cloth is woven in a three-to-one herringbone twill composed of flax fibrils. Its most distinctive characteristic is the faint, brownish image of a front and back view of a naked man with his hands folded across his groin. The shroud was damaged in a fire in 1532 in the chapel in Chambéry, France. There are some burn holes and scorched areas down both sides of the linen, caused by the fire that burned through it in places while it was folded. Fourteen large triangular patches and eight smaller ones were sewn onto the cloth by Poor Clare nuns to repair the damage.

04. Examples of the type of nails used for those who were crucified.



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THE SHROUD OF TURIN AND THE RESURRECTION

The precise three-dimensional photographic negative image on the Shroud of Turin appearing on a non-photographically sensitive linen cloth cannot be replicated by traditional physical, chemical, or biological processes. It is likely that the image was produced by a momentary intense form of low radiation accompanied by the transparency of the radiating body of the deceased person and admits of no natural or scientific causation. Furthermore, since the cloth did not make contact with every part of the body, only radiation can act at a distance while other image agents do not. It is the only physical explanation capable of explaining all the features. This unique image produced discolouration on the uppermost surface of the Shroud, engendered by an unidentified process, colouring it straw yellow.

Scientists are inclined to favour a particle radiation hypothesis as the source of the radiation and the cause of the transparency of the body. Instantaneous atomic disintegration of the physical body would produce particle radiation on both the ventral (frontal) and dorsal surfaces of the Shroud with equal intensity, and the body would become transparent. Heavily charged particles would have formed a three-dimensional highly precise image on the cloth. This would explain both the image and the transparency of the body. The particle radiation hypothesis has no known natural cause, yet it best explains all the unusual features of the image, the cloth, and the blood. We are dealing with the beginning of a miraculous event because it marks the point at which the body moved from a physical state to a trans-physical glorious state, leaving behind a flash of bright light and producing a perfect three-dimensional photographic negative.

There are other aspects of the image on the Shroud and the condition of the cloth that require clarification. The body disappeared from the Shroud without distorting any of the 372 blood stains that had already been transferred to the Shroud, none were broken or smeared. This suggests the possibility of a supernatural cause because there is no natural explanation for the unique image, the integrity of the blood stains, or the excellent condition of the cloth. It seems that other particles of the nuclear disintegration penetrated the linen cloth which would have strengthened it, making it resistant to chemical reactions. This would account for the lack of "ageing" that might be expected in material 2000 years old that had been subjected to repeated ill-treatment.

Biblical scholars today are generally in agreement that Jesus' disciples experienced him as risen from the dead and spiritually transformed in a glorified body. We may ask why the early Christians would have risked such a doctrinal rift from Judaism when they continued to respect other doctrines and did not wish to break from the synagogue? The reason had to be more than an empty tomb and was more likely an experience of a spiritually transformed and glorified Jesus, an appearance that was continuous with his former embodiment but transfigured in spirit, power, and glory (Mt.28:9-20; Lk.24:36-43; Jn.20:19-21; Acts 9:3; 22:6).

How does the image on the Shroud suggest the resurrection of Jesus? A powerful, split-second source of low particle radiation could have caused the image formation and bodily transparency, something akin to becoming spiritual. St Paul coined the term "spiritual body" to describe this phenomenon (1 Cor.15:44). Radiation giving off light with bodily transparency is suggestive of "becoming spiritual" and corresponds to the testimony of the Gospels, Pauline letters, and Acts of the Apostles. One could say that the radiation and bodily transparency which caused the image on the Shroud were the gateway to a risen body transformed in spirit, power, and glory. A precise three-dimensional photographic negative image with encoding of the interior of the body is completely beyond natural causation. And how was the body removed from the Shroud without disturbing or smearing the bloodstains? ●



“You have turned my mourning into dancing.”

As we continue to make our way through Lent, our days in this part of the world are still dark and our longing for late sunsets and long, bright evenings is increasing. Despite the flowering of the snowdrops and the early daffodils, our gardens are still, for the most part, bereft of colour. The longing in our hearts for light and signs of new life increases, aptly described by Jessica Powers in one of her poems:

“I am waiting for a green shoot.

Joy waits with me and I can feel its seepage into my day and night.

I think of the marvellous flower that is to come and how the light will hover over it.

Now and again though, the message is blurred by brief uncertainties.”

As we wait in the midst of life’s uncertainties for that green shoot to flower in our hearts, we can look forward to the great mystery and joy at the centre of our Christian faith - the Lord is risen. Soon we will be waiting at the empty tomb of our lives today. When we find ourselves during the Easter Vigil entering the church with a lighted candle, we will remember that this is the light which “darkness cannot overpower”.

Can we trust and enter into the mystery of this? Or will we plunge into fear, distrust and unbelief? After the days of Lent, will we only

experience a sense of loss? It is here that we will experience *Trasna*, the crossroad that challenges and calls us to choose the ancient path, to cross over and through the empty tomb - to believe, to recognise and to trust, “God is here.”

In one of his inspiring reflections, Fr Richard Rohr shared an experience of United Church of Christ minister, Otis Moss III. In the midst of his church receiving violent threats, Minister Otis heard sounds in the house late one night and feared that there was an intruder. To his surprise what he found was his six-year-old daughter dancing in the dark. He could sense that her movements were so jubilant, so free of worry or fear. And he thought, “The darkness is all around her but she’s dancing.”

She taught him that even in the darkest night, when we are afraid, when we see no light at all, the light IS still there. By dancing in the dark, by doing one of the things she most loved, his daughter was making her own light. She was living the words of the psalm, “You have turned my mourning into dancing.” (Psalm 30)

Can we find ways to allow our Risen Lord to turn our mourning into dancing? ●

Sr Ann Gray

01. Ubein Bridge, Mandalay. Photo: Columban Sisters.

SOCIETY INVITATION TO **MISSION**



Josh Egan travelled to the Philippines as part of the Columbans' Invitation to Mission programme. He writes about how his experiences there challenged him and deepened his faith.

The Philippines was a wonderful experience and one that I will hold very close to my heart. It was a mission that was filled with awe and beauty. I was amazed by the scenery and the warmth of the people I encountered. My expectations and the reality of this mission experience differed in many ways. My expectations centred around prison ministry, travelling around the Philippines and being open to new adventures.

In fact, my mission experience was closely linked to my university degree and working with people with disabilities. With the help of the Caisca Charity we were able

to provide a service space to people with disabilities. Another activity involved helping out at a feeding programme through the distribution of foodstuffs to poor people living in the Malate district of the Filipino capital, Manila. In my last role I helped young people living on the

streets and tried to give them some new experiences from what I had learned during my time on mission in Chile and Slovakia. These activities brought meaning to our interactions and helped me to gain their respect and trust.

I have learnt a lot from working with people with a disability. I am delighted to have been able to offer that service to children and parents who have never been supported in this way. A lot of these families simply cannot afford these activities because the cost is beyond their means. The programme provided disability services to individuals living in the shanty towns of Malate. My goal was to witness to the love of Jesus by using my professional qualifications to help provide a service rooted in God's love. Thanks to Munster Technological University (MTU) and the people of Tralee, Co Kerry who donated in support of the programme, new sports equipment and educational materials were provided to the project.

The feeding programme brought me back to simpler times in my own life and it challenged me as to why God invited me to go to the Philippines. The people come to the programme with their lunch boxes and get them filled with rice, soup and a piece of fruit. The sad reality for those who live in the shanty areas in Malate is that they often eat only one meal a day. The food service runs from 10am-12 noon each day. Here, I was able to connect with and bring the love of God and respect to the



02



03

people I encountered. It was also a good way to learn a bit of the language and get to know some of the local people from the area. The workers here do phenomenal work, including one remarkable religious Sister who is a wonderful inspiration to all and the backbone of our Church. I learnt a lot from her.

I want to thank all the Americans who contributed so unbelievably to this programme. Though I haven't met most of you, I do keep you in my prayers for your wonderful generosity to the people in Malate parish. It was good to be able to serve those in Manila who needed food and support.

Another aspect of my experience was helping out with the youth ministry programmes in Malate and the Singalong areas around Manila, as well as in Bacolod on the island of Negros. I noticed that a lot of the children in Malate would wear the same clothes every week and they didn't have any shoes. The harsh reality for these children is that new clothes are simply not an option. A truck brought water once or twice a week to allow people to wash. It was sad to see parents lining up to wash

their children on the streets. The families in Bacolod, Negros had a little more than the street children of Manila. A lot of the families had their own dwellings, and some had a shop where they would sell food or household essentials.

But the young people in these areas are forced by poverty to live very simply.

Many of the experiences in the Philippines challenged me physically, mentally and spiritually. I was challenged physically when I went dragon-boating with the Fire Blades early in the mornings out on Manila Bay. I was challenged mentally by the weather and the pollution from the choked-up roads. Spiritually I was challenged when I encountered people living in such abject poverty and when I saw how weak I was in the face of such insurmountable poverty - all I could do was offer myself, my support and my care. ●



Josh Egan is currently studying for a Master's in Chaplaincy at Dublin City University.

01. Dragon-boating: Josh took part in this on Manila Bay.
02. Josh with members of the youth ministry programme in Malate Parish.
03. Helping children with disabilities.
04. Malate Parish Church, Manila.

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REST in PEACE



Fr John Colgan



Fr Thomas Patrick (TP) Reynolds



Fr Brendan Joseph Patrick Murray

Fr John Colgan was born in Carrickmore, Co Tyrone on 13th September 1936. He was educated in St Colmcille's NS Carrickmore and CBS Omagh. He came to Dalgan in September 1954, and was sent as an exchange student to the Columban Seminary in Milton, MA, USA from 1957 to 1960. He was ordained priest in Dalgan on 21st December 1960. In 1961 John was assigned to Chile. After language studies in Santiago he was assigned to San Andres Parish, and later to Santa Catalina, both in the Archdiocese of Santiago. After his first home vacation in 1969 he was appointed to promotion work in the United States and covered a lot of terrain over the following three years. In 1973 he returned to Santiago to the Parish of Santa Catalina, and later to the Parish of San Marcos. He became Pastor of the Parish of San Gabriel in 1984. In February 1987 he was appointed Editor of the Australian **Far East**. He spent 16 years in this position and during this time the magazine won several awards. In 2006 he retired to Brisbane, but after two years there he was asked to teach English to seminarians and priests in Myanmar for a year. From 2009-2019 he was editor of Columban **Intercom**. John's health began to deteriorate from 2020 onwards and he entered the Columban Nursing Home in December 2021. A missionary with many talents, John was a gifted photographer and artist. He won the respect of both parishioners and work colleagues as a man of great integrity and pastoral commitment. He died peacefully in St Columban's Nursing Home on 22nd November 2025.

Fr Thomas Patrick (TP) Reynolds was born on 14th March 1935 at Strokestown, Co Roscommon. After school, he served with the Irish Meteorological Service at Claremorris for fifteen months. He came to Dalgan in 1955 and was ordained priest on 20th December 1961. TP was appointed to further studies in French at Hull University and at the Institut Catholique in Paris in preparation for teaching at the Columban High School for boys in Whitby, Yorkshire. When the Whitby school closed in 1967, he was appointed to teach at St Columban's College, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin (1968-1969) and then at St Columban's Seminary, Wisconsin (1969-1972). He obtained MA degrees in French and in Theology. From 1973-79 TP combined doctoral studies

with pastoral work at St Sebastian's Parish, Milwaukee. From 1980-83, he undertook pastoral work in Lima, Peru. Then in 1984 he was appointed to Chicago (IL). He taught at the Catholic Theological Union (CTU) and Loyola Graduate Institute of Pastoral Studies, while working with Columban students and helping with promotion work. He served on the Regional Council for 12 years and as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of CTU for 12 years. Appointed to Los Angeles from 2008 to 2023, TP served in the Vermont Avenue house and later in St Hilary Parish, Pico Rivera, in parish ministry and offering New Testament courses to parishioners. TP retired to Ireland in September 2023. TP had a special gift for languages. He was an exceptional pianist, the heart of the Dalgan 'orchestra'. He will be remembered as gentle and good-humoured, a superb teacher, and a man with strong organizing abilities. TP died in St Columban's Retirement Home on 14th December 2025.

Fr Brendan Joseph Patrick Murray was born on 22nd September 1932 at Louville, Ahascragh, Co Galway. He was educated at Ahascragh NS and St Joseph's College, Garbally, Ballinasloe. Brendan came to Dalgan in September 1950 and was an exchange student in the USA from 1953-56. He was ordained priest in Dalgan on 21st December 1956. He was appointed to Korea and arrived there on 8th December 1957. After language studies he served briefly in Chunchon and later in Hoeng Song as curate before taking over as parish priest of Sam Chok (1961-63) and Yang Dok Won (1963-64). After home vacation he served in Hong Chun, followed by years in Pyong Yang and Jin Bu. Brendan served in Yang Yang (1971-74) and Shillim (1975-79), before he was appointed to do promotion work in Britain (1981-85). After this he went back to Korea and served as Bursar in Seoul (1985-1990).

Appointed to Australia in 1990 he served as Bursar in Sydney until 1995. His next appointment was a House Manager in Solihull, Birmingham in Britain where he served from 1995-2003. Then he was appointed to the US Region to the Quincy House for two years. Brendan returned to Dalgan in Ireland in July 2005 and helped to bring innumerable Columbans to hospital and clinical appointments. He was predeceased by his young brother, Columban Fr Aidan in 2009. A quiet, generous man, Brendan's wide



Sr Mary Keogh

range of appointments was an indication of his willingness to make himself available for any task that needed to be done. When his health began to deteriorate Brendan went to the Nursing Home in 2023, where he died on 16th January 2026.

Sr Mary Keogh was born on 11th February 1927 in Kells, Co Meath. On completing four years as a boarder in Holy Faith Convent Glasnevin, Mary gained a BA and HDip in Education from UCD. After teaching for four years in Holy Faith High School, Clarendon Street, Mary entered the Missionary Sisters of St Columban in 1953 in Cahiracon. Following First Vows in 1956, she was assigned to the Philippines where she taught for five years in our Sacred Heart school in Molave and St Columban's High School in Labrador. In the Philippines she professed Final Vows in 1961. She then returned to Ireland and was assigned to formation work in the novitiate in Magheramore and was later appointed as Novice Directress in the USA. In Emmanuel College, Boston, she obtained an MA in Religious Education. This was at a time when Religious Life was undergoing change following Vatican II – challenges which Mary transformed into opportunities for meaningful change. The next several years saw Mary assigned again to the formation of novices and young Columban Sisters in both Magheramore and the Philippines. Through the example of her life, she shared with several generations of young Sisters what she had learned in her earlier study - the primacy of love in Religious Life. During her several years living in the Magheramore community, Mary also spent time visiting many of the neighbours in the surrounding area. Well-known for her simplicity of life, Mary will also be remembered for the interest she took in the lives of so many and the influence that her life had on them. She died peacefully in Loughshinny Nursing Home on 7th December 2025.

Sr Ita Hannaway was born in 1930 in Lislea, Co Down. After graduating with distinction from St Mary's College of Education in Belfast as a teacher, specialising in nursery schools, Ita entered the Columban Sisters in 1955

in Cahiracon. After First Vows in 1958 in Magheramore Ita was assigned to the Philippines where she taught in Malate. A year after Final Vows in 1963 she was assigned to Magheramore to contribute to the training of young Sisters. After 11 years in Ireland in formation and administration, Ita went to study at Loyola University, Chicago where she graduated with a Master's in Religious Education and a Diploma in Campus Ministry. She returned to the Philippines in 1977. In Immaculate Conception College in Ozamis she helped coordinate religious education. After just four years, Ita had once more to leave her mission as in 1981 she was elected as Superior General of the Congregation. Along with her team, she oversaw changes from Vatican II and supported communities affected by political unrest. In 1988 after completing her term as Congregational Leader, Ita was assigned back to the Philippines to Molave and two years later to Midsalip, where for a number of years the Sisters had been engaged in a Dialogue of Life and Faith with the Subanen people. Returning to Ireland in 1997, she wrote several books telling the story of our early beginnings. As her health began to fail, Ita moved into the Nursing Home in Magheramore and later into Loughshinny. She had a deep love for the Congregation and her whole life was a worthy testimony to this. Sr Ita passed away in Loughshinny Nursing Home on 24th December 2025.

May they rest in peace.

01. The late Columban Missionary Fr Noel O'Neill who died in 2025. Pictured here at Holy Thursday ceremonies washing the feet of God's specially chosen whom Fr Noel served all his life in Korea.

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MIGRANT MINISTRY



Fr Alvaro Martínez and Cristina Coronado write about the Columban Migrant Ministry on the US-Mexico Border which is guided by the words: Welcome, Protect, Promote and Integrate.

Columban Missionary Fr Alvaro Martínez is Director of the Columban Mission Centre in El Paso, Texas and Cristina Coronado is Coordinator of the Columban Migrant Ministry in Juárez, México.

01. Members of the Columban Mission Centre with some of the community of the parish of Corpus Christi Anapra taking part in a Good Friday procession near the US-Mexico border where they reflected on how Jesus Christ is crucified every day as a result of the injustices in our communities.

02. Students from the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez (UACJ) undertake their social service with the Columban Migrant Ministry, which involves offering their skills while learning with and serving the people.

Ciudad Juárez, located on the US-Mexico border across from El Paso, Texas, has become one of the most significant transit points for migrants attempting to enter the US. Between March 2019 and January 2025, thousands of people from Latin America and the Caribbean arrived fleeing violence, economic hardship, and political instability in their home countries.

For many, Juárez became both a temporary refuge and a place of uncertainty, where the dream of reaching the US clashed with the harsh realities of border control and immigration policies. The city faces serious humanitarian challenges, including shelters that were once overcrowded but are now half-empty, with limited medical care, shortages of food programmes, and a persistent lack of resources to meet the basic needs of so many displaced individuals. Migrants often face exploitation, insecurity, and emotional stress as they decide whether to stay in the city or return to their home countries.

After enduring long waits and complex legal processes under strict US immigration rules, hundreds are now waiting for these bureaucratic procedures to be processed in Mexico. Local residents, community groups, and international organisations have stepped up to help. Churches, NGOs, and volunteer networks provide food, temporary shelter, medical care, and legal assistance. However, the scale of the crisis means that these efforts are not enough. Despite the difficulties, Ciudad Juárez has become a

symbol of resilience and unity. It is a place where migrants, local residents, and aid organisations come together in daily acts of compassion, all struggling to survive and build a safer, more stable future.

For many years, the Columbans supported local organisations in caring for migrants. In 2019, seeing the growing number of families unable to cross into the US, the Columban Fathers decided to establish St Columban Migrant Ministry, a service guided by the four verbs proposed by Pope Francis: Welcome, Protect, Promote and Integrate.

In January 2025, with the new government in the US, many migrants chose to start a new life in Juárez after their plans to travel north were halted. This has significant challenges: securing suitable housing, accessing healthcare, enrolling children in school, and helping families adapt to a new environment and culture. To meet one of the most urgent needs, the Columban Fathers launched a programme to sponsor 150 migrant children and enrol them in local schools. This ambitious effort involves more than just finding schools; it also requires preparing legal paperwork, providing uniforms, school supplies, and books, and even offering meals for children. Their families also receive guidance and support to help them integrate into the community.

The Columbans believe education is key to protection and change. Keeping children in school protects them from drug dealers, gangs, and street dangers. More importantly, it gives them hope and the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty and build a better future. ●

SAMUEL CHOOSES DAVID

Samuel was upset by Saul's disobedience and often, when he thought about Saul, his eyes would fill with tears. When God saw Samuel weeping for Saul, he asked, "How long will you mourn for Saul? You know I have rejected him and he will not be king."

Then God told Samuel to fill his horn with oil and sent him to the town of Bethlehem. A farmer named Jesse lived there, and God had chosen one of Jesse's sons to be the next king.

At first Samuel was afraid to go. "If Saul hears of this, he will kill me," he said.

Samuel arrived in Bethlehem and ordered a feast in honour of the Lord God. It was an exciting occasion for the town, and everyone attended including Jesse and all his family.

One by one, Jesse introduced each of his seven sons to Samuel. They were all tall, handsome young men, and as he met each one Samuel thought, "Surely this young man must be God's choice!"

But every time a voice inside Samuel's head said, "No, not this one." It was very puzzling.

"Are these all your sons?" he asked Jesse.

"Except for David, my youngest," said Jesse. "He's looking after the sheep."

Samuel said they couldn't begin the feast until David arrived. They sent for the young man, and he arrived looking bright, handsome and fit.

"This is the one I have chosen," said God to Samuel. "Anoint him king!"

Samuel anointed David with holy oil in front of his brothers. He would be king of Israel one day, but in the meantime he was to return to his sheep. From that moment, the spirit of the Lord was close to David in a special way. ●

Read also: 1 Samuel 16:1-13.



BIBLE QUIZ

NUMBER
126

- 1 In Luke ch.1, how did Zachariah the priest inform the crowd of his son's name?
- 2 True or false, in Hosea ch.1, the prophet Hosea's first child was called Jezreel?
- 3 In Genesis ch.30, what was the name of Jacob's sixth son?
- 4 True or false? According to Genesis ch.5, Methuselah was the father of Enoch?
- 5 In Exodus ch.18, who was the father of Gershom and Eliezer?
- 6 According to Matthew ch.1, who was the father of Mary's husband Joseph?

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WORD SEARCH

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

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BIBLE
CHURCH
EASTER
LAMB
CROSS
BUNNY
BASKET
CHICK
LILY
DAFFODIL
EGG HUNT
CAKE
CHOCOLATE
SPRING

Easter

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

Image: Shutterstock



The March Hare

By **Elizabeth McArdle**

With long ears, long legs and an even longer stride, hares are one of the fastest and most amazing mammals in our part of the world. If you are fortunate enough to see one, you are very lucky indeed. Hares make their homes in grassy areas, tilled fields and at woodland edges. Dawn and dusk are the best times to spot them.

Hares do not live underground in burrows as rabbits do. They sleep and rear their young in shallow depressions in the grass known as forms. Large eyes on the either side of their head give them almost 360 degree vision, which enables them to detect predators. When a predator is spotted, their powerful hind legs come into action and they take off, running at high speed

to a safe place. Hares have been known to run at speeds of up to 72km/h (45mph).

Baby hares are known as leverets and these adorable little creatures are born with their eyes open, fully furred and ready to move. Protective mother hares feed their babies infrequently, generally at dawn or dusk and this strategy reduces the risk of predators, such as foxes or dogs discovering the baby hares. For additional protection, baby hares learn to stay very, very still and hunker down in the grass, further ensuring their safety.

Around the month of March is the hare's breeding season. At this time, males are looking for females to mate with. The males continually chase the females, however, oftentimes the females are not ready to mate. All this attention can get tiresome for the females and they box the males in an effort to fend them off. To see this happen is very exciting indeed.

The greatness and wonder of God is very evident in these beautiful animals. To share in this wonder, we must return to the source, which is nature. Out you go, where a wonderful world is waiting for you. ●



Images: Shutterstock



1. Why do people wear shamrocks on St Patrick's Day?
2. Why did St Patrick drive the snakes out of Ireland?
3. What do you call a fake Irish diamond?
4. How can you spot a jealous shamrock?
5. What do you call a big Irish spider?
6. Why do leprechauns hate running?

1. Regular rocks are too heavy.
2. It was too expensive to fly.
3. A shamrock.
4. It will be green with envy!
5. Paddy long legs!
6. They'd rather jig than jog!



COMPETITION WINNERS DECEMBER 2025



Orlaith Hollingsworth
Loughborough

Michelle Steele
Ayrshire

Clara Steele
Scotland

Issy Maria Fernandes
Essex

1

2

1

2

Colpaint - Aged 7 and Under

Colpaint - Aged 8 and Over

PRAYER FOR ALL SEASONS

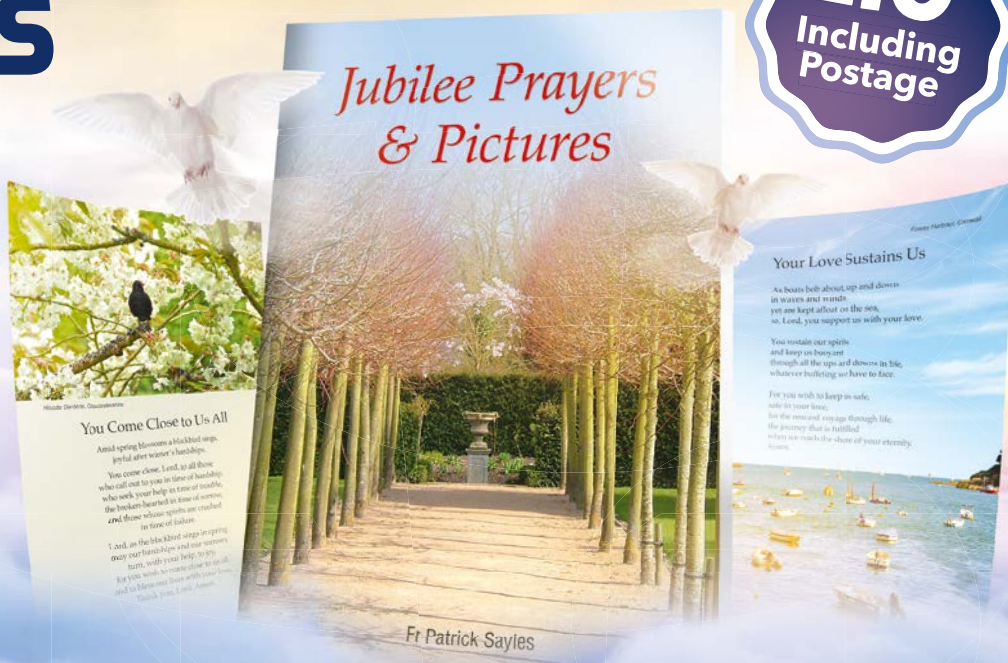
Published in 2023 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood, Fr Pat Sayles has selected **prayers and photographs** lovingly dedicated to all who share the good news of God's love for all. This hardback book is an ideal gift for Easter.

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