

far east

MAGAZINE OF THE COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

MAY/ JUNE 2026



**LIFE ON A
PLATTER**

Upskilling
Migrants

**VOCATION
FOR JUSTICE**

40th Anniversary Tribute

**WEB
OF LIFE**

Columbans &
the Higaonon



CONTENTS

04 Life on a Platter

Fr Tim Mulroy writes about a workshop at the Columban Mission Centre in Peru equipping migrant women with baking and cooking skills to help them find work.

06 Biodiversity 3: Web of Life

James Trewby learns how the Columban relationship with the indigenous Higaonon people in the Philippines has blossomed into a reforestation project.

08 Columban Competition Winners

The winning article and the winning images in the 2026 Columban Schools Competition on the theme: "Becoming a refugee is never a choice, but how we respond is."

10 Regrouping in Wuhan

Fr Dan Troy recalls how the Sisters of Our Lady of Hanyang, founded by Columban Bishop Edward Galvin, re-emerged in Wuhan decades after political circumstances forced them to disband.

12 Vocation for Justice at 40

Becca Long spoke to Columban Missionary Fr Ed O'Connell and Columban co-worker Ellen Teague about **Vocation for Justice**, the Columban newsletter which has been promoting justice and highlighting injustice for four decades.

14 Our Hope for the Future

Columban Missionary Sr Minah Seo recalls the leadership shown by Korea's young people through their peaceful protests and their demands for justice following 2024's political upheaval.

16 Unbeatable Fr Jones

Fr Tom Looney has written the first biography of Irish sports star Fr Tom Jones who bestrode the world of handball and was a generous benefactor of the Columbans.

18 Obituaries

20 Reflection

21 Stories from the Bible

22 Children's Section

23 Nature: Magical Mute Swans



04



06



16



08



10



12



14



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

Annual Subscription

£15 UK
£25 Europe
£35 World
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

Follow us

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

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

Columban missionary Fr Dylan Tabaco with Marisol Rojas, Coordinator of the Columban Mission Centre in Lima, along with migrant women who participated in a cake-making workshop.



On many occasions I have recounted my vocational journey and how reading the novel, **The Song of Bernadette** by Franz Werfel, changed my life's trajectory. However, what I have never related was the specific traits of St Bernadette Soubirous' personality that awakened my lapsed Catholic faith.

As a child, I was fascinated with the lives of the saints. I enjoyed hearing about their mystical experiences of visions and miracles. Looking back, I realise that I rarely knew their human side, their practical life. This changed with St Bernadette.

As a young adult, after reading that novel on St Bernadette's life, it was not Bernadette's visions of Our Lady of Lourdes nor the miracle of her incorruptible body but Bernadette's personality and her hidden life in the convent that touched me.

As a visionary, Bernadette gained an unwanted celebrity status in France, which she rejected. She desired a life of hidden service. That is in stark contrast to today's culture of celebrity and addiction to social media recognition.

Upon entering the Sisters of Charity convent in Nevers (France), the mother superior convoked the entire community to listen to Bernadette's account of the visions and to ask questions. This was a one-time event, and all were strictly forbidden to ever discuss the matter again with Bernadette, and for that she was grateful.

Bernadette had a great desire to serve in the foreign missions, but her frail health prevented it. Often she was in the infirmary due to an illness of one type or another. Eventually the mother superior placed Bernadette in charge of the infirmary stating that since she was not good for much and spent all her time in the infirmary, she might as well be in charge. She dedicated herself completely to the mission that she was given.

It seems to me that St Bernadette's traits – stubbornness, a sense of humour, rejection of worldly fame and silent service – are missionary traits. For the mission belongs to God, and only God decides how the mission will be done. The missionary serves, often in silence in hidden places of the world, but with a sense of humour and a stubborn fortitude that all will work out in God's time.

It is strange to imagine that a peasant girl from 19th century France, a person so unlike myself, became a powerful spiritual guide in my missionary journey. But, as our patron St Columbanus stated, "a life unlike your own can be your teacher". ●

Fr Chris Saenz

Columban Missionary Fr Chris Saenz is from Bellevue, Nebraska. He was ordained a priest in 2000 and served on mission in Chile. He was later regional director of the Columbans in the US. He now works in St Columban's, Nebraska.

01. Our Lady of Lourdes and St Bernadette.
Image: Shutterstock.



LIFE ON A

Columban Missionary Fr Tim Mulroy writes about a ten-week workshop at the Columban Mission Centre in Lima equipping migrant women with baking and cooking skills to help them find work.

Could it be said that the reign of God is like a platter of various kinds of pastries which a group of women from different countries have learned to create together? Among a group of seventeen women who had come to live in the city of Lima, several were migrants from Ecuador, while others had arrived from Venezuela. They also included Peruvians from remote towns or villages who had travelled to the capital city in search of a better life for themselves and their families. One was a Peruvian who, after spending eight years in Mexico, now felt like a foreigner back in her home country.

Almost all of them felt overwhelmed by the frantic pace of city life, and though they were surrounded by over 11 million people, they frequently felt isolated and lonely without the support of their extended family, neighbours and friends. Since more than one quarter of Lima's population live in poverty, it is a major challenge for new arrivals to find suitable

accommodation and regular employment. Many of the seventeen women struggled to find work due to their low level of formal education, or they were unable to take on certain kinds of jobs due to family commitments.

They came together at the Columban Mission Centre in Lima to attend a series of ten workshops on making pastries, in the hope of equipping themselves to start a small business in their own home, which would enable them to provide additional financial support for their families. "However, the pastry-making workshops were intended not just to enable those seventeen women to support their families, but also to grow as people in their new surroundings," emphasised Marisol Rojas, Coordinator of the Columban Mission Centre.

Elaborating on this broader vision, she explained, "The sessions, which took place twice a week, were led by Elena, an experienced confectioner, so the participants learned the craft of pastry-



PLATTER

making and explored their own creativity by experimenting with new recipes. At the same time, they grew in trust and in friendship with one another. Over the course of ten weeks, they gradually found the courage to talk with one another about their personal struggles in this huge city, developed the ability to laugh about their mistakes around the oven, and discovered the confidence to share about their dreams for themselves and their families. Moreover, as they listened to one another, they affirmed each other's courage and resilience. And the gratitude they felt for the ongoing nurturing of their skills and spirits frequently found expression in their spontaneous prayers at the beginning of each session."

Reflecting on his experience of supporting Marisol Rojas and accompanying another group of women who had participated in a similar workshop series at the Columban Mission Centre some months previously, Fr Dylan Tabaco, a Columban missionary from the

Philippines said, "Creating and baking, learning and relating together enabled the women from various backgrounds to understand and respect each other. Since all of them had experienced the prejudice and pain of being an outsider, they understood the importance of stretching one's mind and heart in order to go beyond superficial perceptions and come to know one another at a deeper level. The pastry-making workshops provided them with opportunities to make new friends, gave them confidence and skills to explore new ways to support their families; and deepened their faith in God who accompanies them through all the ups and downs of life."

While none of the women who have participated in the pastry-making workshops envisage their future as 'life on a platter,' all of them have discovered how a platter of delicious pastries nurtures their taste buds, their spirits and their dreams. ●

Fr Tim Mulroy from Co Mayo was ordained in 1995. He was Regional Director in the US between 2012-2018 and Columban Superior General between 2018-2024. He is now based in Britain.

Migrant women who took part in a workshop run by the Columban Mission Centre in Lima with Columban Missionaries Fr Dylan Tabaco and Fr Iowane Gukibau as well as Marisol Rojas, Coordinator of the programme. All photos courtesy of Columban Missionary Fr Martin Koroiciri who is on mission in Chile.

To make a comment on this article go to:



facebook.com/fareastmagazine



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



The feast marks the birth of Christianity in the Philippines in the 15th century and is celebrated in style with dancing, music and processions as well as prayer and reflection on the call to be humbly dependent on our loving God. Looking around the church, it dawned on me that there appeared to be more faces than people – every other member of the congregation was holding a statue of the *Santo Niño*, and some people had more than one. They ranged from the size of a hand to large child-sized figures, and were dressed in a variety of costumes, from traditional Spanish royal clothing to a ‘boy band’-style hoodie. To add further confusion, one mother had dressed her baby as a traditional statue!

Unsurprisingly the Mass lasted significantly longer than an hour; what a feast of music, participation by young people, with dance and colour. I was exhausted just watching Peruvian Columban Fr Enrique Escobar as he made his way through the crowds blessing all the statues. This was his first of four masses that day.

Though we were running late for our visit to the Higaonon people, an indigenous community living in the mountains above the city, we had to wait for the *Santo Niño* procession to pass so Bernie, the local Mission Promotion Animator, could rescue the car. Then we had to grab a live chicken and set off.

The Columban’s relationship with the Higaonon is a fruit of the Inter Religious Dialogue work of Irish Columban Fr Paul Glynn. Following interfaith conversations with the Higaonon people after a typhoon, a dream of shared action was born: growing native trees together. The project

WEB OF LIFE

On a recent visit to the Philippines, James Trewby learned how the Columban relationship with the indigenous Higaonon people has blossomed into a reforestation project for native trees.

“We’ll go to mass first and be back just after 7am, then we will set off to the mountain to meet the Higaonon community”. These, as it turned out, rather optimistic words, were part of the plan Marjorie Engcoy, Columban Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation animator in Mindanao, in the south of the Philippines, gave me for the day’s adventures.

As the sun rose, we arrived early for the 6am Sunday Mass at Our Mother of Perpetual Help parish in Barra, only to discover that this was no ordinary Sunday. It was the Feast of the *Santo Niño* (the Child Jesus), a celebration only in the Philippines. Even with 10 minutes to spare the church was overflowing, with rows of seats added outside the building and the longest procession of altar servers I’ve ever seen spilling out across the road.

To make a comment on this article go to:

 facebook.com/fareastmagazine

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



is now coordinated by Marjorie, and thanks to her support, nearly 30 schools in Britain are now engaged in a five-year solidarity education programme. Through it, students learn about climate change and the biodiversity crisis in the Philippines, indigenous peoples, and Catholic Social Teaching's call for care of creation.

This visit was my opportunity to learn from the people involved. But why the chicken? It so happened that the day of my visit, as well as being the Feast of the Child Jesus, was also a special one for the Higaonon - a day marked by a ritual, 'Panahod', praying for good health and safety. And this involved the sacrifice and sharing of a number of chickens.

Walking around the reforestation area was a beautiful experience. Seeing the Lauan trees planted over the last eight years growing strongly, creating wonderful new habitats, was both humbling and encouraging in the face of so much terrible news about the interlinking environmental crises.

After enjoying a meal together, it was time for *chika-chika*: conversation with *Datus* (chiefs) *Ontong* and *Hapitan*, and tree-growing volunteers Roy, Jimmy, Joebert and Nap. The sharing was illuminating. Speaking about the recent discovery of corruption in the Philippines made apparent following terrible flooding, they suggested that nature has its own way of exposing the truth. They explained how they have seen the changes in the land and in nature around them - they are on the front line of climate change. They spoke about advocating for the rights of nature in the face of the throwaway culture, extractive industries and corruption.

Having recently refreshed my memory

during a conference led by Filipino Columban Lay Missionaries John Din and Arlenne Villahermosa of *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum*, I was struck by the resonance, particularly the call to hear and respond to the "cry of the earth". What a day! Two 'once-in-a-lifetime' experiences in one day. Faith and action, celebration and challenge.

But how to make sense of it all? When Christianity came to the Philippines in the 15th century the Higaonon left their homes by the sea and retreated to the mountains. Now, centuries later, recent church teaching and the signs of the times are challenging us to change our relationship with creation, learning again what they have long known - no longer seeing 'natural resources' but an interconnected web of life that gives glory to the Creator God. The Child Jesus invites us to humility, to stand in wonder and awe, perhaps no longer as stewards but as gardeners, playing our part in revealing and revelling in the Kingdom of God. ●

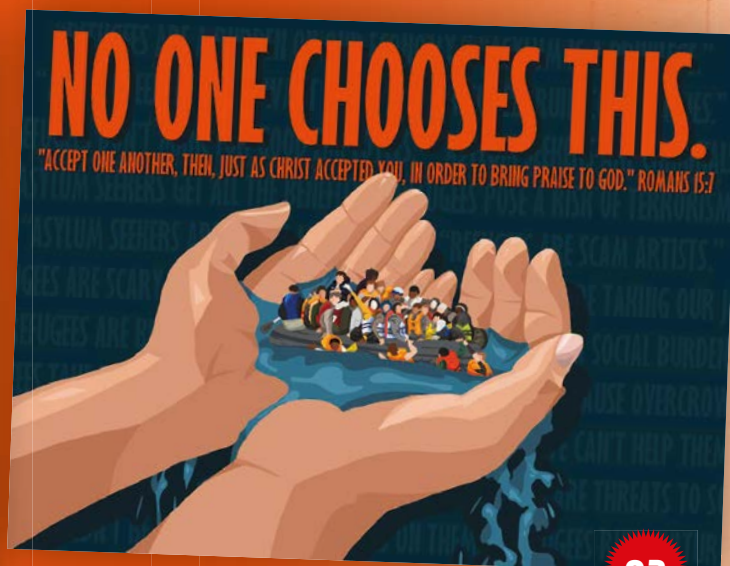


Dr James Trewby is the Justice, Peace and Ecology Co-ordinator for the Columbans in Britain as well as an Education Worker. In this role he helps young people and educators explore the relationship between faith and action, where possible through experience and encounter; "A life unlike your own can be your teacher" (St Columban).

01. A Lauan tree: a tall hardwood native to the Philippines, often called 'Philippine Mahogany'.
02. Columban Missionary Fr Enrique Escobar blessing statues of the *Santo Niño* in Barra Parish in Misamis Oriental, Philippines.
03. Solidarity cards sent by some of the 30 schools in Britain engaged in a solidarity education programme on the Higaonon people and their reforestation project.
04. Dr James Trewby with *Datus* (chiefs) *Hapitan* and *Ontong*, and some of the tree-growing volunteers.



01



02



03

"BECOMING A REFUGEE IS NEVER A CHOICE, BUT HOW WE RESPOND IS."

COLUMBAN COMPETITION WINNERS

Students aged 13-18 were invited to produce a piece of writing or create an image on the topic: **'Becoming a refugee is never a choice, but how we respond is'** for the 2026 Columban Schools Media Competition. They were asked to produce a piece of writing (prose or poem) or an image that explored perceptions of people seeking sanctuary, considering practical examples of welcome and solidarity.

The competition attracted a record 349 entries across Britain and Ireland, the highest number in the nine years the Columbans have it. Entries from

31 schools in England, Wales and Scotland were judged by media experts who praised the high quality of all the entries shortlisted.

The winning piece of writing in Britain came from A. (18), **St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School** and **Sixth Form** in Birmingham, which is a School of Sanctuary. Runners Up were A. (18), **St David's Catholic Sixth Form College** in Cardiff and J. (15), **Holy Trinity Academy** in Telford, Shropshire.

The winning image in Britain came from G. (14), **The Holy Cross School**, New Malden. Runners up were K.

(16), **Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School** in Upminster, East London and J. (15), **Loreto Grammar School** in Altrincham, Greater Manchester.

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

"BLESSED ARE THE MEEK"

by A. (18) St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School and Sixth Form, Birmingham.

No one plans to become a refugee. No child dreams of crossing borders in the dark, carrying only a schoolbag filled with documents instead of books. No parent chooses to leave behind the house they built, the neighbours they loved, or the language that shaped their childhood. To become a refugee is not an ambition, a lifestyle, nor a preference. It is the consequence of danger so great that staying becomes impossible. And yet, whilst those forced to flee have no choice, we - those who receive them - do. Our response is the part of the story that is still in our hands.

Across Britain and Ireland, public debate often reduces refugees to statistics or headlines. However, behind every statistic, there is a person whose life has been disrupted. As of late 2022, over 43 million children were estimated to be forcibly displaced, including those displaced by conflict and violence (UNICEF). It is too easy to throw around statistics; to actually envision one of these children, who has enjoyed the thrill of playing football in a courtyard or who has fought with their sibling over who would get the last biscuit, is to truly stand in solidarity. Catholic Social Teaching asks that we do exactly this: to picture the child and not the statistic. This principle of human dignity taught to us by St Catherine of Siena tells us to see the refugee as someone who has been made 'Imago Dei' and therefore deserves safety, respect, and hope.

My own understanding of this did not come from personal displacement, but from the environment I grew up in. As a white boy in a primary school where most of my classmates were from Middle Eastern or African backgrounds, I was, unusually, in the minority. Many of my friends had parents or grandparents who had fled conflict in Pakistan, Syria, or Afghanistan. One family I knew had left Iran after political unrest made it unsafe to stay. At the time, I did not understand the profundity of their stories. To me, they were just the guys I played cricket with and exchanged snacks with, sat next to in lessons. Now I look back and realise that their presence shaped my sense of community long before words could describe it.

Growing up in that environment taught me something hugely important: refugees are not "others." They are classmates, neighbours, and friends. Their cultures, languages, and histories were part of the very fabric with which I grew up. So when I think I hear those debates currently, and I think I hear refugees portrayed as enemies or strangers, I think of the people I grew up with, the people who lived the story of resilience, of hope, and of safety.

"Welcome the stranger," is a moral imperative grounded in Scripture itself: "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). This moral imperative needs to be accompanied by solidarity, as Pope Leo XIV reminded us in 2025. He noted that "our unity will then value each person's history, as well as the social and religious culture of every people," combating, as it does, the fear of the stranger as an outside threat and embracing diversity as a blessing in itself.

Across Britain and Ireland, there are countless examples of ordinary people choosing compassion. Parish halls converted into warm spaces for asylum seekers. Schools organising uniform drives for newly-arrived pupils. Community sponsorship groups preparing homes for families they have never met. These acts may seem small, but they form a culture of encounter - one in which strangers become neighbours.

Still, our response is not always generous. Public discourse can be shaped by suspicion, misinformation, or political rhetoric. Some argue that offering sanctuary is a burden. Yet Catholic Social Teaching reminds us of the common good: the idea that society flourishes when the most vulnerable are protected. Refugees are not drains on our communities; they are contributors. Many become nurses, engineers, teachers, entrepreneurs. Their resilience is not only personal: it strengthens the places where they settle.

Moreover, the Church teaches the principle of the preferential option for the poor, urging us to prioritise those in greatest need. Refugees, who have lost homes, livelihoods, and often family members, are among the most vulnerable people in the world. To turn them away is not neutrality; it is a choice that contradicts the Gospel. Though many preach religion in countries such as the US, many of us forget that Jesus himself was a refugee from areas within modern-day Palestine, as well as most of the Israelites being refugees escaping slavery and persecution from Egypt in Exodus.

The question, then, is not whether refugees deserve help: they do. The question is what kind of people we choose to be. Do we construct walls of indifference or bridges of compassion? Do we allow our policies and our approach to be dictated by our fears, or our loves? To be a refugee is not one's choice. To be empathetic is. Responding with justice is. Responding with welcome is. And these choices define not only the lives of those who seek sanctuary, but the moral character of the societies they enter.

In the end, the theme of this competition is not only about refugees. It is about us. It is about whether we believe that every person, regardless of birthplace or circumstance, carries an unchanging dignity, as Pope Leo XIV said, a dignity that remains whether we are "living in our native land or in a foreign country." It is about whether our communities of faith will choose to embody the love we profess. Refugees do not choose their journeys. But we can choose to walk beside them. And in doing so, we may discover that welcoming the stranger does not diminish us, but it transforms us. ●



REGROUPING IN WUHAN

Fr Dan Troy recalls how the Sisters of Our Lady of Hanyang, founded by Columban Bishop Edward Galvin, re-emerged in Wuhan decades after political circumstances forced them to disband.

As we stood in front of the old buildings at the newly-named St Mary's Square in the Hanyang area of Wuhan, I explained to members of the city's international community of Catholics that these buildings were built over eighty years ago by Columban Missionary Bishop Edward Galvin as a convent, school and chapel.

In those years the buildings became home to the Sisters of Our Lady of Hanyang, a congregation of diocesan sisters founded by Bishop Galvin in the early 1930s. A **Far East** article from that era highlights how he had learned from a few local families that they expected their daughters would have an adequately comfortable place to call home if they were going to join the new congregation. Bishop Galvin's attentive listening to these families led to the design and construction of buildings that retain considerable architectural style in modern-day China.

Within twenty years of founding this congregation of Sisters, developments throughout China led to immense changes for the Church. A consequence of the unprecedented events of the late 1940s was that one property after another was removed from Church control. As these changes unfolded, the future looked bleak. Bishop Galvin eventually made the painful decision to dispense the Sisters from their vows, meeting with each Sister to give her permission to return to her family and to find her own way in life as best she could, all with his prayerful support. As the young Chinese Sisters gave up their dreams of community living and prayer, they also let go of their committed work in education and medical care, thereby facing an unknown future in what was a heart-wrenching experience for them and their well-loved bishop.

Thirty years later, as political winds began to blow unexpectedly from a different direction, four of those Sisters, older and braver, regrouped one evening at the nearby disused St Columban's Cathedral, broke the locks on the doors of a few simple outhouses and began living once more their community life. Within a few years a couple of their other companions had joined them and parish life was slowly resuming for the Catholics of the area. Better accommodation was then built for the Sisters at their new location beside the reopened Cathedral of St Columban.

From 2001 onwards, I had the privilege of knowing three of those Sisters. As late as 2018, a few months before she died at the age of 99, Sr Li Fenfang would occasionally recall the day when Bishop Galvin told her that she could return to her family, free from the need to live as a religious Sister, the retelling of the story still stirring her to tears after seventy years.



THE BEGINNINGS OF A NATIVE CHINESE SISTERHOOD IN HANYANG.



A few years ago, as part of the city of Wuhan's effort to preserve its history, the original convent, school and chapel of Sr Li's congregation were designated buildings of historical significance. This fortuitous preservation order ensured that the development of a huge new residential complex needed to integrate the old properties into its overall design. The result has been the development of a stylishly refreshed area that now stands in pleasant contrast to the nearby towering housing and office projects. Two coffee shops, a restaurant and a bread shop are now part of a centre of activity that also has a spacious square for various public activities, all of it located beside the busiest transport intersection at this side of the city. Maps of the city show the area with its new name, St Mary's Square.

The recent visit by some members of Wuhan's international community of Catholics to see the old buildings was an opportunity to learn about the history of the Church in this area, as well as to appreciate how the ongoing development of the city has surprisingly incorporated former Church buildings into its plans. At lunch in the restaurant of the newly developed district, we were joined by Sr Clara Zhang, one of the younger generation of Sisters who continue the work of the congregation founded by Bishop Galvin so many years ago.

Sr Clara showed us articles in the **Far East** magazine from the 1940s, linking us to the earlier times of this area. I was pleasantly surprised to see how members of our visiting group were so interested in what they were reading in the old magazines and how the old photographs appealed to them so much. Just a short distance from where we were looking through the old magazines, some of the local Church history is etched on government-sponsored plaques that are well placed for the public to read, also an opportunity for part of the history of the Church in this area of China to reach a wider audience.

As we looked through the old magazines and shared our lunch, it was also mentioned that we were probably the biggest group of Catholics to gather in these buildings since the congregation of Sisters founded by Bishop Galvin had dispersed from here in 1948. In our time, without knowing what the future will bring, it is encouraging that the story of the Church in some parts of China is preserved in the actual walls of the buildings that once provided a home to its humble servants as they reached out in faith to support the people of their own neighbourhood. ●

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

01. Members of Wuhan's international community of Catholics pictured with Fr Joseph Peng, Sr Clara Zhang and Columban Missionary Fr Dan Troy at St Mary's Square.
02. The early days of the new congregation of Sisters in Hanyang as reported in the **Far East** magazine in August 1939.
03. Procession to the chapel in 1939 on the day of First Profession of members of the Sisters of Our Lady of Hanyang. Bishop Edward Galvin, founder of the new congregation, is pictured on the left.
04. Past issues of the **Far East** covering the work of the Sisters of Our Lady of Hanyang in 1939, 1940 and 1941.



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN TEACHING IN CHINA?

AITECE offers those looking for a life-changing break the opportunity to share their English language skills with students while getting to know China.

Skills Needed: Competence to teach third level English language. A degree or teaching diploma. A TEFL diploma is a decided help and essential for those without teaching experience. A fluent speaker of English with clear enunciation and a lively teaching style.

Other valued subjects are: Journalism, Law, Engineering, Import & Export Trade, Computer Science, Biology, Pharmacy and Costume Design.

Mission Dimension: This is mission in the sense of integral human development of both teacher and students.

Accommodation on campus is usually provided free to teachers. The salary is adequate for the needs of a simple lifestyle. Upper age limit for candidates is 65.

For further information:

Telephone Fr Pat O'Beirne: 01564 772 096

Email: pobeirne@protonmail.com • Website: www.aitece.ie





VOCATION FOR JUSTICE AT 40

Becca Long spoke to Columban Missionary Fr Ed O'Connell and Columban co-worker Ellen Teague about **Vocation for Justice**, the Columban newsletter which has been promoting justice and highlighting injustice for four decades.

Becca Long is the 2025–2026 Columban Faith in Action Volunteer in Britain.

01. Ellen Teague and Fr Ed O'Connell being interviewed by Becca Long.

02. *Vocation for Justice*

To make a comment on this article go to:

 facebook.com/fareastmagazine

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

If you've been a faithful reader of **Vocation for Justice** (VfJ) you won't be surprised to hear that it was born 40 years ago this year out of concern over abuses of human rights, military dictatorships, and unbounded exploitation of people and the natural world. After returning from Peru in 1985, Fr Ed O'Connell connected with justice and peace groups across Britain and worked alongside CAFOD, connecting with a growing national network of those concerned about justice and peace issues. **Vocation for Justice** became a means to maintain those contacts, raise awareness of global and local issues, and mobilise people for action.

In 1986 Fr Ed and Mike Kelly began to gather information, write articles and post them out as a newsletter. The circulation grew from a couple hundred to a thousand quickly as people saw the value of this resource for justice and peace work. The newsletter brought together Catholics' longing for justice rooted in the 'See-Judge-Act' method of Catholic Social Teaching and it was shaped by global experiences. At this time Columban Missionaries Frs Frank Nally, Tony Burke, Ray Collier and Frank Regan were accompanying justice and peace groups and attending the events of groups like CAFOD.

Ellen Teague recalls Mike and Fr Ed's first justice and peace conference where they sang the hymn, 'I Pray That I May Never

Be Indifferent' during the liturgy. "It really summed up what we were trying to do – our aim was not to be indifferent to injustice around the world." Ellen was invited to run the newsletter when Fr Ed returned to Peru in 1999. She aimed to produce a newsletter which provided information on justice and peace that wasn't appearing elsewhere and that is a commitment she has continued to deliver on right up to today.

VfJ became a campaigning tool, addressing issues from interfaith and racial justice in East London, to debt, trade, and environmental concerns. Some of its first editions had articles from leading scholars within the Church like Albert Nolan, Gustavo Gutiérrez, and from beyond the Church, such as Aung San Suu Kyi. It was a bridge between these leading thinkers and parishioners in Britain. The newsletter was not afraid of controversy such as publishing a statement on institutional racism in the Church. Recalling the coverage of the Congress of Black Catholics, Fr Ed comments, "The Columbans were quite prophetic in advertising issues that weren't really appearing elsewhere ... I'm very proud of that and of Ellen."

Of many memorable editions over the years, Fr Ed fondly recalls the celebratory ten-year edition, which was introduced by Christine Allen and published contributions from people like Molly Somerville on racial justice, Kathy Piper, and Theresa Jackson,

as well as Rosemary Read with Carol and David Cross writing on the See-Judge-Act principles as applied to unemployment in Middlesbrough. VfJ was really a gathering force as the whole Church moved towards taking the issues of justice and peace and care for creation seriously.

Ellen's favourite issues were those where they really made a difference. She recalls how mining corporation Rio Tinto eventually promised to withdraw from mining in the Philippines. The chief executive of Rio Tinto wrote to Columban Missionary Fr Frank Nally as a result of their campaigning pressure as part of the Working Group on Mining in the Philippines. "We were demonstrating outside the Rio Tinto offices in the city and at lunchtime some of the workers came out and said, 'Keep it up. You don't even know half of what goes on,'" recalls Fr Ed.

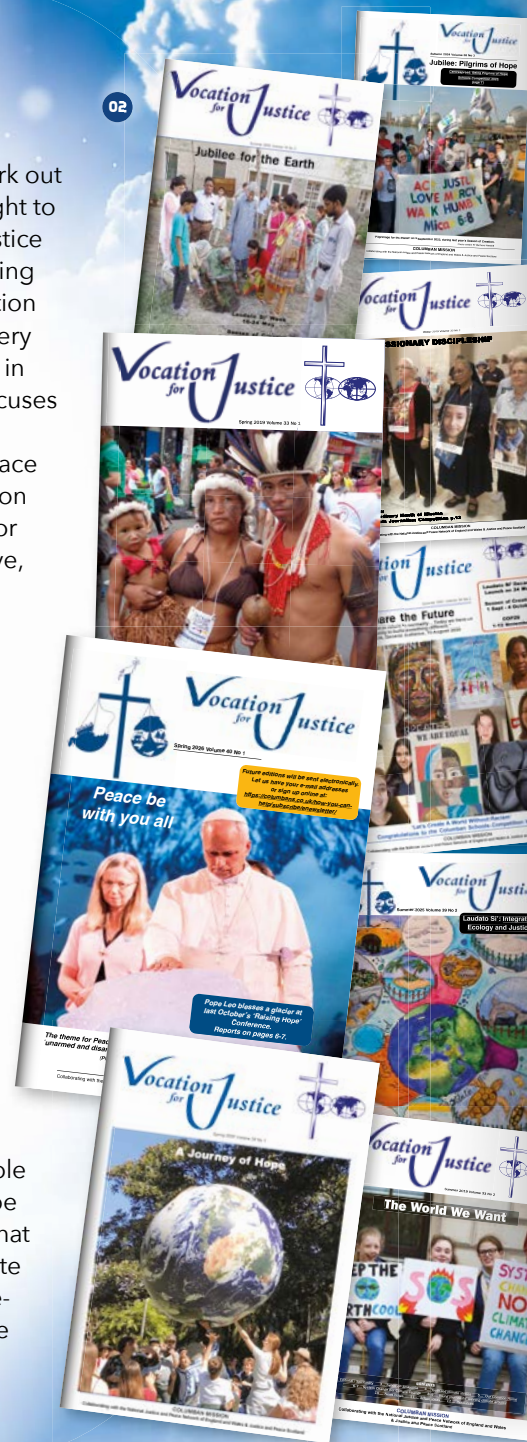
The Columbans made a unique contribution because they often lived alongside some of the injustices that were being uncovered. They were some of the first to expose the toll of extractive industries and to get climate change on the agenda. They were influential in encouraging the Catholic Church to mark the Season of Creation in September. VfJ promoted the 'Hands around Birmingham' campaign on debt in 1998 which became the first mass protest of Jubilee 2000, when 60,000 people showed up to demand debt cancellation for impoverished countries during the G8 summit in Birmingham.

So for the first 30 years, VfJ very much worked at grassroots, educating people, engaging them in events, giving them the social analysis skills and tools to reflect

theologically, and helping them to work out plans of action. The last ten years sought to bring younger people onboard. As justice and peace workers lost diocesan funding there was a lack of training and formation for young people in these areas and very limited paid roles in justice and peace in the Church. Noting that the Church focuses on its charitable wing, Ellen and Fr Ed regret that the focus on justice and peace has diminished. "But we have to carry on because marginalised people and poor communities have to carry on to survive, and we have to support them," Ellen comments.

As VfJ is moving online from May 2026, the team must continue to reach people creatively. Distribution online will be different, but the mission remains. Ellen smiles as she remembers finding a copy of the newsletter in the Archbishop of Westminster's house – the physical copy always reached interesting places!

The Columbans have been prophets for building Kingdom values, seeing mission not as coping with the decline of priests and parishes, but as keeping eyes open to see the signs of the times and standing in solidarity with the vulnerable – both people and the planet. The hope for the newsletter as it goes online is that readers will own it, embody it, distribute it and take responsibility to See-Judge-Act. "The Columban way is to go to the grassroots... I can't see any other way forward." ●



RECEIVE VOCATION FOR JUSTICE BY EMAIL

Subscribe today to the **COLUMBAN eNEWSLETTER** to receive mission articles, reflections and prayers direct to your email, plus **Vocation for Justice**, an online resource focussed on our work to promote Justice, Peace and Ecology.



SCAN ME

Scan to subscribe or go to
WWW.COLUMBANS.CO.UK/ENEWSLETTER

COLUMBAN
MISSIONARIES
BRITAIN





OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Columban Missionary Sr Minah Seo recalls the leadership shown by Korea's young people through their peaceful protests and their demands for justice following 2024's political upheaval.

- 01. Columban Missionaries Srs Minah, Paulina, Angela and Bella at a protest in Seoul following martial law crisis in Korea in 2024
- 02. The political crisis was triggered by the then President Yoon Suk Yeol's declaration of martial law on 3rd December 2024. That sparked massive protests, day and night, led mainly by young people.
- 03. Yoon Suk Yeol's insurrection was thwarted by a democratic revolt by the people.

To make a comment on this article go to:

 facebook.com/fareastmagazine

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

I still vividly remember the night martial law was declared in Korea on 3rd December 2024. I was finishing an ordinary day and falling asleep when I received a message from a friend: "What on earth is happening in our country?" The message woke me up, and I checked the news online. Breaking news reported that President Yoon had declared martial law. The justification was absurd – he claimed that anti-state forces were cooperating with the Opposition party and threatening the nation. I couldn't believe that something like this could suddenly happen on such an ordinary day. Martial law? Was it fake news? I had only read about martial law in textbooks or seen it in movies and documentaries from the era of the new military regime. But happening in 2024?

Fortunately, citizens quickly rushed to the National Assembly to protest and demand that martial law be lifted. About two and a half hours after it was declared, the motion to terminate martial law passed. Many people stayed up all night, filled with fear and anger about what had happened in a democratic country. We could not allow someone who used his power to ignore the sovereignty, safety,

and dignity of the people to remain in the presidency. People began gathering in front of the National Assembly every day to call for President Yoon's impeachment. Many young women in their 20s and 30s especially joined these protests.

That weekend, Columban Missionary Sr Erisa Lee was scheduled to hold an Advent retreat for young adults at our Seoul convent. The theme of the retreat was: "Mary set out on a journey..." (Luke 1:39). But the Sisters struggled over whether it was right to sit quietly in a retreat while young people were out in the freezing cold protesting and demanding justice. Mary, pregnant with Jesus, set out to support Elizabeth in solidarity – so how could we remain still? The day before the retreat, Sr Erisa sent a cancellation message to the participants: "Dear young people... I believe that being on the road with others who hope for a bright future is living Advent with our whole selves. ...Let us meet on the road."

I joined the protests several times with the Columban Sisters. The crowd included people of different generations, but as the media had said, young people led the protest. Many brought light sticks – the same ones they use at the concerts of

the K-pop artists they love. They said those light sticks were the most precious lights in the world. They used that precious light to brighten the cold, dark protest sites. Led by that light, the demonstrations were peaceful, not violent.

Many people say that young people today don't care about the common good and are individualistic. They say young people are absent from the Church, that there are no vocations, and that they have no interest in the spiritual life. But seeing young people holding up their light sticks in the freezing cold made me question those claims. The young people they say are missing from the Church were all gathered there, crying out for justice. Maybe it's the Church that isn't paying attention to what young people are thirsty for. Maybe it's the Church that doesn't know how to approach them. If they had joined the protests driven only by anger, the protests would have been violent. I believe the protests were peaceful and passionate because they were led by justice rooted in love. Perhaps this is the kind of justice God intends for us.

One of my acquaintances has a daughter in her 20s who attended the protests every week. She challenged her daughter: "Your generation values individual happiness, so why do you go out and protest every week?" Her daughter replied: "Yes, personal happiness matters. That's exactly why we can't tolerate someone who threatens it by taking power. Because we respect each other's happiness, we stand in solidarity." Hearing this, I felt that young people are practising "Love your neighbour as yourself" in a way that makes sense to their generation.

Now, more than a year after the martial law and impeachment crisis, a new president is working to guide the country back to normal. But those who led the rebellion have still not been punished, some continue to justify martial law and they try to mislead young people. Social, economic, and spiritual darkness has not disappeared. Yet I believe many young people are still struggling along paths of justice and love. Remembering the light they brought to the protests, I pray that I too, like Mary, will set out on the road and stand in solidarity so that the light of hope we carried together will never be extinguished. ●

Sr Minah Seo was a Columban Lay Missionary serving in China before she joined the Columban Sisters. She is now on mission in Myanmar.



**"Let us be
Christ's, not
our own"**

— St Columban

**The Missionary Sisters of St Columban
have since 1924 served the poor and
marginalised in places like China,
the Philippines, Korea, Pakistan and
Myanmar.**

**We do that thanks to our generous
supporters in Ireland and Britain.**

**Please help us continue our work with those
on the margins. We cannot do it without you!**

To donate online see:

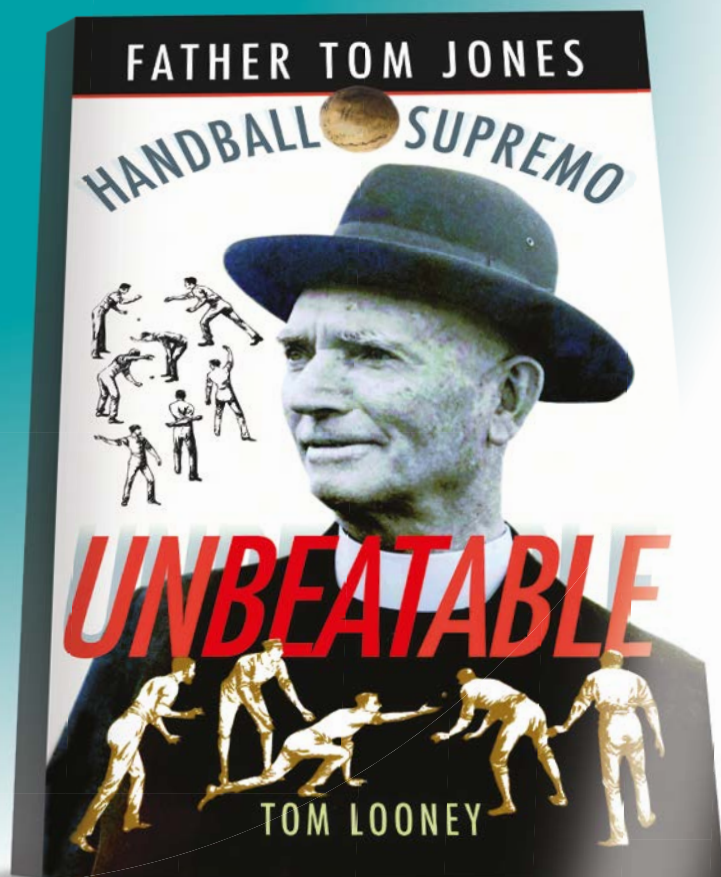
www.columbansisters.org/donation

or write to the Columban Sisters, PO Box 2628, Crumlin, Dublin 12.



**Missionary Sisters
of St. Columban**





01

UNBEATABLE FR JONES

Fr Tom Looney has written the first biography of Irish sports star Fr Tom Jones who bestrode the world of handball and was a generous benefactor of the Columbans.



I have just returned from Ars in France where our pilgrim group encountered the spirit of its celebrated *curé*, John Vianney. I would like to introduce you to another *curé extraordinaire*, Tralee's Fr Tom Jones (1868-1950). Born a year after the Fenian Rising he enrolled in St Brendan's Seminary, Killarney as reigning Munster Singles/Doubles, Irish and World Handball Champion in 1889. This Gaelic sport was, at the time, played at the highest level - almost as a professional sport. One of Tom Jones' winning purses amounted to £400. The world was at his feet. But he twice declined the offer of the lucrative 1890 summer tour of the USA. He told his classmates, "I will not go. I have made enough money to pay for my college and seminary course. God has been good to me, and it would be like tempting providence to put back my ordination one day."

Of the 75 students who entered the seminary in Maynooth with him in 1890, over fifty were ordained by Archbishop William Walsh in 1896. As the fiercely competitive student and invincible athlete faced pastures new, Tom Jones left a lasting mark on Maynooth, with one of the senior handball courts still known to this day as 'Jones's Court' or 'the Kerry Alley'. Maynooth College President, Daniel Mannix, who later became Archbishop of Melbourne recalled: "Tom Jones was altogether the greatest athlete that passed through this house."

Fr Tom Jones was multi-talented not just as an athlete but also as an author, linguist, accomplished musician of 14 instruments, and a fearless rescuer. A man of noted thrift, he ministered in four countries across two centuries until his death at the age of 82 in 1950. On loan from Kerry Diocese for five years, he served in Newtownards and Glenarm in Ulster before he moved to Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire and thence to a further five-year spell in the vast Rockmount Diocese of Australia. There he trekked across an unsparing landscape with horse, Mass kit, tent, cooking utensils, fiddle and pistol as he ministered to scattered Catholic communities. Much to his great disappointment he was debarred from taking part in their sports meetings as he was deemed invincible!

Due to failing health he was recalled to Kerry in 1905 but enjoyed a memorable American/Canadian tour en route winning at handball and discovering the uilleann pipes thanks to a session with Francis O'Neill in Chicago. Jones vowed to master uilleann pipes and went on to spend many a trad session with Leo Rowsome and John Potts in Dublin in later years. Fr Tom spent the next 45 years ministering along Dingle Bay's Wild Atlantic Way in Ballyferriter, Killorglin, Dingle, Caherciveen and Glenbeigh/Glencar where he served as both curate and parish priest. A community centre and handball court there bear his name referring to him as "Laoch ba thréine" or "the most powerful handball hero".

Stories abound about their priest and have come down the generations, including many recounting his legendary frugality. But he understood 'mission' and his generosity to the Church's missionary outreach was shown during his own golden jubilee year in 1946 when he donated £10,000 to the Columban Fathers

(equivalent to €425,000 today), £5,000 to the SMA (equivalent to €212,500) and £4,000 (equivalent to €170,000) to the Kiltegan Fathers "towards the ongoing formation of students for the missionary priesthood". That would be equivalent to a total of €800,000 today.

Fr Tom Jones mastered the Irish language during his Ballyferriter years 1909-1916. As an expert in Russian, German and French he went on to publish classics from the latter two languages in Irish: *Gleann Beithe* (1938) and *An Cailín Ón Sibéir* (1958). His very first visit to the Blasket Islands coincided with the tragic drownings of celebrated Dublin Gaelic Leaguer, Eibhlín Nic Niocaill and young Domhnall Ó Criomhthain, son of the renowned Islandman, Tomás Ó Criomhthain who wrote "it was the biggest funeral ever held in Dunquin".

During Easter Week 1916 local people sent a horse for Fr Jones on spotting eight shipwrecked Norwegian sailors at the base of a steep 200 foot cliff, their ship having sunk down off the Irish coast. Arriving at the scene, Fr Jones scaled down the cliff face accompanied by Patrick and P.J. O'Connor together with Patrick Lynch, whose granddaughter, the musician and church organist Máire Begley named that site Cuas an Chontúirt (Danger Creek). One by one the four men, led by Fr Tom Jones rescued all eight Norwegian sailors and they were later duly honoured for their heroism. The King of Norway sent a silver goblet to "Pastor Jones" which is on view today in Kerry County Museum in Tralee.



Fr Tom served in Killorglin (1916-1921) and survived threats there from the Black & Tans during the Irish War of Independence, and later in Dingle (1921-1928) and Caherciveen (1928-1931) before he returned to Glenbeigh-Glencar where he spent 24 years (1906-09 and 1931-50). He was laid to eternal rest in the churchyard of St James the Apostle in Glenbeigh. The church's East Window, which he sponsored, asks for prayers. Those walking the Wild Atlantic Way will pass his golden jubilee limestone plaque of 1946 at the handball court which hails him as "handball's greatest warrior in Ireland or overseas". ●

'Fr Tom Jones: Handball Supremo' by Fr Tom Looney is available by contacting Londubh Books and Red Stripe Press.

Killarney-born Fr Tom Looney is a retired priest of Kerry Diocese. He served as Emigrant Chaplain under two Columban Directors: the late Frs Jack Casey and Paddy Herlihy 1969-1973. He volunteered to serve on the Cork & Ross Mission Team working in the developing shantytowns of Trujillo on Peru's Pacific Coast 1975-1981. Here his paths crossed again with the Columban Fathers and Sisters in Lima and in the Andes. He served in parishes in Kerry and he writes about sport and local history.

01. The cover of 'Fr Tom Jones: Handball Supremo', Londubh Books and Red Stripe Press.
02. Conor McDonnell, President of the GAA Handball Association (second from left) at the National Handball Centre in Croke Park receiving a copy of the biography of Fr Tom Jones, from Fr Tom Looney, author, along with former Kerry player Éamonn Fitzgerald and Jo O'Donoghue, Londubh Press. Photo: Courtesy GAA/Killarney Today.
03. St Patrick's College Maynooth where Fr Tom Jones studied for the priesthood. Photo: Shutterstock.



To make a comment on this article go to:



facebook.com/fareastmagazine



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

REST in PEACE



Sr Patricia Ann (Pat) Zandrews



Fr Michael Kevin O'Boyle



Fr John Vincent McLaughlin

Sr Patricia Ann (Pat) Zandrews was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1937. The eldest of six girls, she began her studies in the College of St Teresa in Winona, Minnesota and in Nazareth Academy in Illinois. Inspired by love and devotion for Mary, Pat entered the Columban Sisters in 1956. On completing her novitiate in 1959 in Hyde Park, MA, Pat professed First Vows in Boston. After gaining a BA in English from Mundelein College, she gained an MA in English from Loyola University Chicago. She was then assigned to the Philippines where she professed Final Vows in 1964.

In 1976 Pat joined the Clinical Pastoral Education Training Programme at the Makati Medical Centre in Manila. Here, she became convinced that the objective of Clinical Pastoral Education was to help those involved to grow in sensitivity so as to lovingly and effectively respond to the needs of those being served. This conviction was to continue over the years to influence all of Pat's ministry and personal life. In later years, serving as a clinical pastoral education supervisor, Pat not only delivered compassionate care for the people she ministered to, she taught others the importance of bringing their genuine selves to their ministerial encounters.

The following years saw Pat involved in Leadership in both the Philippines and the United States. Beginning in 2003, she worked for several years in the Columban Lay Mission programme before becoming involved in voluntary work. Through her service to the Church, the Columban community, and innumerable people over the years, Pat's life was one of generosity and dedication. As her health began to fail, her life became a witness to the weakness and pain that come with sickness. She died on 31st January 2026 surrounded by the Sisters in St Columban's on the Lake, Silver Creek.

Fr Michael Kevin O'Boyle was born in Quilty, Co Clare on 20th May 1935. He was educated at Quilty NS and at St Flannan's College, Ennis, Co Clare. He entered Dalgan in September 1953 was ordained priest on 21st December 1959. He was assigned to Chile and, after language studies, served his first term in San Luis Parish in Santiago. He opted for leave of absence for two years in 1968 before returning to ministry in the Columban Parish at Westminster CA in 1971. In 1972 Kevin returned to Santiago, Chile and became deeply involved in Charismatic

Renewal Groups over the following six years. He was particularly successful in empowering local communities among the poor and marginalized to take leadership and responsibility. He founded the Basic Ecclesial Community called *Dios Con Nosotros* (God With Us) in the Población Manuel Rodríguez, which is still thriving.

In 1978 he was assigned to the Irish Region initially for Mission Promotion and later for Formation of Columban students in Dalgan, and from 1980 to 1982 in Maynooth. In 1983 he was reappointed to Chile and in the following years he set up the first Chilean Formation Programme for Columban seminarians and was responsible for building the formation house at Conchali, Santiago. He served in this ministry and as the first Rector from 1987 to 1995.

He spent a sabbatical year at the School of Applied Theology, Oakland, CA, and was reassigned to the Region of Ireland in 1996 where he was engaged in mission awareness and promotion. Since that time Kevin was involved in a variety of ministries around Ireland, giving retreats and spiritual accompaniment, and generously serving in parishes where needed until his health began to deteriorate in recent months.

Kevin will be best remembered for his gentleness, enthusiasm, and his ability to make friends. Diagnosed with terminal cancer, he experienced several remarkable periods of remission with his customary optimism. He died peacefully in St Columban's Retirement Home on 6th February 2026.

Fr John Vincent McLaughlin was born in Belfast, Co Antrim on 19th July 1938. He was educated at Merville NS, Co Donegal, at Blackrock College, Co Dublin, at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, Dublin, at National University, Dublin and at Maynooth College, Co Kildare. He was incardinated into the Archdiocese of Dublin and ordained priest in 1963. He served over the next sixteen years in many parishes throughout Dublin in Booterstown, Arklow, Dolphins Barn, Marino and Glasnevin.

In June 1979 he received permission to work as a Diocesan Volunteer Priest with the Society of St Columban. He was appointed to the Region of Chile where he served in the Parishes of Lo Espejo, Santo Tomás Moro and San Luis Rey in the Archdiocese of Santiago. In 1991 he applied for membership



Fr John Molloy

of the Society of St Columban and became a permanent member in June 1995. He continued to minister in Chile for a further twenty years in the parish of San Columbano in Santiago and in the Diocese of Valparaíso: in Corazón de María and Nuestra Señora de Lourdes and the Pastoral Area of Virgen Peregrina.

He was appointed to the Region of Ireland in 2015 and lived in St Columban's, Summerville, Merville, Co Donegal where he helped in the local parishes until his health began to deteriorate. He was an avid reader and zealous and dedicated missionary. He ministered to a local group of the Legion of Mary, was an active member of the Men's Shed, and wrote regular reflections on mission for the Derry Diocesan Bulletin: **The Net**. He died peacefully at Nazareth House, Fahan on 19th February 2026. He was buried in Ballybrack Cemetery, Donegal.

Fr John Molloy was born on 20th June 1936 at Birch Hall, Oughterard, Co. Galway. He was educated at Roscahill NS and St Mary's College, Galway. His brother Michael was a legendary long-distance runner and John

also loved to run. He came to Dalgan in September 1955 and was ordained priest on 21st December 1961.

John was appointed to the Philippines and after language studies in Ozamis City served for the next fourteen years in various parishes in Mindanao. He served in Mambajao (1963-1964), in Gingoog City (1964-1966) in Pagadian City (1966-1970), in Dinas (1971-1973), in Lanipao (1974-1976) and in Bonifacio (1976-1977).

In 1978, suffering from indifferent health, he was appointed to the Region of Ireland. He did occasional short supplies as his health permitted and was always willing to help out with confessions during the summer months at Knock Shrine. His hobby was to care for the Dalgan woodlands and he also tended the gardens attached to St Columban's Nursing Home. A quiet and shy man, John suffered many periods in various hospitals in recent years. He bore all of these with great patience and resignation. He died peacefully in St Columban's Retirement Home on 21st February 2026.

May they rest in peace.

MEET A COLUMBAN MISSIONARY!

In 2026 Columban Missionaries are visiting parishes in the dioceses of **Hexham & Newcastle** and **Arundel & Brighton** for the annual Mission Appeal. More than 70 Appeals have been arranged so far. We look forward to meeting you and to sharing the Columban story of mission.



COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES
BRITAIN



Are we coming to YOUR parish?
Scan the QR code to find out or call the Mission Office on **01564 772 096**

www.columbans.co.uk





01

“Bring flowers of the rarest...”

In the month of May, my thoughts often return to the days of my childhood when my two sisters and I would set up a May altar at home. Singing the well-known hymn, ‘Bring flowers of the rarest, bring blossoms the fairest, from garden and woodland and hillside and dale’, we would gather daisies and buttercups, sometimes even dandelions, and take great pride in arranging the flowers in a jam-jar around the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes which our parents had received as a wedding gift. Each day we would fervently pray before this little altar, expressing the love for our Blessed Mother which we had inherited from our mother and simply asking her to make sure we would

have good weather on the days we arranged for picnics - the simple faith of children! This was a faith which would also be tested each year when we participated in our parish’s annual May procession - no mean feat in a small town which was very anti-Catholic.

As the years progressed, among all the images of our Blessed Mother, my favourite has been those which depict the Annunciation. I have come to realise that in all of these images from various artists, Mary is always leaning towards the Angel Gabriel. Despite her initial uncertainty, it is as if, from the beginning of this encounter, she wants to respond positively to God’s invitation - a very important lesson for all of us. And as she pondered on what was being asked of her, “the silence sifted in” as John W. Lynch describes in his poem, ‘A Woman Wrapped in Silence’. Like Mary, as we know, it is in allowing the silence to sift in that we can respond to what God asks of us. Keeping in mind that this is a woman who “knew the feel of sunlight and the form of bread”, we can identify so easily with her and be confident that we can in fact follow in her footsteps.

As a missionary in both Hong Kong and China, I was gradually attracted to another image of Mary - ‘Our Lady of She Shan, Help of Christians’. Set on a hill and situated roughly 35km outside Shanghai, She Shan is one of the most beloved pilgrimage sites for Catholics in China. This is a powerful image as Mary proudly holds the child Jesus aloft, his arms open in welcome to all those in need.

In 1863, the first Jesuit missionaries had settled on the hill of She Shan and built the first chapel on the summit. During the Tianjin massacre of missionaries and Chinese Christian converts in 1870, the superior of the Jesuits in Shanghai went to She Shan and prayed to Our Lady, “If we are spared from the attack, we will build a basilica and express our gratitude for the special protection of Our Lady.” They were indeed spared and now, to this day, thousands of pilgrims travel in the month of May from far and wide to make the annual pilgrimage to She Shan.

In our world wracked by war and so much suffering, let us continue to turn in prayer to Mary and Jesus and know that our longing for peace will not be ignored. ●

Sr Ann Gray

01. Replica of the Statue of the Virgin and Child of She Shan, China.
Image: Shutterstock.

IN THE UPPER ROOM

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

Later that day, the disciples met together in the room where they had eaten their last supper with Jesus.

The door was locked, because they were afraid of what might happen to them if the Jewish leaders found them.

Suddenly, Jesus was there with them.

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

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

One of the disciples, Thomas, had not been in the room at the time. When the others told him Jesus had actually appeared to them, he did not believe them. "I won't believe until I have seen and touched him for myself," he said.

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

This time Thomas was with them.

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

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

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

Read also: John 20: 19-29



BIBLE QUIZ

NUMBER
127

1 In Acts ch.5, who sold a field and pretended to give all the money to the apostles?

2 In Genesis ch.16, who was the mother of Abraham's son Ishmael?

3 In Exodus ch.2: Moses married Miriam, True or False?

4 In Jeremiah ch.1: what was the name of Jeremiah the prophet's father?

5 In Luke ch.4, what had Peter's mother-in-law been suffering from when Jesus healed her?

6 In John ch.2, at the wedding in Cana who told Jesus the wine had run out?

£20 vouchers for the first three correct entries received!

Consult your Bible, answer the questions above and send your entry to: Bible Quiz N°127, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 30th June 2026.

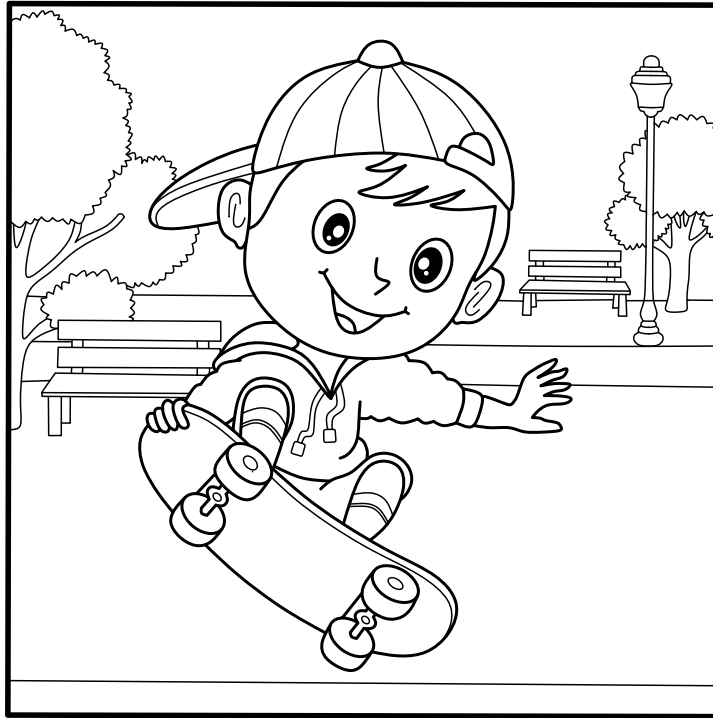
Bible Quiz N° 125 Winners: Katalin Cseh, Driffield • Emma Hall, Leicester
• Josephine Giblin.

Name:

Address:

THREE
£20
VOUCHERS
TO BE WON!

Colpaint



Colpaint

Colour the drawing and send it with your name and address to: COLPAINT, St Columban's, Widney Manor Rd, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 9AB, before 30th June 2026.

Name:

Age:

FOUR PRIZES TO BE WON!

Address:

WORD SEARCH

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

CANOPY
TOUCAN
JAGUAR
MONKEY
ORCHID
SLOTH
VINE
FROG
PARROT
BROMELIAD

JUNGLE WORDS

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



Magical Mute Swans

By Elizabeth McArdle

Mute swans are among the most stately and elegant of our wild birds. Often seen gliding serenely across lakes and rivers, it is their snow-white feathers and orange bill which make them instantly recognisable. Did you know that they are the largest and heaviest of our feathered friends?

These enchanting birds are predominantly vegetarian, preferring to feed on submerged vegetation, such as pond weeds, water lilies and algae. Their long necks help them in their search for underwater plants and they often tip their body forward while trying to reach deeper plants; this behaviour is known as "up-ending". Occasionally, they will graze on farmland or on the callows of rivers, consuming grasses, insects and agricultural crops, such as

grains, oilseed rape and potatoes.

During the nesting season, the male swan helps the female to build their nest, which is usually situated at the waters edge to ensure better protection from predators, such as foxes and dogs. Reeds, small branches and sticks are used to make the foundation and this is topped with aquatic plants. To finish the nest, the female uses her body to shape a nest bowl into which she lays her clutch of about 5-7 eggs.

The young swans, known as cygnets, hatch after about 35 days. Once hatched, the cygnets feed on aquatic insects and crustaceans. These adorable little birds are covered with grey down and can swim shortly after hatching. The parents protect them with tooth and claw until their care is no longer required and it is time for the cygnets to leave the nest and become independent.

Swans are known for forming life-long partnerships and remain faithful to each other for many years. God remains faithful to all His creation and He is our loyal companion as we journey along the path of life, knowing He is always with us, in good times and especially in times of challenge. ●



Image: Shutterstock



1. What does a cloud wear under his raincoat?
2. Why did the sun go to summer school?
3. How do mountains stay warm in the winter?
4. Why do chickens play in the rain?
5. Why did the tree take up a hobby?
6. What is the maths student's favourite season?

1. Thunderwear.
2. To get a little brighter.
3. They wear snow caps.
4. They love fowl weather.
5. It wanted to branch out.
6. Sum-mer.



COMPETITION WINNERS JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2026



Albert
Shahpazov
London

Reggie
Scott
Oldham

Nevaeh
Osbourne
Solihull

Amelia
Fitzgerald
Cardiff

1

2

1

2

Colpaint - Aged 7 and Under

Colpaint - Aged 8 and Over

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

Columban Missionaries respond to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor and leave a legacy for future generations.

What will your Catholic legacy be?

Leaving a gift in your Will is an incredible way to spread God's love and compassion.

For help with making a gift in your Will to the Columban Missionaries, including our Free Wills Service, contact the Mission Office.

yourlegacy@columbans.co.uk
01564 772 096



SCAN ME

Catholic Legacy Week 24-30 May 2026



**COLUMBAN
MISSIONARIES
BRITAIN**



**NATIONAL
FREE WILLS
NETWORK**



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 2026.

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: Friday 19th June 2026 (midday).



**COLUMBAN
MISSIONARIES
BRITAIN**



SCAN ME

Scan for more about the programme and how to apply. Email to request an informal chat with a Faith in Action volunteer. Interviews will take place in central Birmingham on Thursday 2nd July 2026.

invitationtomission@columbans.co.uk

WWW.COLUMBANS.CO.UK