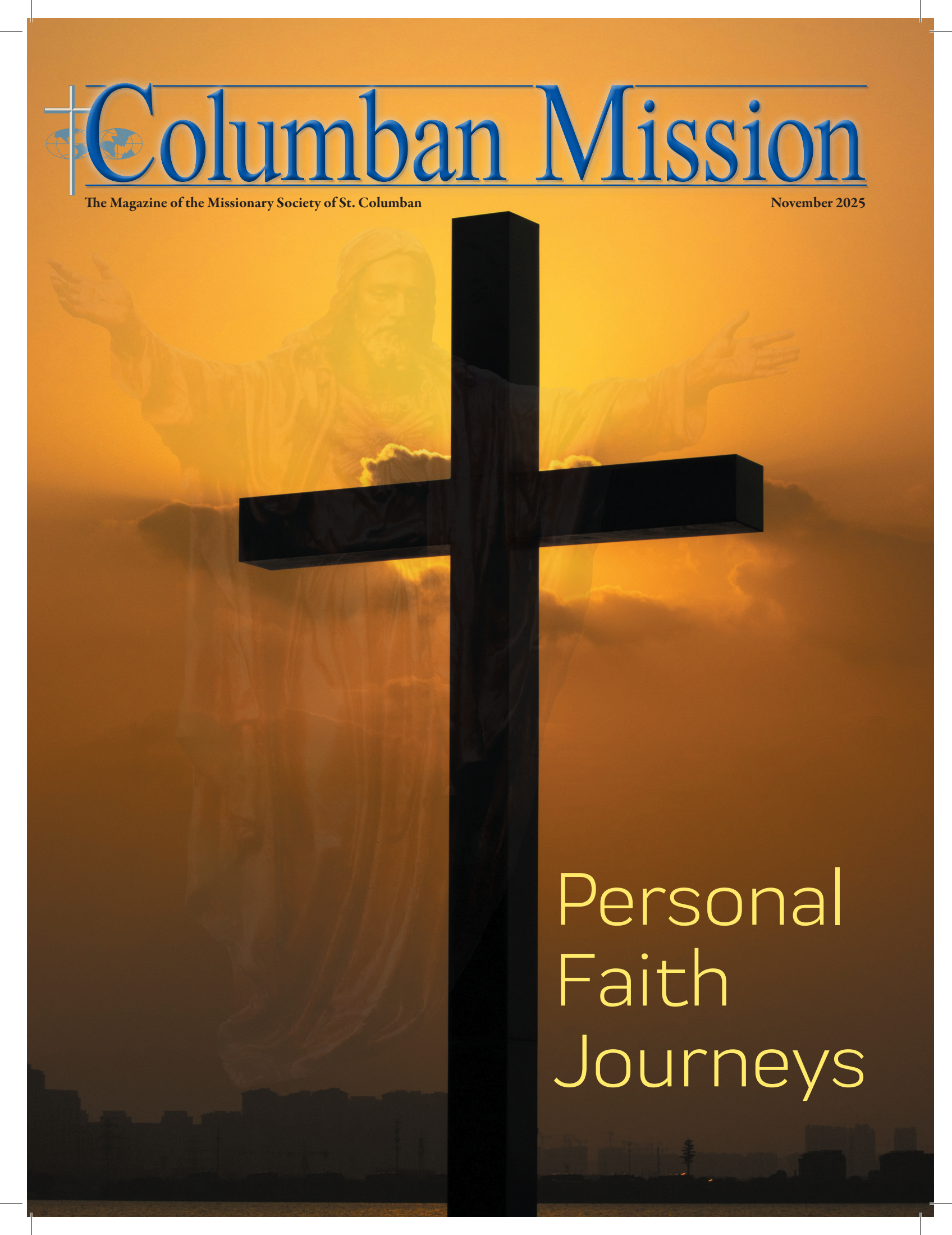


Columban Mission



The Magazine of the Missionary Society of St. Columban

November 2025

Personal
Faith
Journeys

C O N T E N T S

Issue Theme – Personal Faith Journeys



ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE POPE

12



MEMORIES THAT INSPIRE MISSION

14

4 A LIFE UNLIKE YOUR OWN

Learning from Others

6 THE WELLSPRING OF LIFE

Playfulness

8 THIS IS WHAT WAR DOES

Pain and Bravery

10 ROOM FOR JOY

Migrants Visit My Hometown

16 FEELING WELCOME

Matters of the heart

18 PARISH MISSION TRIP

California to Guatemala

20 THE FIJI PIONEERS

The Love of The Sacred Heart of Jesus

22 NOVEMBER THOUGHTS

Stories of Joy and Sacrifice

DEPARTMENTS

3 IN SO MANY WORDS

23 FROM THE DIRECTOR

Volume 109 – Number 7 – November 2025

Columban Mission

PUBLISHED BY THE COLUMBAN FATHERS

COLUMBAN MISSION (Issn 0095-4438) is published eight times a year. A minimum donation of \$15 a year is required to receive a subscription. Send address and other contact information changes by calling our toll-free number, by sending the information to our mailing address or by emailing us at MISSIONOFFICE@COLUMBAN.ORG.

MAILING ADDRESS:

Missionary Society of St. Columban
1902 N. Calhoun St.
St. Columbans, NE 68056-2000

TOLL-FREE PHONE: 877/299-1920

WEBSITE: WWW.COLUMBAN.ORG

Copyright © 2025, The Columban Fathers (Legal Title)

PUBLISHER

FR. ALBERT UTZIG

DIRECTORUSA@COLUMBAN.ORG

EDITOR

KATE KENNY

KKENNY@COLUMBAN.ORG

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

MARCI ANDERSON

MANDERSON@COLUMBAN.ORG

RENEA STEELE

RSTEELE@COLUMBAN.ORG

DYANNE WENDLING

DWENDLING@COLUMBAN.ORG

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

KRISTIN ASHLEY

EDITORIAL BOARD

DAN EMINGER

KATE KENNY

ERNIE MAY

FR. ALBERT UTZIG

The Missionary Society of St. Columban was founded in 1918 to proclaim and witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The Society seeks to establish the Catholic Church where the Gospel has not been preached, help local churches evangelize their laity, promote dialogue with other faiths, and foster among all baptized people an awareness of their missionary responsibility.

In So Many Words

By Sr. Julietta Choi

Stepping Stone of Love

I often see poor children in Pakistan who ride to school on old motorcycles with their fathers in the mornings. These worn-out motorcycles, which look as though they could break down at any moment, carry three or four children together with their father. Younger siblings sit one in front and one behind their father, while the eldest often clambers on from the back.

I remember one such scene where the eldest child, jumped up and tried to grab the edge of the seat but because of his small frame, he repeatedly fell back to the ground. Watching this, I found myself silently blaming the father. Why doesn't he help his child, I thought.

Struggling and holding onto his sibling's clothes for balance, the boy tried again but failed once more. Finally, he managed to climb on. His success might have been the result of his determination and effort, but the main factor was his father's shoulders. By holding firmly onto his father's shoulders, he found the strength to climb up. His father's shoulders provided a stepping stone, enabling the boy to achieve his aim.

Watching that scene, I was reminded of the term "priming water." It refers to the small amount of water poured into a pump to draw up a larger supply. It is the beginning — a small catalyst that allows something greater to emerge. I realized that the father's shoulders were the "priming water" for his child. Those shoulders provided the foundation and strength that prevented the boy from falling and allowed him to succeed.

By holding firmly onto his father's shoulders, he found the strength to climb up. His father's shoulders provided a stepping stone, enabling the boy to achieve his aim.

When we are young, the shoulders of our parents are the entire world to us.

In our own lives, are we not also moving forward towards our dreams, regaining strength when we stumble, because of the sturdy shoulders of someone in our past? I realize that there is no need to worry about what I do or my limitations. Through small acts of daily kindness, we can make God's love known, felt and experienced. We can be light and salt for others. Offering one's shoulders for others to lean on — that is love.

Columban Sr. Julietta Choi lives and works in Pakistan.



A Life Unlike Your Own

Learning from Others

By Fr. Chris Saen



Many times, 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 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. As I looked back, I realized I rarely knew their human side, their practical life. This changed with St. Bernadette. As a young adult, after reading the novelization of 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.

The 1943 Hollywood production of *The Song of Bernadette* was well-produced and acted. In fact, the lead actress, Jennifer Jones, won an Oscar for her portrayal of St. Bernadette. After reading the novelization version of St. Bernadette, I sought more authoritative biographies on her, such as Abbe Francois Trochu's book, *St. Bernadette Soubirous: 1844-1879*. To my surprise, I discovered that Bernadette was not the mild, meek girl that was portrayed in the movie. On the contrary, she was quite stubborn and not easily intimidated. For instance, she often got bored during the interrogations by the civil authorities who doubted her visionary experiences. Once, after an interrogation, she jokingly remarked about how the tassel on the interrogator's hat bounced around like a church bell when he yelled at her. I chuckled, learning that Bernadette had a sense of humor.

As a visionary, Bernadette gained an unwanted celebrity status in France, which she rejected. She desired a life of hidden service. This is a stark contrast to today's culture of 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 ask questions. This was a one-time event and all were strictly forbidden to ever again discuss the matter with Bernadette for which she was grateful.

However, this didn't stop cardinals, bishops, nobles, and wealthy benefactors from visiting the convent and requesting an audience with the little visionaire of Lourdes.

Often, Bernadette was summoned away from her tasks to attend to the requests which she detested but complied out of obedience. Once, Bernadette was walking the halls of the convent when she came across a woman who appeared to be lost. Bernadette inquired what the woman wanted. Completely unaware of who Bernadette was, the woman replied that she wanted to see the little visionary of Lourdes. Bernadette pointed to a door and said, "If you watch that door, you'll see the little visionary pass through it." Without another word, Bernadette left her presence and walked through the door.

Bernadette had a great desire to serve in the foreign missions, but her frail health prevented it. Often, she

*For the mission belongs to
God, and only God decides
how the mission will be done.*

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. This proved to be providential due to Bernadette's knowledge of traditional medicines which made her an excellent nurse. The Sisters often praised her curative skills and compassionate bedside manner. She dedicated herself completely to the mission that she was given.

It seems to me that St. Bernadette's traits — stubbornness, sense of humor, 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 only serves, often in silence in hidden places of the world but with a sense of humor 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, was to become a powerful spiritual guide in my missionary journey. However, as our patron, St. Columban, stated, "a life unlike your own can be your teacher." 

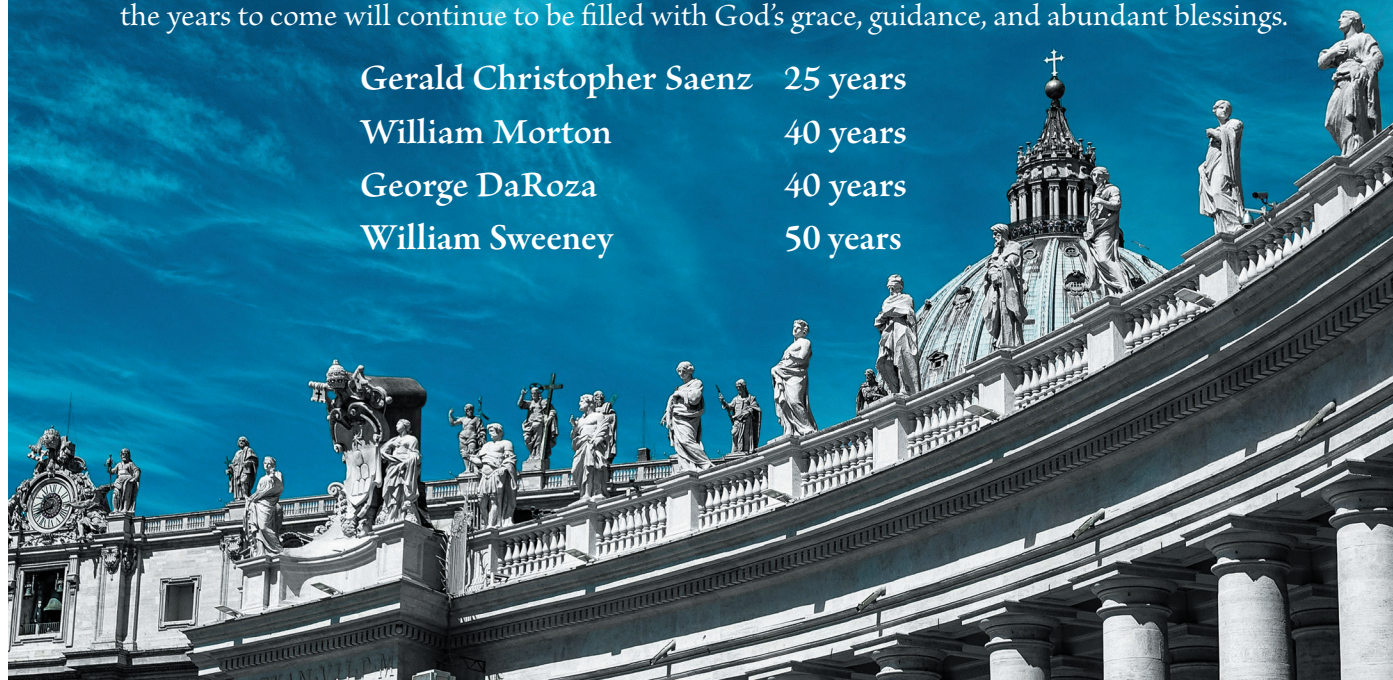
Columban Fr. Chris Saenz lives and works in St. Columbans, Nebraska.

2025 JUBILARIANS

The Society offers our heartfelt congratulations to the members celebrating ordination anniversaries this year. This significant milestone marks not only the passage of time but also the enduring impact of your faithful service, spiritual leadership, and unwavering commitment to your vocation.

May this anniversary be a moment of reflection, gratitude, and renewed purpose and hope that the years to come will continue to be filled with God's grace, guidance, and abundant blessings.

Gerald Christopher Saenz	25 years
William Morton	40 years
George DaRoza	40 years
William Sweeney	50 years



The Wellspring of Life

Playfulness

By Fr. Michael Cuddigan

Playfulness is something we expect to see in a child. Yet, it truly is a source for healthy living and relating for all of us, offering joy and creativity to every aspect of life. Unfortunately, this innate sense of playfulness can be destroyed by the stresses of life and work, often from an early age.

School examinations, grind classes, and societal pressures rob children of the freedom to “waste time.” They are told to focus on achievement rather than simply being. Consequently, the element of living in the present moment is undervalued, and this

essential quality gradually fades. Slowly but surely, playfulness can disappear from our lives, replaced by a seriousness that blinds us to the potential for joyful and creative living.

When we are relaxed, our potential for playfulness and creativity flows more freely. In this state, we can enjoy each other’s company without pretense or the need to control or force others to conform to our expectations. Playfulness enables us to interact authentically, valuing people for who they are rather than what they achieve.

In many ways, playfulness is like a wellspring, allowing the life force to

flow freely, much like a fresh stream. It rejuvenates not just the individual but everyone around them. It draws people into an authentic connection, one that comes from the very center of their being. Playfulness has intrinsic value, distinct from any utilitarian purpose. It keeps alive the awareness that we are valuable in and of ourselves — not for what we produce, achieve, or accomplish, but simply because we exist.

We all need to waste time occasionally, engaging in activities that don’t serve a specific purpose beyond the joy of the moment. Can we stop

and marvel at the beauty of a sunrise or sunset, immerse ourselves in a piece of music, or relish the simple act of being? Too often, even our leisure activities come with goals — losing weight, winning a race, or achieving some measurable success. Yet the healthiest approach to exercise, for example, is to revel in the sheer sense of well-being it provides. Unfortunately, this joy is often lost. We push ourselves to win at all costs, sometimes incurring injuries or even resorting to harmful practices like performance-enhancing drugs. Many sports today are laden with stress rather than fostering the relaxation and joy that could lead to a true spirit of playfulness.

Even our holidays, which should be a time of rest and renewal, are often packed with activities designed to achieve something. We fill our schedules to the brim, chasing experiences or ticking off destinations on a list. In doing so, we lose the pearls of joyful

living along the way and often return home more tired than when we left.

In truth, when we are fully relaxed and enjoying ourselves, our truest selves emerge. Playfulness fosters genuine laughter and joy, drawing us out of our overly self-focused tendencies. It breaks down the walls we build to keep others at a distance — the defenses meant to shield us from judgment or vulnerability. These barriers often prevent us from truly welcoming others into our lives or even from being at home with ourselves.

Without playfulness, life can become stagnant. Competition, fear of failure, and the relentless pursuit of success stifle the spirit of joy. Without that light-hearted spirit, we risk becoming like zombies, only half-living, going through the motions of life without truly engaging with it.

Playfulness allows us to see the humor and absurdity of life, including our own missteps. It invites us to

laugh at ourselves and approach others with openness and generosity. When we embrace playfulness, we free ourselves from the constant barrage of expectations to perform, produce, and achieve, which is especially prevalent in a fast-paced city like Hong Kong.

People who are playful and joy-filled know that their worth is not tied to success or failure. They recognize themselves as whole and complete, made in the image and likeness of God. This foundational truth — that God does not make mistakes — anchors them, enabling them to live with freedom, creativity, and a deep sense of contentment.

Playfulness is not just for children. It is a wellspring of life, an invitation to be fully alive, and a reminder that joy and creativity are as essential to our well-being as air and water. **CM**

Columban Fr. Michael Cuddigan lives and works in Hong Kong.



This is What War Does

Pain and Bravery

By Fr. Barry Cairns

The photo shown here, enlarged to life-size, stood beside the altar when our deceased Holy Father Pope Francis celebrated a Mass for peace on his visit to Japan in 2019.

We each received a copy of the photo. On its reverse side was the Pope's message:

"This is what war does" with the signature, "Franciscus."

The photo is of a young, bare-footed boy with his dead baby brother strapped to his back. He is waiting for his turn at a make-shift crematorium. This is an open trench, with fire alight, for the bodies of many who died of the radiation poisoning from the atomic bomb which exploded over Nagasaki at 11:02 a.m., August 9, 1945.

This poignant photo was taken by U. S. Military photographer Joe O'Donnell just four days after the bomb. In an interview in 1994, Joe vividly describes his reaction to the horrendous death and devastation that he witnessed.



"I saw nightmare scenes." Those scenes plagued him. The trauma was so great that on his return to the U. S. Joe locked his Nagasaki bomb negatives in a trunk away from his sight.

Over the years, Joe suffered various illnesses, some connected to radiation sickness. But being the compassionate man that he was, Joe writes: "I cannot compare my suffering to those unfortunate people who survived the atomic bomb. Their sufferings were vastly more intense." That is compassion in the literal sense of the word – i.e., suffering with others.

During a prayer retreat at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Loreto in Kentucky, Joe O'Donnell had what may be called a religious experience. Joe saw a statue of Christ with a flame-scarred body. The horrors that he had seen in Nagasaki came back to him. Joe wrote: "I could see the flies covering bodies. I could hear the cries for help. I could

U.S. Military photographer Joe O'Donnell vividly describes his reaction to the horrendous death and devastation that he witnessed. "I saw nightmare scenes." Those scenes plagued him.

smell the stench of burnt flesh." That is trauma!

Joe faced this trauma. With courage, he opened the trunk. After almost 50 years hidden in the trunk, the Nagasaki films were well preserved. The reason Joe made them public was to promote peace. With the photos were these words. "Peace must be our future. For without peace there is no future."

Among the photos in the trunk was also one of the young boy at the crematorium site. His baby brother is dead. The boy stands at rigid attention. He is trying to stem his deep grief. Joe also notes that the boy was biting his lip so hard that blood flowed down his chin.

Pope Francis (may eternal peace be his) used this photo as an incentive to use to pray for and work for peace. Let us answer the challenge. And our gratitude to you, Joe O'Donnell. Your pain and bravery are alive and still working for peace. 

Columban Fr. Barry Cairns lives and works in Japan.



Help Future Generations with a Donation Today

Your gift helps people break the chains of addiction through Columban programs like the Rebirth Rehabilitation Center in Myanmar (formerly Burma).



Thanks to the generosity of the Columban donors we were able to complete and open the first residential center in the country for women suffering from addiction. In addition, the program provides vocational education training to help young men obtain jobs. We hope to expand this program and offer the men and women who come here a path productive employment and ongoing recovery.

By making a gift from your IRA, you can provide long-lasting support for the Missionary Society of St. Columban while enjoying financial benefits for yourself.

If you want to make help the Missionary Society of St. Columban spread the Light of Christ around the world, a gift from your IRA will make a tremendous impact on our mission. If you are 70½ or older you may also be interested in a way to lower the income and taxes from your IRA withdrawals.

An IRA charitable rollover is a way you can help continue our work and benefit this year.

- Avoid taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to our organization
- May satisfy your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year
- Reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions
- Make a gift that is not subject to the deduction limits on charitable gifts
- Help further the work and mission of our organization

If you are 70½ or older, you can use your IRA to fulfill your charitable goals. You can use the “Make a Gift from My IRA” tool to contact your IRA custodian and make a qualified charitable distribution. We will acknowledge your generous gifts as a qualified charitable distribution, which may satisfy your RMD, if applicable.

For more information, please contact us at donorrelations@columban.org, call us toll-free at (877) 299-1920, or visit www.columban.org. The Missionary Society of St. Columban treasures your support and is committed to the stewardship of your gifts.



Room for Joy

Migrants Visit My Hometown

By Columban lay missionary Lee Kyungja Christina

Recently, I had the privilege of inviting three Filipina mothers and their three children to my hometown of Jeonju for a three-day trip. These families had become close to me through my work with migrants and refugees. Each of these women carries a story of remarkable resilience to hardship.

One of the mothers is married to a Korean man and raising a 7-year-old daughter. Despite her dedication to her family, she struggles emotionally due to the cultural and age differences in her marriage. The other two women are undocumented immigrants and single mothers raising their 3-year-old daughters on their own. They

live under challenging circumstances, working tirelessly to support themselves while also sending money to their families in the Philippines.

Unfortunately, their situations are not uncommon in Korea. Many migrant workers enter relationships only to find themselves abandoned and left to raise their children alone. A part of my work is to help women in these situations secure child support from the fathers of their children, but the emotional and financial burdens they carry remain immense.

With the hope of giving these mothers a brief escape from their struggles, I planned a trip to Jeonju. The women were excited, especially

since this would be their first time riding Korea's high-speed train. However, their exhaustion from daily life quickly caught up with them, and they soon fell asleep during the journey. Meanwhile, the children, full of energy, entertained themselves with snacks and playful antics, filling the train car with laughter.

We stayed at a cozy guesthouse near Hanok Village, an area known for its traditional Korean-style houses. Nestled within an arts village, the guesthouse had two bedrooms and a living room, making it the perfect space for our group. A kind friend from Jeonju had arranged for us to stay for two nights for the price of one,

a gesture of generosity that I deeply appreciated.

The following morning, we enjoyed a delightful brunch at the guesthouse cafe. The mothers were overjoyed by the experience, eagerly capturing photos and sharing them on social media. They described it as a once-in-a-lifetime moment, and seeing their happiness filled my heart with gratitude.

Our first destination was Jeondong Cathedral, a historic martyrdom site within Hanok Village. Together, we offered prayers of gratitude. As I watched the mothers bow their heads in prayer, I silently wished for God to hear their heartfelt pleas and grant them comfort and peace.

Exploring Jeonju with young children was not without its challenges. The mothers worked tirelessly to calm tantrums, negotiate demands, and carry the little ones who refused to walk. But despite these moments, their spirits lifted as they sampled local street food, shared laughter, and took in the vibrant sights of the village. One particularly heartwarming moment occurred when 3-year-old Maria, after painting a fan with her mother and popping balloons, exclaimed with a radiant smile, “I’m so happy.”

By evening, the night market was alive with energy, bustling with families and young people enjoying street food. The mothers were excited to try sundae-guk (blood sausage soup). As we waited in line, we chatted and laughed, savoring the warm atmosphere. When it was finally our turn, they found the soup delicious and even asked for seconds. Watching them enjoy the moment brought me so much joy.

On our final morning, the owners of the guesthouse prepared sandwiches for us and gave small gifts to the children. Their kindness was truly touching, and we expressed our heartfelt gratitude before boarding the train back to Seoul.



Enjoying the outing

Although the trip was brief, and we couldn’t see everything Jeonju had to offer, it was filled with meaningful moments. Sharing meals, resting together, and experiencing new activities deepened the trust and friendship between us. I hope this journey gave these mothers a chance to recharge, even if only for a short while, and to create joyful memories with their children.

Beyond the laughter and shared meals, my prayer is that these women feel less alone. I hope they understand that there are people who care for them and want to support them through their struggles. May the bond between them and their children grow stronger, and may they find courage and strength in the knowledge that they are not walking this path alone.

This trip was a powerful reminder of how small acts of kindness can

bring light to the lives of others. In the smiles of these mothers and their children, I saw hope — a hope that, despite life’s difficulties, there is always room for joy, love, and connection.

As I reflect on the time we spent together, I am reminded of the importance of being present for one another. Whether through offering a listening ear, sharing a meal, or simply providing companionship, we can help lighten someone’s burden. I hope to continue creating moments like these where those facing hardship can feel supported, valued, and loved.

May God bless these mothers and their children and provide them with comfort, strength, and the courage to face each new day. **CM**

Columban lay missionary Lee Kyungja Christina lives and works in Korea.

One Step Ahead of the Pope

Anticipating Papal Events

By Fr. John Boles

“John, how would you fancy coming with us on a trip to Rome and Assisi?” This was the lovely invitation I received from my good friends and long-time Columban supporters Dave and Sue back in January 2025. Of course, I jumped at the chance. “When would be best for you?” they asked. We compared diaries and decided the most convenient date for starting the journey would be on May 8.

Does Thursday, May 8, 2025, sound familiar? It was the day Robert Prevost was chosen by the Conclave as the new Pope, taking the title Leo XIV. The cardinals had made their choice, but it appeared we’d stolen a march on them. We were already on our way to Rome.

I thought about this as we joined the crowds in St. Peter’s Square to await the first Sunday Blessing by the new Pope. I began to realize how we Columban missionaries have had a

habit of anticipating Papal events.

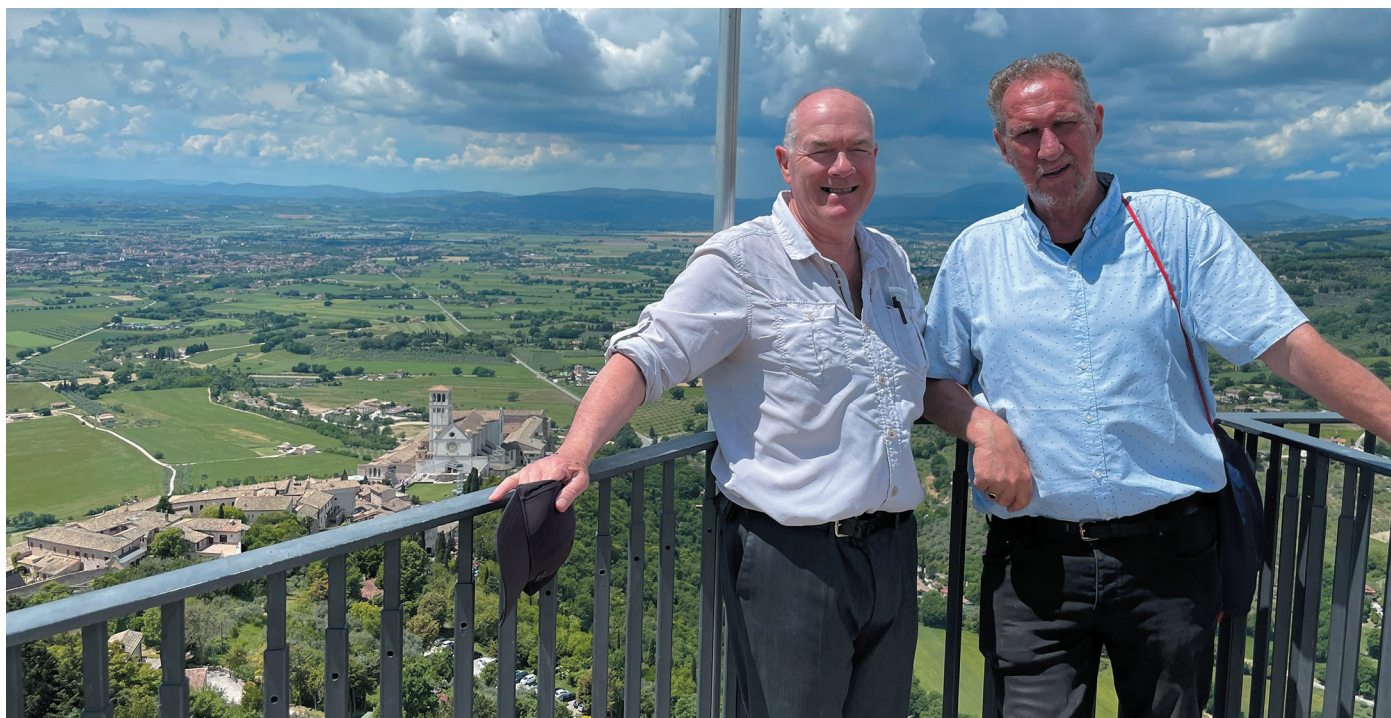
Take, for example, Leo’s predecessor, our beloved Pope Francis. In 2013, he’d inspired the world with his encyclical “*Laudato Si*” showing how combined care of the natural and social environment—our “common home”—was a spiritual and human imperative. Yet, in many respects, Columban Fr. Sean McDonagh had already pointed out much of this more than twenty years before in his seminal work, “*The Greening of the Church*” (1990).

Pope Francis tirelessly emphasized the dignity and equality of every person in society, irrespective of gender, class or ethnic background. He fostered greater participation in the Church by all men and women, not just ordained male priests, culminating in the 2023-25 Synodal process. However, in a way, Columban missionaries had been doing the

same for years. I remember that, when I arrived in what was to be my mission country of Peru in 1994, I was delighted to find how the Columban missionaries were promoting lay involvement in liturgy, pastoral work and decision-making throughout our missions.

Indeed, a common refrain I heard during my time in Peru was along the lines of, “You Columbans, you were Francis before Francis!”

Meanwhile, back on our travels, we continued to find ourselves one step ahead of “Pope Bob.” Incidentally, it hadn’t been lost on me that, not only had the new Pope been a friend and collaborator of Pope Francis, but he’d also been a missionary at the same time and in the same country as myself—Peru. On Saturday, May 10, we decided to join the multitudes praying at the tomb of Pope Francis



Fr. John and his friend, Dave, in Assisi



Fr. John Boles at the tomb of the Pope Francis on May 10, 2025, 40 minutes before the arrival of Pope Leo XIV



Fr. John Boles at the tomb of the Pope Francis

in Rome's Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. As we were leaving, we noticed the police closing off the approach road to traffic. Soon, a small cavalcade arrived, escorting none other than the new Pope, who was coming to pay his respects at Pope Francis's tomb. We'd beaten him to it by 40 minutes!

Soon after, we left for the wonderful hilltop medieval town of Assisi, famous as the home and resting place of St. Francis (inspiration of the late Pope who'd taken the saint's name as his own). Along with the other pilgrims, we visited the tomb of St. Francis and the shrine of his companion in faith and vocation, St. Clare. We then proceeded to a third—and very recent—shrine: the resting place of Blessed Carlo Acutis (1991-2006), located in yet another church dedicated to Mary as Santa Maria Maggiore.

The story of Carlo Acutis—variously called a future “saint for our times,” or “the teenage saint”—is a fascinating one. He was born in London to Italian parents, who soon moved the family back to Italy, where the young Carlo grew up and was consumed by two passions—Jesus and the internet. He became well known both as a “computer geek” and a catechist. He combined them by launching a Catholic website in

Why Did the Pope Choose the Name Leo?

Many thought that the new pope would take a name in honor of an illustrious recent predecessor, such as “John Paul” or “Francis.” However, he opted for Leo. Why “Leo”?

Apparently, the immediate explanation that Robert Prevost gave his fellow cardinals was that he — like Pope Francis before him — had been inspired by the example and teachings of Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903). This was the first pope to take seriously and champion the rights of the working class, which was suffering the adverse effects of the Industrial Revolution. In 1891, he published the papal encyclical “Rerum Novarum,” widely seen as the foundation stone of Catholic Social Teaching. Prevost has shown a deep concern for social justice and has been particularly worried about the impact that artificial intelligence might have on the rights of workers.

However, it seems a secondary influence might have been the life of the thirteenth-century Franciscan known as “Brother Leo.” This Leo had reputedly been the most trusted companion of St. Francis of Assisi. After St. Francis's death in 1226, Leo had fought to maintain the saint's principles of poverty and humility. He'd opposed the plan to construct a basilica in Assisi, criticized what he saw as the drift of the Franciscans towards “worldliness,” retreated to the life of a hermit, and died (like St. Francis) in the simple Porziuncula chapel outside Assisi.

Just as Brother Leo tried to maintain the legacy of St. Francis, the new Pope Leo might be signalling that he'll try and continue the legacy of Pope Francis...as well as that of his nineteenth-century namesake, Leo XIII. In other words, combining four legacies in one!

2004. The initiative culminated in an exhibition unveiled on October 4, 2006, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi — just days before Carlo himself tragically died from leukemia. Beatified in 2020, his canonization was planned for April 27, 2025, during the teenagers' Jubilee, but had to be postponed due to the death of Pope Francis the week before.

Later, we met one of the volunteers who accompanied pilgrims to Assisi.

He assured us they were eagerly awaiting the announcement of a fresh date for the canonization and the arrival of the new Pope at the shrine.

Once again, it seemed we'd anticipated a pontiff's future move.

But that's the Columban missionaries all over. Always in step with the Papacy... and sometimes even a step ahead. **CM**

Columban Fr. John Boles lives and works in Britain.

Memories that Inspire Mission

Former Columban Seminarian Shares His Story

By Fr. Tim Mulroy

More than 95% of the population of the province of Lanao del Sur in the Philippines — where Marawi is situated — are Muslim, while Christians constitute less than five percent. In past decades, Columban missionaries strove to overcome distrust and hostility between these two communities by building bridges of mutual understanding, respect, and friendship. Below is a reflection by a former Columban seminarian from the Philippines, Alito B. Delos Santos, who continues to nurture the seeds sown by those Columban missionaries.

On May 14, 2025, I accompanied Fr. Ramon Torres to the city of Balabagan to retrieve election returns from the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting. These were required as part of the independent verification of the official election count. Despite reports of election-related violence in Malabang, a town we had to pass through, the roads were quiet, and a calm atmosphere prevailed.

Upon arriving at Balabagan parish, I was astonished at seeing a large, vibrant crowd. I had expected a simple religious event on the final day of preparation for the annual parish festival, but found instead a marriage ceremony involving



Alito & Generita Delos Santos, members of Couples for Christ, pause at the site where Fr. Rufus Halley was martyred.

ten couples presided over by Bishop Edwin Dela Peña as well as a temporary clinic operating on the church grounds. To my surprise, the medical team consisted largely of Muslim women doctors, their hijabs a striking symbol of interfaith generosity as they tended to patients of all (and none) faith traditions. Yes, that particular morning the “missionary church” in Balabagan had become the recipient of a missionary outreach by the local Muslims, a thought-provoking reversal of how many people think about mission.

The following day, May 15, my wife and I, who are members of Couples for Christ, returned to the same parish to join the local Catholic community for the traditional celebration of the feast day of San Isidro Labrador. En route, we paused at the site where Columban missionary Fr. Rufus Halley had been

martyred in 2001, since it was his sacrifice for the sake of peace building in that province which had deeply influenced my decision to become a seminarian with the Missionary Society of St. Columban.

When we arrived at San Isidro Parish around 9 a.m., preparations for the festival were already well underway with tables, chairs, and a little stage set up in the midst of a Muslim-majority neighborhood. The Mass in commemoration of San Isidro Labrador, which was led by Bishop Dela Peña, also commemorated the 55th anniversary of the foundation of that parish.

In his homily, the bishop recalled the growth of the parish, crediting the sacrifices of early Christians in that area, notably Fr. Martin Dempsey, a Columban missionary and the first parish priest, who was shot dead in 1970 at the nearby Catholic High School where he had been teaching. His martyrdom became the foundation for the parish’s enduring presence.

The fragile peace thereafter in Balabagan, particularly during the turbulent 1970s, prevented Fr. Dempsey and his contemporary missionaries from witnessing the flourishing of that parish. Yet, their hope for improved Christian-Muslim relations endured. Even though fear of misunderstanding and hostility prevents some clergy from serving in that district up until today, the vision and courage of the Columban missionaries continue to inspire many ordinary Filipino Catholics to follow in their footsteps.

The sacrifices of Fr. Dempsey, Fr. Halley, and countless other

The word “martyr,” meaning witness, captures their legacy. They bore witness to their faith not only by their deaths but also by their way of living.



Bishop Edwin De la Peña with the ten couples who were married on the same day at San Isidro La

The sacrifices of Fr. Dempsey, Fr. Halley, and countless other missionaries inspires many Filipinos Catholics today to continue Christ's mission through daily outreach and service to our Muslim sisters and brothers.

missionaries inspires many Filipinos Catholics today to continue Christ's mission through daily outreach and service to our Muslim sisters and brothers. The word "martyr," meaning witness, captures their legacy. They bore witness to their faith not only by their deaths but also by their way of living. Now, we feel called to continue their missionary efforts by fostering mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation between Muslims and Christians in our day-to-day lives.

My experiences in the city of Balabagan revealed a community of Muslims and Christians that is thriving despite some ongoing challenges. The medical mission led by Muslim doctors, as well as the joyous festival of a Catholic saint in a Muslim neighborhood, demonstrate that peace building is possible



Fr. Ramon Torres (second from left) with Muslim women doctors and Alito (far right)



Muslim women doctors who volunteered for the medical mission team at San Isidro Labrador Paris

through courage, dedication, and perseverance.

As a member of Couples for Christ, I continue to value my background as a Columban seminarian, and share it with other members of that organization so that together we can help build a more stable and peaceful society with our

Muslim neighbors thereby becoming an inspiration for all those who live in similar circumstances, not only here in the Philippines but around the world. **CM**

Former Columban seminarian Alito B. Delos Santos shared his story with Columban Fr. Tim Mulroy, who lives and works in Britain.

Feeling Welcome

Matters of the Heart

By Fr. Colin McLean

In 1993, while working in a predominantly Afro-Brazilian community with the descendants of the 40% of the African slave trade brought to Brazil, I learned of the existence of the “Black Priests, Bishops and Deacons’ Conference.” That year, the meeting was to be in a diocese not too far from the city of Salvador, where I lived. I rang the hosting bishop, Dom Jairo, himself Afro-Brazilian, and explained that I would like to attend on behalf of my parishioners, 90% Afro-Brazilian, although I was a white Australian. He informed me I would be more than welcome.

So, with an Afro-Brazilian priest friend, Antônio Oliveira, from a neighboring parish, I set out for the diocese of Bonfim. There were about 35 black priests, two black bishops (not many black bishops back then!) and a black deacon. I use the word “black” in the way socially conscious Brazilians of African descent use it: the Portuguese word “Negro” (Black) denotes not just color, but race and cultural identification, nothing to do with the disparaging English word applied to slaves in other parts of the



Fr. Colin with conference participants

world. The other word for the color black in Brazil is “preto,” and this was certainly used by the slave-owners to denigrate the slaves.

At the conference, we broke into small groups at various times. I felt very conscious of being the only white priest present. On the second-to-last day of the meeting, we had a personal sharing session to say where we were with the meeting. I shared about feeling welcomed by the group, but a bit out of it due to my being the only white priest present. Then, a Jesuit, Fr. Clovis Cabral, empathized with me and shared how he had felt the same

way for thirteen years in the Jesuit seminary, since he had been the only black seminarian at the time. We have been close friends ever since.

At the conclusion of the conference, there was a Mass at which a black deacon was to be ordained. Dom Jairo called all the “black priests” to step forward to join him in giving a blessing to the new deacon. Several white priests who worked in the diocese stayed where they were, as did I. One of the black priests who had been with us at the conference stepped back and asked me why I had not stepped forward. I replied, “Well, Dom Jairo did say ‘the black priests.’” Then, my companion tapped his own arm and said, “It’s not about this (skin color),” and pointing to his heart, he added, “It’s about this. You have assumed our cause, so come on, you are one with us.” I have never looked back, and I have felt very included and welcome at the National Black Priests, Bishops and Deacons’ Conferences since then. CM



Mass at the conference

Columban Fr. Colin McLean now lives and works in Australia.



Help Spread the Light of Christ with a Gift that Costs Nothing During Your Lifetime

You can show your personal compassion and set an example for others by remembering the Missionary Society of St. Columban in your will, trust or other planned gift. No gift has a more lasting impact.



Recently, a huge influx of thousands of Venezuelan immigrants have entered Chile. Columban parishes have always welcomed the immigrants and tried to provide some material help (school supplies, warm clothing, blankets, and more) for them. We hope to continue providing relief for those who come to this "land of dreams." However, we know that the most important gift we have to share with them is our faith in the Risen Lord.

A planned gift helps the Missionary Society of St. Columban continue God's mission in the poorest areas of the world. And, financially and prayerfully supporting the Missionary Society of St. Columban is an excellent way to participate in the missionary activity of the Church.

With thoughtful planning, you can choose which ways to support work best for you and your loved ones and make sure your gifts are made in a way that will maximize their total value while minimizing their after-tax-cost. There are many planned giving options, including some you may not have considered before. Planned gifts provide a major impact in our missions, and we offer the following suggestions to aid selection of the best giving option for your stage of life.

- Donor Advised Fund Gifts
- Direct Gifts of Cash and/or Securities
- Charitable Remainder Unitrust Gifts
- Charitable Bequest Gifts
- Gifts of Life Insurance Policies

The U.S. Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Regulations encourage charitable giving by allowing generous tax savings for individuals who make gifts in accordance with approved giving programs. A planned gift also offers you many potential advantages: the opportunity to increase spendable income, the elimination or reduction of capital gain taxes and possibly federal and state estate tax savings.

For more information, please contact us at donorrelations@columban.org, call us toll-free at (877) 299-1920, or visit www.columban.org. The Missionary Society of St. Columban treasures your support and is committed to the stewardship of your gifts.



Parish Mission Trip

California to Guatemala

By Fr. Al Utzig

Late last year, Yolanda got a call from Sr. Lili, a Colombian Daughter of Our Lady of Mercy. They had met in Costa Rica three years ago when Yolanda and Roberto and some of our other parishioners had gone there to bring some simple aid after a hurricane. Sr. Lili is now in Guatemala working as a pharmacist at the parish in Livingston. She and Sr. Blanca and Sr. Rosa are the backbones of the parish outreach programs. That area of Guatemala is on the coast with a very mixed population of mestizos, Garifunas, and Quechi-i indigenous people. Would St. Mary's

Parish in Fontana, California, be able to give them some help?

Yolanda and Roberto approached me about it. Yes, I think we can do something. So, we asked our parishioners if they would help, not knowing much about Livingston. We had some fundraisers selling enchiladas, tacos, etc., getting donations for some children's blankets, using our Catholic Charities Rice Bowls, and finally asking at all the Masses for donations on the way out the door. The response was overwhelming. We collected over \$15,000 in a month. They connected

with a store owner and ordered \$12,000 worth of rice, beans, sugar, flour, cooking oil, powdered milk, etc. Paying our own travel expenses, we flew from Los Angeles on Sunday night, drove eight hours to the coast, made final arrangements to have it all delivered to the church, met the Sisters, then slept. It was about 90 degrees and 90% humidity.

The next day at the church, the seven of us from St. Mary's had a lot of volunteers recruited by the Sisters to help us, both women and children. We had to fill 800 bags with food to feed 400 families at four different locations.

It was a lot of very sweaty work until three in the afternoon.

Early Wednesday morning, we went back to the church and lined up 360 bags outside where hundreds of grandmothers and grandfathers and women with children were waiting. They were enrolled in Sr. Blanca's various programs of education and hygiene.

I celebrated Mass with Fr. Rudy, the pastor. He has over 30 Quechi-i villages to care for with no roads in or out of the area. Everyone came into the church for Mass. The choir was Garifuna. These are the descendants of African slaves who formed communities along the Caribbean coast in the 1600s and speak the language of their ancestors mixed with local languages. It was very lively with drums and African harmony. Many of the others were indigenous people who don't speak Spanish. After Mass, we went out and distributed food to those who needed help.

Then we loaded a small boat and crossed the bay to a dock where some local folks were waiting for us. We unloaded our food and many from that village carried it about a mile through the forest to their village. We

met them, talked a while, distributed our food, ate a special soup made with rooster and tortillas from corn they grow, all from "slash and burn" agriculture—small scale, corn stalks widely spaced.

The next day, we loaded our boat again and crossed the bay, and went up a small river to a place to land. Again, we were met by friends of the Sisters who helped carry our supplies to the village. We explained that we were from St. Mary's in Fontana, and we know they don't really need what we bring, but we recognize that all of us are members of the same family, one body in Jesus Christ, and we didn't want to come empty-handed. After singing a song, we again ate rooster soup, a very tasty broth with some tough legs. In the afternoon, we visited our fourth village up a river. There we had more soup and a walk through their fields. It was very hot and difficult walking the ups and downs. Coming back, the tide had gone out, and our boat got stuck at the mouth of the river. So, the pilot jumped out into hip-deep muck, floated a ways in front of us with a rope and pulled us 100 feet. Then he went another 100 feet and pulled. And another 100 feet and

pulled. We finally got into the bay and slowly made our way home, tired and content.

Some thoughts that stay with me from this experience: How did the earliest missionaries share their faith with people speaking such different languages? They must have been amazingly strong and with great perseverance to find and travel to these villages. The priests and Sisters and lay people who serve them these days must have a great faith and strength too. And how different are the cultures in the Catholic Church! Everyone should certainly be encouraged to celebrate their faith in their own ways. Blessed are those who can speak several languages, so we can communicate with each other. But at least our presence was a sign that we recognize that we are all one, respecting each other, caring about each other. What we took with us was not much, but what I experienced was a great blessing. And experience is the root of wisdom. May all of us have many experiences of differences. God is so much bigger than we are. CM

Columban Fr. Al Utzig is the director of the U.S. Region.





The Fiji Pioneers

The Love of The Sacred Heart of Jesus

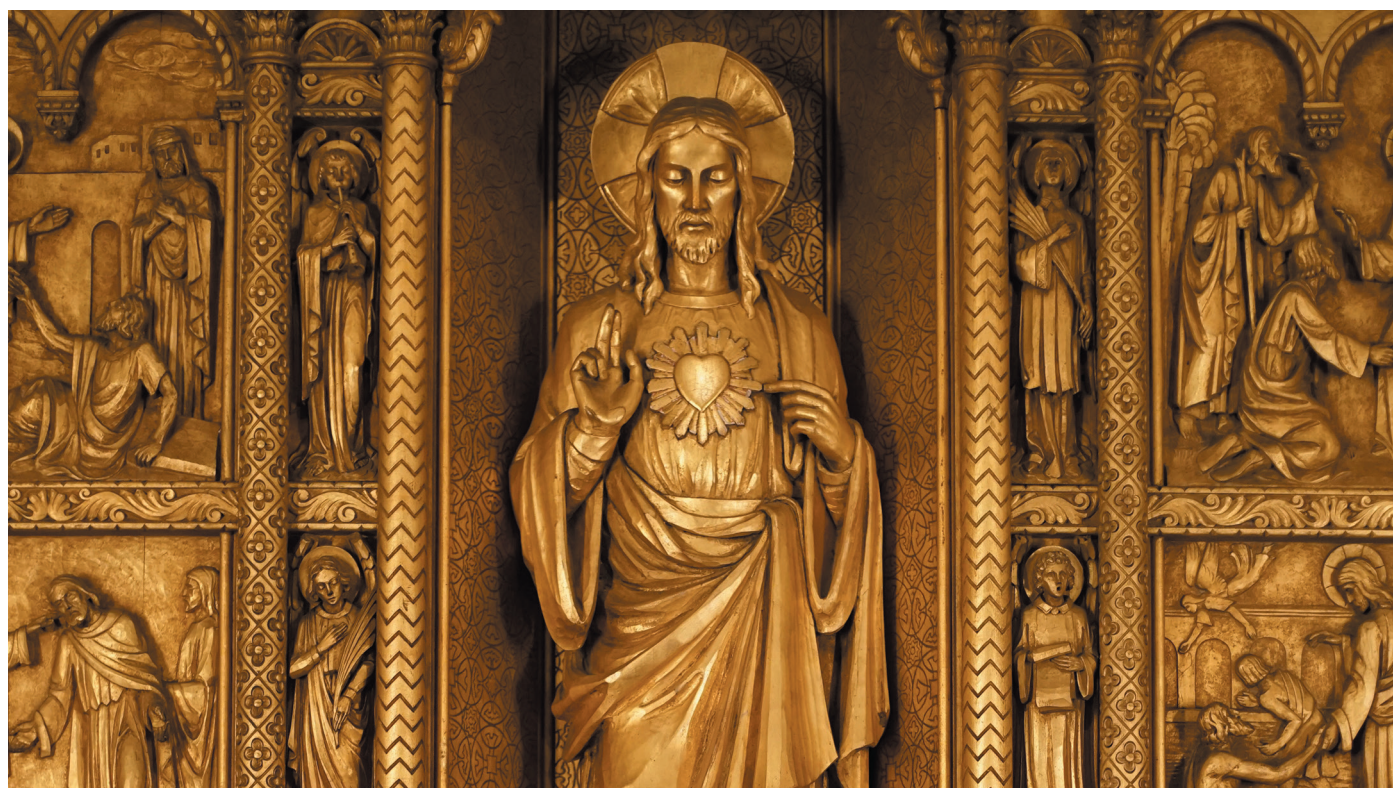
By Fr. Donal McIlraith

In October 1964, a group gathered around Columban Fr. P.J. Kelly in Lautoka Parish, Fiji, and the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart was born in Fiji. The group consisted of Shirley Mar, Kitty Frazer, Joe Foon, Margaret Eyre (nee Giblin), Master Joseph Palingau (“Master” is the title given to teachers in Fiji) and Catherine Singh. From that small beginning, the PTAA was spread throughout all of Fiji and throughout the Pacific.

Fr. James Cullen SJ started this association in Dublin, Ireland, in 1898. There was a lot of alcoholism in Ireland at that time. Fr. Cullen asked people who did not have a problem with drink to abstain freely from all alcohol. He further required that they do this as a request to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the one loving us (Rev 1:5), to help those who find themselves addicted or in other difficulties with alcohol.

The Sacred Heart is a symbol of Christ’s love for us, human and divine. It started with older ladies in his parish but widened out quickly so that by 1950, there were more than 300,000 Pioneers in Ireland. It followed the Irish diaspora. I have met with Pioneers in St. Paul, Minnesota, and in Sydney, Australia. Irish priests, like Fr. Kelly, brought the movement with them around the world. From Fiji, the late Fijian Vincentian Father, Fr. Joseva Tuimavule CM, spread the movement in the Solomon Islands and he and the then Fiji ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Mr. Romano Tititikoca, encouraged its spread in Papua New Guinea.

The Pioneers gathered at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Suva in May 2024 to celebrate the Diamond (60th) anniversary of the movement in Fiji. Shirley Mar from the founding group was there and shared about the beginnings. Her presence and sharing gave a strong sense of the identity and



continuity of the Association. The celebration opened with the Mass of the Sacred Heart. Archbishop Peter Loi Chong, himself a pioneer, had hoped to celebrate but was detained elsewhere on the day. As National Chaplain I ended up presiding and preaching. We had a smallish crowd of about thirty. The COVID pandemic has affected the Association, like every other group in the Church. After the Mass, the group gathered in the Cathedral Crypt presided over by the National President, Master Paulo Lala. He, the treasurer, Betty Finiasi, and the secretary, Margaret Tufunai, have kept the flag flying for us in the dark times of COVID.

Another eminent guest that day was Marist Fr. James Ross. Fr. Ross is from Dublin and has spent his entire priestly life in Fiji, some sixty years. Fr. Ross was once chaplain to the group himself. At age ninety, he is still hale and hearty. Our next big celebration will be his 75th anniversary of becoming a Pioneer, which will coincide with his 91st birthday. Fiji has thirty-four parishes and the Pioneer

with an annual AGM held in one parish or another. My first stint as National Chaplain was from 1989, shortly after I arrived in Fiji. I recall celebrating the Silver Jubilee in 1989 in Lautoka. I also recall attending AGMs in Tokou on the Island of Ovalou and in Holy Cross Parish, Wairiki, on the Island of Taveuni. It is difficult to estimate the total number of Pioneers now in Fiji, but at one time it certainly involved several hundred.

I became a permanent member of the Association as a teenager, but broke my pledge in the Seminary. I drank my way around the world during my first years as a Columban missionary. Luckily, I did not care too much for alcohol but did enjoy the wines of Italy when I was a student in Rome. However, either in 1976 or 1977, when helping to give a Parish retreat in Aghina, my uncle, Fr. Seamus Corkery's parish, near Macroom, I felt myself being called back. Permanent Pioneers get one reprieve and so, after a year's discernment, I joined again with Tom Linchan in Macroom and have no regrets.

Not wanting us to be proud, our loving God hides the good we do for others but once I think the veil was lifted for me. It was my first day in Vienna, and I was coming out of a bank. I said hello to someone, in German, and he responded. Then I discovered he was from Liverpool and so we switched to English. His mother had died and would I offer Mass for her. I would be delighted. And it was his birthday today and would I care to join them. Knowing nobody in Vienna, I was also delighted.

I got to the beer garden a bit late and everyone was well on in their cups. Why was I not drinking? I tried to explain that I was a Pioneer as I sipped my "Spaetsi," the satisfactory concoction of Coke and Orange Fanta I had discovered in Munich. Months later, I got a letter from my Liverpool friend. "Dear Fr. Donal, Thanks for sharing that you too were an alcoholic. This helped me to face my alcoholism and now I am organizing AA for central Europe." CM

Columban Fr. Donal McIlraith lives and works in Fiji.

November Thoughts

Stories of Joy and Sacrifice

Fr. John Burger



November 9 each year is marked as Founders Day by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Not far from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, west of the town of Malvern, is Villa Maria, the motherhouse of the Sisters. They do seem to prefer calling their properties “Villa Maria” — one of those little customs that make a group a community.

Founded in the middle of the nineteenth century by Theresa Maxis, a laywoman of Haitian descent and Father Gillet, a Belgian Redemptorist priest, this American congregation was organized to respond to the continuing need for Catholic children to be educated in their faith as well as reading, writing and arithmetic.

From a small beginning in a cabin in the woods of Michigan in 1845, this congregation of women religious has grown into three separate, though similar in spirit, congregations: one based in Malvern, another one near Monroe, Michigan, and a third located in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

In the Malvern motherhouse is a newly rearranged and redecorated “heritage room” where one can trace the history of the congregation by viewing the exhibits. But there is another place where one can learn the history of this group of teaching Sisters. It is across the road at Camilla Hall, the large convent and health care center where the elderly, retired and sick Sisters are looked after and look after each other. I have been their chaplain these last three years.

Often across the tables in the dining room at Camilla, stories emerge from 50, 60, or even 70 years ago: stories such as the fun they had as an entrance band of young postulants in the 1950’s, stories they remember of the endearing things children did in their classrooms, the assignments they loved—or perhaps didn’t enjoy.

Some Sisters are at Camilla Hall temporarily, recovering from surgery or an acute condition and are anxious to get back to their mission. For others, this will be their last assignment. I like to think that St. Paul’s words to the

Romans apply to most residing here. “Although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.”

Almost all rooms are equipped with television sets, so that even those who need to spend nearly all their time in bed can see and hear the Masses and other prayer services being conducted in the chapel. Despite that, the rooms on the second and third floors of this four-story building tend to be quiet. And daily, the ringing of a handbell in the hall signals that the Blessed Sacrament is being brought to Sisters who instructed literally tens of thousands of children that Jesus is truly present in the little white host.

The Sisters have had long journeys from their own Catholic homes, to school days when perhaps they noticed and admired the Sisters, to the Novitiate, to the day when they professed their vows, to a series of schools and convent assignments, around Pennsylvania, or Connecticut, or Virginia, or Georgia, or Florida, along with summers spent in summer school. For some, their journey involved years-long sojourns in Peru and Chile.

November in our Catholic tradition is a time for remembering those the Lord has called to Himself. On the extensive grounds along Fraser Road, in Malvern, Co-foundress Mother Theresa Maxis and hundreds of the Sisters who followed her are now laid to rest under simple headstones in the peaceful, orderly community cemetery. Each gravestone says little: a name, a cross, a date of death. But God knows the stories of joy and sacrifice. The stones are slanted and arranged in neat rows, like rows of student desks. Together, they silently bear witness to years and years of service to the Catholic Church in North and South America. **CM**

Columban Fr. John Burger lives and works in Pennsylvania.

Faith Journeys

The last four years I was in Korea, I was blessed to be able to live in a community of Columbans—three Sisters, a lay missionary, and myself, the priest. We lived in a rural village of about 55 families, all farmers, about five Catholic households, the rest professing no faith or religion, except a few Buddhists. The vision for our community was to be like a little garden, each of us a different type of flower, growing among our neighbors. Each of us had different talents and interests, but we were also fellow-farmers with everyone else. Our style was organic, living in harmony with the earth. We took great care in using cut weeds and chopped rice straw and newspapers as mulch and pig manure from a neighbor as our fertilizer. No one else in the village was doing that. We hoped that our example (long before Pope Francis' Encyclical "Laudato Si" came out) of seeing ourselves as part of creation rather than masters of it, would cause our friends to think about it. We also used the stuff from our outhouse (after it was composted) in our own garden as well and had the biggest cabbages in the village.

This is the expression of a faith rooted very much in the earth, and life, a vision of a God who does not just sit on a golden throne issuing decrees and judging us (as we find in the Book of Revelation), but is very involved in the life of the world that God created and asks us to live in, caring for it, enjoying it, loving it and being nourished by it—the God of Creation, the God of Jesus who is with us (Emmanuel) and understands us and our life.

We were there not so much as missionaries of our

FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Fr. Al Utzig



religion, but of our faith. Faith and religion are certainly connected, but they are also different. In our four years there, only one person was baptized as a Catholic. That was fine with us. Hopefully, some neighbors came to see the natural world a little more as a friend and ally than just a resource to be used at will.

I also had a great experience of learning to have faith in our good God. One of the elderly women who was a Catholic, called "Ta-du Om-ma," was a very thin widow, 74 years old, with only a few teeth in her mouth. She



cared for her son who was paralyzed from a stroke and lived on the floor of her house for several years until he died. To support herself, Ta-du Om-ma worked as a day laborer, as did many of us who had more time than fields to work. Others in the village needed help with their planting, weeding, harvesting, etc., and we would work with them for a day for so much money. Ta-du Om-ma had no land of her own, and we had only a small plot, so we often worked together for others. Since the parish

The vision for our community was to be like a little garden, each of us a different type of flower, growing among our neighbors.

priest did not want me to say Mass in the old, little chapel in the village, we took the bus on Sunday mornings into town for Mass. At the collection time, I noticed that Ta-du Om-ma was putting in 10,000 Won while I was putting in 5,000. As an older woman she was paid 5,000 won for her days work while I, a man, was paid 10,000. I felt that half a day's wage was a fair donation at Mass, but she gave twice a day's wage. Wow, what a generous person was she. And what faith she had. God would see and bless her. She had no doubt.

Ta-du Om-ma has passed on now but this little but great example of faith and generosity has stayed with me for all of these years. "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours; but woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation." (Luke 6:20,24). Experience is the root of wisdom. Our experience of a life-giving God helps us to be wise indeed.

Fr. Al

COLUMBAN FATHERS
1902 N. CALHOUN ST.
ST. COLUMBANS, NE 68056-2000

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
COLUMBAN
FATHERS

Transform the Lives of Others...Enrich the World...Give Hope

Columban Mission magazine is published eight times each year and tells the stories of our missionaries and the people they are called to serve. Columban missionaries live in solidarity with their people and, together, they move forward to improve their social, economic and spiritual lives, always with Our Savior as their guide and their eyes on God's Kingdom.

For a \$15 donation or more, you or a friend or loved one can share in our baptismal call to mission and the Columban Fathers' mission work around the world through *Columban Mission* magazine.

To begin receiving your *Columban Mission* magazine or to provide a gift to a loved one, simply visit our website at www.columban.org, call our toll-free number 877/299-1920 or write to us at:



**Missionary Society
of St. Columban**
1902 N. Calhoun St.
St. Columbans, NE
68056-2000



"But who do you say that I am?"

– ST. MATTHEW 16:15

Faith is indeed a gift from God, but this gift is transmitted from one faith-filled person to another down to our own day. We too are called and empowered to give witness to our belief that Jesus is the Son of the Living God.

Answer the Call: Become a Missionary Priest

Do you feel called to serve, to spread the Gospel and to bring the light of Christ to the ends of the earth? The missionary priesthood offers a life dedicated to service, faith, and love. It is a vocation that crosses borders, cultures, and languages, offering a unique opportunity to make a profound impact on the lives of others. If you feel the stirrings of God's call in your heart, we invite you to explore the missionary priesthood.

Fr. Arturo Aguilar

National Vocation Director

Columban Fathers | St. Columbans, NE 68056

Toll-free: 877/299-1920 | Email: vocations@columban.org

Website: www.columban.org

Japan + Korea + Peru + Hong Kong + Philippines + Pakistan + Chile + Fiji + Taiwan + North America