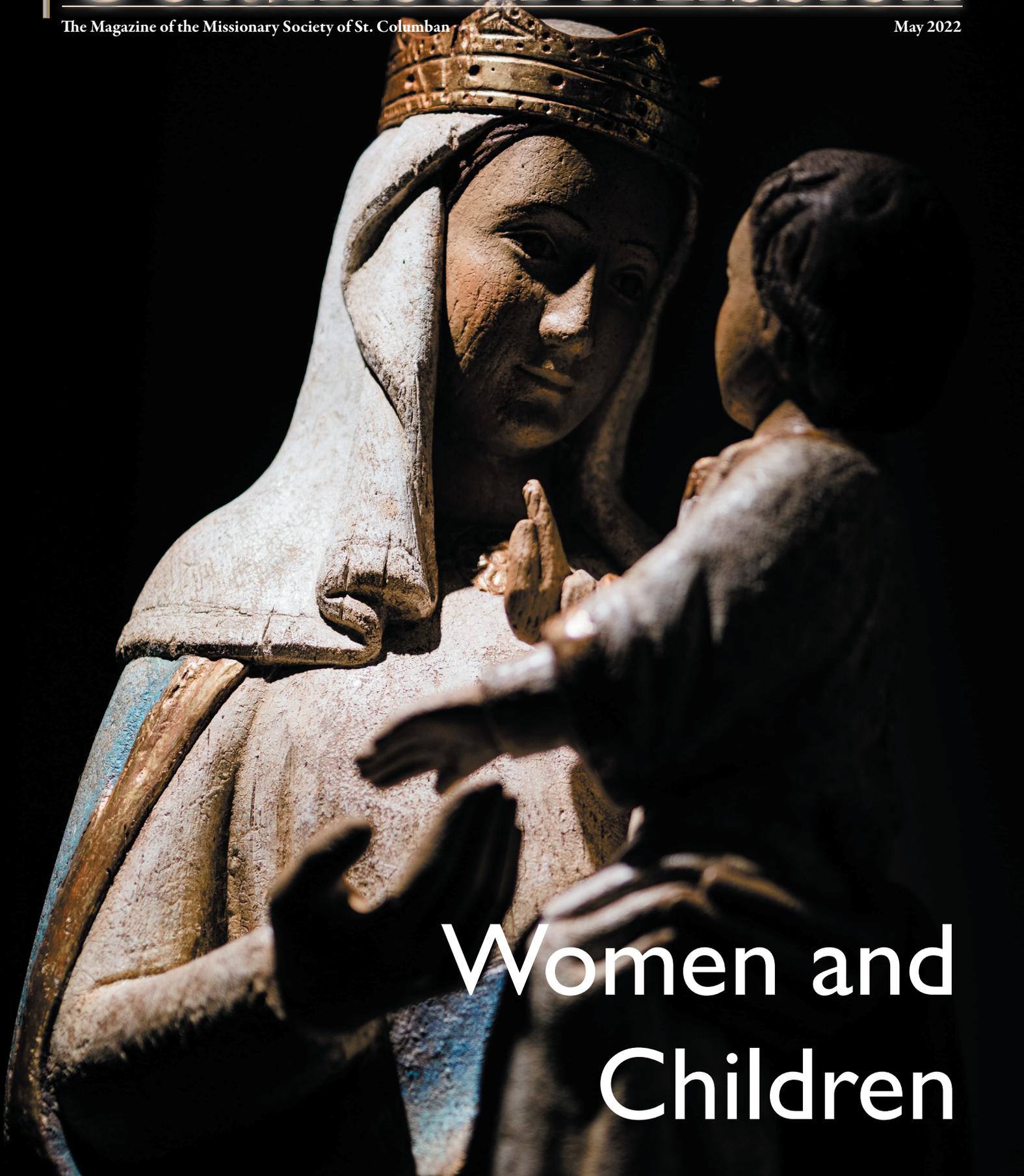


Columban Mission

The Magazine of the Missionary Society of St. Columban

May 2022



Women and Children

C O N T E N T S

Issue Theme – Women and Children



A PARISH CONFIRMED IN FAITH

12



WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING

14

4 A REFLECTION

Samaritan Woman at the Well

6 RELIGIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Protect God's Creation

8 LAY MISSIONARY LOWEZA

Compassionate Care

10 DIALOGUE

A Way of Being on Mission

16 SHARING A MEAL TOGETHER

Moments of Grace

18 WHAT IS IMPORTANT?

Our Presence

20 PRIMEVAL KNOWING

Underpinning Both Oral and Literary Cultures

22 THE CHALLENGE

To Love Them as They Are

DEPARTMENTS

3 IN SO MANY WORDS

23 FROM THE DIRECTOR

Volume 106 – Number 3 – May 2022

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 © 2022, The Columban Fathers (Legal Title)

PUBLISHER

FR. CHRIS SAENZ
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
JEFF NORTON
FR. CHRIS SAENZ
SCOTT WRIGHT

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 Fr. Barry Cairns

A Grieving Mother Is Consoled

A parishioner, whose husband had died two years before, had now lost her only son. He had died of a heart attack while hiking in the mountains. His car was found in a parking lot at the foot of the trail, but his body not discovered for two days. He was really a caring and loving son. His mother was distraught. Sudden death is always a great shock. His mother told me, “There is an emptiness and dire hunger in my heart.” She used a strong meaning Japanese verb, usually associated with “dying of hunger.”

Like the Gospel scene of Naim, Jesus saw this mother’s tears and gave her His consolation. But as so often happens, the Risen Lord in our world today, works through others. Jesus says to us: “You are my hands and voice.” In this case a fellow parishioner and friend sent the grieving mother an amaryllis bulb in a pre-prepared container. All that was needed was to insert water. It was sent as a consolation gift.

The dead-looking amaryllis bulb with its roots touching water at first showed green leaves, then a bud, and finally bloomed in glory. And just as it bloomed the sad mother read the words of Jesus, “I am resurrection and life. The one who believes in me will never die.” (John 11:25)

This tearful mother, thanks to the eternal present tense of Jesus’ words in the Gospel, aided by a bulb in bloom, was greatly consoled. She realized that her son’s love was still with her. And I told her that she could

Consolation of the saddened ones of life is a great act of kindness, and we are acting in the name of Jesus.



still talk to her loving son, as this was one part of what we believe when we use the theological shorthand term “communion of saints.”

So, this plant had a message for the grieving mother. It also has a living message for us today. Consolation of the saddened ones of life is a great act of kindness, and we are acting in the name of Jesus. In the vein of Matthew’s Gospel, chapter 25, the Lord will say to us: “When I was sad, you comforted me. Whenever you did it to one of my people, you did it to me.”

Columban Fr. Barry Cairns lives and works in Japan.



A Reflection

Samaritan Woman at the Well

By Fr. Malachy Hanratty

Setting

Jesus had a good following in Galilee but going into Judea towards Jerusalem He was meeting much resentment, opposition and obstruction from the religious authorities. He decides to go back to Galilee. With some disciples He chooses to go through Samaria. It is the shorter, but unpopular way.

Samaritans and Jews disliked each other strongly. They also diverged firmly in many religious ways. Jews had contempt for Samaritans. It is now noontime for Jesus and company on their journey. It is very hot, and they are weary and hungry. They arrive at a special well which dated from the patriarch Jacob's time. While the disciples go into the neighboring town to buy food, Jesus rests close to the well.

The Encounter

A Samaritan woman appears to draw water from the well. But it is noontime! Women drew the water much earlier when it was much cooler. It was also an informal social gathering. To avoid coming at this time suggests a desire to deliberately avoid other women. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." Hearing this must have been quite a shock. She is not afraid to show her surprise, pointing out how Jews ignore Samaritans. I think Jesus is pleased with her truthfulness and courage. He uses her reply to point out His own desire that she receive



what He wants to give her. It is “living water!” She challenges His ability to do greater than their patriarchal father Jacob. But Jesus claims even deeper! He is offering not only a drink of special water but an “interior spring that gushes up to Eternal life.”

However, she hears only that what He is promising will mean her not having to come out alone in the heat to draw water, so gladly she accepts His offer. But Jesus wants to lead her further to understand that this is a much more important and powerful gift. He is offering that inner spring—the spring in her heart—would lead to Eternal Life.

Firstly, He helps lead her to understand His more important role. Showing her His knowledge of her unorthodox history convinces her of His prophetic role. That raises her thoughts and hopes to the promised Messiah. Then she hears the overwhelming words, “I who am speaking to you,” said Jesus, “I am He.”

Sharing the Gift

I picture the woman’s eyes widening and an overwhelming awe building up in her. Then an explosion of excitement. She swivels around and rushes back to town. Her joyous excitement and openness claim the immediate attention of these people who usually ignore or deliberately avoid her. In this excited woman they see a different person, so changed that she captures their full attention! They listen. They are so convinced that they go to meet this Messiah. Just reflect: this messenger has had a poor reputation and this supposed Messiah is a Jew. But they go! They meet Jesus. So, many become convinced that he really is the savior of the world and they beg Him to stay. Jesus spends two full days with them. How exhilarating, inspiring, and uniting those two days were!

With Jesus they prayed together to the Heavenly Father. Listening more to Jesus their hearts were burning and their minds were opening more. They listened

to His teachings, shared and asked questions. The physical Jesus leaves.

Now I see the early morning gatherings at the well are often centering around the changed “water-bearer.” Jesus-centered prayer is helping her receptive heart become a spring. Thus, she helps others in their prayers be with Jesus again. Thanking God, sharing, consulting, encouraging one another is increasing. Their hearts are even becoming able to meet and share with disliked people. She notices herself thinking and feeling differently towards those who still avoid her. Other co-prayers are even moving beyond to spread Good News. By spending much time praying and pondering John’s text, this is what the Spirit has pointed out to me. Sharing has helped. Now the important question: What is the Spirit saying to YOU? Is it helping your prayer and behavior? 

Columban Fr. Malachy Hanratty lives and works in Ireland.

Religions and Climate Change

Protect God's Creation

By Fr. Frank Hoare

The young people of the Pacific are the ones who have contributed least to planetary destruction, but they will suffer its consequences sooner and more than those who are most responsible. They can expect massive cyclones to destroy their villages, damage their coastlines and traumatize them greatly. Many will see their crops rot through floods or shrivel up because of drought. Some will be expelled as climate refugees from their low-lying islands by rising sea water. Their voices must be heard and heeded.

Our Columban interreligious dialogue (IRD) desk has been organizing sessions for young people of different religions in Suva, Fiji, every two months. When we were struck by COVID in March 2020 and by the Delta strain in March 2021 our efforts at interreligious dialogue came to a standstill initially as we focused on this unknown enemy. Later ZOOM allowed us to resume discussions.

An even more dangerous threat is growing silently in the wake of coronavirus – the climate crisis. The world's temperature could rise by a disastrous three degrees centigrade by the end of the century because of the carbon dioxide, methane and other gasses belched into the atmosphere by transport, agriculture, and industry. Political and industry leaders will have to make radical and decisive cuts to carbon emissions. We all must change our lifestyles to live more lightly on the planet.

The IRD youth leaders and Catholic Tertiary Association leaders agreed to participate in two webinars

to raise awareness. Our webinars featured a one hour BBC film - Climate Change: the Facts. Following this we presented nine, three minute videos from various faith groups highlighting the miracle of nature and aspects of environmental damage.

The Arya Samaj Hindus made a strong plug for vegetarianism. Methodist youths took us on a virtual sight-seeing trip through their newly planted garden. Seminarians from the Pacific Regional Seminary highlighted the value of mangrove forests as a protective eco-system. A young Catholic wrote a poem counterpointing each of the seven days of creation with parallel human damage done. However the pearl of the presentations was a beautiful classical dance representing the wonders of creation by a colorfully dressed South Indian lady.

The call to respect and protect God's creation is common to all religions and so is an ideal task for cooperation by religious communities. Different religious perspectives can inspire and



Sangam priest speaking to Fr. Frank and the Catholic group

challenge us. Religious diversity brings out the magnificence of God's creation and God's love for all humanity.

Young people today are facing a frightening future. They will experience the cost of the greed and denial of older generations. Those who have lived longer have not shown wisdom. They have abused the earth, seas, atmosphere and flora and fauna for their immediate satisfaction with no thought for the destruction of the web of life. We all must listen to Greta Thunberg and the millions of school children who have been demonstrating for life 

Columban Fr. Frank Hoare lives and works in Fiji.



Pilgrims at Sangam temple



LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

1% of Your Estate Continues the Mission Work

One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed. Proverbs 19:17

Good intentions are important, especially when it comes to giving. And a planned gift — a gift you designate to start after your lifetime — can have long-term impact. By designating just 1% of your estate as a gift to the Columban Fathers, you insure that the work you have supported during your lifetime will continue.

Columban lay missionary Noh Hyein, better known as Anna (pronounced En-na), a teacher by profession, lives and works in the Philippines. After getting to know the women in her parish, and realizing how desperately poor they were, Anna, with the help of Columban benefactors, launched a candle making livelihood project called “Light the Life.” The women make candles and earn income for their families. The program also helps in the holistic development of the women, making them value their own self-worth. The women in the program make candles that light the homes of others, but they are lighting their own paths as well.

Contact us to learn about the many different ways you can give to the Missionary Society of St. Columban.



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

www.columban.org
toll-free: 877/299-1920
donorrelations@columban.org



Lay Missionary Loweza

Compassionate Care

By Fr. Daniel O'Connor

I met Loweza in the village named Mundiala Virka many years ago when I was on mission in Sheikhpura Parish in Punjab Province, Pakistan. She arrived at their simple village home carrying a heavy load of green fodder for their few buffaloes, goats and sheep. Loweza, like the majority of the girls in her village did not attend school. She worked as a young shepherdess. "Early in the morning I milked the buffalo and then took out the sheep and goats for grazing. I would then return with them before the sun set. I enjoyed

this life very much, with the freedom of roaming here and there with the animals, finding grass and branches of trees for them to eat near the canal and country tracks. Some of the goats and sheep belonged to a blind couple whom I also cared for."

When I went to the village for visitation and Mass, I was very impressed with Loweza's proactive presence. She had learned much from the example of her elder sister who sadly had died as a young woman. Loweza, with the help of the children, had put another layer of soil on the

church's floor as well as cleaned the church and small compound. Then she would, with loud joyful voice, do the rounds of the Christian families and call them to come to the church. She would also, at harvest time, gather a share of the wheat and rice harvest from the families as their contribution to the parish.

I also noted her as a girl bargaining with the Tonga Wallas, (horse and cart taxis), about a just fare in traveling to her village. Seeing all of this behavior from a girl in a male dominated society inspired me.

Some Mercy Sisters from Australia had recently opened a hostel for girls whose situation was similar to Loweza, in that they have not attended school. It was a place where they could learn to read and write as well as receive much formation in faith and life skills. Loweza said, "It was a big change in life style for me. The Sisters frowned on us eating food with our hands. There was much new discipline which we were not aware of. Sister would tell us to say "sorry" but I did not know the meaning of the word, and I felt that I had done nothing wrong. Overall, I enjoyed the life there with the friends I made, as well as that I learnt so much from the Sisters, which has been a great help throughout my life."

The Sisters found Loweza to be an exceptional young woman and asked me to send her back for another year. On returning home to her village Loweza also became an active member of the parish womens' group which was facilitated by a former Columban lay missionary, Gloria Canama who had served on mission in Pakistan from 1990-2013. Over these years Loweza graduated as a "village Bible leader" and also went on a mission exchange program to the Columban mission in Sindh Province.

Over this time Loweza's family were making plans to find a suitable man so that Loweza could be married as she was about 18 years old. "My heart tells me that I do not want to be married," she stated. Her mother, Bashiran said to me. "What to do, Loweza is refusing to be married and so now Fr. Dan she is your responsibility."

I had heard of a girls' hostel and school in Karachi which was run by a Sister Janine. Karachi is about a 20-hour train journey from Lahore. Loweza made this journey by herself to check it out and on her return stated to me. "I will go and live in Karachi. The hostel and school is

When I went to the village for visitation and Mass, I was very impressed with Loweza's proactive presence. She had learned much from the example of her elder sister who sadly had died as a young woman.

good. The arrangement is that the girls work in the mornings to cover some of the costs of the food and education, and then attend school in the afternoons."

At a later date when I visited her I was impressed with the rapport that she had with the leprosy patients that she was caring for and the happiness that she brought to their lives. Loweza told me that, "A Muslim woman, named Zakia, was stricken by this terrible disease. She had lost her feet and hands and had little sight left in her eyes. People had fear seeing her situation and did not want to care for her. I was able to bathe her and dress her wounds." There was some anxiety

when some black spots appeared on Loweza's body. She was then taken off this work and treated. Thank God that it was not leprosy, and the black spots went away. "When I started attending the school I felt some embarrassment as I had to sit in the class with the young girls," she told me.

Over many years Loweza has journeyed with the sick and poor who require medical care. She cares for and facilitates many Tribal people from Interior Sindh that Columbans send to her. Life in the big city of Karachi with its 20 million plus population is so very different to life in their villages. Loweza has many contacts in the hospitals with doctors and nurses who have great admiration and respect for her. She is able to obtain medical care for operations and medical needs as well as obtaining discounts for medicines, blood, etc. These poor patients, Christians, Muslims and Hindus would be at a loss without the competent and compassionate care of Loweza. CM

Columban Fr. Dan O'Connor lives and works in Pakistan.



Dialogue

A Way of Being on Mission

By Sr. Rebecca Conlon



Pope Francis' pastoral visit to Iraq in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic as a Pilgrim Penitent and as a Pilgrim of Peace put me thinking. Age and diminishing health did not stop him from taking on this pilgrimage which started in the ruins of Ur, the 5,000-year-old Mesopotamian city that was the birthplace of Abraham; the place he once called "home." That to me was ingenious as it is the root and "home" of our monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, which on many occasions do not see eye to eye.

Just as Abraham left Ur and pitched his tent along the way, we Columban Sisters pitched our tent in the midst of Muslims in Pakistan 31 years ago, making dialogue our way of life. In Pakistan we breathe Islam day and night as we hear the Call to Prayer five times each day, wake up to the sirens calling the nation to get up at 3:30 a.m. as it is Ramadan and time to get ready for the fast, and where the presence of God is tangible in the midst of many differences.

Our plan to live among Muslims was frowned on because of fear for our security but keeping the vision of dialogue alive and focused gave us strength to face the many challenges over the years. Twenty-nine years ago, we branched out to the tribal Christians of the Hindu background in the interior of Sindh. This brought another rich dimension to our dialogues which now included Hinduism as well as Islam. This enriched our mission immensely.

Our first Christmas in Pakistan was memorable as our Muslim neighbors



gave us our first Christmas tree with a “Happy Christmas” decoration, which they stuck up on the wall. It is important to note that this was a time of great political tension and turmoil in the area where we lived. They protected us in our vulnerable moments and were always with us in good times and difficult times.

On Christmas Day, family and friends arrived to celebrate with us. It was a eureka moment of welcome and the dialogue of life was opened up for us effortlessly. We attended their marriages and deaths as family, and when tragedy hit them, we were the first called, and we supported them. This relationship continues to this day. Their friends became our friends and this experience showed us how life can be, as a tiny minority in a sea of Isla.

One dream was to have a shelter for women as the plight of women was one of our top priorities when we were missioned to Pakistan. We visited a renowned Muslim lawyer in Karachi seeking advice and there we met a young Muslim lady doing her law internship in his NGO; she was a native of Hyderabad, where we lived. This encounter worked out as a partnership for life to the extent

that when the Irish Bishops came to Pakistan with Trocaire, she was introduced as a “Columban Sister” as she is of one mind and one heart with us in our mission to reach out to the people on the margins.

As foreigners, we could not open a shelter, so she became our hands and feet. She successfully opened her shelter and worked at grassroots with women, visiting them in their villages as well as accompanying them to the courts and giving them shelter. It was thanks to our relationship with her and her contacts that we were able to visit the women’s jail for about fifteen years as an ongoing twice-weekly presence, running income-generating generating projects with the women prisoners. Their children stayed with them in prison, and we saw to their education. Our Christian children from outside always visited for Children’s Day and played and danced with the mothers and their children.

One American Dominican priest who was a missionary here for many years was once asked how many people he converted in Pakistan? His answer was “One. Myself. That’s it!” Our neighbor comes in with a tray of food, just cooked for our Eid (Festival). This has been a pattern all our years

here and we in turn do likewise. We meet the women and children on the roof and chat across to each other, but this does not mean that as a minority there are no problems among us in this society. Muslims have stood at our gate in dangerous times of war and controversial cartoons to make sure we were not attacked.

As foreigners we cannot take a prominent role fighting for justice, but we remember Shakeel Patan, a neighbor and an outspoken human rights activist opposed to bonded labor who was killed in a car accident. When his body arrived at his home, we were there for his bewildered children who did not understand anything of what had happened.

Our mission mandate to “go to the margins” would not have happened without a vision of dialogue with other religions as being a way of life. God’s kingdom is alive and well in and through all this and hopefully through our daily intermingling of life together we will continue to care for each other as children of the one God for, “It is in Him that we all live and move and have our being.” 

Columban Sr. Rebecca Conlon lives and works in Pakistan.

A Parish Confirmed in Faith

Feast Day Celebration

By Fr. Patrick Colgan

French Catholic missionaries first arrived in Fiji in 1844 at Lakeba, Lau. Missions were established in 1851 at Ba and Rewa on the island of Viti Levu, and at Solevu on Vanua Levu. Missionaries had to be withdrawn due to ill health, and in 1855, efforts were abandoned except for the mission at Levuka. At this point, the legendary Père Bréhéret built a boat and began sailing from island to island to preach the Gospel. Very slowly, the mission began to make progress. In 1860, the first Catholic school was built. In 1863, Fiji was made a Prefecture, with 6,000 converts.

In the early 20th century, there were 30 Marist Fathers, spread over 250 islands, tending eighteen central stations and 273 villages; eleven Marist Brothers, in charge of a school at Suva, a seminary and college at Cawaci and an English school for native Fijians at Rewa; 24 European and 31 native SMSM (Marist Missionary Sisters) Sisters conducting the majority of schools for girls; eight sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, ten Marist Sisters, in charge of a school and orphanage at Levuka and a school at Ba. A mission for lepers was conducted on Makogai Island by a Marist father and two SMSM Sisters.

Challenges abounded in the province of Ba, ranging from the persecution and imprisonment of Catholics en masse on the river-locked island of Delailagi, the Spanish measles outbreak in 1916, the great flood of 1931, difficulties in the outreach to the large Hindu and Muslim populations, the pervasive tension between

the British colonialists and often outspoken French priests, and finally to the fire that gutted the small parish church of St. Peter Chanel in 1995.

Apart from small interludes, Columbans have administered the parish since their arrival in Fiji in 1952 (along with the nearby Xavier



College), and the then parish priest Fr. Tom Daly immediately undertook a fundraising campaign to build a new Church for the rapidly expanding Catholic population. This came to fruition on the Feast of Christ the King, November 17, 2021, when a new

Church of that name was consecrated by Archbishop Petero Mataca.

Twenty years later, parishioners gathered to celebrate this anniversary, along with the Sacrament of Confirmation of 34 candidates from five villages and four town areas. Twice delayed due to COVID restrictions, the young people with their facilitators bravely carried on their two year preparation course online and offline, and it was truly a joy to welcome Archbishop Peter Loy Chong who was last here in 2019.

Fine weather welcomed all who came on this Feast of Christ the King, November 21, 2021. COVID compliance teams, ushers, readers, ministers, choir members, and of course the candidates were all here one hour early. In his homily the Archbishop praised the young people who remained faithful to the two year Confirmation preparations, despite two lockdowns and an economic slump. He compared Confirmation to the cultural initiation rituals well known to indigenous people, in which particularly boys are expected to endure pain and isolation. COVID has been such an experience.

We hope that as restrictions ease, these “new soldiers of Christ” will find creative ways to spread His love and light at home, in their villages and wherever and to whomever God sends them as adult believers.

May Christ the King reign and may His kingdom, all people and all creation know its saving power. 

Columban Fr. Patrick Colgan lives and works in Fiji.



The Confirmation of 34 young people by Archbishop Peter Loy Chong



Fr. Colgan and Archbishop Chong



Catechists and Fr. Colgan



Parish feast day



Fr. Oreve and boarders in 1950



Church altar

World Day Against Trafficking

Victims' Voices Lead the Way

By Fr. Peter O'Neill



In 2007, during one of my weekly visits to the Hsinchu City Immigration Detention Center in Taiwan, I met Ani and Siti (not their real names), two young women from Indonesia who were working as carers for their Taiwan employer's elderly parents and in-laws. I was deeply concerned as to how Ani and Siti had ended up in the detention center. Sr. Rosa, the Diocesan Migrant Center's Indonesian caseworker, translated for me.

I learned that Ani and Siti had, before departing Indonesia, each borrowed money from the bank at an interest of 18% to pay the Indonesian government's regulated placement fee of AUD \$2,600 (approximately \$1,900 USD) to their employment agency.

When they complained to their employer about not receiving their full salary and the long hours of arduous work, he threatened to send them back to Indonesia.

It would have taken them at least one year of salary deductions to pay this debt bondage.

Upon arriving in Taiwan, besides caring for the elderly parents and in-laws, cooking and cleaning for the whole family, and taking care of their employer's children, Ani and Siti were forced by their employer to work illegally in the family restaurant for twelve hours a day with no day off. When they complained to their employer about not receiving their full

salary and the long hours of arduous work, he threatened to send them back to Indonesia.

After slaving away for six months, Ani and Siti thought the only way of escaping this horror was to run to a nearby police station to seek help to retrieve their stolen wages and return home to Indonesia. One morning they packed their simple belongings and ran from the house until they came across the detention center thinking it was a police station. Since they didn't want to return to their employer's house the director of the detention center allowed them to stay at the center until they were able to secure their passports, which their employer had confiscated.

At the end of our conversation, I asked Sr. Rosa to help Ani and Siti write down their story in detail, which we then had translated into Chinese. I met with the director and welfare officer of the center explaining to them that Ani and Siti were victims of human trafficking. At that time, there was no law in Taiwan to protect the rights of trafficked people. With the support of the director, we were able to convince the immigration police to allow Ani and Siti to stay in our migrant center's shelter while we lobbied the Ministry of Labor to have them transferred to new employers and to help them retrieve their stolen wages. Four months later, they moved to their new employers to work as carers.

Ani and Siti, along with other victims of human trafficking living in shelters across Taiwan, gave permission for their stories to be used to advocate for the implementation of a law to protect the rights of trafficked people.

Columban Fr. Nguyen Van-Hung and I joined the Taiwan Anti Trafficking Alliance Watch formed by civil society and faith-based organizations to advocate and lobby for the Human Trafficking Prevention and Control Act, which

would eventually pass in the Taiwan Parliament in June 2009.

Over several years, Government agencies invited me to participate in their education campaigns to conduct awareness-raising seminars on human trafficking for immigration, foreign affairs and local police, labor officials, and detention center staff.

Just like Ani and Siti, there are millions of domestic workers across the globe who are vulnerable to human

Just like Ani and Siti, there are millions of domestic workers across the globe who are vulnerable to human trafficking.

trafficking. In 2010 and 2011, I was a member of the Migrant Forum in Asia delegation to the International Labor Organization Conferences in Geneva to advocate for the adoption of its Convention 189 Decent Work for Domestic Workers. With the adoption of this Convention, domestic workers were finally recognized as entitled to labor rights and protections equal to all other workers. Ten years later, only

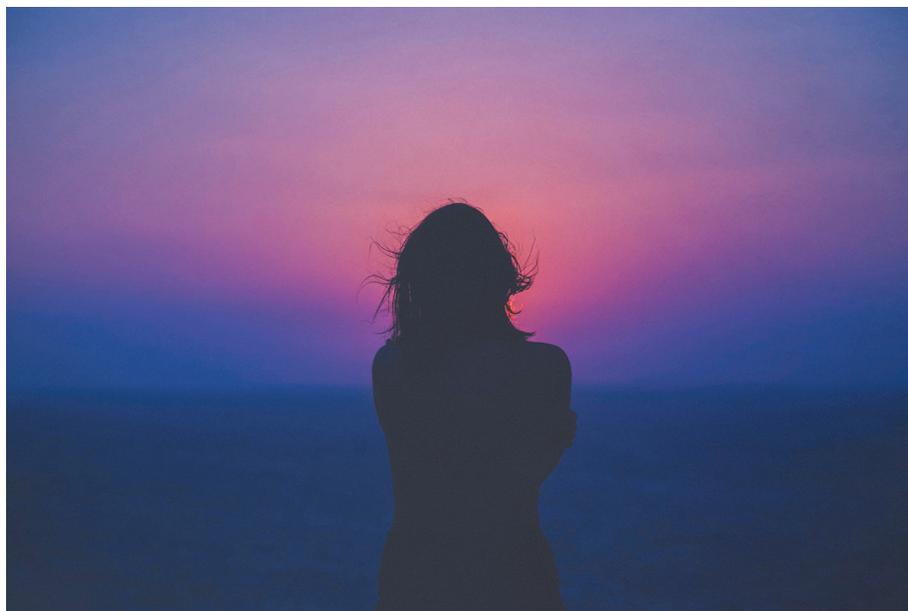
29 United Nations Member States have ratified this Convention, and Australia is not one of them.

Victims' Voices Lead the Way is the theme for this year's World Day Against Trafficking in Persons (July 30). It puts Ani and Siti and other victims of human trafficking at the center of the campaign and highlights the importance of listening to and learning from survivors of human trafficking.

Pope Francis, who frequently speaks out against human trafficking, says, "Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the Body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity."

People ask me if there is human trafficking in Australia. Yes, there is. Just recently a Melbourne couple was found guilty of keeping a Tamil woman as a slave for eight years. The maximum penalty is 25 years. This is just one of many stories that have appeared in the Australian media. Human trafficking is often hidden in plain sight, even right next door to us. [cm](#)

After many years on mission in Taiwan, Columban Fr. Peter O'Neill is the Columban leader in Australia.



Sharing a Meal Together

Moments of Grace

By Lee Su-Bin Matilda

Every morning when I would arrive at the center Harmony Home for people living with HIV/AIDS where I work, there was a patient who would always greet me with a “How are you?” in Korean. I didn’t teach it to him so I wondered where he learned this Korean greeting. Now I am sorry that I didn’t ask him about it. One day when I arrived in the center, I was immediately informed that he passed away earlier that morning. His body was still in his bed so I went to visit him one last time and prayed for his eternal rest.

A few months previous, his health started getting worse, and he needed to have an operation because there was a tumor on his neck. The doctor, his family and the staff told him many times that he should have the procedure, but in the end he decided not to go ahead with it. He would not eat and was getting weaker day by day so I encouraged him to try to eat so that his medication will work and for his body to become stronger. He said something to me with tears in his eyes but I couldn’t quite catch what he was trying to say due the tumor. What did he say to me that day? I would never know and will always wonder.

Later, a Korean group on a mission exposure visited the center. Before their arrival, I already heard that they had many concerns about what to expect about meeting the people in the center, so I wanted to let them know the facts about HIV/AIDS and dispel the myths that the virus can be transmitted by social contact. Most importantly I wanted to show them that people living with HIV/AIDS are also children of God.



I was given an hour to share with them about my life as a missionary. I hoped that through my sharing they would arrive at a better understanding about the virus and people living with HIV/AIDS, which if given the wrong information can often lead to prejudice and misunderstanding. After my sharing with them, we had lunch together with the people in the center.

At first I was anxious whether the group and the patients in the center would be comfortable sharing a meal together. But my concern was unfounded! When I witnessed that they were enjoying eating together, I felt that the Kingdom of God was here with us at that moment. I could see that everyone was enjoying themselves. It was the moment where any prejudice and misunderstanding between them was broken. I felt very grateful and happy especially when one of the participants from the group expressed their appreciation to a patient who had shared some food with them during the meal.

At first they might have felt afraid to meet the patients because they

didn’t know much about AIDS. I was deeply impressed by the openness and courage of the group towards the people living with HIV/AIDS in the center.

Fear stops us from moving forward. Through this experience I have learned that we can meet our living God when we allow ourselves to be more courageous.

Five weeks after the visitation of the Korean group, my morning “welcomer” passed away. He died young at the age of 55. He witnessed many deaths while he was staying at the center and was probably afraid because eventually this would happen to him one day. I cannot help wondering what would have happened to him if he had undergone the surgery. And, I would like to express my gratitude to the Korean group that gave him joyful memories before his death.

Finally, let us remember all those who have passed away of AIDS and may they rest in Peace. ☩

Columban lay missionary Lee Su-Bin Matilda provided this reflection.



CHANGE THE WORLD

With a Gift from Your Retirement Account

*They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing
I also was eager to do. Galatians 2:10*

Good intentions are important, especially when it comes to giving. And a planned gift—a gift you designate to start after your lifetime—can have long-term impact. If you are looking for an easy way to support the Missionary Society of St. Columban, but can't part with assets today, consider designating us as the beneficiary of your retirement plan assets. Retirement plan assets make a tax-wise gift to the Society. As a nonprofit organization, we are tax-exempt and eligible to receive the full amount and bypass any federal taxes.

Your gifts helped Columban Fr. Michael Hoban run a summer program for children living in one of Santiago, Chile's poorest areas. With your assistance, the Columban missionaries provided recreation, education and food for over 150 children during the summer.

Contact us to learn about the many different ways you can give to the Missionary Society of St. Columban.



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

www.columban.org
toll-free: 877/299-1920
donorrelations@columban.org

What Is Important?

Our Presence

By Sheryl Lou Capili

Coming back to Taiwan as a second term lay missionary, I was very excited to go back to serve in the migrant ministry. I have a new assignment which is to help out in conducting the Chinese catechism class among the children of the Filipino immigrants. I was looking forward to being with these children, whom before I would only meet on special occasions. I was told that for the first few months, I would observe how Ms. Chen (a Taiwanese volunteer teacher) and Sr. Imee (a Filipino Carmelite sister) facilitate the class and

to assist when they ask me to do so. Doing catechism in Chinese requires experience, and the knowledge of the language is necessary, especially the terminologies used in the Church in a way that children would understand.

It was the first day of the Catechism class. It was a big shock for me. Our catechists got so busy and suddenly I was asked to handle the class by myself. I started to panic because I did not prepare anything, or maybe it is more accurate to say, I had no idea how to go about it. After three years of living in Taiwan, that

was the first time that I would be with Mandarin-speaking children, not just for a small talk but to conduct Catechism. I felt shocked and anxious.

For the first few minutes I was speechless. All I could do was to smile at the cute, angelic faces before me while thinking about what to say to them. I felt sorry for them because if I will not handle the class that Sunday then their coming would have been in vain. I realized that I need to play a part to remedy the awkward situation. At the same time I wished that I was

They would attend the Catechism class regularly. I was grateful for that experience, because I realized that I can share my faith experience and love to those children. I was full of joy being with them.

in a situation where I could speak the language fluently.

During our orientation program in the Philippines, I did part-time apostolate in Malate Parish every Saturday morning. There were around 30 kids and teens between the ages of five to fifteen. They would attend the Catechism class regularly. I was grateful for that experience, because I realized that I can share my faith experience and love to those children. I was full of joy being with them. I didn't feel anxious because



A few more weeks have passed, and I have slowly adjusted to this new experience. Gradually I am gaining more confidence in speaking Mandarin.

I knew the language they speak and communicating with them was not a big concern for me. But this time I was faced with the challenge of speaking in Mandarin.

At the beginning there were so many things that I wanted to share with them, but most of the time I felt anxious and uncertain about how to say things to them. I was concerned that they would not be able to understand what I was trying to tell them. One girl asked me in Chinese, “Does Jesus also like bad people?” When I heard her question, I felt anxious. Not because I do not know what to say, but how to answer her in Mandarin. Nevertheless, I still tried my best, and I think she was satisfied with my answer.

A few more weeks have passed, and I have slowly adjusted to this new experience. Gradually I am gaining more confidence in speaking Mandarin. I continued to conduct the Catechism classes by myself. In being with these children little did they know that they are helping me to improve my ability to speak Mandarin. More importantly I am enjoying my time with the children. As I manage to overcome my frustrations and expectations of myself, I believe

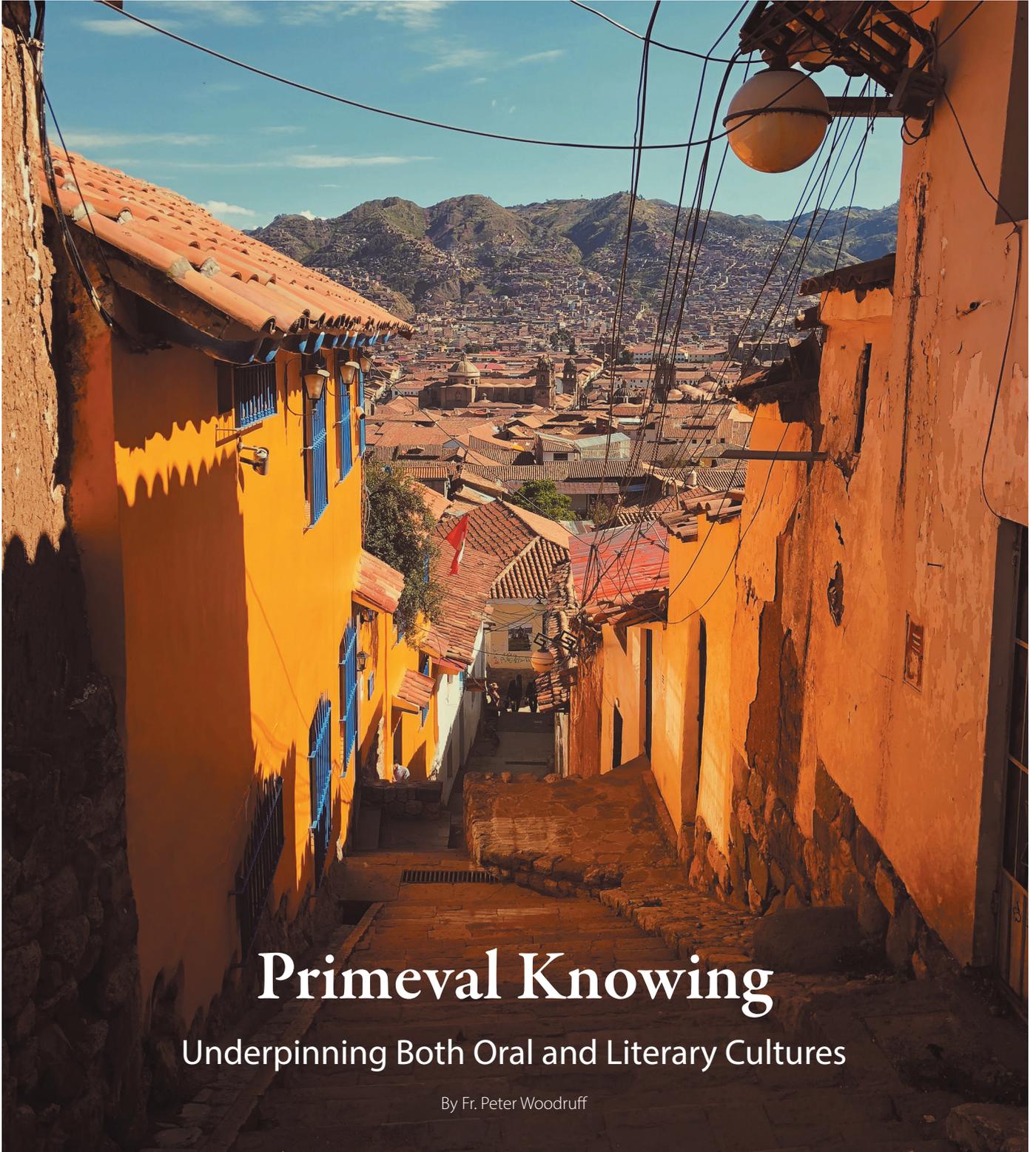


In being with these children little did they know that they are helping me to improve my ability to speak Mandarin.

that the Holy Spirit is at work. Every Sunday is so special for me because it is a constant call for me to continue to recognize how the Holy Spirit is at work.

Like the situation where I am at the children seem to understand what I am trying to teach them, even with my limited Mandarin. The children have been very patient with me all this time and this has been a humbling experience for me. I realized that in doing mission, most of the time it is not the words that are important but our presence. 

Columban lay missionary Sheryl Lou Capili lives and works in Taiwan.



Primeval Knowing

Underpinning Both Oral and Literary Cultures

By Fr. Peter Woodruff

My mind was significantly shaped by mathematics, logic and informal debate. Thinking things through, stating a position and articulating the case for a position has been constant in my life. For some, the primary way of learning

and communication is in the context of conversation. Such people learn by engaging with others, speaking and listening. They yarn, tell and listen to stories. Such stories may simply be about life experiences or they may be stories that interpret the meaning

of things. However, my experience of life tells me that there is another primeval pattern of learning, thought and insight that might be potentially operative in all of us.

I recall an occasion when I was sitting in a chair, next to the altar in

a busy and noisy church at the end of Mass. I was resting and watching men and women buzzing about organizing the removal of a large portable platform on which they carried the florally adorned image of their patron saint. It must have been clear that I was enjoying myself as one of women said to me: “Padre, you seem to like the people’s religion.” I was unfamiliar with the implied distinction between the priests’ religion and the people’s religion.

In that framework, leading the celebration of the Eucharist was an integral part of the priests’ religion. Organizing and participating in the festivity in honor of the patron saint was similarly part of the people’s religion. In the Eucharist there is both teaching and celebration and while the “people” are the vast majority of those present, the priest leads both the teaching and ritual parts. On the other hand, the celebration in honor of the saint is entirely in the hands of the devotees. There is no teaching but much ritual and music; there may even be fireworks. There is a procession, then a party with food and drink, music and dance, and, of course, much camaraderie. There is no strictly defined ritual, but there is ritual, understood and enacted by various designated members of the community as they celebrate their patron saint’s feast day. There is intense communal activity and sharing.

I remember that I engaged with the woman who commented on my liking the people’s religion and told her that, yes, I did like the people’s religion, which took me back to an occasion when I had joined in a celebration of the people’s religion.

That had been in another parish, in the upper part of a valley rising

up towards the east from the coastal plain, much of which is now covered by the suburbs of Lima (Peru). In this part of the parish, there were, at that time, around 500 houses, some in a ring around the edge of the valley wall and others in a few short, crisscrossing streets in the center of the valley that had been levelled at the time of the original settlement. The residents had squatted in that part of the valley and then negotiated an agreement whereby they became owners of the land.

A small group in the local community had a special devotion to *El Señor de los Milagros* (The Lord of Miracles). They wanted to carry an image, in this case, a painting, on a portable platform (*el anda*) around the streets of the settlement (*el barrio*). There would normally be a band to accompany the image, rotating teams to carry the portable platform and any number of devotees. Our route was the unpaved street that looped around the edge of the top part of the valley floor. We struggled to find a few women to carry *el anda* as no men had come along. There were more dogs than people and some children joined in too. There was no band so someone found a cassette player with batteries that ran out during the procession.

For the most part, neighbors watched respectfully as the procession passed their house but there was some jeering. I tagged along, taking things as they happened and not feeling in any way responsible for trying to “fix” anything.

It occurred to me at some stage of the procession that the small rag-tag group of people and mangy dogs, walking slowly, until the batteries ran out, to the canned music of a few hymns was God saying to the people

of the barrio, “I am with you.” There was no sewage system installed and no piped water. The houses were small and mostly unfinished – some of brick and concrete, some of adobe (mud and straw brick) and some of matting made from sugar cane (*esteras*). The residents were poor, very few with more than primary education and most struggling to find or hold a steady job. Some were desperately poor.

I have no idea why it occurred to me that we, on the initiative of a small community group, were in fact announcing God present in that community. There was nothing particularly beautiful about our procession. In fact, it probably seemed a little crazy to most of those watching. No one was making any promises about anything. At that time, we had not acquired land to build a chapel. There was no local church organization up and running. No one had ever told me that announcing God’s presence was the basic purpose of such a procession. I was just wandering along with the small group chatting and, for moments, wondering about it all. I had no expectations. In fact, in a certain sense the whole business seemed to be a disaster from beginning to end. And yet, it ended up being one of the most memorable moments of my life.

The key to insight in this case was not related to reading and thinking, not even to listening to someone speaking wisely, but simply being with a group of people going about expressing their faith in God in a way that was familiar to them – people’s religion! **EM**

After many decades on mission in Peru, Columban Fr. Peter Woodruff now lives and works in Australia.

The Challenge

To Love Them as They Are

Sr. Cecilia Cuizon

The Community of Hope Special Education Center is a religious and charitable organization run by the Columban Sisters. It delivers services to children and young adults with disabilities in Ozamiz City, Philippines, and its neighboring towns in Misamis Occidental aimed at making a difference to their lives. The love of God becomes a reality for them as they see their own transformation.

Leslie is a student with autism and an intellectual disability. She also has a potassium deficiency. Eating bananas and more exposure to the sun are not enough anymore. The medication she gets at the center strengthens her muscles to enable her to stand and walk. She was only ten years old when she was referred to The Community of Hope Special Education Center by the principal of her school. She was defiant and disobedient with her teachers as she hated school. She was being bullied both in school and in the community. The bullies felt that she was different from them.

Her mother wanted to give her a good education in preparation for her future. She worked hard selling cakes to add to her husband's meager income. He was an alcoholic and had no regular job. Later he died of depression. Her older children got married and had families of their own. Leslie's mom was sickly and died when Leslie was only thirteen years old. Leslie was the youngest in the family of four.

With her parent's death, Leslie suffered intensely. She was moved

from one relative to another. At one time she stayed with her older married sister who has three children and whose husband did not have a definite income. It did not work. Leslie was back to her old problematic behavior. God, who is rich in mercy and compassion, touched the heart of her paternal married aunt who decided to take her as part of her family. At present, she is living with them. Her aunt has become her legal guardian, and it is with Leslie's aunt that we are carrying out the rehabilitation process.

The center's social worker drew up a rehabilitation plan for Leslie. The intervention includes pre-academic, one-to-one intervention and Activities

Their smiles reflect the compassionate love of God for all people without distinction.

for Daily Living (ADL) which covers simple, practical and appropriate livelihood skills training. Socialization among her peer group has helped her develop her self-confidence.

Every year, the center organizes a Youth Summer Camp. It is the one time of the year that Leslie experiences psychological and emotional security. During this event, some young people volunteer to accompany our students. They accompany our students and show them care and appreciation for their gifts and talents. Our students feel that they are loved, appreciated and have a sense of empowerment.



At present, the center is serving 125 children and young adults with disabilities. They receive physiotherapy and other rehabilitation services. Their smiles reflect the compassionate love of God for all people without distinction. Sr. Cecilia says, "Our call and challenge is to love them as they are and to act according to what is appropriate."

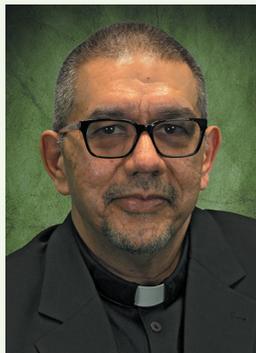
Over the years the center has served more than 1,000 children and young adults who suffer from autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, club foot, cleft palate, hearing impairments and intellectual disabilities. Thanks to the programs at the center, some participants have been able to find work in the local community. Sr. Sophia, who manages the livelihood skills training program says, "With faith and trust in God, we are very grateful that we can continue to offer these services. Thank you, God, for choosing and giving us the privilege to love, cherish and journey with these students. God is indeed good!" 

Columban Missionary Sr. Cecilia Cuizon is the Director of the Hope Special Education Center in Ozamiz, the Philippines.

Women and Children

One summer, as a seminarian, I was a chaplain in a Level-1 trauma center at Mount Sinai Hospital, Chicago, Illinois. Generally, I attended to the emergency room section. However, at one point I asked to begin to visit the maternity ward because I spoke Spanish and many of the women were Spanish speaking only. I was hesitant about going thinking that, as a man, what could I converse with them? I went on my first visit but felt the conversations were awkward. Often, I was at a loss for words. Later, I shared my experience with a group of fellow chaplains. The female chaplains inquired about what I asked the women. Did I ask how long the labor was? How difficult the labor was? How much did the baby weigh? Of course, those questions did not occur to me. When I went back to the maternity ward, I made the inquires, and the conversations changed. They were more engaging, and the mothers wanted to talk about their experiences of birth.

As a priest in Chile, I had a remarkable experience of being a friend to Rosa, a very poor woman who suffered from depression. She had lost custody of her two children because she couldn't keep a job due to her psychological condition. Rosa made a living by selling small handicrafts she made out of her little choza (shack) where she lived. Often, she would come by the parish to converse with me about her difficult life. Her only desire was to regain custody of her two children. I took pity on her and often bought her



FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Fr. Chris Saenz

small handicrafts. I prayed that her life would become better. One day, she came to share exciting news with me. I wondered if she had regained custody of her two children. Not so. Rosa wanted to share the news that she was pregnant with twins! I thought this was a divine joke and wondered how could this woman handle such a burden. Yet, upon looking on her face, she was radiant with joy. Rosa proclaimed, "I am so happy that God considers me worthy enough to still give life!" At that moment, I felt like Elizabeth receiving Mary's news of



the Incarnation. Rosa wanted to rejoice with a friend, and I was honored enough to be that friend.

Lastly, a couple of years ago, I was sitting with a relative of mine who talked about her struggles with menopause. In the conversation she asked, "Do you priests get training into how to accompany women struggling with menopause?" I searched my head and realized that we do not. She inquired, "aren't women the majority of the people in the church, how can you not

As in the Gospels, women were the main supporters of Jesus' mission (Luke 8: 1-3) and accompanied Him even to the Crucifixion (Luke 23: 49).

get some sort of training in this issue?" She was right. As a priest, women are our valuable partners in the mission. As in the Gospels, women were the main supporters of Jesus' mission (Luke 8: 1-3) and accompanied Him even to the Crucifixion (Luke 23: 49). As missionaries, we wish to recognize the valuable contributions women and children have made, and our need to adequately support their needs. It was a trademark of Jesus' ministry, and we are asked to imitate Him.

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**

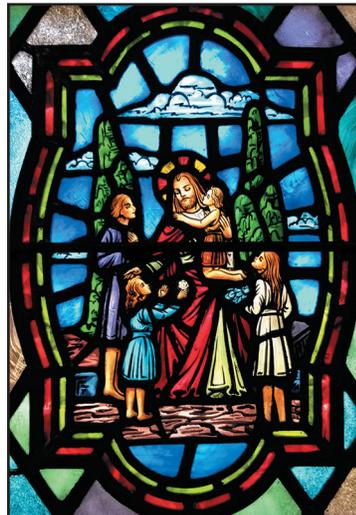
Columban Mission magazine is published eight times each year and tells the stories of our missionaries and the people they are called to serve. Columban missionaries live in solidarity with their people and, together, they move forward to improve their social, economic and spiritual lives, always with 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



*“Do not prevent them, for the
kingdom of heaven belongs
to such as these.”*

– St. Matthew 19:14

To whom does the kingdom belong? It belongs to the children, indeed, but also the weak, the poor, and those on the edge of society are those who possess it. He sends us to bring the good news to them and to be good news for them.

We invite you to join this new generation by becoming
a Columban Father or Columban Sister.

*If you are interested in the missionary
priesthood, write or call...*

Fr. Bill Morton

**National Vocation Director
Columban Fathers**

St. Columbans, NE 68056

877/299-1920

Email: vocations@columban.org

Website: www.columban.org

*If you are interested in becoming a
Columban Sister, write or call...*

**Sr. Carmen Maldonado
National Vocation Director**

Columban Sisters

2546 Lake Rd.

Silver Creek, NY 14136

716/934-4515

Email: sscuvocations@yahoo.com

Websites: www.columbansisters.org

www.columbansistersusa.com

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