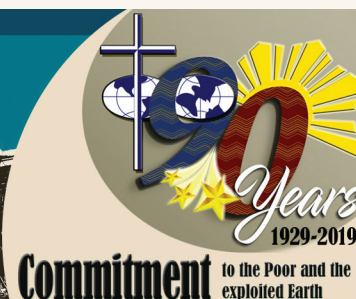


Columban Mission

Issue No. 33

Pilgrims for Christ



In line with the 90th anniversary celebration of the Columban Society in the Philippines, we have adopted a banner reflective of what the Society commemorates reaching out to the ends of the earth as Pilgrims for Christ. The logo [symbol at the right] is the official anniversary logo. As we move forward, we continue to share in the mission of Christ, walking with those in the margins and the exploited earth.



REMINDE US OF GOD'S MAJESTY

Praise be to God! Fr. Louie Ybañez was ordained a priest by Bishop Edwin dela Peña, MSC, of St. Mary's Prelature of Marawi on February 16, 2019 at the Most Holy Rosary Parish, Agusan, Cagayan de Oro City. The Columban Missionaries are most grateful to God for having another committed person saying YES to the call to mission on the occasion of their 90 years of missionary presence in the Philippines.

The smiles and tears on the faces of Father Louie's family and friends conveyed their deepest emotions which words could never describe. It was difficult for them to let go of Father Louie at the start since he was never separated from them. But as time passed by, they began to rejoice with their son in his chosen vocation.

Bp. dela Peña, in his homily, encouraged Father Louie with these words, "We need you to be a holy, good and faithful priest. In spite your unworthiness, speak to us about the word of God; point us to eternal life, and in your life and ministry remind us of the majesty of God's grace." With these thoughts, we pray with Father Louie as he journeys with the people in Pakistan where he will be assigned.



What's Inside

- ♦ Book Launching of "Popong: A Compilation of Stories about Fr. Rufus Halley"
- ♦ Fulfillment of A Call
- ♦ Centenary Celebrations in Pangasinan, Rizal and Don Victoriano
- ♦ Jubilarians
- ♦ The Forgotten Face of God
- ♦ The Accomplishment of a Vocation Promoter
- ♦ My Great Columban "Close Encounter"
- ♦ News Updates
- ♦ Prayer Guides
- ♦ Those Who Journeyed With Us

We thank **Mary Joy Rile-Servicio** for her dedicated service to Columban mission and her passion for the work at the Communications Office. Joy first started working with the Columbans as Editorial Assistant of *Misyon* from November 2008 to April 2013. She came back in August 2015 and became the Assistant Editor in June 2017 when the *Misyon* office moved to Manila. She got married in November 2018 and has moved back to Bacolod with her husband to start a family of their own. Wishing Joy all the best in life. God bless.



JOY-RILE SERVICIO



Our gratitude goes **Ma. Criselda Mendoza and Cindy Isorena** for their generous service to the Columbans. Crissy was secretary to the regional director since July 2013. Cindy started working as an accounting assistant in September 2014 and moved her way up to becoming the regional bursar by October 2018. Crissy has moved to Australia for further studies while Cindy has decided to help in the family business. We wish them God's best in their journey.



MA. CRISelda MENDOZA CINDY ISORENA



FROM THE DIRECTOR



Our immense gratitude to our generous God as we recall the most joyful and grace-filled Centenary celebration of the Missionary Society of Saint Columban we had last year. Our sincerest appreciation to everyone who worked so hard throughout 2018 to ensure that we had a series of most wonderful celebrations in the dioceses and parishes where Columbans have served over the years in Luzon, Mindanao and Negros.

This year, we have the great privilege of celebrating 90 years of Columban Mission in the Philippines. On May 30, 1929 the first Columban priest to be assigned in the Philippines, Fr. Michael Cuddigan, arrived in Our Lady of Remedies Parish, Malate, Manila from Ireland.

Many of our priests suffered great hardships at various times in our country's history; yet God has always been faithful to us, especially during those difficult times. But we, Columbans, have been able to continue our mission here in the Philippines for 90 years because of the tremendous friendship, encouragement and love that we continue to receive from the Filipino people.

It is also through the fruit of your marvellous support over the years that many young Filipinos and Filipinas have responded to the call to be Columban missionary priests and lay missionaries in so many countries around the world.

On February 16, 2019 we were blessed with the gift of another young Filipino Columban missionary priest, Fr. Louie Ybanez, SSC. He was ordained to the priesthood by the bishop of Marawi, Most Reverend Edwin de la Pena, MSP, DD in Father Louie's home parish, Holy Rosary, Agusan, Cagayan de Oro City. Father Louie will be taking up his new mission in Pakistan by September this year. Please pray for him as he responds to God's call in this difficult mission.

To mark the 90th anniversary of our Columban presence in the Philippines there will be a Thanksgiving Mass in Our Lady of Remedies Parish, Malate on June 3, 2019 at 6pm. We are truly grateful to God and to you our supporters, our benefactors – our dear friends. Without you we would not be celebrating 90 years of mission in this most beautiful country.

Maraming, maraming salamat po sa inyong walang tigil na pagsuporta sa amin!

Fr. Paul G. Lynn SSC

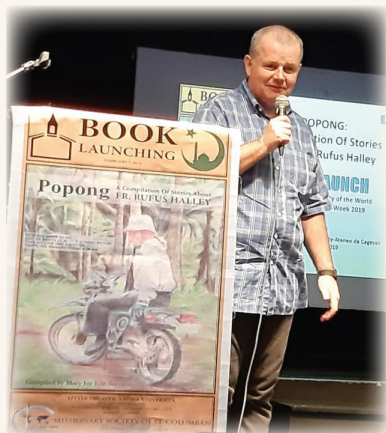
REUNION OF FORMER COLUMBAN STAFF

On December 30, 2018, a group of former Columban staff held their first reunion at the house of Mr. & Mrs. Narciso Friolo. Most attendees were former staff of the then Columban house in Ozamiz. The presence of two Columban Fathers, Oliver McCrossan and Sean Martin, was greatly appreciated. It is the hope of the group to hold a yearly gathering and invite other Columban workers (former and present) to join, especially those in Mindanao area.



BOOK LAUNCH OF “POPONG: A COMPILATION OF STORIES ABOUT FR. RUFUS HALLEY”

by Rochelle Mordeno, JPIC-Mindanao Animator



“In everything, we need to transcend. Let our faith be bigger or higher than our fears.” To people whose lives were touched by Fr. Rufus “Popong” Halley, the above statement is so clear, when in pursuit of a life that directly puts one in the line of adversity. His tragic death remains a great loss to the Columban Society, and even more so to the people in Malabang and other neighboring municipalities in Lanao del Sur where he was doing his mission. However, the impact of his life’s work remains felt, and in an attempt to preserve his legacy comes “Popong: A Compilation Of Stories About Fr. Rufus Halley”. Fr. Paul Glynn, SCC, Regional Director of the Missionary Society of St. Columban, formally opened the book launch last February 17. Friends and comrades came together in a one-of-a kind gathering to remember him and articulate his legacy and its relevance to the situation in Mindanao today.

Ms. Mary Joy Rile-Servicio, who compiled Fr. Popong’s stories and works with the help of many contributors, presented the book. She cited that the stories reveal not only positive things about Fr. Popong but also his limitations, aspirations and fears while doing his mission, just like any ordinary person. Some of the most memorable life lessons Fr. Popong impressed upon the contributors are about his long years of advocacy for inter-faith dialogue, the importance of humor amidst strife, and the value of prayer. The ripeness of the timing of the activity to the present situation in Mindanao is Popong’s reminder to all of us to pursue our work for peace.

Archbishop Ledesma, who graced the occasion, cited, “The situations of conflict need to be overcome by situations of dialogue. In the past, talking about Culture of Peace was associated with polarization, suspicions, etc. I am happy to see that the mindset has shifted now. It has become a shared dream of everybody. Milestones like these prove Popong’s life and death did not go in vain. His efforts continue to reverberate among us, and may all these sustain our peace efforts today.”



L-R: Rochelle Mordeno, Fr. Chito Suganob, Vilma Arante & Mary Joy Rile-Servicio

“My father was the backbone in molding me to the Catholic faith. You are also my backbone, supporting and encouraging me in this journey to the priesthood,” expressed Fr. Peter Dong during his Thanksgiving Mass held at the Columban house in Singalong on February 20, 2019. Father Peter couldn’t help but shed tears of sadness as he recalled the presence of only one Columban priest on behalf of the Society during his ordination. However, he remains grateful and understands very well that inasmuch as many of the Columbans would like to join him on that very important event in his life, the risks of foreigners attending his ordination in China were quite high for

FULFILLMENT OF A CALL by Mary Joy Rile-Servicio



Fr. Peter Lichun Dong, SSC

everybody, including Father Peter.

Father Peter was ordained to the priesthood, with two other priests and two deacons, on January 25 in China; the first one to be ordained for the Missionary Society of St. Columban from Mainland China. This is a momentous event for the Columban Missionaries after a

hundred years of responding to God’s call to mission. Father Peter attended the formation program in the Philippines. He was sent to Chile in 2015 for a two-year First Mission Assignment. He learned Tagalog and Spanish, and now has to learn Urdu for his new mission in Pakistan this year.

It is tough to learn different languages, adapt to new ways in a new culture and to keep a firm heart, while dealing with people of different faith traditions, but these are all parts of becoming missionary. It is God’s grace that enables one to fulfill the call. Father Peter, thank you for the friendship and for the valuable time you spent with us here in the Philippines. God bless you!

MISSION PROMOTION

by Ms. Evelyn Sabate, Luzon Animator

The Luzon Mission Partners' General Assembly held at Malate Jubilee Center last December 2018 was a memorable, joyous and successful event. The participants came from different areas including Binangonan, Bulacan, Cubao, Malate and Zambales. The presence of the Columban priests, seminarians and lay missionaries during the assembly was a great opportunity to strengthen and deepen relationships with our partners in mission.

The Missionary Society of St. Columban is profoundly grateful to all mission partners, especially to those who attended the assembly.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals (BCBP) Social Action Group-Alabang Chapter for being our new partner in reaching out to people who are in need. Thank you for your in-kind donations, but most importantly, for your trust in this partnership. May this be the beginning of more collaborative efforts. Special thanks also to Wilcon Home Depot for becoming our partner in mission, providing avenues for people who want to extend help and pledge support to Columban mission by allowing us to put coin banks, "alkansya", in all their branches in the Philippines,

To all our individual benefactors and donors, thank you for your unwavering support. We will continue to cultivate and strengthen relationships with groups and individuals through mission appeals in parishes, "alkansya" in the different learning institutions and through the facilitation of recollections.



Luzon Mission Partners General Assembly - Malate



*L-R: Asiba Sulani, Rasam Disuma
& Mohaya Pua*



CHRISTMAS OUTREACH IN PAGADIAN

by Marjorie Engcoy/Mindanao

Marjorie is a Columban lay missionary who is presently assigned in Fiji.

The Columban Vocation-Mission team continues with its regular gathering & monthly reflection/recollection with the mission partners.

Last December 9, 2018, I had the privilege of joining the Columban mission partners in Pagadian in their Christmas Outreach to the residents of San Pedro. The group rendezvoused at Sto. Niño Cathedral before heading to the community. This activity was in partnership with PAGKAKA (Pagdakayo Kasamahan Ma Kauman, which stands for "Unity of Sama People in Community"), a non-government organization established in 2006. The organization strives to prepare Sama Kabingangan children, aged 3-4 years old, before teaching them Islamic values, Mathematics, Reading and Writing in Kindergarten.

We were greeted by Ms. Mohaya S. Pua, the program coordinator and two of her teachers, Ms. Rasam Disuma and Asiba Sulani. They were the ones who organized the gathering of the mothers and their children who are members of the tribe Sama Kabingangan. The mission partners shared a simple lunch with the community and gave out Christmas gifts such as packs of groceries and toys for the children.

FORMATION UPDATE *by Fr Felisiano Fatu, Rector*

The formation community warmly welcomes Verano Lee from South Korea who is currently studying English at the Assumption Language College. The community consists of four students studying English, five studying Theology and nine studying Philosophy at Loyola School of Theology. The pastoral work is in full swing as students attend to their ministries either on Saturday or Sunday.

Four students will begin their First Mission Assignment (FMA) program in July 2019. Iowane Naio and Saula Seeto, both from Fiji, have been appointed to Peru while Peter Kyaw Zaw and Francis Nbwi La Aung, both from Myanmar, have been appointed to Fiji. The four are happy with their appointments and are looking forward to their FMA in July.

The students attended a forum on “Spirituality of Peace” from various perspectives and religious traditions such as Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam at the Institute of Spirituality in Asia. Fr. Paul Glynn conducted an inter-cultural living workshop with them at the end of March 2019.

On a lighter note, the students enjoy having sports every Friday as a way of bonding with each other and as a refresher to their tired minds from the demands of their studies. Overall, there is good morale in the community.

This year, we will organize a Lenten collection for the benefit of the people we are working with in Parola, Tondo.

We continue to thank our mission partners and benefactors for their support and generosity. We remember them in our community masses and prayers.

May God's blessings be upon all of you.



COLUMBAN LAY MISSIONARIES (CLM) UPDATE *by Lilibeth Sabado, Coordinator*

Nineteen Columban Missionaries attended the parish mission-sending mass of Hazel Angwani on December 9, 2018 at Sta. Rita de Cascia Cathedral in Bontoc, Mountain Province. Hazel (PH 25), together with her companion, Monaliza (PH 26), are assigned to Pakistan. They had their contract signing on April 8, 2019 at the Columban House in Singalong, Manila.

Lanieta Tamatawale, Fiji, assigned to the Philippine region, is presently in Australia for her sabbatical. Jhoanna Resari who was in the region for a few months to help out in mission promotion is doing her Sabbatical in the US. On January 6, 2019, Michael Javier and Lorna Cañete left for Myanmar.

In mid-January, CLM-PH hosted its Central Leadership Team (CLT). The three members of the CLT attended some modular classes at EMMAUS Center, did a workshop on team building with Fr. Finbar Maxwell and had a few days of retreat in Tagaytay.

Kim Sun Hee and Noh Hyein Anna, Korea, came back from Ireland after a year of English language studies. Both were welcomed in Singalong at the closing of the regional assembly, and at the same time, we bade Anna farewell as she would take on the CLM Coordinator's role in Korea. We wish Anna all the best in her ministry of leadership.

We are happy to welcome back Liliani Ma'afu and Haiti Muller who have decided to renew their agreement with the CLM for another three years as second term LMs. We look forward to their return in April.

Meanwhile, we thank Vasemaca Ratu for spending three years with us. We wish her all the best.



Mona Esteban & Hazel Angwani



Michael Javier & Lorna Canete

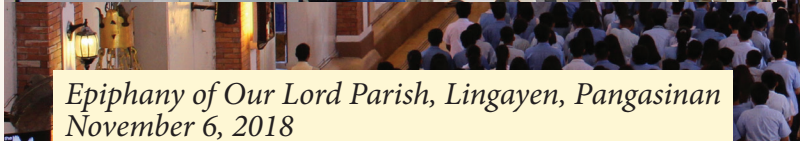


Noh Hyein & Kim Sun Hee

CLOSING OF CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS 2018



*Epiphany of Our Lord Parish, Lingayen, Pangasinan
November 6, 2018*



*Our Lady of Lourdes Mission Station
Don Victoriano Chiongbian, Misamis Occidental
November 28, 2019*



*Santa Ursula Parish, Binangonan, Rizal
December 6, 2018*

JUBILARIANS

DIAMOND



Fr. Kevin McHugh, from Antrim, Northern Ireland, has been in the Philippines since 1960. He spent many years in Mindanao, much of that time in parishes in Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. He learned to speak Cebuano and Meranao. In recent years, he has been working in Malate Parish, Manila and has learned to speak Tagalog as well. He has devoted much of his energy and time in making the liturgical participation come alive in the Christian communities.

GOLDEN



Fr. Damien McKenna was born in Armagh, Northern Ireland. He has been a missionary in the Philippines since 1969 and has been assigned to different parishes in Mindanao for the past 50 years. He is also a philanthropist who has provided children with academic scholarships. He is currently living in Pagadian.



Fr. Dominic Nolan, from Melbourne, Australia, has been working in the Philippines most of the time since his ordination to priesthood in 1969. He was assigned to parishes in the Diocese of Iba, Zambales. His ministries include raising mission awareness, giving lectures on Scripture, life and prayer. He is a co-founder of the Center for Ecozoic Living and Learning (CELL), a place where permaculture, sustainable living and zero waste disposal are being demonstrated and practiced.

SILVER



Fr. Enrique Escobar, from Chiclayo, Peru, first came to the Philippines as an Associate Priest of the Columban Society and was assigned in Malate parish while learning two languages, English and Tagalog, at the same time. In 2001, he became a Columban Priest. Presently, he is assigned to the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Barra, Opol, Cagayan de Oro. Prior to his assignment in Mindanao, he studied Cebuano in Davao.



Fr. Paul Glynn, from Cork, Ireland, first arrived in the Philippines as a seminarian during his First Mission Assignment (FMA) in 1990 and was assigned in Morong, Rizal. After his ordination in 1994, he returned to the Philippines and for many years had lived among Muslims in Mindanao, spending most of that time working for better relations between Christians and Muslims. In 2016, he became the Regional Director of the Columban Society in the Philippines. He speaks fluent Cebuano, Meranao and Tagalog.

We thank and praise God for these Golden Jubilarians who were once assigned in the Philippines for many years and are now in Ireland:



Fr Donal Hogan



Fr Colin McLean



Fr Sean McDonagh



Fr Bernard Mulkerins



Fr Joseph McDonnell



Fr Peter O'Neill

REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

February 18-21, 2019
Singalong, Malate, Manila
Columban priests, lay missionaries, students
and co-workers



WE ONLY HAVE 12 YEARS!

by John Din, JPIC Coordinator

Scientists, in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report in 2018, informed the world that a far-reaching and unprecedented scale of transition is needed for the next twelve years to keep the level of global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius. Otherwise, forget about the earth as we know it. As always, it will be the poor who will suffer the brunt of the human-induced climate change. It is indeed an urgent call to care for our common home.

The Columban Missionaries are celebrating its 90th year of missionary presence in the Philippines by honoring its commitment to the poor and



Lalom nga Panaw ngadto sa Laudato Si' Animators Training
CABUSTAM CLUSTER - Cagayan de Oro, April 2-5, 2019

Updates on Vocation Promotion

by Rolly Aniscal, SSC, Vocation Director

We started accompanying eleven candidates who showed interest in joining the Columban Missionaries.

The candidates had the chance to mingle with the Columban Missionaries when they stayed in the Singalong house on April 5-10 for the workshops on inter-cultural living and on sexuality. From the eleven candidates, seven took the psychological exam, a prerequisite for the final screening in June this year.

Columban Missionaries during a vocation talk
at Central Philippine State University - Ilog
Campus, Negros Occ.



We keep our vocation promotion open to grade ten and senior high school students. It is good to plant the seeds of vocation in the hearts of the young so they may know the Columban Missionaries. We are looking forward to the National Youth Day in Cebu City on April 23 to 28. Please pray for all our seven candidates.



the exploited earth. As a convenor of Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM)-Pilipinas, the Columbans have provided support for the organization to respond with urgency the call for ecological conversion. GCCM-Pilipinas continues to conduct Deep Journey into *Laudato Si'* Animators Training (DJLS) – a combination of the Awakening the Dreamer Workshop developed by Pachamama Alliance and the encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* On the Care of Our Common Home.

DJLS training-workshops were given to the Diocese of Laoag Catholic School System in January 2019 and in February, to a group of representatives coming from the different dioceses and religious congregations in Myanmar. A Cebuano DJLS training-workshop was conducted to the cluster diocese of Cagayan de Oro, Butuan, Tandag, Surigao and Malaybalay (CABUSTAM) in Cagayan de Oro in April. This was the first time the module was given in the local language. The team is still working on the Tagalog translation of the module.

There are plans to conduct the DJLS training-workshop to the cluster diocese of Dipolog, Ozamiz, Pagadian, Iligan and Marawi (DOPIM) and to four dioceses in the island of Negros. It is the hope of GCCM-Pilipinas that, with the support of the Columbans, the workshop will be made available to the parishes.

GCCM-Pilipinas co-organized the meeting between Christiana Figueres, former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and faith-based organizations during her visit to Manila. Christiana shared how *Laudato Si'* had been instrumental in getting the world leaders to adopt the Paris Agreement in 2015.



Christiana Figueres meets with
Faith-based organizations in Manila

The Forgotten Face of God

by Fr. Kwang-Kyu Ji



Father Kwang-Kyu, Korea, did his First Mission Assignment here in the Philippines in 2012.

I came back from Korea to the Philippines on March 26, 2018 and was assigned to Our Lady of Remedies Parish, Malate for eight months.

One day, I was assigned to visit the sick. I was accompanied by two members of the Legion of Mary. On our way, they asked me, "Father, shall we visit a child first before going to the area in Malate? The child wants to receive Holy Communion." They brought me to a street where a small child and his mother were living in a tent. His name is Mark. When I saw him, he was in a wheelchair, so weak and thin as a rail. I was quite shocked to see this little child suffering from terrible illness and poverty. I didn't know what to do.

Overwhelmed by Mark's situation, I asked God, "Why is this happening to the one who loves you? Why do you allow tragedy and suffering? Why have you abandoned your beloved children?"

Amidst the noise on the street, I said a prayer. After saying the "Our Father", I said to Mark, Kristo", and gave him that moment, his face I saw God in Mark's wonderful surprise for embarrassment, I saw His in the darkness of my heart. His pure heart penetrated the depths of my soul.

This was the first time that I gave the sacrament on the road. I gazed at Mark and he smiled at me. It was a wonderful experience of joy and comfort. At such unexpected moments, God shines out.

Whenever I pass that road, Mark looks at me with a smile and waves his hand. The child's small gesture and bright smile, re-invigorate the love of God engraved in me and remind me of His forgotten face.

God's presence often appears when we least expect it. We see God in the eager face of a child who is still capable of smiling amidst his suffering. We encounter God who comes to us as a piece of bread in the mystery of the Mass, which we often ignore. We sometimes forget how to recognize the face of God, how to feel his presence. Despite all this, God is always with us.

*God's presence
often appears when
we least expect it.*

"Katawan ni the Eucharist. At shone so brightly. face. It was God's me. In my guilt and radiant face glowing



**KATUWAAN
LANG**

*How does Moses
make coffee in the
desert?*

Answer:

He gets water from the rock, boils the water
on the burning bush, then
HE - BREWS it.



Bernie Durangparang
& Fr. Louie Ybanez, SSC

The Accomplishment of a Vocation Promoter

by Bernie Durangparang

It is a memorable feat, having another recruit ordained. No other feelings can describe it but happiness. I couldn't hold my tears when Louie Ybanez started to impart his blessing especially to Bishop De La Peña and fellow priests during his ordination.

I am on my 23rd year as a Columban vocation promoter. As of this writing, I am 48 years old. When I turned 40, I began counting my accomplishments. I asked myself, "Oh my God, what have I contributed to the community? What am I doing in this world?" At that time, I thought I haven't accomplished anything yet. I felt guilty, sad and downhearted until I realized that the kind of work I have, accompanying young people who are discerning their vocation in life, is in itself a great accomplishment. A few have become priests and some have been called to other paths in life, but I am sure that in accompanying them, I was able to impart good values and touch their lives in one way or another.

I am very happy for Louie, a priest I had accompanied during his discernment period before joining the Columban Formation Program. This is yet another occasion that reminds me of my role and responsibility as a vocation promoter.

Vocation ministry is hard work. There were times I felt like giving up, thinking I was no longer effective as a promoter. I felt exhausted. But witnessing Louie receive the gift of priesthood has inspired me to continue being an instrument of God by fulfilling my commitment to the ministry.

Guide for Group Reflections on Mission Awareness

These ten session guides are meant to help us appreciate more deeply our common calling to be “light to the world and salt for the earth” and to help others too, live out the same calling, to be missionaries in our world; to heal, to restore, to affirm, to care for, and to promote LIFE in all its diversity.

An adaptation from “Life for the World” by Frs. Peter Leonard and Sean McNulty, SSC.

SESSION ONE: THE GIFT OF LIFE

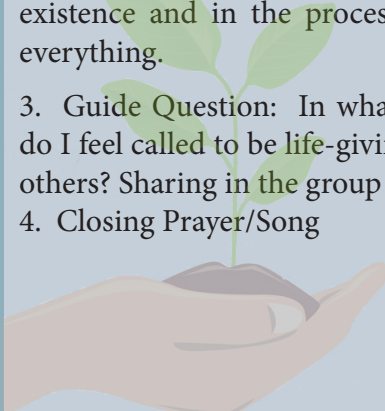
Aim: An appreciation of all life as gift – that needs to be cherished and shared

1. Opening Prayer/Song
2. Read and reflect: Mat 25:14-29 “The Parable of the Talents”

POINTS FOR REFLECTION:

The focus of this parable is on the person who received the one talent. He refused to take the risk of investing it because of the fear of losing it. In doing so, he lost the opportunity for meaningful existence and in the process lost everything.

3. Guide Question: In what way do I feel called to be life-giving for others? Sharing in the group
4. Closing Prayer/Song



SESSION TWO: ALL LIFE IS ONE

Aim: Awareness and appreciation of the way in which all life is interconnected and the need to care for all life on the planet

1. Opening Prayer/Song
2. Activity: Spend about 10 minutes being alone with nature. Have you had any personal experiences that gave you a sense that all life is connected?

What feelings would surface when you think of the ongoing destructions done to our planet? Can you name some of these?

POINTS FOR REFLECTION:

God is the creator of the universe and author of all life; that all life is good and has unity, order and purpose; that humans have a special role in creation; and that despite our infidelity, God’s fidelity prevails. Our lives are inseparable from each other and from all life on the planet. And since all life is one, all life needs to be respected, protected and cared for. When any life form is damaged all life is damaged.

3. Guide Question: In what way do I feel called to respect, protect and care for life, in all its forms? Sharing in the group
4. Closing Prayer/Song

SESSION THREE: CHOOSING LIFE OR DEATH

Aim: A deepening awareness of the realities of our world, both the signs of life and the destruction of life, as a result of the way we respond to or fail to respond to the gift of life.

1. Opening Prayer/Song
2. Reading: Life confronts us with the same challenge that Moses put to the people of Israel: “I am offering you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live.” (Dt 30:19)

Moments of silence.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION:

Every day of our lives comes to us as gift, as something that challenges us to respond in a life-giving way. We can choose not to respond to the gift and to ignore it – in which case life suffers and our behavior leads to death.

We promote either life or death depending on the way we live.

The two paths are open to us – the way of selfishness (attachment to possessions, fame, pride) OR the way of self-giving (detachment from possessions, to be content with being ordinary, acceptance of the truth of self) so as to be free to serve others.

3. Guide Question: Where do I stand? In what way can my life be more decisive (life or death)?
4. Closing Prayer/Song

PRAYER

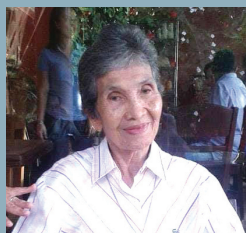
Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.

For through your goodness, you welcomed us in loving relationship with you.

May we see our relatedness to others and help us establish a caring and nourishing relationship with our sisters and brothers and with all your creation.

Amen.

by Manny Bautista



MY GREAT COLUMBAN “CLOSE ENCOUNTER” *by Sister Socorro Largo, RSM*

After the closing celebration of the Columban Missionaries' 100th year in the mountains of Don Victoriano, Misamis Occidental; and the celebration of my 60th year as a Sister of Mercy in Iligan City in 2018, I thought of writing this article.

I finished my high school and college education at the Immaculate Conception College in Misamis (now Ozamis City) like my great mentors: the Columban Sisters and Priests, and the lay missionaries. It was during this time when I first met the young Columban priest, Rev. Fr. Patrick Cronin, SSC, who later became an Archbishop. He covered the Aurora, Zamboanga areas to celebrate Sunday masses with the people, turning up in our barrio, Tambulig, on a horse or in a left-over WWII jeep. It was impressive, how he could easily adapt to the unfamiliar territories and the people in the Philippines.

Years later, an American Columban Priest, Fr. Edmond Bahl, SSC, confirmed my religious vocation and connected me to the Religious Sisters of Mercy who, at that time, were just starting their Mercy Mission in Tubod, Lanao. These Mercy Sisters, especially during their early days, were greatly assisted by the Columban Family in adjusting to the Mission. Because of the Columbans' love for Mother Earth, they helped in our efforts on reforestation in Mt. Malindang and in some work with the Subanens. The Sisters of Mercy continued working with the Columban Fathers, establishing schools in three towns, and a hospital in Iligan City.

The Columban Missionaries and the Sisters of Mercy share the same Irish roots. The Religious Sisters of Mercy started in Dublin City in 1831. Some Irish Columban friends said that they were educated by the Sisters of Mercy.

I thank God and Mama Mary for these “close encounters” with the Columban Missionaries. It is indeed a year to be grateful, being connected with the Columban Family since the late 1940s.

Those who journeyed with us...



FR. PAT O' HERLIHY was ordained in 1958. Father Pat was first assigned in the Philippines where he served twelve years in the parishes of Masinloc, Candelaria, Sta Cruz and Coto Mines in Zambales, Luzon. He witnessed the plight of the poorest among the poor when he worked in the Smokey Mountain, Tondo from 1992-1996. Despite struggling with periodical depression throughout his life, Father Pat is a pleasant person who never lets an opportunity to promote the work of Columbans pass up.



FR. THOMAS VAUGHAN passed away at St Elizabeth Manor, Bristol. He was a U.S. army soldier first before becoming a Columban Father in 1956. Most of his time as a missionary was spent in the Philippines, but he also served in Belize, Chicago and St Paul in the US.



FR. THOMAS REVATTO came to the Philippines in 1949, where he would come to dedicate 52 years of service, primarily in Negros Occidental. With most of the province's land used to plant sugar cane, it was a challenge for anyone to minister the place because of the extreme conditions of the workers. Father Tom along with other Columbans worked hard to fulfill their assignments as missionaries. By the time he returned to Ireland in 2001, Negros has thriving parishes, a highly developed school system, and a large group of Filipino priests.



FR. COLM RAFFERTY committed to a life in mission promotion, administration and vocations ministry. He was one of the pioneer missionaries who had to struggle with establishing the ministry in the early years in Negros. The 1970s was a particularly difficult time for him, as a director of vocations during a time when there was so much opposition to the Church. In 2008, he was appointed to Ireland until he moved to a retirement home in 2018.

First Aggregation to the Missionary Society of St. Columban 3 Years Temporary Membership



Peter Kyaw Zaw
Myanmar

Francis Xavier Nbwi Laung
Myanmar

Larry G. Duerme
Philippines

Ioane Naio
Fiji

Antonio Saula Tubuna Seeto
Fiji

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of Saint Columban in the Philippines Inc.

001650-143220

SEND THRU: ML Kwartá Padala (MLhuillier)

Account Name: Columban Missionary
Foundation Inc.

Phone Number: 0932-245-0300

FOR PICK-UP Please contact our office:

Mindanao: Mr. Bernie Durangparang 09501837474

Visayas: Fr. Brian Gore 09228939614 or
Mr. Jayson Arcamo 09258768666

Luzon: Ms. Evelyn Sabate 09287968173

For more copies, you may contact the following:

Luzon: Ms. Evelyn Sabate at 0928-796-8173 (Smart)

Mindanao: Mr. Bernie Durangparang at 0933-136-9922 (Sun)

Visayas: Mr. Jayson Arcamo at 0925-876-8666 (Sun)

PUBLISHER:

Fr. Paul Glynn
Regional Director

Editor:

Arlenne Villahermosa

Assistant Editor:

Daniella Clemente

Layout Artist:

John Din

Proofreader:

Fr. Donald Kill

COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES
1857 Singalont Street,
Malate, Manila
(02) 523-3361
www.columbanmission.org.ph
colcomphil@gmail.com
FB: Columban PH Missionaries