

Columban Mission

PILGRIMS FOR CHRIST

ISSUE NO. 38

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The Subanens are an indigenous group whose ancestral home is in the mountains of Mindanao, Southern Philippines. Inspired and guided by the Subanen Ministry of the Columban Sisters, who have been living and working with the Subanens since 1983, I began working with Subanen crafters in 2000. Since then, I witnessed how interconnected the Subanen culture is with their home, because the need to protect and nurture it, in turn, is necessary for the survival of the Subanens as well as their lowland neighbors.

Their interaction with their environment led to a long and practical crafting tradition. They developed clever ways to shape rattan, bamboo, grasses and palm leaves into baskets, tools, furniture, mats, hats, roofs, walls, musical instruments and even the walls and roofs of their homes. Attracted by their crafting tradition, I worked with Subanen crafters to form a livelihood project called Subanen Crafts.

Over the years our craft project developed greeting cards that honor life-enhancing ways of nurturing the human family and the natural

world. In designing our Christmas cards, we intentionally placed Mary and Joseph within an image of the Earth to remind us that we are called to protect and nurture our life-giving planet, our common home. These cards show Joseph repairing the manger, cleaning the stable, heating water, and preparing food while Mary attends to Jesus and prepares his manger bed.

The kind deeds we highlight in our cards remind us that our craft project has been blessed by the kindness of others. When we couldn't travel to get the supplies the crafters needed due to lockdowns, our ambulance service would occasionally bring us craft supplies along with food and medicine. We are grateful for our ambulance service and its drivers for their kindness to us.

We thank, most of all, our kind God who provides us with food, water, shelter, and the tools we use for our livelihood. Our craft project expresses gratitude to God by keeping our habitat in good repair. Both the Subanen People and their lowland neighbors depend on healthy forests, rivers, and soil. Decades ago, these life-sustaining gifts were looted by unregulated

CHRISTMAS CARDS THAT CELEBRATE KINDNESS

By Fr Vincent Busch



Subanen Crafters

logging that made quick profits but devastated the land and sea. The Subanen Craft project promotes the tree-growing and sloping agricultural ministries of the Columban Sisters. These ministries have reduced hillside erosion which, in turn, have helped prevent monsoon rains from flooding.

Jesus praised acts of kindness and promised to welcome all into the Kingdom of God who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, sheltered the homeless, visited the imprisoned and comforted the sick. Such acts of kindness keep our families, our communities and our habitat healthy.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



November is the month when we remember all our loved ones - family, neighbors and friends - who have returned to God. November is also the time we celebrate the feast of our Patron, Saint Columban, who left his home and family in Ireland to preach the Good News in foreign lands, some 1400 years ago. May he continue to inspire us to do whatever we can to help our missionaries who are being sent out to foreign lands today, just like Saint Columban. In a special way, we remember all our Columban Mission Partners who died during the pandemic. Of course, we offer masses for their happy repose. I think that our dear Columban Mission Partners who have now gone to God might be given a special welcome by our Lord. I can imagine Our Lord welcoming them and saying something like this to them: *"Come and enter the place I have prepared for you! You are the ones who supported and sent out these young men and*

women to preach the Good News all over the world. Now receive your reward". I reflect on the words of St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans: *"And how can anyone preach unless they are sent out? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"* [Romans: 10:15]. May our sister and brother Mission partners rest in eternal peace and may their lives inspire us to continue to support our Columban seminarians and lay missionaries who continue to be sent out all over the world to preach the Good News.

I am delighted to announce that on this Feast of Saint Columban, November 23, 2022, a new Columban Regional Director is taking charge of our Columban Mission here in the Philippines for the next three years. He is Fr. Leonito Distor SSC, who is currently Parish Priest in Our Lady of Remedies Parish, Malate, Manila. Father Leo is originally from Koronadal, South Cotabato and has spent many years on mission in Korea and was one of the formation staff in our former seminary in Chicago, USA. Our new Vice-Director is Fr. Rodolfo Christopher Kaamiño SSC, from Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental, who has worked for many years in Taiwan and who currently accompanies our seminarians during their Spiritual Year Formation. We give thanks to God for blessing us with Fathers Leo and Chris to guide us as we continue to prepare our seminarians and lay missionaries to be sent out to witness to the Gospel of Peace in a world that hungers for peace.

Lastly, maraming salamat po sa inyong taos pusong pagsuporta sa akin sa panahon ng aking panunungkulan bilang Regional Director. May Saint Columban continue to pray for us all!

FR. PAUL GLYNN, SSC

MEET OUR NEW LEADERS



*Fr. Leo Distor, SSC
Regional Director*



*Fr. Chris Kaamiño, SSC
Regional Vice-Director*

WELCOME TO THE REGION!



Fr. Teakare Betero (Fiji)

Currently assigned in
Malate Parish



Marjorie Engcoy

Justice, Peace and Integrity
of Creation (JPIC) Animator
for Mindanao



Lily Faunillan

Mission Promotion
Animator for Visayas



Karen Lanipao

Regional Secretary



THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF FR. MICHAEL MCGUIRE

On April 18, 2022, a simple celebration was held in Singalong to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Fr. Michael McGuire as a priest. We thank God for the many years of blessings in the life of Father Michael and we thank him for all his contributions not only to the mission in the Philippine region but also to other regions where the Columban Missionaries are present. May Father Michael continue to be sustained by His grace, and may his life in God's service always be filled with joy.

BON VOYAGE, FATHER DARWIN!

Thank you, Father Darwin, for saying "Yes" to help out in the Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish in Barra, Cagayan de Oro. And now, the time has come for you to respond to another call - mission to the Region of South America. We wish you God's blessings on your new journey. Bon Voyage! Feliz Viaje! You will be sorely missed.



THANK YOU, DANIELLA!

The invaluable contribution you've made to the Region through the Communications and Publications office will be sorely missed. We wish

you the very best in your studies and internship program. May you reach new heights and be able to serve those in the margins. God's blessings be with you in your new journey in life.



THANK YOU, MARIFI!

We thank you for your dedicated service over the past thirty years as cook for the Columban Lay Mission (CLM) House, and for the fund raising activity through the CLM Kitchen. You have

won our hearts for all your loving effort, skills, wit, and humor. We wish you all the best and God's abundant blessings in your life ahead as you embark on your new journey. Dios Mabalos!

updates

The Columban Mission Promotion-Luzon team wishes to thank all our mission partners and friends for helping us raise sufficient funds to support our Columban students in formation. We also thank our partner schools and establishments for their support through our alkansyas, and our partner parishes for allowing us to do mission appeals in their parishes.

Despite the pandemic, we were able to organize online and face-to-face recollections for our mission partners. Recently, we have been able to conduct home visitations to some of our mission partners, benefactors and friends. We continue to send daily prayers and spiritual messages to inspire and keep their faith alive. Maraming salamat po sa patuloy niyong suporta sa Columban Mission.

COLUMBAN MISSION PROMOTION-LUZON

by Evelyn Sabate



Face to face recollection of Columban mission partners with Fr. Rolly Aniscal

COLUMBAN MISSION PROMOTION-MINDANAO

By Bernie Durangparang

In September 2018, former Columban workers from Buru-un and Linamon parishes in the Diocese of Iligan, Northern Mindanao, formed a group named COLUMBAN FAMILY WORKERS IN MISSION.

One of the objectives of the group is to reunite with other former Columban workers. They also want to support the Columban Mission. In 2019, they distributed food packs containing canned goods and rice to some of the needy families in one of the remote villages of Buru-un. In September this year, they also reached out to one of the far-flung villages of Linamon. The funds they used to purchase the food packs came from their own pockets. They believe that through these means,

they are also participating in Christ's mission.

Estrella Mugot, who worked as a cook for the Columban Fathers in the parish of Linamon, Lanao del Norte from 1976 to 1994, was one of those who initiated the founding of this group. She worked with Frs. Michael Donohue, Martin Ryan, Laurence Ryan, Joseph Shiels, John Hishon, and other Columban priests. To date, there are already 35 active members in the group – more than half of whom are former Columban workers and the others are their family members.

Buru-un and Linamon parishes are managed by the diocesan priests of Iligan since the Columbans turned them over to the Diocese about 20 years ago.



Former Columban workers including Estrella Mugot (2nd from left)

Thank you all dear Mission Partners (individuals, groups, and companies), friends, partner schools, parishes and establishments for your donations and support over the years. Your faithfulness and generosity to the Columban Mission have helped Columban students with their continuing formation, and have given hope to many especially during this time of pandemic. You are truly appreciated. God bless you all.

PARISHES

LUZON

Diocese of San Fernando, La Union

1. St. Isidore the Farmer Parish, Tubao
2. St. Michael Archangel Parish, Bacnotan

Diocese of Pasig

1. Sagrada Familia Parish, Taguig City
2. Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish, Lower Bicutan, Taguig
3. Archdiocesan Shrine of St. Anne, Sta. Ana, Taguig City
4. Sto. Nino de Taguig Parish, Taguig City

Diocese of Iba, Zambales

1. San Sebastian Parish, San Narciso, Zambales
2. St. Columban Parish, Olongapo City
3. St. Joseph Parish, Olongapo City

Archdiocese of Manila

Our Lady of Remedies Parish,

Diocese of Cubao

Immaculate Conception Cathedral,
Cubao, Quezon City

Diocese of Rizal

St. Jerome Parish, Morong, Rizal

Diocese of Parañaque

Holy Family Parish, BF Homes,
Las Pinas City

Diocese of Imus

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Tagaytay City

MINDANAO**Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro**

1. Holy Child Parish, Kinoguitan, Misamis Oriental
2. San Alonzo de Rodriguez Parish, Balingoan, Misamis Oriental
3. St. Francis Xavier Parish, Pueblo de Oro
4. San Lorenzo Ruiz Fil-Chinese Parish, Cagayan de Oro City
5. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, Carmen
6. Our Lady of Snows Parish, El Salvador

Archdiocese of Ozamiz

1. St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Tangub City
2. San Lorenzo Ruiz Parish, Ozamis City

Diocese of Malaybalay

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Camp Philips,
Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon

VISAYAS**Archdiocese of Jaro**

Immaculate Conception Parish Catechetical
Ministry, Oton, Iloilo

SCHOOLS**LUZON**

1. Child Jesus of Prague School, Binangonan, Rizal
2. Binangonan Catholic College, Binangonan, Rizal
3. St. Jerome Academy, Morong, Rizal
4. Morong National High School, Morong, Rizal
5. Immaculate Conception Academy, Cabangan, Zambales
6. San Nicholas Academy, Castillejos, Zambales
7. St. Columban College, Olongapo City
8. St. Joseph College, Olongapo City
9. St. Columban College, Lingayen, Pangasinan
10. St. Columban Institute, Domalandan, Pangasinan
11. St. Columban's School, Labrador, Pangasinan

MINDANAO

1. Gingoog City Colleges, Gingoog City
2. St. Mary's Academy, Talisayan, Misamis Oriental
3. Father Saturnino Urios College of Trento, Trento, Agusan del Sur

ESTABLISHMENTS and CORPORATE OFFICES

1. Savemore Market: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao branches
2. Wilcon Depot: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao branches
3. Shann's Pharmacy, Pagadian City
4. City Civil Registrar Office, Pagadian City
5. Cake Co., Pagadian City
6. City Court Office, Pagadian City
7. Salon de Alfonso, Pagadian City
8. Fortune Bakery, Pagadian City
9. Sure Brake Auto Shop, Pagadian City
10. Sekwate Haus, Pagadian City
11. Royal Supermart, Kalibo, Aklan
12. Amigo Columbano

COLUMBAN LAY MISSIONARIES

By Sun Hee Kim

A simple thanksgiving and despedida dinner was held at the Columban Lay Mission (CLM) House on September 22, 2022 for Arlenne Villahermosa. For the past five years, Arlenne has been making a remarkable contribution to the Region as the Regional Finance Officer and editor of the Communications and Publications Ministry. She planned to have her sabbatical in 2020 but it was put on hold due to the pandemic. Finally, the circumstances allowed her to take her well-deserved break. Thank you, Arlenne. Everyone in the Region will miss you! Enjoy your sabbatical.

In October 2021, Latai Muller (Tonga) and Mereani Nailevu (Fiji), who are currently assigned in Barra, Opol, Misamis Oriental, had their end-of-term review. Their experiences as first term lay missionaries, while not easy, have been positive and life-giving, and both have expressed their desire to go through a discernment process for renewal. Thank you, Latai and Mereani, for your commitment to the people of Barra and as Columban Lay Missionaries.

In August 2022, the CLM-Central Leadership Team (CLM-CLT) conducted a hybrid visitation to Arlenne, John and Sunhee in Manila, and to Latai, Lanie, Ana and Mereani in Mindanao. CLM-CLT coordinator Vida Amor Hequilan graced us with her physical presence while Sainiana Tamatawale from Hong Kong met us virtually. On August 28, CLM-Philippines hosted a simple dinner for Vida Amor and Fr. Kang Seung-won Joseph at the CLM House. We thank them for gracing us with their presence.



Mereani Nailevu and Latai Muller



(L-R) Father Seung-won, Sun Hee, Vida, Father Dodong, and Arlenne

The Vocation to Love

PRIESTLY ORDINATION OF FR. ELBERT BALBASTRO, SSC

by Arlenne Villahermosa

The seed of vocation starts in the family. It is nurtured at home and matures in time as the child grows in stature and wisdom. This is how the vocation to love blossomed in the life of Elbert, and it has come to fruition today.

This is the main message of the Most Reverend Jose Romeo O. Lazo, D.D, Archbishop of Jaro, who officiated the Holy Mass on the ordination of Elbert Balbastro to the Columban Missionary Priesthood on May 21, 2022 at the Immaculate Conception Parish, Oton, Iloilo City.

In the homily of Archbishop Lazo, he thanked the family, relatives and friends of Elbert for the love that has brought the latter to the realization and fulfillment of his dream which we are now celebrating. Elbert is one of the two sons born to Herminia and Wilfredo (+) Balbastro. The brother of Elbert, Christopher, was out of the country at the time of the ordination and could not come home in time for the occasion, but has given his full support and well wishes to Elbert.

The well-organized liturgy and the thanksgiving reception at the Sheridan Boutique Resort in Oton reflected the solicitude of the people – genuine camaraderie, well-planned program and good food. The presence of his loved ones near and far and the contributions they have given freely and willingly echo their appreciation and endearment towards Elbert. The Missionary Society of St Columban showed their full support with the presence of the Regional Director, Fr. Paul Glynn, Formator, Fr. Finbar Maxwell, Elbert's classmate who will be ordained on June 14, 2022, Jerry Lohera, and other Columban Missionaries – priests, lay and staff – from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

At the reception program, testimonies shared by Elbert's relatives, friends, co-workers and companions from different organizations revealed how organized,



Father Elbert and his nanay Herminia

warm, generous, kind-hearted, and diligent Elbert is as a person and as a friend. For instance, Elbert's Home Economics teacher, his aunt, recalled that she taught Elbert in school how to cook, sew and do other house chores to prepare him for the future, much to everybody's delight.

Tatay Wilfredo (+), who passed away a few months ago, would have been especially happy to witness this great celebration and gratitude to God for the gift of his son's vocation to mission. His support, coupled with Nanay Herminia's, has given Elbert the encouragement to pursue his chosen vocation despite all the odds. Though his and Christopher's presence were missed, their love was felt all the same. Nanay Herminia, on behalf of the family, shyly but graciously welcomed all the guests and thanked them for their presence, both at home and at the Sheridan Boutique Resort.

Elbert thanked each and every one for their presence and for the contributions they had made to make the celebration extra special for such an extraordinary occasion. All ended well with everybody happy, leaving the place with hearts full of praise and thanksgiving to God.



Rev. Elbert lying prostrate during the Litany of Saints



Father Elbert with his family and friends



Fr. Paul Glynn lays his hands on Father Jerry

TO BE FISHER OF MEN

by Marjorie C. Engcoy, JPIC Animator-Mindanao

The Columban family in the Philippine region rejoiced with the parishioners of San Roque Parish, Magsaysay, Misamis Oriental as Fr. Jerry A. Lohera, SSC was ordained into priesthood last June 14, 2022, by Archbishop Jose Cabantan, D.D. of Cagayan de Oro. It was also attended by the priests of Magsaysay donning the same design of vestments as Father Jerry for the occasion. One could feel the palpable joy and excitement of the people as seen in their preparation of the church, the meaningful and solemn liturgy, and the catering for the people. Also in support were his family and relatives, batchmates, teachers, and friends. Mission partners from Barra and Gingoog, and some members of the Amigo Columbano also graced the occasion in support of Father Jerry on his special day.

Before the ordination, the people of Magsaysay had the chance to reminisce the memories of the Columban priests who journeyed with them since 1956. They shared their fond memories of these priests and expressed their gratitude for their presence and for the difference they made in their lives.

In the Archbishop's homily, he reminded the newly ordained priest and the rest of the clergy of the core of the vocation through the call of Simon Peter in the Gospel reading. Jesus called Simon to become fisher of men, which means to bring people into the kingdom of God and into a relationship with Jesus. He reminded them of their call to serve the flock and not to be served. Moreover, the Archbishop also emphasized that priests are still human beings who also have weaknesses, they also need the laity's fervent prayer that they may be faithful to their call. But these weaknesses may be the gateway of the Holy Spirit to grant them the grace to be steadfast and committed in their response to their call as priests. God calls workers to His Vineyard with the request to trust him fully all his life and all that he is. This is true in the call to become a missionary priest being sent to another land, another culture, and another tradition that is not his own. At the end of his homily, he asked the parishioners to continue to pray for Father Jerry who will be assigned to Pakistan; that God will strengthen and guide him as he ministers to the people he will be sent to.



Father Jerry with his sister and father Leonardo

At the end of the celebration, Father Jerry expressed his gratitude to all those who went out of their way to help in anyway they can to prepare for the ordination. He lovingly remembered his mother, who died when he was only eight years old. Despite having passed on, he still felt her guidance and love throughout his growing years. He thanked his father, Leonardo Sr., who had to stand as both mother and father to all eight of them siblings. This day is as much of a celebration of his hardworking father who had to raise all eight of his children alone. Father Jerry thanked his siblings and relatives for supporting him in his studies, most especially remembering his aunt who died two weeks before the ordination. Lastly, he thanked his teachers who mentored and guided him while growing up. They, too, were instrumental for Father Jerry to realize his dream in becoming a priest. As one of the witnesses

during the day, I saw a good seed sown into a healthy soil, nurtured and nourished well by God's stewards so that the whole Vineyard would have the chance to witness him grow and become fruitful in his future ministries. I witnessed a community, inspired by a good shepherd and was brought together to support another of God's servants called to serve in another land.



Showing support to Fr. Jerry Lohera, SSC are the priests of Magsaysay, Misamis Oriental

SPIRITUAL YEAR HOUSE

By Fr. Taemoon Kwon

Spiritual Year 2022-2023 started with Sunday Mass on July 31. There are six (6) students. Three (3) are from Korea (Jinwook Kim- age 40, Seoul; Seungjun Ro- age 26, Cheongju, and; Woobin Lee- age 31, Dajeon), and another three (3) from Myanmar (Dominic Lum Zawng- age 27, Shan State; John Naw Graung- age 30, Myitkynia; and Peter Zau Mai- age 28, Banmaw). Taemoon Kwon is the Director of Formation, and Christopher R. Kaamiño serves as Socius.

The program for this Spiritual Year was designed taking into consideration the following three components: deeper relationship with God, self-awareness, and the deeper understanding of the Missionary Society of St. Columban. To satisfy the first two, I asked a few Columbans who will give lessons to the students to incorporate these into their lessons. For instance, in Fr. Dom Nolan's class on Bible and Fr. Finbar Maxwell's class on Arts and Spirituality.

The services of Exodus, Our Lady of Peace Guidance center (OLPGC), and Cenacle have been tapped to help the students better learn about God and themselves. Exodus will cover Human sexuality and Enneagram, etc. OLPGC will help them with reflective thinking, and Family and Community Dynamics, among others.

We have regular community meetings, in which we share about our community living experiences and give suggestions for a better community life. For our recreation,

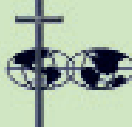
we enjoy outings and community nights. These are personally organized by the students.



From Left: Jinwook Kim, Seungjun Ro, Woobin Lee



From Left: Lum Zawng, Naw Graung, Zau Mai



COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES
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Paring Misyonero

" Mission entails sacrifice but there is also a profound joy in it. This road less-travelled is the way of life that I am willing to take and commit to. "

FR. ELBERT BALBASTRO, SSC
COLUMBAN MISSIONARY PRIEST
PAKISTAN

FORMATION HOUSE

by Fr. Finbar Maxwell

The new 2022-2023 formation year began on 30th July. There are eight students in the formation house this year, comprising five from Fiji / Kiribati and three from the Philippines. Two students, Iowane Naio and Atonio Saula Seeto from Fiji, are in 4th year theology; one student, Marvin Salarda from the Philippines, is in 2nd year theology; one student, Lydio Mangao Jr. from the Philippines, is in 1st year theology, and four students, Ietawa Naati and Matang Maoniba Maeke from Kiribati, Pio Francesco Tauri from Fiji, and Nadim Lumubos from the Philippines are in 1st year pre-theology (philosophy). Fr. Cireneo (Dodong) Matulac is the formation program Vice-Rector and Fr. Finbar Maxwell is the Rector. Presently, five students from the formation house are on their First Mission Assignment (FMA) with three students assigned to Mindanao and two to Peru. Students on FMA are usually those who have completed two years of theology.

The students began this new formation year with a retreat. This semester, all students are back to on-site classes on a full-time basis. Unfortunately, pastoral work had to be suspended for the past two years. In its place, we have community Alternative Pastoral Reflection meeting, in which we discuss diverse issues currently facing different parts of the world. This academic year, we hope to return to some form of pastoral work.

Our Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) group in the formation house will keep us focused, through their presentations and monthly JPIC liturgies, on this central part of our Columban mission charism. Since August, our Filipino students have also begun helping the Mission Promotion team at Sunday Masses in different parishes in Manila and locations further afield.



(L-R): Lydio Mangao Jr., Ietawa Naati, Ioane Naio, Father Finbar, Pio Francesco Tauri, Matang Maoniba Maeke, Marvin Salarda, Nadim Lumubos, Father Dodong

INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE (IRD)

by Fr. Rex Rocamora

In March this year, I took up my new role as Inter-Religious Dialogue (IRD) coordinator. I was formally introduced to Bishop Joe Cabantan of the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro and met the Archdiocese IRD Director, Fr. Dodong Pandero. I also met Mona Pangan, the person-in-charge of the Interfaith Forum, and expressed my desire to join the group.

During the installation of Barra (Opol, Misamis Oriental) as a new parish, Bishop Joe Cabantan, in his homily, named Barra as a pilot parish in Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) - IRD work.

Recently, I attended the reunion of the RMCMDP (Ranao Muslim-Christian Movement for Dialogue and Peace) in Baloi, Lanao del Norte which was hosted by Bishop Edwin de la Peña of Marawi. Another meeting with RMCMDP was organized by Pakigdait, Inc. who conducted a "Listening Survey" to determine the people's opinion on rebuilding the St Mary's Cathedral in Marawi City. The attendees also elected a new set of officers, with Atty. Saidali Gandamra as its new president.

In August, IFPHS (Interfaith Forum for Peace Harmony and Solidarity) met at the Bishop's Residence in Cagayan de Oro, and discussed the sustainability of the forum.

In view of incorporating IRD in the local seminary curriculum, I also invited the rector of San Jose Seminary de Mindanao, Fr. Raul Ricacho, to participate in IFPHS and be a partner in IRD work. I have also reached out to Bishop Joey Rapadas of Iligan to join the RMCMDP, as per the group's recommendation.



Fr. Rex Rocamora (R) during the RMCMDP meeting in Iligan City



Participants of Walk for Creation 2022 with Frs. John Leydon and Leo Distor

JPIC UPDATE *By John Din*

After three years of lockdown, the Walk for Creation event to open the yearly celebration of the Season of Creation in September was re-initiated in different parts of the country. Although participant numbers are not as massive as before the pandemic, the event is becoming more localized in dioceses and parishes around the Philippines.

The frequency of back-to-back typhoons – successive typhoons in a short span of time - is now a reality in the Philippines. In October, we have seen the massive damage and loss of lives brought about by Typhoon Paeng with radius covering the whole country.

From November 6 to 18, the world gathers for the COP 27 Climate Summit in Egypt. Some have lost hope that something good can be achieved from this meeting. Some people insist that this meeting is our only hope for a global response to the climate emergency. Nevertheless, after 30 years of this annual climate meeting, the fight continues and more urgent than ever.

In December, another global meeting, COP 15, will take place in Montreal, Canada to deal with the biodiversity loss. It is shocking to know that our lifestyle is causing a faster rate of extinction of species since the history of our planet began. As Pope Francis said, “we must stop this madness.”

Individual and communal initiatives like tree growing, recycling, clean up, etc. are not sufficient to curb the effect of Climate Change and Biodiversity loss. These two crises demand from us to engage in advocacy to influence our political leaders to enact bold policies to face this climate emergency. What would inspire you to engage with our political leaders?

Guide for Group Prayer and Reflection

THEME: THIRSTING FOR GOD

“My soul is thirsting for you my God.” (Ps 62)

FOCUS: Today’s Scripture tells how the will of God works in our lives. Earth’s cycles of life and death, rebirth and transformation are God’s first teaching. Have we rebelled against God’s ways?

OPENING PRAYER OR SONG

READING: Mt 16:1-4

FOR REFLECTION:

“The natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behaviour. ... The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognize any higher instance than ourselves.” ~Pope Francis Laudato Si’ #6

“The deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet.” ~ Pope Francis Laudato Si’ #48

THEME: HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS

“Listen to his voice, harden not your hearts.”
(Ps 94)

FOCUS: Today’s Scripture reminds us that where two or three gather, God is there guiding us. We ask forgiveness for the times we have ignored the advice of others and hardened our hearts.

OPENING PRAYER OR SONG

READING: Ezekiel 33:1-11

FOR REFLECTION:

Recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures, leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change. We need to experience a conversion, or change of heart. ~ Pope Francis Laudato Si’ #218

The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. ~ Pope Francis Laudato Si’ #2

SHARING

CLOSING PRAYER

Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invite us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grant us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness.

Lord God, strengthen us in our journey to do what is good for ourselves, for those we meet and the Earth community which upholds us. Help us go forth as part of the cycles of life.

FINAL HYMN

SHARING

CLOSING PRAYER

Mary, Mother of God, as you grieve for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power, lead us to the way of Jesus; teach our hearts to listen to the voice of God, especially in the poor and the exploited earth.

Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

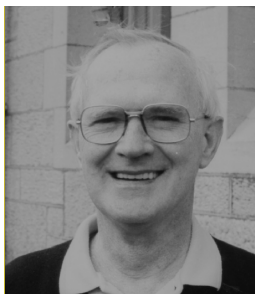
FINAL HYMN

Those Who Journeyed With Us



REV. AODH O'HALPIN

APRIL 2, 2022



Fr. Aodh O'Halpin was appointed to the Philippines in 1959 to the southern island of Mindanao, and served in Oroquieta and Ozamis City, Misamis Occidental, and Tukuran, Zamboanga del Sur. In all three parishes he was remembered for his cheerfulness, his love for the poor, and his willingness to take whatever measures were necessary to advocate on behalf of those who were oppressed. In the early 1980's he moved to London where he would spend the next forty years working with Filipinos and other minority groups advocating on their behalf for housing and just working conditions.

REV. WILLIAM CARRIGAN

MAY 21, 2022



Fr William ("Billy") Carrigan was assigned to the Philippines in 1958 to the southern island of Mindanao. He served in Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte, Oroquieta City, Ozamis City, Tambulig, Zamboanga Del Sur, Bonifacio and Sinacaban, Misamis Occidental. In 2007 he retired to the Region of Ireland. He was deeply appreciated for his kindness, his open house, and his generosity. He had a special ministry to the sick and the bereaved. His own final illness was unexpected, but he accepted it with great fortitude.

REV. CHARLIE MEAGHER

OCTOBER 12, 2022



Fr. Charlie Meagher came to the Philippines in 1961. He served in Gingoog City, St. Michael's Parish in Iligan City, and Ozamis City where he pioneered the Pre-marriage and Marriage Enrichment Programs. He was elected District Superior of Mindanao (1981-1988), Regional Vice Director (1986-1990), and Director (1990-1994). In 1996, he was appointed as Formation Coordinator for the Society until 2000. Later, due to health problems, he asked to be assigned to Ireland. He was deeply remembered for his common sense, kindness, and down to earth and caring ways.

Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them, O Lord.



Columban students and lay missionaries

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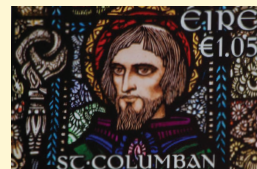
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