MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. COLUMBAN

Annual Report

1 APRIL 2022 – 31 MARCH 2023

03 OUR MISSION STATEMENT

04 LETTER FROM THE SOCIETY LEADER

05 OUR MISSIONARY WAY OF LIFE

06 WHERE WE WORK

22 IN GRATITUDE

23 GIVING BACK TO OUR BENEFACTORS

24 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

26 SOCIETY INVITATION TO MISSION

27 VOCATIONS AND SEMINARY LIFE

29 INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. COLUMBAN

Annual Report

1 APRIL 2022 – 31 MARCH 2023

Cover Image:
Columban lay missionary, John Din, holding the globe during the Peoples' Climate March in the Philippines, calling for urgent action on the climate emergency as world leaders met at COP 27, Egypt, and at the G20 summit in Indonesia. Image: Jire Carreon, LICAS

This page: Fr. Michael Hoban, with a Chilean deacon and sisters praying the Stations of the Cross with members of the community in Alto Hospicio, Chile.

We have blurred the faces of minors in this report as part of our Safeguarding Policy.

Our Mission Statement

The Missionary Society of St. Columban is sent by the Church to proclaim and witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ. We cross boundaries of country, language and culture, living in close relationship with the poor while fostering care for our common home the earth. We are called to:

- Establish the Church among peoples to whom the Gospel has not been preached;
- Accompany local churches as they mature until they are able to evangelize their own and other people;
- Promote dialogue between Christians and those of other religious traditions;
- Facilitate exchange between local churches, especially those from which we come and those to which we are sent;
- Foster in local churches an awareness of their missionary responsibility, particularly in the areas of justice, peace and care for creation.

Fr. Liam O'Callaghan with Columban worker, Danish Yakoob, in the truck distributing food rations, medical and sanitary kit, mosquito nets, and water containers in Mariam Ngar village (Mirwa, Pakistan).

We strive to build collaborative relationships with our supporters in order to nurture their faith while encouraging them to provide spiritual and financial support for our missionary endeavours.

Letter from the Society Leader

As I leafed through this Annual Report and reflected on Columban mission during this past year, I was struck by the multiple cords of concern and collaboration that stretch across our world, bringing help, healing and hope to those who are bruised and crushed.

Columbans in Japan provide a bridge for the Japanese people to express their compassion for the people of Pakistan, who continue to suffer greatly because of devastating floods last year. Burmese migrants in a remote island in Scotland remain faithful in channelling their compassion through the Columbans to suffering people, not only in their home country, but across the globe. Caritas Chile and the Daughters of Charity work side by side with Columbans in ensuring that poor migrants from Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru can realize their dreams for a better future in Chile.

All our Columban benefactors and supporters continue to be an important part of this global network of solidarity. Through your compassion, generosity and prayers, the risen Christ embraces our world today. Please be assured that Columban Missionaries remember you and your loved ones in our Masses and prayers.

Rev. Tim Mulkay, SSC

WATCH VIDEO

Our Missionary Way of Life

As missionary disciples of Jesus, we are called to build bridges and foster mutual understanding through encounters with people of other cultures and religious traditions, as well as to promote healing, reconciliation and peace. Moreover, our commitment to live in solidarity with people on the margins of our world, and to care for the earth, our common home, are ways in which we participate in God's mission. Our proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus leads us into a deeper awareness of God's presence and action throughout our world, which leads us into a deeper communion with the Trinity.

- **Evangelization and Education**
- **Solidarity with the Poor**
- **Inter-religious Dialogue**
- **Justice and Peace**
- **Care for the Earth**

Fr. Kurt Pala (2nd from right) at a tree-planting activity during the 1st Interfaith Youth Peace Camp in Myitkyina, Kachin State, facilitated by Catholic Student Action Myitkyina (Myanmar).

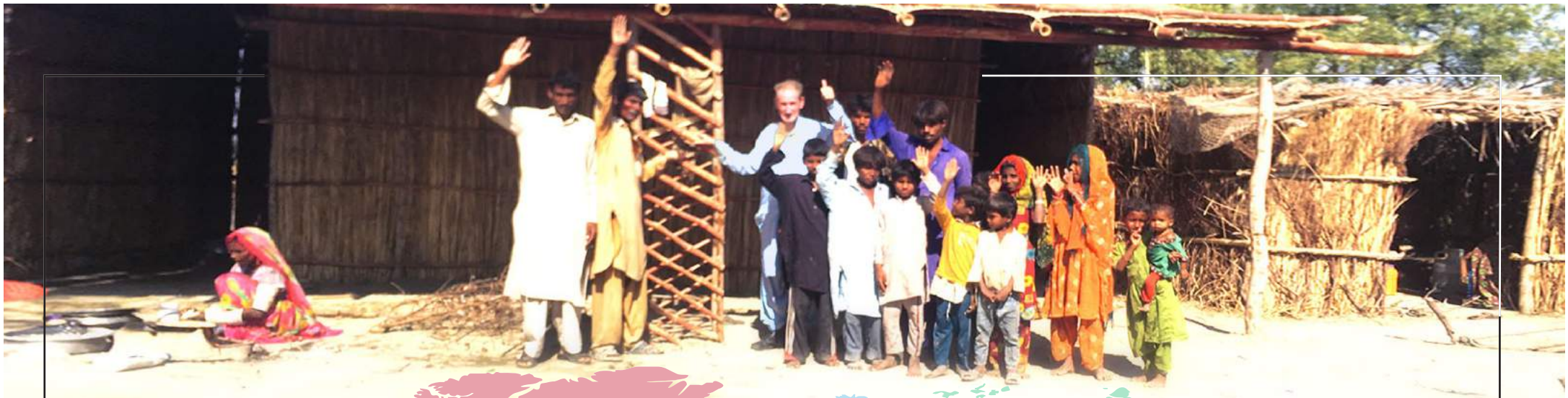


Image: Fr. Dan O'Connor, dressed in a blue shalimar kameez (centre), helped rebuild lives by constructing five simple houses for Parkari Kohli families in Gari Bith village, 50 kilometres outside of Karachi city, after they lost everything in the floods of July and August 2022. Alongside Fr. Dan are some of the families who were rehoused (Pakistan).

Where We Work

Australia

The Region of Oceania received awards at the Australasian Catholic Press Association Conference for our Columban Art Calendar, The Far East magazine and the Columban Daily Prayer Book. We published a new prayer book and Lenten and Season of Creation educational resources, and organized a Season of Creation school competition. We provided funding to the Columbans in Pakistan to build 100 homes for the victims of the floods, and continued to support other Columban projects overseas. Several talks were given on interfaith topics to various audiences, including clergy, teachers and school children.

Student winners of the Season of Creation Columban school competition chat with Fr. Kevin O'Neill and Columban Peace Ecology and Justice Officer Sr. Caroline Vaitkunas.

WATCH VIDEO

Columban lay missionaries accompany women seeking sanctuary in the UK on a social and cultural visit to a 'living' museum in Birmingham.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- Over 500 teachers took part in Columban training days, exploring the connection between faith and action through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching.
- Some 129 young people from 18 schools entered our school media competition, submitting articles and images on the theme 'Building Peaceful Futures'.
- Columbans in Britain organised two 'Festivals of Encounter' - residential experiences bringing together Catholic educators with people seeking sanctuary in the UK.

Britain

Fr. John Boles travelled this year to Orkney in Scotland to investigate a legacy bequeathed to the Columban Missionaries by a supporter ten years ago.

He took the opportunity to visit the Columban donors living on these islands, among them a couple from Burma (now Myanmar) for whom 'church' is a chapel in the front room of their house. Their faithful and generous service to the local Catholic community was a joy to experience, but he was not surprised, as it is 'salt of the earth' people such as these that have been the bedrock of Columban Mission for more than 100 years - one prayer, one donation at a time.

Fr. John loves to visit Columban supporters when he travels the country, often when staying in a parish for the Mission Appeal. We thank God for the prayers and generosity of all who leave legacies to the Columbans in faith, hope and love.

WATCH VIDEO

Video featuring the Columbans Schools Media Competition.

Chile

Half a million Venezuelans have migrated to Chile over recent years. Many are undocumented and live in dreadful conditions. Some have settled in parts of the northern city of Iquique, including the Columban parish of Sagrado Corazon de Jesus. The parish has always welcomed immigrants and tried to help them. Last year we teamed up with the Daughters of Charity to provide assistance to a new squatter camp, known as "Mule's Trail" ("el paso de la mula"), where there is neither proper housing nor electricity nor sewage disposal facilities. With support from abroad, the Sisters were able to lay some concrete house foundations and donate a set of plastic water storage tanks. The social apostolate of the parish regularly distributes food parcels, blankets and clothing. A Christmas supper was organized in conjunction with local benefactors, Columban supporters and Caritas Chile. Parishioners and Columban donors also cooperated in supplying school materials to the children.

Fr. Michael Hoban celebrating Mass at the "Mule's Trail", Alto Hospicio.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- The Daughters of Charity bought ten 1,000 litre plastic water containers for the community. As and when they need, families can fill these from the water trucks which pass along several times a week.
- A Christmas Chicken Supper was served to 280 migrants. Columban supporters provided the chicken, local benefactors donated toys and Caritas Chile gave out food parcels.
- Winter nights can be really cold. Thanks to Columban friends, the parish was able to distribute 240 blankets.

WATCH VIDEO

China

A Columban outreach to people with special needs has gradually developed in China over the past 20 years. The ministry takes place in family homes as well as in public settings such as parks and restaurants. It provides friendly social interaction for the participants, a way that affirms their dignity as children of God.

The help offered to two participants in Wuhan and one participant in Shijiazhuang also supports and encourages their families. Columban priests, lay missionaries and seminarians have contributed to this ministry over several years and are remembered fondly by the people they have befriended.

Fr. Dan Troy with Yang Xu and his parents at their home in Gaoyi, Hebei Province. For 12 years Yang Xu has been a participant in the Columban Crafts Project, making Christmas cards and greeting cards in his home.

With a population of over a thousand million, the sheer scale of China can make a Columban ministry of this kind seem quite small. Within such a large setting, perhaps the humble words of Mary, proclaimed far from public view at the Annunciation, can echo the experience deep in the hearts of the people we meet in these ministries: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour".

Columban ministry to people with special needs. Fr. Dan Troy with Han Weiwei (centre), Theresa Li (left) and Sr. Clara Zhang (centre) during a bi-weekly visit to the Yangtze River Park in Wuhan.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- The initiative began 20 years ago.
- Within each of the three families, one person with special needs is a participant.
- The ministry relies on social interaction in the homes of the families.

WATCH VIDEO

Fiji

This year we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Columbans in Fiji. We thank the people of Fiji for warmly welcoming the many Columban priests, students, lay missionaries and priest associates who have worked collaboratively with them in the areas of parish ministry, education, interreligious dialogue, peace, ecology and justice. We thank our many Fijian co-workers and Columban Companions in Mission for their ongoing faithful and loyal support.

After long periods of isolation during the past two years due to COVID, in 2022 we returned to public gatherings in Fiji for our work, especially in relation to interreligious dialogue and justice issues.

The Suva Youth Interreligious Dialogue Forum organized different activities. Columbans in Fiji sent a delegation to the U.N. Oceans Conference in Lisbon, Portugal in July 2022.

WATCH VIDEO

Columban Companions in Mission having a wonderful celebration together with the parishioners of St. Pius X Parish in Suva.

Candidate for the Columban short-term overseas mission programme, Josh Egan, working on his family farm in Ireland before leaving for Chile.

Ireland

The Columban Ireland-Asia Residence is a "welcoming community", located in a house in Maynooth. It caters to Sisters, priests and lay leaders, mainly from China, who are doing language studies and third level courses at nearby St. Patrick's College Maynooth. The project is a way for Columbans to show our continuing support for the Church in China and other parts of Asia, by offering a positive experience and support to those encountering an unfamiliar culture and Church in Ireland.

In turn, the students are encouraged to bring along their friends – Christian and non-Christian – thus allowing Columbans to also welcome them to Ireland and learn about the riches of their heritage.

WATCH VIDEO

FACTS AND FIGURES

- The Columban Centre in Dublin's inner city provides a "welcoming space" and a support service, both for refugees and migrants, and for those working to build links between different faith communities.
- St. Columban's, Dalgan Park operates a fully staffed Nursing Home for older Columbans who return to Ireland after many decades on overseas mission.
- County Carlow Councillor Fintan Phelan paid tribute to the Columban Fathers and Columban Sisters who, he said, played "a pivotal role" in steering the new "Columban Way" pilgrim and heritage trail across the island of Ireland, culminating in its official launch in 2022.

Japan

This year marks our 75th year of mission in Japan, and there is a good reason to celebrate.

The international dimension of our missionary work is very important. Our Justice, Peace and Ecology ministry networks and collaborates with Columbans in other countries and uses international resources to bring an awareness of justice and ecological issues to the Church in Japan.

In our pastoral ministries we are in contact with migrants from overseas, providing religious and social support in three languages.

Another international dimension is the financial support extended to other Columban areas, including Myanmar, Pakistan and the Philippines. Thanks to our local Church connections, we are able to raise funds to help out with projects in these countries.

We look back on 75 years of Columban mission in Japan, giving thanks for the dedication and faith of both our priests and the people of God, and humbly look forward to the future.

The Myanmar community in Tokyo celebrating confirmation with Archbishop Kikuchi. Fr. Leo Schumacher (3rd row, 3rd from right) is chaplain to the community as well as liaison for Tokyo Archdiocese with the Myanmar Church.

WATCH VIDEO

Korea

In Korea the Columbans organize an annual 'Re-entry Programme' for Korean missionaries returning home after overseas service. The programme helps the participants review their life on mission and begin a new life at home.

In October 2022, 25 missionaries who had worked in Peru, France, Brazil and Zimbabwe participated in the programme. Each told their story. Whether it was working in a jail in Lima, or with women in a village in Brazil, or being a member of a multicultural community in France, the experiences had changed their lives and faith. Also, they were now returning to a country very different from the one they had left.

As a Columban staff member, Fr. Donal O'Keeffe shared how he had changed during 40 years working in Korea. Participants in the programme came to clearly see that, while living in very different cultural situations may be difficult at times, it brings many blessings. Those blessings are the gifts that we missionaries share on returning to our home countries.

Columban benefactors, co-workers, lay and ordained missionaries in solidarity with the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation ministry (JPIC).

FACTS AND FIGURES

- 4,656 persons did retreats at the St. Isidore Retreat House on Jeju Island, Apr. 2022-Mar. 2023. The average retreat is for three days, and the director is Columban Fr. Michael Riordan.
- The Columban Mission Centre in Seoul provides meeting facilities for small groups. During the period, Apr. 2022 to Feb. 2023 the meeting facilities were used by various groups on 215 occasions, with a total of 3,125 people participating in the events.
- Throughout the year, one day a month, our Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Team joined the people of Samcheok City in a peaceful protest against the construction of a coal-powered electricity plant near the city. The Team also participated at events each Friday in the centre of Seoul to highlight the dangers posed by climate change.

WATCH VIDEO

Myanmar

Because of the military take-over, the last two years have been very difficult for the people of Myanmar. We have tried our best to respond to this tragic situation.

The price of everything has risen dramatically and many people now struggle to meet their daily needs. However, while the price of everything has increased to levels that make even staples like rice unaffordable for the poor, the price of heroin has dropped dramatically. An already chronic drug addiction situation is now getting even worse.

Fr. Eamon Sheridan lives and works at the Rebirth Rehabilitation Centre which offers a programme of recovery from addiction for all, regardless of ethnicity or religious background. He is also in the process of building a half-way house for recovering addicts in Myitkyina, and is starting a vocational training programme to offer skills to recovering addicts so that they don't return to their old habits.

Fr. Kurt Pala (centre) with graduates of the month-long Life and Work Skills Training.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- 70 men and 11 women (Total 81) received drug addiction therapy at the Rebirth Rehabilitation Centre during the year.
- 140 students attended our Mandalay Higher Education Centre.
- 943 pupils at our boarding houses, 120 children at the St. Francis Xavier Orphanage in Myitkyina and 1,058 children in early childhood were provided with nutritional supplement.

WATCH VIDEO

Fr. Trevor Trotter, former Regional Director of Oceania (3rd from right), and Maha Shawky, Regional Business Manager (2nd from left), visited the New Zealand Office and attended the Advisory Committee meeting in October 2022.

Aotearoa-New Zealand

Throughout these past 80 years, Lower Hutt has been home to the Columbans in New Zealand. As a young boy, Fr. Barry Cairns remembers the arrival of the first group of Columbans in 1943 and the excitement it brought to his hometown. Within a few years, that excitement had deepened within him, leading to the realization that God was calling him to become one of them.

Ordained as a Columban missionary priest in 1955, Fr. Cairns went to Japan the following year – and today, as he approaches his 92nd birthday, is still engaged in parish ministry there.

Moreover, he remains curious about all aspects of life in Japan and continues to be inspired by the faith commitment of the Japanese people. His observations and reflections on mission continue to be enjoyed by readers of the Far East magazine not just in his Lower Hutt hometown, but around the world.

Meanwhile, the people of New Zealand continue to generously support Fr. Cairns in Japan, as well as Columban mission in Mexico and Myanmar, in the Philippines and in Peru.

WATCH VIDEO

Fr. Louie Ybañez (left) with Daniel, a catechist (right), visiting a Christian family in a village in Salu Bhombro.

Pakistan

Pakistan was devastated by massive flooding in August 2022. According to Global Climate Risk Index 2021, Pakistan is ranked the eighth most vulnerable country in the world in terms of climate change, and the poor are always the most susceptible. Many villages were inundated by water, crops were destroyed, and malnutrition and water related illnesses became prevalent. The Columbans working among tribal communities in Sindh Province, Southern Pakistan, responded with immediate emergency relief, medical outreach, and a long-term rehabilitation project for the victims of the disaster.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- Collectively, we have distributed a total of 1,743 food rations including mosquito nets, medical and sanitary kits.
- The TB Clinic in Badin admitted 176 T.B. patients to nearby hospitals and 1,253 outpatients were treated. Medical outreach teams have visited over 70 villages which have no direct access to doctors, and 8,754 patients were given free check-ups and medicines (mostly women and children).
- A housing project is in progress and aims to build 100 mud brick houses for families whose homes were destroyed or badly damaged by the flooding.

WATCH VIDEO

Fr. Iowane Gukibau (left) with lay people participating in summer formation courses held at the Columban Mission Centre in Lima.

WATCH VIDEO

Peru

Recently, a Columban Team journeyed 400 kms northwards from Lima to share a mission experience among people of two parish communities in the Diocese of Chimbote. It was a "synodal mission", experienced at two levels - "walking together" as a Columban team and "walking together" with the local people.

The Columban team consisted of two priests (Fr. Iowane Gukibau from Fiji and Australian Fr. Bernie Lane), three overseas students (from Korea, Myanmar and the Philippines) and members of the local Peruvian lay missionary group (known as the "Columban Missionary Companions").

For a month we accompanied the people, especially families, in two poor areas; a settlement on the edge of the desert town of Casma and the fishing village of Samanco (where Fr. Kevin McDonagh has ministered during the past nine years).

As expressions of service to the Local Church and promotion of missionary outreach, we were a presence and witness to the project of Pope Francis - a Synodal Church: participation, communion, mission.

Philippines

The COVID-19 pandemic, recurring flooding and the global recession have taken a terrible toll on the people of the southern province of Misamis Oriental. Indices of poverty, hunger, unemployment, domestic abuse and juvenile suicide are all on the rise.

Columbans are trying to lighten the burden felt by local people - not only parishioners but also those of other faith communities – through the following initiatives.

Provision of sewing machines and a garment-making training package to unemployed women;

Working with other groups (including Muslims) to set up organic communal vegetable gardens (thus boosting incomes and food production);

A programme of food distribution to malnourished children;

Training courses on the encyclical "Laudato Si", the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the use of sign language for the deaf;

Promotion of the Rights of Nature through the formation a youth-led advocacy group, which is also spearheading a campaign against single use plastics (SUPs) in the parish.

Parishioners participating in the "Square-foot Gardening Project" of Barra Parish with Fr. Enrique Escobar (far right) and Columban lay missionary Latai Tokelau Siu Mafuata Muller (2nd row, 2nd from left).

FACTS AND FIGURES

- 25 previously unemployed women trained in garment-making currently earn regular incomes;
- 150 malnourished children were taken care of by the church-local government collaborative initiative;
- Parish youth climate activists institutionalized their cooperation with other advocacy groups at the local and national level.

WATCH VIDEO

Columban lay missionary Jao Resari (left) presenting the winners of the art competition for World AIDS Day at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Cathedral, Hsinchu Diocese.

WATCH VIDEO

Video featuring the 60th Anniversary Celebration of Taian Parish where Columban missionaries serve.

Taiwan

The Agape Centre provides assistance and education regarding HIV prevention and awareness in the Diocese of Hsinchu. The coordinator is Jao Resari, a Columban Lay Missionary. This ministry is aimed at responding to the realities experienced by migrant communities who encounter conditions that make them vulnerable to HIV infection and the stigma associated with HIV.

Jao works in collaboration with priests, pastoral coordinators, lay leaders and migrant service centres to facilitate the HIV Awareness and Education Campaign for migrant communities in the diocese. The campaign reached approximately 3,320 individuals from May to December 2022.

Last year, we held our first art competition for World AIDS Day. Through their artworks, some 38 participants, from 10 to 54 years of age, expressed messages of hope and compassion for people living with HIV and AIDS. On World AIDS Day itself – Sunday, 4th December - we announced the winners and observed the Day at Sunday Mass in seven different parishes.

Fr. Al Utzig with Karla, a co-coordinator of one of the new communities at Saint Mary´s Church Fontana.

United States

After more than a decade of preparation, there was great excitement in the Parish of St. Mary's in Fontana, California, when excavation began for the foundation of the new church building in February of this year.

However, Columban missionaries who have overseen that parish for more than twenty years know that, while it is important to have a dignified venue for worship, it is much more important that the church community is welcoming and hospitable to everyone who wants to strengthen their faith and deepen their commitment to God. Composed of more than 5,000 families that reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the surrounding district, over many decades St. Mary's Parish has grown through ups and downs into a community in which members have learned to support one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

During this past year, St. Mary's Parish has been challenged to respond to several individuals and families who have come to seek guidance and support in matters concerning sexual identity. Some of the young adults were confused or fearful, while their parents were worried or distressed. This led the parish to look for ways to support them and to reassure them that God cares for them.

St. Mary's Parish realizes that the construction of the new church building may take another year or two to complete, but the building up of an hospitable church community for all God's children will remain an ongoing task.

WATCH VIDEO

Back row (L-R): Lillija Uzkureliene, Bernadette Gohan, Saule Pieriene, Julita Duszynska, Rekha Glseesh, Anna Doktor Brozek (Director of Nursing Home); Front Row (L-R): Frs. Pat Egan, Kevin O'Boyle, Seamus O'Neill.

In Gratitude

The Missionary Society of St. Columban was founded in 1918, and by the 1990s the number of priests returning to Ireland, worn out after years of mission in difficult places, had increased greatly. It became evident that we needed a nursing home to care for them. Plans were drawn up to extend the ground floor of Dalgan Park's west wing into a modern nursing home, complete with 34 rooms for residents and a fully qualified nursing staff.

By 1997, Frs. P. J. Kelly and Cathal Coulter had collected sufficient funds, and the nursing home was built.

The Dalgan Park Nursing Home has been a blessing for elderly Columbans. However, it is becoming more difficult to find the funds to support and maintain it, and we only are able to maintain this essential support for our retired missionaries thanks to the generosity of our donors.

WATCH VIDEO

Giving Back to our Benefactors

I am Bernie Durangparang, Columban Mission animator for Mindanao, Philippines, for the past 27 years.

In August last year, we had our mission appeal at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. Here, I met Abeth and George Gamolo, who at the time were not familiar with the Columban Missionaries. Upon learning that we needed donations for our formation programme, they approached us immediately after the Mass and expressed interest in becoming our mission partners. Since then, they have shared their blessings on a regular basis. Their dedication is heartfelt.

Abeth also actively assists in finding more mission partners in Camp Phillips, where four families, including hers, now contribute regularly. Recently, I, along with three Columban seminarians and Fr. Rex Rocamora, had the privilege of visiting Abeth and George's home, where we were warmly welcomed. Father Rex blessed their home, and also the homes and stores of other mission partners in the area as a gesture of our gratitude and our way of giving back for their generosity. It's heartening to witness how they share not only financial support but also the joy of being Columban mission partners. I look forward to organizing a regular retreat with them, as we do in other areas.

"Breaking bread and sharing life"

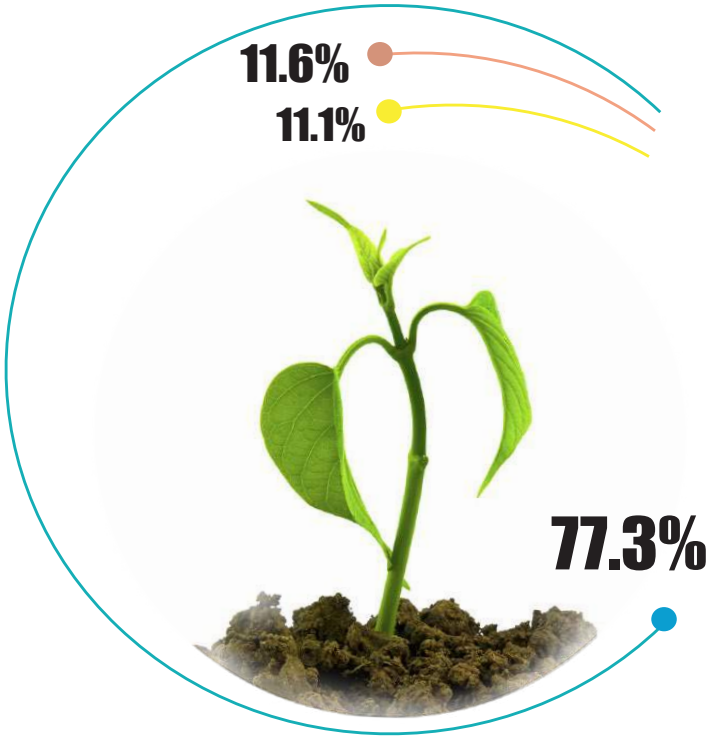
Abeth (seated, right) and George (standing, 3rd from right) warmly welcomed Bernie (right) and other Columbans into their home.

2022 - 2023 *Financial Summary*

Seminarian Peter Nhkum Zau Mai from Myanmar plants an indigenous tree as part of his exposure to Columban ministries in Mindanao, Philippines.

APPLICATION OF FUNDS RECEIVED IN THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Society received U.S.$24.45M in revenue. Total funds received were used in the following manner.

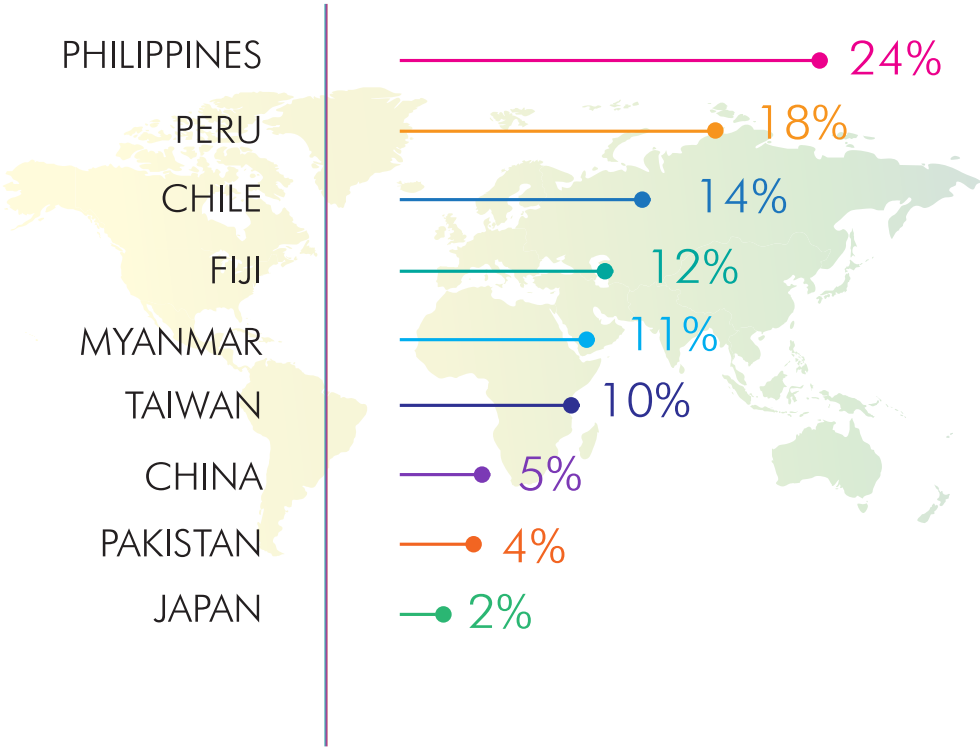


MISSION EXPENSES

- MISSION APOSTOLATES
- ADMINISTRATION
- FUNDRAISING AND DONOR-DEVELOPMENT

Funding of Various Missions

Columban lay missionary Bae Sihyeon Teresa (right) with the youth of Taian Parish (Taiwan).



Our missionary endeavours in Australia, Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, South Korea, and the U.S./Mexico are self-funded.

The expense associated with each mission country reflects the number of Columban Missionaries ministering there, the cost of living, and the level of support which the local Church can provide.

Danny Sweeney from Britain (left) and Josh Egan from Ireland (right) with three Venezuelan migrants.

Society Invitation to Mission

Columbans sought creative ways to continue to facilitate short-term mission experiences despite the impact of Covid-19 during these past few years. Columbans in China shared a newsletter with about one hundred people, including past participants who had visited China. Columbans in Britain kept contact with former participants through virtual meetings, while other Columbans researched possible projects and activities for when the restrictions were lifted.

Despite the ongoing impact of Covid-19, Columbans in various countries continue to engage in planning projects.

For example, Columbans in Korea and Taiwan are planning an exposure programme to allow young people to experience missionary life in a deeper way. Korean youth will have a one-week mission exposure experience in Taiwan in September.

Moreover, Columbans in Korea are promoting the three months' volunteer programme on Isidor farm, which is overseen by Fr. Michael Riordan, on Jeju island.

Vocations and Seminary Life

Seminarian Iowane Naio presenting a simple gift (an image of the Holy Family and a prayer to use with it) in appreciation to the family who hosted him during his Home Visitation Initiative.

My name is Iowane Naio. I am a 4th year theology student from Fiji.

Together with Marvin, my fellow Columban seminarian, I am engaged in pastoral work with a small base community at a local Manila parish. I would describe my pastoral experience as being, "planted in rich soil". In the beginning, Marvin and I needed to identify an entry point into this project. After a few pastoral visits and moments of shared reflection, we sensed the importance of inspiring more people to become active participants in the community. We decided therefore to organize a home visitation ministry. People were happy to welcome us, and they were very excited about our proposed activities for them.

As I immersed myself in the community, I gradually became aware of my own gifts, which were emerging because of various encounters. I also began to observe seeds of ministry sprouting around me, and this gives me hope and inspiration for my own future as well as the future of the people in my ministry site.

WATCH VIDEO

Vocations and Seminary Life

As a seminarian from Myanmar studying for Columban Missionary priesthood in Manila, my goal is to develop a deeper understanding of God's love and the mission of the Society of St. Columban.

With two Columban companions, I was assigned to do pastoral ministry once a week in Pasay Cemetery in Manila. We travelled there by train and then walked for 45 minutes. Once at the cemetery, we began to befriend the children living there, using activities like painting and games.

At first, I was intrigued by the lives of the people who inhabit the cemetery, but as I interacted with the children, I felt sorry for them. Despite their challenges, the children embrace life with resilience and acceptance, and always welcomed me with innocent smiles. Despite language barriers, I communicated with them through my presence - listening, and spending time with them.

From them, I learned valuable lessons about fortitude, simplicity, and God's unconditional love. By respecting and valuing them, I hope to help them experience God's love more deeply, realizing that we are all one in our shared humanity.

Peter Nhkum Zau Mai

Seminarian Peter Nhkum Zau Mai with children in Pasay Cemetery in Manila, where he carries out his weekly pastoral ministry.

International Leadership Team

Back (L-R): Fr. Seung-won, Fr. Tim, Fr. Brian, Fr. Alvaro
Front (L-R): Sainiana, Vida Amor

GENERAL COUNCIL (HONG KONG)

SOCIETY LEADER	FR. TIM MULROY
SOCIETY VICAR	FR. BRIAN VALE
SECOND COUNCILLOR	FR. KANG SEUNG-WON JOSEPH
THIRD COUNCILLOR	FR. ALVARO MARTINEZ

COLUMBAN LAY MISSIONARY CENTRAL LEADERSHIP TEAM (HONG KONG)

COORDINATOR	VIDA AMOR HEQUILAN
TEAM MEMBER	SAINIANA TAMATAWALE
TEAM MEMBER	FR. BRIAN VALE

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT PERSONNEL

BURSAR GENERAL	FLORENCE TSUI (HONG KONG)
INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR JUSTICE PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION (JPIC)	AMY W. ECHEVERRIA (U.S.)
RESEARCHER OF JPIC PRIORITIES	FR. SEAN McDONAGH (IRELAND)
RESEARCHER ON MISSION AND CULTURE	FR. SEAN DWAN (IRELAND)
SOCIETY ARCHIVIST	FR. PATRICK O'DONOGHUE (IRELAND)

www.columbanmission.org