



# COLUMBAN MISSION

*"Pilgrims for Christ"*

Issue No. 30

In line with the centenary celebration of the Columban Society, we have adapted a banner reflective of what the Society is all about – reaching out to the ends of the earth as Pilgrims for Christ. The logo [symbol at the left] is the official centennial logo. As we move forward, we continue to share in the mission of Christ, walking with those in the margins and the exploited earth.



**"Patience Obtains All things"**  
by: Mary Joy Rile

*"Milukso ang akong dughan sa kalipay nga napari na jud si Bobong,"* Grace captured the very sentiment of her heart when her son, Rev. Erl Dylan J. Tabaco, was ordained a priest by Most Reverend Antonio J. Ledesma, SJ, DD, Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro at the Most Holy Rosary Parish, Agusan, Cagayan de Oro City on February 17, 2018. No words could describe what the family truly felt, just tears to express it. The parish was jubilant to have its first ordination. It was under the Columbans since 1971 until 2012. The Columbans are grateful for the gift of Erl in time for its centennial celebration.

As a child, Erl helped in the family business as a delivery boy; he played with kids, but spent more time in the church. "Several times, Erl came home with broken statues which he rescued from the trash," his sister Rhea recalled Erl's delight in religious images. Erl served as a sacristan in the parish with his older brother Eric. Fondly remembering those moments, Eric now shares, "God has called me to a different path and I am happy with my marriage. But definitely Erl's ordination was like fulfilling my own dream to become a priest."

When the Columban vocation team visited Erl's house, it was the start of something bigger. Uncertain of what lay ahead, only Eriberto accompanied his son to the Columban Formation House in Cubao. "It seems only yesterday when I brought Erl to the seminary. Now, he is a priest! This kind of happiness is way beyond description. He has our support. We hold him in our prayers as we entrust him to God."

Erl, in his homily, recalled the words of his then formator, Fr. Mick Mohally, that consoled him in his doubting moments, "Be patient with the process. Patience... patience... patience..." Erl held it as his guiding principle in this journey. These same words resonated with his mother who, at times, became impatient in waiting. "You already went to other places for mission, but still you are not a priest. When will you become a priest?" Grace continued, "Erl would reply, 'It's not that quick and easy, Ma. Just be patient. We will come to that in God's time.'" Erl trusts in God's compassion and believes that God has a purpose for everything happening in his life.

At mass, Bsp. Ledesma anointed the hands of Rev. Erl and tied them with a cloth. Then Erl went to his parents, requesting his mother to untie his hands. Grace did not understand it but was touched by the ritual. Untying the anointed hands of his son was like freeing a lamb. Was this an act of offering his son to God to be like Christ? Was this affirming the important role she played in the journey of her son? Was this a reward to her patient waiting? "When I asked him what I will do with the cloth, Erl advised me to keep it. I might use it in due time. So I am keeping it and treasuring that very moment," mused Grace. She, too, has to live the virtue of Patience.

Erl is blessed with his fear and love of the Lord, simplicity, kindness and humility that brought him to where he is now. To capture Erl's attitude toward life, I quote St. Teresa de Avila's words, "Patience obtains all things. Whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices." I know Fr. Erl will continue to live these words in his missionary journey.

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## Thank you, Cynthia!



We thank Cynthia Empleo for her three years of service as Administrative Assistant of Mission Office at Singalong House. She was a Columban lay missionary assigned to Fiji from 2000 until 2003.

She also worked part-time in the Archives Office for some time. Her being organized provided a system to Mission office. Her creativity in making rosaries and bracelets helped our fundraising projects.

**TEXT US**



*We thank God for your support. And we need you to continue supporting us in our mission. Salamat po!*

*We would like to ensure that you receive this newsletter. PLEASE TEXT US your name and address at this number **0928-796-8173** so we can continue to send your copy of Columban Mission.*

*Why not text us your prayer requests so that we, Columbans, can pray for you?*



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

by: Fr. Paul Glynn

in our Formation House in Cubao by Bishop Honesto Ongtioco, DD. As we celebrate 100 years since the first Columbans prepared to go on mission to China we are very happy to have our first Columban from China taking the first steps toward Columban Missionary Priesthood. The Almighty has done great things for us!

We also give thanks to God who has blessed us with yet another Filipino Columban Priest. Father Erl Dylan Tabaco was ordained to the priesthood in his home Parish of Holy Rosary, Agusan, Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanao on February 17 by Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, SJ, DD. He will be returning to his mission in Peru in September. For now, he will serve in Barra, Opol, Misamis Oriental with fellow Columban Father Enrique Escobar who is originally from Peru. It is thanks to your prayers and financial support that we are able to send out another Filipino Columban Priest to share Gospel Joy with the people of

This year we are celebrating 100 years of the Missionary Society of Saint Columban. 100 years ago in Ireland, the first group of seminarians began their training to be missionaries of the Good News in China. They knew that it would not be easy. Yet they said: "Yes!" Many died of malaria when they got there. Others were imprisoned and killed. Others made their way here to the Philippines in 1929 to continue Christ's mission. There is so much to celebrate after 100 years of Columban Mission and 89 years of Columban missionary work here in the Philippines.

It is a special blessing for us that Rev. Peter Dong, SSC was ordained to the Diaconate on February 4, 2018,

Peru. The Almighty has, indeed, done great things for us!

The more we reflect on the blessings in our own lives and the beauty of the world around us – from the joy of listening to the birds singing in the morning to the magnificence of a deep-red sunset – we cannot but be filled with gratitude for how wonderful God's love for us is. In his beautiful encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us that God loves each one of us and everything He has created. To show our love to God for all His goodness to us, we should love our neighbor as ourselves, difficult it may be, and to love and care for all of God's Creation. We have to act now before it is too late.

As we celebrate God's faithfulness to Columban missionaries we would like to thank you for being part of our story. Without your support we would not be able to look forward to another 100 years.

Thank you for being our true and faithful friends for so many years.

***Maraming Salamat, po!***



Columban Regional Assembly, Singalong, Manila, February 19-22, 2018



CHRISTOPHER

KWANG-KYU

## Welcome back!

We welcome back Fr. Christopher R. Kaamiño IV and Fr. Kwang-kyu Ji to the Philippines. Fr. Chris, from Ozamiz, ordained in 2011, served in Taiwan for five years where he also had his First Mission Assignment (FMA) as a seminarian for two years. Fr. Kwang-kyu, from Korea, ordained in 2016, did his FMA program here in the Philippines. He finished his formation in Korea and was ordained there. Then he went to Ireland for language studies. Both priests are assigned to Malate Parish.

## KNOW A COLUMBAN



**Fr. Desmond Morrison**, from Derry, Northern Ireland, was born on February 28, 1925. He was ordained in 1951 and arrived in the Philippines in 1956. An engineer by profession, for some years he was engaged in designing churches in Columban areas in Mindanao. Since the 1960s, he went into parish work in the Archdiocese

of Ozamiz and Dioceses of Iligan and Pagadian. His advocacy in Natural Family Planning started in 1972 and as the years went by became more and more involved in the ministry. A musician by heart, he loves singing *Baleleng*, a Visayan folk song. At present, Fr. Des is the oldest Columban priest in the Philippines at the age of 93.

## China's First for Columban Mission ORDINATION TO DIACONATE OF PETER DONG

by: Mary Joy Rile

The Columban Missionaries were originally known as the Maynooth Mission to China when the Irish bishops gave their approval on October 10, 1916. The sacrifice that co-founder Bishop Edward Galvin made on February 28, 1912 when he first went to China instead of going home to his mother in Ireland is now bearing fruit. God's timing is always perfect. After a hundred years, it is remarkable to see Peter Dong standing before us as the first member of the Society from China – God's wonderful present to the Society.

Peter grew up in a community where religion is lived rather privately. He struggled to keep up with his Catholic faith. But the faithfulness of his family and their constant support strengthened his own resolve to fulfill what God has planted in him. "I can feel it's not easy to journey in formation for 20 years," said the parish priest who flew all the way from China to celebrate Peter's vocation. The restlessness that Peter felt in his heart as a young man has finally reached a destination with his oath of membership to the Society on February 3, 2018 and diaconate ordination on February 4 at the Columban House of Studies in Cubao, Quezon City with Bishop Honesto F. Ongtioco, DD as ordaining prelate.

Peter's father, Joseph, was to clothe him again, this time with a stole, a cloth of service for Christ's mission. It was

with conviction that Joseph offered his son saying, "it is to be that way – to serve God". Joseph was more than happy to receive Communion from Peter for the first time.



A touching moment came when Peter stood up from kneeling as newly ordained deacon and his father approached to receive him in his arms. Joseph laid both of his hands on the head of Peter, no words were spoken, only a scene of deep emotion – a mixture of gratitude, pride and great joy. An expression of a father's love! And with that, Peter was to submit himself and be a child again. Peter's deep gratitude to his father, his constant companion in this journey, was best expressed in heartfelt words of thanks with tears.

And just like "the first-fruits of the land were to be brought to the holy place of God's choosing", so do we offer the gift of Peter in this Columban centenary to the place God has also prepared for him. Bishop Honesto encouraged Peter, in his homily, to live a life shaped by love, marked by service and faithful to his commitment to obedience, celibacy and poverty. We pray for Peter that the commitment he made at his ordination will be fulfilled with God's daily grace as he continues the journey. And in the words of his parish priest, we pray for Peter "to be a good missionary, wherever God leads him."



### San Ildefonso College Awards the Missionary Society of St. Columban

On behalf of the Columbans, (L-R) Fathers Rolly Aniscal, John Keenan and Christopher Kaamiño received the Plaque of Appreciation from San Ildefonso College, Tanay, Rizal on February 2, 2018 for the meritorious contribution of the Columban Society to the school. The Columbans served in Tanay from 1937 until 1966. Both the Columbans and San Ildefonso College are celebrating their 100 years of foundation this 2018.

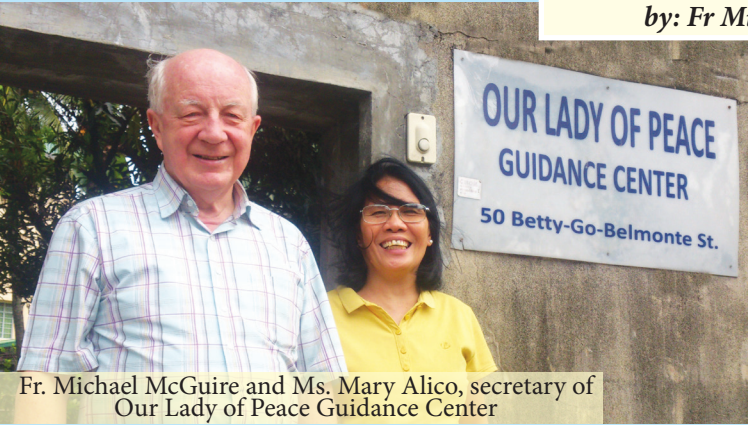


### Martin Buber Award

Fr. Shay Cullen, SSC received the 2017 Martin Buber Plaque Award in Kerkrade, the Netherlands on November 17, 2017 in recognition of his internationally acclaimed work on human rights undertaken through PREDA Foundation. With him in the picture is Mr. Francis Bermido, Jr. (right), Executive Director of People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance (PREDA).

## Counseling Sustains Mission

by: Fr Michael McGuire



Fr. Michael McGuire and Ms. Mary Alico, secretary of Our Lady of Peace Guidance Center

*Fr Michael, from Ireland, has a PhD in Clinical Psychology with a specialization in Christian Vocation, helping out in Columban formation and the Columban lay missionaries, and as a Counselor in Our Lady of Peace Guidance Center since 1988.*

Right after ordination in 1972, I was assigned to the Philippines. I went to Ozamiz for language studies and afterwards was assigned to San Miguel Parish, Iligan City as assistant parish priest for three and a half years. The people were great and I began to notice that the difficulties they were having in living were not primarily spiritual but psychological – how to manage life, relationships and stress. So with the advice and permission of my Columban Leaders, I decided to go and study this topic.

The research shows us that the biggest factor that pushes us into difficulties is our so-called unconscious motivations. And more than 90% of our motivations are driven by our unconscious processes. This means that unconscious influences on our perceptions, choices and interactions play a big part in how we live. The first ten years of our life is when these unconscious processes develop and we are not aware of them. Our likes and dislikes; our wanting and not-wanting are often unconscious. And this unconscious self resists change because we are not aware of it and don't see its influences until perhaps after events have occurred. So having both a conscious mind as well as an unconscious mind we find it

difficult to know and understand ourselves and others. The unconscious is working quietly in the background of our conscious mind's choices and decisions.

So we notice that when somebody appreciates and recognizes us we feel satisfied, optimistic and light in our living. When this doesn't happen we tend to feel heavy, down and even pessimistic during our daily living.

The work of counseling is dedicated to attempting to discover the unconscious process that is making life heavy, difficult and painful for the individual going about one's daily life. Preparing for this kind of work or service requires a lot of training and supervision which I had to undergo for four years at the beginning of this work. This equipped me with some tools and skills to help others find the integration and peace they may be looking for. The grace and presence of God are very obvious in this healing that goes on.

Counseling takes place in a quiet place that offers privacy and safety for the person to explore the painful aspects of her/his life and the counselor has to learn not to intrude in this process. Thus, confidentiality is essential for this work to happen. Hence being called "a companion or sojourner" with the person is not really an appropriate term.

Boundaries have to be safeguarded. People invite a counselor or therapist into their life to explore with them the causes of their distress (anger, frustration, sadness, guilt, etc.). The counselor helps them find their way through these matters and this is done as an assistant to the person himself or herself.

Given the above, my mission work is at the private, personal and secluded level and is different from the social renewal level of programs of mission work. As missionaries get renewed individually, they influence their social network. While it is not directly social action, it really is in the long run because as people change their outlook, their perspective, their beliefs, they will live differently.

I have been to other Columban Regions/Mission Units doing retreats, seminar on living vocation and facilitating group communication. I'm glad to be able to offer this service to Columbans and others in many different places.



The Spiritual Year students (2017-2018) with Frs. Michael Riordan (center) and Finbar Maxwell (rightmost), Retreat Directors, after their 30-day retreat which finished on March 14 at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Novaliches, Quezon City

**BEWARE** Fake news is news – stories or hoaxes created to deliberately misinform or deceive readers. Usually, these stories are created to either influence people's views, push a political agenda or cause confusion and can often be a profitable business for online publishers. Fake news stories can deceive people by looking like trusted websites or using similar names and web addresses to reputable news organizations.

Source: (<https://www.webwise.ie/teachers/what-is-fake-news/>)



**Katuwaan Lang...**

**Question:** Why didn't Peter trust the water of the Sea of Galilee?

**Answer:** Because he thought there was something fishy about it.

The Mission & Vocation Promotion Teams continue to visit our mission volunteers and mission partners in Cagayan de Oro, Ozamiz, Iligan and Pagadian areas and inviting some potential Columban friends to become our partners in mission.

We had mission reflections with our mission partners in Pagadian and Ozamiz; mission appeals in



PAGADIAN

**Visayas & Mindanao**  
by: *Bernie Durangparang*

Barra, Opol, Misamis Oriental and Hinoba-an, Negros Occidental; mission & vocation promotion and Thanksgiving Masses in Surigao del Sur and Bohol; gathering of mission partners and Thanksgiving Masses in Pagadian, Cagayan de Oro City and



HINOBA-AN

**Luzon**  
by: *CMP-Luzon/Evelyn Sabate*

Strengthening old connections and building friendships are vital to Columban Mission. Despite the challenges, the warm welcome and stories shared by individuals we met made us enthusiastic and eager to work. Listening to their stories gave us a glimpse of their commitment in supporting the Columban mission.

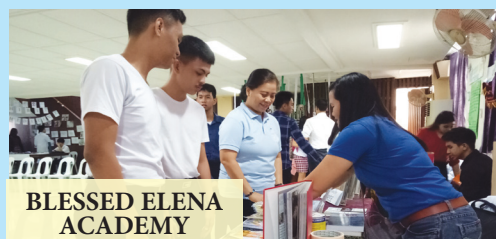
Recollections and Gatherings were done at Binangonan, Rizal and Marilao, Bulacan. We continue to promote mission and vocation in various schools and parishes, especially in places where the Columbans used to minister before, particularly in Rizal, Olongapo, Pangasinan and Zambales.

The *Alkansya* Project is doing well in schools, especially in the areas of Olongapo, Pangasinan and Zambales. We are grateful to Savemore and French Baker for partnering with us in this project. We continue our search for more partners.

*(Acknowledgement of all the parishes, schools and organizations in Luzon, Visayas & Mindanao will be featured in the next issue.)*



BINANGONAN



BLESSED ELENA ACADEMY



ST. JOSEPH COLLEGE

**JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION UPDATE**

by: *John Din*

A series of workshops and talks on *Laudato Si'* have been going on since January of this year: one in Cebu, with students and volunteers of *Tuburan sa Gugma* school; one in Center for Ecozoic Living and Learning (CELL), for the Columban Spiritual Year students and the candidates for lay mission in the Orientation program; and with our mission promoters in Binangonan, Rizal.

The Philippine Forest Foundation has approved the project proposal put forward by Global Catholic Climate Movement-Pilipinas through the Urgent initiative. The project aims to provide *Laudto Si'* Animators training workshops for the Dioceses in Luzon, particularly those surrounding the Sierra Madre Mountain Ranges; the Dioceses of Samar and Leyte and the different civil society organizations in NCR. The training will also be offered to the dioceses in Mindanao and Negros where Columbans work.

Lydio Mangao, Sr., our JPIC worker in Negros, participated in the Environmental Summit held in Cebu City on February 20-22, 2018 organized by Green Convergence.



*Laudato Si'* in Binangonan, Rizal



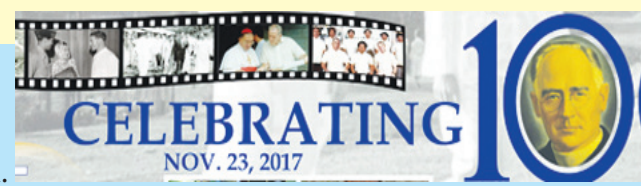
*Laudato Si'* and the New Story of Creation at CELL



*Laudato Si'* Workshop in Minglanilla, Cebu

# IN THE SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE, GENEROSITY AND JOY

by: Arlenne B. Villahermosa



The generosity of the Columban Fathers has inspired many in mission. The Columban Fathers came to help build churches in the Philippines, educated the people and helped build the communities. When the right time came, they turned over the parishes to the local churches without frills, without any claim attached to the parishes, but only with joy and thanksgiving. With *grande animo* (great spirit) the Columban Fathers did the work entrusted to them and continue to do so until today, responding to the challenges that present themselves with joy and generosity of heart. The Columban Missionaries go where the Spirit leads, crossing boundaries of culture, creed, race, gender and age. With love comes generosity of spirit.

What we are today, we owe to those who have paved the way for us today – those who have embraced and welcomed us. We thank them for what they have given us. Bishop Edward Galvin and Father John Blow have given from themselves, trusting in God's plan. We have been generous in responding to the invitation. The Columban Society generously responded to our call for participation in the church. It was not easy to organize, but we called the Columban lay mission program. T

## MINDANAO

## NEGROS





ave gone before us and those who are with us till  
ed us, those who mentored us and journeyed with  
to us, with and in their generosity, starting with  
ick and all those who have come after them. They  
s goodness to make sense of the whole. They have  
n to share the love of God for and in His creation.  
ded to the call of Vatican II regarding the laity's  
for the Columban Fathers to start what was then  
they didn't know what to do with it, but went on

ahead trusting the Spirit to work with and through them. Now,  
the Columban Lay Missionaries (CLM) is thriving in mission.  
The Society also affirms and appreciates working in partnership  
with its co-workers, benefactors, mission partners and promoters.

When the founders said "YES" to the call, they did not know where it  
will lead them, yet with their *grande animo* they sailed on. Pope Francis  
in answering his critics regarding his Encyclical "Amoris" has mentioned  
that we need to ask in what spirit are we giving. May it be in the spirit of  
gratitude, generosity and joy that we continue our life as missionaries, as  
we walk and work with the poor, the marginalized earth and all of God's  
creation. And with joy and thanksgiving, we launched our Centenary  
Celebrations in November 2017 in Cagayan de Oro, Negros and Manila.

## NEGROS



## LUZON

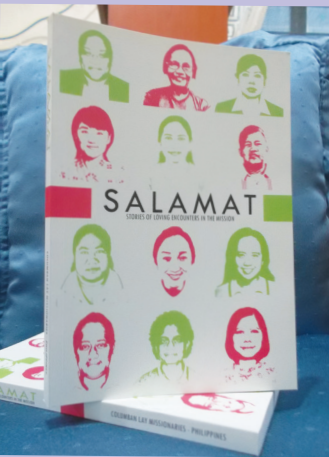


# Columban Lay Missionaries Update

by: *Lilibeth Sabado*

It is with joy and gratitude that as the Society celebrates its 100 years this 2018, the CLM has played 27 years into its history. In line with the Society's centennial celebration and CLM's ongoing 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, we are holding Thanksgiving Masses in the areas where the lay missionaries come from. (*List of all the Thanksgiving Masses will be featured in the next issue.*)

On November 25, 2017 the CLM book was launched in Cagayan de Oro City as part of the centenary celebrations



of the Columban Missionaries in Mindanao. Mrs. Perla Yap, who has worked with the Columban Missionaries for many years, gave a review of the book and briefly shared her experiences with the Columban Missionaries.

At present, the region is blessed with eight long term and three first term lay missionaries (LMs); two are currently in Ireland for their English language studies. At the moment, CLM-



Philippines is also hosting three LMs assigned in other RMUs for their studies.

Joan Yap, Reins Mosqueda and Sherryl Lou Capili renewed their commitment with CLM on February 12, 2018 at the LM house in Cubao. They have been reassigned to Taiwan. On the last day of the Regional Assembly, February 22, Ana Flores and John Din also renewed their long-term commitment with CLM.

Two candidates in orientation have finished their Clinical Pastoral Education at Philippine Heart Center. They will leave for Zamboanga City in March for another leg of their orientation program as they prepare for their assignment to Pakistan.

Aside from the LMs' individual commitments in their ministries, people continue to come and go, re-entry processes, "Come and See" gatherings, meetings, welcoming and sending LMs, and other activities. Indeed, there is no dull moment in CLM-Philippines and for these, we praise and thank the Lord.

## THE JUBILARIANS

*The following Irish Columbans turned 50 years of priesthood on December 21, 2017. As we thank God for their faithfulness, we wish them Ad multos annos! "To many years!"*



**Fr. Michael Mohally** arrived in the Philippines in 1968. He spent two years in Negros and the following years he worked with young people and formation program up to the present. He is now based in Manila. He celebrated his Golden Jubilee with a Thanksgiving Mass at Singalong

House. Below are excerpts from his homily:

*Fifty years ago, at my first mass and my first public talk as an ordained priest, I thanked God for the gift of life, for calling me as a Columban and calling me to share in Christ's priesthood to lead his worshipping communities.*

*Fifty years later, I am grateful to God for his fidelity to me despite my weaknesses, my infidelities, my sins. I have wondered at God's choice, God's call to me. I don't know the reason. It's a mystery to me, but of one thing comes to my consciousness is that I was chosen because of my weakness...*

*My story is the story of all Columbans who have not had a chance to share their story. It is not about me, it is about God.*



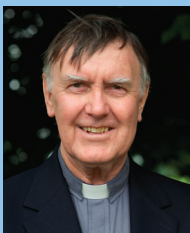
**Fr. John Brannigan** was first assigned to Negros in 1968. He taught at the Seminary in Jaro, Iloilo before he came to Manila. He taught at the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies (IFRS) and at Maryhill School of Theology. He worked as a Chaplain for Student Catholic Action for seven years. He is now the pastor of the Filipino Center in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.



**Fr. Pat Raleigh** first served in Lingayen. He came to Manila and became chaplain of Student Catholic Action in a number of schools for five years. He also spent many years in Pakistan. He was assigned to Ireland as JPIC coordinator before he became Regional Director of Columbans in Ireland in 2012, finishing his term in November 2018.



**Fr. John Hickey** spent all his life in Mindanao since he came in 1968 in the Archdioceses of Ozamiz and Cagayan de Oro, and Dioceses of Iligan and Pagadian. Since the later part of 2007 he has continued parish pastoral work in the Diocese of Clonfert in Ireland.



**Fr. Seán Coyle** spent his early years in parish and other ministries in Mindanao. He was the first priest in charge of Columban formation in the Philippines which began in 1994. He took over as an editor of *Misyon* in 2002 and later of Columban Mission. He was involved in Worlwide Marriage Encounter and Welcome Home Foundation (for the deaf) in Bacolod City until he retired to Ireland in June 2017.



## What I Have Learned from Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

by: Rev. Peter Dong

I took the Clinical Pastoral Education program at the National Kidney and Transplant Institute. I thought CPE was only about helping the sick deal with sufferings and death, but I discovered that it was also helping me recognize my issues and weaknesses. I, too, need to grow and be healed. Many times, my patients were the ones who comforted me with the way they went through the process of healing. This gave me hope. The processing helped me face my own shortcomings and affirm the goodness in myself.

I learned that I need to strengthen my own faith and the desire for God. Sickness and death destroy the physical bodies but they also bring the family together and strengthen their bond. Three things I learned from CPE:

### Understanding

It is important to know some data about the patients and understand their sickness. In this way, I can understand their situation better and be able to articulate my questions carefully to help them express themselves and encourage them in their difficulties.

### Trust

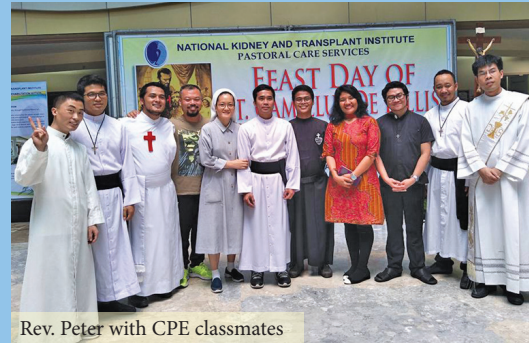
Trust is a bridge between the patients and me, and between God and me. At the start, it was hard for me to trust others and reach out to them. I learned that the more I open myself, the more I get to know others. Slowly, I found myself opening up to the patients whom I visited, including those who were reluctant to receive me. I began to be open to God too. Sometimes I could not understand Him; I could not feel Him, but I trust Him.

### Feeling

I did not understand how important feelings are in our life. From where I am coming from, it is difficult to describe or show one's feelings, especially the negative ones. In CPE, I had learned that feelings tell the truth about myself and others. Now, I'm learning how to face my own feelings, especially the negative ones. There is no right or wrong about what I feel. Even the negative feelings are part of me. When I express my real feelings, others understand me more.



Rev. Peter with Fr. Felisiano Fatu



Rev. Peter with CPE classmates



## Celebrating the Gift of Vocation in Mission

by: Joan Yap

*Here's what the author shared during her renewal of commitment with the CLM along with RP19 on February 12, 2018.*

Today is a special day as we celebrate the gift of lay vocation – a celebration of thanksgiving for Sherryl Lou Capili, Reina Mosqueda and me. We finished our second term as Columban lay missionaries in Taiwan having learned many new things and having had memorable experiences of joys and challenges.

I worked with the Migrants' Ministry in Taiwan. I was inspired by

the stories of how migrant workers survived the challenges and the sacrifices they had to make being away from their families – stories of marriages being challenged by extra-marital affairs; survival stories of women who were sexually and physically abused in their workplace; and stories of discrimination. What sustained them was their love for their families and their faith in God. I was blessed to accompany them in their journey.

There were times when I felt very lonely and missed my family back home. I had difficult times adjusting and living in a different culture, learning the Mandarin language, dealing with the people I worked with and many others.

One incident happened three years ago, a day before New Year. I was excited to go to the central house after my language class to celebrate New Year with my fellow lay missionaries. While walking, I was really shocked when somebody kicked me from behind and shouted, "You, Filipinos, go back to your country! You are stealing our

money!" It was a Taiwanese lady. I wanted to shout back at her but I controlled myself and left.

These kinds of difficulties made me think that maybe I am not worthy to be a missionary. But faith made me see that these were lessons that helped me grow as a person and I am grateful. I was able to see how God was working in my life and felt his everyday love for me. Being a missionary is about offering oneself to God. It requires a lot of grace from Him.

Today, Sherryl, Reina and I thank God who continues to call us to take part in his mission. As we renew our commitment, we pray for God's love and mercy to be with us always, that we remain faithful to His call.



## Guide for Group Reflections on Mission Awareness



### Session Four: Life in a Broken World

*Aim: An appreciation of the shape of authentic living in a broken world – as it was lived out in the life of Jesus*

#### 1. Opening Prayer/Song

#### 2. Read prayerfully Is. 52:13-53:12

**3. Activity:** Give some examples of the destruction of life happening in our country/world today. What could be the source of these evils? What is the common response of people?

In the reading, what was Jesus' response?

#### 4. Sharing

#### Points for Reflection:

The destruction of life is evil. Evil is generally responded to by further evil. Many choose to remain silent and become paralyzed. Thus, the destruction of life continues.

In the life of Jesus we come to know God's solution to evil. Jesus lived life authentically. His way of responding to evil was to heal what was broken, to seek and gather together what was lost, to bring to life what was dead, to suffer for others. He stood his ground in the love of His Father. Evil lost its power. It was disarmed by the all-embracing love and forgiveness of God.

We, too, are empowered to be givers-of-life to others in Jesus' name.

**5. Sharing:** Give examples of people you may know who gave their lives for others.

#### 6. Closing Prayer/Song

*These guides are adapted from "Life for the World" by Columban Frs. Peter Leonard and Sean McNulty, a continuation of the first three sessions found in the previous issue of Columban Mission (No. 29).*

*These 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.*

### Session Five: Healing and Affirming Life

*Aim: An appreciation of how Jesus went about his mission and how his followers may continue the same mission*

#### 1. Opening Prayer/Song

**2. Activity:** Assign the following Gospel verses to the different members of the group:

Mt. 4:23 – the good news of the Kingdom;

Lk. 4:18-19 – Jesus declares the nature of His mission;

Mt. 11:1-6 – how do we know you are the Messiah?

Mt. 9:35-37 – the content of the Gospel that Jesus preached

**Guide Question:** What do the Gospel texts tell us as to how Jesus understood what his life and mission was about?

#### 3. Sharing

#### Points for Reflection:

God's unconditional love for all and total acceptance especially of the outcasts and sinners were made manifest in the person of Jesus. The heart of Jesus' mission was the healing and affirming of life in all its dimensions. He ate with sinners and outcasts and spent time with them and in doing so, affirmed their worth and accepted them as they were.

We, as Christians, can only be credible in our world today to the extent that we are dedicated to this same healing mission of Jesus – for all peoples and for the world.

**4. For further reflection:** What are the areas of life in the community that are in most need of healing?

#### 5. Prayer of Healing and Thanksgiving

### Session Six: Light to the Nations

*Aim: To heighten awareness of and involvement in mission to the wider community of the world*

#### 1. Opening Prayer/Song on Mission

**2. Activity:** Think of missionaries you know or have read about. In what way are they life-givers for others? From where are they? In what countries are they working and with whom are they working? How are they caring for life? Are there similarities between what they are doing and what people do here in the Philippines?

#### 3. Sharing

#### Points for Reflection:

People can be on mission anywhere. What is unique about those in foreign mission is that they are in places and cultures other than their own. They embrace and share God's love to and with other peoples – crossing boundaries of creed, culture, gender, race and age.

Ever since the first Pentecost, the Spirit has continued to inspire the followers of Jesus to leave father and mother, family and possessions to bring the good news of salvation to other nations – to be light to the nations (Mt. 28:18-20).

**4. Sharing:** In what way can I/we support the mission? In what way can I/we help the Philippine church become more missionary? As Pope John Paul II said, "There is no doubt about it; the Philippines has a special missionary vocation to proclaim the good news, to carry the light of Christ to the nations."

#### 5. Prayer for Missionaries

**FR. ERL's  
ORDINATION PHOTOS**  
(For more photos visit our website:  
[www.columbanmission.org.ph](http://www.columbanmission.org.ph))



**A Dedicated and Committed Man**  
by: *Jayson Arcamo*



Lolita and Julio Martir on their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary

**Julio Guanzon Martir** began serving as a Columban mission promoter/partner in 1990, two years after the first publication of *Misyon* magazine. He continued his service until shortly before he died on November 9, 2017 at the age of 86 years old. Julio was an ardent promoter of Columban mission. Even during his final illness he continued to encourage the volunteers to keep promoting Columban mission through the distribution of the Columban Mission newsletter. In his younger years, he untiringly distributed the *Misyon* magazines and later its CD version.

Julio was born on May 30, 1931 in Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental. He had a degree of Bachelor of Science in Education at the University of the East (1950-1954). He got married to

his first love, Lolita Salvarino Martir, with whom they had nine children – five boys and four girls. The wedding took place on December 28, 1957 with Columban Fr. Eamonn Gill presiding over the ceremony. All nine of their children were baptized by Columban priests.

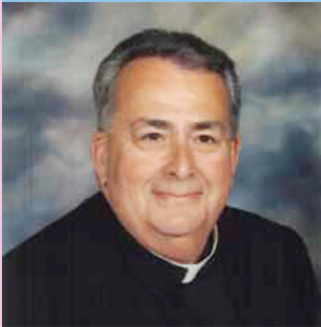
He taught at Kabankalan Academy which later became Kabankalan City College under the directorship of the Columban Missionaries where all of his children finished their studies. He served the school for 42 years (1954-1996), until his retirement at age 65. Julio was one of the first two Lay Ministers when the Lay Minister program started at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral (1987-1988) with Msgr. Josefino Elidan as the Parish Priest. He retired from the service at age 80.

The Columban Missionaries are very grateful to Julio's dedication and commitment to the church and to the Columban Mission. He was a catalyst for mission to flourish in Kabankalan.



Fr. Brian Gore with the bereaved family of Mr. Julio Martir

**A COLUMBAN WHO JOURNEYED WITH US**



**Fr. John M. Lagomarsino**, born on November 9, 1939, died at Philip Hulitar Hospice, Rhode Island in the early morning of February 13, 2018. He was 79 years old.

In 1961 he joined the Peace Corps and was among the first group assigned to the Philippines. Here he met the Columbans while teaching English as a Second Language in Ilog, Negros Occidental.

He returned to the United States in 1963 and applied to the Columban seminary. Fr John was ordained on June 13, 1970 at Sacred Heart Church, Sacramento. In September 1970, he returned to the Philippines where he began parish work in Isabela, Negros Occidental. After two years, he went to Kabankalan and then to Daconcogon. He later served as President of Binalbagan Catholic College and as Bursar at the Columban House in Batang. Years later, he was assigned to Ozamis City, Mindanao, where he became the spiritual director for Columban seminarians on an Overseas Training Program. In 1980 Fr. John returned to the US and did various works for the Society.

May God grant him eternal peace and rest.



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