



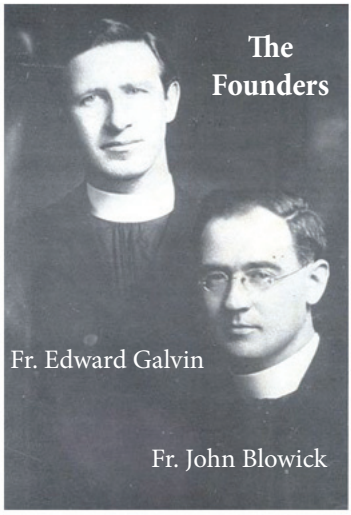
COLUMBAN MISSION

"Pilgrims for Christ"

Issue No 29

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.

The Founders



THE CENTENARY OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. COLUMBAN

by: *Fr. Pat Baker*

Fr. Pat, from Australia, is the Philippine Region Archivist.

The Missionary Society of St. Columban was officially established by the Church authorities in Ireland on June 29, 1918. It was founded by two Irish diocesan priests – Fr. Edward Galvin and Fr. John Blowick. Fr. Galvin had volunteered to go as a missionary to China. After a couple of years there, he was almost overwhelmed by the need for more missionaries to bring the Good News to the millions of Chinese who had never heard of it.

By 1920, the first group of Columban missionaries was ready to embark for China. Many structures were set up in

Ireland to give the necessary support to the new Society. Almost immediately, Columbans were also assigned to the United States, Britain, Australia and New Zealand. During the past 100 years, the Society has expanded into many other countries where we have been given the warm and generous response.

Our celebration of the Centenary here in the Philippines will be launched officially on November 23, 2017 (the Feast Day of St. Columban) and conclude on November 23, 2018.

Why do we need to have this celebration?

First and foremost, it is an occasion to look back over the past 100 years and thank God for all the graces and blessings, challenges and opportunities that God has lavished on us, on the Society. Without His grace and guidance, nothing could have been achieved.

see CENTENARY on page 2

Walking with Creation

by: *John Din*



John, a Columban lay missionary, is the Regional Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation Coordinator.

On August 31 I found myself with some volunteers installing tents at Burnham Green, Luneta Park, Manila for an event that would take place at the crack of dawn the following day – “Walk for Creation” on September 1. Being near the coast, the wind was very strong and we had to find sacks of sand to support the four corners of each tent and pieces of strings and wood to tie the tents to the ground to withstand the force of the wind. That evening, the sky was clear and one could see stars, good enough signs that promised a dry day after days of torrential rain. That was our hope.

Before three o’clock in the morning of September 1, rain started to pour and showed no signs of stopping. All of us were

see PARISH PRIEST on page 11

see CREATION on page 5

Blessed to be a Columban, Blessed to be a Parish Priest

by: *Fr Leo Distor*

Fr. Leo, from Marbel, South Cotabato, is the first Filipino Columban Parish Priest of Our Lady of Remedies Parish, Malate.



Before I became a Columban, I was with the tribal people in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato for six years teaching elementary grade school students and working as a liaison to the different tribal communities in the area. I discovered that I like this kind of work and was happy doing it. When I learned about the Columbans’ understanding of mission which is very different from those I had in mind, I knew that this is where what I experienced and what I learned will have a place, where I can grow as a missionary.

I joined the Columban Society and was ordained on December 27, 1996. Right after my ordination, I was assigned for two months in Malabang Parish, Prelature of Marawi. Together with Columban Fathers Rufus Halley and Paul Cooney

FROM THE DIRECTOR

by: Fr. Paul Glynn



This year, with great gratitude to God in our hearts, we are launching our year-long Centenary Celebration marking One Hundred Years of the Missionary Society of Saint Columban. We were founded in 1918 by two young Irish diocesan priests who answered the invitation of Christ to: “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:19). The Columbans have been part of the Philippine Church since our arrival here in 1929. As once it was the Columban priests from overseas who came here to the Philippines in answer to Christ’s call, today young Filipinos are answering that same call and are being sent by Christ to bring the Good News to far distant lands – Chile, Peru, Pakistan, Korea, Fiji, Myanmar, Britain, Ireland, USA, China, and Taiwan. As we celebrate the 100 years of Columban presence we are, indeed, grateful to God that our Filipino young priests and lay missionaries are now at the forefront of our missionary work.

Since 1929 up until the present, we, Columbans are so privileged to have been able to experience the immense generosity of so many ordinary Filipinos, without whose help and support, our missionary work here would be impossible. Most especially at this time, we are so thankful to God that, because of your continuing support and generosity, we are able to train more and more young Filipinos to answer the call to preach the Gospel throughout the world.

Christ is calling many more young Filipinos to follow Him. But these young men need your prayers and support. Please continue to support them by saying a little prayer each day for the work of the Columban Missionaries and by continuing to send your donations to us, however small, for the training of our seminarians who have responded generously to Christ’s call.

Maraming salamat po sa inyong pagsuporta!



Joint Area Meeting, September 26-27, 2017, Singalong

CENTENARY from page 1

It is also an occasion to thank the 744 Columbans who gave many years of their lives to share the good news with others before going to their eternal reward. We thank the 381 members who are still laboring in the vineyard of the Lord. We thank the Lay Missionaries, past and present, especially the fifty Lay Missionaries who are still actively engaged in a whole new way of being on mission that has greatly enriched the Society.

Finally, but most importantly, we thank all our benefactors and supporters worldwide. Without their help, there would have been no missionaries, no Missionary Society of St. Columban. Our many celebrations during the centenary will highlight in more detail the contribution that God has made and that all these people have made. ■



Fr. Pat Baker

Singalong, September 4, 2017



A Christmas Gift to Japan

by: *Fr Philip Ilio Bonifacio,*
Columban Priest from Bacolod City

I used to think that the spirit of Christmas was the same in every part of the world – houses are lit up with lights and decors, evening caroling or *daigon*, *Misa de Gallo*, fireworks and gift-giving. This is the spirit of Christmas in the Philippines.

Since the time I was assigned to Japan after my ordination in 1995, I have spent most of my Christmases in Japan. Catholics attend Christmas Eve Mass, sing some carols, share tea and then go home. The Christmas lights brighten the atmosphere but fireworks and house-to-house *daigon* are nowhere to be found.

My first Christmas here was a bit lonely. After the evening Mass, I was left alone in the parish with no family to spend the season with. So I called my family in the Philippines, then I phoned some of the Filipino parishioners who, I found out, also shared my feelings of loneliness for being away from home. We agreed to go to a restaurant. Since then, every year we gather for a Japanese *Noche Buena* after the “Midnight Mass”. We also share Filipino dishes cooked

by Filipino parishioners. We have become one family as we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ.

In 2012, I became the parish priest of St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Matsudo, Archdiocese of Tokyo. One day I asked myself, “How can I make Christmas memorable for the children here in Matsudo?” Three years ago, I incorporated caroling and gift-giving into the Midnight Mass. Before the final blessing, I invited all the children to come up to the altar to receive their gifts. Shy they might be, one could see the big smiles on their faces. It was the first of a kind in Japan. Gift-giving, in this context, is something extraordinary for the Japanese. We were more than happy to see them rejoicing on Christmas Day, a memorable occasion for them and one they now look forward to each year. In the years that followed, the Japanese children came bringing their parents and grandparents.

see CHRISTMAS on page 11

Christmas in Negros, Philippines

How was it like to a Myanmarese and three Fijian Columban seminarians having spent Christmas for the first time at the Negros Nine farm in Kabankalan, Negros Occidental in 2016?

It’s a blessing going to new places and be surprised at many unexpected things, like discovering that I could endure waking up very early since I am not an early bird. The *Simbang Gabi* at 3 o’clock in the morning days before Christmas was a memorable experience. Celebrating with Mangao family and the organization, it was an abundant Christmas for me with everyone gathered together. The exposure was nice and it’s good to experience the typical Filipino Christmas celebration. **Antonio Saula Seeto, Fiji**

I encountered the love of God through the beautiful nature and meeting people. The people shared their love and kindness. I was a stranger to them but they really made me feel the love of God and taught me how to love a stranger. Participating in the games at the Christmas party was really fun. In our group, they could not speak English well. I, too, cannot speak English well, let alone Ilonggo. Instead, we communicated with body language and still won the game! Playing with the children made me so joyful and made me feel the meaning of Christmas. **Columban Nhkai Hkun Myat Aung, Myanmar**

Before tree-planting, we said a prayer together. It was very unique at that moment having the same feeling of being in union with your brothers, the family and with everyone up there. The prayer was an act of giving life to nature. We planted trees for the future generation. It was very touching—that feeling of being part of something that is bringing back life to the environment. Also playing with the kids, with them climbing at my back, reminded me of my own nieces and nephews. It was really great to see them happy. **Kusitino Saro, Fiji**

We sang some Christmas carols that the kids in Colombo Elementary School were familiar with. Although we were not so prepared, it was a great moment to do something for those kids. One thing that really struck me is that I could still feel the influence of the Columbans in the area. When they learned that we are Columban seminarians, they looked at us with a different relationship. They were very hospitable and treated us well with respect and care. I wonder why the Columbans are not sending young priests and lay missionaries here? It’s also a good place for missionary work. **Iowane Naio, Fiji**



Spiritual Year 2017 - 18 by: Finbar Maxwell



L-R: (back) Yosup, Fr. Finbar, Fr. Dan, Iowane, Ambrosio, Joseph
(front) Peter, Francis, Larry, Antonio, Leo, Meli

Spiritual Year began on August 1, 2017 and will finish on May 31, 2018. There are ten students taking part in the year: four from Korea (Yosup Park, Joseph Garam Jin, Leo Muhn Sung Yun and Ambrosio Shim Hong Seok), three from Fiji (Iowane Naio, Antonio Saula Seeto and Meli Nanuku Farasiko), two from Myanmar (Francis Xavier Nbwila Aung and Peter Kyaw Zaw) and one from the Philippines (Larry Duerme). Fr. Dan O'Malley is *socius* (assistant) of the program and Fr. Finbar Maxwell is director of the year.

Spiritual Year is a very special year in the Columban formation journey as it provides an important foundation of prayer and spirituality for the years of life, mission and ministry to come. There is great cultural richness and diversity in the community this year, which is reflective of the overall membership of the Columban Society. The purpose of Spiritual Year is to help the students grow in deeper self-awareness, deepen their relationship with God, come to a deeper understanding of the charism and mission of the Society of St. Columban, and facilitate authentic vocational discernment.

The courses they are taking include prayer, scripture, personal and spiritual integration, critical reflection, journaling, motivation, values development, theater arts and the 30-Day Spiritual Exercises.

This 30-Day retreat, which will take place over February and March of 2018, could be described as the "peak experience" of the Spiritual Year, as everything in the first half of the year will be a preparation for the retreat, and the weeks and months afterwards will be a reflection on the retreat experience. The gift of the retreat is that it enables the students to make a more informed commitment to Columban missionary priesthood.

The students are also doing pastoral work in Malate Parish; in Pasay with families for whom the cemetery

is their home and at the nearby scholar's center with the Columban Sisters; and in the Kuya Center for street children in Cubao.

Columban Formation Update by: Felisiano Fatu

The Columban Formation Program in the Philippines started the new academic year 2017-2018 with the students' annual retreat at St. Scholastica's Center of Spirituality, Tagaytay City from July 30 till August 5. Fr. Patrick O'Donoghue, presently assigned in Myanmar, was the retreat director. The opening mass for the academic year was held at the Singalong chapel on August 6. The students began their classes for the first semester on August 7.

The formation community stays in Singalong house and consists of two formation staff and twelve students. Fr. Felisiano Fatu is the Rector while Fr. Cireneo Matulac is the Vice-Rector. The students are: three from China (Peter Lichun Dong, Thomas Li Changan and Brian Hu Xingfeng), three from Fiji (Kusitino Saro, Mosese Yacalevu and Remisio Domodomolagi), three from Myanmar (Columban Nhkai Hkun Myat Aung, Columban Lahtaw Aung Li and Matthew Tu Hkwang), and three from the Philippines (Louie Ybanez, Emmanuel Trocino and Gerald Mandam).

After completing the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program, Peter continued on with pastoral work at Our Lady of Remedies Parish, Malate. Emmanuel helped out in the Mission Promotion Office and is presently doing CPE. Louie is studying at the Loyola School of Theology (LST) in his final year of theological studies. Kusitino and Columban are studying Philosophy at the University of Santo Tomas while Aung Li, Gerald, Mosese, Remisio and Matthew are studying Philosophy at LST. Brian and Thomas are currently studying English at the Assumption Language Center.

Students are involved in pastoral works at the Kuya Center for street children; Bible reflection with the mothers, catechetical classes with the young people and formation classes with the young scholars at a cemetery in a Pasay parish; and formation classes with the incarcerated at the New Bilibid Prison.



L-R (back) Emmanuel, Brian, Fr. Cireneo, Fr. Felisiano, Remisio, Mosese, Kusitino
(front) Columban, Matthew, Louie, Aung Li, Gerald and Thomas

The Ladies Who Are Called Maria
by: Marjorie Engcoy, Filipina Columban Lay Missionary in Fiji

In my new parish assignment, I am blessed to have met wonderful ladies who are named after our Blessed Mother.

Nana Maria

She became like a mother to me when I came to live in her household for a month before I moved into a rented flat. On the day I came to live with them she told me that I was already part of the family. Nana Maria is a widow and is left with her three children: a son, who is her eldest child and two daughters. She's very active in the parish and in the archdiocese. She treats everyone warmly with her gentle smile and happy greetings. She encouraged everyone under her leadership to do their best in their ministries, to take courage and not to be afraid because God is always with them. It wasn't all easy for Nana Maria; I saw her facing trials as well. She faced them with her head held high. One day, I asked her, "Nana, how are you keeping up with all of these trials?" Her answer? Love. Early on, these trials didn't make sense to her, but as she got to know and understand her ministry more, she began to love it,

thus becoming a part of her. The same is true with her family; her love for her family gives her the strength to keep on standing by them and with them.

Aunty Maria

Aunty Maria is a community leader of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus Community in Raiwaqa Parish, Suva. I was told that this is a challenging community when it comes to participation. Indeed, I saw it when I visited the community. There are only about three to four families who are actively participating in the church or community activities. Two things that I admire about Aunty Maria are her love and commitment to the community. Whenever she is blessed with good health, she goes around visiting families almost every week, constantly asking how they are and requesting them to assist in the community activities of the church. Aunty Maria is a warm and welcoming person. The faith community is not only her big responsibility. She is also taking care of her daughter who has special needs. But that does not stop her from being the way she is.



The Blessed Mother

Both women are named after the Blessed Mother and both have inherited the loving and committed attitude of Our Lady. In their life journeys, they have never left the foot of the Cross; they adore the Cross, the source of their strength to withstand whatever tribulations they face in life. Like the Blessed Mother, they knew the cost when they decided to follow Him. As I journey with these women, I am further inspired and strengthened to keep hanging on.



2nd Aggregation as Temporary Members

Two Columban Seminarians renewed their temporary membership with the Society of St. Columban on June 27, 2017 at the Columban house in Singalong. Elbert Balbastro (*left*) and Jerry Lohera (*right*) took their oath during a Mass celebrated by Fr Paul Glynn, Regional Director. Jerry is from Magsaysay, Misamis Oriental and Elbert is from Oton, Iloilo. Both joined the Columban seminary formation in June 2012 and have gone to Pakistan on July 7 this year for a two-year First Mission Assignment.

CREATION from page 1



wondering what would happen to the event. Would it be postponed? And just before the scheduled Mass at 4:00 am, the rain stopped. Everybody rushed to get the event started. The rain had disorganized ourselves but everybody worked hard so we could start. People started gathering in the middle of the uneven and grassy field, walking through waters, mud, and anthills.

Lo and behold, we celebrated the Mass, with Cardinal Tagle reminding us of the need to nurture the culture of care present in every generation. It was celebrated in the altar of the open field. It was the Word of Scripture meeting the word revealed through all the created elements already there present with us.

The Mass took place at the passing of time from the darkness of night with the clouds of rain to the rising of the sun. The Mass was followed by a reflective walk that meditated on the different moments of creation informed by the current scientific understanding of our evolutionary universe. We walked along the fields, some through the mud while others tried to escape the inescapable heavily soaked field. But we had the sun accompanying us in our walk.

The Walk for Creation was indeed a time of experiencing creation at its full manifestation, from the blows of the wind, the blessing of the rain, the stability and support of the earth, to the fire of the rising sun. What was thought to be a "walk for creation"

became a "walk with creation" that is ever present. The walk brought back memories of my childhood. It was a memory of being at home with the natural world. We need to recover this memory of at homeness with creation to combat uncontrolled commercialism and strained relationship with the earth, separating ourselves from our real identity that is related and interconnected with all forms of life. ■



MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Sharing

January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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CITY OF ST. COLUMBAN

2018

Gospel Joy

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Jan: New Year's Day

5 Feb: Lunar New Year

5 Feb: EDSA Revolution Anniversary

9 Mar: Maundy Thursday

10 Mar: Good Friday

11 Mar: Black Saturday

Apr: Araw ng Kagitingan

May: Labor Day

12 Jun: Independence Day

15 Jun: Eidul Fitr

15 Jun - Foundation Day

Missionary Society

Columban (100 years)

1 Aug: Eidul Adha

1 Aug: Ninoy Aquino Day

7 Aug: National Heroes Day

Nov: All Saints' Day

Nov: All Souls' Day

Nov: Feast Day of

Columban

10 Nov: Bonifacio Day

24 Dec: Christmas Holiday

25 Dec: Christmas Day

30 Dec: Rizal Day

31 Dec: New Year's Eve

July

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100 YEARS...



Columban Lay Missionaries Updates

RP18 Renewal of Commitment

Rose Basada, Gertrudes Samson and Jayjay Enterina renewed their commitment with the CLM on June 28, 2017. They have been assigned to the Region of Britain since 2010. Rose is presently assigned to the US region while Gertrudes and Jayjay are hopeful to renew their visas within the year.



PH21 Renewal of Commitment

Jenanydel Nola and Luda Egbalic renewed their commitment (2nd term) on September 18. They left for Korea on September 20.

PH 24 Off to Fiji

for a three-year mission

Lily Faunillan, 28, is a teacher from Moalboal, Cebu. Jake Lunor, 31, is a nurse from Talamban, Cebu City. And Jinky Ucol, 38, is a teacher from Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro.



PH 25 in Orientation

Ma. Fe Corazon Arienza, 31 years old, is from Cabadbaran City, Agusan Del Norte. She is a graduate of Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Father Saturnino Urios University, Butuan City.



Hazel Jean Angwani, 25 years old, is from Bontoc, Mountain Province. She is a graduate of secondary education major in Social Studies.



Thank you, Ana Flores (Peru), Anna Noh Hyein (Korea) and Sun Hee Kim Sunny (Korea). We pray for you and we await for your return.

Welcome Lilibeth Sabado as the new Coordinator of CLM Philippines. We thank Beth for her generosity in accepting the role.

Thank you, Andoy!

Alejandro “Andoy” Basañez had worked with the Columbans in Singalong House since 1977. He was interviewed by Fathers Denis Mescall and Peter Steen, and got employed at the age of 19. Andoy is from Leyte and got married to Glena Tolentino, who is from Cebu, in 1985. The couple settled in Manila so Andoy was able to continue working with the Columbans.



Years later, he was assigned at the front door greeting everyone, until his last day on September 21, 2017.

We thank Andoy for his more than 40 years of dedicated service. He will be remembered by his friendly presence, courteous greetings and sweet smiles.

Maraming salamat, Andoy!

Farewell, Philippines

by: Fr Matthew ChanIn Park

Fr Matthew ChanIn Park, from the Diocese of Daejeon, Korea, joined the Associate Priest Program in 2011 and worked in the Columban parish of Our Lady of Remedies, Malate, Manila for six years. He left the Philippines on July 25, 2017 to return to and serve his home Diocese. Below is an excerpt of his farewell message.



Thank you everyone, especially to the Columban Fathers, for supporting me and allowing me to serve in Malate community. This parish is for me very special. The journey was not all easy but because of your care and love, I am here.

I didn't want to accept my insufficiency and lack of abilities. I got disappointed with myself and almost lost my self-esteem. But there were many people who came to encourage me again and again. I needed to be humble. I am sure that without the help of others and the guidance of God, I could not have survived in the Philippines.

At Mass, I remembered and prayed to God for all the families. Humbly, I ask for your prayers that I may carry on my ministry in Korea.

Once again, I'd like to say to all of you, “Thank you and sorry”. Thank you for coming into my life and giving me joy. Thank you for loving me and receiving my love in return. Thank you for the memories. I am leaving but I won't forget the memories that you have given me.



Emman with Isabela Mission Partners



Students in Kabankalan reading *Columban Mission*

Standing With Us

by: *Emmanuel Trocino, Columban Seminarian*

I was invited to meet and hold a whole-day recollection for the mission partners in Isabela, a former Columban parish. A good number came, most of them friends of former Columban parish priests of their church. They were full of life and animated as they shared their experiences with the Columbans. Fr. Brian Gore might be the last Columban priest standing in the province but he is not standing alone. For behind this last Columban are the loyal and ardent Columban mission partners, the simple and silent supporters who continue to keep the flame of mission alive in the island of sugarcanes.

RECOLLECTION & RE-CONNECTION with our mission partners in Cubao, Binangonan (Rizal) and Malate, to rebuild stronger relationship with them **ALKANSYA PROJECT** with Savemore; Child Jesus of Prague School, Binangonan; St. Columban College, Olongapo City; and St. Joseph College, Olongapo City **MISSION APPEALS** in Baras, Binangonan, Cardona, and Morong, Rizal; Silang, Cavite and Malate in Manila; and Mission Promotion & Mission Sending mass in Mindoro Occidental.



Fr. Rolly with Binangonan Mission Partners

Reconnecting with
Luzon Mission Partners
by: *CMP-Luzon/E. Sabate*

Strengthening Mission Promotion in Mindanao

by: *B. Durangparang*

The Mission Promotion Team and Volunteers in Mindanao had a meeting at the Columban House, Patag, Cagayan de Oro City on June 21-22, 2017 to strengthen Mission Promotion.

On-going activities:

MISSION PARTNERS FORMATION:

Every month

MISSION APPEALS: in Columban and former Columban Parishes and at Mission Sending Masses

PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS:

through continuous visitations and giving out of mite boxes in the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro and in the Dioceses of Bukidnon, Butuan, Ozamiz, Pagadian and Iligan

Inauguration at Columban College

Monsignor Crisostomo A. Cacho, President of Columban College, Olongapo City invited the Society of St. Columban to the inauguration and blessing of the new building of the school dedicated to Columban Bishop Henry Byrne. Regional Director Fr. Paul Glynn and Vocation Director Fr. Rolly Aniscal attended the said event. It was a day

of recollection of the contributions of the Columbans to the school and to the diocese.

The Columbans first came to the Province of Zambales in 1951. The province became the Prelature of Iba in 1955 and a diocese in 1982. Bishop Byrne was bishop from 1956 until 1982.

The school, formerly known as Naval Reservation Junior College founded in 1947 by two teachers, Mr. Pedro Mendoza and Mr. Dionisio Lindayag, was named

Columban College in 1961 when the Columban Fathers accepted the invitation to take over the school. The Columbans stayed on until 1983.



L-R: Fr. Rolly, Fr. Daniel Presto (Diocesan Administrator), Msgr. Crisostomo Cacho (Vicar-General), Fr. Raymann Gatindig and Fr. Paul



Mindanao Mission Promotion Team

L-R: (Front) Au Luceño, Bernie Durangparang, Irma Cantago, Sr. Elisa Dogon, MSOLTC (Middle) Vicenta Pallo & companion, Apolinaria Neri, Louie, Jennyflor Faelden (Back) Fr. Paul, Emily Aveyro, Helen Raña, Churchill Aguilar, Vilma Arante

Guide for Group Reflections on Mission Awareness

These guides are adapted from "Life for the World" by Frs. Peter Leonard and Sean McNulty, SSC.

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 One: The Gift of Life

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

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

Points for reflection:

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

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

Session Two: All Life is One

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

1. Opening Prayer/Song
2. Activity: Spend about 10 mins. being alone with nature.

Have you had any personal experiences that gave you a sense that all life is connected?

What feelings would surface when you think of the ongoing destructions done to our planet? How do these destructions affect your life, those in the community and our environment?

Can you name these experiences?

Points for reflection:

God is the creator of the universe and author of all life; that all life is good and has unity, order and purpose; that humans have a special role in creation; and that despite our infidelity, God's fidelity prevails.

Our lives are inseparable from each other and from all life on the planet. And since all life is one, all life needs to be respected, protected and cared for. When any life form is damaged all life is damaged.

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

Angelus for Creation

by: Archbishop Socrates Villegas, DD

Leader: The angel of the Lord appeared in a burning bush

People: The Lord is King, let the earth rejoice

Hail Mary...

Leader: God looked at everything he had made and found it very good

People: Learn from the way the wild flowers grow

Hail Mary...

Leader: What you do to the least you do to me

People: We await new heavens and new earth

Hail Mary...

Leader: Pray for us Holy Mother of God

People: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ

Let us Pray: *O God, you wonderfully created human nature and still*

Session Three: Choosing Life

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

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

Moments of silence.

Points for reflection:

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

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

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

more wonderfully redeemed it. May those you have redeemed understand that there exists nothing more marvelous than the world's creation at the beginning. Recognizing that all creation is perfected in Christ, may all you have created give you praise and glory now and forever.

Glory be to the Father...

Parish Priest from page 1



L-R: Fr. Kevin McHugh, Fr. Jason Antiquera, Fr. Mickey Martin, Naanise Mo'unga, Fr. John Leydon; Fr. Leo playing the guitar

I helped out in the masses and got involved with the youth. The parish was first administered by the Columbans.

After my assignment in Malabang, I was appointed to go on mission to Korea. After the language refresher course, I stayed in a Korean parish for two years. On weekends, I helped in the ministry for Filipino migrant workers in Korea. I said masses for them, heard confessions and accompanied them in their journey, spending time talking with them and listening to their stories. These went on for five years, from 1997 until 2002. The years that followed found me in the formation work.

Joining Malate Parish in 2013 and being assigned a parish priest since May 2014 is a familiar call that has become closer to my heart. I have always wanted to do pastoral work, to be with people and journey with them. It has become a source of confidence for me. I may not be as extrovert as others, but I speak out. I get energy from my experiences with people. I am quite happy with what I am doing and grateful that people are happy to have me here.

Pastoral work is the joy and fulfillment of my priesthood. It is the drive of my missionary journey.

Being the first Filipino parish priest in Malate is a mark recognizing that in the region, Filipinos or local people are now taking on regional or bigger responsibilities such as this.

I keep an attitude of openness to the leadings of the spirit. Sometimes the difficult part is to know what it is. But life continues. I carry with me that sense of gratitude. I am happy

THOSE WHO JOURNEYED WITH US



Fr. Bernard O'Connor was born on April 18, 1934 in Ballymote, County Sligo, Ireland. He was ordained in Dalgan Park, Ireland on December 21, 1958 and was appointed to the Philippines. He spent many years of work in the Archdiocese of Manila. His first years were spent in Silang and Binangonan, but from 1969 he was engaged in Student Catholic Action. This was a dynamic ministry of leadership training among the university students in Manila founded by the Columbans in 1936. He mainly served in Far Eastern University during the turbulent years of Martial Law. He served as Superior in Luzon District and returned to parish ministry in 1988 in Malate until he was appointed to Britain in 1995 where he did Mission Awareness work and was the house manager in Solihull for thirteen years. He returned to Ireland in 2009 to begin his dialysis treatment. He died suddenly on September 17, 2017. Fr. Bernie will be remembered for his droll humour, for his hope and indomitable courage, a witness to all on how to cope with life's difficulties. May he rest in peace.

to be with the Columbans. I am blessed to be a Columban and I can be a blessing as a Columban too. Blessings abound. I've learnt to be attentive to God's blessings that can come through people. There are just so many good things happening and I am happy to be part of it. ■

Christmas from page 3

Christianity is seen as foreign by most Japanese and Filipinos are regarded as foreigners. They are surprised to know of Japanese parishioners actively participating in the Church. They often thought Christianity is only for foreigners. Some Japanese are a bit shy about their identity, so it is good to motivate them.

The beauty with Japanese children bringing along their grandparents is that the elders now want to return to the Catholic fold. It is good to see them re-introduced to the Church. Many others have become interested about the services offered by the parish. We now have come up with an additional preparation for Christmas, a Communal Rite of Reconciliation for the Japanese on the first or second Saturday of December.

Mother Church is inviting us "to go out and find your sheep". And this is how we in Matsudo parish have responded. This is our Christmas gift to Japan. ■



Mr. Felix Linejan Depista

Felix worked for the Columbans from 1970 to 1980 at the Catadman House in Ozamiz. He was the gardener and housekeeper. He died on August 1, 2017 after a long illness. He is survived by his wife, Conchita and three children. May he rest in peace.





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