

Columban Mission

PILGRIMS FOR CHRIST

ISSUE NO. 37

A TIME TO KEEP AND A TIME TO DISCARD



Palm Sunday celebration, Our Lady of Remedies Parish, Malate

Last year, 2021, the Philippine Church celebrated 500 years since the arrival of Christianity. On March 31, 1521 Ferdinand Magellan and his fleet moored at Limasawa Island (Leyte). According to the fleet's chronicler, the first Catholic Mass was celebrated in the Philippines that day by the fleet's chaplain, Padre Pedro Valderrama.

Even though some historians claim that other missionaries said mass in the Philippines before 1521, the Easter Sunday Eucharist that took place marked the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines. The Santo Niño statue given to Humamay has come to symbolize the Catholic faith in the Philippines; a faith that continues to endure despite everything.

In his letter, the acting bishop of Manila, Bishop Broderick Pabillo, points out that: "Although the Cross of the faith had come with the Sword of the conquistadores in the

time of colonialism, through time the Filipinos have learned to distinguish between the Christian faith and the Spanish colonialism. We had fought against the Spanish masters and drove them out but we have remained fervent in our fidelity to the Catholic Church".

This is indeed a time to celebrate; yet it is also a time for us to mourn the injustices of the past, to learn from the mistakes of history and to redouble our resolve to do what is fitting to right the wrongs and heal the wounds of colonialism. It is a time to be grateful for how the values of the Gospel of Jesus have endured for 500 years despite being historically enmeshed with colonial oppression. Commitment to the Gospel has strengthened the people of this archipelago to stand up to corrupt dictators, to practice immense resiliency in the face of all sorts of natural disasters, calamities, wars and conflicts and to endure the worst forms of poverty, hardship and injustice.

We also need to seriously reflect on where the values of the Gospel have not yet fully taken root in our own lives and in the life of Philippine society as a whole. Why, in the third most Catholic country in the world and the only majority Christian country in Asia, is there still so much poverty, inequality, exploitation of workers, of women and children, violation of basic human rights, injustice and corruption? Why is there still misunderstanding and distrust between our diverse communities? Why are we so remiss in caring for the oceans, rivers, forests, flora and fauna of this, our beautiful land? This is a time for us to celebrate our 500 years of commitment to Christianity; but it is also a time to mourn our immense shortcomings in order to renew our resolve to be ever more faithful to the Gospel of Christ into the future.



*by Paul Glynn
Regional Director*

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

These last two years have been very difficult for each and every one of us. Many of us have lost loved ones, family and friends due to the coronavirus pandemic and this long and tedious lock-down has been filled with all sorts of worries and anxieties. Because of this, it is good to take comfort from the reassuring words of our Loving God: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” [Joshua 1:9].

You who are reading this newsletter are the very reason why we Columban missionaries are still able to continue our mission despite all the difficulties. Just as we are beginning to emerge from the hardships of the Covid 19 pandemic, our world is being further engulfed in war and conflict and more and more people are suffering the effects of Global Warming. At this time, it is more important than ever that we continue to share the Gospel message of Peace, Compassion and Respect. Because of your generosity and that of so many Filipinos we are able to continue to respond to this missionary call. Through your generous support, through your prayers and through your donations, together, we are able to continue to train and send young Filipinos and Filipinas as Columban Missionary Priests and Columban Lay Missionaries to the four corners of the earth.

In May and June of this year, God willing, despite all the hardships of Covid 19, the Society of Saint Columban will be blessed with the ordination to the missionary priesthood of two young men, Rev. Elbert Balbastro SSC, from Oton, Iloilo and Rev. Jerry Lohera SSC, from Magsaysay, Misamis Oriental. With God’s grace they will both take up their mission assignment in Pakistan next year. Every time you pray for us and every time you support us you are generously playing your part in helping the Filipino Church to respond to the mandate of Christ: “Go and make disciples of all nations” [Matthew 28:19].

Maraming, maraming salamat po sa inyong taos pusong pagsusuporta sa Misyon ni Kristo!

Fr. Paul G. Lynn S.S.C.

OZAMIS ARCHDIOCESE JUBILEO DE ORO CLOSING CELEBRATION

*by Bernie Durangparang, Animator for
Columban Mission Promotion-Mindanao*

The Archdiocese of Ozamis celebrated its 50th founding anniversary as a Diocese on February 17, 2021. The year-long celebration culminated on February 17, 2022 with a mass officiated by Archbishop Martin Sarmiento Jumoad, DD at the Immaculate Conception Metropolitan Cathedral, Ozamis City.

Plaques of Recognition were given after the mass to all those who have served and helped the Archdiocese in its various ministries to make the church a living witness to the Gospel message of Christ. The Missionary Society of St Columban is one of those who were given the Plaque of Recognition (one plaque for the Columban Fathers and another plaque for the Columban Lay Missionaries).



*Fr. Jovito Dales received the Plaque of Recognition on behalf of the Columban Missionaries.
Fr. Sean Martin (left of Archbishop Jumoad) also graced the occasion.*

A SPECIAL AND MEMORABLE CELEBRATION

November 23, 2021 was a special and memorable day for the Columban Missionaries in the Philippines. On this day, we had three in one celebration: Mass for the feast day of St. Columban at the Our Lady of Remedies Parish in Malate; the renewal of aggregation of Kyaw Zaw (one year), Iowane Naio (two years), Atonio Saula Tubuna Seeto (two years) and Larry Gulay Duerme (three years with FMA – first mission assignment), and the first aggregation of Mosese Biuduadua Wasia Yacalevu (three years with FMA); and at the same time it was a thanksgiving mass of Fr. Leonito “Leo” Distor on his 25th anniversary as a priest this year.

What made this occasion extra special is the fact that after almost two years of not being able to gather together physically as one due to the restrictions brought about by the pandemic, this was the first time ever that the Columban Missionaries – priests, lay, sisters and students – in Luzon area came together at Malate Church for the celebration. It was one filled with joy, laughter and gratitude. There was a lot of *kumustahans*, catching-up on each other, exchanging of stories and simply being with each other while maintaining social distancing and wearing of masks. Even with the health protocols in place, the air was filled with a strong bond of camaraderie among us.

The celebration radiated the spirit of mission, love and hope amidst the difficult times we are facing during this pandemic.

96 on 70th and 56 on 25th JUBILEE CELEBRATION



Father Des with fellow Columban Missionaries (L-R): Fr Rolly Aniscal, Arlenne Villahermosa, Lilibeth Sabado, Fr Paul Glynn and Fr Leo Distor

Not many would have come this far! Fr Desmond Morrison, at 96 years of age, celebrated his 70th anniversary to the priesthood on December 8, 2021, the Feast of the Immaculate Concepcion. A fitting day to celebrate his anniversary since the Blessed Mother has always been close to Father Des’ heart. A thanksgiving Mass was offered by Father Des at Big Hearts Adult Daycare and Assisted Living home with some Columban Missionaries and with the staff and residents of the place. Fr. Leo Distor, 56, and celebrating his 25th anniversary on the same year, concelebrated the Mass. Two missionary priests who have been blessed with many years in mission – an occasion to celebrate with great joy and gratitude.



Father Des celebrating Mass with (L-R) Fr Leo Distor, Fr Paul Glynn and Fr Rolly Aniscal



Columban Missionaries – Priests, Lay, Sisters and Students



L-R: Larry Duerme, Mosese Yacalevu, Iowane Naio, Atonio Saula Seeto and Kyaw Zaw

DIACONATE ORDINATION

The event took place at the Columban International House of Studies in Cubao, Quezon City. Elbert Balbastro and Jerry Lohera were ordained deacons of the Missionary Society of St. Columban on June 27, 2021 by the bishop of Cubao, Most Rev. Honesto Ongtioco, DD. Due to the pandemic, the gathering was attended only by the main celebrant, Columban students and priests. It was, however, live-streamed so that families and friends could take part in the celebration. Fellow Columban students prepared the liturgy and the songs for the Mass, as well as the decoration of the chapel and the set-up of the dining tables for the meal that followed after the Mass.

As a result of everyone's collaborative effort, with the love and support given by fellow Columban students, the ordination became extraordinarily special for both Jerry and Elbert amidst the limitations brought by the pandemic. It was indeed a joyful and a memorable ordination day!



Elbert and Jerry lying prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament



(L-R): Fr Finbar Maxwell (Rector), Jerry Lohera, Bp Honesto Ongtioco, Elbert Balbastro & Fr Paul Glynn (Regional Director)

STUDYING IN MANILA: A REFLECTION

by Larry Duerme (Deacon - Philippines/Peru)



Having studied for three years in LST (2 years on campus and 1 year online), I believe that it provides a great learning experience that a student like me training to become a missionary, needs. Given that students come from different countries around the globe the LST teaching strategies and approaches cater to our varying needs. They offer courses suited to different charisms and ministries of the diverse congregations. Aside from the foundation courses that I study, I have the chance to take subjects like the Biblical Perspectives on Ecology and Human Rights of Migrants with professors

who are available for consultation to address queries and questions related to the discussions presented. They allow us to write papers based on topics related to current issues and situations around the world with the aid of the library for research. Aside from the quality Catholic education that LST provides, the ambiance and atmosphere of the campus help the learning to be more fun and enjoyable - where everyone gets to know each other and develop camaraderie. Students and professors sit together for lunch in the canteen. Even though the school had to resort to online learning due to the pandemic, it still facilitates in-depth study experiences - emphasizing personal research for additional knowledge and providing more reading materials for each subject. One thing I miss about not being able to go to school is sitting with classmates in the gazebo during class breaks, with a smoothie or coffee, having conversations, or just looking at the view of Marikina City and the nearby Sierra Madre mountains.

The Influence of Sto Niño

IN MY FORMATION JOURNEY

by Elbert Balbastro

Deacon, Missionary Society of St. Columban



Reflecting on my formation journey in relation to the 500 years celebration of Christianity in the Philippines, draws me the statue of the Sto. Niño because it feels like meeting Him again. According to history, the statue of the boy Jesus was a baptismal gift to Humaway, the chief wife of Rajah Humabon. Of all the material things that Magellan and his group brought, I asked myself, “Why give the image of the Sto. Niño?”

Thereafter, I realized the importance of the symbol that it represents. The Child Jesus depicted in the statue reminds me of the childlike attitude that I need to cultivate as a seminarian. I was taught that like the boy Jesus, I need to be reformed, to have a deeper faith in God, and a wider understanding of mission. Furthermore, the virtue of humility is an important quality. Knowing when to apologize, being able to recognize the aspects of our life we are ignorant about, and recognizing our strengths and weaknesses developed me into a person who is in touch with the reality of life.

In my journey, there were times when academic studies were demanding and difficult. However, openness to learn aided me in refining my motivation to be a missionary priest. My studies are not only for my personal interests, it is also dedicated to the people of my future ministry.

I remember working in the prison and hospital ministries and being confronted with difficult questions. Why do God let these people suffer? Where is the hand of God in the tragedies of their life? As much as I would like to answer them, I do not bear the knowledge that could give them sufficient answers. What I could only do, at their times of distress was to be a companion, a brother, friend or pilgrim.

Love always comes from within and from that wellspring, it will overflow to others. As a missionary, I must be capable of love for all people regardless of race, color of skin, gender, religion, and culture and for all beings created. As an ordained deacon, my eyes are open to a wider perspective of God’s mission. The best gift I could give in the mission is my effort to reach out to people with love and compassion, to advocate protection for the environment, and to promote equality and peace through mutual respect and dialogue.

My faith gets nourished by my burning desire and commitment to encounter God and it is through my daily encounters with people that I meet Jesus. Sometimes, I find myself in doubt or lacking in my knowledge of God, but all I have to do is look at the statue of the Sto. Niño and draw inspiration from it.



STUDYING IN MANILA: A REFLECTION

by Rev. Jerry Lohera
(Deacon - Philippines/
Pakistan)

Studying at LST has brought me a deep sense of God active in each culture, faith tradition and in all human conditions. LST has given me an incarnational approach in theological methodology that has prepared me for my ministry in all its complexities as it also strengthens my faith.



Elbert Balbastro together with Columban Fathers
Pat Raleigh (L), Tomas King (R) & Pakistani Parishioners

THANK YOU, SR PAT !



Sr. Patria "Pat" Daomilas, a Columban Sister who worked with the Mission Promotion Team of the Columban Missionaries for more than 20 years died on March 10, 2022 at the age of 93. We have been blessed by the life and talents shared by Sister Pat. May she now rest peacefully in her new homeland forever. Below is a shortened version of her autobiography. We are publishing this as our tribute to Sister Pat for her generosity and for a life well-lived and loved.

April 20, 1948 marked a milestone in the history of the Immaculate Conception College (ICC- La Salle), Ozamiz City. The school held the first high school Graduation Exercise featuring sixty (60) ecstatic students. I was one of them. In June of the same year, the College Department opened with 16 students and again, I was proud to belong to that batch. I transferred to UST two years later, where I finished the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education.

Immediately after graduating, I taught at ICC High School for one year. Upon the invitation of Sisters Mary Teresa and Felicitas Curran, I transferred to Sacred Heart High School in Molave. It was during this time that I began considering a missionary vocation for myself. At Sacred Heart High School, my love for music was nurtured. The school had just opened and there was a big need for its improvements. In order to raise funds, we put up yearly operettas for which I served as accompanist. I also started the Children of Mary Sodality. For the parish, I organized a big raffle, the proceeds of which went to the improvements of the church. Rev. Patrick Stein was the parish priest in Molave at that time.

After Molave I decided to join the Columban Sisters. In October 1957, I left for Boston, Massachusetts to enter the Novitiate. As a postulant and all throughout my noviceship, I was assigned to the kindergarten – a big challenge! What saved me from losing my balance was the daily practices on the piano and organ.

In 1960, I made my first profession in Hyde Park, Boston after which I was sent to Chicago to study at the

Conservatory of Music of Mundelein College. I took up advanced studies in Voice and Piano. A year later, I received my first assignment as a Columban Sister in St. Columban's College in Lingayen, Pangasinan. Years later, I was assigned to Labrador and then to Malasigui, both in Pangasinan. In Sinacaban, Misamis Occidental, I was made Directress/ Principal of St. Joseph's High School.

While working in Sinacaban, I pursued my Master of Arts in Education at ICC Graduate School. During the 70s, the Columban Sisters came out with a Renewal Program for all the Sisters, so I went to Ireland for Spiritual Renewal upon finishing my MA degree.

I came home and worked in Labrador, Pangasinan as the Directress/ Principal of the High School for four years. "Music is in the air I breathe," so to speak and after Labrador, I was again given the chance to finish my degree in Music with Voice and Piano as my major subjects at Centro Escolar University (CEU). After graduation, I was back again in Pangasinan teaching piano and voice to musically-inclined children for three years.

The 90s saw the thrust of the Columban Sisters in the Philippines changing. We started handing over our schools in favor of informal education. We collaborated more with NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and worked in partnerships with some programs of the Columban Fathers. I belonged to a team that went around schools and parishes in Metro Manila promoting mission, giving seminars on the theme, "Life for the World."

In my many years of religious life, I can say that my missionary journey has been very fruitful. Many people have touched my life, my loving mother and father particularly (both deceased) who generously offered me to God. My brothers and sisters and I sincerely offer all of them to God in praise and thanksgiving as well. May the symphony of life which we have begun together end in a resounding and a continuous song of gratitude to Him. For all these that took place in my life, I am extremely grateful to God and to ICC.

*Sister Patria M. Daomilas
Columban Sister*

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

by John Din, Regional Coordinator, JPIC-Philippines



Despite the pandemic, the recurring lockdowns that we endured in the past two years, and the feeling of uncertainty towards the future, the desire to connect gave birth to many initiatives in the JPIC program. The promotion of *Laudato Si'* to different parts of the country continued via online platforms. It is truly amazing how humans quickly adjust to the online reality.

One of the surprises in 2021 was the launching of the National *Laudato Si'* Program in March 2021 by the Catholic Bishop Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). The program aims to consolidate the church response to the planetary crises.

On January 2022, the CBCP issued another pastoral statement in which concrete steps were laid down to follow the pastoral letter in 2019. If we look back, we can see the journey from describing what is happening to our beautiful land in 1988, to a call for ecological conversion in 2019 and just recently, towards unity and action in 2022. It is great to see how Columban Missionaries contribute in bringing planetary crises at the forefront of church ministries through its active participation in the *Laudato Si'* Movement Pilipinas.

This year's national and local elections are especially crucial to our nation's history. So important is the election that the CBCP, in less than a month, issued two statements calling for discernment in choosing good leaders that promote the common good. Both statements decry the pandemic of lies and call Christians to speak, live and defend the truth.

In times of calamities, generosity abounds. We thank Noh Hyein Anna (a Columban lay missionary) in Korea for raising funds through the Global Catholic Climate Movement Korea for the victims of Typhoon Odette. The funds we receive are now shared with the Badjao Community in the Diocese of Surigao.



PRAYER SERVICE FOR PEACE

The date was February 12, 2021. Every year on February 12, the people in Myanmar celebrate their Union Day. However, this year's commemoration was quite different because of the recent *coup d'état* in the country placing it in a state of political turmoil. In solidarity with the people in Myanmar, the Columban Missionaries in the Philippines marked this day with a zoom prayer service for peace in Myanmar. The Columban students from Myanmar led a moving prayer service which started with a brief history about the country and the struggles the people went through under the military regime for more than 50 years.

Since then, a regular prayer service for peace in Myanmar is being held which is attended by Columban Missionaries from the different Regions/Mission Units around the world.



Update from the Formation House (and Spiritual Year) March 2022

by Fr. Finbar Maxwell, Rector



(L-R) 1st row: Lum Zawng and Tu Hkwang; 2nd row: Father Dodong, Hkun Myat Aung, Larry, Kyaw Zaw, Naw Graung and Aung Li; 3rd row: Mosese, Iowane, Saula and Father Finbar

After a welcome Christmas and New Year break, the students at the Columban Formation House began their second semester on 31st January 2022. During the break, the formation staff spent time with their families (Fr. Cireneo Dodong Matulac in Zamboanga-Sibugay and Fr. Finbar Maxwell in Ireland). Meanwhile, the students took recreation breaks on two Sundays each month: trips to the sea, to the forest or to the mountains. We are grateful to Fr. Leo Distor for taking time from Malate parish to be with the

students at the formation house on Rosario Drive. There are ten students in the formation house at this time: eight are doing theology studies at Loyola School of Theology (LST) and two students are doing 2nd year Pre-Theology (philosophy), also at LST. Currently we have three students in their own countries doing LST theology courses through virtual classes: a 4th year Myanmar student in Fiji, and two 1st year students in Myanmar and Korea. With the availability of visas again, we hope to have these three students with us in Manila soon.

Three Spiritual year students recently completed their 30-Day spiritual exercises retreat at the Sacred Heart retreat center in Novaliches. They were directed in the retreat by the Spiritual Year director Fr. Kwan Taemoon. Very shortly, they will all regroup at the Spiritual Year house, along with Fr. Chris Kaamino, for the second half of their year.

For the past two years, all academic courses in the Formation and Spiritual year houses were conducted at home and online. March 21st marks a turning point when all of the LST students will return to classes on campus. While there is room to rejoice, we will do so with great care and with all of our protocols in place.

Our current students are as follows: 4th Year STB, Nbwi La Aung Francis Xavier and Kyaw Zaw from Myanmar; 3rd Year STB, Larry G. Duerme from the Philippines, and Iowane Naio and Atonio Saula Seeto from Fiji; 2nd Year STB, Mosese Yacalevu from Fiji and Hkun Myat Aung Columban, Lahtaw Aung Li Columban and Tu Hkawng from Myanmar; 1st Year STB, Kim Jin Wook John from Korea and Peter Zau Mai from Myanmar; 2nd Year Pre-Theology, Lum Zawng Dominic and Naw Graung John from Myanmar. Our three Spiritual Year students are all from the Philippines; they are, Marvin Salarda, Mark Joseph Magat and Lydio Mangao Jr.

CONGRATULATIONS to our students who have received their First Mission Assignments (FMA).

Mosese Yacalevu (Fiji) Hkun Myat Aung Columban (Myanmar) and Lahtaw Aung Li Columban (Myanmar) have been assigned to Mindanao, with Rex Rocamora as their FMA director.

Larry Duerme (Philippines) Tu Hkawng Matthew (Myanmar) and Lee Jongrak Verano (Korea) have been assigned to Peru, with Bernie Lane as their FMA director. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers as they prepare for a life of overseas mission.

Update from Columban Lay Missionaries (CLM)

Lilibeth Sabado finished her term as CLM Regional Coordinator last December 12, 2021. She is now preparing for her well-deserved sabbatical. Due to the pandemic, Beth, as she is fondly called, had graciously extended her appointment to the role of coordinator for one year and then, again, for another six months. Thank you so much, Beth, for your untiring dedication to the job and to your marvelous contribution to both the regional council and to the life of the region as a whole.

A simple thanksgiving mass was held on February 23, 2022 wherein Beth also signed her renewal of agreement with the Columban Missionaries for three years. We will all miss you! Enjoy your sabbatical.



WITH JOY AND GRATITUDE

by Lilibeth Sabado

Beth is a Columban lay missionary who finished her term as CLM Regional Coordinator last December 12, 2021. She is now taking her well-deserved sabbatical.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

- Proverbs 3:5-6

Leaving China and coming home in 2017 was not easy. The thought of reintegrating back into the Philippines after being away for almost 15 years was overwhelming. Despite the difficulty, I said yes, as I held on to my faith and trust in God. The experiences over the years defined who I am now. The stories that I shared, I owe them all to the Missionary Society of St. Columban and to the Spirit that guided my missionary journey. I am grateful for all that has been and for all that will be. But after four and a half years, I bid goodbye once again.

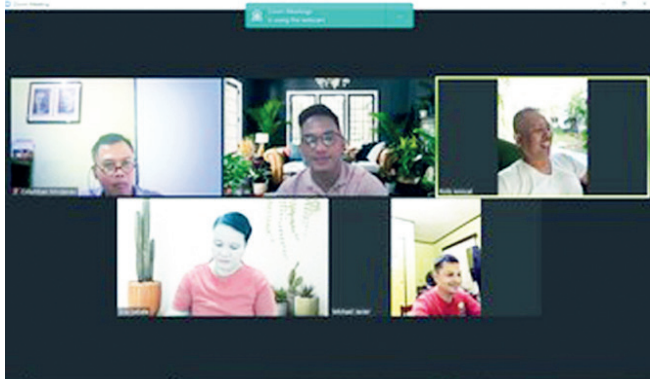
My heart overflows with joy and gratitude for everything: people I have been privileged to work with, places and families I have visited, every experience and learning, from the start to the end and everything in between - thank you God for this beautiful journey.



L-R: John Din, Lilibeth "Beth" Sabado, Liliani Ma'afu, Ana Flores, Fr. Tim Mulroy (Superior General), Lanieta Tamatawale, Kim Sun Hee "Sunny", Arlenne Villahermosa, Heidi Muller and Fr. Cireneo "Dodong" Matulac

VOCATION MINISTRY UPDATE

BY VOCATION PROMOTION TEAM



Vocation Promotion Team: (top to bottom; L-R) Bernie, JayR, Father Rolly, Evelyn and Michael

During the two years of pandemic, the vocation team devised a new approach in assisting our aspirants in the Columban Accompaniment Program. We have online recollections for them, and have divided them according to their phases.

Phase 1 consists of those who are still studying but have expressed their desire to join

the Columban formation. Phase 2 consists of those young professionals who are working to help their families and at the same time are willing to join in the discernment process. Phase 3 consists of those who have decided to do an intensive program for the entrance into the Columban formation.

So far, there are six youngsters in the first phase, five young men in the second phase and three in the third phase. As a result of this pandemic, media platforms are at the forefront of connecting with our aspirants. We use social media to promote vocation, to message and send updates to the candidates about our online activities, and to entertain vocation seekers about their vocation concerns. Since the outbreak began over two years ago, all of our activities have been focused on online gatherings.

The vocation team tries to assess the candidates in a manner that, despite the circumstances, we will not leave them hanging. Planning of activities and evaluations are all done online.

MISSION PROMOTION UPDATE

Gratefulness in Times of Uncertainties

by Eve Sabate, Mission Promotion Animator-Luzon

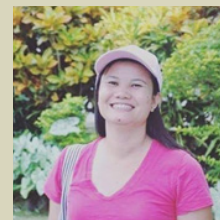
Starting in March 2020, when the lockdown was implemented, the Mission Promotion Team-Luzon was able to maintain contact with our mission partners and benefactors through text and online messaging despite all the limitations.

From June 2020 until now, we have been organizing a virtual monthly recollection with the objective of staying in touch with our partners and benefactors and being able to listen to their experiences. Through this activity, we are able to provide moral support & pray with them as they combat depression & loneliness. It serves as a forum where they can express themselves and share their personal struggles and joys.

Columban priests and lay missionaries have been generous with their time, especially those in a different time zone, in facilitating the recollections and sharing their insights and rich experiences in mission with our partners and benefactors.

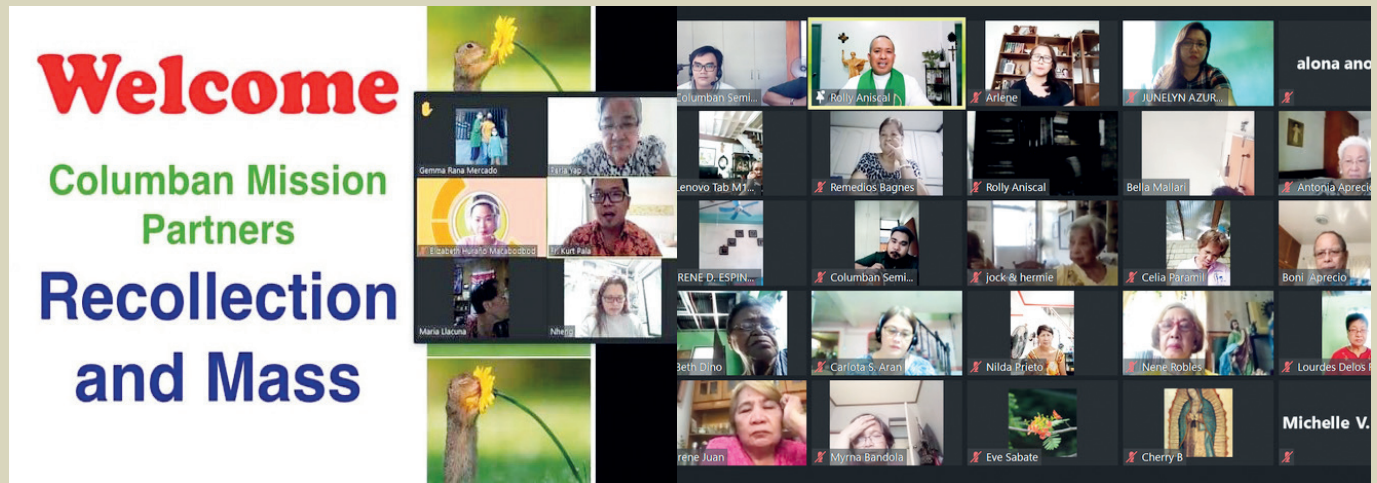
We also send daily prayers and inspirational messages to our mission partners and benefactors, and accept mass intentions and prayer requests. We celebrate the Holy Eucharist with them once a week aside from the monthly mass after the recollection. We also do virtual masses for their family members who died because of COVID-19 and other illnesses.

Occasionally, we go out to pick up donations from our partners and individual benefactors, as



well as the *alkansya* from our partner establishments while observing the protocols in the house so as not to bring the COVID-19 virus to our community.

Once the situation eases up, we will resume our mission promotion work in person, such as visiting our mission partners and benefactors in their houses and doing mission appeal in parishes and other institutions.



Mission in the New Normal

by Bernie Durangparang, Mission Promotion Animator-Mindanao

Since the start of the pandemic, the movements of the Mission Promotion Team-Mindanao have continued to be limited due to the restrictions imposed by the government. This has affected our work in promoting mission. We are unable to conduct face to face activities such as monthly recollections and mission reflections with our mission partners which they have always looked forward to.

Thankfully, online platforms allow us to have virtual recollections in the new normal. It is unfortunate, however, that not all of our active mission partners are able to join the online recollection for various reasons. Some have limited or no access to the internet. Some of them do not own the right gadgets, while others do not know how to use the internet at all. Those who can attend find the activity helpful despite the limitations. Their positive feedback has been very uplifting, and it is personally heart-warming for me to hear how the Columbans have been able to extend spiritual support to them amidst these trying times.

Sending morning prayers regularly to our mission partners is something they also greatly appreciate. They are happy that we are always willing to offer prayers when they have prayer requests for themselves and their loved ones.

I am forever thankful to our mission partners who continually offer both their spiritual and financial support to the Columban Mission despite the tough times we are all facing. I am also thankful to the Columban priests and lay missionaries who always make themselves available every time I need help in facilitating these recollections. All of us, especially our mission partners, are constantly praying for this pandemic to end for it has already costed many lives, especially those we know, our friends and our own loved ones.



THANK YOU, VANESSA!

We will remember with joy and gratitude the services you've rendered to everybody in the region in your capacity as the Regional Secretary. You've gone through a lot of challenges in life but you've remained steadfast in your commitment to your work. We wish you the very best of what lies ahead of you. May God be always at your side all through the ebbs and flows in your life. Take care.

**J
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Columban Priests

0917-773-5005 / 0950-183-7474

Lay Missionaries

0956-386-6144 / 0917-427-8943

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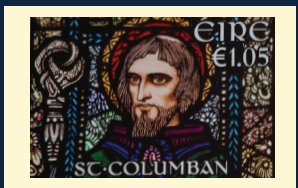
DEPOSIT TO OUR BANK ACCOUNT

Bank/Branch:	East West Bank - Bicutan	Banco de Oro (BDO) - Paco
Account Name:	Columban Missionary Foundation Inc.	The Regional Director of the Missionary Society of Saint Columban in the Philippines Inc.
Account Number:	200006345793	001650-143220

SEND THROUGH: ML Kwartá Padala (MLhuillier) **FOR PICK-UP:** Please contact our office

Account Name:	Columban Missionary Foundation Inc.	Mindanao: Mr. Bernie Durangparang (09501837474)
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