



MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
OF ST COLUMBAN

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

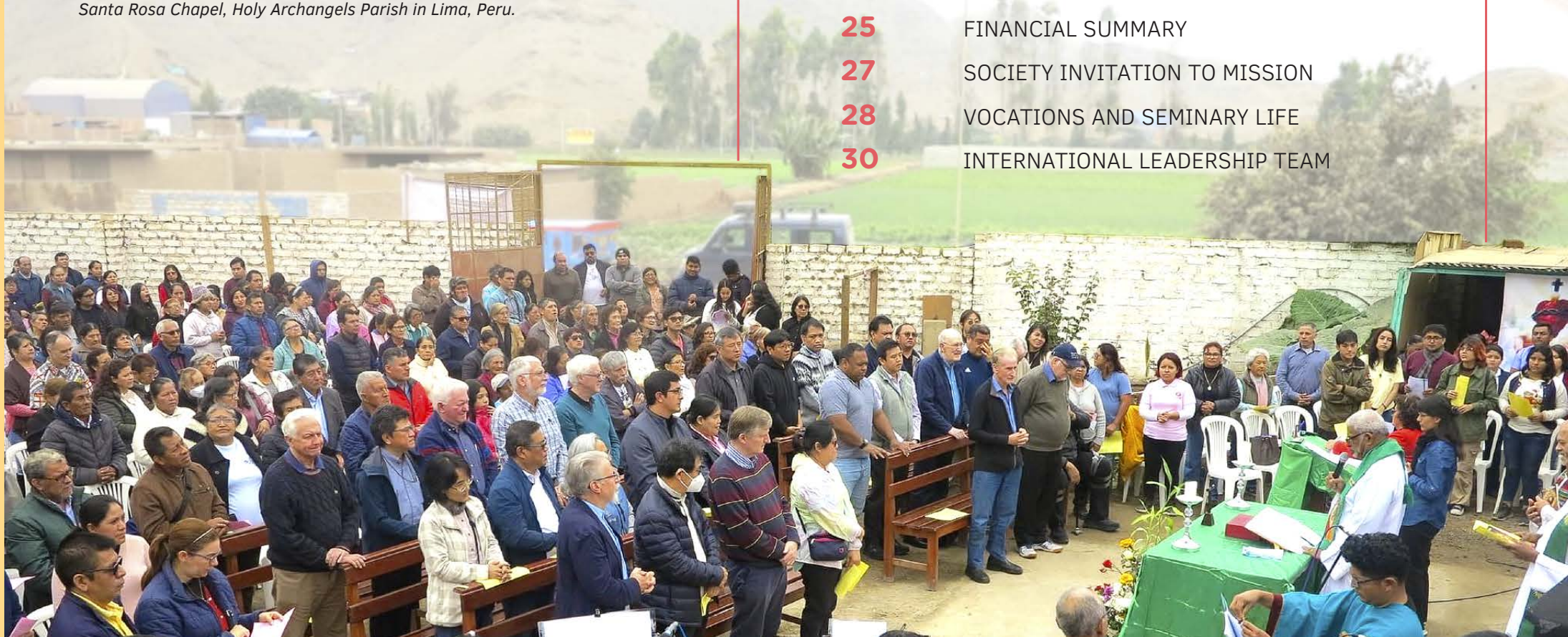


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*Cover Image: Fr Nbwi La Aung (Francis Xavier), the first Columban priest from Myanmar, greeting a parishioner during his ordination to the priesthood at St Luke's Parish in Edin, Myitkyina, Kachin State, Myanmar on May 1, 2024. It was a joyous celebration for the people of Myanmar and for the Columbans because, as a Missionary Society of Apostolic Life, our call is to foster in local Churches an awareness of their missionary responsibility.*

*On this page: Columban missionaries who participated in the Columban General Assembly 2024 celebrate the Eucharist with the community at Santa Rosa Chapel, Holy Archangels Parish in Lima, Peru.*





## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

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

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

*Participants who attended one of several tree-planting events at the Columban House in Solihull, Britain, hold a 'Nature' sign designed by local school students.*



## LETTER FROM THE SOCIETY LEADER

As the international leader of the Missionary Society of St Columban, it is with sincere appreciation that I present to you, our dear friends and supporters, this annual report 2025.

This report reflects the enduring commitment of Columban missionaries who continue to serve in diverse and often difficult contexts. It is also a testament to your vital role in this mission. Your prayers, encouragement, and generous support make it possible for us to remain present among communities that are often overlooked or forgotten.

As the Church celebrates the Jubilee Year 2025 with the theme “Pilgrims of Hope,” we are reminded that mission is not something we do alone. It is a shared journey of faith, one that we undertake with the people we serve and with you, our supporters and benefactors, who walk with us in spirit and solidarity.

The image of pilgrimage speaks to the reality of our lives as missionaries. It is a journey shaped by listening, accompaniment, and trust in God’s presence along the way. In many parts of the world, Columbans continue to walk with those affected by civil unrest, injustice, poverty, displacement, and natural disasters. We remain committed to caring for God’s creation, engaging in interreligious dialogue, and supporting the growth of the local Church. These efforts are rooted in a spirit of synodality, where we listen together, discern together, and respond together.

Your support is more than a contribution. It is a sign of communion. It tells us that we are not alone in this mission. You remind us that we are part of a wider community, united by shared values and a common hope. For this, we are truly grateful.

As you read through this report, I hope you will see the many ways your generosity is making a difference. Thank you for your continued trust and partnership, and we pray that God rewards your kindness with an abundance of blessings.

May this Jubilee Year bring you renewed strength, peace, and the joy of knowing that you are helping to build a more compassionate and hopeful world.



**WATCH VIDEO**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDRZR-Er8s4>

*Fr. Andrei Paz*  
**REV. ANDREI PAZ**





## OUR MISSIONARY WAY OF LIFE



*Columban Fr Jerry Lohera celebrates the Eucharist on the Feast of the Holy Family during the Christmas Octave with catechist Daniel Savji and the faithful in Essa Nagar in Pakistan.*

As missionary disciples of Jesus, we are called to a way of life that is deeply rooted in communion and living out synodality. We see our mission as a shared participation in the Mission of God. We strive to foster right relationships—with God, one another, and all of creation—by listening attentively to the cries of the marginalized and the wounded Earth. As cross-cultural missionaries, we discern and embrace our calling with humility, responding to present challenges despite diminishing resources. Our commitment is expressed through two key priorities: outreach to migrants and refugees, and the protection and restoration of biodiversity in collaboration with people of other faiths and worldviews. With an unwavering faith, we embark on this transformative journey, accountable to God, our fellow missionaries, and those we serve. We embrace ongoing formation and personal renewal, understanding that external changes must be accompanied by deep inner transformation. We commit ourselves to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ with simplicity, dialogue, and unwavering solidarity. In communion with all people of goodwill, we strive to embody a synodal way of life—one that is transformative, empowering, and faithful to the Spirit's call in mission.



## WHERE WE WORK



We have a presence in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Wellington. Fr Tom Rouse is on the roster of the local parish of Te Awakairangi and would regularly be called for sick calls and to visit the local hospital. He is also a member of the Ecology, Justice and Peace (EJP) Commission for the Archdiocese of Wellington and convenor of the EJP Poverty Committee. Fr Don Hornsey visits many people of the local parishes and provides a weekly Sunday mass at our Columban chapel for the Spanish-speaking community. Up to 30 people attend our weekday Columban Eucharist.

The work of fundraising and mission promotion continues in the Columban Mission Office. Anita Walsh and Fr Pat O'Shea oversee this work which includes the distribution of The Far East and the sale of Columban calendars. Frs Pat O'Shea, Tom Rouse and Don Hornsey write regular articles for our e-bulletin and provide reflections for our NZ Columbans Facebook page.

*Columban Fr Don Hornsey joined by parishioners in New Zealand as he marks 60 years of dedicated service to the priesthood.*



## FACTS & FIGURES

Between 30 and 40 people attend the Spanish-language mass held in our chapel each Sunday. Fr Don Hornsey is the celebrant.

Fr Tom Rouse has prepared PowerPoint presentations on what Catholic Social Teaching has to say about housing for two archdiocesan workshops.

Frs Don Hornsey and Tom Rouse write regular reflections on the daily readings. These appear on the NZ Columbans Facebook page. There are 1,258 followers.

## WATCH VIDEO



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGYWM7-9ITM>



*CMC Partnership Coordinator Mariana Waqa (left), and children from the St Vincent de Paul Walkathon 2024, Columban Fr John Hegerty, Deputy Principal Laura Petrie, CMC CEO Maha Shawky (right)*

The Columban Mission Centre (CMC) is leading a Partnership Programme in Catholic schools across Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji, focusing on mission awareness and environmental care. Rooted in Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* and the 2025 Jubilee Year, this initiative connects students with Columban priests and lay missionaries working in diverse mission fields.

A key highlight is Xavier College in Ba, Fiji, where students, supported by Columban Companion in Mission Margie Muller, are implementing a waste management project to reduce pollution and flooding.

Missionaries from Chile, Myanmar, Peru, the Philippines, Fiji, and the U.S. will contribute video stories and school visits, sharing real-life experiences of children and missionary work. Schools in Australia, New Zealand and Suva have been approached.

This programme fosters global solidarity, encouraging students to engage in local environmental action inspired by global mission efforts. We hope to extend this partnership to parishes and other community organisations.

## FACTS & FIGURES

- ◆ The Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations' Bridges magazine received a Highly Commended from the Australasian Catholic Press Association (ACPA) Awards for its 100<sup>th</sup> edition on interfaith relations. We distribute 846 copies of Bridges, which is published quarterly.
- ◆ With the support of our benefactors, we thankfully contributed US\$172,000 to support the Education Centre in Myanmar and vulnerable students during the year.
- ◆ Our Season of Creation video competition reached 2,574 views and received 183 responses, highlighting strong engagement and enthusiasm for creation care.

## WATCH VIDEO



<https://youtu.be/p8SNQJZJCMw>

## FACTS & FIGURES

Our 2024/25 Schools Media Competition: Pilgrims of Hope saw 91 articles and 122 images submitted from 22 schools across Britain. Since 2018, the competition has been a beacon for aspiring filmmakers, journalists, and storytellers. Each year, we witness a growing pool of talent that continues to raise the bar for creative expression.

In 2024 we visited 128 parishes in Westminster and Wrexham to preach the Annual Mission Appeal. More than 3000 people contributed US\$169,000. This will be used to help fund Columban mission projects supporting those on the margins of society in Britain and in countries around the world.

The Columban Faith in Action Volunteer Programme celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> year in 2024. The programme welcomes enthusiastic young adults to join the Columban Mission team in Britain, to explore their faith through active participation in mission and to accompany disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

As part of our commitment to care for creation, we hosted a rewilding event during the Season of Creation which united educators, students and the local community. We joined A Rocha UK's Partners in Action network and pledged to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of our land, supporting the recovery of declining species and habitats and promoting sustainability.

Our collaboration with the Higaonon indigenous community as part of the Higaonon Tree Growing Project: Seeds of Change in the Philippines is flourishing and we have led several tree planting events, engaging local schools, parish groups and businesses to foster a sense of environmental stewardship. To date we have planted just over 5000 trees throughout our gardens.

An interfaith delegation from Birmingham visited Dublin, Ireland to explore dialogue efforts, address shared challenges and foster collaboration. Through attendance at a national Dialogue Conference, visits to places of worship and reflections on migration and climate, participants built friendships and renewed their commitment to interfaith action.

*Imam Sajid Zafar, Dr Ali and Columban co-worker Mauricio Silva (right) at the The Ahlul Bayt Islamic Centre during a visit to Ireland by interfaith leaders and practitioners in Birmingham.*



Since 2023 the Diocese of Iquique in northern Chile has implemented a renewal of pastoral plans for each parish according to the context of mission demands within their communities.

Our parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Alto Hospicio, Iquique has implemented and strengthened its missionary outreach to migrants living within the squatter areas of the parish by delivering food, clothing and other necessities to migrant families, and providing a safe space within the parish grounds where children can play away from the dangers and threats of criminal activities which the squatter areas are commonly known for.

With our bishop leading the way, we have created a community through a process of synodal pastoral planning where houses aren't just numbers but part of a growing community of multi-ethnic brothers and sisters who are one family through the Holy Spirit.

## FACTS & FIGURES

In 1985, a Columban priest founded the first parish in Alto Hospicio and several years later we founded two more parishes in Alto Hospicio, where the mission to migrants is active in the largest squatter areas in all of Chile. We are currently serving in one parish, but our Columban legacy of mission is still resounding within the hills of Alto Hospicio.

Baptisms in the Sacred Heart of Jesus parish have increased from 70 to 78 between 2023 to 2024 and we are expected to go over 85 this year.

Columban missionaries in Chile are currently serving in three parishes, two in Santiago and one in Alto Hospicio, Iquique. We currently have six Columban priests working in parishes and one in Hospital ministry as well as two Columban seminarians working in parish ministry.

*Columban Fr Martin Koroiciri (right) with young migrants from Bolivia, Peru and Venezuela during the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday.*



## FACTS & FIGURES

- ◆ A total of 35 Chinese priests, sisters and lay people have received Columban scholarships for Degree, Masters or PhD studies outside of mainland China since the Columban China Formation Committee was established in 2003.
- ◆ Graduates who have returned to China are making a unique contribution to the life of the Church thanks to the academic knowledge and deeper awareness of the universal Church they received while living overseas.
- ◆ Currently there are four Chinese sisters and three Chinese priests studying overseas. Four study in Ireland, one in Rome, one in Taiwan and one in Australia.

The Missionary Society of St Columban supports the long-term development of the Church in China by providing scholarships for Chinese priests, sisters and lay people to study overseas. Since these scholarships were initiated in 2003, we have sponsored Chinese Church personnel to obtain qualifications in philosophy and theology as well as other areas of specialization.

Many of those who receive Columban scholarships have the opportunity to live with Columbans and therefore learn about our missionary history and charism. Their experience of Church in a different culture also widens the horizons of their understanding. During their studies, bonds of friendship develop in ways that ensure Columbans can maintain contact with the students after they return to China.

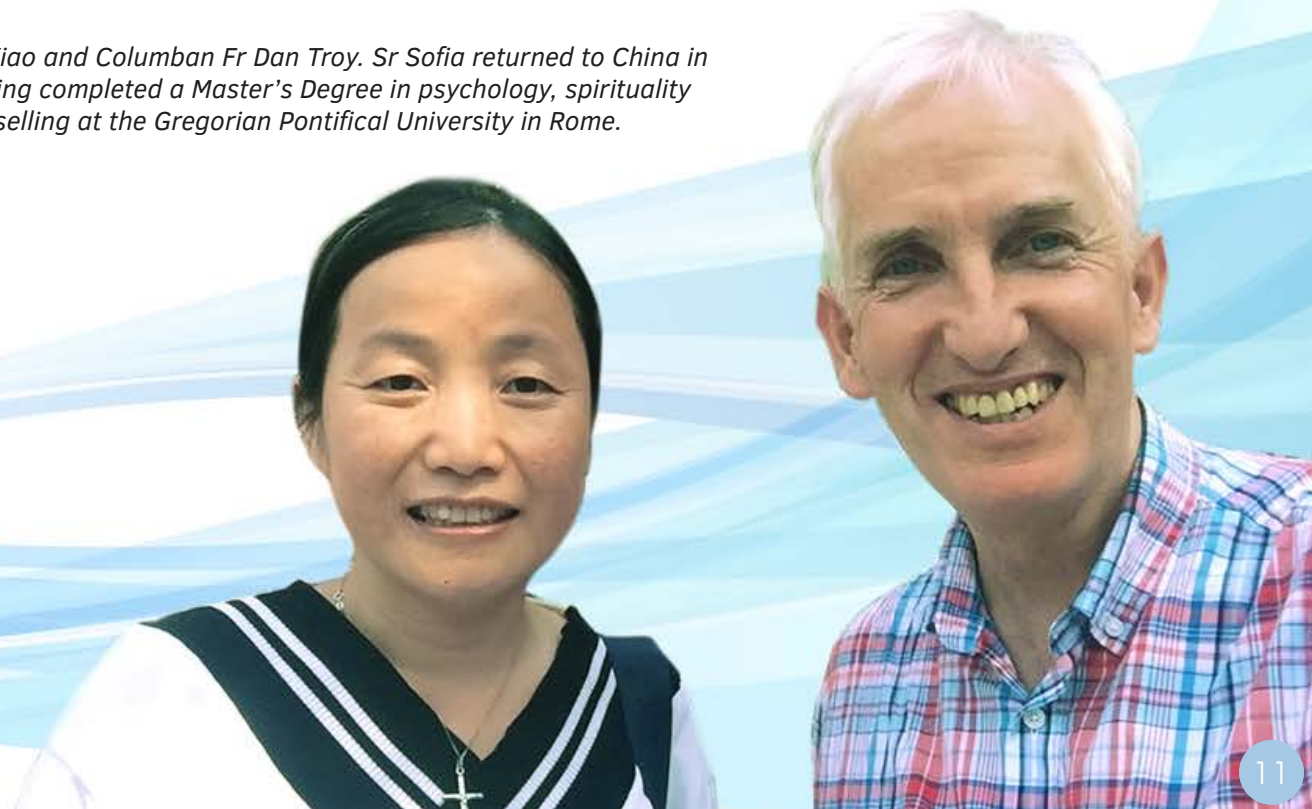
Graduates are now living in many parts of China. The benefits of their studies, combined with their faith commitment, will bear fruit in the Church in China for many more years.

*Sr Sofia Xiao and Columban Fr Dan Troy. Sr Sofia returned to China in 2025 having completed a Master's Degree in psychology, spirituality and counselling at the Gregorian Pontifical University in Rome.*



**WATCH VIDEO**

<https://youtu.be/q-R2eRGcWXU>



In Fiji there are nine Columban priests: three Fijians, two Irish, one English, one Tongan, one Korean and one from Myanmar. There is also a long-term Columban lay missionary from Tonga. Our key ministries in Fiji focus on Ecology and Interreligious Dialogue (IRD). We continue to respond to the Society's two mission priorities: migrants and biodiversity. Five priests minister in our Columban staffed parishes of St Pius X, Raiwaqa and Holy Family, Labasa. It is our hope that the two parishes can contribute more in terms of programmes and activities focusing on our two mission priorities.

We continue to fundraise through an annual Mission Appeal and sales of both local wall calendars and the Australian Art calendar. We are committed to our Columban ministries in Fiji, responding as best we can as part of the Region of Oceania and the global Society of Columban Missionaries.

*Parishioners at St Columban's Church in Fiji, together with Columban Frs Donal McIlraith (left) and Iowane Naio (4<sup>th</sup> from right)*



## FACTS & FIGURES

- ◆ Over 1,000 primary school children had the opportunity to attend awareness programmes on Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*.
- ◆ About 270 students from two Catholic Secondary Schools in Suva participated in an awareness programme in their schools on Interreligious Dialogue.
- ◆ Around 40 participants from different religious backgrounds participated in the Pilgrimage Walk to different religious places of worship organized by the Columban IRD office.



**WATCH VIDEO**

<https://youtu.be/mhaDMgtNVvs>

## FACTS & FIGURES

- ♦ Mission appeals in the dioceses of Tuam and Down & Connor by ordained Columbans and Columban lay missionary Angie Escarsa, with the help of the Columban Mission Office staff, brought in US\$94,000 for mission projects and 400 subscriptions to the Far East magazine.
- ♦ Lay missionary Angie Escarsa continues to assist a number of missionary groups, including the Association of Leaders of Missionaries & Religious of Ireland's (AMRI) Lay Mission Committee. Since 2003 she has worked with the Redemptorists in Cork conducting Meitheal Leadership Training for secondary students. Since 2019, Angie has been involved in giving school retreats on behalf of the Spiritans, De La Salle, and the 'I Am Retreat' team.
- ♦ Ballymun community in Dublin has long associations with the Columbans through St Joseph's parish. Angie Escarsa and the Columban Sisters continue their Ecology ministry through Ballymun Tidy Towns, Eco-Congregation Ireland, Season of Creation Group, Laudato Si Award Group, and Pocket Forest.

St Columban, patron of our Missionary Society, was born in 540AD in the shadow of Mount Leinster on the Wexford/Carlow border. In midlife Columban felt a new call to forsake his land and family as a "pilgrim for Christ", never to return home. With 12 companions, he founded abbeys in Luxeuil, France; Bregenz, Austria; and Bobbio, Northern Italy where he finally settled and where he died in 615AD. Communities in these countries have preserved St Columban's memory over the centuries.

In September 2024, Columbans in Ireland were involved in the mapping and walking of the 568km 'Columban Way' from Mount Leinster, Myshall, Co Carlow to St Comgall's Abbey, Bangor in Co Down. This project established the Columban Way as a viable walking route across the Island of Ireland, crossing borders, and bringing people into contact with the cultural and spiritual heritage of Ireland, along with its biodiversity.

Dalgan also hosted the 2024 AGM of the Turas Columbanus/Columban Way as plans for this pilgrim walk progressed. The Columban Way is an answer to people's longing for peace, healing and wellbeing.



*Columban Fr Patrick Colgan (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) and Columban Sr Ann Gray (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) with the local Anglican Rector, Rev Stanley Gamble, and the community of Comber, Co Down during the mapping and walking of the 'Columban Way.'*

### WATCH VIDEO



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcsUDt5VOWE>

Fr Nguyen Xuan Tien, in addition to his other pastoral duties, has been assigned chaplain to Vietnamese migrant workers in Chiba area, north of Tokyo. On a recent Sunday afternoon, over 300 young Vietnamese Catholics gathered for mass and companionship. Over the past few years, the number of Vietnamese has increased rapidly, so that they now number over 600,000, constituting the second largest community of foreign residents in Japan after the Chinese. Fortunately, many Vietnamese sisters and priests have also arrived to minister in Japan. Fr Tien, having been in Japan for over 20 years, has taken up a mentoring role for these new missionaries. A network of missionaries now provides regular youth camps, faith formation courses and sacramental preparation. Through his recent appointment, Tokyo Archdiocese has recognized Fr Tien's important contribution as a bridge between the local Japanese Church and the new community of Vietnamese Catholics.

## WATCH VIDEOS



<https://youtu.be/ZuxHhOLvvGQ>



<https://youtu.be/D5tKL98lfLg>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxKmGsTcB78>

## FACTS & FIGURES

- ◆ The 11 Columban priests assigned to Japan have provided over 400 years of missionary service.
- ◆ In addition to Japanese, in Columban administered parishes there are masses in English, Vietnamese, Spanish, French and Burmese.
- ◆ The parish of Our Lady of Sorrows Yatsushiro, Kumamoto Prefecture, Kyushu with Columban assistance, opened a park dedicated to the 11 martyrs executed there in 1603.



*Columban Fr Nguyen Xuan Tien with Vietnamese parishioners after a baptism.*

During the year a lot of exciting things happened in the Region of Korea, particularly in the initial formation ministry. Three of our Korean students returned from their First Missionary Assignment (FMA) in Chile. The students had already completed their required studies to be ordained as Columban missionary priests.

The students completed their re-entry programme followed by three months of intense ministry - one helped refugees, another helped in the Columban central house and the third in his home diocese in a Catholic study room for children whose parents were not able to afford private institutes. By June, they were ordained deacons, and in November, they were ordained Columban priests at the Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul. Another Korean student returned from his FMA in Peru and, after completing his required studies, was ordained a deacon in the same ceremony where the other three deacons were ordained priests.

The initial formation ministry is usually very student-focused. However, it has a significant impact on both the local church and society. With the ordination of four new Columban missionaries, the Columbans continue to have a very positive impact on the Church here in Korea, even though we are now dedicated to more specialised ministries. The ordaining bishop, Bishop Paul Kyung Sang Lee, was immensely grateful for all our contributions, not just to the Church but also to the local community.

*(L-R) Columban Fr Finbar Maxwell with newly ordained Columban Missionaries Frs Park Yo Sup Joseph, Seong Yo Seob Joseph, Shim Hong Seok Ambrosio, and Deacon Lee Jeong Rak Verano, as well as Fr Kim YoungIn Gregorio and Fr Peter O'Neill following the ordination ceremony in November 2024.*





*Columban Fr Jehoon Lee facilitates a family workshop, engaging participants in meaningful reflections and dialogue.*

In Myanmar, we Columban missionaries continue our commitment to serving the most vulnerable amid the ongoing crisis. From April 2024 to March 2025, our mission focused on supporting displaced families, youth, and those suffering from addiction. The country's prolonged civil war, the effects of the military coup, and the recent earthquake have compounded the hardships faced by its people. Widespread internet outages and limited electricity—available only six hours a day—have further disrupted daily life.

In response, we have actively engaged in community outreach, assisting internally displaced people and marginalized groups. We are also active in the Diocese of Myitkyina, including serving as director of the Diocesan Family Commission. Through the commission's outreach, we have provided emergency relief, healthcare, education, and counseling services to help rebuild their lives. Special attention has been given to youth and families affected by the crisis, with programmes to foster hope, healing, and resilience. We express deep gratitude to our benefactors for their ongoing support, which has been vital to the mission. Despite the ongoing challenges, we remain steadfast in our mission to alleviate suffering and support those most in need.

## FACTS & FIGURES

The Interfaith Youth Network of Myitkyina launched and distributed the Burmese translation of the Golden Rule and the first Common Calendar. The event was attended by 10 religious leaders and 43 young people representing the five major religions in the city, promoting interfaith unity and cooperation.

In July 2024, the Columbans provided essential food supplies to 334 families affected by severe flooding in Myitkyina.

A total of 326 married couples successfully completed the family workshop, which included sessions on faith formation, managing family stress and trauma, and parenting guidance. The programme aimed to strengthen family relationships and promote holistic well-being.



**WATCH VIDEO**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-FUi-McQWQ>

Health ministry is one of our priorities in Pakistan and it is a response to the needs of the people. Tuberculosis is rampant in the country and greatly affects our poor brothers and sisters. Hindus, Muslims and Christians come to our clinic in Badin every Friday for a doctor's check-up and the distribution of TB medicines. Every Thursday, the TB Clinic team does outreach programmes to spread awareness of cleanliness, proper hygiene and sanitation to the people.

In Karachi and Pithoro, Columbans work with the Parkari Kohli tribal people, and this health ministry helps to ensure poor people have access to healthcare and quality treatment. Our health worker, Louisa, is central to this ministry.

Restoring health brings hope to people. They hope to live another day, be reunited with their family, and be integrated back into society. We strive to be pilgrims of hope to people in need of healing.

*Columban Fr Elbert Balbastro (right) with (L-R) Peter (lab technician), Baji Mariam and Sahil (clinic assistants) during their preparation to visit the sick at Tando Bago City.*



## FACTS & FIGURES

- ♦ The Columban-run schools in both Hyderabad and Karachi dioceses are ministering to 1,397 students coming from different religions. The Columbans are a vessel of hope shaping the future of these children.
- ♦ In 2024, the Badin TB Clinic provided medical services to 147 patients with tuberculosis, 58 completed their six months of medication and unfortunately, ten died. Hope is still visible and tangible as more patients are restored to their health.
- ♦ The housing project continues as a Columban outreach to the poorest communities. Forty-seven houses have been built in different communities. People feel a glimmer of hope living in better conditions.



WATCH VIDEO

<https://youtu.be/TnYGizDe1GY>

## FACTS & FIGURES

- The Baking programme started with 18 migrant women who eventually brought their children. They shared their culture, their dances and their hopes and dreams.
- The Columban central house was sold last year and we have moved to the new central house that is more closely located to mission areas, in the poorer community of Lima.
- The Columban Parish of Holy Archangels in Lima consisting of 18 chapels, is now preparing to return 8 chapels to the Diocese to create a new parish of their own.

After the 2024 Columban General Assembly in Lima, we planned to incorporate one of the Columban mission priorities into our activities. What began as a ten-week cooking and baking workshop specifically aimed at migrants developed into a Columban refuge programme. Migrants of various faiths set themselves the goal of creating a community, where they learned more than just cooking skills but also found a caring space to share their struggles and the pain of living so far away from home.

They shared their dreams and hopes. Despite many trials and tribulations along the way for both the project and each woman and their families, they formed a community. Though not bound by blood, they became a family. “For in one Spirit, we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and we were all given one Spirit to drink.” (1 Corinthians 12:13)

*Columban Fr Erl Dylan Tabaco and co-worker Marisol Rojas (kneeling) with Venezuelan migrants and Peruvian internal migrants during the pastry workshop held at the Columban Centre for Missionary Studies (CCEM)*

WATCH VIDEO



<https://youtu.be/Uid86fLG6u4>



## FACTS & FIGURES

- 103 parishes, schools, establishments, and organizations support Columban Mission through mite boxes, *alkansya* (piggy banks), pledges and/or donations.
- 150 elderly and disadvantaged people benefit from the Columban Malate Parish feeding programme from Monday to Saturday.
- More than 2,000 seedlings of native trees are available for planting this year 2025 in the reforestation area of Santuario de San Columbano de Bantolainao, Negros.

The expansion of the Columban-Higaonon Tree Growing Project at Sitio Langag, Dansolihon, Mindanao began in 2024. It covers an area of five hectares. The expansion also marked a remarkable partnership with over 20 Catholic schools and the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) ministry of the parish of Worthing and Lancing in Britain, and with a local accounting firm, Diaz-Murillo-Dalupan (DMD) and Company.

By the end of 2024, the site already has 1,736 young trees growing on it. Thanks go to the Laudato Si' Animators-Mindanao, Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish-Barra community, Golden Heritage Polytechnic College Students, friends from the Integral Ecology Ministry of the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro, and Amigo Columbano members for planting these indigenous trees. With the financial assistance of DMD, the construction of the basic infrastructures including the bunkhouse, toilet cubicles, and nursery within the reception area is ongoing. At Site 1 in Sitio Canaan, 1,000 young trees are thriving healthily.

## WATCH VIDEOS



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSLhdt37Lyl>



<https://youtu.be/pNJjAPIUiDo>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOtcpxzYa6I>

*Columban Fr Enrique Escobar (left) with participants who took part in the Walk for Creation at the San Jose de Mindanao Seminary.*





*Columban lay missionary Bae Sihyeon (seated, center) and Columban Fr Joseph McSweeney (standing, 3<sup>rd</sup> from right) with diocesan catechist Beisu (seated, 1<sup>st</sup> from left) and the parishioners of TaiAn Nansan village area parish set up a natural composting area to prepare for planting*

For over 30 years, Columban missionaries have been working with the Indigenous in the mountainous TaiAn Pastoral Area of Hsinchu Diocese in central Taiwan. A Columban lay missionary, co-worker and priest work together with a diocesan catechist and a pastoral council consisting of representatives from the eight villages in the parish.

We seek to engage the local people in a parish-centred ministry of Care for Creation, particularly the protection and restoration of biodiversity. The goal is to return land to a sustainable natural state while eliminating the use of chemical fertilizers. By providing education and living models of permaculture, we invite the local people to be actively involved and share their agricultural expertise.

Meeting the pastoral needs of people through the sacraments and other ministries of the Church builds a spiritual foundation that deepens the people's intimacy with God the Creator, and encourages them to value and pass down their culture, language and traditions.

## FACTS & FIGURES

- Twenty parishioners attended our 'action' retreat during Advent. In a prayerful atmosphere, we used the permaculture method to prepare a plot of land for planting.
- A member of the parish staff completed a course on permaculture and biodiversity with 30 other students, receiving a certificate in permaculture design. Some of the students have begun working with us to implement a plan for protecting and restoring biodiversity on parish grounds.
- We have started building a network with the teacher and students of the Permaculture Design course, as well as with other Columbans and Care for Creation groups in Taiwan.

## WATCH VIDEO



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSM8uVmuM8U>

## FACTS & FIGURES

2,000 people a week were fed and received assistance with shelter, medical care, legal services and spiritual and emotional support in our Juarez Columban Migrant Welcome Centre.

Apart from the stipends for our Welcome Centre Team, all other services were funded by donations, both cash and in-kind, from individuals, religious congregations, NGOs and Columban Benefactors, amounting to over US\$80,000 for 2024.

Towards the end of 2024, in order to assist individuals and families who desire to remain in Mexico, we initiated a legal programme in collaboration with the IRC (International Rescue Committee) and Mexican government entities, to obtain Humanitarian Visas and work authorization, for 200 individuals and families, a total of close to 700 people.

*Columban Fr William Morton serving food at the Welcome Centre for Migrants and Refugees in Juarez*



WATCH VIDEO

<https://clmbn.org/ar2025>

The Columban Welcome Centre for Migrants and Refugees located in the lower level of the Cathedral in Juarez, Mexico has been fulfilling Jesus' mandate to 'welcome the stranger' for the last seven years. Open Monday through to Friday from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm, the Columban Border Ministry Team offers a warm welcome and a hot meal in a safe place in the middle of a city best known for violence, kidnapping, corruption and the abuse of migrants. In the past year we were blessed to receive over 100,000 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, men and women and children, and to provide them with food, housing, legal assistance and medical services. *Muchas gracias* (thank you) to all of you who make our mission possible!





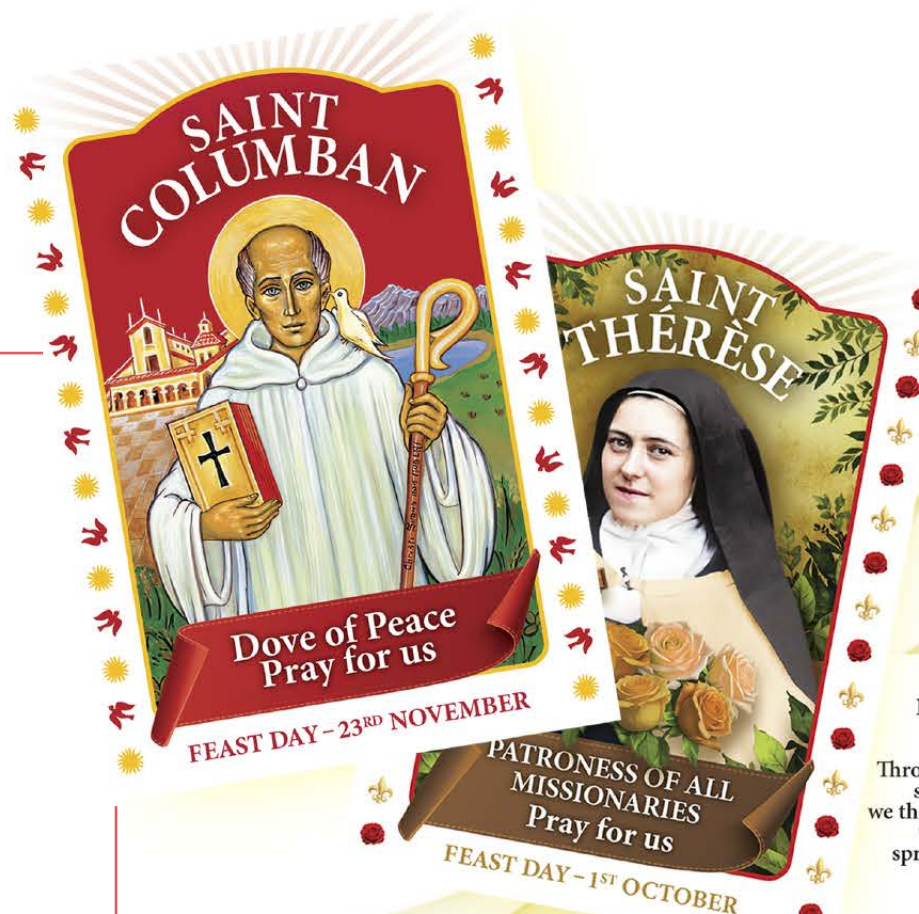
## IN GRATITUDE

Last year the Mission Office in Dalgan (Ireland) introduced the St Columban prayer card with the theme of peace. That prayer card has been sent to Columban supporters in many parts of the world.

As a result of the huge response to the St Columban prayer card, 40,000 of which have been distributed in Ireland, the Mission Office produced a new prayer card earlier this year invoking St Thérèse, Patroness of all Missionaries.

These prayer cards are a way of thanking our supporters and benefactors for their continued support for the work of Columban Missionaries and Columban Mission. They are also a way of widening the circle uplifting Columban Missionaries and Columban Mission in prayer.

Anyone who would like a copy or would like to promote these prayer cards to St Columban and St Thérèse can contact Ruth Cleary in Dalgan at: [ruth.cleary@columban.ie](mailto:ruth.cleary@columban.ie)



### PRAYER FOR PEACE

Heavenly Father,  
Through the intercession of your  
servant Saint Columban,  
we the friends and members of the  
Columban Community,  
spread throughout the world,  
unite our prayer to his,  
asking You for peace,  
unity and charity,  
in a world of growing conflict,  
division and war.

In times of great peril,  
Columban was heard to pray,  
"O God, come to my aid,  
O Lord, make haste to help me."

We ask you, Father,  
through the merits of your Son,  
Jesus Christ,  
to come to our aid today,  
through the Spirit,  
And grant us the gift of Peace.  
Amen.

 Columban  
Missionaries  
Ireland

Dalgan Park, Navan, Co Meath  
00353 46 9098275  
[www.columbans.ie](http://www.columbans.ie)

## GIVING BACK TO OUR BENEFACTORS

Many dedicated Columban Mission Partners in the Philippines generously give their time, talents, and resources to support our mission.

In gratitude for their generosity and commitment, the Columbans, through the Mission Promotion Team, regularly organize recollections, workshops and gatherings to nourish the spiritual lives of Columban Mission Partners, strengthen their sense of community, and inspire them in their journey and mission with the Columbans. During the Christmas season, Columbans also visit their homes to sing Christmas carols, bringing joy to their families and embracing the spirit of the season.



*Columban Mission Partners with Frs Leo Distor, Rolly Aniscal, Finbar Maxwell, and Columban seminarians during the Annual General Assembly in Manila*

## GIVING BACK TO OUR BENEFACTORS

On September 12, 2024, the Columban Mission Promotion Team organized a recollection for the Mission Partners in Cubao, Quezon City, in celebration of the Season of Creation. Centered on the theme “To Hope and Act with Creation,” the recollection was facilitated by Columban lay missionary Arlenne Villahermosa.

On the Feast of St Columban in November 2024, Columban Mission Partners in Luzon gathered for their Annual General Assembly. More than just a time for renewal, it was an opportunity to connect with fellow mission partners who share the same commitment and passion for serving the less fortunate through Columban mission. It was also a meaningful moment to journey together towards a synodal transformation for mission.



*Columban lay missionary Arlenne Villahermosa (standing) with the Columban Mission Partners during the recollection.*



*Columban Mission Partners with Fr Rolly Aniscal (right) during a pilgrimage to Zambales*

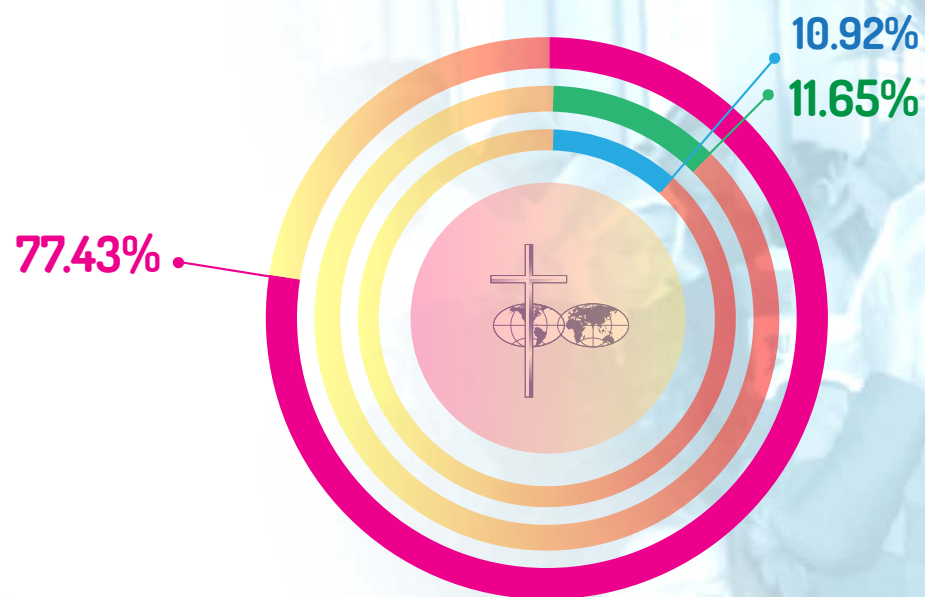
On September 19, 2024, a group of Columban Mission Partners embarked on a pilgrimage to Zambales. The pilgrims revisited the rich history of Columban mission in the area and paid their respects at the tomb of Bishop Henry Byrne, SSC. The pilgrims were grateful for this meaningful opportunity to reflect on the legacy of faith, service, and sacrifice of the Columbans, and it also empowered and deepened their commitment to continue their journey as Columban Mission Partners.

By journeying with our mission partners in whatever way we can, we strive to give back to those who have given so much in service of God’s mission.

## 2024 - 2025 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### APPLICATION OF FUNDS RECEIVED IN THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Society received U.S.\$25.5M in revenue.  
Total funds received were used in the following manner.



### MISSION EXPENSES

- ◆ Mission Apostolates
- ◆ Administration
- ◆ Fundraising and Donor-development



## FUNDING OF VARIOUS MISSIONS

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

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



## SOCIETY INVITATION TO MISSION

The Society Invitation to Mission (SIM) has experienced an outstanding year, building connections and fostering engagement within and across countries where Columbans live and work.

Britain conducted a short cross-cultural mission exposure, showcasing Columban mission and visiting local ministries. The SIM volunteer programme, Faith in Action, is a year-long commitment of service with Columban mission. This year our volunteer is Abi Yendole. Her efforts have significantly contributed to our mission's outreach.

China and Pakistan have guided individual visitors to experience what Columban missionaries do in the mission areas and how they build relationships with the local people. These experiences provided participants with a deeper understanding of our mission, its impact, and their own missionary vocation.

We are proud to maintain strong connections with SIM participants long after their SIM experience. From Ireland, Josh Egan shared his experience in Chile with schools and churches in Ireland and collaborated with Ballymun Summer Camp, Dublin where Angie Escarsa, Columban lay missionary serves. Participants from Korea also shared their reflections on their SIM exposure at the bi-monthly Mass at the Columban Mission Centre in Seoul, and continue to attend Columban celebrations. Columbans in China also maintain relationships with participants. Some participants have made generous donations to the Society as well as helped with Columban Mission Appeals in their diocese. By sharing their stories, former participants invite others to explore and experience Columban mission, thus expanding our community and impact.

The SIM programme's success is a testament to the dedication and passion of our participants, volunteers, and Columban personnel. We look forward to continuing to invite people to experience Columban mission and charism. Britain, Chile, China, Korea, Myanmar, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, and Taiwan are always ready to welcome participants for SIM exposure, internship, and volunteering.

*Josh Egan gives game instructions to children at Ballymun Summer Camp. He shares his sports expertise with them which he also did when he was in Chile for the SIM programme.*



## VOCATIONS AND SEMINARY LIFE

The purpose of the First Missionary Assignment (FMA) is to provide Columban seminarians with a two-year opportunity to participate in Columban mission in another country. The following are accounts of the experiences of two Columban students who are currently on FMA in Pakistan and Chile.

I am a Columban seminarian from Myanmar. Being assigned to Pakistan for my FMA was a joyful and emotional moment. It reminded me of God's goodness and strengthened my trust in God's grace.

I arrived in Pakistan on August 6, 2024. The immigration officer delayed my entry for an hour, teaching me patience. I have come to understand that patience is essential for being a missionary in Pakistan. Now, after seven months in the FMA programme, I am still learning the Urdu language. On weekends and during the December break, I visited Columban mission areas.

One visit deeply touched me. In the town of Dabegi which is part of the Diocese of Karachi, I was accompanied by fellow Columban Fr Dan O'Connor, to bring Holy Communion to a Christian family. We met a devoted teacher caring for her two daughters. One of her daughters has disabilities and requires full-time care. Despite this, she extended her love by adopting her second daughter. Her love and kindness amazed me. Witnessing her struggles, faith and hospitality deepened my understanding of God's unconditional love for us all; we are truly loved.

### **ZAU MAI PETER**

Myanmar Seminarian in Pakistan



*Columban seminarian Zau Mai Peter (left) and Columban Fr Dan O'Connor (right) and some of the Catholic faithful during a pastoral visit to Boharo village in the Diocese of Karachi.*



**WATCH VIDEO**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcAQHnUUIVs>

## VOCATIONS AND SEMINARY LIFE



*Columban FMA seminarian, Ro SeungJun (left) with Korean teacher, Jeon Harim, on the Brazil side of the Iguazú Falls*



**WATCH VIDEO**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzO8NcOGubk>

My name is Ro SeungJun, a Columban seminarian from South Korea. I arrived in Santiago, Chile in September 2024 to begin my two-year First Missionary Assignment. I am currently learning Spanish for six months before being assigned to a parish in Chile for my parish experience with the local people. During my language studies, I have had some glimpses of South America.

In February, I went to the Iguazú Falls, on the border between Argentina and Brazil to see the natural world God has created. While I was there, I met a Korean who works as a secondary school teacher in Korea. Together we went to view the waterfalls on the Brazil side of the border. When we carefully watched the waterfalls together, he asked me, “When you watch this power of nature, what kind of things do you think?” While I couldn’t answer his question, he told me, “I want to share what I see and feel with my family.”

In some respects, each one of us is considered as a miniature of the universe. It’s a ‘miracle’ how people from different environments and different times can meet. That is why to share something with each other is so precious and nourishes our life. We call this the Providence of God. The sharing is not only to share some material things, but also to share one’s life. Therefore, this FMA experience is so precious and so beautiful – a time for me to know a new culture and a new people, especially in Chile. I am so excited about where God will bring me and what things God wishes to share with me. I believe it will nourish my spiritual life. Please keep accompanying all missionaries.

**RO SEUNGJUN**

Korean Seminarian in Chile

## INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

### GENERAL COUNCIL (HONG KONG)

|                   |                                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| SOCIETY LEADER    | FR ANDREI PAZ                     |
| SOCIETY VICAR     | FR PETER GERARD O'NEILL           |
| SECOND COUNCILLOR | FR KIM YOUNGIN GREGORIO           |
| THIRD COUNCILLOR  | FR SALUSTINO VILLALOBOS MONDRAGÓN |

### COLUMBAN LAY MISSIONARIES CENTRAL LEADERSHIP TEAM (HONG KONG)

|             |                         |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| COORDINATOR | SHERRYL LOU CAPILI      |
| TEAM MEMBER | KIM SUN HEE             |
| TEAM MEMBER | FR KIM YOUNGIN GREGORIO |

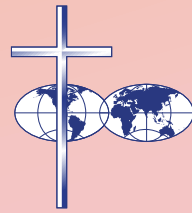
### CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT PERSONNEL

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| BURSAR GENERAL   | FLORENCE TSUI (HONG KONG)       |
| INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR<br>FOR JUSTICE PEACE AND<br>INTEGRITY OF CREATION (JPIC) | AMY W. ECHEVERRIA (U.S.)        |
| SOCIETY ARCHIVIST  | FR PATRICK O'DONOGHUE (IRELAND) |

*Front row (L-R):  
Fr Salustino, Sherryl Lou, Sun Hee*

*Back row (L-R):  
Fr Andrei, Fr Peter, Fr YoungIn*





[www.columban.org](http://www.columban.org)