

Columban Mission

The Magazine of the Missionary Society of St. Columban

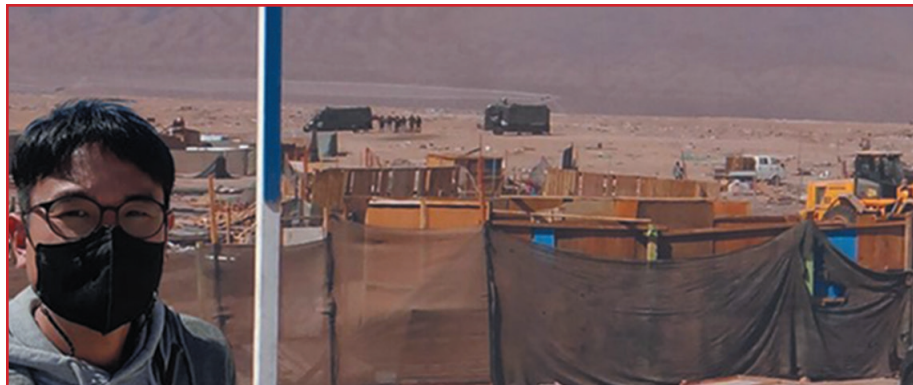
November 2024



FORGIVENESS

C O N T E N T S

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The Missionary Society of St. Columban was founded in 1918 to proclaim and witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The Society seeks to establish the Catholic Church where the Gospel has not been preached, help local churches evangelize their laity, promote dialogue with other faiths, and foster among all baptized people an awareness of their missionary responsibility.



Forgiveness

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God has forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32

Forgiveness is a profound act that resonates deeply within the human experience, touching on themes of compassion, healing, and personal growth. Reflecting on forgiveness, I find it to be both a complex and liberating concept, offering insights into our relationships with others and ourselves.

At its core, forgiveness involves letting go of resentment, anger, or bitterness towards someone who has caused harm or offense. This process is not easy; it requires us to confront and navigate intense emotions, often revisiting painful experiences. However, through this emotional journey, forgiveness emerges as a transformative force.

Forgiveness does not mean forgetting or excusing the wrongdoing. Rather, it acknowledges the reality of hurt while choosing to release the negative emotions attached to it. In this sense, forgiveness is as much about self-healing as it is

about reconciliation with others. It empowers us to break free from the cycle of resentment, which otherwise can imprison us in negativity and hinder our emotional well-being.

I've come to see forgiveness as a gift I give myself, a means to reclaim my own peace of mind and emotional balance. By forgiving, I release the burden of carrying old grievances, allowing myself to move forward with greater clarity and resilience. It fosters a sense of inner peace and strength, restoring harmony within myself and in my interactions with others.

Moreover, forgiveness is not a one-time event but a continuous process. It requires ongoing commitment and practice,

especially in situations where hurt runs deep or trust has been severely damaged. Each instance of forgiveness deepens our understanding of empathy and strengthens our capacity for compassion.

However, forgiveness does not always mean reconciliation or condoning harmful behavior. Boundaries may need to be set, and trust may need to be rebuilt gradually. It's a delicate balance of honoring our own well-being while extending grace to others.

As I continue to reflect on forgiveness, I am reminded of its transformative power and the immense potential it holds for fostering empathy, restoring relationships, and nurturing inner peace.

The Columban missionary who provided this reflection wishes to remain anonymous.

*I've come to see forgiveness as a gift I give myself,
a means to reclaim my own peace of mind and
emotional balance.*





Fr. Frank Hoare and the formation community

Reflections of a Retiring Formator

Feeling Like a Father

By Fr. Frank Hoare

It's the closest I will ever get to feeling like a father! As I approach the end of seven years as a Columban formator in Suva, Fiji, I look back with affection to the students with whom I have lived. I take pride in their growth in maturity and their successes. They were mostly from Fiji but a few came from Kiribati. At one time we had seven students. Now only one senior student remains until he finishes here.

It was a thrill when a student came to insight about himself in personal accompaniment. It was great to see someone growing in confidence in presenting a vocation talk or in giving a homily. It was good to see how younger students learned from and were helped by older students. But I was also pleasantly surprised when a

younger student challenged an older student on the basis of a Christian or Pacifican value.

Many students were introverted but an occasional extrovert livened meal conversations. Pacificans have a tradition of not chatting at meals. Drinking kava is the time for talking.

It was good to see how younger students learned from and were helped by older students.

Eating is a serious business to be given one's full attention. But living and working in an international Society calls for some adaptations. COVID, too, brought stress and tested adaptability.

The students enjoyed their varied pastoral work – working with juvenile offenders, visiting the elderly, evaluating Gospel-sharing prayer groups, programs with youth, observing Sunday services of different Christian denominations, census taking of families in informal settlements, and sacramental instruction. They also enjoyed attending youth interfaith dialogue sessions. I encouraged them to constructively critique each other at reviews.

Being in a formation community helped my spirituality. I experienced saying the divine office in common as more prayerful than alone. Being courageously challenged for my mistakes (not easy for Pacificans) gave me the opportunity to understand

They also enjoyed attending youth interfaith dialogue sessions. I encouraged them to constructively critique each other at reviews.

and apologize. It taught me humility, dependence on God's help, and the need for spiritual direction.


One memorable incident comes to mind. We jointly organized a march for climate justice with third-level lay students on Saturday in the middle of COP 26 in November 2021. The police heard that a well-known youth activist would participate. They stopped the march and didn't allow it to proceed to the public park where our Archbishop was waiting to speak. Instead, we went to the nearby seminary and held our rally there.



Betero, Jobepina and Fr. Frank

We got much more television, print and social media exposure than if the march had been allowed.

I will miss the youthful enthusiasm of our seminarians in Fiji in the future. Vocation promotion will be that much harder. They will miss the opportunity to settle into the early discipline of

formation in a Pacific setting. But it is a necessary adjustment. I am happy, however, to have had the experience of serving as a formator here in Fiji. So, empty nest syndrome now! 

Columban Fr. Frank Hoare lives and works in Fiji.

The Missionary Society of St. Columban congratulates the 2024 Jubilarians on their years of mission service and prays they be blessed with health and joy.



40 years
Arturo Aguilar

50 years
Richard Pankratz

60 years
Vincent McCarthy

Karachi Diocese Diamond Jubilee

1948-2023

By Fr. Daniel O'Connor

On May 20, 2023, the Diocese of Karachi reached 75 years. Established on May 24, 1948, the Inaugural Mass of the Jubilee Year was celebrated on Pentecost Sunday, May 28, 2023.

Karachi used to be part of the Archdiocese of Bombay (Mumbai) but separated from it in 1947 with the creation of Pakistan when, with a population of approximately 400,000, it became the capital of the new country. Archbishop Benny Trivas emphasized in his homily the theme of the Jubilee Year — reflect, rejoice, renew— and with the chosen Biblical verse from Ezekiel 36:26: “A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put in you.”

It is believed that St. Thomas the Apostle passed through the territory of the present archdiocese on his journey to South India. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Augustinian Missionaries came on mission to the Sindh Province. Because of the persecution they suffered they had to leave and were succeeded by the Discalced Carmelites, who remained until 1672. After the conquest of Sindh by the British in 1842–43, the Carmelites returned to this territory as chaplains to the troops. They remained until 1852, when the Capuchin Fathers took charge. In 1856, the Jesuit priests took over until 1935. There are about 200,000 Catholics in sixteen parishes spread throughout the megacity of Karachi, now with a population of approximately eighteen million.

Bishop Benny stated, “God granted the diocese a generous heart, welcoming many ethnic groups, Goans, Anglo-Indians, South Indians,



Sindhis, Punjabis, Mangalorians, Parkari Kholis, and many others. Missionaries, foreign and local, built institutions for the needs of these people — orphans, lepers, physically and mentally challenged, those in need of medical care, those with addictions and so on. The diocese also tries to provide education and healthcare to the people of Karachi through schools, hospitals, colleges, and clinics.”

Throughout the years, the diocese has faced numerous challenges, both internal and external, including political unrest, economic fluctuations and social upheavals. The journey has also witnessed significant milestones in fostering interfaith dialogue and ecumenism. Recognizing the importance of religious harmony and

“A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put in you”

~ EZEKIEL 36:26

peaceful coexistence, the church engages in dialogue with members of other faith traditions. Through these efforts, bridges have been built and mutual understanding fostered, leading to a more inclusive and harmonious society.

St. Patrick’s Cathedral is situated in the heart of Karachi and was opened in 1878. Irish soldiers who served in the British Army contributed generously to the cost of its construction. Recently, the Sindh Government refurbished and strengthened this impressive cathedral. As the people arrived to enter the compound, they had to go through solid security checks so that nothing untoward would happen. The start time was given as 5 p.m., so Mass started at 5:40 p.m. The summer sun pierced intermittently through the clouds, and people wiped sweat from their faces. At times, a gentle wind blew in from the Arabian Sea, giving welcome relief. In the church compound, 5,000 chairs had been arranged for seating. These soon



filled up, yet people continued to pour in, resulting in about 2,000 having to stand.

Among the congregation were about 700 Parkari Kholi tribal people. At Christmas 2020, I took up an appointment to be on mission with these people. Over recent years, many of them have come from Interior Sindh to Karachi in the hope of obtaining work in factories and a better future for their children. They have fled from the unjust landlord system where they labored as landless peasant farmers.

Many still work as peasant farmers on landlord properties in villages situated to the east of Karachi. They were invited to the Jubilee Mass and given the privilege of praying a prayer in the Parkari language; a family was involved in the offertory procession, and three young women presented a graceful liturgical movement called “Arati,” with its accompanying hymn, at the time of the doxology. These three young women had left their village and farm work so that a teacher could prepare them well for the “Arati.”

The Missionary Sisters of Charity are also on mission with the Parkaris. They visited the villages and had a “hair cutting and bathing day,” while the buffaloes and goats looked on. Four buses transported about 500 people, including adults, children and infants, who happily piled aboard. Travel to the city of Karachi from the villages took a few hours. For most of these people, it was the first time they had seen the bustling city and their eyes opened wide. “We did not imagine in our minds that there would be such high buildings,” they declared.

Before the Our Father prayer, the commentator invited the Parkari Kholi Catholic young women from the village to perform the prayerful liturgical “Arti.” He explained: “Liturgy is diverse. It is the glorification of God and the sanctification of the people. When liturgy meets culture, we become one with the soil. It is a welcome to Jesus present in the Eucharist. It also acknowledges the presence of the loving Trinity. The Trinity of love encompasses the people gathered here as well as in all of Creation. God is the source of life. Everything is in God’s hands and without God there is nothing. Jesus is our teacher, and we are His disciples.”

During the Mass, hundreds of hawks circled in the sky, some soaring high, others swooping low. People on roofs of nearby buildings had “bird’s eye views” of the celebrations. Boys flying kites in the streets added to the Pentecost Spirit as the kites fluttered above. A red kite appeared above the altar at the time of Consecration. The distribution of Holy Communion coincided with the sunset, and from the loudspeaker of a nearby mosque “Allah-O-Akbar” (God is Great) rang out for all to hear. When the drone camera appeared above, a tribal man commented, “I thought it was Jesus coming down.” Karachi, the city of



“I invite each and every one of you during this Diamond Jubilee Year to reflect, rejoice and be renewed so that truly we may all have a New Heart and a New Spirit.”

~ ARCHBISHOP BENNY TRAVAS


lights,” then lit up, and Mass concluded with fireworks. “We suddenly ducked down as we thought a bomb had exploded,” declared some of the Parkari people. St. Patrick’s Cathedral and compound had become the “Bright Shining Light of Karachi.”

In conclusion, Bishop Benny stated, “I invite each and every one of you during this Diamond Jubilee Year to reflect, rejoice and be renewed so that truly we may all have a New Heart and a New Spirit.”

The local Christians asked the Parkari people, “Where are you from? Are you from the desert area? What are these clothes and many bangles that you wear? What is this language that you speak? Are you Christians?” The tribal women were surprised when they noticed that many city women were not covering their heads with a dupatta (head cloth). The Karachi people said, “Thank you for coming to the

Jubilee Mass. We did not know of your existence and so it was a joy for us to pray together.” The Parkaris felt a warm welcome and acceptance from the Karachi Catholics. They reflected, “We felt as one with the City Christians. We saw and now we believe that we are not only a few Christians but very many.” A local priest commented, “It is historical that, with the tribal people from the villages present for the first time, the Diocese of Karachi was visible in all of its dimensions.” This experience captured something of the Spirit of a Church of Synodality that Pope Francis is calling forth with his vision.

It was wonderful that Columban Fr. Joseph Joyce was present, as a week later he retired from mission in Pakistan and returned to Ireland. Fr. Joe had been on mission in Pakistan for 30 years. His humble, loving, kind and committed service to the Church and people of Pakistan had also given new Heart and Spirit to those he journeyed with.

The Parkari Kholi people, full of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, boarded their buses for the return journey to their simple life in the villages. On the way, the Army Rangers stopped the bus and checked them over. On looking inside, they noticed many hammocks and inquired, “What are these and who are you?” They replied, “These hammocks have our babies sleeping in them, and we are Christians and have been to celebrate our feast day.” Some males traveling on the roof of the bus went to sleep and, on arrival at the village, had to be woken up. The next morning, they were back attending their recently opened village school, then tilling Mother Earth and talking about the wonderful experiences of the previous day, which they treasured “with a new heart and a new spirit.” 

Columban Fr. Daniel O’Connor lives and works in Pakistan.



Help Future Generations with a Donation Today

Your gift helps people break the chains of addiction through Columban programs like the Rebirth Rehabilitation Center in Myanmar (formerly Burma).



Thanks to the generosity of the Columban donors we were able to complete and open the first residential center in the country for women suffering from addiction. In addition, the program provides vocational education training to help young men obtain jobs. We hope to expand this program and offer the men and women who come here a path productive employment and ongoing recovery.

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- Help further the work and mission of our organization

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Messing About in Boats

Happily Afloat

By Fr. John Burger

I think that for most of my life I have agreed with the water rat in *The Wind in the Willows*.

“Believe me, my young friend, there is *nothing* — absolutely nothing — half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.”

I have always enjoyed being on a boat and always seem happy afloat.

When I was growing up, we lived near the Delaware River. I looked forward to a special day each summer. It involved spending a day on the river with one of my dad’s cousins who owned a cabin cruiser. We enjoyed seeing some landmarks from an entirely different angle.

Some years later, in 1972, toward the end of my seminary career, I was getting ready for ordination as a priest. I was assigned as a deacon to a Columban parish on St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The harbor of Charlotte Amalie was a busy place with cruise ships bringing tourists, sailboats, and small vessels bringing produce from the other islands. At first, I thought all those white-painted cruise ships in the harbor looked alike, but after a few months, instead of checking a calendar, I noticed myself glancing at the harbor to tell the day of the week, “Today is Friday since the Ambassador and the Adventurer are in.”

During the 1980s, while living in Chicago, I learned to enjoy sailing in

a catboat on Lake Michigan. You only had to be a few hundred yards offshore, to exchange the noise and traffic of Lake Shore Drive for the fresh air and quiet off-shore. I also learned about all the work it takes to keep a sailboat “shipshape.”

About 20 years later, during the time I was living in Dublin, Ireland, I was an occasional volunteer at the Apostleship of the Sea. They had a large old townhouse on the north bank of the River Liffey in the city center

There are several cruise lines who cater to people who would not consider cruising at Christmas or Easter unless they knew there would be services on board.

and a van that used to collect crewmen from the ships in the outer harbor and bring them into the center where they could relax and get phone cards to contact their families in their home countries. Some of them would shop for things to take home or send home.

When I was Regional Director of the Columban Fathers in Nebraska — far from salt water(!), I was going through my mail and received a brochure from the Apostleship of the Sea-USA, recruiting priests to join their ministry to people of the sea. I

passed along their request through the regional newsletter, but there was not much response. Some priests like the idea of a week or more on a cruise ship, but I know others who remember being seasick and for that or other reasons would consider it about as attractive a prospect as jail time.

Today’s cruise ships are like floating resort towns; the most recently constructed ships carry thousands of passengers and crew members. There are plenty of entertainment options, and dining options, shops, a casino, a theatre.

Like the social class situation on land, on the ship there are two groups of people — passengers and crew, separate and unequal. The chaplain is somewhere in an in-between category.

Some of the other problems that face us on land, also face us at sea. For example, reducing the carbon footprint is a serious issue as is preventing diseases from being transmitted in a somewhat confined environment.

People are, of course, on vacation and are seeking relaxation. They don’t have to worry about what to cook for dinner or any of the usual tasks. They can attend shows, lectures, fitness presentations, cooking classes, and movies. Or, they can lounge on deck with a good book and a view of the horizon (my favorite).

There are several cruise lines who cater to people who would not



The boat



Fr. John Burger



Fr. Ron Kelso



A view from the deck

consider cruising at Christmas or Easter unless they knew there would be services on board. And a few lines even try to provide daily Mass for those whose day would not be complete without attending Mass. Apostleship of the Sea-USA priests are onboard for the spiritual and pastoral care of passengers. They provide the Sacraments to Catholics and do an ecumenical service for Protestants who want to do Sunday worship. And, of course, priests are present if an emergency situation were to develop.

Columban Father Ron Kelso and I have been friends since our first year in the seminary and were ordained together. We both were on

the mission in Japan and celebrated our 50th anniversary of ordination together last year. Father Ron received an Apostleship of the Sea chaplaincy assignment that allowed him to take a

People are, of course, on vacation and are seeking relaxation. They don't have to worry about what to cook for dinner or any of the usual tasks.

guest on a voyage to Spain and invited me to join him.

Because it was a long, slow crossing there were a good few days to get to

know the people who attended the daily Masses. There was a couple who were friends of a Columban. Usually, among the passengers there are a few people who are used to serving as lectors or cantors in their home parishes and are happy to do those roles at the Masses.

A long cruise can be an opportunity to meet new people. One of my favorite quotations is something I heard the famous Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez say, "If you want to be a missionary, make friends." Even afloat, one can be making friends. CM

Columban Fr. John Burger lives and works in the U.S.



Jumping into Cross Cultural Mission

The Breath of God

By Yo Sup Park

On the day I left for Chile from Korea, I really didn't feel that I was going to Chile, even at the airport. Chile was too far from Korea, and it was a country I had seen only on television. I arrived at the end of February 2022, finished studying Spanish in Santiago, and by July 2022 arrived in Alto Hospicio.

Here in Alto Hospicio, I wasn't sure how to start because I didn't speak Spanish well and didn't have any relationships with anyone. But with God's help, I found places one by one where I could work. Sisters, Brothers and a parish coordinator gave me a chance. I understood that it was also not easy for them to accompany someone who did not speak their language well. I felt bad but was grateful at the same time. During this short missionary journey, I experienced very surprising things.

I have already seen God's presence through the minds of those willing to help me with the things I need as a missionary. Moreover, the Sisters were already with the refugees, the parishioners living together with the poor, and the Brothers were providing

Two priests and I lived with all those people. Their solidarity shows the poor that they are not alone and that God is with them. I had just come to where God was already.

educational opportunities for the poor so they could draw a bigger picture for their lives. Two priests and I lived with all those people. Their solidarity shows the poor that they are not alone and

that God is with them. I had just come to where God was already.

The situation in refugee camps is very difficult. Refugees cannot find food in their own country, so they come to the place where there is no water or electricity, but where they can buy food. And they are working hard for a better life.

It is strangely heartbreaking to see a woman selling drinks with her daughter on the roadside near my house. All I can do is go buy some drinks and say a few words in Spanish that I don't speak well and remember her family in my prayers. Basically, what I can do right now in Alto Hospicio is to participate in the mission that other people are doing. I don't know if that's enough. I can't do anything but prepare myself for God to do His mission through me. Gradually, I am learning what it means

to know there is nothing we can do but prepare ourselves to participate in God's mission.

Meeting children at school is an amazing experience. There is a child with Down Syndrome who touches my head twice and hugs me as an expression of affection. We do not speak, but I can feel her affection. The love I receive from children is so big that I wonder if I have ever received so much love in my life before.

This reminds me of Jesus' words, "Unless you repent and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3) Adults are often hesitant to show themselves openly. When they meet a new person, they use their head to think of what to say. But children seem to follow the voice of their heart. Children have a lot of questions. The energy of children who open themselves up to curiosity is so pure and beautiful. When I meet them, I am comforted and healed.

I smile a lot because I cannot express myself in words. The downside is that people might get me wrong and think that I don't want to talk to them or that conversations with me would not be fun. Just imagine. Someone tells you something funny, and the answer they receive is, "Oh, yes?" It's hard for such a conversation to last! The advantage is that I can stay in the situation rather than make judgments about it. I can see something as it is. And I try to listen rather than speak. I could do what I wanted without difficulty in Korea, but I can't do it here in Chile. Through this experience I have also learned that I am a person who needs help from others. Knowing that I am also a person in need reminds me that I am a person who needs God's love.

Letting go of what I have is not as easy as it sounds. There is a limit

to living on my own strength. When I want to run away from a certain situation, I realize that it is time to live with the strength of the Holy Spirit. Who wants to live like a fool? But I think being able to live like a



Adults are often hesitant to show themselves openly. When they meet a new person, they use their head to think of what to say. But children seem to follow the voice of their heart.

fool means being able to live humbly as well. I hope to keep this precious experience in my heart and live it without forgetting it.


I have been thinking about what mission is. Mission is the breath of God and His existence. I believe that when I live in the love of Jesus that the breath of God — that is, life and love — will be delivered through me. This is

because we do not only meet and talk to each other but also exchange energy with each other.

I heard a lot from other Columban missionaries that they felt like a child when they first started on mission. But I didn't know that it was not easy for an adult to become a child again. Opening one's heart means an attitude of accepting both joy and pain. To do that, I have learned about humility again and asked for it.

The missionary journey isn't just beautiful and happy. I also feel a lot of difficulties and despair. I have learned that mission is not about living in hope of certain visible results but about living with hope in the invisible God. I think it is through a life of faith that God's will is accomplished through us. I ask for the wisdom and strength to be constantly humbled so that mission becomes God's work, not mine.

There is an idiom "first penguin." It originated from the fact that penguins in Antarctica are afraid to jump into the sea to hunt because there are predators in the sea - but if one penguin has courage and jumps in first, a group of penguins will follow it into the sea. It refers to a member who challenges with courage and has a great influence on others. In the English-speaking world, this word is used as an idiom for a "pioneer" who takes on uncertainty and challenge courageously.

The children, the Sisters, the Brothers, the parishioners, the priests, they're all "first penguins" to me. Looking at them makes me hope I can become a first penguin too. Instead of running away from fear, I hope that I can trust God and dive into the sea that he opens before me. 

Yo Sup Park is a Columban FMA (First Mission Assignment) seminarian living and working in Chile.

A Step into the Light

Moving Forward

By Fr. Robert Mosher



Alicia and her husband were good, practicing Catholics, in a working-class residential area of Chile's capital city, Santiago, where the Columbans administered a parish, San Gabriel.

She helped lead the weekly meetings of the parents of children preparing to receive their First Holy Communion, gatherings that met for two years, and her husband was inspired by the social teachings of the Church to become a leader of a local trade union. Her husband and other members of the union would collectively bargain for decent wages

and safe working conditions from their employers.

Neither of them were prepared for the military forces to violently take over the government, and begin arresting people who might oppose them, in September of 1973, but a few months into the dictatorship of General Pinochet, a group of soldiers arrived at their doorstep and took Alicia's husband away. It was just after two in the morning.

She never saw him again.

Over the weeks, months and years that followed her husband's arrest, none of the personnel at any

base, government office or hospital recognized the name of her husband. The morgues didn't either, when she was finally moved to look for his body there.

To add insult to injury, the soldiers and officers at the entrances to military facilities began to tire of her entreaties for any information about her husband, and would dismiss her with brazen ridicule, suggesting that her husband had fled over the border and was living in Argentina with a new wife and family.

They treated hundreds of families, also looking for their missing loved

ones after their arrests, in the same way. At one point, the junta even promoted a story about a massacre in neighboring Argentina, where most of the arrested had disappeared to and had supposedly died, fighting one another in some kind of internal dispute among the supposed enemies of the military regime. It was an attempt to make the whole affair go away.

Fortunately, the Church stepped in and established a Vicariate of Solidarity, which provided lawyers, social workers, medical personnel and aid to the families of the disappeared, and other victims of the violence of the dictatorship. The Church helped them establish soup kitchens and folkcraft workshops, publishing its own monthly review of the human-rights situation in the country (distributed through the parishes) as well as nine tomes listing the details and backgrounds of every missing person who was last seen being arrested by state security forces, including the circumstances of the removal of Alicia's husband from their home.

Alicia struggled with her own bitterness and anger. One could see how her normally quiet, cheerful personality and faith-filled demeanor changed in the face of the blatant brutality and violence of the

dictatorship. Not used to speaking out, or assertively expressing her own opinions, she now learned how to insist and demand answers of those responsible for her husband's disappearance, joining others in organized demonstrations for truth and justice, and becoming a beloved member of the Agrupación, the organization that the relatives of the arrested-missing founded for themselves and their mutual support.

She also knew Jesus' teachings, and

One could see how her normally quiet, cheerful personality and faith-filled demeanor changed in the face of the blatant brutality and violence of the dictatorship.

example, very well. As a disciple of Jesus Christ and faithful Catholic, she felt sadness and guilt over her inability to forgive those who took her husband away.

If a uniformed person got on the bus she took to work, she would get off at the next stop, unable to bear being on the same means of transport. She understood very well the chants and

the passion of some of her colleagues in the Agrupación, who firmly held to the slogan, "Neither forgiveness nor forgetting" about the past—*Ni perdón ni olvido!!*

She, too, experienced the same kind of anger at the violent crime she and her daughter were victims of—an event that of its nature could never provide the healing closure of at least seeing the body, or providing a funeral to offer him, or even the essential knowledge of what happened to her husband. She would never be allowed to grieve over what was left of her husband, and move on in life.

"But, how could she call herself a Christian?," she asked herself. She just couldn't accept forgiving those who took her husband away into oblivion.

She shared her inner struggle with several of us Columbans over the years. And then, a light came into her life, a new perspective, that opened the door to a happier existence, without requiring her to give up on the search for her husband, nor cease her demands for accountability, in truth and justice, with others like her in the Agrupación.

In fact, nowhere in the Bible, in either Testament, is there any command to "forgive and forget." "Forget about the past" is not a value in the Judeo-Christian tradition,



Demonstrators asking "where are our relatives?"



She knew that she could not wish anyone else to suffer what she had gone through, no matter who they were.

while remembering the past, on the other hand, is central to the history of salvation that it describes for us, and through which God speaks to us in His saving Word.

But there was something else she could do. Despite the need for accountability and justice, both for her and for the country, there was something else she could cling to, to be authentically faithful to Christ's teaching to forgive one's enemies, and to do good to those who harm you (Luke 6:27-28).

The question that came to her put the whole situation into a new light. When she considered how much she and her daughter had suffered, from the very first night of the abduction, for years afterwards, she then asked herself, "Would I want the families of those responsible for this crime to suffer as I have, as my daughter has?"

She had to say no, she didn't. No matter how heinous the violence done to her husband, her daughter, her own person, she was not capable of wishing

the same thing to happen to her worst enemies. It was too much for anyone to go through. She was not like the perpetrators of violence. She knew that she could not wish anyone else to suffer what she had gone through, no matter who they were.

And that turned out to be the beginning of healing, in her life as a follower of Christ. Over time, she would no longer step off a means of public transport whenever a uniformed person stepped on. She no longer crossed the street to avoid members of the police. On the national day of celebrating the national police force, called carabineros, she finally was able to stop a policeman in uniform, shake his hand, and thank him for his service to the country.

When Alicia died two years ago, she was still working with the Agrupación, who had been recognized by the governments that were elected after the return of the democratic system of government, and civilian control. Monetary compensation had

been proposed to resolve the situation by an investigative committee set up by the government, but the struggle to find out the truth and bring those responsible to justice continues to this day, sometimes eking out results, but never abandoned.

I was moved to see the photograph of a smiling Alicia, sitting at an information table with others, the picture of her husband pinned to her blouse, published next to her obituary on the information website of the Agrupación. She kept up the struggle to the end of her life, but found a measure of healing and joy in her life of faith, before passing over into everlasting freedom, and into the presence of the Paschal victory of Christ, and the New Life of God's Reign. CM

Columban Father Robert Mosher lived and worked in Chile from 1980 through 2009 and is presently assigned to Saint Columban's Residence for retired priests of the Mission Society of St. Columban, in Bristol, Rhode Island.



Help Spread the Light of Christ with a Gift that Costs Nothing During Your Lifetime

You can show your personal compassion and set an example for others by remembering the Missionary Society of St. Columban in your will, trust or other planned gift. No gift has a more lasting impact.



Recently, a huge influx of thousands of Venezuelan immigrants have entered Chile. Columban parishes have always welcomed the immigrants and tried to provide some material help (school supplies, warm clothing, blankets, and more) for them. We hope to continue providing relief for those who come to this "land of dreams." However, we know that the most important gift we have to share with them is our faith in the Risen Lord.

A planned gift helps the Missionary Society of St. Columban continue God's mission in the poorest areas of the world. And, financially and prayerfully supporting the Missionary Society of St. Columban is an excellent way to participate in the missionary activity of the Church.

With thoughtful planning, you can choose which ways to support work best for you and your loved ones and make sure your gifts are made in a way that will maximize their total value while minimizing their after tax-cost. There are many planned giving options, including some you may not have considered before. Planned gifts provide a major impact in our missions, and we offer the following suggestions to aid selection of the best giving option for your stage of life.

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- Direct Gifts of Cash and/or Securities
- Charitable Remainder Unitrust Gifts
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The U.S. Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Regulations encourage charitable giving by allowing generous tax savings for individuals who make gifts in accordance with approved giving programs. A planned gift also offers you many potential advantages: the opportunity to increase spendable income, the elimination or reduction of capital gain taxes and possibly federal and state estate tax savings.

For more information, please contact us at donorrelations@columban.org, call us toll-free at (877) 299-1920, or visit www.columban.org. The Missionary Society of St. Columban treasures your support and is committed to the stewardship of your gifts.

With Great Love

Making a Difference

By Monaliza Esteban

What is our contribution as Christians to the bigger Society? Perhaps there's a lot to tell but nowhere to start! It was a blessing to listen to one of the older local missionaries who posed this question at the start of our conversation. And he continued that there's a lot to handle in mission but the "how" we respond to these things in order to have a positive perspective is important. It stirred up my mind thinking "yeah, what could it be?" And experiences, one after the other, popped up in my head.

What could be their future?

One evening I was sitting with four teenage girls in the village. To begin a conversation, I am always eager to ask who among them is attending school and often I get the same answer. It is an answer that disheartens me every time I hear it, but it also gives me hope to keep trying to inspire and encourage them on the importance of education.

It may be a slow process, but there is always hope. In their sharing some had expressed their dreams of becoming a nurse someday but, while listening, I felt like they know they had already lost that dream and at the back of their mind is the same path waiting for them when they turn 18 years of age. Most of them stopped going to school when they turned 12 regardless at which grade they had reached, and some hadn't been to school at all.

I wonder sometimes what if they were given the opportunity to have access to higher education. What



could be their future? While there are parents who try and fight for their young girls to finish their education, there are also parents who don't have the means to let go of their young girls. Some don't have the courage to risk, and it is a sad reality because of the society they are in. It is a challenge because it involves tradition, custom, and culture. But I trust and pray that as we continue to offer them awareness of their purpose and importance in this society as girls and women, they will be empowered.

God's Instruments

We went to pay respect to one of our tuberculosis patient two weeks after her death. It was my first experience to visit a Hindu village to pay respect to their beloved dead. As we approached the village, the ladies started to cry — a symbol of mourning. We entered silently and sat on the ground in front of their house. There was total silence for a while then one from our team lead the prayer. There was a silent and serene moment while the prayer was going on. Afterwards they started



talking about the last days of their beloved deceased companion. It was a moment of grief but at the same time a time to be thankful for her life.

Sitting on the string bed after the formalities allowed me to chat more with one of the ladies. Her openness reminded me that Jesus never suggested that His followers should bear “strangers,” hate them, or reject them, even if those strangers practiced a different religion, and even if they were perceived as enemies. Instead, He pointed told His followers to welcome them, love them, and care for them.

A little gesture of outreach makes a difference in building relationships with people of other religions. We may have many differences, but God always provides a way to be one with them, especially those who are in need.

A Difficult Life

One Friday morning in March, a patient, a very weak woman, was brought to our tuberculosis health clinic. She could barely walk so the doctor had to go out and take a look at

her in the rickshaw. While observing and asking questions of the men who brought her, I could see the weariness in their faces. These people were living behind the cemetery where life is difficult. They must have been trying hard every day to put something on the table and forgot how sick they were. Ignoring whatever pains they have was common to them and when they can't bear it, that's when they come to see the doctor for help.


Towards the end of April, a lady called Sita who I know and who is from that cemetery, came to the church compound with a man and his baby to see the catechist, but they were not able to meet him. They were sitting outside when I saw them. She came to me holding the 5-month-old baby and started to tell me the story that the mother had died a month ago and she couldn't find means to feed the baby.

A Malnourished Baby

Then I realized that the mother was the very weak woman they had brought to us that Friday. I explained to them that

we could provide the baby's milk for as long as necessary and asked them to bring the baby on Friday for a check-up. That Friday the baby was admitted with tuberculosis! Thanks to Sita who took the baby into her care with love regardless of what would happen. She trusts God that this baby will have a life and future after all. God's instruments are always there when they are needed.

Like one of the famous saints in our church said, “There are no great things, only small things with great love.” And I think this is what the world needs now — doing things with great love.

P.S. I was happy to visit the people in the cemetery coming back from my language course, and received the welcome news that the baby I left in the hands of my team in our tuberculosis health clinic was running around strong and healthy and had completed his tuberculosis medication. 

Columban lay missionary Monaliza Esteben lives and works in Pakistan.

Peace Ministry

A Look Across the Border at North Korea

By Fr. Nam Seun-won



Due to the outbreak of Covid19 I had not been able to visit the border between China and North Korea since 2015. Fortunately, I finally got the opportunity to visit Shenyang and Dandong together with a number of priests from the Bishops Committee for National Reconciliation. After a two-hour morning flight from Incheon International Airport, I arrived in Shenyang where I had lunch in the

West Pagoda area before traveling on to Dandong, a journey that took five hours.

I had seen on the Korean news that North Korea had just opened its airspace and that its Koryo Airlines had been bringing back North Korean expatriates from Beijing and had also started to fly back its citizens from Shenyang International Airport. All of their citizens had not been able to return to their homeland for years

due to Covid19. Shenyang is a city that is signified by a single Chinese character in Korean. It is in the heart of Dongde region where both heavy industry and military industries are very developed, and it is a strategic point connecting Dongbei and the Korean peninsula. Many Chinese-North Korean citizens from the provinces of Pyongan and Kyongsang live in Shenyang and its surrounding cities. There are many stores and restaurants in

the West Tower area but North Korean restaurants refuse to accept South Korean customers. I don't know what's the situation in South East Asia. I once saw a video of people visiting a North Korean restaurant in South East Asia, I don't know if that was a recently made video or an old one. I was able to enter a place that was selling paintings by North Korean artists that was run like a café. Chinese and overseas Chinese were running businesses in Shenyang and Dandong. North Koreans who were working in restaurants and factories in major Chinese cities were unable to return home when the border was closed during the pandemic.

The Boxer Rebellion was a movement against foreign powers in the provinces of Shandong and North China towards the end of the Qing Dynasty that lasted from November 2, 1899, until September 7, 1901. It is sometimes referred to as the year of Kyung-Jah Rebellion meaning the Rebellion that took place in the year

1900 or the year of the rat. It is said that more than 150 believers, monks, priests and a bishop were killed in front of Shenyang Cathedral. The first two bishops of the diocese are buried underneath the central aisle of the Cathedral. Unfortunately, all the historical records were destroyed during the cultural revolution, and Shenyang diocese regrets that all they have are very faint historical evidence about those that were martyred. A Qing Dynasty-style statue of the Virgin Mary is a good representation of Qing Dynasty culture.

Shenyang is where the portrait of Crown Prince Sohyeon from the Joseon Dynasty is also located. King Injo surrendered to Qing Taizong the Qing Emperor in 1637. After the conclusion of the Peace Treaty the Qing Dynasty demanded hostages so on April 10, 1637, Prince Sohyeon, together with his wife Kang Xiao, traveled to Shenyang where they were detained together with the ministers of the main office. During

his eight years of detention Sohyeon is said to have been introduced to Western civilization by Adam Schall a Catholic missionary he met in Beijing. Sohyeon gathered the captive Koreans together and sought to make a living by cultivating the land, hoarding grain and trading.

Dandong is a five-hour drive from Shenyang and is a border city in the province of Liaoning, bordering Sinuiju North Pyongan Province the Yalu river and the Yellow Sea. South Koreans who specialize in North Korean affairs frequently visit Dandong for research purposes. By checking the trucks and trains that leave Dandong bound for North Korea they can indirectly determine what and how much trade that takes place between China and North Korea and thus gauge the economic situation in North Korea. Reporters frequently visit Dandong whenever some event of note takes place in North Korea.

From the living room of the apartment that the priests stationed in Beijing and Dandong use we could see the city of Shinuiju which is situated between the Yalu River and the North Korean province of North Pyongan. There we celebrated a Mass for peace on the Korean peninsula as we looked across at the island of Wihwa.

From the place where I was staying on the banks of the Yalu River I could clearly see the Sinuiju area. I felt a pang of sadness as I thought "there is North Korea right in front of me." While it is important to read books and other materials about the situation on the Korean peninsula with it being divided into North and South Korea it is also important to visit the border area and see it with one's own eyes.

North Korea has announced five special economic zones:

- Rason Special Economic Zone
- Golden Pyeong and Wihwa Island Special Economic Zone

Prayer for the Reconciliation and Unity of Korean People

O Lord, You have created us in Your own image and likeness. Make us daily more like you
 You have made us one in love, strengthened our love for one another.
 O Lord, Your desire is for peace among us, may peace be restored on this peninsula.
 Forgive us for our slandering and fighting with one another, even though we are one people sharing one blood.
 Grant us the grace of reconciliation so that we may forgive one another and heal the wounds of division.
 O Lord, You desire the unity of all people, heal the pain of separation that divides us.
 As we share all we have with one another, make us aware of our mutual indifference towards others and help us strive for unity.
 Help us to respect and love one another and so bring about a peaceful reunification.
 Give us faith Lord to believe in You and let the Kingdom of God reign in this land.
 We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ.
 Amen.
 Queen of Peace, Pray for us.
 All the Martyrs and Saints of Korea,
 Pray for us



- Kaesong Industrial Zone
- Wonsan and Mt. Geumgang tourist zone
- Sinuiju International Trade Zone.

One can see the Golden Pyeong and Wihwa Island Special Economic from Dandong. As a border city Dandong is a military area and due to the anti-espionage law enacted by the Chinese government, one is only allowed to stop one's car at designated tourist stations. It is forbidden to stop on any other part of the journey along the way. Of course, attempting to take photographs is a very dangerous occupation.


With the resumption of high-level exchanges between China and North Korea attention has turned to the possibility of the Yalu bridge which connects Dandong to North Xinjiang province opening this fall or early next year. When I went to the Yalu Bridge I witnessed many Chinese taking

photographs. When the bridge was originally completed and about to be opened the coronavirus struck and of course the border was immediately closed. It is reported that both China and North Korea suffered a lot of economic losses due to its forced closure. The customs buildings on the Chinese side were left unattended for three years and fell into disrepair. While looking at the Yalu Bridge I could hear it being repaired and see some vehicles on it so it looks like it will open very soon.

The Broken Bridge, a railroad bridge between China and North Korea, was bombed by the U.S. military during the Korean War, but if you look at this railway bridge nowadays you can see that the North Koreans have destroyed it on their side. Next to the broken bridge is the Friendship or Uhokyo steel railroad bridge that one sees in the news these

days which allows trains and trailers to come and go at the same time.

On the Chinese side of the Yalu River we were able to ride a boat which gave us the chance to look directly into North Korea. There is an hour's difference in the time between the Chinese side and the North Korean side of the Yalu River. Even though both North and South Korea are in the same time zone and are both part of the Korean peninsula, the situation on the peninsula remains unstable. We continue to live at a time when our prayers for peace are urgently needed.

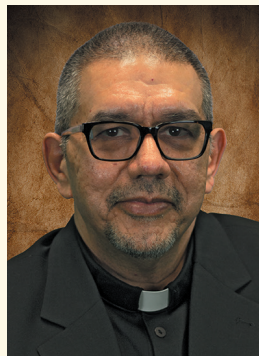
“May the peace of Christ reign in our hearts, for it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body.” Colossians 3:15 

Columban Fr. Nam Seung-Won is in charge of the Columban's Peace Ministry Department.

Forgiveness

The South American country, Colombia, suffered a devastating bloody civil war for decades. The country experienced communities vs. communities, neighbor vs. neighbor, families vs. families, brother vs. brother, etc. In the late 1990s, Fr. Leonel Narváz participated in the peace negotiations between the Colombian government and leaders of the rebel forces. Based off this experience and further studies in Harvard, Fr. Leonel became interested in developing a program for forgiveness and reconciliation. What process is needed to begin healing? Thus, he created ESPERE, a Spanish acronym for School of Forgiveness and Reconciliation. In 2009, I participated in ESPERE while living in Lima, Peru. Through ESPERE, I came to understand that, although inter-connected, forgiveness and reconciliation are two separate processes.

Forgiveness is the first step towards reconciliation. Forgiveness is about how I relate to the offense, the events of what happened to me. Like many, I have been hurt before by others. My mind was cluttered with how the universe was going to bring me justice. If the offender's name was mentioned, nothing but negative energy came forth from me. In time, carrying these negative thoughts consumed energy and prevented happiness. Eventually, I had to learn that forgiving was not for the offender, it was for myself so that the offender and events don't dominate my perspective on life. The saying of "forgive and forget" is misleading. We cannot forget but we don't have to let the memory prevent happiness. Much like the

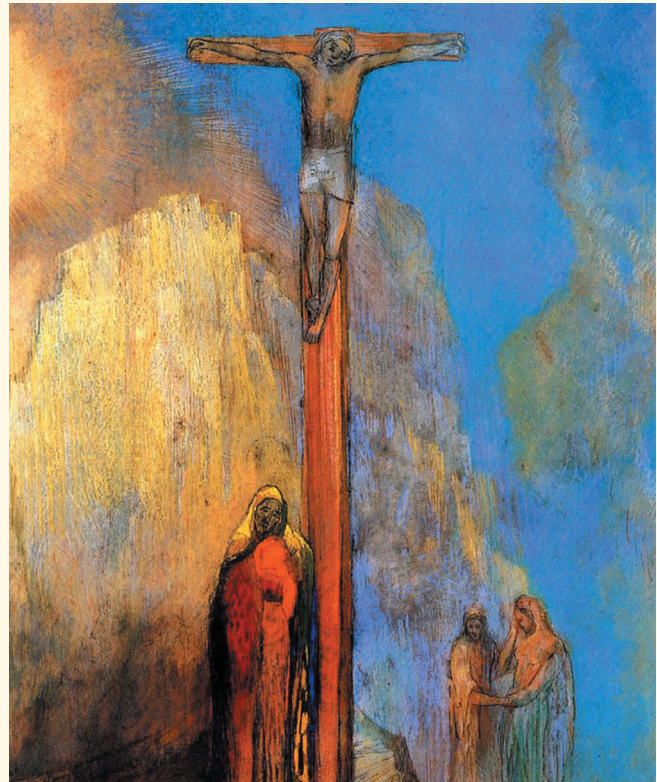


FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Fr. Chris Saenz

Resurrected Body of Jesus that was no longer on the Cross but carried the wounds of the Cross. The wounds are a reminder of what He lived through but, no longer hold any power over Him.

Reconciliation relates specifically to what relationship I will have with the offender. There can be no reconciliation unless there is forgiveness. If the offender is alive, what type of relationship can there be? Through ESPERE, I learned there are three possibilities. First, is the "Separate Worlds" model. Basically, it means



there is no relationship. Although I no longer harbor negative feelings toward the offender, I keep in my world, the offender in his/her world. Second is "Interconnected Worlds." In this model, I come in contact with the offender only when it is necessary. Our contact is cordial and civil but doesn't go beyond there. An example is a divorced couple who only meet to discuss and resolve

Eventually, I had to learn that forgiving was not for the offender, it was for myself so that the offender and events don't dominate my perspective on life.

issues with their children. Otherwise, they are not in contact with one another. Lastly, is the "One World." In this model, I have reformed my relationship with the offender. An example will be a couple that experienced infidelity by one. Through counseling and much dialogue, the couple remain together and forge a new relationship. Which model is the best? The one that is possible and won't rob my peace and happiness. As the saying goes, the greatest revenge is to be happy.

Fr. Chris Saenz

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World...Give Hope**

Columban Mission magazine is published eight times each year and tells the stories of our missionaries and the people they are called to serve. Columban missionaries live in solidarity with their people and, together, they move forward to improve their social, economic and spiritual lives, always with Our Savior as their guide and their eyes on God's Kingdom.

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"But who do you say that I am?"
– St. Matthew 16:15

Faith is indeed a gift from God, but this gift is transmitted from one faith-filled person to another down to our own day. We too are called and empowered to give witness to our belief that Jesus is the Son of the Living God.

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