



**Columban Mission:**  
Global and Local



SUMMER 2006/07

## Free people from poverty – Fr Sean Connaughton

Muhammad Yunus and his Grameen Bank in Bangladesh were awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. Columban Sean Connaughton met Yunus a few years ago, and has applied his idea – providing small loans to needy people to initiate small businesses - in the Philippines. Here Fr Sean provides an insight. Also see item overleaf regarding the Columban Partnership Program.

It is dark and raining, almost seven in the evening. Why is Ramon, our branch manager opening up the Kazama Grameen office? Then I can overhear. It's another member. The voice I don't recognize. I can hear the story. Dengue fever. This is a new kind of mosquito malaria that causes bleeding inside the body.

This woman's child is in the hospital. Her husband drives a jeep, but the wage is already used up. She cannot sell her livelihood project (pig and chickens): that's the rules of the Grameen. Besides, the very small profit is barely enough to provide the daily food and weekly repayment. About \$1.50 had to be repaid weekly; the whole year loan is \$50.00.

So, it is the Emergency Fund. This is a little piggy bank that each pays into weekly. It looks like nothing: the price of a few cigarettes. But today, Elma is happy; she can take out 1,500 pesos (\$40), the bill asked in the hospital.

"Where will you go now?" asks the manager. "To the hospital, my husband has to drive tomorrow again. He is very tired. I will watch overnight". "Will the children sleep with you in the hospital ward? Who will cook?" And so on, till the paper is signed and off she went.

*Ricky, a recipient of a small loan, turning Mt. Pinatubo ash into hollow building blocks*



In the Philippines we have an invisible apartheid. It means: "Poor people and uneducated – keep out!"

We used to think a high school diploma would erase the sign "uneducated". It has not. The class distinction remains.

Kazama Grameen tries to empower, give dignity, and grant decent homes, utensils, basic furniture, and all needs that are fundamental for the poor family. This is done by simply providing a job, creating any kind of income generator that will liberate them from hunger and shame, however hidden this may be.

"Forgive us our **debts** as we forgive those who have **debts** against us"

Matthew 6:12



"O God, source of all life, You have promised that justice would flow like a river. That debts would be cancelled.

Forgive the sins which divide country from country.

Govern the hearts and minds of those in power. That economic justice, reconciliation, peace and unity may come to the world.

**Amen."**



Adaptation of the Jubilee Prayer from Korea

On 16 October, Columban Mission priests and staff in Essendon and Strathfield stood up for the UN Millennium Development Goals.

STAND UP against poverty was organised to tell world leaders that it is time for action, and to point to the growing support for the Make Poverty History Campaign.

STAND UP broke the Guinness World Record for the most people to stand up for a cause! We were part of the 23, 542,614 people worldwide and 91,987 Australians taking a stand against poverty.

**STANDING UP in Essendon against global poverty**

**STAND UP**  
AGAINST POVERTY, STAND UP FOR THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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## People News

### FR TREVOR TROTTER

The recent General Assembly of St Columban's Mission Society saw the election of a new international leadership team, including that of Fr Trevor Trotter as the Vicar-General.

General Assemblies identify directions for Columban ministry over the coming years. The last such gathering took place in Sydney in 2000.



Fr Trevor Trotter

### A PRIEST BROTHER

Fr Thinh, the younger brother of Columban Fr Tien Nguyen, was recently ordained in Melbourne.

### FR PETER WOODRUFF

Fr Peter has left for Lima, Peru. Before leaving Australia, however, he completed a PhD thesis at La Trobe University on changes taking place in religious expression among those who leave the Andes to come down to live in Lima.

### FR GEORGE HOGARTY

Fr George Hogarty has also left Australia to take up his assignment in Lima.

### FR JOE RUYS

Associate priest Fr Joe Ruys sends a greeting from Cochabamba, Bolivia where he is studying Spanish. He writes: "Things are not going too badly over here. Nearly every week has at least three good days



Fr Joe Ruys

of Spanish. At the end of this week we get a week's break. I'll be going to Santa Cruz with two Korean priests. One is a Columban associate priest heading for Chile. So here I am in Cochabamba, Bolivia, going out to a Chinese restaurant on a Saturday night with two Korean priests who can't speak English and myself an Australian priest who can't speak Korean. The answer? Use our very best Spanish with each other!"



Columbans who attended Fr Thinh's ordination. From left: Frs Tony Cox, Bernie McDermott, Bernie Lane, Keith Gorman, Tien Nguyen, Leo Baker and Cyril Hally.

### FR CYRIL HALLY

Fr Cyril received a 'Life Membership' of the Paulinian Lay Missionary Association (PALMS). It recognised his contribution in helping found PALMS, which now places volunteer missionaries in the Pacific and Africa. Fr Cyril has moved to Essendon.

### DICK DANCKERT

Dick, who coordinates the Columban Partnership Program, is taking a group from St John the Baptist parish in Ferntree Gully, Melbourne, to the Philippines. A number of other groups are also involved with the Partnership Program, including those supporting the Grameen bank in the Philippines. (See story overleaf.) To enquire about the Partnership Program, contact Dick at 03 5264 5254 or dickdanckert@hotmail.com

## NEWS FROM THE COLUMBAN MISSION INSTITUTE (CMI)

**Prayer bookmarks** on the theme of Debt (see overleaf) are now available. They remind us to pray and act so that greater debt relief can be achieved for countries such as the Philippines (where Columbans work).

**The Lantern** is a series of A4 leaflets on Evangelization: Witnessing Christ in the World. It is a resource for reflection, discussion and action on mission by individuals, groups, schools and parishes. The third issue, The Rite of Christian Initiation, is just out. (For the Debt prayer bookmarks and the Lantern series, call 02 9352 8021 or email [annelanyon@columban.org.au](mailto:annelanyon@columban.org.au)).

**Educating for Peace, Ecology and Justice:** Catechists have been assisted with reflection days under the heading of 'Justice? What's that got to do with the Eucharist?'. A Peace, Ecology and Justice group has been formed at the Australian Catholic University in Strathfield.

**Sr Suporna Rozario smsm** has joined CMI to assist in the area of Christian-Muslim relations.

**Sr Pauline Rae smsm** co-facilitated an in-service session for teachers on Christian-Muslim dialogue – 'sharing our story'.

**Columban Fr Patrick McNerney** is continuing his work on his doctoral thesis on Interreligious Dialogue.

**Unjust Genes—Life and Death for Sale** This is a 26 minutes DVD, accompanied by a study booklet, to aid discussion and action on genetically engineered food which is a major issue of our times.

### For more information on the DVD contact:

Fr Dr Charles Rue on 0408 466820 or at [charlesdrue@netscape.net.au](mailto:charlesdrue@netscape.net.au).

Copies of the DVD may be ordered from Columban Mission Centre (see address below). The cost is \$25.00 per DVD (including GST) and \$22.73 for schools and Churches (no GST).

## Columban supporters help

Fr Robert McCulloch writes that ten inches of rain (250 mm) in two days, and an Indus River in flood have devastated Latifabad, Pakistan. Essential equipment and operating theatres at St. Elizabeth's Hospital were substantially damaged. \$25,000 was sent to help with this emergency. Thank you for your support.

## Rest In Peace

### FR GORDON JACKSON

Fr Gordon died on 3rd August 2006 from cancer at almost 92. Educated by the Christian Brothers and Marists in Sydney, and ordained in Ireland, he was sent to the Philippines. Ill health brought him back to Sydney where he was involved in several chaplaincies.

### FR EDDIE SHERRY

Born in England in 1910, he was ordained in 1935 by the founder of the Columbans, Bishop Edward Galvin. He spent nine years in China, including four years as the Secretary of Bishop Galvin in Hanyang. Assigned later to the Australia-New Zealand Region, he spent almost fifty years at Essendon. He was manager of The Far East three times, and for decades prepared the Columban Calendar.

## Columban Calendar

Let us help you with a great Christmas gift. We can send Calendars in your name to your friends. Cost \$6.00 plus \$1.50 for postage and handling.

## Bequests

Leave your influence behind. Your assets of today can assist the communities of tomorrow. Remember Columban work in your Will.

## The Far East

Another Christmas gift ideal. Why not take out a subscription for your friends? They will enjoy the read. Cost \$10 p.a.



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