



Fiji COLUMBAN INSIDER

June 2020



Emerging from COVID-19



Fr John McEvoy
Country Leader, Fiji

whom have recovered and there were no deaths. For this we are grateful. On Wednesday of Holy Week, Fiji was also visited by Tropical Cyclone Harold, wreaking havoc on the Islands of Kadavu and the Lau Group. Apart from heavy rain and strong winds – no damage was done in any of our parishes. Here in the Central House due to damage to a nearby electrical trunk line – we were without power for 3 days and nights. In the last few weeks as restrictions were somewhat eased, many of us Columbans, with the promptings of the Archbishop were helping people and families to name their feelings and emotions during the lockdown weeks. It was surprising the thoughts and emotions expressed by people during this time. House and community Masses with less than 20 attending has been allowed since Sunday 14th June – Feast of Corpus Christi. It is likely that other restrictions including the opening of Churches and schools will be allowed in the very near future. Columbans in the Suva area offered Masses and reflections organised by the Archdiocese via live streaming and televised Sunday Masses. We are very much aware and conscious of people who are in need at the present time because of the loss of jobs and pay-cuts and we are striving to find ways to support such people by expressing our concern for them and supporting the work with Saint Vincent de Paul (SVDP) in Columban parishes. Of course international air travel is still severely disrupted. Due to this fact the movements of many Columbans have been affected.

Greetings from Nasese/Suva. It is three months ago now since I sent out the last Fiji Circular. It was in mid-March and the Corona Virus was beginning to spread swiftly throughout the world. A number of cases were discovered here in Fiji. On Friday the 19th March we decided to shut down the offices in the Central House – and sent the staff home for the two-week period of lockdown. The same happened in Raiwaqa Parish and the Formation and Lay Mission Houses. A nightly curfew was imposed. Of course we were all affected by the imposed restrictions set by the Church and Government, but these restrictions proved very beneficial – as the virus was curtailed and controlled quickly and rapidly. Only 18 cases of the Virus were recorded in Fiji – all of



From left; Fr. John McEvoy with Fr. Pat Colgan and Fr. Pat O’Beirne before Fr. Colgan departed for Christ the King, Parish—Ba

End of the Spiritual Year and Temporary Aggregation

Congratulation Frs Pat O’Beirne, Director of our 1st ever Spiritual Year conducted here in Fiji and also to his Socius, Fr Pat Colgan. They brought the Spiritual Year to a close on June 12th 2020. **Congratulations also expressed to Elia Poasa and Paula Suka** who successfully completed their year including the 30-day retreat – given by Fr Kelvin Barrett SSC Australia. Elia and Paula were admitted as Temporary Members of the Society (3 years) and made their oath of Aggregation at a Mass in the Central House on Sunday afternoon before the Columbans here in the Suva Area on the 7th June, Feast of the Holy Trinity.



From left; Elia Poasa and Paula Suka visiting the Suva Remand Centre in Korovou



From left; Elia Poasa, Fr. Pat O’Beirne (Spiritual Year Director) Fr. Pat Colgan (Socius) and Paula Suka at the Nazareth Prayer Centre, Wailekutu



From left; Paula Suka with Fr. Kelvin Barrett SSC (Spiritual Director) at the Nadi International Airport awaiting his flight to return to Australia



Elia Poasa and Paula Suka making their oath of Aggregation as Country Leader Fiji, Fr. John McEvoy looks on

FMA

The two students Kyaw Zaw and Francis Xavier who are still studying Hindi have spent the last month with families in the Naleba area of Labasa Parish. They return to Suva on Thursday 18th to continue their formal language studies in the Central House – while living again with their host families (in Wailoku and in Nadera) for about 2 more months before returning to Naleba. By all accounts they are doing very well and are enjoying their experience living and learning from their host Indo-Fijian families. While they are here in Suva they will have their mid-term evaluation.



Kyaw Zaw and his Indo Fijian family at the “Hot spring” in Savusavu south cost of Vanua Levu



Francis Xavier together with his Indo Fijian family working in the family farm in Naleba

Lay Missionaries

Jake, Lily and Jinky : Their 3 years’ contract and Fiji visa work permit ends in June. But due to the Corona Virus situation in the RP and no international flights in or out of Fiji – they will be unable to return home at this time for their holidays and discern about their future. We have decided to have their visas renewed for 3 more years regardless the outcome they may make for their respective future. They have had been farewell in their parishes – Ba, Labasa and Natovi. In the meantime, they will help out in the Mission Office and with the work of Evangelisation in the Suva area. Naanise has had her Evaluation/Review after 3 years as Lay Missionary Coordinator, her contract as LM Coordinator is renewed until June 2021.



Left; Sr. Akeneta (SOLN), Lily Faunillan (LM) and Fr. Finn at Lily's farewell lunch prepared by teachers and staff of St Vincent De Paul Primary School, Natovi



From left; LM's—Lily Faunillan, Jennifer Lunor (Jake) and Evangeline Ucol (Jinky) all eagerly awaiting to return home to the Philippines

Fiji Website to go LIVE

In recent months the Mission office has concentrated more and more on **Social Media** by postings reflections, daily gospel readings, video clips and parish events on our Facebook Page. The **1st edition of e-Kaulotu** is about to be sent out far and wide via email. The new **Fiji Website** is due to go live on the 24th June. From that date onwards you can find Columban Fiji News on www.columban.org.fj The website was made possible with the help and expertise of Columban Mission Office Melbourne. The IRD Desk has issued a Newsletter all the detailed of IRD activities for last year (already sent out). It makes impressive reading as what can be achieved with the youth of different denominations – Christian, Hindu and Muslims.



Vitalina Vukinagauna working on final touches to the E-Kaulotu magazine that will be uploaded onto the newly established website for Columban Fiji

ECO CHALLENGE PROJECT

This project has suffered severely because of the restrictions imposed because of Covid 19. The closing date has now been rescheduled to 28th Aug. 2020. This is to allow all teams to continue their activities that were disrupted by the restrictions. Ten (10) teams confirmed their participation. We thank them for their participation. The Theme still remains ***'Our world, our environment, our responsibility'*** Funds raised will go towards the training of our Columban Seminarians and Lay Missionaries. Activities include: back yard farming, planting of trees, cleaning of drains, waterways and coastlines, the preservation of energy, recycling projects, planting of vegetables and flowers gardens.

'A clean environment is essential for healthy living'.



Naomi Naiubi of "Team Greenies" putting so much effort in beautifying the compound



"The Real Patriot Team" of Dogoru with LM-Jake Lunor

NEWS UPDATES

Fiji/Tongan Columbans affected because of Travel Restrictions: Fr. Nilton Iman stranded in Peru – was due back in Fiji, before Easter; Fr. Pat O’Beirne and Fr. Pat Colgan – who have completed the Spiritual Year (12 June 2020); The two students who completed the Spiritual Year, Elia and Paula due to be in Manila by the end of June; Sophia and Ling – LMs appointed to Britain and stranded in NZ; Fr. Dave Arms in NZ was due back in Fiji in May/June; Fr. Willie Lee – stranded in Tarawa, Kiribati; Teakare due in the Philippines in July; LMs Jinky, Lily and Jake’s due to return home to the Philippines at the end of June; Fr Palenapa (Peru) and LM Haiti Muller (PI) stranded in Tonga and Columbans who are due home leave this year.

Fr. Nilton Iman: Was due to be in Fiji for Easter and end his time as Associate Priest with us at the end of Dec 2020. But due to the awful situation re Covid 19 still raging fiercely in Peru – he has now ended his contract in June. He has expressed a wish to join the Society. The Society Leader, Tim Mulroy and Regional Director SA Fr Cathal Gallagher are following up on this. We here in Fiji are grateful to Nilton for the 6 years he spent with us (as parish priest of Ba) – where he worked tirelessly for the people of this huge parish. Vinaka Vakalevu Fr. Nilton.

Fr. Taaramon and Fr. Teakare: paid us a flying trip to Suva a few weeks ago; Fr. Taaramon after his 7 weeks’ quarantine came in to fix his Visa back to Taiwan while Fr. Teakare came to visit a sick relative and to accompany him back to Rabi. Both priests are still in Rabi.

Fr. Pat O’Beirne: has been appointed to Britain but won’t be able to get away anytime soon. He will surely find useful works to occupy himself for the next few months around the Suva area.

Fr. Pat Colgan/Fr. Anselmo Chung SongJun: Fr. Pat has moved to Ba on Wednesday (18th June) where he will assist Fr. Anselmo for the next few months until Fr. Anselmo’s 3-year contract as an Associate Priest ends.

Fr. Donal McIlratih: Is still teaching Scripture to the students at PRS online via Zoom.

Ietawa Naaiti and Ratu Pio Daurewa: our two new students have started 1st year Philosophy Classes in PRS.

Elia Poasa and Paula Suka: presently on holidays with their families in their respective villages.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fiji Assembly 21st and 22nd July The first day of this gathering will be given over to our **Child Protection Policy Document** that we have signed up to. As a group we will study this document together. Fr. Frank has drawn up a schedule for the day, assigning parts or a chapter of the document to various members. He has already sent this out to us. Please take note and if assigned please prepare. On the second day 22nd July among other topics we will look at Inter Cultural Living and perhaps a session on the importance of Social Media. The agenda for this day is not yet fixed. A Leadership Team meeting will be held on 23rd July.

Our Annual Retreat: The Annual Retreat has been rescheduled for the 17th to the 21st August. The Venue will be at the Nazareth Prayer Center. Fr Joe McHugh SJ will conduct the retreat. The Capacity at the prayer Centre is 12 Rooms. Please let Fr. McEvoy know as soon as possible re your intention of attending or not.

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Columban Gallery

Columbans Overseas



LM's - Latai Muller and Mereani Nailevu on their fourth month of language studying in Davao learning Cebuano



Iowane Naio and Saula Seeto our Seminarians in Peru helping those in need including people from other religion



Uakeia Tawaia third year student in the Columban Formation Program completed Philosophy and will commence Theology in August



Mosese Wasai Yacalevu fourth year student in Loyola School of Theology has just completed Spiritual Year.