



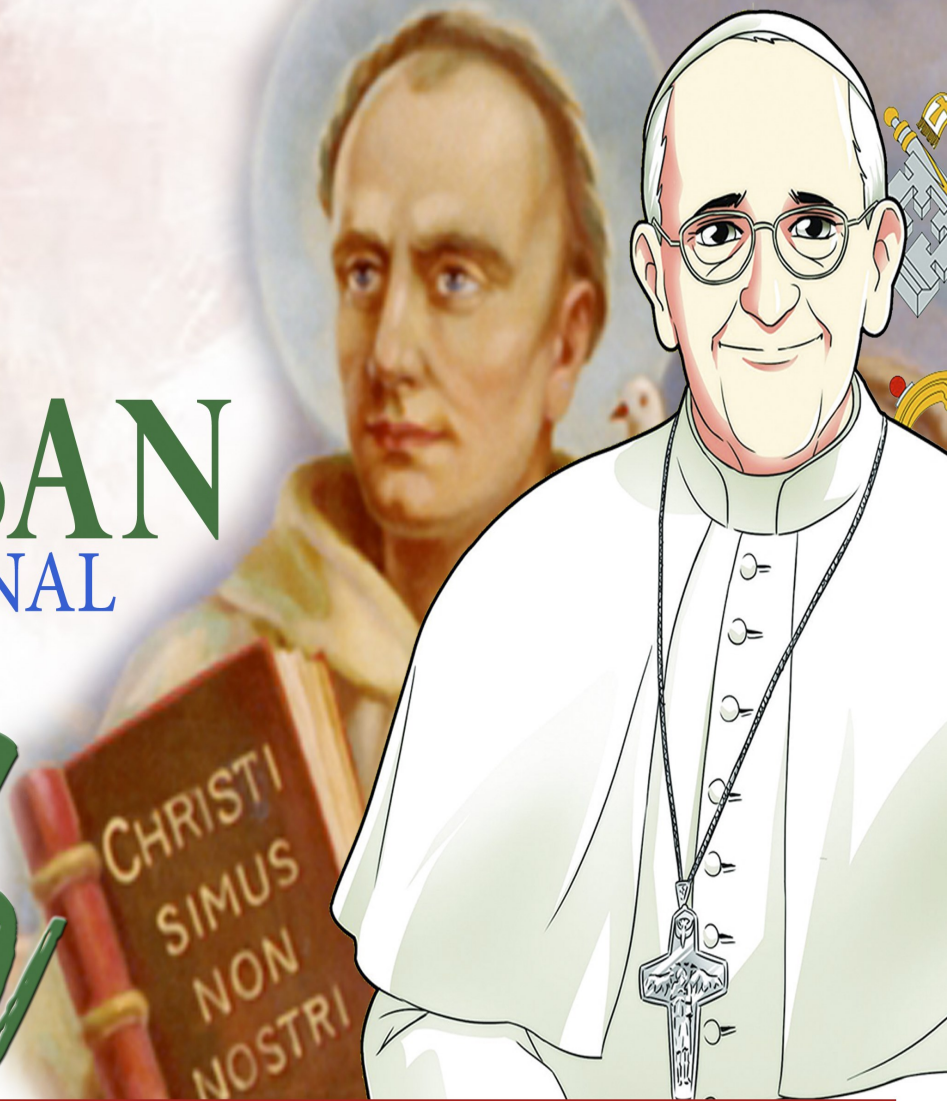
COLUMBAN
INTERNATIONAL

Youth

Encounter

*"A life unlike your own
could be your teacher"*

-Saint Columban-





Today, 16th January 2021, I participated in the launch of the first Columban International Youth Encounter. This was organised by young ordained Columbans, Lay Missionaries, and co-workers. Participants were youths from 6 Columban Regions namely Pakistan, Peru, Myanmar, Philippines, Britain, and Fiji.

Sharing our culture and learnings as well from their culture was interesting with a few laughs and joikes.

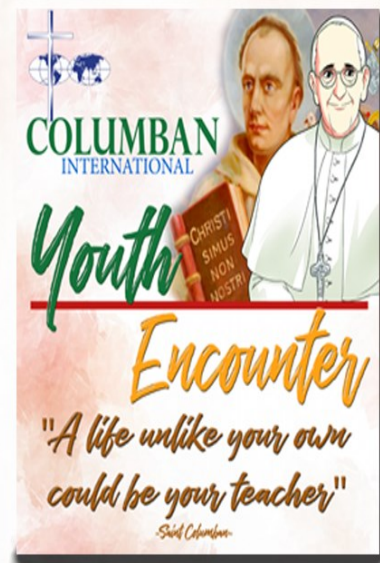
However, hearing their experiences on the pandemic has made us realise how blessed our nation is and to appreciate what we normally take for granted. One of the participant had said that due to the lockdown in their nation, people are not only dying from COVID-19 but are also suffering and dying from hunger.

In another country, the participant said that they still have churches closed, denying them of the community spirit and the reception of the Eucharist.

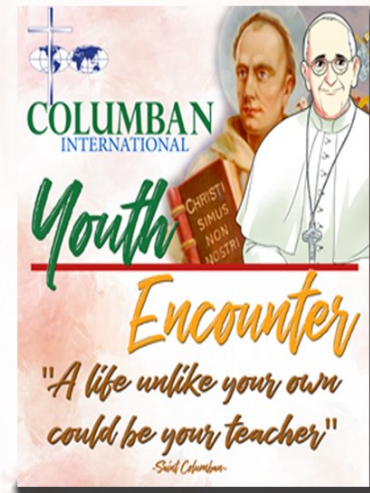
Truly a reality check for me personally to be more appreciative of our situation and what we have here in Fiji!

Many thanks to the Columbans who organised this wonderful and eye-opening program for us young people.

-**Bruce Vute**, Fiji Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021



It was great to meet with other young people from across the world. In a time when it's so easy to feel disconnected and void of new experience and encounters, I really enjoyed the chance to feel connected on a global level.

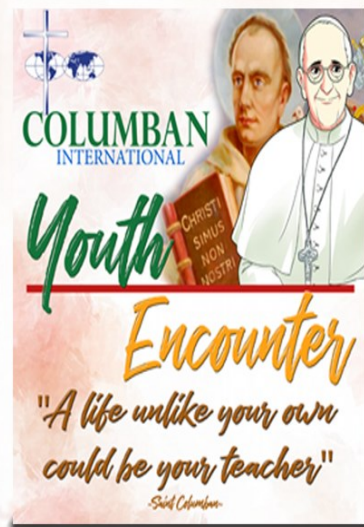


-**Catherine**, Great Britain, Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021



I appreciate a lot that I was able to participate in the activity. Firstly, I was nervous. But during the intermission, I was happy that I got a chance to speak with them. I learned and heard many stories about many different food, places from different parts of the world. I felt like we are one in God even though we are separated by land. For the next encounter, I would like to have more time for sharing to become more familiar with each other.

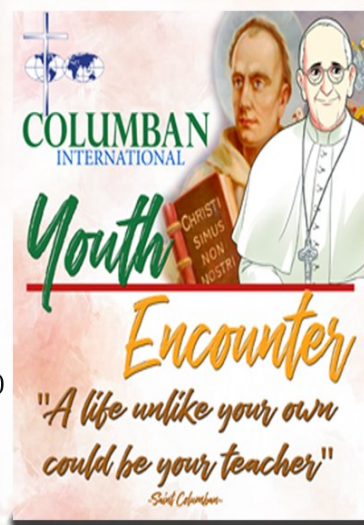
Once again, thank you very much.



-**Columban Zau Htoi Naw**, Myanmar Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021



As a young person, connecting with young people from around the world amidst the pandemic was just a great feeling of excitement, joy, and above all the best experience so far. Curfew being implemented, border closures and restrictions on gatherings did not dampen our spirits and faith in connecting with our Columban brothers and sisters from Peru, Pakistan, Philippines, Myanmar, and the UK via the Zoom platform. Being able to have a chat and see fellow youths from overseas was truly a great experience. Not only did I have a great time 'zooming' but got I also got to learn about their culture, their way of life, even some of their delicacies that made me very hungry, and some aspects of their diverse societies respectively. Thus, empowering our young people during this time of uncertainty is very crucial in getting youths back up on their two feet and combating social issues affecting us.



-**Christopher Wali**, Fiji Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021

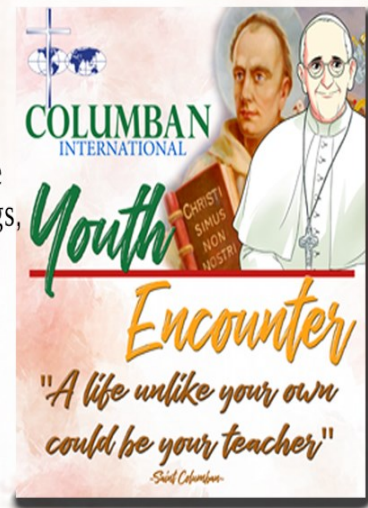


I'm glad to share my beautiful experience of CIYE (Columban International Youth Encounter). I always have a curiosity inside me to know diverse cultures and their values. And truly it was a pleasure to know and have a lively view of the world outside my country--looking at different cultures, rituals, and traditions. Being exposed to diverse cultures helped appreciate more in life and respect and value others. Also, it made me learn new things, develop understanding and sympathy with others. It developed in me a positive and joyful attitude. The most jolly part is making new friends, with different perspective.

Exposure to multiple culture also led me to enhance creativity and memorable experience. Plus, it made my perspective more broad after meeting people and learning other traditions. It was marvellous to see new foods, learn new traditions and superb places. It is truly one of my life-inspiring experiences and it gave me the heartfelt joy to see everyone in Christ.

I hope to be able to taste the food that were presented that day, visit and celebrate cultural diversity in person in the near future. In God's own time.

-Charmine Mukhtar, Pakistan Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021



It was really great experience for me to be part of the meeting. The Youth Encounter enabled me to open up to other youths from other countries and increased my global awareness. It was a good way to learn from each other's personal experience--our personal experience of the pandemic. I felt elated to see the spirit of the youth from Britain who got up early in the morning or perhaps sacrificing their sleep for the love of Jesus and attend the meeting. I've learned the act of sacrificing from them; it motivated me to grow stronger in faith. I think this kind of meeting is very productive spiritually and socially.

-Cynthia Javeed, Pakistan Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021



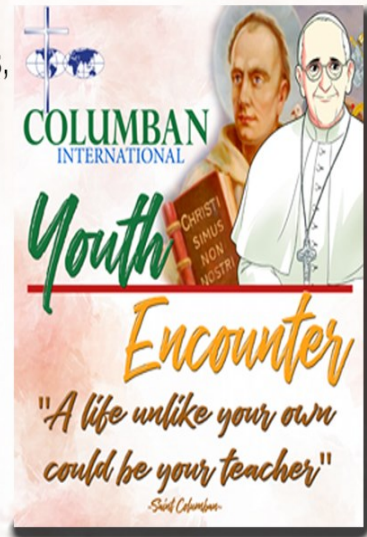


I learned about the cultures, food, popular places, a bit of history, the flags, and other things from the six countries that participated the recent online Columban International Youth Encounter. They are all very interesting and lovely. I have got a good experience of speaking and listening to my newly met friends from these countries. They are very friendly, and they have their own beauty.

Hopefully, in the future, when this pandemic is over, I would love to meet them in person and nurture this encounter in the hopes to build good friendship. I would want to learn more through these future Youth Encounters as well.

Thank you!

-Elizabeth Seng Ra, Myanmar Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021

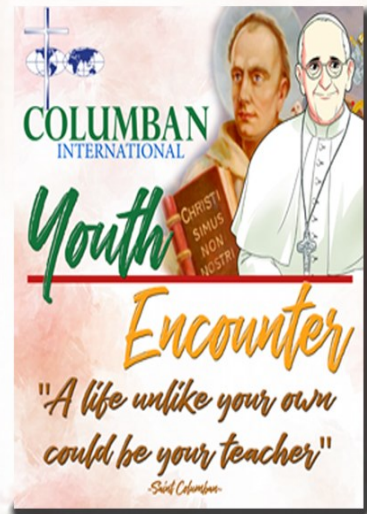


The Youth Encounter spearheaded by the Columban Missionaries taught me to be open in embracing the diverse culture of every country. It was a fun yet informative virtual gathering wherein everyone is proud to share their respective cultural background. I was able to also share my thoughts and life experience in regarding this present pandemic during the breakout session. In return, I was also blessed to listen to other youths of other nationalities what they also had learned and realized during these trying times. Everyone was willing to learn and share their faith, culture, and experiences.

It was an amazing conference indeed. I would also like to thank the Columban Missionaries for the invitation to such an engaging youth formation. I hope to see again the faces of the CIYE (Columban International Youth Encounter) participants in the next event we will have.

Mabuhay ka, Columbano!

-Evan Dave C. Perejan, Philippines Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021



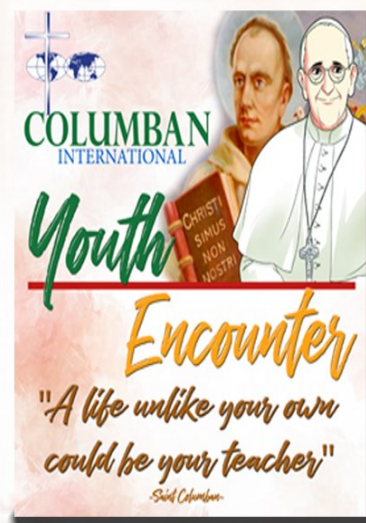


On the 16th January, the Columbans had arranged an online international encounter. It started with a brief introduction of our countries and a bit of insight on what makes our countries unique. It was really good to hear about their unique features like their special dishes, which made a lot of us comment that we were getting a bit hungry.

We were then put into breakout rooms to share something on what we've learnt from the pandemic. It was tough to hear and imagine that most of those participating members have been and still are going through like constant lockdowns and inability to be at work or with family. We in Fiji are so fortunate to not have suffered as much as the rest of the world. While I felt restless for being at home and away from work, I realised that I'd spent so much time away from my family. I was always caught up with work and other activities. I am now appreciative of my time with my parents and brothers; and I will make the most of it every chance I get.

It was an amazing experience--to be a part of something like this gathering. Here's to more opportunities like this! God bless us all.

-Katherine Maria Powell, Fiji Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021

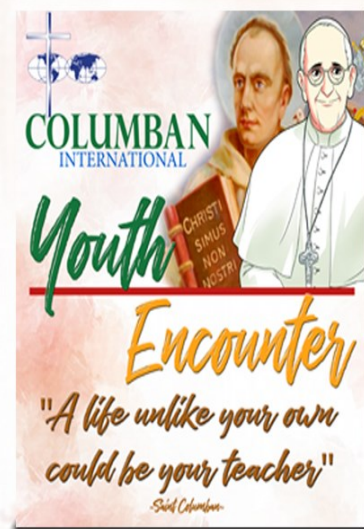


The Youth Encounter facilitated by the Columbans for the youths from six other countries did not only make us realize that we have a lot of things in common--such as our rich culture and traditions--but it also highlighted our unique differences. Our similarities helped us to strengthen our bond and connection as human beings and as children of God.

One of the striking points during the youth encounter was when we were asked to share our personal struggles with the group. During the sharing, we were able to reflect on how COVID-19 pandemic affected our community and ourselves in a personal level. Although we faced different challenges, it did not hinder us to appreciate and find meaning in our struggles. Within my small group, I shared that the greatest lesson I have learned from this trying time is that amidst the pains and sorrows we face every day, I should not forget to be grateful, to give to those who have less in life, and to pray for those who have restless hearts.

I wish for more of this kind of platform where young people like are encouraged to participate in a health conversation.

-Francis Rafil Gascon, Philippines Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021



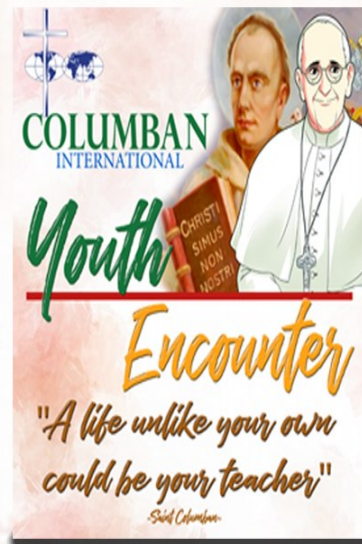


I enjoyed the Columban International Youth Encounter very much. I learned about traditions of other youths from other countries. Before this event, I did not know anything about countries like Fiji and Peru. But now, I know something about these beautiful countries. I feel that this encounter is effective for me; it has been an eye-opener for me. All countries have beautiful places, respectable traditions, and delicious food.

The sharing time was a bit short for me; I felt comfortable in connecting with the youths in my small group. I hope to nurture this friendship we have begun.

Thank you very much!

-**Maureen Hka Mai**, Myanmar Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021



First of all, I want to say that I am very happy to attend this meeting and I also feel glad to meet my fellow youths from other parts of the world. It was my first online meeting and I think it was a great experience for me.

This type of meeting encouraged me to develop my confidence. I had also gained more knowledge about other countries. I think having knowledge about something is very important.

-**Nancy Younas**, Pakistan Youth Representative
Columban International Youth Encounter 2021

