

Letter to Columban supporters printed in the 2010 Columban Calendar.



Purchasing the Columban Calendars is one of the principal ways in which we support our mission around the world. The first decade of the Twenty-first century has been full, violent and dramatic. We have had 9/11 followed by the Iraq and now Afghanistan wars. We have had the crisis of climate change and the drought, bushfires and floods. And now we are in the midst of the global financial crisis. But on the positive side many people have become more aware of and committed to interreligious dialogue and work for ecology. We have had the apology to our own aboriginals and the election of a black President of the United States.

It is a Chinese curse to live in a time of transition. We are living in such a time, a time when the old certainties have been eroded and the new are still fragile and not yet convincing. However, the prophet Isaiah tells us "Do not long for the things of old. I am doing a new thing can you not see it." [Is. 43:18f.] We need bifocals capable of recognising evil and yet also capable of seeing and appreciating the new shoots. To see the new we need positive, expansive hearts capable of wonder and appreciation. Hearts that are not easily overwhelmed by evil and still able to wonder.

That is where we hope the Columban Calendar can help. It has always tried to present the most beautiful art of the classical Western world. The hope being that beauty is as important as spirituality and justice. As Keats said, "Beauty is truth and truth beauty, that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know." Beauty has its own authority. These paintings and images have inspired and nourished Christians for centuries. They can give us an insight, sensitivity and the energy and vision to keep working for a united, just and sustainable world. I hope this year's calendar helps you become better people with bigger hearts and minds.

Because of the global financial crisis, global warming and wars and violence, many of the people we serve are suffering. They have no social services to fall back on. Robert Zoellick, the President of the World Bank, recently declared that between 200,000 and 400,000 children will die every year if the international community does not give the necessary aid. Millions will fall back into poverty. As the poor they will suffer more than most from the problems of pollution and global warming and will be victims of violence.

Through buying this Calendar you can help us help the urban poor in Peru, Chile and the Philippines, the migrant workers in Taiwan, Korea and Ireland and those who are suffering violence in Pakistan and Mexico. As well you help us proclaim the Gospel and proclaim a beautiful and hopeful message in many countries. Thank you.

Peace,

Fr Noel Connolly SSC

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