

Columban Fr. Shay Cullen

Following his ordination in 1969, the Irish-born Columban Fr. Shay Cullen went to the Philippines to begin his missionary work. When he arrived, he found children being bought and sold as sex workers while a corrupt government aided companies profiting from it.

The government routinely arrested children whose only crime was poverty and lack of food, shelter and education.

Fr. Cullen took action to save these children, destroy sex tourism business and stop the violation of human rights by founding the PREDA (Prevent and Rehabilitate Drug Abusers) Foundation in 1974. (www.preda.org)

Believing that poverty, violence and child abuse are barriers to peace and give rise to extremism, Fr. Cullen strives to eliminate child abuse and promote respect for children's rights. He works for peace by striving to change the unjust economic political and social structures and attitudes that allow such abuse.

The [twelve Preda projects](#) are to educate for peace, free children from brothels and jails and give them a chance to recover in therapeutic homes and be reintegrated and have a happier life free from jail, brothels, abusers, traffickers, violence and abuse. His team has worked to bring the abusers to justice and has succeeded in the Philippines and in Germany to get convictions. He is a leading world-wide campaigner against trafficking and child and woman abuse. The PREDA Foundation operates protective therapeutic recovery shelters for the victims.

He has battled the sex Mafia, lived with death threats and survived an assassination attempt. When he uncovered a child prostitution ring selling children to personnel at the US Naval base, Subic Bay he initiated a successful ten year campaign, helped unify an anti-bases coalition to remove the US bases and convert the infrastructure into a commercial manufacturing zone. Over 100,000 Filipinos now work at the converted U.S. bases in Clark and Subic.

Fr. Cullen has received several human rights awards and has been nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize. He has testified before the U.S. Congress, the Philippine Senate, and is a well-known speaker and facilitator at international conferences. Fr. Cullen is the author of [Passion and Power](#) an autobiography, and wrote a chapter in a new book entitled *Fighting Slavery - Faith in Action*, published on April 15, 2015. He writes a weekly column in [The Manila Times](#) that is published in other newspapers and on-line.