

## Columban missionary priest to receive humanitarian award

Father Shay Cullen named recipient of Hugh O'Flaherty Humanitarian Award for his work protecting exploited children Columban missionary priest to receive humanitarian award.



A Columban missionary priest in the Philippines is to receive an international humanitarian award for his lifetime's work promoting children's rights and welfare.

Father Shay Cullen, founder of the Preda Foundation in the Philippines, will receive this year's Hugh O'Flaherty Humanitarian Award in recognition of his work to protect the rights of exploited children.

The award was set up in honor of Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty, an Irish prelate, who was based at the Vatican from 1938 until 1960.

Monsignor O'Flaherty helped save the lives of 6,500 Jews and allied soldiers from the Nazis via the "Rome Escape Line."

"Father Shay has given his life to protecting the human rights of oppressed and exploited children and has fearlessly challenged those who were not prepared to shoulder their responsibilities," said Jerry O'Grady, chairman of the awards body.

In 1974, Father Cullen set up the People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance or Preda Foundation to help children and women who were involved in the sex trade around American military bases at Subic Bay and Angeles City in the Philippines.

The Columban priest has exposed widespread child sexual abuse and human trafficking by US military personnel and sex tourists.

"The award is a recognition of the children Preda has rescued and the human rights workers who, like Monsignor Hugh, continue to work for the unjustly imprisoned, the refugees and those risking their lives to help them escape," said Father Cullen.

Father Cullen, who writes opinion pieces for [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com), has been nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Preda Foundation continues to implement projects to rescue children from sexual abuse, human trafficking, and from a life in brothels and sex bars.

The organization has two centres in Zambales province that provide residential care, therapy, and legal support for children.

[ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com) reporter, Manila