

# MARYKNOLL®

U.S. Catholic Church in mission overseas

Summer 2021

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*Challenged to Respond*

## FROM THE EDITOR

A popular maxim holds that we cannot control what happens to us but only how we react to it. Of course, sometimes we can control what happens, yet, not to quibble, there is plenty in life to which we have only our response. So much of this issue of *Maryknoll* magazine is less about what happened than how Maryknoll missionaries and others around the world are responding. Some of these responses deal with the challenges of COVID-19, while others look beyond this pandemic.

We see this in how people in a barrio in Honduras carry on the loving legacy of a late Maryknoll priest who served there, in the efforts of a peacebuilder in South Sudan who helps resolve conflicts among rival ethnic groups in the fledgling nation, and in how a Maryknoll sister works with young and old alike to help deepen faith in the southeast Asian nation of East Timor. In the winning entries from Maryknoll's annual student essay contest, two young scholars eloquently address Pope Francis' call to "build a civilization of love."

Like the rest of the world, we at Maryknoll have grappled this past year with how to respond to the immediacy of the pandemic, and now, going forward, with its long-term impact on mission and mission education. As part of our response, we continue to develop new channels for messaging and invite you once again to go to [www.maryknollmagazine.org](http://www.maryknollmagazine.org) and click on our News category for more stories about Maryknoll and Catholic mission overall.

Lynn F. Monahan  
Editor-in-Chief

**MARYKNOLL**  
U.S. Catholic Church in mission overseas

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"To those who love God, all things  
work together for good ..."

Romans 8:28

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Hunter Lopez unloads mud from  
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The Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, the Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic and the Maryknoll Lay Missioners share the Maryknoll name and charism of commitment to the mission of Jesus Christ, sharing God's love with people worldwide. While these three Catholic organizations often work together in mission, each is responsible for recruiting and supporting its own missionaries. The Maryknoll Affiliates is a movement grouped into local chapters both in the United States and abroad of lay people who seek to reflect the Maryknoll charism within the context of their own lives, careers and communities.



*Photo meditation on Corpus Christi*

# BREAKING OF THE *Bread*

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

*On the night of his last supper  
Gathered with friends in the upper  
room he ate his final meal.*

*Word made flesh makes bread his body  
Bids us take and share the glory  
of God's kingdom here on earth.*

*'Round the table with him sharing  
Broken bread then cross he's bearing  
Beckoning to follow him.*

*Seed once broadcast, fallen, buried  
Harvested the sheaves are carried  
To the miller's to be ground.*





*Wheat from chaff the thresher scatters  
To the winds but saves what matters  
Into jars of finest flour.*

*Christians who break bread together  
In his name forever gather  
As Christ's body here on earth.*

*Recognizing Jesus' presence  
In all peoples without difference  
Who become one in the Lord.*

*Down in adoration falling  
Rising to answer our calling  
To find Christ in all we do.*



# Missioner Tales

**S**t. Justin Centre for Children with Disabilities is a place in Musoma, Tanzania, where you see kids struggling to walk, to communicate, or to do a simple drawing, but they welcome you with so much love. Eighty kids live there with the loving support of the Immaculate Heart Sisters of Africa. When I was a Maryknoll lay missionary serving in Musoma, I asked the sisters to give me a list of the children's needs. The list included uniforms, shoes, mattresses, food, etc. I am happy to report that new mattresses for all the students came from a wonderful donor. I shed lots of tears as I watched the smiling children carry their mattresses to their rooms.

*Angelica Ruppe*

**T**he late theologian Paul Tillich said, "Life on the boundary often entails great loneliness as the boundary person can never be totally at home on either side."

I know I am deeply loved by my sisters and brothers here in Nicaragua. Yet I will always be the fair-skinned foreigner. In the United States I will almost always be considered the "visitor," one living out of a suitcase.

After I returned from my first eight months in Nicaragua, a friend asked me, "What is it you learned about yourself during those months

in Nicaragua?" My immediate answer surprised us both: "I learned to love myself."

My time in Nicaragua then was my first experience of not being surrounded by my family and friends, on whom I had always counted for affirmation. My Spanish was at such a beginner level that I would not have known if people were affirming me or not. This sense of being loved by self was definitely a gift from God.

Without this gift of God, I would never have had the courage to be that "boundary person" I have been called to become.

*Catherine Madden,  
Maryknoll affiliate*

**I**n January we teamed up to facilitate a weekend retreat titled "Holistic Health in Times of Uncertainty" at Afya Women's Holistic Center here in João Pessoa, Brazil. Participating in processes such as breathing techniques, meditation and dynamics to reconnect with ancestral lineage, 12 people started off 2021 focused on integral health, self-healing and community building.

Afya (which means "health" in Swahili) was co-founded by Maryknoll Sisters Efu Nyaki and the late Connie Pospisil in 2000. Many Maryknoll lay missionaries have worked there. Currently Kathleen

Bond teaches a weekly yoga class there and assists with marketing and social media efforts. We hope to offer more retreat moments in the future when the situation of COVID-19 improves. For now, we continue doing workshops and individual sessions online during this traumatic moment on our planet.

*Kathleen Bond and  
Flavio Rocha, MKLM*

**M**uoch Chol Kuon is a 12-year-old boy from the village of Nasir, southeast of Malakal in South Sudan, where I serve. He was bitten by a snake and since there are no medical facilities in his village, he was brought by his father to the hospital in our U.N. camp. The boy's infection was so serious that they had to amputate his left leg from the knee down.

The first time I met Muoch, I was touched by his gentle smile and sparkling eyes. Muoch wanted to learn English. As we talked daily, I would teach him words in English. He was so eager to learn. The most important part of our visit would be drinking porridge together. If I missed a day coming to visit him, he would use his father's cell phone to call me and tell me to drink porridge with him.

Muoch eventually was able to get around using crutches and return to his village. He still calls me every week by cell phone and we greet each other with his asking me if I had any porridge today.

*Michael Bassano, M.M.*

*Sean Sprague/Tanzania*





# Chamelecón REVISITED

By Gregg Brekke

*The legacy of a late Maryknoll priest lives on in a poor and violent barrio in Honduras devastated by hurricanes*

**T**he mud-stacked streets of Barrio Chamelecón in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, serve as a visceral reminder of a people forgotten. In January 2021, two months after rains from Hurricanes Eta and Iota overflowed the banks of the adjacent Chamelecón River, filling homes and businesses with more than three feet of sediment, residents of this poor suburb were surviving in soggy squalor without basic services or necessary support from the municipality.

More than 100,000 people live in cramped quarters in this low-lying community, where an estimated 20,000 homes were destroyed or damaged and 40,000 people displaced by the recent storms. Hardship and poverty are no strangers to this community, and neither is Maryknoll.

From 1999 through 2008, Father Thomas Goekler, a Maryknoll missionary from West Haven, Connecticut, served the people of Chamelecón. During his nine years here, Father Goekler focused on helping people grow in their faith, receive much needed health care, advance in their education, and learn valuable life lessons through work and service.

Several programs initiated by Father Goekler in San Pedro Sula, which he called his "adopted hometown ... a little bit of heaven, and a lot of heartbreak," have had a lasting impact on the people of this neighborhood. Although Father Goekler died in 2010 of a heart attack in neighboring Guatemala, his

*Cleanup continues in Chamelecón, a neighborhood in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, after Hurricanes Eta and Iota in late 2020 caused massive flooding in communities along the Chamelecón River. (Gregg Brekke/Honduras)*





*Father Thomas Goekler pauses for a coffee break with two local youths and a visiting doctor, Brandon Stark of Chico, California, in a 2006 photo. (Sean Sprague/Honduras)*

ministries are still making a difference in the community through the leadership of those he formed and in practical ways that support health and sustainability for the people living here.

The primary aim of these ministries was to counter gang recruitment and to improve the well-being of residents. Chamelecón is often referred to as the “murder capital of Honduras”—some claim of all of Central America—due to the prevalence of rival gangs. The MS-13 (Mara Salvatrucha) and MS-18 (Mara 18) gangs wage a daily turf war here centered around narcotics distribution, human trafficking and extortion under the threat of violence in the guise of “protection” for local businesses.

By all accounts, Father Goekler was fearless in the face of gang members’ contempt, often chastis-

ing them for their violent deeds, even condemning them for recruiting and corrupting young children during a service held for a deceased gang member. He is also remembered as a compassionate, though strict, mentor to at-risk youth and an advocate for the poor people living in Chamelecón.

More than 50 young men made their way through Father Goekler’s Walking for Peace (Caminando Por La Paz) program during his tenure here, where in the process of building homes for residents, they helped to better their community and acquired trade and construction skills, leadership and valuable life lessons.

With the benefit of another program called Street Teens (Jovenes En La Calle), many of these youth received counseling and scholarships to attend local schools. Several went on to complete college and now



*Angelina Enamorado at her home that also serves as a drop-in medical clinic and store in Barrio Chamelecón, a neighborhood of San Pedro Sula, Honduras. (Gregg Brekke/Honduras)*

teach at the same schools they attended. According to one graduate of the program, none of the program participants entered a gang.

Although a Catholic Worker house founded here by Father Goekler is no longer functioning, some ancillary programs are still operating, including two health clinics, one of which provides tattoo removal services for former gang members and those hoping to leave gangs.

“People loved him, and they followed him,” says Angelina Enamorado, who runs a small medical clinic and convenience store from her home in Chamelecón. She expresses deep gratitude for the Maryknoll missionary who supported her 32-year effort to improve the community.

“He really helped a lot,” she says of Father Goekler’s support for her clinical outreach. “When he said it was important to have medical

checks, or for children to be immunized, they listened.” She says he also built relationships with organizations in the United States that provided supplies and medications.

Enamorado helps residents with such needs as prenatal care, basic medications, checkups and diagnoses. Health issues such as heart disease, skin and lung irritations, and a myriad of gastrointestinal issues plague residents, and are exacerbated by standing water and sewage overflow following the storms. The hurricane damage to her small pharmacy is visible in a side room stacked with medical aids and instruments, such as crutches and a wheelchair, in need of cleaning and restoration.

“We were already under a pandemic situation when the hurricanes came,” she says. “That remains our main worry right now.





*Residents move a reclaimed couch during a torrential rainstorm in Chamelecón, a neighborhood of San Pedro Sula, Honduras. They hope to clean and resell it to those who lost everything during Hurricanes Eta and Iota last year. (Gregg Brekke/Honduras)*

People don't know who is infected and they are scared."

Enamorado's riverside neighborhood of San José in Chamelecón was hardest hit by the 2020 storms. Navigating the muddy streets by foot involves walking between puddles and over mounds of debris, often spanned by planks, sodden mattresses or the remains of broken furniture.

Here Hunter Lopez mucks mud from his mother's home across the street from Enamorado's house. Heavy rains throughout January washed much of the previously removed mud from the street and back into the courtyard and ground

floor kitchen area of the home.

"Any work that's been done to clean homes or remove waste has been done with our own hands," Lopez says. "This community will be the last to have its streets cleaned (in San Pedro Sula). It is all but forgotten by the government."

Another of Father Goekler's legacies is a second clinic in the barrio's central business district operated by Suyapa Bonilla, a nurse assistant. She met the priest when he arrived in Chamelecón in search of people who understood the community. Health providers offered a conduit to develop other relationships.

The clinic, which sees as many as 70 people per week, is staffed mainly by Bonilla as the lead medical practitioner. Health consultations, she says, are free, although people are asked to pay what they can for additional services. Besides the common illnesses and wellness checks, the clinic distributes and administers antiretroviral medication to people living with HIV.

Yet now, in 2021, Bonilla says the main concern of those she sees is "only the virus." COVID-19 cases have skyrocketed in the tightly packed barrio, and while she says mask use is common, many people still do not wear them, and social distancing is not practiced universally.

"We have seen daily deaths due to the virus," she says. "It's the most difficult time I've experienced as a medical provider. We are unable to help once people become too ill."

Bonilla and her husband, José, also operate the Goodbye Tattoos (Adios Tatuajes) program from the clinic, using a laser to remove gang members' tattoos.

In the 30 years that Adios Tatuajes has been in operation, Bonilla estimates they have removed an incredible 26,000 tattoos, mostly from those who have left gangs and no longer want to carry on their bodies the symbols of that involvement.

"A lot of young people who've had their tattoos removed come back and say, 'Look, I'm working now, thanks to you.' Those moments are some of our most successful moments—changing the lives of those who belong to the gangs so they can get a job and enter back into normal relationships," Bonilla says.

It's this exercise of love for the people of Chamelecón that still motivates Bonilla through the hardships of the pandemic and hurricanes, and even past the loss of her friend Father Goekler over a decade ago.

"To love one another—other human beings—as Jesus teaches is why we're still here," she says. "It's sometimes very hard to love somebody, but my faith teaches me that this [medical] practice is the way I can show love to people."✠

*Gregg Brekke is a photojournalist and writer from Bellingham, Washington, dedicated to telling stories of justice and faith.*



*Suyapa Bonilla at her health clinic in Barrio Chamelecón. (Gregg Brekke/Honduras)*



# Spirit of Mission

## *We Are All the Body of Christ*

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

Sometime in December 2019 a customer at the Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan, China, sneezed while buying fish. Sixteen months later, 117 million people had contracted COVID-19 worldwide, of which 2.6 million died, a half million of these in the United States alone. This dramatic manifestation of our global interconnectedness, which continues to impact our lives, is a modern application of John Donne's classic 1624 meditation, "No Man Is an Island."

"No one is an island entire of itself, everyone is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any one's death diminishes me, because I am involved in humankind. And, therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

It should come as no surprise to learn Donne was a cleric in the Church of England, for his spirituality clearly mirrors that of St. Paul, who articulated his analogy of the body in 1 Corinthians 12:12. "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ." This

keen insight resulted from Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus, while hunting down Christians to arrest them. Suddenly he heard a voice that asked, "Why are you persecuting me?" Paul asked the speaker's identity and heard: "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." This was years after Jesus died, rose and ascended. What Christ revealed is whatever we do to one another, we do to him.

Paul further expanded this collective identity of believers in his epistles, uniting Jews with Gentiles, men with women, free people and slaves. St. Matthew would take up this theme in his account of the Last Judgment, "Whatever you did to one of these least of my brothers and sisters, you did to me" (Matthew 25:40).

We in the English-speaking, Christian West have thus had this understanding of our oneness in Christ ingrained into our culture and philosophy for thousands of years.

St. Francis of Assisi met with Sultan al-Kamil and, after dialogue, each recognized the other as a brother in faith, children of the same God. Surely this prefigured the historic meeting of the saint's namesake, Pope Francis, with the Grand Ayatollah Sistani in Iraq last March.

Despite heroic acts of unity be-



Dr. Anne Berry, who served as a Maryknoll lay missionary in East Africa, talks with a woman in the maternity ward at Bukumbi Hospital in Tanzania. (Jerry Fleury/Tanzania)

tween peoples of different nationalities, races and religions in recent years, violent resistance to such solidarity, especially by people who identify as Christian, is shocking and alarming. Even though China struggled to contain the COVID-19 virus, many supposedly Christian Americans responded with acts of anti-Asian aggression. Strident opposition to wearing masks, social distancing and lockdowns put the most vulnerable in our society at risk and violated the most basic tenets of our faith: we are, in faith and in fact, our brothers' and sisters' keepers.

In his third encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* (All Brothers), Pope Francis blames such deplorable responses to the COVID-19 pandemic on a failure in global cooperation due to the breakdown or absence of human fraterni-

ty and solidarity: "If only we might rediscover once for all that we need one another, and that in this way our human family can experience a rebirth, with all its faces, all its hands and all its voices, beyond the walls that we have erected."

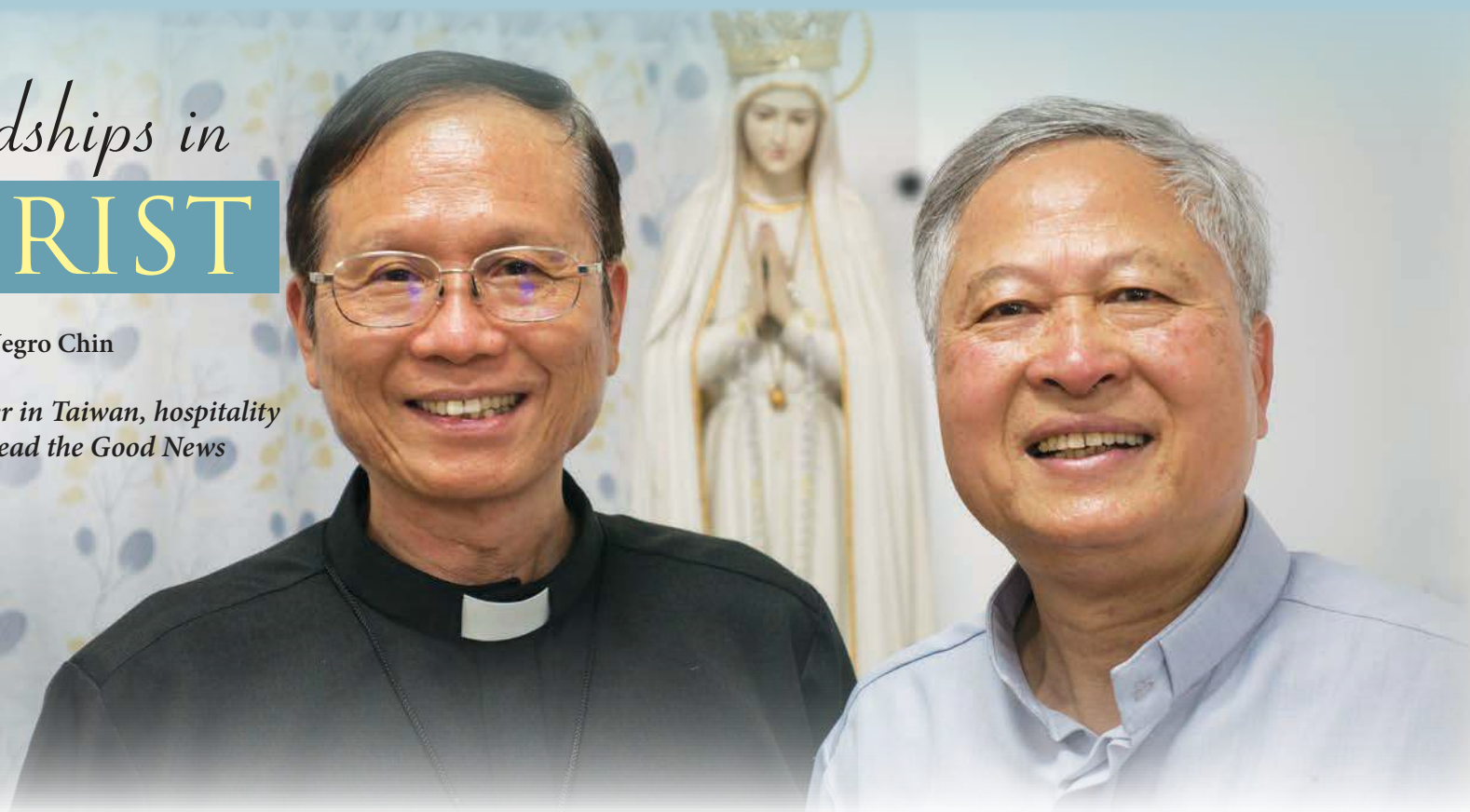
COVID-19 exposed a sad truth: Far too many people died from soul-draining isolation as well as from the disease. But it also revealed the nobler side of humanity: people risking their lives for others. A random incident half a world away can impact us all, but so too can acts of charity and sacrifice. As Christians, we cannot exist in a vacuum, separated physically, emotionally and spiritually from others, but must search out new, creative ways to express our connection to one another. We are the Body of Christ here and now. ✠



# Friendships in CHRIST

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin

*For a missionary in Taiwan, hospitality  
is a way to spread the Good News*



*Taipei Archbishop Thomas Chung An-zu (left), then bishop of Chiayi, visited Maryknoll Father Nhuan Nguyen at his parish in 2018. (Nile Sprague/Taiwan)*

Ever since his first assignment as a pastor in Taiwan, more than 27 years ago, Maryknoll Father Nhuan Nguyen has been inviting friends and parishioners to join him at the rectory for tea or a home-cooked meal. While pouring the tea for his visitors one day, before COVID-19, he extolled the virtues of green tea, a gift from a 90-year-old friend.

"She gave it to me and said that it is very good for the body," the missionary says. "She has no high blood pressure and has a clear,

good memory. So I drink the tea for good health."

For Father Nguyen, tea—and the friendship associated with it—is part of his mission ministry.

The priest says that evangelizing in Taiwan, where Catholics account for only 1.5% of nearly 24 million inhabitants, is not easy. Yet, he says, the way to help others know Jesus Christ is "from friend to friend."

He makes friends easily, he says, probably because he talks and jokes a lot. He is doing this at his

current parish, St. Joseph the Worker, in the Diocese of Chiayi. He is the first Maryknoll priest to serve in the diocese.

"Because Father Nguyen is quite hospitable to the visitors, we are beginning to attract nearby believers," said Taipei Archbishop Thomas Chung An-zu, who, as bishop of Chiayi, invited the missionary priest into the diocese.

He said he was happy to have Father Nguyen in the diocese because of the Maryknoll priest's successful evangelizing at Guadalupe

Church—a church he built in the Taichung Diocese. "Father Nguyen has experience growing the local parish (in Taichung), making it like a pilgrimage site," the then bishop said.

When Father Nguyen arrived at St. Joseph in 2017, the church compound was dilapidated. Overgrown weeds obscured the property and "only pigeons came to stay here," he recalls.

"The church was in very bad condition," says Dr. John Chu. He and his wife, Justine, used to go to nearby churches before Father



Nguyen arrived in Chiayi.

It took six months to clean up the church grounds, the missionary says. With limited parish funds for renovations, he was able to count on donations from his former parishioners and his Catholic friends in Taichung.

He drew on his building experience at his previous parish and on his experience building schools and homes for those in need in his native Vietnam.

Once the repairs were completed, the priest reached out to Vietnam-

ese migrant workers and Taiwanese Catholics in the community.

Parishioners say the statues that Father Nguyen has obtained from Vietnam and that now adorn the church compound attract people in the community as well as travelers. "The marble statues of St. Joseph helping young Jesus, the Assumption of Mary with surrounding angels, 12 disciples—it becomes so conspicuous that Taiwanese people know it is a Catholic Church," the Chus wrote in an email.

Father Nguyen, who will turn 68 in May, is open and receptive to Christians and non-Christians. "I welcome anyone who wants to come," he says. "I open the door outside the church. People come in to take pictures with the statues. I go (to them) right away and start conversations."

Last December, Father Nguyen received a call from a man asking for a funeral Mass for his wife. "The lady was Buddhist. They were all Buddhist," says the missionary, who went to visit the family. "I asked, 'Why a Mass?' and they said that the wife had worked at a Catholic kindergarten." The family wanted to go to church that Friday—which was December 25. "There were a lot of people singing for Christmas and I said that Jesus was born for us and brought us new life. The family was very happy. They are still in contact with me."

Father Nguyen spends most of his time visiting hospitals, ministering to the elderly and nurturing friendships, all while sharing God's good news. He also shepherds Vietnamese workers.



*A local woman and Father Nguyen stand with a cross made by the missionary at the request of a Vietnamese priest in Taiwan. (Courtesy of Nhuan Nguyen/Taiwan)*

During this year of St. Joseph, the parish is encouraging young Vietnamese workers to follow the saint's example of fatherhood, Father Nguyen says.

"(They) left their homeland to come here and earn some money so that their families could live decently," the Chus explain, adding that the workers' faith brings new life to the parish.

The church is home to 25 to 35 Vietnamese migrant workers who come to Mass every Sunday. On holidays—such as Christmas and Chinese New Year—there are up to 100. "If people cannot come, it is because they are working overtime," Father Nguyen says of the migrants,



*Father Nguyen shows a statue of St. Joseph helping young Jesus, one of many statues crafted in Vietnam that now adorn the campus of St. Joseph the Worker Church. (Courtesy of Nhuan Nguyen/Taiwan)*





Father Nguyen visits the 96-year-old mother of a parishioner in Taichung. Visiting the sick and elderly is part of the missionary's ministry. (Courtesy of Nhuan Nguyen/Taiwan)

who are mostly in their 20s and 30s. "They are always working, working, working. I tell them that if they are too busy, to pray at home. But do not forget Sunday."

He also encourages them to keep in touch with each other using contact information from the parish. "They are lonely," he explains. "I visit them sometimes."

Father Nguyen learned about the importance of going out to the people in his homeland. As an altar server, 10-year-old Nhuan joined Father Vu Dinh Trong, his parish priest,

during home visits in a suburb south of Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam at the time. (Saigon was renamed Ho Chi Minh City after the Vietnam War and it is now the largest and most populous city in Vietnam.) The country was at war between the communist North and the anti-communist South. Every week there was a funeral or memorial Mass, he recalls. During the home visits, the pastor gave Communion to those mourning the dead.

One day, the priest needed to raise money for the church. "He went to

every family," Father Nguyen says. "But when we went to a poor family, he did not ask for money—he gave them money."

Inspired by the priest's example and his own family's strong Catholic faith, Nhuan entered the Congregation of the Mother Co-Redemptrix minor seminary when he was 13 years old. That's where he learned construction and carpentry. But in 1975, when the communists took over, he was one of the thousands who fled to the United States by boat.

Later, he left the congregation and pursued a degree in business data processing. Following a life-long dream to serve others overseas, he entered Maryknoll in 1985. He was ordained as the first Vietnamese Maryknoll priest in 1993.

Assigned to Taiwan, he focused on learning the country's history, culture and language and quickly

made friends with the Taiwanese. "If you know Mandarin (the official language), people tell you 'hello and goodbye,' but the Taiwanese language is for the family," he says. "The Taiwanese like Maryknoll because we speak Taiwanese."

Recently, a Chiayi priest asked Father Nguyen how to raise money to repair or rebuild a church. "I told him two things are important. First, everyone has to pray. If God wants you to, you can rebuild the church. Two: Do you have many friends? If you don't have friends, nobody helps you. If you have friends, they can raise money with you."

The missionary is happy that St. Joseph the Worker is now a welcoming place where parishioners are engaging in evangelization activities, including processions and celebrations. These events, he says, help people recognize God already living and acting in this area.✠



Vietnamese migrant workers share a meal with Father Nguyen after Mass, during the days the priest was working to rebuild his parish. (Courtesy of John and Justine Chu/Taiwan)



# Building *Hope* in JAMAICA

By Carolyn Trumble

*In the midst of poverty and pandemic, Catholics in Jamaica open a new school*

There are an infinite number of reasons not to open a school while facing a pandemic, says Franciscan Father Colin King, vicar of education for the Diocese of Montego Bay in Jamaica. He mentions challenges that include financial constraints and the risk of failure. But his diocese was willing to “stare down fear and the uncertainty of a pandemic,” he says, to open a school for boys last fall.

In this Caribbean island nation, he says, many children grow up in one-parent families, with a mother or grandmother being the sole parent. “Our young men are suffering from that,” says Father King, referring to the lack of male role models.

Without father figures who see the value of education and take responsibility for supporting their families, many boys drop out of school, says Maryknoll Father Leo Shea, who served in the Montego Bay Diocese for several years. “The Jamaican male is a lost segment of society,” he says.

The downturn in the economy has exacerbated the plight of boys and young men in Jamaica, forcing those who were in school to leave

to find work. As one school board member describes it, “The boy’s wings are clipped too soon in the educational process.”

Confronted with poverty and few opportunities for work without an education, young men are often recruited into gangs and into illegal scamming.

Responding to the urgent need to help such youth and, in the words of Father King, “trusting that God will lead us,” the Diocese of Montego Bay opened Monsignor Gladstone Wilson College in October 2020. Named for a Jamaican priest who lived from 1906 to 1974 and distinguished himself as a scholar, the school has begun with a handful of students in what Jamaicans call sixth form, the U.S. equivalent of 12th grade. Their curriculum follows the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) methodology, including some college courses in the U.S. educational system.

The school is currently located in a transformed parish hall in Montego Bay’s Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, but the Ministry of Education for Jamaica plans to help the diocese build a school that will be able to

On a Maryknoll immersion trip to Jamaica, Carolyn Trumble makes a new friend. (Dennis Kelly/Jamaica)







Deacon Baldwin Powell (left) and a young Jamaican resident tell visitors about their Caribbean island nation. (Courtesy of Maryknoll's Church Engagement Division/Jamaica)

accommodate more students and grade levels.

"We are building hope," says Deacon Baldwin Powell, who serves at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral and is a member of the Maryknoll Deacon Mission Partners. "Our goal is to establish a school to try and reduce the risk of these vulnerable boys so they can be prepared to live lives of service, be committed in relationships and be good citizens. We want to put a lifeboat out there for those who are struggling and drowning. We want them to know that even though they may come from broken homes with no father figure, it does not mean that will determine their future."

One of the students who is coura-

geously navigating his first year at Monsignor Gladstone Wilson College is Chrison. The pandemic has forced him, like students throughout the world, to go to remote learning. With no internet service or computer at home, he attends his classes on a cell phone. Father King has helped Chrison buy more data for his phone so he can participate.

Gifford and Andre are two other young men whom Father King has helped with their education in another school. Gifford is studying to be an architect and aspires to build community centers to provide a safe place for the children in his community. Andre is working to become a teacher. All three of these bright, talented, young men are examples

of what an investment in quality education can do to open doors not only for them but for the lives they will touch in the future.

"They would not have been able to finish high school without help because their families did not have the money," says Father King. "They are all grateful for the opportunity to pursue their education."

Jamaica currently has several all-girls schools that have been successful and are a model of what can be achieved with a school for boys. Jamaican universities are reporting their student bodies as 80% female and 20% male. The Catholic community of Montego Bay is committed to helping boys catch up.

"The history of Catholic education



At St. Paul's Chapel in Glendevon, Montego Bay Diocese, Deacon Powell (right) explains to an immersion trip participant the Church's mission in Jamaica. (Matthew Dulka/Jamaica)



is to never forget the forgotten," says Father King. "It is designed to uplift people and try to empower them. We want to help these young men to reach their full potential and for the kingdom of God to take root in their lives."

Deacon Powell echoes that sentiment. "Our hope is to inspire these young men and to build a better Jamaica. We want them to excel and to take their rightful place in society as leaders," he says.

Led by Bishop Burchell Alexander McPherson, the Catholic Church in Montego Bay continues its long his-

tory of healing the sick, feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger and educating the young.

Faced with all the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and a struggling economy, the diocese has chosen to move forward, assembling talented, committed people who together courageously took a leap of faith, trusting that God will open doors. ✠

*Carolyn Trumble is a consultant who writes and edits educational materials for Maryknoll's Church Engagement Division. She served as a Maryknoll lay missionary in Brazil.*



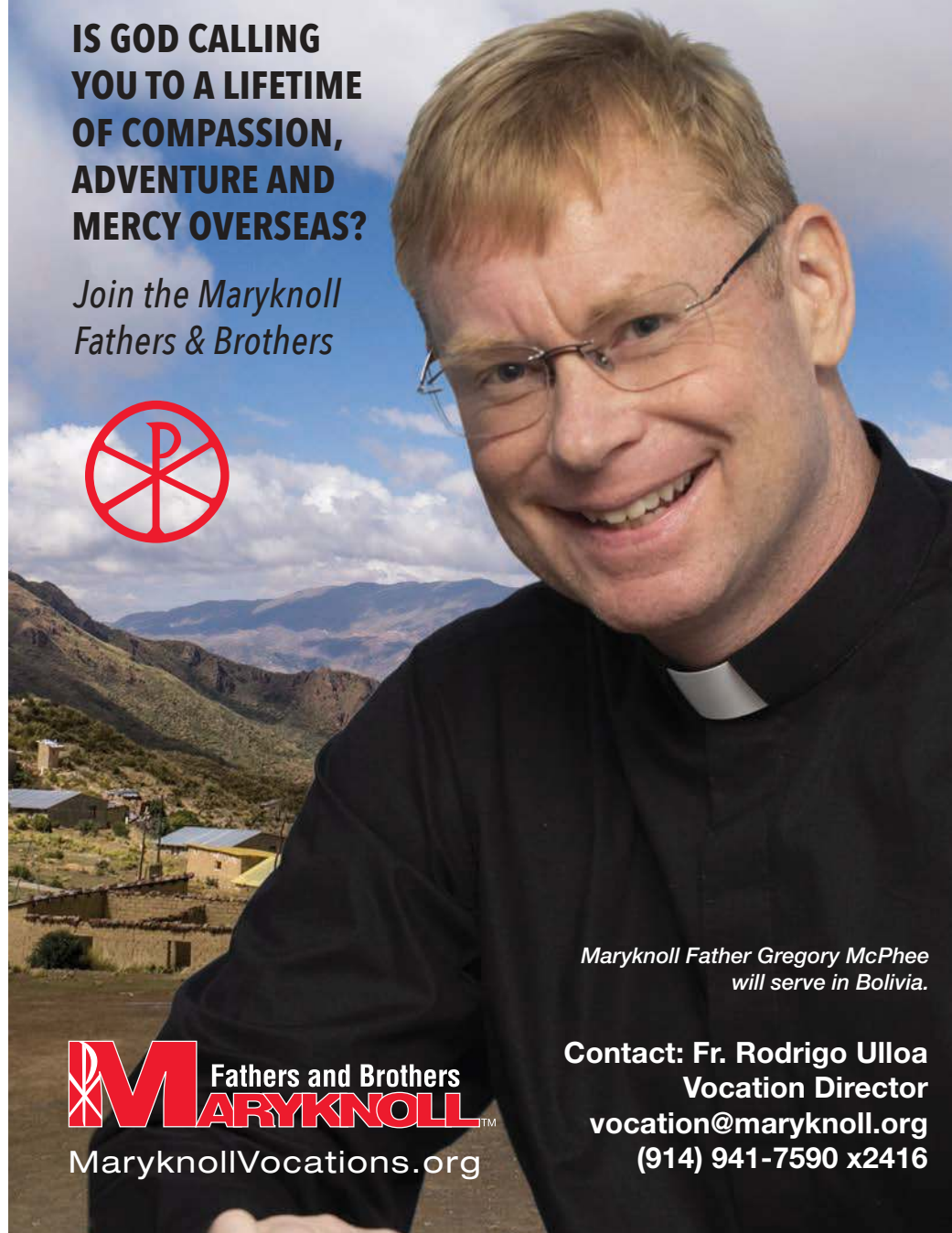
*Father Colin King welcomes student Alex Gordon and dad Mike to Monsignor Gladstone Wilson College, where Mike is on the school board. (Courtesy of Colin King/Jamaica)*

*Jesus said, "Follow me..." — Matthew 4:19*

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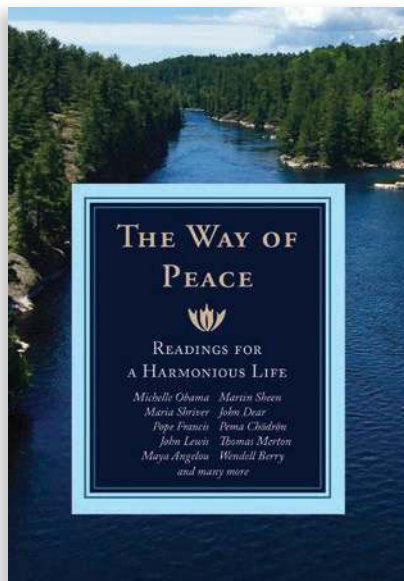
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# ORBIS Books Spotlight

Preview by Michael Leach



**T**his anthology of stories, essays, poems and prayers is meant to inspire readers of all generations to cultivate peace in themselves, their family and the world. “Not the peace that the world gives” (John 14:27) but the peace of God “that makes all things new” (Rev 21:5).

*The Way of Peace* is organized into three parts: Peace of Heart, Peace on Earth and Prayers for Peace, which weave into and support each other. The premise of the book is that peace of heart extends itself to peace on earth—and that none of this is possible without God.

Part One sets the table with meditations and practices that help us nourish inner peace. “Peace in the world cannot be made without peace in the heart,” writes Henri Nouwen.

Part Two focuses on examples of individuals from all walks of life who have spread that peace to others. Cultivating inner peace and becoming an instrument of peace are inseparable. “If one is authentic,” writes Franciscan Sister Pat Farrell, “it leads to the other.”

Part Three brings in prayers from all faith traditions that plant the seeds of peace in ourselves and the world. Theologian and novelist C.S. Lewis writes, “God can’t give us peace and happiness apart from himself because there is no such thing.”

The book makes clear that few of us are called to give up our lives for peace as Jesus did, or to work tirelessly for peace like Gandhi did. But each of us can perform the life-changing little things that eighth-grader Riva

Maendel, winner of a Maryknoll essay contest, suggests for those her age:

“I will probably never get a chance to put my life on the line like the Christians in the Middle East, but nonetheless, I can take a stand for peace and nonviolence every day. At school, the way I interact with my peers will influence the younger students in our school. I can also show interest and support the local organizations in my community that work for peace: our local police officers, AA and other organizations that work towards bringing peace to those who are trapped in a cycle of violence. Even though our efforts might seem small and insignificant, we are actively working for peace.”

“Peace is not something you wish for,” said John Lennon. “It’s something you make. Something you do. Something you are, and something you give away.”

Other contributors to *The Way of Peace* include Pope Francis, Dorothy Day, Martin Sheen, Michelle Obama,

Maria Shriver, Thomas Merton, Robert Ellsberg, John Dear, Joyce Rupp, Sojourner Truth, Mohandas Gandhi, Maya Angelou, John Lewis, Peace Pilgrim, St. Francis and many others.

*The Way of Peace* is fifth in a series of books on spiritual values that transform our lives. First came *The Way of Gratitude*, followed by *The Way of Kindness*, *The Way of Forgiveness* and *The Way of Suffering*. The purpose of the series is to reassure readers that these values reap tremendous benefits, and to offer them some inspiration for the journey.

Without peace in our hearts, there can never be peace in our family or on earth. It begins but does not end on the spot where “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). I hope you find *The Way of Peace* a beneficial companion on this our communal journey. ✞

Michael Leach is publisher emeritus of Orbis Books.



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*“Unlike disagreement and conflict, persistent and courageous dialogue does not make headlines, but quietly helps the world to live much better than we imagine.”*

—POPE FRANCIS  
*Fratelli Tutti*

A girl in Atlanta holds a flower during a vigil at a makeshift memorial outside the Gold Spa following deadly shootings March 16 at three day spas in Atlanta. (CNS photo/Shannon Stapleton, Reuters)



# 2020 STUDENT ESSAY WINNERS

Referencing Pope Francis' call to "build a civilization of love," we asked students to explain what they think the pope means by that phrase, how they have seen people building a civilization of love during these extraordinary times and how they will do so going forward. We received 2,743 essays from students competing in two divisions (grades 6-8 and grades 9-12). Following are the winning essays.



Deacon Kevin McCarthy gives Danielle Carradorini, a seventh-grader at Saint Albert the Great School in Huntington Valley, Pennsylvania, the first-place Bishop Francis X. Ford Award for Division I of the Maryknoll Student Essay Contest.

## DIVISION I (Grades 6-8)

### First-Place Winner: DANIELLE CARRADORINI

#### *A Civilization of Love Includes Everyone*

The coronavirus has affected many aspects of our lives, not only in America, but throughout the world. As Catholics, we are called to respond to these stressful and dividing times with Christian love. In Pope Francis' address on Sept. 9, 2020, he talks about how we all need to contribute to building a "civilization of love." The pope believes that the pandemic is giving us an opportunity to create a more "healthy, inclusive, just and peaceful society."

According to Pope Francis, a "civilization of love" is one in which everyone is included. The love that we need to have for relationships to flourish starts in the home with the family. Pope Francis calls us to share that love and let it spread into social, cultural, economic and political relationships. As a "civilization of love," we cannot overlook the vulnerable or do something just because there is a benefit in it for us. Relating to the coronavirus pandemic, businesses shouldn't be developing vaccines as a money-making venture, but rather out of love for the people who need them. We must show "the best in our human nature and not the worst."

Also, in association with the election, we shouldn't try to divide people, worsen the conflict, or seek benefits for ourselves when voting. According to the LiCAS.news website, the pope said that "love must be unconditional and must be expressed even toward perceived enemies." The same website also reports the pope saying, "inclusive love can generate social structures that encourage us to share rather than to compete." Instead of competing to be the first to develop a vaccine, keeping it for ourselves, and not sharing it with other countries, we can share the medicine for the good of all people and not have such an egotistical mindset. The just society that Pope Francis speaks of is one that includes all people, doesn't overlook individuals, and encourages sharing instead of competition or self-centeredness.

We can see, especially during these times, a number of people who are helping to build a society of love. One way people have done this is by making an effort to support small businesses that are struggling because of the pandemic. Supporting them both economically by buying from them and emotionally by sending them letters and kind words is helping to spread love to them. Another way people are helping to build a "civilization of love" is by feeding the hungry. Many people are giving food to and volunteering at food banks. This is showing the part of the pope's vision which is sharing and not being selfish. The volunteers do not get paid for the work they do, and the givers of the food are sharing their goods with others who need it. Also, at the beginning of the pandemic, people were giving cards and gifts to the residents of nursing homes to make sure that they knew they were not forgotten. This shows that the usually overlooked and vulnerable people in nursing homes are being cared for and noticed by lots of people. When good people work together, the "civilization of love" grows.

Since every person is included in the "civilization of love," it is important that we all contribute to the making of it. Going forward, I can help to build it by abiding by all the precautions put into place for both my school life and life at home. Even if I don't want to, or I am not at risk, I will do it to protect everyone around me. I can also help my mom make dinners



for healthcare workers who are working so hard on the front lines dealing with COVID-19 patients. Another thing I can do to build a society of love is to pray for the dying. I can pray to Saint Joseph, who is the patron saint of a happy death, because many of the people dying of the coronavirus are dying alone because family and friends are not allowed to visit them.

To conclude, as Christians, we are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the world. We have to respond with love in these unusual and divisive times. If we do, we can emerge from this pandemic, as the pope believes, a better and more loving civilization. ✠

## DIVISION II (Grades 9-12)

### First-Place Winner: CONNER CRUISE

#### *Neighbors Help Neighbors Build a Civilization of Love*



*Flanked by his parents, Chris and Kimberly, Conner Cruise, a 12th-grader at Cedar Rapids Washington High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, wins the first-place Bishop Patrick J. Byrne Award for Division II of the Maryknoll Student Essay Contest.*

In a world separated by political ideology, culture and now an invisible six-foot social distancing bubble, finding a “civilization of love” seems like a far-fetched goal. Together, however, we can begin the road towards love, hope and a community-wide family. We need a civilization not built on personal gain and greed, but one designed on the principles of kindness and compassion. We yearn for a society built not on arrogance and ignorance but on knowledge and faith. We live in a civilization whose roots stem far into dishonesty and cruelty. Pope Francis calls us to amend that, and shower the roots with hope and love so that our community may grow stronger and taller. The pope’s message is directed towards finding a way where neighbors can love neighbors, and people learn to respect and appreciate the values of others who have different viewpoints, even though you do not always agree with them.

I have witnessed, firsthand, a community of hope and love. On the afternoon of Monday, August 10, a severe weather complex known as a “derecho” sent intense winds and thunderstorms over a 700-mile stretch of the Midwest. My hometown of Cedar Rapids was severely impacted, with more than 800 buildings suffering at least partial collapse. Nearly every home and business was damaged, and roads were impassable due to trees, debris and downed power lines. An estimated 500,000 people throughout Iowa were without power for many days. In the aftermath of the storm, Cedar Rapids was in desperate need of repair and cleanup. It started within each individual neighborhood, as families rallied together to get the streets and yards clear of debris. People loaned battery-powered generators and power saws to those in need. My high school mobilized volunteers to help within the greater community. A group of high school friends and I went from home to home helping cut down and remove trees and rubble from yards. We took ice, water and other necessary supplies to people in need. It was an incredibly powerful experience watching neighbors and members of the community rally together to help those who were severely impacted. We heard stories that broke our hearts while at the same time, inspiring and strengthening our resolve and determination. When Pope Francis speaks of a “civilization of love,” I recall this powerful experience. Our civilization, one like many others, came together, not for personal satisfaction or gain, but to love and serve others in our community. This experience has shown me the true love that a community can have for each other. Pope Francis calls us to spread this love to all civilization. We are all a unified people under God.

Love, like nerve networks in our brain, weaves itself into billions of different short pathways in the community, usually only reaching as far as extended family. The pope calls for us to fill in the gaps in the pathways and build a connected blanket of love that stretches as far as there are living things. I, personally, am only one out of seven and a half billion people.

However, as one individual I can impact and love others in my community and abroad. God calls us to love one another. “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35). Everyone who calls themselves a follower of Christ is called to walk in love. We are called to love wholeheartedly and sacrificially, as God loves us. It is my fervent desire to give the very best of myself, as Jesus did for me. Each and every day I plan to look for new opportunities to show God’s love for all of mankind and help build a worldwide civilization of love. ✠



## SECOND-PLACE WINNERS

### DIVISION I AMY POTTS

Grade 7

Morgantown House School  
Morgantown, West Virginia

Citing examples of people in her community helping others this year, Amy says, "We need to combat this pandemic with the virus of love." But, she acknowledges, love needs to start at home. She plans to build a civilization of love beginning with small things. "I can wash the dishes, clean my room or look after my little brothers," she says.



### DIVISION II EMILY ARTMAN

Grade 12

Green Mountain High School  
Lakewood, Colorado

To illustrate that building a civilization of love often consists of small moments of kindness, Emily shares the story of her 8-year-old cousin comforting a lost child. "I saw Jesus working through her that day," Emily says of her cousin, "and it serves as a reminder to me that through compassion and love even the darkest moments can be broken with light."



## THIRD-PLACE WINNERS

### DIVISION I DELANEY BUCKEL

Grade 8

Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral  
School, Phoenix, Arizona

For Delaney, building a civilization of love means putting our own needs aside to help others. Among the many who have done that during this pandemic, she mentions healthcare workers and people buying groceries for elderly neighbors. She too wants to share her gifts with those in need. "We all take part in making our world a better place," she says.



### DIVISION II ADAM DURR

Grade 11

Lansing Catholic High School  
Lansing, Michigan

In a civilization of love, says Adam, all are welcome. This year, he points out, society has been forced to consider the pain of those who have been excluded. "All around the world we see people coming together, striving to help, passionately calling for justice," he says. He promises to join those efforts to build a world where all are loved.





# PEACEBUILDING IN SOUTH SUDAN

By Gabe Hurrish, MKLM

*A Catholic Church initiative in South Sudan sends a team to remote villages to promote harmony among ethnic groups*

The village was waiting for Romano Longole to begin his presentation. All the Toposa men, women and youth were sitting in the central area. Their stick and mud huts with grass-peaked roofs surrounded them. Cattle, goats, chickens and dogs wandered here and there, yet everyone was attentive as Longole began to speak to them in parables.

Longole's job is mediating and motivating the Toposa and other ethnic groups who live in the Kuron region

in the southeastern part of South Sudan to work together for peace and unity. His is not an easy task in an area that emerged from years of the country's wars, only to be beset with ethnic rivalries and hostilities.

Today's workshop is part of Longole's ministry at Holy Trinity Peace Village-Kuron. Better known as Kuron Peace Village, this model initiative in a remote part of Eastern Equatoria is a project of Catholic Emeritus Bishop Paride Taban of the Diocese of Torit. Over the past 20 years, Bishop Taban has worked to build what he describes as "a community where people with



Romano Longole stands before tribal leaders in the Kuron region, ready to help them work for peace. (Gabe Hurrish/South Sudan)



different ethnicities and religious backgrounds can live side by side in harmony and fellowship.”

Romano Longole is well suited to this ministry. Born in Uganda but raised and educated in Kenya, he is a member of the Karamojong ethnic group and speaks the Karamojong language. This is also the language of the Toposa of South Sudan. He speaks English and Swahili and understands several other languages.

Longole has been working with the Catholic Church on peace and justice issues for decades. He often uses images to convey his message, such as using the eyes to represent male and female when he is discussing issues of gender equality.

Today he tells the villagers, “You can’t see so well with only one eye. You need two eyes for clear vision. So send your girls to school.” Toposa men are resistant to this idea and prefer to keep the women in the house. Thanks to efforts like Longole’s, however, attitudes are slowly changing. More and more girls are asking for schooling, and more fathers are allowing them to study.

Longole’s responsibilities often take him into remote villages like this. He and his team, two young Toposa men named Eliah and Peter, go where the people are. They are constantly on the move and, of course, in these settings, things can change quickly. The team may spend one or two nights in any community trying to resolve problems.

The main issue the team attempts to address is violence arising from cattle raiding. This is a deep-rooted issue and cannot be changed overnight. Cattle are seen as a most im-

portant resource in several of the cultures of South Sudan. The peace team is often approached by elders seeking help with mediating between conflicting groups.

The topics for discussion that Longole and his team facilitate are all-encompassing. Besides clan disagreements and gender inequality, Longole addresses issues like alcoholism, thefts and other social problems. He is doing what the government should be doing, but government officials are absent here.

Longole is very enthusiastic about his work. In a short time, he has gained the respect and admiration of the chiefs and local people through his humble and unassuming ways. Being a Karamojong, to which the Toposa are related, he is well aware of the dominant issues the Toposa face and how to approach them about changing attitudes and behaviors. He knows, and is known by, so very many in this area.

In addition to his gentle and calm disposition, Longole has a quick wit and keen insight into the people he works with. Like Jesus, he silences his critics with common sense and faith. He insists that these Toposa men and women devote their lives to truly living as Christians and not seeking revenge for previous wrongs.

I have been honored and blessed to work with Romano Longole at Kuron Peace Village. We spend time talking about many things, and I have learned so much from him. I thank God for his presence here. ✕

*Maryknoll Lay Missioner Gabe Hurish has been working at Kuron Peace Village since October 2020.*

## Wondering what's next in your life journey?



Maryknoll Lay Missioner Larry Parr (second from left) works in youth development in El Salvador.

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# The Joy of COMING TOGETHER

By Mary Ellen Manz, M.M.

*Maryknoll Sister from Tanzania shares blessings and is blessed serving in East Timor*

One morning when she was in the marketplace in East Timor, Maryknoll Sister Susan Wanzagi had an experience she was not prepared for.

"A woman came up to me and said, 'Because I did not go to Mass, I want to kiss your hand to get a blessing,' " she recalls. Initially taken aback, Sister Wanzagi was moved by the woman's respect for her religious vocation and obliged.

"I have many blessings that I may share with others," she says.

Since 2018 she has been doing just that in the southeastern Asian nation of East Timor, where she serves in mission.

Sister Wanzagi, who was born in Musoma, Tanzania, is one of five Maryknoll Sisters, all from different cultures, currently serving the people of Sts.



En route to deliver the supply package on her head, Sister Susan Wanzagi and youth pause for a selfie.  
(Courtesy of Susan Wanzagi/E. Timor)





Sister Wanzagi beams in the background as children she mentors show off their artwork. (Courtesy of Susan Wanzagi/East Timor)



Sister Wanzagi and Divine Mercy group visit an elderly neighbor. (Courtesy of Susan Wanzagi/E. Timor)

Peter and Paul parish in the mountainous district of Aileu. There she uses her skills and experience as a teacher to do what she calls “informal education,” outside of a school setting. “I teach English to the children, youths, and professional people like doctors, firefighters and police,” she says.

She also works with a youth club that aims to help deepen the faith of young Timorese through weekly Bible study, retreats, feast day celebrations and singing at their parish church. “These young people are learning that to be Christian means to reach out to help others who are needy, by visiting the sick and doing charitable works,” Sister Wanzagi says.

The parish, she adds, has a Divine Mercy group, which—like other such groups throughout the world—is committed to spreading the message of God’s love for all. This devotion was ignited by apparitions

in the 1930s to Polish Sister Faustina Kowalska, now a saint, in which Jesus instructed her to make known God’s merciful love in a variety of ways. All Divine Mercy groups commit to saying special prayers each afternoon at 3 o’clock, the hour of the Crucifixion.

“In our group we pray the Divine Mercy prayers every day at 3 o’clock and visit people who are sick at home or in the hospital,” says Sister Wanzagi. “We also visit people who are needy, the elderly and disabled. We prepare and distribute packages of basic things like food, shampoo, oil and soap.” Sometimes, she says, the youth and Divine Mercy groups work together doing charitable works.

Sister Wanzagi sees her role in all these groups as advisory. “My ministries help me share the love of God with the Timorese and build relationships with them,” she says.

When Dominican friars first came

to East Timor with Portuguese traders in the 16th century, they planted the seed of the Christian faith and the Catholic Church, which has helped the people to survive occupations by foreign nations and tremendous suffering, persecution and wars.

Catholics today make up about 85% of the inhabitants of the country, and Sister Wanzagi is inspired by their religiosity.

She also finds much in the Timorese culture that is similar to her own Tanzanian culture. “For example,” she says, “when visiting a family, they will prepare food for you, and if they do not have much food, they will prepare coffee or tea. This culture of generosity is the same as my Tanzanian culture and this makes me feel at home.”

East Timor has two official languages, Portuguese and Tetun, the dialect of the Timorese people. Already fluent in Swahili, English and



Maryknoll Sisters Julia Shideler (left) and Susan Wanzagi (right) visit homes and listen to the concerns of their neighbors in Aileu. (Courtesy of Susan Wanzagi/East Timor)





Sister Susan Wanzagi (white shirt) joins the women's group in clearing their cornfield after they harvested the crop to feed their families and sold the surplus. (Courtesy of Susan Wanzagi/East Timor)

the tribal dialects of her own country, Sister Wanzagi concentrated on learning the Tetun language shortly after arriving in East Timor by taking formal classes at the language school in the capital of Dili for two months. She is now fluent in Tetun, which enables her to be of service and to develop friendships with the many women, teenagers and children with whom she works. "I thank God that I now speak Tetun, and I really like the language," she says.

The Democratic Republic of East Timor is one of the poorest nations in the world. According to the World Bank, 20% of the population is unemployed and 52.9% live on less than \$1.25 a day. As a result, many struggle to feed their families, educate their children and care for their sick, all of which leads to domestic abuse and sometimes abandonment by husbands. Despair has led many men and women to commit suicide.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, women who had a small business

selling food or doughnuts had to close down and soon found themselves unable to feed their families. This included a women's group that Sister Wanzagi accompanies. The group chose to look for a solution.

"We decided to have a women's garden and we started cultivating vegetables, sweet potatoes, white potatoes and corn," says Sister Wanzagi. "This has enabled the women to feed their children and family members as well as to build their agricultural skills."

By growing enough food as a group, they are able to sell the surplus of what they grow, thus helping the project to be sustainable and a source of income.

"Another very positive and most important result," Sister Wanzagi adds, "is that it has helped the women to build good relationships among themselves, and to experience that working together gives them strength." This, she says, is a blessing for all.✠

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*Father Paul Masson (holding a hat) greets parishioners of St. Pius X parish. (Nile Sprague/Bolivia)*

## FORMING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN BOLIVIA

By Giovana Soria

*Maryknoll missionary guides parishioners of St. Pius X Church in Cochabamba to evangelize*

Before COVID-19 broke out, Maria Terrazas' routine on Sunday was to get up early and prepare to visit the inmates of the San Sebastian women's prison in the heart of Cochabamba, Bolivia. After passing a rigorous security check, Terrazas would go to the prison chapel, where she assisted Maryknoll Father Paul Masson as he celebrated the Eucharist for more than 30 inmates.

"That is what the Catholic Church teaches us: When we serve our brothers and sisters, we are serving the Lord," Terrazas says. "Some people ask me why I visit the inmates and I tell them that it is not me, but God who is acting within me. It is a commitment that I have with the Lord." In addition to helping at Mass, Terrazas supports, listens to, and brings clothes and food to the inmates.





*During the pandemic, members of Christian communities gathered with Father Masson and Seminararian Matthew Sim (green shirt) to make rosaries. (Rossy Bedoya/Bolivia)*

Terrazas began this service more than five years ago after being part of a Christian community in her parish, St. Pius X, a community that is now led by Father Masson. The priest, who began his mission in Bolivia in 2015, lives near the parish and serves as a spiritual guide for its base Christian communities.

"We were asked through the Maryknoll Mission Center to help this parish, St. Pius X, to be a mission parish," says Father Masson. "We discovered four Christian communities that parishioners called

assemblies: La Chimba, Cuzco, Huayna Kapac and Siles. During the pandemic, the leaders of the assemblies and other members have continued to meet once a week on a Zoom call."

While COVID-19 cases persist, Terrazas can't enter the prison. However, the inmates asked her for rosaries, since they were using their fingers to say the prayers. Terrazas, who belongs to La Chimba assembly, approached the other members of the Christian communities to ask for help. Immediately Rossy Bedoya

from the Huayna Kapac assembly offered her house and some materials to start making rosaries.

For a couple of nights, the participants, including Father Masson and Maryknoll Seminararian Matthew Sim, who also lives in Cochabamba, gathered in a large room, all wearing masks, to make more than 50 rosaries and one-decade rosaries. "The rosaries we made were beautiful," says Bedoya. The group members decided to sell those rosaries. With the money they made, they bought cheaper,



*In addition to five-decade rosaries, participants made one-decade rosaries. (Rossy Bedoya/Bolivia)*

plastic rosaries for the inmates and other things the prisoners needed.

Lorena Simons, who belongs to the Cuzco assembly, was one of the initiators of the Christian communities five years ago. She remembers knocking on doors in the neighborhood to invite people to join. "At 5 in the morning we would call people by megaphone to come out to pray. We would call for half an hour and we would walk down the street praying the Rosary. At the beginning, we were about 30 people," she says. "After we attended





*Father Masson, playing the guitar, and Maryknoll Seminarian John Siyumbu (white shirt) meet with Christian communities at Father Masson's home. (Nile Sprague/Bolivia)*

Mass, we talked about our problems, we prayed, we sang and we had a breakfast with everyone." From this group, the assemblies were born.

For Father Masson, 78, it is important to base the meeting on the Gospel and the life of Jesus. When the communities gather every Wednesday, they discuss a Gospel passage or a document from Pope Francis. Participants share reflections on the reading and what is currently happening in their lives.

"The custom is that the priest always has a voice, but it is very important to find a way for a new church where people have a voice," Father Masson says. "The only way to make a church that is more open is with community participation."

The missionary from Rouseville, near Oil City, Pennsylvania, says that if you want to be present in people's lives, you have to take culture and reality into account. "In Christian communities," he says, "we use the methodology of ob-

serving, seeing what is happening; reflecting on what are the signs of the times; and then acting."

He emphasizes that one of the important initiatives of the Latin American Episcopal Conference of Medellín in Colombia in 1978 was the idea of forming Christian communities so that people would not only go to Mass on Sundays but also live their faith and form communities.

In addition to his ministry in prisons and the support he offers St. Pius X Church, Father Masson mentors Maryknoll seminarians, including Sim, and brother candidates who are experiencing mission and discerning if this is something they want to do for the rest of their lives. As part of their formation, these men spend two years in Maryknoll's Overseas Training Program.

Sim, from Singapore, who started participating in the Christian communities three months ago, says the pandemic has been a call to be more creative in terms of accompanying the community.

"I feel it would be meaningful to share what I have learned, methods of pastoral theological reflection, updates on Church teachings, papal documents and other new developments in the Church," he says. "As a foreigner, I felt that I could offer another perspective during these meetings. At the same time, I believe, like the Catholic Church, that this accompaniment is enriching for us. These dialogues invite everyone to discern and create a new way of being Church together by recognizing the presence and wisdom of God that exist in different realities.

For Sim, the accompaniment of Father Masson has helped the members of the Christian communities understand and integrate their role in the mission of the Church. "The group started as a Bible study group, reading the Scriptures and examining how it connected to our lives," he says. "During the pandemic, the group through Father Masson's suggestion shared our experiences, concerns and reflections from the Scriptures in terms of how we might change our negative emotions from our current situation. The change in our way of being as a Christian community had a great impact on everyone. Instead of being just a group for prayer and reflection, the members of the group became contemplatives in action."

Father Masson, who was ordained in 1972, served in Chile for 20 years, working with different Christian communities in formation and with apostolic movements. In 1998 he was assigned to be part of the Maryknoll border team in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, where he served for 10 years. He was a member of the Maryknoll General Council from 2008 to 2014.

When the pandemic is under control, Maria Terrazas hopes to serve the inmates again. In the meantime, she will continue to evangelize, listen to people and give them advice based on the word of God.

"I thank God for being a part of St. Pius X Church. I have learned a lot from Father Masson and the Maryknoll missionaries who help us," she says. "They are like a light that illuminates us." ✠



## 2021: A Year Highlighting Child Labor

By Kathleen Kollman Birch

**T**he United Nations has named 2021 as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labor. Throughout this year, U.N. member states and civil society are being called on to take concrete steps to end the practice of child labor, which involves an estimated 152 million children worldwide.

This global focus on child labor could not come at a more urgent time. Coronavirus restrictions around the world have shut down schools and pushed an estimated 120 million more families into extreme poverty, making it even more likely for children to be burdened with the responsibility to earn income. International agencies such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) are expecting a large increase in child labor this year, a trend that will have enormous implications for years to come.

What exactly constitutes child labor? The ILO defines child labor as “work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.” In addition, it is most often work that interferes with their education or that is “mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous.”

The majority of child labor occurs in the agricultural sector, about 70%. About two-thirds of child laborers work in family enterprises. About half of child laborers work in what is known as “hazardous” labor, or jobs that place them in direct physical danger.

In many societies around the world, it is expected that children will prioritize helping with agricultural labor or providing income for the family over education. This is especially true for girls, whose education is often least valued. Research demonstrates that inappropriate levels or types of child labor can cause significant and life-long developmental harm for children, which has led to the global movement against child labor.

Now, with families experiencing even more desperate poverty during the coronavirus pandemic, the problem has grown more endemic. The United Nations has estimated that between 2000 and 2020, the number of child laborers had fallen by about 40%, but UNICEF now suggests that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic could almost entirely reverse that progress.

Ending the practice of child labor will be no mean feat. Around the world, certain approaches to combating child labor have backfired, such



*A young child in the Philippines works making handicrafts. (Sean Sprague/Philippines)*

as strict criminalization, which can unfairly target poor families and drive the practice underground, making it even more dangerous. Studies have shown that working against child labor requires an integrated approach that increases social protections and addresses the root causes of the problem, including the structural causes of poverty, lack of incentives for education and other social norms that legitimize the practice.

Despite the challenge, global lead-

ers are urging recommitment to the fight against child labor. “There is no place for child labor in society,” said ILO Director-General Guy Ryder. “It robs children of their future and keeps families in poverty. ... With COVID-19 threatening to reverse years of progress, we need to deliver on promises now more than ever.” ✦

*Kathleen Kollman Birch is communications manager at the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.*

### FAITH IN ACTION:

- Explore resources on the issue of child labor in advance of the U.N. World Day Against Child Labor on June 12: <http://bit.ly/June12ChildLabor>
- Explore the U.N.’s official website for the Year for the Elimination of Child Labor and make a personal pledge of how you can take action: <https://end-childlabour2021.org/>

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, based in Washington, D.C., is a resource for Maryknoll on matters of peace, social justice and integrity of creation, and brings Maryknoll’s mission experience into U.S. policy discussions. Phone (202) 832-1780, visit [www.maryknollogc.org](http://www.maryknollogc.org) or email [ogc@maryknollogc.org](mailto:ogc@maryknollogc.org).



# Partners in Mission

## *Emerging leader for the Church and society*

By Jorge Rivera

Pope Francis emphasized in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* that a “Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice.” Carolina Perez, a young adult leader from Chicago, is not afraid to “take the first step.” She gives of herself, always looking out for those in the margins.

I’ve known Carolina since her late teens and have witnessed her passion for mission. Now in her mid-20s, she represents the face of a vibrant young Hispanic church.

“I live out my call of missionary discipleship by forming community and working in *pastoral de conjunto* to build a more loving, merciful and just society,” she says. (*Pastoral de conjunto*, or communion in mission, is a model of Church that is communitarian, evangelizing and missionary.)

Carolina, or Caro, has evolved from a ministry leader in her parish and archdiocese to an emerging leader in national organizations such as The National Catholic Network of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana-La Red and the National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry-NCCHM.

She was a catalyst in encouraging young adults in her region to engage in the National V Encuentro of Hispanic Ministry’s multi-year process. She also leads a committee organizing the 2022 Raíces y Alas Congress, a national Catholic congress in Hispanic ministry.

In addition, Carolina is pursuing a master’s degree in justice ministry at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. “After I graduate, I hope to be able to educate more people in Catholic social teaching, which is very close to my heart,” she says, “not just to educate, but to accompany and walk with young people in the Church and the peripheries of society.”

Carolina is impressed by Maryknoll’s vision and mission, particularly the focus on Catholic social teaching. “I truly love that component of being a missionary disciple who is called to action,” she says, adding that a Maryknoll missionary discipleship retreat in 2014 impacted her life. “Even though I already had a heart that was partly missionary, the commissioning at the end (of the retreat) was the push I needed. ... It encouraged me to take ownership of that vocation.”

Two years ago, Carolina successful-



Carolina Perez (third from right) with other participants at a discernment conference called *Catholics on Call* at Catholic Theological Union. (Courtesy of Carolina Perez/U.S.)

ly organized a group of young adults from Chicago to participate in World Youth Day in Panama. As the group’s mentor, I witnessed how Carolina helped participants from five different parishes live out the experience as a pilgrimage rather than merely a trip.

Pope Francis describes youth as “the age of choice” and suggests young people should not be “afraid to take chances and make mistakes.” He must have had in mind young people like Carolina, who work for the common good and live in the present as courageous missionaries.

She has been a bridge-builder in her ministry to Hispanic/Latino young people. Drawing on her Mexican roots, she understands their culture, values, and the importance of religion and family to them.

Carolina is part of the young adult empowerment communities that Maryknoll started in 2020 to help young people grow in faith and mission. “I was drawn by the action component,” she says. “There are not many local organizations that support Hispanic ministry and social ministry, so that differentiates Maryknoll from other opportunities.”

Focusing on her goal to be a mission educator, Carolina says, “That missionary spirit that’s instilled in me since I was 19 continues to see the fruits of sharing faith and community to be an *Iglesia en salida* (a Church that goes forth).” ✠

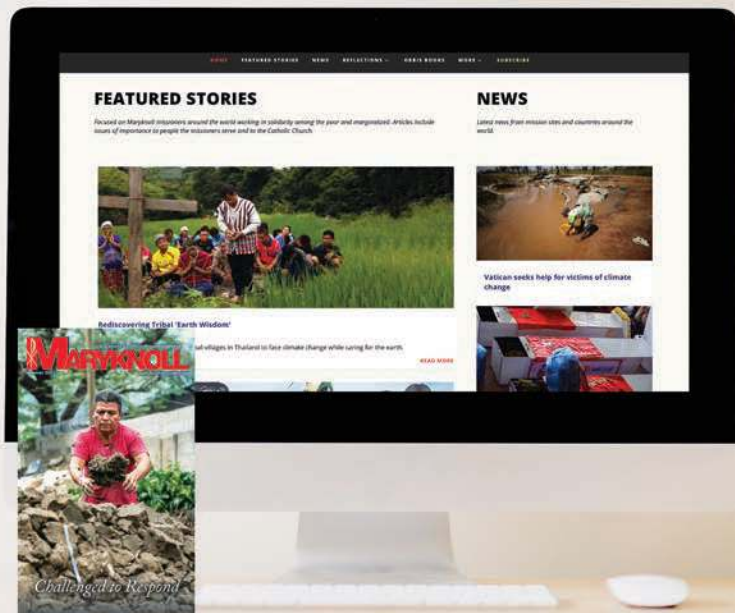
Jorge Rivera was a mission educator-promoter for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers from 2018 to 2021.



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## Readers' Responses

### COUNTERPOINT

I am a Trumpist and my views on immigration and border protection run counter to much of what I read in *Maryknoll* magazine. *Maryknoll*'s ideological bent is not in sync with my conservative outlook on life.

That being said, I read *Maryknoll* with interest each time it arrives. Your articles are thought-provoking and usually challenge my worldview. I thank you for that. Otherwise, I might forget how fortunate I am to live where I do and how lucky I am to have been born in the United States.

It is not that I am unfamiliar with the developing world. As someone who served in the military in Vietnam, I will always appreciate what we have versus those who have not. Nevertheless, life gets so busy sometimes, I forget to take the time to thank God for his blessings and *Maryknoll* serves as a great dope slap to help bring focus to that reality.

I wish you the best with your wonderful missionary work and hope you will continue to slap me upside the head with your coverage of the U.S. Catholic Church in mission overseas. Believe it or not, you have even inspired this narrow-minded soul to take positive action in that regard.

*Brian F. Sullivan*  
Plymouth, Massachusetts

### PROUD OF STUDENT

I was delighted to see the article on Melissa Altman and her family in the Spring 2021 issue. I was Melissa's history teacher at La Roche University in Pittsburgh and in class we spent

much time discussing the four U.S. churchwomen who were martyred 40 years ago in El Salvador. These women have had a special place in my wife's and my heart over the last four decades, and to see Melissa serving the poor, not only as a lay missionary but in the very region of El Salvador where two of the martyrs—Sister Dorothy Kazel and Jean Donovan—served brings great joy to us. Melissa, we at La Roche are so proud of you.

*Edward T. Brett*  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

### FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS

In the Spring 2021 edition, I read the article "Families Working Together in El Salvador."

I was impressed by the work Melissa Altman and her family were doing at the Acomujerza cooperative. After reading about the friendship bracelets made by local young people, I wanted to help out and purchase some of the bracelets, but I didn't see any information on how to purchase them.

Please let me know where I can find additional information regarding these bracelets. I'm sure there are other people like me reading this article who would like to help out and purchase some bracelets too.

*Marc Dent*  
Kirkville, New York

**Editor's note:** For those who wish to contact her regarding bracelets, Melissa Altman gives the following email: [acomujerzaderl@hotmail.com](mailto:acomujerzaderl@hotmail.com)

### LOVE POEM

My mom and I were deeply touched



by Father Joseph Veneroso's beautiful love poem to Jesus in the Spring 2021 issue of *Maryknoll* magazine. His writing demonstrates a childlike, artist's sensitive heart that deeply loves the Lord and his Church. Can you tell us about the gorgeous carving of Christ that accompanied the poem?

All the stories were beautiful, but I really appreciated the stories out of Asia, where Christians have bravely endured threats of the harshest persecutions for centuries. The convert from Taiwan touched me especially in light of the dangers her people face in their relationship with communist China. These souls are living testimonials to us to value and defend our Christian Catholic faith and especially the ability to receive the sacraments from noble souls like the Maryknoll priests.

The early Maryknoll seminary in Pennsylvania is now a Baptist college, oblivious to the Catholic heroes who trod the halls, the chapel erased of all references to the Blessed Mother or the saints, but we walk those magnificent grounds conscious that they bore the blessed footsteps of martyrs.

Dorina Amendola  
Scranton, Pennsylvania

**Editor's note:** The figure of Jesus is part of a life-size Way of the Cross made by stone carvers from the Artesanos Don Bosco in Huaraz, Peru. The statues are installed in a prayer garden at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Las Vegas.

#### MY MOTHERLAND

I just read the article "Abundant

Graces Flow in Taiwan" by Yu-Mei Lee in the Spring issue of 2021. It touched my heart very much. Being an immigrant from Taiwan, I appreciated so much the contributions Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers have given to my motherland. I heard Father Eugene Murray is still in Taiwan. His dedication is admirable.

Joseph Ku  
Palo Alto, California

#### DIFFERENTLY ABLED

One of the Maryknoll priests who died this past year was Father Brendan O'Connell.

His family moved to Waterbury, Connecticut, from New York City when he was still in the seminary. My brother and I served Father O'Connell's first Mass in June of 1963. The missionary was assigned to Taiwan, where he opened a school for developmentally disabled children.

In 1980, while Father O'Connell was home on leave, he baptized my daughter, Martha, who was born with Down syndrome. Father O'Connell's sister, Helen, had Down syndrome.

Joseph P. Nolan  
Waterbury, Connecticut

#### MODEL ST. JOSEPH

What a wonderful article about St. Joseph in your Spring 2021 issue. Father Joseph Veneroso was able to show us how St. Joseph answered God's call and how he can be an inspiration to us in so many ways.

Pete Winkler  
Saratoga Springs, New York

The editors invite Maryknoll readers to send us their views. Write to:  
Readers' Responses  
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Our e-mail address is: [mklmag@maryknoll.org](mailto:mklmag@maryknoll.org)

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*Maryknoll Sister Susan Wanzagi (brown skirt) accompanies members of the Divine Mercy and youth groups in East Timor visiting their needy and elderly neighbors. See story, page 44.*

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