



Maryknoll Sisters: *100 Years in Fields Afar*

FROM THE EDITOR

Each autumn we dedicate an issue of this magazine to mission vocations, coinciding with World Mission Sunday in October. So in this, our quarterly Fall 2021 edition, we feature mission journey stories of Maryknoll priests, brothers, sisters, lay missionaries and affiliates.

Reflecting on this, I'm reminded of the role of *Maryknoll* magazine in my own mission journey. In the late 1980s I was working on a daily newspaper in Connecticut when one day *Maryknoll* appeared unexpectedly in my mailbox. I believe I got the magazine after ordering an Orbis book on Latin America.

At the time, I was also diligently studying Spanish. As I read the providential copy of *Maryknoll*, I came across an article by an American journalist serving as a Maryknoll lay missionary at Latinamerica Press. I already subscribed and read regularly this weekly bulletin based in Lima, Peru. The rest, as they say, is history.

I joined the Maryknoll Lay Missioners and served for a term at that very publication in Lima. Some years later, I was hired to work for *Maryknoll* magazine, after I had returned from my mission in Peru. Having served with Maryknollers overseas and having reported on their missions around the world, I remain forever awed by the love, dedication and fortitude of these amazing men and women. I'm also reminded of Church teaching that we are all missionaries by virtue of our baptisms.

That said, what is your mission journey story?

Lynn F. Monahan
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Maryknoll sisters in mission, from
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Francis Davis.

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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.

Community of Sinners,

Community of Saints

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

*Alone, angry, afraid, apathetic
I did nothing and everything to forget
Or at least be less mindful of God's love
To prove myself unworthy of being saved.
So I sought out the company of others
With similar or different but no less
Self-inflicted wounds and so convince
Myself I—no we—were right to be wrong.*

*And so rather than change I covered up
My shame and guilt with prideful justification:
Everyone does the same or worse.
Weighed down by layer upon layer of denial
I could barely move much less escape
My self-imposed exile and thus found myself
Alone in a crowd of indifferent and
Uncaring strangers.*



*Among us stood one familiar yet unknown
Who looked right through our pitiful disguises
And conveyed through merciful eyes
Compassion, hope and healing.
Extending his wounded hands he unwound
Our would-be shrouds and washed them clean
In the water and blood flowing from his side
For us to sanitize and bind each other's injuries,
Giving us festive garments and tablecloths
For the wedding banquet of the Lamb.*

*Amid food of every sort, and music, dancing
And much laughter, I arose from my place and
With a nod of understanding from the holy host
Ran back out into the streets to seek and find
Those still wandering and lost. And standing
In their midst like one familiar yet unknown
And looking through their pitiful disguises with merciful eyes
I let healing flow to them through my wounds and
Taking them by the hand and walking by their side
We entered the wedding feast together.*



Missioner Tales

Almost every morning around 6 a.m. I walk my dog through our neighborhood in the coastal Brazilian city of João Pessoa at the easternmost part of the Americas. I am often joined by street collectors who rustle through garbage for recyclables and other items to be reused. Last All Souls' Day, as I was returning home, I passed an elderly woman pulling her cart.

Suddenly a gentle rain started to fall. I commented to her that it always rains on the Day of the Dead (Dia dos Finados, as it is called in Portuguese). She replied that our ancestors are crying on this day. I said that our Maryknoll Brazil Mission Community was crying too because during the year we had lost three of our beloved Maryknoll elders: Sister Connie Pospisil and Fathers Frank Higdon and Daniel McLaughlin. May they rest in peace.

Kathleen Bond, MKLM

Four sisters entered a small elevator on the third floor of the Maryknoll Sisters Center, heading down to lunch. One of the sisters was from Hawaii and had worked in Japan; another was from Japan and had been missioned to Guatemala; the third, from Missouri, had served in Japan; and the fourth, from Pennsylvania, had recently returned from Guatemala. By the time the door opened on the ground floor, the four (Rita Burdzy, Bernice Kita, Teruko Ito

and Elizabeth Kato) were laughing heartily. Why? Rita, Kita, Ito, Kato—or any other arrangement of the names—could only happen, happily, at Maryknoll.

Bernice Kita, M.M.

Here in Bangladesh, skinny, awkward, 6-year-old Bareek was brought to see me by his equally thin, worried mother. A doctor had diagnosed the boy with cerebral palsy. I pledged to arrange a two-week course of physiotherapy so that the mother could help her son.

On that very day, my neighbor Haroon and I were hauling earth in baskets to lay as a foundation for my new house. Bareek decided to help us. In his family's cooking shed he found a high-sided rice plate.

Working alongside us men, Bareek filled his plate repeatedly with soil, carried it 15 meters despite his unsteady gait, and emptied the contents of his plate wherever Haroon and I emptied our basketsful. Bareek labored non-stop as long as we did. Neighbors who observed his voluntary efforts thought, pound for pound, Bareek was the most admirable earth hauler of all.

Robert McCahill, M.M.

One of the sisters who works with Solidary with South Sudan, a Catholic initiative that trains leaders for this new country, was at the airport processing through

the chaotic check-in area. Here, one is pushed every which way because there are no lines and the system changes daily as to what you need to show for identification.

In all the hustle and bustle, the sister dropped a white envelope that was clearly marked: \$100. She never missed it, but an official saw the envelope drop. He could easily have picked it up and put it in his pocket, and no one would have been the wiser. This would have been the equivalent of about three-months' salary for him! But the official called the sister over, told her she had dropped the envelope and handed it to her. Thank God for honest people in this world.

Gabe Hurrish, MKLM

Casa Materna in Matagalpa, Nicaragua, where I have served since 1986, provides food, shelter, medical care, education and transportation to and from the hospital for high-risk pregnant women.

Part of my ministry here is fundraising. That means my life is lived in a spirit of "thanksgiving." Most often my gratitude takes the form of letter writing.

My yearly visits to the States also allow me special times to give thanks as I walk with friends and family who are so supportive of me and my ministry. At times I feel that our sharing reaches a greater depth and sense of intimacy because of the limited time we have together.

Catherine Madden, Maryknoll affiliate



John Barth/South Sudan

CHINA BOUND and BEYOND

FIRST DEPARTURE
FOR CHINA
1921

By Mary Ellen Manz, M.M.

*The Maryknoll Sisters celebrate 100 years
of worldwide mission*



Maryknoll Society co-founder Father James A. Walsh and (seated, second from left) Mother Mary Joseph Rogers with first departure group: Sisters (standing, left to right) Imelda Sheridan, Barbara Froehlich, Monica Moffatt; (seated, left) Rose Leifels, (seated, second from right) Paul McKenna, (seated, right) Lawrence Foley.
(Photos from Maryknoll Mission Archives)

September 12, 1921: the first Maryknoll sisters set out for mission in China. Their departure was both joyful and sobering, as they bid farewell to families and homeland for life. Travel by air was unheard of, so the six women underwent a rough sea journey of 40 days to Kowloon, Hong Kong. They were relieved to see Maryknoll priests and brothers on shore shouting and waving in welcome. Sisters Paul McKenna, Lawrence Foley, Barbara Froehlich, Rose Leifels, Monica Moffatt and Imelda Sheridan had landed. A century of sisters in foreign mission would unfold.

At the beginning of the 20th century, brave young Catholic men and women aspired to travel to China, willing to give their lives to spread the Gospel of Jesus and “to save souls.” The first Maryknoll men who arrived in 1918 had become aware that women missionaries were need-

ed to minister to Chinese women. However, many, especially in the Vatican, doubted that American women could withstand the rigors of life in the Orient.

Full of zeal and romantic ideas of being missionaries, the sisters were inexperienced and unprepared for life in China. But, fortified by their deep faith—and the saving grace of a sense of humor—they rolled up their sleeves and went to work.

The women scrubbed the walls and floors of the old house where they set up residence. Very soon they had a small chapel for the Blessed Sacrament.

In 1922, six more sisters arrived. At the invitation of Maryknoll Father Francis X. Ford, a group of sisters went to Yeungkong, in the south. There Father Ford put them in charge of a school, a house for the elderly and blind girls, an orphanage and a dispensary.

Sister Madeleine Sophie Karlon, who was sent to China in 1934, worked in direct evangelization with women and children in the Kaying Diocese.



Sister Gertrude Moore, a nurse, ran the dispensary. Within 10 months she treated some 6,000 cases of worms, skin ailments, blood poisoning and eye infections. When a typhoid epidemic broke out, Sister Gertrude attended 50 to 100 patients a day, until contracting the disease herself and dying a few weeks later. This was a terrible blow for the fledgling group.

Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, the Maryknoll Sisters’ mother superior, visited the sisters in China for seven months. She shared their grief over the death of Sister Gertrude and experienced the difficult living conditions endured by her young sisters. For example, the only means of local travel was on filthy “junks,” boats overcrowded with crated livestock and a bucket for sanitary facilities.

During Mother Mary Joseph’s visit, Father Ford observed how easily the Chinese women and children related to her and the sisters. He asked if she would allow pairs of sisters to visit rural women on their homesteads. It was unacceptable for men to do so. The sisters could stay with families, making friends with and learning from them. Mother Mary Joseph heartily approved: wasn’t this the way Jesus sent his disciples out to evangelize, two by two?

Maryknoll Sister Paulita Hoffmann, assigned to the area of Hakaland in 1938, recalled, “Father Ford told us very emphatically, ‘Schools and orphanages, the Christians will build later; you are here



Sisters Lawrence Foley (l.) and Monica Moffatt hold babies in Yeungkong in 1923.

to bring them the gift of faith and teach the Christian doctrine.’ ”

“The rub was, we had to learn the local dialect of the women, which was different from Cantonese,” Sister Hoffmann explained. Much laughter ensued, she said, as the sisters attempted to repeat words using inflections the village women taught them.

“After carefully copying what we heard in our notebooks, when we would go home, we would give the new words and phrases to two of the sisters who were rewriting them in a book,” Sister Hoffmann continued. “After four or five years, they had a complete course of 18 books!”

This new type of ministry (called “direct evangelization”) was met

with criticism by some other religious congregations, who objected to sisters leaving the protection of convent walls. Encouragement arrived in 1939 in a letter to Mother Mary Joseph from Cardinal Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi. He praised their efforts, writing, "Such work and sacrifice ... showed courage and devotion."

By 1941 there were more than 450 Maryknollers in Asia (priests, sisters and brothers). At one time approximately 100 sisters staffed four primary and two secondary schools in Hong Kong.

A painful turning point came with

World War II. Missioners in China were seen as American spies. Many were interned and others deported. Even worse, the subsequent Communist takeover destroyed most missions. Some sisters were interned in prison; others were kept under house arrest and would have starved if kind neighbors had not quietly left them food. In 1951, the Maryknoll Sisters reluctantly left China.

With the door closed to them in mainland China, the sisters crossed back into Hong Kong to reach out to the millions of Chinese fleeing their homeland in search of a new home and freedom. Today, there are only nine Maryknoll sisters in the China Region. But the schools and a hospital continue on, efficiently run by Chinese. Though they were disbanded and persecuted, and their churches destroyed, Chinese Christians hold the seed of faith deeply rooted in their hearts.

In 1962, the Second Vatican Council sought to pastorally adapt the Church and the apostolate to a world undergoing great transformation. It was a new epoch, and a time for revising ideas about mission. Maryknoll sisters' "direct evangelization" was right in step with this. That understanding of mission evolved into an apostolate of making God's mercy and love known and experienced through encounters among people and with Jesus Christ on five continents.

When asked how all of this had affected her understanding of her



In Loting in 1938, Sister Francis Davis, a member of the second group of sisters sent to China, shares her faith with three girls, one of whom admires her medal.

missionary vocation, one sister said, "I understand in a deeper way that we are sent to people of other religious beliefs, not to bring God to them, but to help them find a loving God within them."

Today, Maryknoll Sisters President Antoinette Gutzler says, "As we approach the 100th anniversary of the first six Maryknoll sisters leaving for mission in China, our hearts are filled with gratitude." She adds that the sisters have chosen September 12th as the beginning date of their next General Assembly. "We will discern the 'signs of our times,' embark on new paths

in mission, and choose our next Congregational Leadership Team," Sister Gutzler says.

Understanding of mission has changed; but the call to go forth remains. "We embrace the spirit of our first sisters who left home, family, friends and all they knew to preach the Gospel," affirms Sister Gutzler. "They gave their lives to 'make God's love visible.' We pledge to do the same." ✠



Sister Marie de Lourdes Bourguignon, a registered nurse, treats a young patient in Yeungkong in 1923.



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Spirit of Mission

Missioner vs. Missionary

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

What image comes to mind when you hear the word “missionary”? A knock at the door and two well-dressed strangers asking if you are saved? Bible tracts on the street corner, calling you to accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior?

Fairly or not, “missionary” is also historically fraught with dramatic images: Christian zealots breaking idols, overturning pagan altars and imposing baptism on conquered people. Missionaries often preceded or accompanied foreign colonizers. Since the time of Constantine, missionaries were as much identified with their imperial sponsors as they were with the Kingdom of God.

France, Spain and Portugal sent missionaries into newly discovered territories to cultivate allies as well as converts. The first martyrs of North America, St. Isaac Jogues, St. René Goupil and St. Jean de la Lande, were French Jesuits. France was allied with the Huron, enemies of the Mohawk, who were allied with the English (rivals of the French). Thus, the animosities of Europe translated into the inter-tribal rivalries of the New World. The Mohawk martyred the Jesuit missionaries as much for being

French as for being Catholic.

Missionaries have rightly been criticized for mistreating Native Americans, or at least, aiding colonizers. But what about Servant of God Bartolomé de las Casas? A landowner-turned-Dominican missionary to Central America, Las Casas spent 50 years of his life advocating for the dignity of indigenous peoples, while European theologians debated whether native people had souls. And many Jesuit missionaries died in Paraguay defending the Guaraní population from Spanish slave traders.

Our co-founder Bishop James A. Walsh intentionally referred to his spiritual sons as “missioners” to distinguish them from “missionaries.” The distinction is more than semantic. Decades before the word “inculturation” was coined, Maryknoll missionaries were trained to respect the traditions and religions of the people they served. Foreshadowing the Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate*, Maryknollers “reject nothing that is good and holy in these religions.” Churches built by Maryknollers in China and Korea, for example, reflect an unmistakable Oriental style, as does Maryknoll’s iconic headquarters in Ossining, New York.



Maryknoll Father Robert McCahill, who ministers to the sick poor in Bangladesh, visits the family of Mehenaz, a 3-year-old with cerebral palsy. (Sean Sprague/Bangladesh)

Maryknoll missionaries ascribe to the “job description” of St. Teresa of Calcutta: “I give people an experience of God; after that, it’s up to them how they choose to worship.” This spirit is seen in the ministry of Father James Kroeger, who promotes understanding between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines. Similarly in Bangladesh, Father Robert McCahill, the only Christian for miles around, lives and works among Muslims in what he describes as the “dialogue of life.” Brother John Beeching has immersed himself in the Buddhist spirituality of Thailand and Myanmar, insisting that doing so deepens his appreciation for Christianity. Mission, he says, means “falling in love with the world because you’ve fallen in love with God.”

Perhaps the greatest distinction between a missionary and a missioner is the difference between proselytizing and evangelizing.

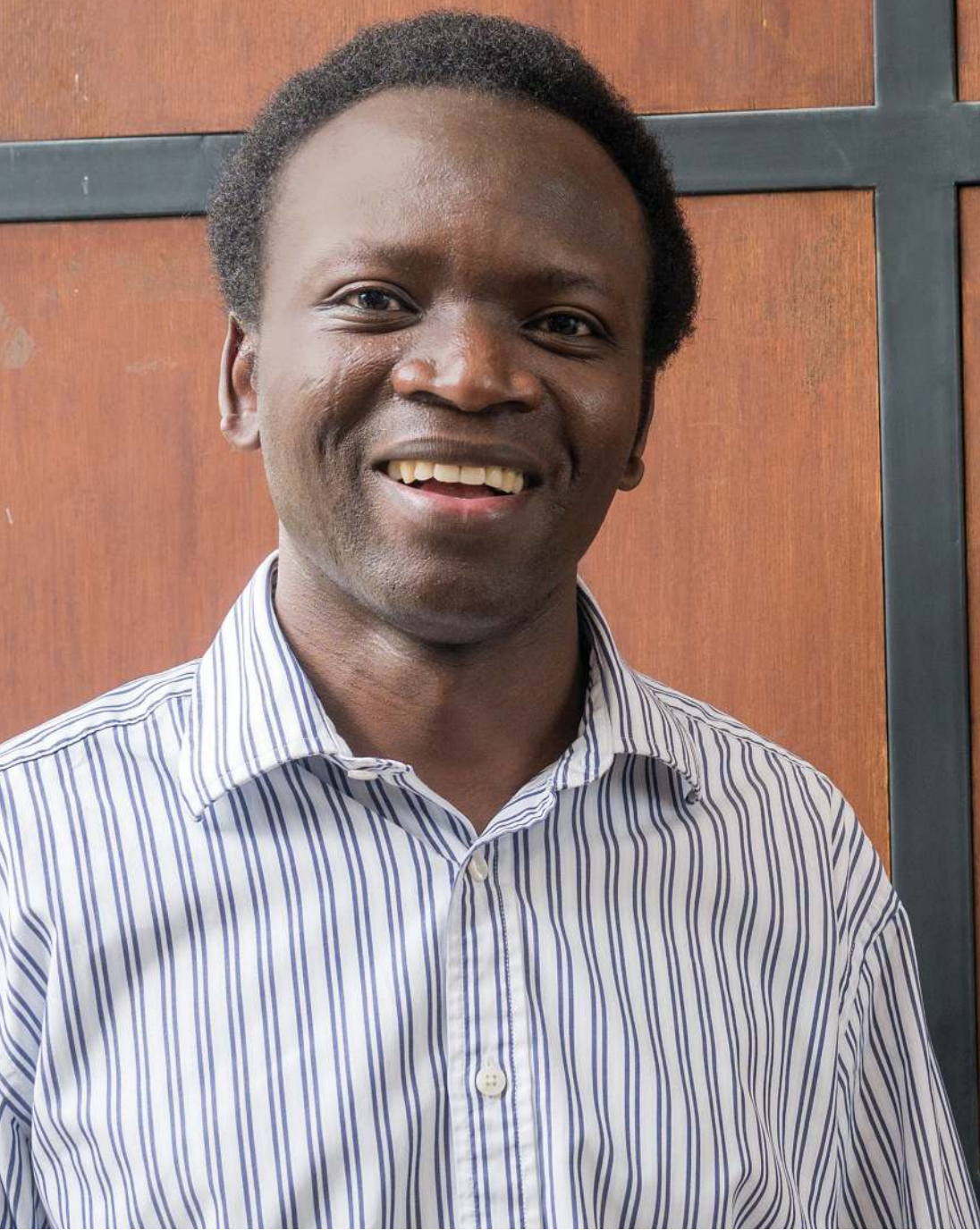
Proselytizing means viewing others as objects to be converted to Catholicism through baptism, whether or not they encounter the reality of Christ in their lives. For centuries missionaries were motivated by an urgency to save souls. Conversion in this context meant a change of religion but not necessarily a change of heart.

Evangelization recognizes and respects others as partners on the journey, who are invited into the Reign of God as defined and inaugurated by the teachings, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It means walking, working, living and sometimes dying with them as they encounter Christ in their culture as well as in the Church.

Methods of mission have changed over the millennia, but the message remains the same: God’s love and grace are for all people! Missioners still proclaim this Good News. ✠

RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL

By Giovana Soria



Candidates to priesthood and brotherhood share in the Maryknoll spirit during vocational formation

Maryknoll seminarian John Siyumbu was asked to visit an elderly woman in Chicago and pray with her family. Responding to his call to serve and accompany God's people, he immediately agreed.

As part of his preparation for the priesthood, Siyumbu was doing an internship at Old St. Patrick's Church in Chicago during the second lockdown for COVID-19 in March 2021. The seminarian says he remembers the visit as if it were yesterday.



Seminarian John Siyumbu outside St. Pius X Church in Cochabamba, where he served in different ministries. (Nile Sprague/Bolivia)



Before heading to his OTP in Bolivia, Maryknoll brother candidate Paul Shultz volunteered once a week at St. James Food Pantry in Chicago. (Octavio Duran/U.S.)

"Walking into the room, I saw an elderly lady on her bed. One of her daughters was holding her hand, another was seated by the foot of the bed and the third was nearby. It struck me that I was walking into an intensely intimate moment and yet very communal," he says. "We formed a semicircle with their mom in front of us. We read from the Bible and reflected on Jesus' ministry to the ill. We prayed the Our Father and then together stretched out our hands over the mom and prayed for her one last time."

The woman was 90 years old and one of her daughters told Siyumbu that she had a good life. "Even though it was a very painful situation, I recall the warmth with which

the daughters welcomed me," says Siyumbu, who is from Kenya. "I remember feeling the accompaniment and the presence of God in this house." Shortly after Siyumbu left, the mother passed away.

Siyumbu, who is doing theological studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, is one of 18 young men currently in the Maryknoll Formation Program to become either priests or brothers. They are in various points in their formation while residing in Chicago, Bolivia or Nairobi.

Siyumbu, 36, lives in the Maryknoll residence in Chicago as he continues his formation. He has an undergraduate degree in special education from Kenyatta University in Nairobi and completed three years

of philosophy studies in his home country. In 2016 he was accepted into the Maryknoll Formation Program and spent a spirituality year in Chicago, learning and living Maryknoll's spiritual charism of mission.

The seminarian spent two years in Bolivia as part of Maryknoll's Overseas Training Program (OTP), where he strengthened his ministerial calling to visit the sick and homebound. He says he liked how St. Pius X Church in Cochabamba, Bolivia, gave him this opportunity. "I found a lot of spiritual encouragement in this ministry," he says.

"John accompanied me to visit the sick, but we spent time with their families too," says Doña Maria Luz Sanchez, who invited Siyumbu into her ministry to the confined sick and elderly. "We brought Holy Communion, talked about God, invited them to Mass and had the opportunity to evangelize the whole family."

Siyumbu acknowledges his gratitude to Sanchez, who he says accepted him in her ministry and taught him about service and what mission means.

"When I think about the people of God, the faces of Cochabambinos come to my mind," says Siyumbu of his OTP experience and the people of Cochabamba. "Doña Maria Luz and many others confirmed my desire to accompany and minister to the elderly and sick. I feel that God is calling me to do that."

Father Russell J. Feldmeier, rector of Maryknoll's initial formation team, says his role is to help candidates discern whether they are called to Maryknoll and to help them grow in their ability to listen

to what God is inviting them to do.

"Each of them has his unique calling. I help them understand what the Maryknoll community and vision is," Father Feldmeier says. "They say it takes a village to raise a child. It takes a community, like a pastoral grouping of Maryknollers, to mentor a candidate."

Paul Shultz, 26, a brother candidate who recently started his OTP in Bolivia, says he first felt the call to mission in 2015 when he lost both of his jobs. He opened himself to prayer and asked God: "What is my purpose in life? What do you want me to do?" After that, he started to think of doing mission work.

"I want to respond to God's call to serve the most vulnerable in the world by recognizing there is a need out there to help those who are suffering," says Shultz, who is from Forsyth, Illinois.

Joshua Mutende, 25, a Maryknoll candidate to the priesthood from Kenya, says he has wanted to be a priest since he was a child, when his sisters used to take him to Mass. "Masses in Africa have a lot of dancing and singing," says Mutende. "One day at Mass during the sign of peace, one seminarian carried me and greeted me. I felt so much joy and I said, 'I want to be the same.' From that moment, I started feeling the call to become a priest."

Mutende completed his two-year OTP in Bolivia and is currently in Nairobi before beginning his theological studies in Chicago. He says that what attracted him to Maryknoll was its mission spirit. "The pope is asking us to 'be shepherds with the smell of sheep,' and that is



Maryknoll seminarians Joshua Mutende (white shirt) and Charles Ogony learn Spanish at the Maryknoll Mission Center in Cochabamba, Bolivia. (Nile Sprague/Bolivia)

what Maryknoll does," he explains. "I would like to work with young people so there is an opportunity for that."

Charles Ogony, 28, from Kenya, is another priesthood candidate preparing for studies in Chicago. He also felt the call to serve God at an early age. When he was 6 years old, a group of robbers attacked his home during a time of many conflicts in his town, particularly with people stealing cattle. At that point, he says, he decided to give himself to God.

"I saw the priesthood as a sign of uniting people together," Ogony says. "I said if God calls me, I should respond 'yes' so I can be the sign of peace to others." His father, who was a catechist, was supportive and

played a big role in the younger Ogony's decision to follow his vocation.

Ogony completed his two-year OTP in Bolivia, where he learned Spanish and served, during the COVID-19 pandemic, at Hogar San José, a home for elderly women and men run by the Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly. "I want to walk with and work with people just like Jesus did with his disciples," he says. "My mission is to proclaim the Gospel."

Over more than 100 years, some 2,000 men have been ordained as Maryknoll missionary priests and several hundred have taken oaths as brothers. Although Maryknoll was founded to train men from the United States as priests and brothers for mission overseas, it has re-



Mutende and Maryknoll Father Paul Masson, spiritual guide for Maryknoll candidates in Bolivia, play guitar during Mass at Maryknoll chapel in Cochabamba. (Nile Sprague/Bolivia)

cently begun to accept candidates from other countries where men like Siyumbu, Mutende and Ogony have gotten to know Maryknoll missionaries and feel the call to join them in serving the poor.

Father Rodrigo Ulloa, Maryknoll's director of vocations, says that despite the challenges the pandemic has presented for vocational recruitment, he is hopeful for the future.

"Jesus was inclusive and he walked in different towns and met people of different backgrounds. He was interrupted by a lot of people and yet his interruptions brought miracle stories," Father Ulloa says. "We have been interrupted by COVID."

Meanwhile Father Feldmeier enjoys mentoring current candidates

such as Siyumbu, who is expected to be ordained in 2022.

"There's a real depth he has, of his prayer and his ability to share it in cross-cultural ways, as he did when he was in the overseas training. I just encouraged him to make his unique contribution to missions and to Maryknoll," Father Feldmeier says. "As God has called him to Maryknoll and to mission, God will be with him throughout his life, as he lives out this wonderful vocation as a missionary." ✠



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A Call *within* The Call

By Gregg Brekke

Priest reflects on lifelong mission to serve alongside the people of Nepal

It all began with a priest on a motorcycle. At school, 11-year-old Joe Thaler was captivated by a presentation about Maryknoll. “A priest riding a motorcycle in Africa seemed pretty appealing,” Maryknoll Father Joseph Thaler recalls. It was the launching point for a lifetime of service. In Nepal, he logs thousands of miles navigating treacherous terrain on a tenderly cared-for 30-year-old Honda XL 185 motorcycle.

“I felt a call to the priesthood even when I was younger, and I got a lot of positive reinforcement,” Father Thaler reflects. Young Joe’s family and parish priests were supportive. Another influence was family friend Father Robert Greene, a Maryknoll missionary who had been imprisoned in China. After graduating from Covington Catholic High School in Park Hills, Kentucky, Thaler began his vocational training at Maryknoll College Seminary in 1967.

In the mid-1970s, the work of Maryknoll missions was taking new shape. “Missiology within the Church was changing,” Father Thaler says. “For the



Instructor Gyanu Kumari Chaudhary (left) with Father Thaler and students at the Sewing Cutting Training Program for Deprived Women in Baniyabhar, Bardiya District, Nepal. (Gregg Brekke/Nepal)

first time, the Church was willing to accept the fact that truth could be found in other religions.” He continues, “Maybe God was already present in other peoples and other cultures before the missionary person arrived.”

In Nepal—then known as a Hindu kingdom—missioners would not be allowed to baptize or preach. Even today it is forbidden by law to proselytize, although personal conversions and practice of all religions is permitted. “But still, Maryknoll felt that this was where God was calling us to be,” recounts Father Thaler. He notes that in 1974, Pope Paul VI had convened a synod to define evangelization: “It empha-

sized that the world needs to see witnesses of a new possible way of living in order to be introduced to the Good News.” After much personal discernment and the decision by the Maryknoll Society to open a mission in Nepal, on Oct. 17, 1977, Father Thaler boarded a plane for Kathmandu.

He describes being overcome by the majestic mountain scenery from the plane as he arrived in Nepal. “Boom, there’s Everest out the window and the beautiful Himalayan mountains,” Father Thaler recalls. “And it was crystal clear. When I arrived here, I could just feel that this is where I wanted to be—it was a really good feeling. When I look



Maryknoll Father Joseph Thaler has logged thousands of miles over rough terrain on his 30-year-old Honda XL 185 motorcycle to visit the Nepalese. (Courtesy of Joseph Thaler/Nepal)



Samjhana Tharu, a graduate of the Sewing Cutting Training Program for Deprived Women in the Bardiya District of Nepal, sews as Shailee Singh Rahour, project director for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers in Nepal, proudly looks on. (Gregg Brekke/Nepal)

back at how I ended up in Nepal, it’s because not only was I called to the priesthood, but I felt that this was the call that I had—to mission.”

Father Thaler, known simply as “Father Joe,” and his indomitable staff soon became involved in dozens of community-based projects. This would be how the Good News was made visible in mission.

One of the early missionaries in Nepal had worked with differently abled people in Japan and sensitized other members of the team to their plight. The missionaries became aware that in Nepal, people with disabilities were shunned. Culturally, disability was seen as a curse, a karmic stain on the family, disrupting the design of the universe. Often, the disabled were hidden by their families or forced to survive by begging.

“We were walking down the

street and there was a woman selling cigarettes,” Father Thaler says. “She had a sack next to her, and every once in a while, that sack would shake. So we asked her, ‘What’s in the sack?’ She told us it was her daughter. And the reason she had her daughter in the sack was because she was disabled.”

Moved by this and other examples, the missionaries created a day center for people with physical and mental disabilities. The project provided a space to meet others like them, to grow in self-esteem, and to gain skills.

“It was a springboard for further ideas,” says Father Thaler, reflecting on those early years. The mission expanded to embrace others at risk in Nepali society: widows, people of lower castes, students with few opportunities and day laborers in brick factories. “The Good News in Nepali



Father Thaler is flanked by Sitaram and Reena Tharu, graduates of the Sewing Cutting Training for Differently Abled Persons, as he visits their home. Trainees of the couple stand behind while a young neighbor sits with the Maryknoll priest. (Gregg Brekke/Nepal)

context," says Father Thaler, "is seen in their work of educating for self-sufficiency, releasing women from prisons, rebuilding homes and communities after the 2015 earthquake, meeting medical and mental health needs, saving young people from human trafficking, and providing COVID relief." During the pandemic, the Maryknoll mission has provided oxygen cylinders, distributed personal protective equipment, and worked with local agencies to mitigate contagion.

All of this is accomplished through the dedicated staff of Maryknoll Nepal and partnerships with other non-governmental organizations, cultivated since the mission's inception. Asked to number how many

people have been assisted by the Maryknoll mission in Nepal, Father Thaler rattles off figures from nearly a dozen long-term projects. The list goes on and on, with the count reaching into the thousands.

Father Thaler has navigated regime changes, natural disasters and shifts in Nepali culture. Most importantly, he has developed deep relationships. He shares his vast experience of financial and organizational stewardship, but also enters joyfully into the life of the people. As the Maryknoll representative of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Nepal, Father Thaler enjoys project visits to various remote and isolated communities. Because of terrain and climate conditions, sometimes trav-

eling just five miles can take up to an hour by motorcycle. Father Thaler doesn't mind.

"Sharing meals and participating in weddings and festivals and all types of cultural activities is common on each project visit," he says. "Invitations are extended to visit the temple, the Gompa (monastery) or the mosque and even the cave to share a blessing. I learn and listen to the many needs that go way beyond the work of the 'official' project, and together we respond to them."

Although the breadth of Maryknoll's mission outreach is wide, Father Thaler's focused commitment, present in every activity, is to out-

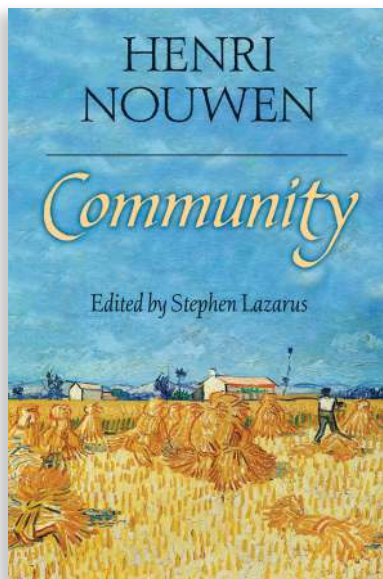
casts and the poor. He is grateful that in Maryknoll, the priestly vocation isn't limited to parish-based sacramental ministry, as important as it is. In 2021, the missionary celebrates 45 years of ordained ministry as a Maryknoll priest. "Our call is to mission. Our call is to other people, and to live out the Gospel," he says. "In my life, I feel very happy in the priesthood, because it has called me to serve and to be present within the world in different types of situations." ✠

Gregg Brekke is an award-winning photojournalist and writer dedicated to telling stories of justice and faith.



Father Thaler with students and staff at a presentation for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers of Nepal at the secondary school in Tratal, Bardiya District. (Gregg Brekke/Nepal)

ORBIS Books Spotlight



Preview by Robert Ellsberg

"Community is not a human creation but a divine gift which calls for an obedient response. This response may require much patience and humility, much listening and speaking, much confrontation and self-examination, but it should always be an obedient response to a bond which is given and not made."

—Henri J. M. Nouwen

This fall marks the 25th anniversary of the death of Henri Nouwen, a Dutch priest who became one of the world's most influential spiritual teachers. To mark the occasion, Orbis has published a collection of his essential writings on community, a theme to which he constantly returned. It was also the subject of his own lifelong quest. It propelled many of Nouwen's most significant life choices, including his decision in 1981 to spend six months among the Maryknoll missionaries in Bolivia and Peru, and his decision in

1986 to leave his academic position at Harvard to join the L'Arche Daybreak community in Ontario. It was there, his home for the last 10 years of his life, that all his spiritual teachings, especially on the subject of community, found a new depth and concrete focus.

Though community was one of his central themes, Nouwen never wrote a full book on it. But now editor Stephen Lazarus has corrected that gap by compiling 10 of his most compelling articles and talks from over a period of 20 years. As Lazarus writes,

"For Henri, community is a basic need and hunger of the human heart. We are created for community, but often we do not experience it in the individualistic and competitive cultures that shape our lives. Community is a place marked by acceptance, intimacy and vulnerability, where we can bear fruit in solidarity with others and be the Body of Christ for the sake of the world. It is a place of care and celebration, the place where our wounds and weaknesses are exposed, a sheltered place for the confession of sin and brokenness, and a house of love where we can receive forgiveness and offer it in return."

For Nouwen, that understanding of community was eventually tested by his experience at Daybreak. As I describe in my foreword, I first encountered Nouwen's thinking about community over 40 years ago, when, as a young editor of *The Catholic Worker*, I published one of the articles included in this volume. At the time, to be honest, I wasn't fully impressed by the

piece, which seemed abstract and impersonal—not the work of someone with a lot of actual experience of community. But on rereading that article many years later, I was struck by how truly profound and challenging it was, in ways I hadn't appreciated. And in the articles that followed, I was amazed by the depth and insight that Henri would bring to the subject.

"What an enormous, important spiritual journey it is when we discover that where our healing begins is where joy is rooted," Nouwen writes, "not in where you are different from people, but in where you are the same." For all lovers of Henri Nouwen, and all who struggle with the call and challenge to build community, this volume serves as an important part of his legacy, rounding out the teaching that continues to make him one of the most trusted spiritual writers of our time. ✂

Robert Ellsberg is the publisher of Maryknoll's Orbis Books.



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In Memoriam

Please pray for our Maryknoll missionaries who died during the past year.

Father Joseph B. Arsenault

Father Richard B. Callahan

Sister Beatrice Carvalho

Sister Agnes Chou

Father James A. Conard

Father John E. Conway

Sister Patricia Desaulniers

Brother J. Francis Dolphin

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Sister Marie Morgan

Father Laurence T. Murphy

Father Raymond J. Nobiletti

Sister Helen Phillips

Sister Marion Phillips

Brother Edward D. Redmond

Sister Dolores Rosso

Sister Gloria Ryan

Father J. Lawrence Schanberger

Sister Lucia Yu

*The souls of the just are
in the hand of God.*

—Wisdom 3:1

New solar panel canopies are now installed over parking lots on the Ossining campus of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. (Marco Gallo/U.S.)



Being a good neighbor while caring for the Earth

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin

A community solar project at Maryknoll will help preserve the Earth's natural resources

The New York campus of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers looks a bit different this fall. Solar canopies now cover the property's main parking lots, generating renewable energy that its neighbors in Ossining, New York, can use.

Ecogy Energy, a Brooklyn-based solar energy company overseeing the Maryknoll project, will sell the collected energy to the local utility company, giving Ossining residents

a chance to purchase green energy. The project will have a total of 110,000 square feet of solar panels. It will generate enough electricity to power 100 to 200 households.

This initiative aligns with the Maryknoll Society's goal to combat environmental destruction and care for God's creation. "We all have a responsibility to protect our common home, to reduce as much as possible our common carbon



Maryknoll Superior General Father Raymond Finch (second from left) joins Ossining's town supervisor, Ecogy Energy employees, Maryknoll's Eco-Mission team and employees at the groundbreaking of the solar panel project at Maryknoll's headquarters, the first community solar energy system in Ossining, New York. (Diane Mastrogiulio/U.S.)

footprint," says Maryknoll Superior General Father Raymond Finch. "It's part of how we see ourselves fulfilling our responsibility both in line with *Laudato Si'* and the Catholic Church's position" to care for the Earth.

"Pope Francis is very clear in that we have to be concerned about protecting our common home and at the same time helping people to move beyond poverty, and that they are connected; one cannot be without the other," says Father Finch, paraphrasing a passage from the pope's encyclical on the environment.

Ecogy and Maryknoll put a lot of work into making sure no trees

were cut, by using the air zone above the existing parking lots and underground electrical wiring, preserving the trees on campus. Ecogy Energy has signed a 25-year lease agreement with Maryknoll to install solar collection panels. The project will promote clean, renewable energy while the lease's income will support Maryknoll's work in 22 countries worldwide.

"Maryknoll is known around the world for helping others, and after they won the Green Business Partnership award in 2019 for their water efforts at the Ossining campus, we really could not think of a better partner to embark on a community

solar project with," says Brock Gibian, Ecogy's director of development. The water efforts he refers to include using recycled water from the campus' roofs and gutters to water the plants.

This community solar project, Gibian explains, enables Ossining residents who can't afford or are not able to put solar panels on their houses, rental units, or apartments to subscribe to this project and lower their electricity costs. Ecogy, he adds, focuses on the underserved, prioritizing low-income people when looking for subscribers. "By providing solar access through community solar, we can really reduce inequality in the renewable energy transition," Gibian says. "We hope for a successful long-term partnership that creates clean community solar access for all."

Gibian says that this project would be one of the, if not the, largest solar canopy systems in Westchester County. It is also the first community solar energy system in the town of Ossining. The company spent a year studying the sun's direction to maximize solar production and produce as much electricity as possible.

"For years, we have been interested in solar energy and alternative sources of energy that are protective of the environment and protect our common home," Father Finch says. "We have done a lot of work overseas installing solar projects where there was no other available electricity."

Maryknoll Father Michael Snyder recalls a small solar initiative in Tanzania in 1983 when the country only had electricity in major towns.

"In rural areas, there was nothing. We used kerosene lamps for light and refrigerators, but the solar energy began to be somewhat available back then," says the missionary from Lanoka Harbor, New Jersey. "Many of us would have purchased the panels—it was quite clunky back then—and use the electricity in our parish compound. We used it in some of our dispensaries and in schools, where students would be able to study at night."

He explains that generators were costly compared to the upfront cost of small solar systems. As time went on, Tanzania invested in greater access to electricity, he continues. Yet, the electricity in rural areas can still be sporadic. People use supplementary solar energy when electric stations lose power.

In the case of Ossining, solar codes passed in 2018 paved the way for Ecogy and other solar developers to work with the town, explains Dana Levenberg, the town of Ossining's supervisor. This code included a floating zone where the area above large portions of land, like a parking lot, could be used for something like solar canopies.

She adds that the town was happy to work with Maryknoll, "a long-established missionary organization that does good work around the world," to introduce a sustainable energy source into the grid.

"They were hoping to get Ossining residents to be part of the community solar group and it's on an already clear piece of land, so we think that it's a huge success story," Levenberg says.

This project "establishes a rela-

tionship between the town and Maryknoll. We are partners, working together for the betterment of society and the health of our community," Levenberg says.

She adds that this project could be an example for others. Future solar projects could involve school bus parking lots or train stations.

"My hope is that we can lead the way and be good neighbors to the town of Ossining," says Father Finch.

The responses from Ossining residents and Maryknollers have been unanimously positive, says the missionary. "Society members have wanted to see solar here for a long time," he says.

"We all have a responsibility to protect our common home."

Father Lawrence Radice, a Maryknoll missionary from Grand Junction, Colorado, who has been working with farmers and ecology for 35 years, was one of these missionaries.

"I always thought to myself, 'We have this huge parking lot; why don't we cover it with solar panels?'" he says in a video interview. He even wrote a couple of proposals about this.

The solar project at Maryknoll could be a "teaching moment about caring for God's creation," Father Radice says. He explains that it can help students and community members to learn more about sustainable energy production.

David Agosta, director of support services and one of the employee representatives of Maryknoll's Eco-

Mission committee, says the missionary society's commitment to the environment takes decisive actions. He adds that the willingness to try something new, such as pioneering the first solar project of this size in Ossining, is "the way that Maryknoll missionaries have always done things."

According to Agosta, some of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers' green efforts have included using recyclable office supplies and recycled paper and using both sides of the paper when printing (which reduced paper usage by 30%). These and other conservation efforts allowed Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers to be certified by the Green Business Partnership. Maryknoll's eco-mission group is also working on an initiative to reduce the use of plastic on campus, Agosta adds.

Why is it important to take action? "Because it depends on each and every one of us," Father Finch says, adding that people can look for ways to live well while respecting the Earth. "It's true that governments have to do their part, but each of us has to do our part."

Levenberg agrees that to protect the Earth "we have to think big and act small."

"It's already almost too late," she says, "but we can all hope and pray that, with human innovation, we can figure out a way to undo some of the damage that we've done to our Earth and make sure that we protect it for the future, for humanity and animals, all living creatures." ✂

2021 **MARYKNOLL**™ STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

GoodNews

CELEBRATE GOOD NEWS. BECOME GOOD NEWS.

Today the world seems full of "bad news" stories that tell of people expressing hatred, violence, discrimination and other evils demonstrating the worst of humanity. But there are many people who are making the world a better place.

ASSIGNMENT: Write an essay sharing a "good news" story from your own life and explain how it reflects the Good News message of Jesus.

ENTRY: Entries should be 500-750 words. Essays should include your name and division typed on each page. *Note: Spelling and grammar count.* Students may 1) submit essays online at MaryknollSociety.org/Essay (if 13 or older) OR 2) mail essays to the address below. Mailed essays should be typed and stapled, each attached to an ENTRY COVER SHEET (available at MaryknollSociety.org/Essay).

ELIGIBILITY: Students in grades 6-8 (Division I) and grades 9-12 (Division II) are eligible. See MaryknollSociety.org/Essay for official rules.

DEADLINE: Entries must be submitted online or postmarked by **MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2021**. First-place essays will appear in the Summer 2022 *Maryknoll* magazine. All winning entries will be published online at MaryknollSociety.org/Winners by April 1, 2022. For more educational and catechetical resources, please visit <https://discoveryourneighbor.org/>.

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SMILES AND TEARS IN SÃO PAULO'S FAVELAS

By Meinrad Scherer-Emunds

Lay missionary follows vocation to teach, uplift and accompany communities in Brazil's favelas

When she was discerning joining the Maryknoll Lay Missioners, one of the things Margarita Durán was concerned about was separation from family and friends. Serving in São Paulo, Brazil, however, she has found that building new relationships and friendships is the most rewarding part of being a lay missionary.

"Coming from a big, tight-knit Latino family, I'm very family-oriented," Durán, 26, says. "But in my ministries here, I build relationships with many wonderful people that help fill that void. They have now become my friends and my 'overseas family.' "

Durán's interest in mission was sparked when she was a teen helping with catechism classes in her home parish in New Mexico. Her family received *Maryknoll* magazine, so when she became serious about pursuing



Durán works on a mosaic for Our Lady of Grace Chapel in a São Paulo favela. (Oscar Brites/Brazil)



Margarita Durán leads the traditional skirt dance for children during Community Haiti's "Festa Junina" celebration of the feast of St. John the Baptist. (Oscar Brites/Brazil)

overseas mission, Maryknoll seemed a natural place to look. Earlier this year, Durán completed her initial three-and-a-half-year commitment with Maryknoll Lay Missioners. She renewed for an extended term and will continue teaching religious education, art, physical education and English to at-risk children and youth in São Paulo's favelas.

Durán began working in the favela of Haiti (a community of Haitian

immigrants and internal migrants who moved from northeast Brazil in search of better lives) in 2018. Maryknoll Sister Anastasia Lee had helped launch a women's group to provide emotional and social support for women. Durán joined in accompanying the group, offering workshops on conflict and trauma therapy. When the women expressed interest in exercise classes, Durán stepped up (literally!) and

started a Zumba class. She would lead the crew of women and kids in fast-paced salsa, merengue, cumbia and other Zumba moves. Smiles beamed all around.

One girl from the Haiti community has particularly inspired Durán. "She suffers from scoliosis, but that doesn't stop her from running to my Zumba classes every Tuesday and Thursday," Durán says of 11-year-old Maria Clara. "In fact, she has

helped me choreograph four songs. Maria Clara is a high-spirited young girl with big dreams for her life—including becoming a dancer and a veterinarian."

Durán also teamed up with Spiritan seminarians to teach a Saturday catechism class for 7- to 12-year-old children. The class created the design for an expansive mosaic, compiled from the children's ideas, for the new Nossa Senhora das Graças (Our Lady of Grace) Chapel in the favela. "The work on the mosaic was a wonderful opportunity to build teamwork skills and self-esteem among the children," Durán says.

Another creative project led by Durán and enthusiastically embraced by the community was a traditional *dança da saia* (skirt dance) performed during the favela's "Festa Junina" celebration of St. John the Baptist. "The *dança da saia* is usually performed with preschool-aged children," Durán explains. "I wore an enormously large skirt at the center of the circle while the young children danced around me holding on to the ends." (For more, see <https://mklm.org/skirt-dance>)

"Margarita is always ready to lend a hand and help bring an idea to life," says Eliana, a community leader in Haiti who helped organize the Festa Junina event. "She has amazing energy and pours her heart into every detail."

In early 2020, Margarita Durán felt she had hit her stride. Her ministry projects in São Paulo were running smoothly and she had become more and more connected in the communities where she was work-



Durán (right) joins Holy Rosary Sister Ann Griffin (white shirt), Spiritan Seminarian Oscar Britez and community members at outdoor Stations of the Cross. (Anastasia Lee/Brazil)

ing. Then came the coronavirus pandemic, and, like much of the world, she says, “I had to start back from zero all over again. It’s definitely been a roller coaster ride.”

After the United States, Brazil has seen the world’s second highest COVID-19 death toll. And its largest urban center, São Paulo, has been a hotspot. As of mid-July, the state of São Paulo alone had seen more than 130,000 of Brazil’s over 530,000 COVID deaths.

According to UNICEF, prior to the pandemic, 60% of children in Brazil already lived in poverty. Health emergencies, economic hardships, food insecurity and mental health stresses have added heavy new burdens to the lives of Brazilians, especially young people.

“The pandemic has affected both people’s livelihoods and their quality of life,” Durán says. “People who used to be so high-spirited and active

are now discouraged and battling through feelings of hopelessness. That has been one of the hardest things to see among so many people I have come to care for.”

Seeing their suffering, Durán says, has strengthened her commitment to accompaniment—walking with people, making time to be present and to lift their spirits. The missionary has found that starting the day with Scripture, other spiritual readings, prayer or meditation helps to ground her and remind her why she is there.

Not long after the first pandemic lockdown, the Centro de Integração do Migrante (Migrant Integration Center, CIM) in the neighborhood of Brás began responding to hunger in the community. Along with CIM’s director Sister Malgarete Conte, a Missionary Servant of the Holy Spirit, staff and other volunteers, Durán helps distribute baskets of



Margarita Durán helps children to create doves representing the Holy Spirit for a mosaic at Our Lady of Grace Chapel in Community Haiti. (Kathleen Maynard/Brazil)

basic food items. These are provided through a large food relief program collaboratively organized by a network of nonprofits in Brazil.

“The baskets include basic necessities and food staples such as beans, rice, flour, coffee, canned goods and sometimes fruits and vegetables,” Durán explains. “But on the downside, the donations can’t always meet the need. Some weekends, we have had 50 families come to the center pleading for a basket, but there are only 25 available. In all the communities where I work, many families really depend on these donations.” She adds, “I register the families, see what their means are, and then prioritize.”

Durán continues, “The city center of São Paulo is now filled with people living in situations of homelessness.” She has joined fellow Maryknoll Lay Missioner Joanne Blaney volunteering at the Street Network,

which provides lunch each day to an average of 1,000 people.

Blaney, who has served for more than two decades with Maryknoll Lay Missioners in Brazil and is its regional director, is glad Durán followed her vocational call to the favelas of Brazil. She most values Margarita’s “loving presence and service to others, her creativity and generosity in using her skills and talents for mission. Margarita continues to be a gift to us in the Maryknoll Brazil Mission Community.” ✠

Meinrad Scherer-Emunds is the communications director of Maryknoll Lay Missioners. Returned Maryknoll Lay Missioner Kathleen Maynard also contributed to this article.



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Hope on Hooves

By Nancy Richards

Through a goat project in Tanzania, a Maryknoll affiliate from Seattle discovers mission is from everywhere to everywhere

I never thought it would be possible to do mission in Tanzania from my living room in the state of Washington. But a goat project, aptly called Hope on Hooves, has become a mission for me and for many U.S. friends who give needy families in this African country the gift of goats and more.

As a Maryknoll affiliate for 18 years, I have long been attracted to mission, globally and locally. I do prison ministry locally. But in 2016, I had the chance to experience overseas mission through Father John Mollel. He had served in my Holy Cross parish in the Seattle suburb of Lake Stevens. When he returned to his home parish in Arusha, Tanzania, he invited me to visit.

I received unbelievable hospitality from the Tanzanian people, even in

the midst of great poverty. I shared the fruits of my trip with the members of my Seattle Affiliate Chapter when I came home. They were not only inspired by but also supportive of my desire to stay connected to Tanzania.

Three years ago, Father Mollel passed away, but he had left me a forever friend group. One of them connected me on Facebook with Samson Gladstone, a local teacher.

Early last year, I saw Sam's post on Facebook that he was buying goats at \$25 USD for single mothers in Karatu, near Arusha. The women, Sam explained, use the milk to nourish their families, sell it or make cheese. The goats have kids a couple of times a year, soon creating herds. Goats give these women independence and a means of support. I told Sam I'd buy a goat. Two days later, I received a picture of my goat and the family that received it. Enclosed was a handwritten thank you sign.

Meanwhile COVID-19 impacted all our lives. By May 2020, I was stressed out by the pandemic, unable to do my local ministry. I asked God what I could do to help others. I had posted pictures on Facebook of my goats so my friends and fellow affiliates could see the families served. I told them if they were interested in purchasing a goat for \$25 or a cow for \$130, they could buy it through me and receive pictures of their goat or cow with the family they were help-

ing. The response was overwhelming!

Now local volunteers in Tanzania, Lotha Loyewo, Rodgers Mungure and Kajuju Theophil together with Sam, are interviewing the long list of women requesting a goat. All the volunteers are teachers and take time away from their families or work to help with the project. Delivering animals, the volunteers have found many of these families also need food, clothing, household supplies and medical assistance.

I track the donations, make thank you signs, and email them before the deliveries. Seeing the pictures of the goat recipients, many people send additional money. The volunteers are very grateful to be able to purchase the needed food, clothing for the children and moms, beds, bedding, medicine and furniture. The volunteers also drive the women and children to medical appointments, attend doctor appointments with them and keep me informed. One hundred percent of the donations go to the families.

In December 2020, one of our Seattle affiliates, Carolyn Creighton, made many phone calls and was instrumental in getting more than 40 Christmas goat orders from our Seattle chapter. Donors from Maryknoll, family and Facebook friends have been eager to help. Several people have generously paid for entire surgeries for children as well as giving money for food for the rest

The Hope on Hooves project gave this family a goat and new living quarters for six months, until the mother was able to get on her feet. (Courtesy of Samson Gladstone/Tanzania)





Students at St. Paul Academy who could not afford uniforms and backpacks received them along with snacks for all from Hope on Hooves. (Courtesy of Samson Gladstone/Tanzania)

of the family. These children would never have had the opportunity for normal lives without these surgeries. We have helped three children with serious leg issues, funded an eye surgery and provided glasses for a little girl with AIDS. Most recently, we saw the following miracle unfold.

A woman whose toddler son, Said, had water on the brain, begged us to help him. Without committing to covering possible surgery, we said we could get him to Arusha for a consultation. I said I would try to raise some funds. A recent \$200 donation covered travel for Said, his mom and a volunteer; an MRI; blood tests and a doctor visit. A neurosurgeon saw Said on a Wednesday and said the child should stay at the hospital. Two neurosurgeons who specialized in this type of brain surgery were flying in from the United Kingdom on Friday. They would perform

the surgery the following Monday.

When I heard that the volunteer, feeling he had no other choice, had signed the consent for the surgery without asking the cost, I was worried. Surely the cost would be prohibitive! But when the volunteer explained the situation to the surgeons, they gave their services free of charge! The only cost was \$120 for Said's hospital stay. We paid for his mom's meals for a month and transportation home.

The day after Said's surgery, out of the blue, I received donations for \$100 and \$250. Said is going back for a follow-up appointment and I am told his head has started to reshape.

As of this past summer, we've delivered 246 goats and 20 cows, funded lots of medical assistance, and provided food, clothing, school uniforms, school books and playground toys, tables and chairs, beds, mattresses and bedding.

I plan to return to Tanzania as soon as possible and meet many of these families. I will send pictures to those who have donated and/or sent prayers. Through this project, I have learned an important lesson: You can reach out and touch people from anywhere and, through God's grace, make connections that are miraculous. ✠

Nancy Richards is an executive assistant for a multinational aircraft corporation. She has three grown children and one grandchild.



Derrick got funds from Hope on Hooves to pay for the surgery he needed on both his legs because he had rickets. (Courtesy of Samson Gladstone/Tanzania)

Marking 30 Years

By Robert Short

The Maryknoll Affiliates are the most recently formed expression of Maryknoll. We are just over 540 members who gather regularly in 45 individual chapters throughout the United States, Latin America, Asia and Africa. While continuing to pursue our own life journeys, we commit ourselves to the mission goals of Maryknoll through these chapters, where we pray and encourage each other in our lives of service.

Guided by the four pillars of community, spirituality, global vision and action, we affirm our belief that God's love invites all humans into the fullness of life. We seek especially to walk in solidarity with the poor, oppressed and disenfranchised, wherever they may be.

This year the Maryknoll Affiliates celebrate our 30th anniversary, having been founded in 1991 by Maryknoll Sister Ellen McDonald and the late Maryknoll Father James Madden. We are very grateful to have been part of Maryknoll's global mission outreach for these 30 years and joyfully look forward to the future.

Robert Short is executive coordinator of the Maryknoll Affiliates.



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Families in mission

By Alejandro Lopez-Cardinale

Massachusetts parishioners launch a project to foster a sense of belonging during COVID-19



In the summer of 2020, I was concerned about how to help my parishioners in Somerville, Massachusetts, feel part of our parish community amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

As I was leaving for my annual retreat, a parishioner left an image of the “Pietà” encased in a small wooden box outside my door. It reminded me of the pilgrim images that visited from house to house in my home parish in Venezuela. At the retreat, I read an interview with Pope Francis, where he indicated the value of popular piety. I was inspired. Why not combine the need to reach out to parishioners with the “pilgrim images” of my youth?

Soon the Proyecto Comunidad (Community Project) was born.

One thing was clear: we could not do this alone. Our parish had to work with institutions already developing paths of missionary discipleship for Hispanic Catholics in the United States. Immediately, we contacted the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers and the Maryknoll Lay

As part of Proyecto Comunidad, Yngrid and Francisco Flores pray with their children (above) in front of the visiting image of the Holy Family (at left) during the 2020 Advent season. (Photos courtesy of Alejandro Lopez-Cardinale/U.S.)



At a weekly prayer encounter during Lent of 2021, Kayla Lopez reads the Maryknoll study guide as other participants listen and reflect. (Courtesy of Alejandro Lopez-Cardinale/U.S.)

Missioners, with whom we have collaborated since I arrived in this bilingual parish community in 2018.

We proposed that, given Maryknoll's experience with online communities of faith, we develop this project together.

We began the project's first phase during Advent last year, with 12 families each receiving a pilgrim im-

age of the Blessed Mother or a saint to accompany them during the liturgical season. The families committed to following weekly study guides developed by Maryknoll, which facilitate prayer, Bible readings, questions for reflection and discussion as well as action items to do as a family. The guides were written in Spanish and the prayer encounters were



Father Lopez-Cardinale, pastor of St. Benedict Church, enjoys a meal with community members at a parish event in 2019. (Courtesy of Alejandro Lopez-Cardinale/U.S.)

conducted in Spanish and English.

The goal was for families to be strengthened as domestic churches, identifying as communities of faith permanently in mission.

By gathering the family around the Word of God and the pilgrim image, this project engages participants in theology and living faith by inviting them to walk together, as Jesus did with his disciples. This is an initiative to foster and encourage the family as the first group called to be a small community that becomes part of the larger parish community.

"The Church is coming to them and they are called to accompany others, especially during the time of isolation due to COVID," says

Deacon Kevin McCarthy, a Maryknoll mission promoter. "The study guides have the components of prayer, reflection and action. They help people understand their identity as missionaries not only at home, but as families that strive to support others."

We encourage families to use digital platforms to contact relatives who have not been able to visit and make them feel part of our ecclesial community. This is especially important for our Hispanic parishioners, 95% of whom are from El Salvador. Territorial, cultural and geographical limits are not an impediment to developing that sense of belonging.

The Peña family told me, "Father,



Father Lopez-Cardinale smiles during the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in December 2020 at his parish in Somerville, Massachusetts. (Courtesy St. Benedict parish/U.S.)

you cannot imagine what the visit of the pilgrim image has become in our family!" This project, they explained, came at a time when they were going through a tough situation. "The moments we shared through the visit (of the image) and the study guides helped us to reconnect as a family, to work for a solution together, to endure the situation, and, amid everything, to

feel that we could be united with other members of the family in El Salvador when the youths shared the meetings through social networks. For us, it was a blessing."

We carried out phase two during the Easter season this year. A very clear focus of Proyecto Comunidad is to be a Church that goes out, a missionary Church. We want to encourage each family to feel chal-

lenged and called to get on the way. As poet Antonio Machado reminds us: "Wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking." "The project creates new spaces where participants are agents of evangelization. Our goal is that they "do" theology—a practical theology, in which they open themselves to the experience of being found by God in the midst of their lives and the lives of others.

Proyecto Comunidad has opened new doors and paths. The Lopez family says that when they invited their young family members to participate, the youths came looking disinterested and annoyed. "But, after the second week, they began inviting all their cousins through their social networks, those from here and those from El Salvador, even those who live in other states of this country," say the Lopezes.

"From annoyed, they became the ones leading the sessions, the ones who reminded us about the encounters. They were the first to be there, around the pilgrim image every week, and waiting to answer the questions during the sharing moments presented by the study guides," the family continues. "As the time with the pilgrim images was drawing to a close, (the young people) themselves asked: 'When will we have them again?' "

We will hold the project's third phase in Advent and we hope to organize a family parish gathering in the spring of 2022, inviting all who



Ovidio and son Aaron invite family members to join online in honoring the Sacred Heart. (Courtesy of Alejandro Lopez-Cardinale/U.S.)

have participated in the three phases. This is just the beginning. We ask the Holy Spirit to show us the way we should continue to build the Kingdom of God. ✠

Father Alejandro Lopez-Cardinale, a native of Venezuela, is pastor of St. Benedict Church in Somerville, Massachusetts.

Global Climate Momentum Builds

By Kathleen Kollman Birch

Momentum is building for ambitious action to counter climate change, both in the world community and within the Catholic Church.

New climate goals announced by President Joe Biden in March represent the United States' recommitment to the Paris Climate Agreement. As the primary international effort to combat climate change, the agreement formalizes each nation's pledge of action. These must be updated and resubmitted every five years.

The next international gathering organized by the United Nations to address climate change is set for this November. Originally scheduled for November 2020 but postponed due to the pandemic, the Conference of Parties, known as COP26, is expected to be held in Glasgow, Scotland. Pope Francis has been invited to attend.

Whether or not COP26 is held in person, climate activists are striving for the conference to become a turning point for climate action. Much is expected from the gathering, with anticipated announcements of new contributions from each participating nation, the United States' return to the negotiating table and the international

momentum to "build back better" from the COVID-19 crisis.

Adjacent to these international efforts, in May 2021, the Vatican officially launched the Laudato Si' Action Platform inspired by the 2015 encyclical that accelerated the Church's ecological conversion and work for environmental justice.

The seven-year plan will galvanize action on climate within the global Church. According to Cardinal Peter Turkson of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the project is designed "to do something concrete" in response to the growing message from scientists and youth activists that "we are destroying our future."

The number "seven" was chosen to appear throughout the campaign due to its biblical significance. The Laudato Si' Action Platform names seven goals and seven key sectors it hopes to influence. The goals are responding to the cry of the earth, responding to the cry of the poor, ecological economics, ecological spirituality, adopting sustainable lifestyles, investing in ecological education, and community engagement and participatory action.

The sectors include families, par-



A municipal worker collects garbage on the shore in Jakarta, Indonesia, on World Oceans Day, designated by the United Nations for June 8. (CNS, Willy Kurniawan, Reuters)

ishes and dioceses, schools and universities, health care institutions, economic actors (workers and employers), and religious orders and movements. The platform invites Catholics in each sector to prayerfully discern how they can best respond to the invitation of *Laudato Si'* and make a seven-year action plan accordingly. The Vatican hopes the campaign will culminate in a year of celebration to mark the Church's progress toward ecological conversion.

In his video announcement of the Laudato Si' Action Platform, Pope Francis said that although we are facing an "unprecedented ecological crisis ... there is hope. We can all collaborate ... so that our mother Earth may be restored to her original beauty and creation may once again shine according to God's plan." ✠

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

FAITH IN ACTION:

- Watch Pope Francis' five-minute video introducing the Laudato Si' Action Platform: <https://bit.ly/34zdOch>
- Explore the new Laudato Si' Action Platform website, available in nine languages. Prayerfully discern with your faith community how you might get involved: <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>
- Read and share our series of two-pagers "Path to Paris" and "Path from Paris": <http://bit.ly/Path2ParisMOGC/>

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 or email ogc@maryknollogc.org

Partners in Mission

Sharing a treasury of experience

By Deirdre Cornell

When Maryknoll Brother Tim Raible thinks of Doctor Anna Morris, a quote attributed to St. Francis of Assisi comes to mind. “Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words.” Maryknoll Brother John Beeching agrees, “Doctor Anna is a true partner in mission.” Both brothers work with the short-term volunteer in Asia.

Born and raised in Ireland, Anna attended medical school in Galway and then immigrated to Canada, where she completed her residency in Hamilton, Ontario. Both she and her husband, Liam, felt called to serve overseas. As young parents, they lived for a year with their children in China, where Liam taught English.

Once their two sons and two daughters had grown up and Liam retired, he went to China as a Maryknoll volunteer. “He loved every minute of it,” his wife says. Liam’s declining health made it necessary for him to return home to Canada, where eventually he died. Doctor Anna first volunteered with the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers in Bangkok in 2015.

She notes that volunteer programs often recruit young people. However, she points out, “There is a treasury of

experience and knowledge in older age groups.” Doctor Anna, now 73, relished her experience in Bangkok. “Getting older, a lot of people become inactive, which is a pity; they still have so much to contribute. It’s good to take on new mental and physical challenges. For me, learning to get around Bangkok by bus was an accomplishment. As they say, ‘if you don’t use it, you lose it!’”

During visits over the next three years, Doctor Anna worked among the Karen hill tribe people in mountainous northern Thailand.

Because of her medical background, the Maryknoll Thailand team invited Doctor Anna to accompany them on relief missions in Myanmar. “We make periodic trips to the Kachin State to bring relief supplies to IDP (internally displaced people) camps,” says Brother Beeching. He explains that over 400,000 Kachin villagers have been displaced by the world’s longest civil war.

On the team’s most recent trip to Myanmar, in January 2021, a local priest asked Doctor Anna to visit a 24-year-old stricken by sudden paralysis. “Apparently Aung Mai was a fit, healthy young man, until over the



Doctor Anna (left) and Maryknoll Father Lawrence Radice distribute blankets at an internally displaced people’s camp in Myanmar. (Courtesy of Anna Morris/Myanmar)

course of a week, he lost power and sensation in the lower two-thirds of his body,” she recounts. An MRI identified a tumor in his spinal cord.

“The prognosis looked very bleak,” Brother Beeching says, “and Aung Mai was beyond any medical assistance in the far north of the country.”

“Most people would have given up and said this case was hopeless,” Brother Raible adds.

But Doctor Anna confides, “I felt compelled to try and find a way forward for Aung Mai.” She went to work contacting a specialist, securing a wheelchair and enlisting resources. Within a week, Aung Mai took his first plane ride, a trip to the capital for a neurosurgical assessment. An operation quickly followed. “The tumor was completely removed,” Doctor Anna relates. “The laboratory report indicated, to everyone’s relief and delight, that it was benign.”

Back home in Canada, Anna keeps busy with her five grandchildren (ages 5 to 14 years old), while maintaining regular contact with her mission partners. She received word that after months of rehabilitation, Aung Mai is walking again.

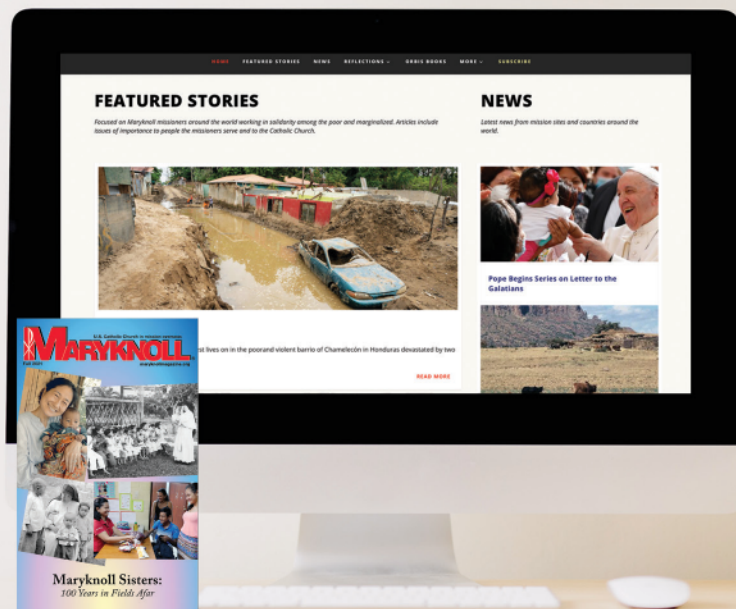
Doctor Anna writes, “I offer my profound gratitude to Maryknoll. In the spirit of friendship and encouragement (and with a generous sprinkling of humor), our golden years have been enriched with opportunities to explore new horizons and, in the pope’s words, the privilege to ‘encounter’ the poor.” ✠

For more information about Maryknoll’s Short Term Volunteer Mission, Immersion and Study Programs, contact Father Michael Snyder at (914) 941-7590 x2467 or visit <https://maryknollsociety.org/how-support/volunteer-opportunities>

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Readers' Responses

FAITH PERSUASION

I have been a reader of *Maryknoll* magazine going back to the mid-1950s. It was my grandfather's subscription and later my dad's. And for the past few decades, I have had my own subscription. Regardless of your editorial position or slant, I have and will continue to support the good and faithful work of your missionaries.

I was pleasantly surprised to read Brian F. Sullivan's letter in the Summer 2021 issue. I, too, support Donald Trump, and I was elected as a Trump presidential delegate from Illinois last year. Also, like Mr. Sullivan, I am "not unfamiliar with the developing world," having served in Vietnam in 1969.

I firmly believe that the faithful, regardless of political persuasion, can be part of the Maryknoll family and help contribute to Maryknoll's selfless effort to bring Jesus' love to all.

*John F. Morrissey, Jr.
Elmhurst, Illinois*

MISLEADING CONNECTION

Connecting a customer sneezing in Wuhan market as the cause for 117 million people contracting COVID-19 worldwide 16 months later and then in the article alleging "a random incident half a world away can impact us all" is misleading, considering that the Chinese Communist Party refused to allow an independent, outside investigation into the cause of the virus, which may have come from the Wuhan lab operated by the CCP military.

Father Joseph R. Veneroso's attempt at what appears to be a poetic connection for his article is not only misleading but unfortunate, considering the lack of credibility that permeates much of American media today.

*Carl Schaefer
Beacon, New York*

COLLEGE LINK

In the Summer 2021 edition of *Maryknoll* magazine, I noticed a photo of the late Father Thomas Goekler wearing a Manhattan College "Jaspers" shirt. After I left the Maryknoll seminary in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, in 1966, I finished my bachelor's degree in economics at Manhattan College, Riverdale, New York, graduating in 1968. I then served for 26 years in the Navy, retiring in 1994 as a supply corps captain. I always read your magazine, and will continue to support the Maryknoll Society. I'm wondering: Did Father Goekler attend Manhattan College?

*Benedict J. Maguire
Clermont, Florida*

Editor's note: According to our *Maryknoll* archives, Father Goekler is not a Manhattan College alum. He earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy and a master of divinity degree, both from St. Bernard Seminary, Rochester, New York. The photo in the Summer 2021 issue was taken in 2006 when a group of Manhattan College students volunteered to help Father Goekler's mission in Barrio Chamelecón, San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

ENRICHED READING

The Summer 2021 *Maryknoll* magazine brings me joy. Publishing student essays on an assigned topic is enriched reading and offers hopefulness. Perhaps you might consider extending the contest internationally. It would be a delight.

Kathleen H. Kennedy
Ashtabula, Ohio

MARYKNOLL EXPRESSIONS

I have enjoyed *Maryknoll* magazine for many years, and was happy to see the good being done with my contributions. Many of the most touching and inspiring stories are about the service of Maryknoll sisters and lay missionaries. So, I was disappointed when I noticed the small print near the front of the magazine that distinguished between the three kinds of "Maryknollers," and the contribution form at the back that says that donations will only be used to support the work of the men's organization.

Please don't think that I am devaluing the work of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. I have been a supporter since the middle of the last century. I even understand the reasons for the three branches, to some extent. Our parish was founded and staffed by Salvatorian priests, brothers, sisters and lay members. One of my sons is the head of the U.S. province of the men's part of that society. It seems that the Salvatorians' founder origi-

nally intended to have the order more fully integrated, but medieval political constraints required more social distancing between ordained, professed, lay, male and female members.

Would it be possible to add a note near the contribution form to indicate how donors could help support the Maryknoll sisters and lay missionaries? If they have separate magazines, I don't know about them. If their work is only promoted in your magazine, it doesn't seem fair that they don't share in the resulting income.

Gerald Wocken
Huntsville, Alabama

Editor's note: Yes, there are canonical reasons for the separate expressions of *Maryknoll*. The note on the bottom of page 3 of the magazine was drafted a few years ago, with the input of leadership of the Maryknoll Society, Maryknoll Sisters, Maryknoll Lay Missioners and Maryknoll Affiliates, specifically to be transparent and address the topic of your letter. The Maryknoll Sisters and Maryknoll Lay Missioners each regularly have ads in the magazine in which they may promote vocations, programs or fundraising. All the expressions have websites, and the URLs for those sites are at the bottom of the articles for each entity in this, our annual vocation issue. The lay missioners have a magazine that publishes less frequently than *Maryknoll* and the affiliates have a bimonthly newsletter.

The editors invite Maryknoll readers to send us their views. Write to:
Readers' Responses
P.O. Box 302, Maryknoll, N.Y. 10545-0302
Our e-mail address is: mkimag@maryknoll.org

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Seminarian John Siyumbu interacts with Brenda Garcia while teaching a catechism class at Saint Pius X Church in Cochabamba, Bolivia. (See Maryknoll candidates story, page 18.)

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