

MARYKNOLL[®]

U.S. Catholic Church in mission overseas

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Hope Shines Through

FROM THE EDITOR

In his environmental encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis introduces the concept of integral ecology. While he didn't coin the term, the pope goes to great lengths to explain "everything is closely interrelated, and today's problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis." An integral ecology, he says, includes human, environmental, economic and social dimensions, "so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

In this issue we highlight Maryknoll's response to the global environmental crisis, which along with the threat of nuclear weapons is widely regarded by scientists as one of the "twin existential threats" to life on earth as we know it. We focus on the commitments of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers and Maryknoll Sisters to live out the pope's call to care for our common home.

To that end, we are excerpting part of the Maryknoll Society's guiding document from its 14th General Chapter, which elected new leadership in July and set direction for the next six years. In the document, the Society pledges clearly and beautifully to "integrate the care of creation in all that we are and all that we do" on both personal and communal levels.

This powerful statement is a testament to how the promise of the pope's seminal encyclical – to "bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development" – is already bearing fruit.

"For," as Pope Francis writes, "we know that things can change."

Lynn F. Monahan
Editor-in-Chief



U.S. Catholic Church in mission overseas

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Magazine of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers



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

Romans 8:28



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FRONT COVER:

A woman sells charcoal by a drainage ditch inside a U.N. camp for displaced people near Malakal, South Sudan.

COVER CREDITS:

Front: Paul Jeffrey/South Sudan
Back: Nile Sprague/Bolivia

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 Mary Magdalene


The Mission of the Magdalene

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

*Through teary bleary eyes she wept
forth her labor pains in despair deeper
Than the grief of watching her Master's shameful
Death on a cross, his bruised and bloodied corpse
Wrapped without ritual and laid in a borrowed tomb.*

*Standing her ground while others fled in fear
She had watched in silent horror as her Lord,
Who had delivered her of no less than seven demons,
Was whipped, stripped, scourged, and nailed to a tree.
Surely she no less than Mother Mary felt the lance
Pierce her heart and soul and hope.*

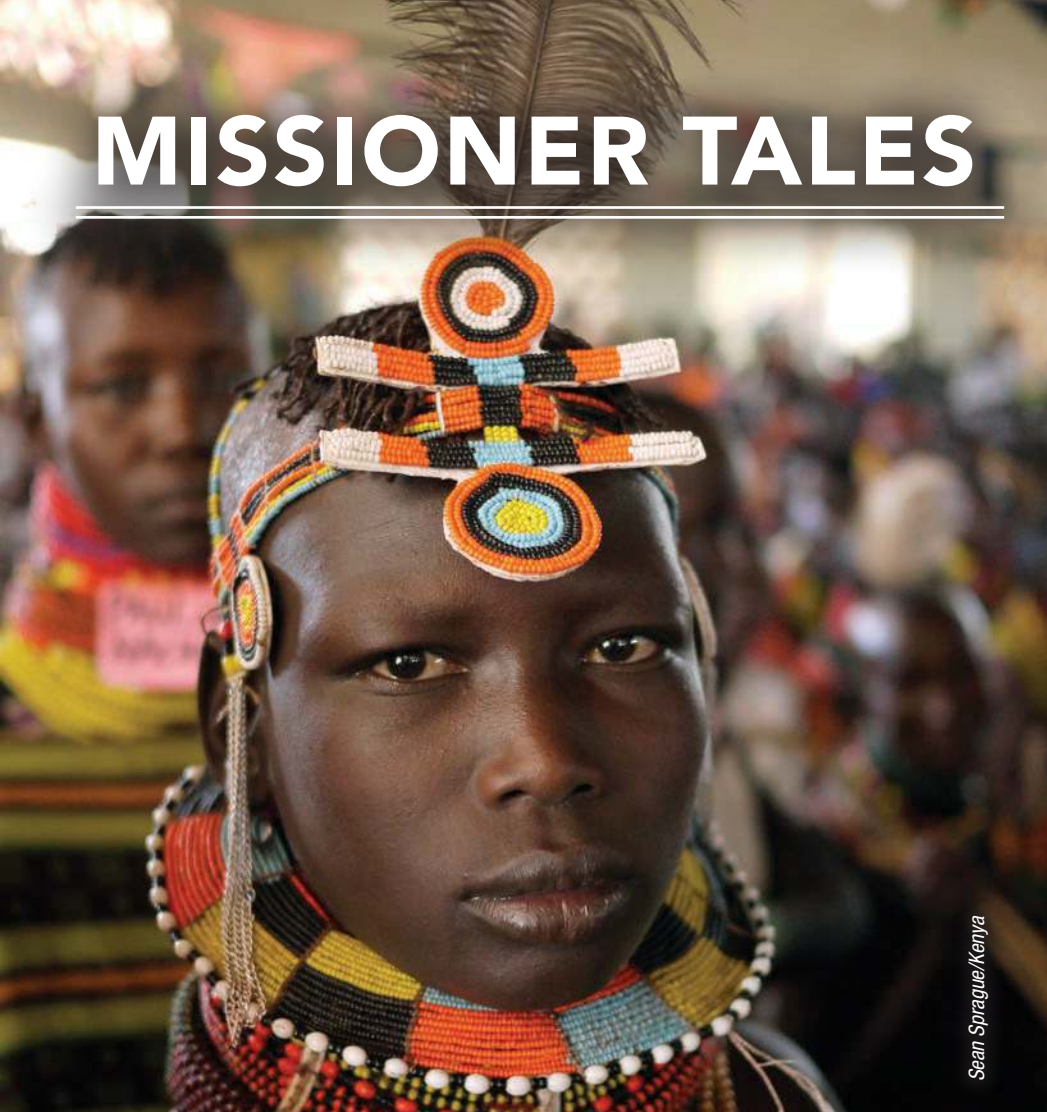


A landscape at sunrise with a bright sun over rolling hills. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the scene. The hills are rolling and covered in green grass, with some trees scattered across the landscape. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with some clouds near the horizon.

*How long that endless Sabbath seemed to last waiting
For the dawn to bear myrrh to anoint their dead Lord
Only to be taunted by an opened, empty tomb.
“Tell me, gardener,” she sobbed, “where you put him and...”
“Mary!” he said as the sun rose a second time
And history itself turned on its head.*

*And in the time it took the Magdalene to rush
From the open tomb to the locked upper room
Behold, her message and mission birthed the Church
Into being, despite their dismissive disbelief
Her hope restored, her faith renewed, her love confirmed
She lit the spark that set the apostles' souls ablaze.*

MISSIONER TALES



Sean Sprague/Kenya

Recently I visited a Catholic family in Nairobi, Kenya. The father had not yet arrived home from work. The mother was cooking lunch. She told the young children to entertain the visiting priest.

After we chatted for a while, the 9-year-old daughter told me she was teaching her 3-year-old brother how to make the Sign of the Cross. The boy began by touching his chest, then his right side before his left side. His sister patiently took his hand and

traced the correct steps. After many tries, the younger brother got it right. He clapped and said, “Amen.” His sister excitedly said, “Jimmy, you did it.” She ran into the kitchen shouting, “Mommy, Jimmy did it, Jimmy did it.” The mother dropped her towel and ran back into the living room. Jimmy made the Sign of the Cross by himself and Mommy gave him a big hug. We all clapped.

I am hopeful for the Catholic Church in the future. African Catholic families

are taking responsibility for their religious education and passing on the Catholic faith from one generation to the next.

Joseph Healey, M.M.

This is the spirit of the resurrection: everyone coming together to combat the suffering of COVID-19 with acts of love.

Where I serve as a Maryknoll lay missionary in El Salvador, people have joined to install car washes to sanitize vehicles entering the communities. Churches, local governments, organizations and neighbors also go from house to house giving food to the elderly and families in need. They live out a message of hope.

Members of our youth program help deliver food baskets. Esaú, one of our soccer coaches, told me about visiting an elderly woman with no income. She told him she had already received a food donation and requested that he give her food basket to another family who had not gotten anything.

Esaú said, “The humblest people, who have almost nothing, share the little they have with so much love and an open heart.”

Larry Parr, MKLM

In Nairobi, I serve as a member of a peacebuilding team. We organize “Conversations for Social Change” for men and women from Kenya’s diverse ethnic and religious groups. One man’s story shows the importance of this work.

This man lived among neighbors of another tribe on a plot of land he had purchased. When ethnic conflicts flared in the region, he was brutally

beaten and left to die. Treated at a hospital, he then went to live in an internally displaced people’s camp until relative calm returned.

Moving back home, he noticed that a neighbor had taken possession of one of his cows! Having learned how to speak up in our conversation groups, he very humbly and courageously asked the man how they could share the “fruit” of this cow.

“What I want is a good relationship with you,” he told his neighbor. “Now that this cow has a calf, you can choose to give me the calf and you remain with the mother, or you give me the mother and you keep the calf.” The neighbor responded that it would be good for the man to take the calf and he would keep the cow. It was arranged as simply as that. In fact, the aggrieved man thanked the other for looking after his cow during the time of violence.

Sia Temu, M.M.

Here in El Paso, Texas, I serve at Annunciation House’s longer-term migrant shelters. A Honduran mother and her two daughters, 10 and 12 years old, stayed with us at Casa Romero. When it was mealtime—and again after the meal—the mother would gather her girls together in a huddle to pray. When the day came for them to leave and to go to their sponsor, they asked us volunteers to pray with them. That moment, for me, was sacred. Here was this woman, so grateful for being welcomed. She felt secure and respected—and dignified because we treated her and her family like the special guests they were.

Coralis Salvador, MKLM



Toward an Integral **HUMAN ECOLOGY**

At its 14th General Chapter, which elected new leadership and set direction for the next six years, the Maryknoll Society laid out the case for an ecology of interconnectedness and committed to an action plan to respond to all life on our changing planet. The following is an excerpt from the Chapter documents.

In June 2019, Pope Francis declared a global “climate emergency,” warning of the disastrous effects of global warming and stating that a failure to act quickly to reduce greenhouse gases would be a “brutal act of injustice towards the poor and future generations.” The 14th General Chapter unequivocally shares Pope Francis’ concern. Furthermore, we affirm the scientific conclusion that climate change is real and presents an existential threat to all life on earth.

Our Christian faith and our love for the poor compel us to respond to the cry of the earth, its people, and its creatures. In God’s eyes, all creatures of the earth are interrelated and in need of mutual care. *Laudato Si’* teaches us that ecological sin is ignoring our interconnectedness and relationship with the earth and with fellow human beings and future generations who depend on our good stewardship of God’s gift of creation.

Our response must be immediate, because delay will add to the world’s suffering and make any remedies all the more difficult. Our response must be both personal and communal.

An aerial view contrasts lush rainforests and deforested land in the Amazon region near Porto Velho in Brazil. (CNS/Bruno Kelly, Reuters)



Women carrying babies make their way through an affected area in Bogra, Bangladesh, where floods have worsened in recent years. (CNS/Mohammad Ponir Hossain, Reuters)

Awareness of our intimate connection with all creation must result in concrete action in and with the communities where we live and serve. Living and preaching an integral human ecology is the new face of contemporary mission. From now on, Maryknoll seeks to integrate the care of creation in all that we are and all that we do.

LISTENING TO THE CRY

From the comfort of our weatherproof homes and air-conditioned cars, with our well-stocked refrigerators and easy access to COVID vaccinations and medical care, it is not easy to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. In order to truly

listen, we must open the doors of our hearts and minds. We must be ready to hear the unexpected. We must be willing to hear the painful moaning of Jesus on the Cross. "Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' (which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?')" (Matthew 27:46).

The details of climate change's impact can be daunting. They can stun the psyche and paralyze the heart. Diminished fresh water availability, coastal area flooding and crop failures are but a few of the projections that scientists are noting. As global warming proceeds, ocean temperatures are rising, massive coral reefs are dying and caus-

ing fish populations to decline. The human communities dependent on the ocean for food sources will be left hungry. All across the world, heat waves and extremely powerful storms are being witnessed. Such climate extremes will kill many vulnerable people and creatures in the years to come.

As missionaries, we are called to look with new eyes upon all of creation. Mission calls us to cherish, revere and renew the earth. We are challenged anew to listen with open hearts and to recognize that the cry of the earth is the voice of Our Lord calling out to us from the Cross.

IDENTIFYING WITH THE CRY

After we recognize Jesus in agony on the Cross in the cries of the earth and the poor, we must not cover our eyes or retreat into our comfortable homes. As Christians, we are called to realize our oneness with the Suffering One — to identify with Christ, the poor, and all creation. "I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one — as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe..." (John 17:21). Jesus' prayer demands that we feel within our minds and hearts the horror of the ecological devastation that is being perpetrated upon Mother Earth.

In connecting the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, Pope Francis presents an integral human ecology as the new face for contemporary mission, which recognizes that all creation is interrelated and that our good stewardship is a Christian imperative (Genesis

1:26-31). In order to identify with the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth, we must realize that we don't just inhabit the earth, but we are of the earth. When the earth suffers exploitation, we all ultimately suffer. This is most evident in those people who are impoverished and living on the margins of society. In the spirit of the book of Exodus, where God hears the cry of the oppressed and responds to their suffering (Exodus 3:7-9), we must identify with the suffering of the earth and the suffering of the poor within our own bodies, and in this way we will realize that our very existence and salvation depend upon taking seriously this responsibility (Romans 8:19-23). ✠

THE LAUDATO SI' GOALS

- Response to the cry of the earth
- Response to the cry of the poor
- Ecological economics
- Adoption of sustainable lifestyles
- Ecological education
- Ecological spirituality
- Community resilience and empowerment

<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>

Pioneers in Ecology and Care of Creation

By Lynn F. Monahan

Maryknoll Sisters set an example of caring for our common home

From the Philippines to Panama to Zimbabwe and at home in New York, the Maryknoll Sisters have been pioneers in the ecology movement. Their works in Asia, Africa and the Americas have all led by example and presaged what Pope Francis deemed “care of our common home” in his 2015 environmental encyclical *Laudato Si’*.

“Women are leaders in climate adaptation,” said Maryknoll Sister Marvellous (Marvie) Misolas, the Congregation’s representative to the United Nations. In a U.N. debate on climate action in October 2021, she described what it looks like “when women lead climate action,” citing an example from her native Philippines.

In the city of Antipolo, east of Manila, women participated in reforestation and afforestation (growing trees where none grew before) programs as part of a community-based watershed conservation program, the Marikina Watershed Protected Landscape. The locally led effort in 2016 was designed to conserve fresh water sources that would directly benefit surrounding communities, she said.

“Local women initiated leadership in the implementation pro-

cess,” Sister Misolas said. This included collecting seeds from forests, setting up nurseries, participating in government meetings and capacity building workshops, selling seedlings to the government, and planting and monitoring new trees.

“Women leading climate action have shown interconnectivity of solutions,” she said.

In the early 1990s, Maryknoll sisters working elsewhere in the Philippines established the Maryknoll

Ecological Sanctuary in Baguio City on the island of Luzon, preserving 2.8 hectares of lush tropical pine forest. The sanctuary not only saves a tiny piece of forest from being burned off for agriculture, but also serves as a learning center to help local people reclaim knowledge of caring for the earth.

Similarly, Maryknoll sisters in the rainforest of Darién, Panama, work to promote a way of life that harmoniously co-exists with the environment. They run programs that include sustainable living and alternatives to the slash and burn agriculture that has been destroying Darién’s forests for decades.

“I think one of the big problems that has caused a lot of destruction in our environment, in God’s creation, is not recognizing that God is really everywhere,” Maryknoll Sister Jocelyn Fenix said of the Darién mission in a 2019 article in *Maryknoll*.

“God is in our fellow human beings, in the animals, in the land. So, how can we help others to stand in awe at the wonder of all creation?”

Maryknoll Sister Janet Miller (see story, page 18), who also served in Panama, began her mission career in Africa in 1976, working in community gardening and agriculture in Tanzania and Zimbabwe, where she studied farming techniques suitable for the southern African landscape.

Back in New York in 2012, Sister Miller, as co-director of the Maryknoll Sisters’ Environmental Office, helped preserve 42 acres of the Sisters’ 60-plus acre property in the town of Ossining as a land trust.

“The conservation easement is to protect the environment, which contains both native woodlands and wetlands,” Maryknoll Sister Rebecca Macugay told the U.N. in October. “The trust is more than a legal agreement; it is a sacred trust.”

The Maryknoll Sisters, like the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, have committed themselves to addressing climate change and care of the earth and to responding to Pope Francis’ call in *Laudato Si’* for a sustainable and integrated ecology.

Maryknoll Sister Anastasia Lott, who also addressed the U.N. in October, said: “We hope our efforts will spark a movement of integrated climate solutions that are responsive to Pope Francis’ moral call to humanity in *Laudato Si’* to care for God’s creation and God’s people.” ✠



Sites like the Marlin gold mine in San Marcos, Guatemala, have devastated the environment of indigenous communities. (CNS/Ezra Fieser, Reuters/Guatemala)

Spirit of Mission

Whose Church Is It?

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

Neither a trick question nor a trick answer. It's Jesus' Church. It says so right inside the Vatican, in Latin words circling Michelangelo's cupola: "*Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam...*" (Matthew 16:18) "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build MY church..." (Emphasis added.) This proved more literal than most people realize. Bones were discovered beneath St. Peter's Basilica in 1942 and identified in 1968, so the church was indeed physically built on top of its eponymous pope.

The key takeaway is that from its inception, the Church belonged to Christ. It's only when we, the Body of Christ, forget this essential fact that we get overwhelmed and despair of the current state of the Church.

We cannot deny that there are very serious problems that shouldn't be minimized: Aftershocks of the 2002 sexual abuse of minors scandal continue to undermine people's confidence in the bishops as well as in the institution. Lawsuits force bishops to sell church property. Political divisions have splintered parish councils. Fewer priestly vocations and increasingly aged priesthood have forced bishops into closing and

consolidating hundreds of parishes. Discouraged parishioners either decrease their financial support or leave the Church altogether.

At times like this it helps not only to remind ourselves the Church belongs to Christ, but to look a bit more closely at our 2,000-year history. The Church has been through times of tribulation before. In fact, the first few hundred years saw brutal persecutions and martyrdoms unleashed by despots determined to blot out the new "Way." Yet the Church endured and grew.

Internally the Church has been fraught with conflicts and divisions, including the Great Schism (split) of 1054 between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

During the darkest days, the Holy Spirit raised up saints to guide the Church into the light.

In medieval times when popes and bishops were living opulent lifestyles and corruption was rampant, Francis of Assisi heard Jesus speak to him from the cross: "Francis, rebuild my Church." At first Francis took the message literally. He began to repair an abandoned chapel, one stone at a time. But eventually he realized his call was to be a living witness



Parishioners at Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Church in Taichung, Taiwan, fervently worship God at Sunday Mass in 2018. (Nile Sprague/Taiwan)

of Christ. He renounced all worldly possessions, devoting himself to preaching the Gospel and caring for the sick. He soon had a band of followers doing the same.

Closer to our own time, during the Great Depression, U.S. journalist Dorothy Day became a tireless advocate for the poor. (See *Orbis Books preview*, page 30.) She founded the Catholic Worker Movement dedicated to offering hospitality to homeless people and protesting war, violence and all forms of injustice.

Day never hesitated to raise her voice against the wrongs she saw, even when it brought criticism on her from the Catholic hierarchy, as was the case regarding her pacifist

stand during World War II. Yet she remained a loyal Catholic who sought her strength in the sacraments and rituals of the Church. Her cause for canonization is currently before the Vatican.

Passionate prophets like these call clergy and laity alike back to radical conversion to the Gospel.

Whose Church is it? It is Christ's and it is ours. It will survive and thrive if we remember we belong to Christ and, like Francis of Assisi and Dorothy Day, we are called to be Christ in the world today. Let us keep in mind the rest of that quote from Matthew 16:18 inside St. Peter's cupola: "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." ✠

LEARNING NEW LANDSCAPES

by Deirdre Cornell

Care for Creation is integral to mission

Maryknoll Sister Janet Miller has spent a lifetime learning new landscapes.

“Wherever I serve, I like to put my hands in the soil,” she says. Most recently, the missionary moved from New York State, where she helped preserve native woods and wetlands, to the Texas borderlands, where she helps the desert bloom.

As a master gardener trained by Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University AgriLife Extension, Sister Miller, 72, now grows flowers, fruits and vegetables in El Paso.

“It’s different to garden in the desert. It’s all about irrigation and sustainable water management,” she explains. “In the Midwest where I grew up, we have an abundance



Master gardeners Maryknoll Sister Janet Miller (left) and Veronica Macias, trained by Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University AgriLife Extension, care for landscape at the El Paso Municipal Rose Garden. (Margaret Sierra/U.S.)



Sister Miller teaches a student to care for poultry in 1988 while serving as an agricultural instructor at Thornhill High School in Gweru, Zimbabwe. (Maryknoll Mission Archives)

of grass and trees, but here in Texas we encourage natural landscaping with native plants to reduce the use of water.”

It’s not surprising that Janet Miller was drawn to care for creation at a young age. “Although we were not farmers, my family got a lot out of two and a half acres,” she says about her childhood in Evansville, Indiana. “My mother canned or preserved our fruits and vegetables for the year.”

Miller, who earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education, felt called to religious life – and to mission – since high school. Drawn to Maryknoll through *Maryknoll* magazine, she entered the Congregation in 1974.

During her novitiate in New York, Sister Miller was enraptured by the

natural beauty of the Sisters Center. “Our foundress, Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, envisioned our center as a place where the sisters could come back from mission and be refreshed and renewed,” she says. “She referred to our spiritual life as a garden.”

Sister Miller first served in 1976 in Tanzania, where she studied Swahili and worked in education and community development, including garden projects. Then when Zimbabwe gained independence, the Maryknoll Sisters launched efforts to support that southern African nation. “They asked for Maryknollers with experience in Africa,” says Sister Miller, who along with other Maryknoll sisters volunteered. She was assigned there in 1982.

While Sister Miller taught in a

secondary school, she wanted to pursue training in farming. “I was more interested in the practical courses than the academic ones,” she says. She sought advice from Maryknoll Sister Mary Frances Kobets, who led a program at Gweru Teachers College for instructors in agriculture and animal husbandry. “Sister Fran told me not to go to ag school in the U.S., but there in Zimbabwe,” she says. “She said it would be more useful to learn the techniques that work in that landscape and climate.”

Sister Miller says completing the year-long agricultural training was “a dream come true.”

Yet, there was more to learn. “The government was promoting eucalyptus trees. Some teachers decided to plant them on the land around our school,” she recalls. “After we planted the trees, the village chief said that before, they used to plant rice there. That land was better suited to rice.” She concludes, “It’s so important to consult with the local community.”

Sister Miller, who professed her final vows in 1985, worked alongside Zimbabwean teachers and religious sisters. She learned Shona, the regional language. “When I left Zimbabwe in 1995,” she remembers, “the sisters said to me, ‘You ate the food we ate, and you went to our celebrations and our funerals.’ They meant I shared village life, among the people.”

Her next mission assignment took her to a completely new landscape, in Panama. The province of Darién, in particular, contains a biosphere reserve of jungles and rainforests

that are home to diverse plants and animals. Sister Miller served in Darién and in the community of Las Mañanitas, close to the capital city. There she volunteered with a non-profit organization called Madres Maestras (Mothers as Teachers), which runs groups for mothers and their preschool-age children. “Among other activities, we composted and we grew papaya trees,” she says.

Reflecting on her different mission experiences, Sister Miller says that her ministry is made of small, hands-on acts offered in a spirit of service. “I relate to the Gospel story of the widow’s mite. ‘Out of her poverty, she put in everything she had to live on.’ She gave everything.”

In 2005, Sister Miller was called back to the familiar, beloved property of the Sisters Center in New York. She became co-director, with Maryknoll Sister Doreen Longres, of the sisters’ Environmental Office. The office looked for ways to implement practices making the center more ecologically sustainable. In 2012 (for the sisters’ 100th anniversary), the Congregation set aside 42 of the center’s 67 acres in an easement, protecting the land from future development. “I am grateful this land will be here for further generations,” Sister Miller said at the time.

Nowadays, Sister Miller calls the desert “home.” She arrived in El Paso in 2017 to join other Maryknoll missionaries responding to the humanitarian crisis at the U.S./Mexico border.

She volunteers for Annunciation House, a network of sites that offer



Sister Miller, trained in agriculture and animal husbandry at Gweru Teachers College in Zimbabwe, discusses farming techniques with a student in 1988. (Maryknoll Mission Archives)

hospitality to migrants, and currently serves at its largest shelter, Casa del Refugiado (Refugee House). Using the Spanish she learned in Panama, she converses with migrants “to make them feel welcome.” Many are refugees fleeing from persecution or violence or displaced by climate change.

She finds inspiration in the way that the local Church and the wider community have responded generously and compassionately to migrants in need – even as, at one time, over 1,000 arrived daily. With such hospitality, the desert becomes a place of respite and welcome, as noted by Bishop Mark Seitz of the El Paso Diocese, who quotes Isaiah 35:7, “The burning sands will become pools, and the thirsty ground, springs of water.”

As part of her environmental min-

istry, Sister Miller proposed a course on Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home* to Tepeyac Institute, a bilingual diocesan ministry training center. “Another sister, a Franciscan, nurtured the seed and got it going. We had a 10-week program on *Laudato Si’*,” she says. The participants then formed teams promoting care for creation in their respective parishes and communities.

“As I get older, it’s still all about that widow’s mite, or the mustard seed,” the missionary says. “Am I willing to plant my little seed of understanding, and join it to other people’s? I’m on the page of creation and ongoing creation. ... *Laudato Si’* for me is about how to engage in care of our common home. And home is wherever I am at the time.” ✠

MARYKNOLL MISSION INSTITUTE



PROGRAM PLAN FOR 2022

The Mission Institute will offer the following programs during 2022. Write for an application form.

(Maryknoll Mission Institute, Maryknoll Sisters
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Tel. 914-941-7575 x5671 or e-mail us at missinst@mksisters.org.)

Dates	Title	Presenter
May 15-20 (Sun. - Fri.)	<i>Laudato Si’</i> “Care of Our Common Home”: Pope Francis Calls Us to Care for God’s Imperiled Creation, the Poor and Marginalized and Think of the Future Generations. It is time to act!	Erin Lothes, Ph.D.
June 5-10 (Sun. - Fri.)	<i>Healing the Earth:</i> Spiritual Practices for Personal and Planetary Transformation	Dr. Bruce G. Epperly, Ph.D.
June 12-17 (Sun. - Fri.)	<i>“Eco-Justice and the Emerging Challenges for Christian Faith”</i>	Rev. Diarmuid O’Murchu, MSC
June 19-24 (Sun. - Fri.)	<i>Integrating Mindfulness Tools with Christianity toward Compassion and Justice</i>	Gail J. Stearns, M.Div., Ph.D.
July 7 & 8 (Thurs. - Fri.)	<i>Theogenesis:</i> God’s Becoming in Evolution (Two-day program)	Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF, Ph.D.
July 10-15 (Sun. - Fri.)	<i>Women at the Well:</i> Agents of Change and Shapers of the World	Maureen O’Connell, Ph.D.
July 17-22 (Sun. - Fri.)	<i>Images of God in Teilhard and Merton</i>	Sr. Kathleen Duffy, SSJ, Ph.D.
July 24-29 (Sun. - Fri.)	<i>Vulnerability Is a Mark of Existence:</i> Film’s Testimony to Truth and Hope	Rev. Larry Lewis, MM, Ph.D.

Application forms and program descriptions may be found on our Website <http://www.maryknollsisters.org/missioninstitute>

ONLINE REGISTRATION AVAILABLE

HOPE SHINES THROUGH *in South Sudan*

Text and photos by Paul Jeffrey

Maryknoll priest serves displaced people at U.N. camp in African nation

For thousands of displaced people who have found refuge inside a United Nations base in Malakal, a town in war-torn South Sudan, it's a daily struggle to find food, water and medicine. Finding hope is even harder. For that, many of them look to Maryknoll Father Michael Bassano.

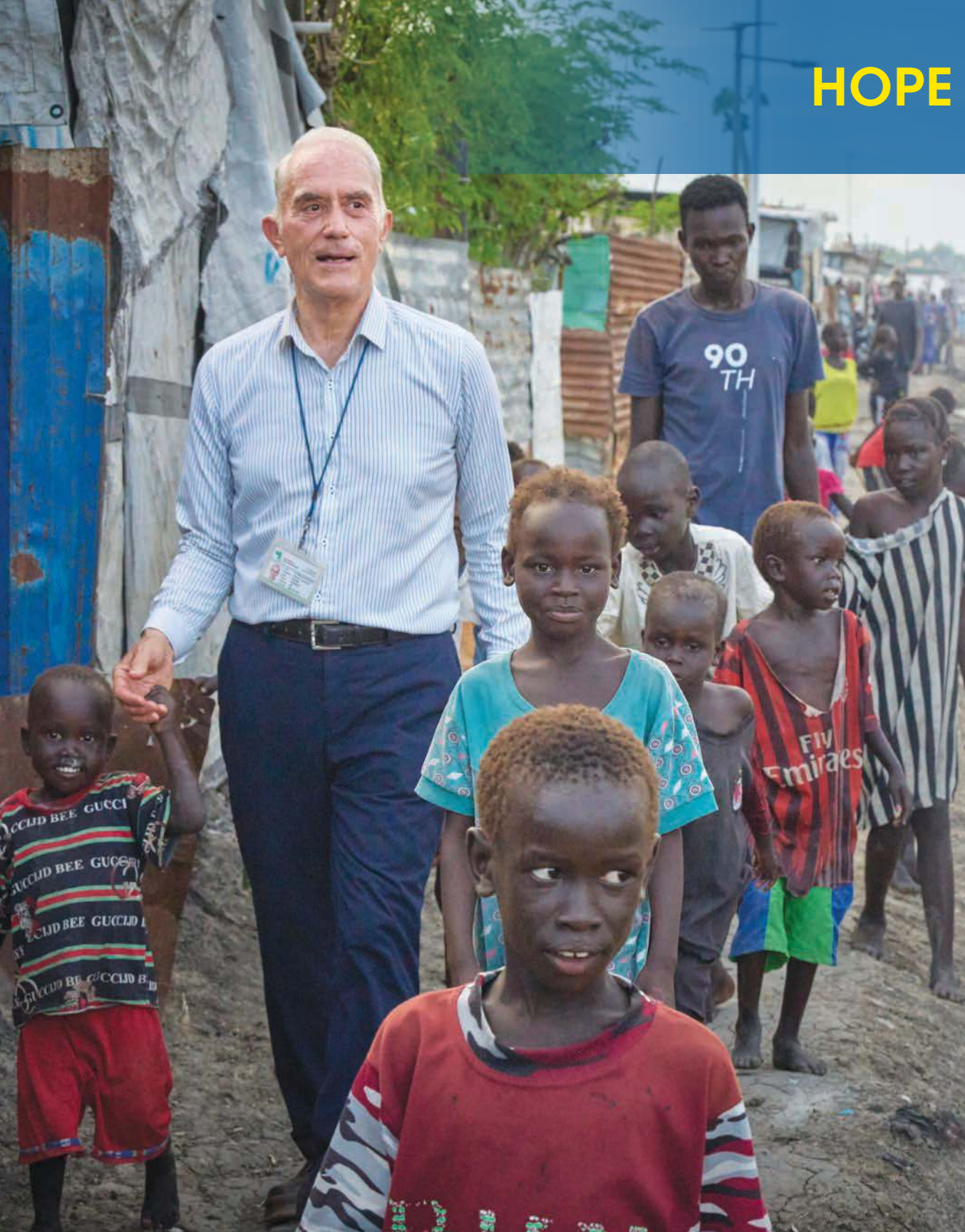
The missionary from Binghamton, New York, says his parish is a tightly packed maze of shacks constructed of scrap lumber and tin sheeting filled with people hiding from war.

"In Maryknoll, we believe we should be with people at the margins, and you don't get any more marginal than this," he says. "I'm in love with the people here."

The camp, which today hosts some 35,000 displaced people, formed in 2014 when political conflict in the country's capital fanned lingering ethnic tensions into open warfare. In Malakal, threatened members of the Shilluk, Nuer and Dinka tribes ran to the U.N. base. Haunted by the ghosts of the Rwandan genocide in 1994 that pitted ethnic groups against one another, local U.N. officials took in the fleeing people and posted peacekeeping troops to stand guard.

Father Bassano had been in Malakal for only two months when the war broke out. He had left Tanzania to join Solidarity with South Sudan, an international community of Catholic groups supporting teachers, health care workers and pastoral agents (at that time, in the world's newest country). Living in a teacher training college in Malakal, he was learning Arabic, visiting hospitals

Maryknoll Father Michael Bassano, a member of the Solidarity with South Sudan network, walks through the U.N. base at Malakal, where he lives and serves.



and working in a local parish.

When the shooting started, Father Bassano crouched on the floor of a bathroom, the best protected room in the house, where three Catholic sisters also hid for safety. After four days of lying low, the priest and sisters made their way past burned vehicles and bullet-riddled bodies to the U.N. base.

Father Bassano was evacuated, but his heart remained in Malakal. After months of vicious fighting, he was finally able to return.

"All the priests in Malakal had left, so the people felt abandoned and forgotten. I decided to stay

with them," he says. It wasn't safe to return to the town, and the teacher training college was in ruins. So Father Bassano lived with the displaced people who'd made a home on the U.N. base.

"I didn't speak much Arabic, but some of them understood English. I stayed with them to show them that I, as a Maryknoll missionary, wanted to accompany them on their journey," he says. "And they responded. They organized a youth group, dance and drama groups, and the catechists and Legion of Mary got to work. And with each of these groups, I pushed to include



Father Bassano talks with women inside the Protection of Civilians area inside the U.N. base in Malakal, South Sudan, which shelters approximately 35,000 displaced people.



members of every ethnic group in the camp."

Father Bassano talked U.N. officials into giving them a small parcel of land, where they started gathering under a plastic tarp for Mass. In 2015 they got a larger lot and constructed a building with sheets of metal roofing. The missionary calls it the "Tin Box" because, he says, it's almost intolerable in the hot season.

Father Bassano admits his seminary classes didn't include how to be a priest in a displacement camp. He invokes Saint Daniel Comboni's belief that mission will teach you both what to do and how to do it.

"Being in the camp has shown me that if we can come together, all the different ethnic groups, if we can be truly catholic with a small c, then we can find a path to peace, not just for people in the camp but for everyone in South Sudan," he says.

Children jump back and forth over a drainage ditch as they play. Residents are protected by U.N. peacekeeping troops.



Members of a youth dance group practice for their participation in Sunday Mass at the camp.

Finding that path hasn't been easy. In 2016, government soldiers invaded the camp and armed Dinkas set fire to the shelters, burning over a third of the camp. At least 30 people died.

In the aftermath of the attack, Dinka residents of the camp moved back to the town. About the same time, the government started flying

Dinka families from other areas to Malakal. They took up residence in the homes of the displaced Shilluk and Nuer living in the camp.

After several weeks, Father Bassano proposed that Catholics in the camp go into the town to celebrate Mass.

"There was a lot of resistance. They told me that if I went into town, I loved those people more than them," he says. "But every time we gathered for worship in the camp, I reminded them we are one family of God. If we are truly Catholic, we have to reach out to our brothers and sisters in town." Finally, a small group went into town, where Father Bassano celebrated Mass with the Dinka. "That began a very small opening to reconciliation, despite the ongoing conflict," he says.

"I've learned to be patient, to move with the people, to see what they're feeling and thinking, and



Father Bassano receives the offering as he celebrates Mass in a makeshift chapel of scrap lumber and corrugated tin, bringing Shilluk, Nuer and Dinka residents together.



The families of children such as these two girls, shown selling fruit, were displaced from their homes following the outbreak of civil war in 2013.

yet to encourage them that as true believers we have to put our divisions aside," he says. "I've learned that when we're simply present with people, by the example of our lives and our faith, by showing our concern for others, then something happens."

Rhoda James Tiga, a Dinka woman who lives in the camp and works for the U.N., says Father Bassano helps people understand what it means to be Catholic.

"There is fighting outside – Dinka against Shilluk, Shilluk against Dinka, and the same with the Nuer – but inside the church, we all pray together," she says. "Thanks to Father Michael, we are able to unite under the Catholic Church."

According to Sergey Chumakov, a Ukrainian protection officer with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Father Bassano has become a key player inside the camp. "There is huge respect for him. People listen to him," Chumakov says. "They

see in him that South Sudan is not forgotten."

Father Earnest Aduok, a Shilluk, who is pastor of St. Joseph's Cathedral in the town, adds, "All the other priests who were here in Malakal were chased away. For Father Mike to stay in the camp has been a sign of hope."

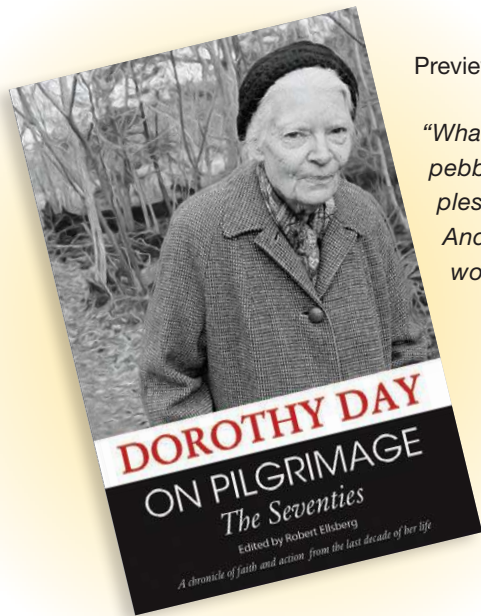
Today, in the wake of a wobbly 2018 ceasefire, the only camp that remains under the U.N.'s control is in Malakal.

"My hope is that the people in the camp can return home someday soon," Father Bassano says. "I keep encouraging them not to lose hope. It may take five, 10 or 15 years, but we'll get there. And I'll accompany them in that journey as long as I can." ✠

Paul Jeffrey is a photojournalist who works around the world with church-sponsored relief agencies. Founder of Life on Earth Pictures, he lives in Oregon.

ORBIS BOOKS

Spotlight



Preview by Robert Ellsberg

“What I want to bring out is how a pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. And each one of our thoughts, words and deeds is like that.”

– Dorothy Day

Upon her death in 1980, Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, was famously described as “the most significant, interesting and influential figure in the history of American Catholicism.” That significance has become only more evident in the last 40 years, as her distinctive integration of faith with the causes of peace, care for the earth and solidarity with the poor has become an integral challenge for the mission of the Church. She was one of the four “great Americans” around whom Pope Francis organized his 2015 speech to the U.S. Congress, and today her cause for canonization is in process.

This new Orbis volume, a collection

of Day’s writings from the last decade of her life, illustrates her signature effort to balance three impulses: direct service of the poor; protest against the system that causes so much poverty and injustice; and an attentive appeal to the possibility of a new society, animated by new values. She had spent her whole life trying to live out the radical implications of the Gospel. But to be a radical, she believed, was not just about protesting, but pointing in the direction of a constructive alternative, a society “where it is easier for people to be good.”

Even as Day aged, her last years were marked by travels around the world, including trips to Soviet Russia, India (where she met with her

friend Mother Teresa) and Tanzania, eager to learn about the village socialism of President Julius Nyerere. Other adventures included her last arrest, in 1973, on a picket line with striking farmworkers in California, and her standoff with the Internal Revenue Service over her refusal to pay federal taxes for war. In 1976, at the Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia, she delivered her last public speech, linking the Eucharist with the hunger for bread and the cause of peace. Still, she found the energy to open a new shelter on the Lower East Side for homeless women.

These writings, which also poignantly document the culmination of her earthly “pilgrimage,” are especially meaningful to me, as they are drawn from the five years I spent as a member of the Catholic Worker community. Several months after my arrival in 1975 at the age of 19, Dorothy asked me to serve as managing editor of *The Catholic Worker* newspaper, thus, in a way I could not have

foreseen, pointing me in the direction of my life’s work: not just as an editor, but as *her* editor.

This collection marks the fifth volume I’ve edited of her writings, beginning with her *Selected Writings* (reprinted by Orbis), *The Duty of Delight: The Diaries of Dorothy Day*, *All the Way to Heaven: Selected Letters of Dorothy Day*, and *On Pilgrimage: The Sixties*, also published last year at Orbis. Of all these volumes, this one captures the Dorothy I knew — brave, compassionate, prophetic — who made you feel it was possible to be a better person, and that this undertaking was a marvelous adventure. Both for those who have read her classic memoir, *The Long Loneliness*, or are discovering her for the first time, these writings, the last testament of a life of faith, solidarity and activism in the cause of justice and peace, point toward a new saintliness for our time. ✠

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



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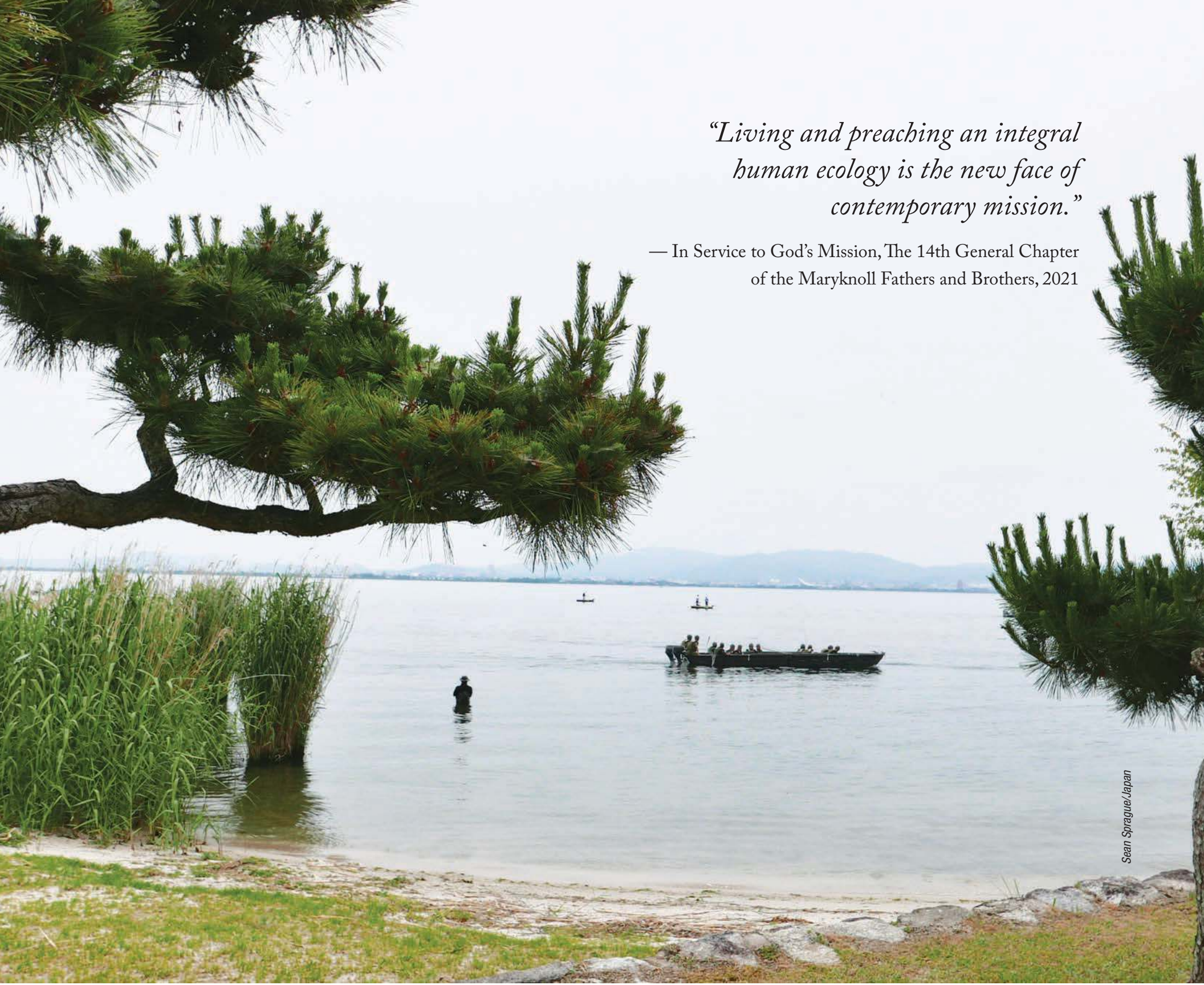
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Teaching Forgiveness

By Giovana Soria

A Maryknoll priest in Bolivia helps people lead happier lives by learning to reconcile with one another

Maryknoll Father Juan Zúñiga leads a workshop of the Schools for Forgiveness and Reconciliation (ESPERE) at a Jesuit parish in Oruru, Bolivia. (Nile Sprague/Bolivia)

Rosario Miranda faced much pain and suffering after her husband abandoned their family 10 years ago. Miranda had to work very hard in different jobs to raise her two youngest daughters, Sarita and Gabriela, in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Separated from her husband after 23 years of living together, Miranda felt anger and resentment towards him. She also blamed herself. "I'm sure that due to my

personality, I have undone my marriage," she said. "I was not able to understand him."

Then Miranda learned of a program called ESPERE, an acronym in Spanish for Schools for Forgiveness and Reconciliation. The program is led by Maryknoll Father Juan Zúñiga and five other facilitators.

ESPERE is a program of the Foundation for Reconciliation, a non-profit organization based in Bogota, Colombia, led by Father Le-

onel Narváez Gómez, a sociologist and member of the Consolata Missionaries. To make forgiveness and reconciliation essential elements in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, the foundation based its models on research from the universities of Wisconsin, Harvard and Cambridge.

Father Narváez had gained experience as a facilitator during the peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the guerrillas of the Armed Revolutionary

Forces of Colombia (FARC).

The ESPERE model has expanded to 21 countries and has trained more than 2 million people since 2003.

In Bolivia, ESPERE was introduced by Maryknoll Lay Missioner Joseph Loney, who invited a couple of religious sisters from Brazil to offer an intensive workshop on the program to a group in 2015. Since then, Father Zúñiga, with Jason Obergfell, a former Maryknoll lay missionary and now a Maryknoll affiliate, and four



During an ESPERE workshop in Oruru, Bolivia, a participant engages in an activity about the values and principles that guide us through life. (Nile Sprague/Bolivia)

Bolivian volunteers, organize and present the ESPERE workshops.

The complete workshop is composed of 12 modules and requires approximately 40 hours of class time. Participants engage in prayer, Bible reflections, activities such as writing a letter to the person who hurt them, and games and discussions in small groups. The first workshop in Bolivia was presented in a prison. Then it was offered at the Maryknoll Mission Center in Cochabamba, and parishes and other communities. Currently, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the program is only able to offer virtual monthly meetings of past participants but hopes to initiate in-person workshops this year.

Miranda, who continues joining the monthly ESPERE meetings, says they have helped her forgive both

her husband and herself. She is now able to deal with adverse situations and accept people and the decisions they make. "With reflections they have given us, we have been able to learn from the daily readings, based on the illumination of the Bible, always by God's hand," she says.

After she forgave her husband, Miranda says, her family life became more harmonious. Last June, her husband, who had another family in another city of Bolivia, met with Miranda and her daughters and asked them to forgive him for abandoning them. Sadly, a month later, he died of complications from COVID-19.

"I joined the meetings to restore myself, because we always carry pain and there are many situations to mend and fix in my life," Miranda says. "This pandemic has devastated

us. I feel with my heart the suffering of my daughters for having lost their father forever. Things don't always have to be broken. There has to be a way to be able to conform and resign ourselves to the trials of life."

For Father Zúñiga, assigned to serve in mission in Bolivia since 2011, supporting this program is important.

"ESPERE teaches us to recognize the negative feelings we might be carrying because of something that happened in the past, and those negative feelings eventually take a toll on our relationships with other people and our relationship with ourselves," says the missionary from San Antonio, Texas. "We are invited to recognize those negative feelings and see how they are affecting our lives; the need to free ourselves of those negative feelings is the

key. You don't want to carry that around with you anymore, so you decide to forgive the person. That forgiveness is really for you, not for the other person."

Katherine Olguin Rodriguez, a pastoral agent of Nuestra Señora del Rosario parish in Oruro, says the program has been very dynamic and has allowed her to interact better with other members of the parish. "In my work with youth ministry projects, we developed themes of life and present them with workshops. ESPERE provides important resources to learn something new and to innovate our work."

For Olguin ESPERE was also an opportunity to acknowledge her own negative feelings and restore personal relationships. Olguin, an educator and psychologist, says her relationship with her mother has not been the easiest. "My mother



Rosario Miranda (third from right) joins other participants at an ESPERE workshop on forgiveness and reconciliation in Cochabamba. (Courtesy of Juan Zúñiga/Bolivia)



Maryknoll Affiliate Jason Oberfell (center) facilitates an ESPERE session on mediation in bridging differences and building reconciliation. (Nile Sprague/Bolivia)

would have been happy for me to be a housewife," she says.

"I am a mother of three children and I feel that I need to restore this relationship to exercise my motherhood with more freedom and confidence," she says. Working with other mothers in the workshops, Olguin says it was touching to hear their perspectives and how they have acted as daughters or sisters. Listening to others' stories helped her understand why many people hurt others or make mistakes through repetition or without awareness.

Psychologist Everett Worthington, a presenter at the VI International Meeting of ESPERE last November, outlines five steps to reach forgiveness. First, he says, recall the hurt: To heal, you have to face the fact that you've been hurt. The

next step is to empathize with your partner: Empathy is putting yourself in the other person's chair. The third is called altruistic gift: To give forgiveness as an unselfish act. The fourth is to commit: Once you've forgiven, write a note to yourself, something as simple as, "Today, I forgave [person's name] for hurting me." This, he says, helps your forgiveness last. Finally, he says, hold on to forgiveness: "We write notes of commitment, because we will almost surely be tempted to doubt that we really forgave."

Miranda, who now participates in ESPERE sessions online, says she greatly appreciates Father Zúñiga's support. "Father Juan has the wisdom from God," she says, "and that gives us confidence to share our pains and open our hearts in the meetings." ✠

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'Here I Am, Send Me'

By Margaret Gaughan

New Maryknoll Lay Missioners (l. to r.) Francis Wayne, Jaclyn Geyer, Lynn Cunningham, Megan Hamilton, Laurie Rumpf, Louise Locke, Kathy Kang, Josh Wetmore, Susan Feeney, Bob Cunningham, Andy Perry, Sister Deirdre Griffin and Victoria Arce. (Josh Wetmore/U.S.)

At a time when COVID-19 continues to threaten the global community, 13 men and women have chosen to leave their homes in the United States to share the Gospel as Maryknoll lay missioners overseas.

During their mission-sending ceremony last December, Robert Ellsberg, publisher of Maryknoll's Orbis Books, reminded them why they are taking such a bold step. Referencing the biblical account


of God's call to the prophet Isaiah (6:8-9), Ellsberg said, "Your presence today is a response to a question that was at some point planted in your hearts: 'Whom shall I send?' and you have answered, 'Here I am, send me!'"

After an eight-week orientation and the signing of a three-and-a-half-year renewable service commitment, the missioners embark on a journey where, Ellsberg assures them, they can expect to find God.

To the U.S./Mexico Border

Deirdre Griffin, a Sister of St. Joseph of Springfield, Massachusetts, heard God's call amid the pandemic, which she says has exacerbated the needs of the most vulnerable people. "More and more people have to flee their homes for safety, and to survive," she explains. "I feel an even greater urgency now to be that radical hospitality of God at our borders." An attorney with experi-

ence in immigration law, Sister Griffin went through a discernment process with her religious community to determine how best to use her legal skills. She is confident God will now use those skills "to alleviate some of the sufferings of our neighbors."

 **To El Salvador**
Liz and Bob Cunningham, from Concord, Massachusetts, have been married for 35 years and have



During orientation (l. to r.) Bob and Liz Cunningham, Louise Locke, Josh Wetmore and Jaclyn Geyer enjoy a hike in New York's Hudson Valley. (Josh Wetmore/U.S.)

three grown children. Bob's inspiration for mission was his uncle, Maryknoll Father Robert Lilly, who served in South Korea. The seeds of Liz's mission vocation were planted when she was a child reading *Maryknoll* magazine. Both pursued careers in development and fund raising, but, "We got the most joy out of service work," says Liz. They are happy not to have a specific assignment in El Salvador, which, they say, "leaves open a space for prayer and discernment."

Pittsburgh native **Josh Wetmore** served as a Jesuit Volunteer. Afterward, when he took a 9-to-5 job, he realized he wanted more out of life. The example of Maryknoll missionaries attracted him. "They were so shaped by what they were doing," says Wetmore, who has a degree in journalism. He was impressed that when COVID-19 struck, most Maryknollers chose to stay with the people they served. "Being in rela-

tionships," he says, "that's where mission starts."



To Brazil

Kathy Kang from Cerritos, California, hopes to assist refugees in Brazil. As an immigrant who grew up in South Korea and came to the United States as a teenager, she understands the struggles of those who emigrate. Kang has worked as a computer software engineer, but says her passion is working with people. She recently spent a year in Cambodia as a Jesuit Volunteer. Having known Maryknoll "for a long time," she has chosen to be a Maryknoll lay missionary.



To Bolivia

"Bolivia has many indigenous people, who lose their identity when they migrate to the cities to make a living," says **Victoria Arce**,

from Santa Maria, California. A self-described "strong Latina," she wants to "empower people to value their roots." After working for more than 25 years in social service, Arce says she has chosen to serve with Maryknoll Lay Missioners because of "their willingness to take people over 60!" She appreciates their orientation program, particularly the workshops on how to be respectful of other cultures, and praises the program for giving the new missionaries a chance to bond. "This has become my adopted family," she says.

Louise Locke, from Derwood, Maryland, has spent most of her career serving senior communities as a chaplain and spiritual care provider. "Now," she says, "I am happy to meet the *abuelas* (grandmothers) in Bolivia!" She wants to work in the poorest communities. She appreciates that Maryknoll Lay Missioners works to match a missionary's skill set with the needs of a particular country. "I feel much more prepared after orientation," she says.

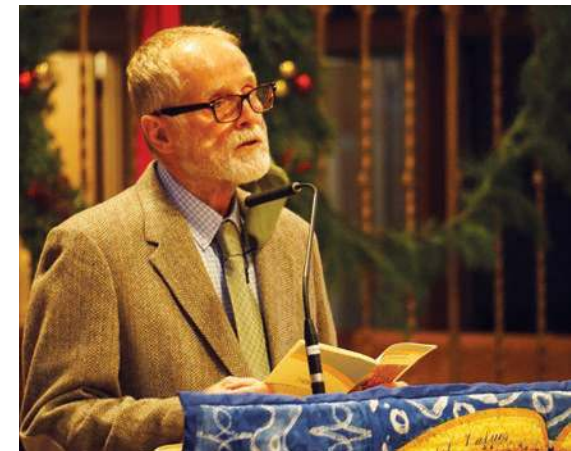


To Kenya

For **Francis Wayne**, this is his second contract as a Maryknoll lay missionary in Kenya. Wayne, who grew up in Kentucky and now lives in Baltimore, Maryland, is a contractor with his own home repair business. He joined Maryknoll Lay Missioners in 1993 after hearing a Maryknoll priest speak in his parish, and served in Kenya until 1996. For him the heart of mission is "connecting with God and being able to present that to others in the way I live and speak."

Megan Hamilton, from Fayetteville, West Virginia, worked for over 40 years in the African diaspora in Baltimore. She has served in Jamaica with the Franciscan Mission Service and in Albania with the Peace Corps. These experiences, she says, have taught her that "people want to learn from each other." The attitude of a missionary, she adds, must be to learn from the community and see how you can serve. She appreciates Maryknoll Lay Missioners' renewable commitment. "It gives us the opportunity to stay as long as we can be of service," she says.

Susan Feeney, a tax lawyer from Skillman, New Jersey, came to Maryknoll because she wanted to live her faith 24/7. "Balancing a professional career with my faith didn't always mesh," she says. On a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, she committed herself to mission. A Maryknoll Lay Missioner-sponsored Friends Across Borders trip to Tanzania solidified



At the mission-sending ceremony, Francis Wayne reads the biblical account of God's call to Isaiah to be God's messenger. (Patrick Norberto/U.S.)

her commitment. During orientation, Feeney particularly valued the pastoral theological reflection, that is, reflecting on life in light of Scripture. She also felt enriched interacting with 12 other people whose ages ranged from 23 to 71.



To Tanzania

Allison (Andy) Perry from Millbrook, Alabama, is a 2020 college graduate. She studied cultural geography and has had several short-term service experiences domestically and internationally. Looking for a longer-term mission experience, she turned to Maryknoll Lay Missioners. "My faith is really important to me, so a faith-based organization is what I was looking for," says Perry, who became a Catholic in college. As for serving as a missionary during the pandemic, she says, "The world needs help now more than ever."

Jaclyn Geyer of Tacoma, Washington, is returning to Tanzania, where she studied for four months as a college student. "I have always been interested in things abroad," she says, "and Maryknoll came across my radar." A convert to Catholicism, Geyer values Maryknoll Lay Missioners for giving her the opportunity to combine long-term service with faith.

Laurie Rumpf of Hopewell Junction, New York, worked for Maryknoll Lay Missioners as a major gift officer from 2014 to 2016. Participating in two Friends Across Borders trips, she says, "I was able to see what missionaries do. I wanted to be like them and do the kind of work they do." Rumpf thought about being a missionary since college but put it off to get married and raise a family. Now that her children are older, she says, "I finally have the opportunity to fulfill my lifelong dream." ✠



Maryknoll leaders (l. to r.) Ted Miles, Father Lance Nadeau, Sister Teruko Ito and Lay Missioner Marj Humphrey bless crosses for the new missionaries. (Patrick Norberto/U.S.)

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SILENT SOLIDARITY *in Chile*

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Members of the Cristo Resucitado solidarity ministry, with Brother John Nitsch (middle photo), package food for those in need in Curicó, Chile. (Photos courtesy of Beatriz Abrigo/Chile)



Parishioners give what little they have to feed the vulnerable in their community

During his nearly 50 years living among the poor in Chile, Maryknoll Brother John Nitsch discovered that they are the most generous in helping others in need. "These are the people who have great faith in Christ and his Church," he says. "These parish people are helping many others in a very silent way, not publishing their acts of solidarity."

Some of these acts include donating money to help a neighbor who lost his home to a fire or cleaning and cooking for elderly people or donating food so people don't go hungry.

Brother Nitsch's parish of Cristo Resucitado (Risen Christ) is in a poor part of the city of Curicó. Even though some of the 40,000 parishioners are professionals, says the missionary from Baltimore, Maryland, many rely on seasonal work in the orchards or odd jobs to feed their families. The elderly



For many years, Brother Nitsch (center) and youth leaders from Cristo Resucitado parish ran a summer program for children of poor agricultural workers. (Maryknoll Mission Archives)

population is especially vulnerable, but the parish also reaches out to families in need, including migrants.

Beatriz Abrigo Hernández, who co-leads the parish's solidarity ministry, says they support 350 families — about 550 people — with a bag of food once a month. "We especially help older adults, those who are bedridden or abandoned," she says. "Many have no family. We are driven by the need they have because of how alone they are."

Many older adults need basic items like new linens. Others live in dwellings with dirt floors or cardboard lining the walls for insulation. The ministry does not want people living in those conditions to also go hungry.

The ministry — which includes Brother Nitsch — provides food,

company and a listening ear. The missionary says food delivery continued when Chile declared a state of lockdown in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "We went in secret," Abrigo says. "The idea was to keep on helping. If we don't give the elderly the food, they will go hungry. Sometimes they have anemia or other illnesses because they do not have something to eat. So, we worry about their well-being."

Brother Nitsch, currently the only Maryknoll missionary in Chile, has always tried to establish a personal connection with people old and young. "I feel that my vocation as a Maryknoll brother is to help people, to encourage them as much as I can, and to listen to them," he says. "I try to be a good friend to them."

Nitsch joined the mission society in 1961, three months after graduating from high school. He took his final oath as a Maryknoll brother in 1969. Two years later, he was assigned to Chile. Working with young people and the poor at his first parish, Brother Nitsch made lifelong friendships. He then worked at another parish before spending three years in the United States, which included working as the Maryknoll Brothers' formation program director. He returned to Chile in March of 1994, beginning his mission as a pastoral agent in Curicó.

Since his arrival at Cristo Resucitado, he has worked with youth, especially the children of poor agricultural families.

Brother Nitsch believes Jesus wants a better life for all people. Abrigo says his quiet kindness has

made a difference in many people's lives in Curicó. "Brother always supports us. He accompanies us," she says of the 78-year-old missionary. "He is a very generous person. He helps a lot of the older adults, migrants and college students."

Brother Nitsch says the parish has a long history of helping the hungry in the community. Parishioners organized soup kitchens to help children in the early 1990s, but later focused on feeding the elderly, since children could get meals at school. Around 2018, the parish decided to give out food packages. "We started going door to door," says Abrigo, who has been a parishioner since she was a young adult. "We go and see what the families' needs are."

The solidarity ministry also brings food bags to the shores of the Guaiquillo River, where many migrant families take shelter in makeshift camps. Additionally, Brother Nitsch says, the parish has opened up unused parish buildings to receive migrants from Haiti and other countries. "We are trying to fix some of the parish buildings to be more suitable for them. We are going to install showers and are doing small things like that," he says. "So, they at least have temporary housing until they find something better."

Abrigo says she often gets home and thinks, "How else can we help?"

Keeping up with people's needs month to month is a challenge, Abrigo says. The ministry keeps seeking more ways to fundraise for those in need. "If we did not have the financial support of people, we are not sure what we would do," she says.

Even though the parish helps



A parishioner of Cristo Resucitado (right) delivers a Christmas dinner donated by the parish in an impoverished neighborhood of Curicó. (Courtesy of Beatriz Abrigo/Chile)

more than 500 vulnerable people, another 30 to 50 families are in need in the area, she says. The parish, she explains, is located in an area of Curicó where unemployment and crime are commonplace and people often resort to selling drugs. This results in young husbands ending up in prison and families going through hardships. "We wish we could help them," says Abrigo, explaining that their priority must be the elderly. They offer the women the clothes donations given to the parish. "That way," she adds, "the women can sell them" and feed their families.

Amid all the challenges, Abrigo, too, is inspired by the generosity of her fellow parishioners. There have been times when the ministry

did not have enough money to buy beans, oil or diapers for those who needed them, she says. So the parish ran solidarity campaigns to collect these items. "That's when you realize that the ones with the least donate the most," she says.

One time, she recalls, a man with battered shoes donated new sneakers. "We asked him, 'Why are you not taking them for yourself?' He told us, 'Others need them more than I do. I have food, and I can keep walking in these shoes. ... I know that if I help others, the one above will help me.'"

Gestures like this continue to encourage ministry members to reach out to the most vulnerable in their community and, as Brother Nitsch says, help in any small way they can. ✕

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Maryknoll Father Paul Sykora greets a mother and baby outside Nueva Vera Cruz center in Bolivia, where the missionary gives schoolchildren homework help and a nutritious meal.



M Fathers and Brothers
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One Step Further

By Deirdre Cornell

Deacon serving immigrants in New York parish widens his vision visiting U.S./Mexico border with Maryknoll



Deacon Carlos Campoverde stands near the border wall in Ciudad Juarez during a Maryknoll immersion trip to the U.S./Mexico border. (Courtesy Carlos Campoverde/Mexico)

Deacon Carlos Campoverde, coordinator of the Hispanic Apostolate at the Church of the Assumption in Peekskill, New York, says, "I have worked my whole life in social ministry."

Recently the deacon took yet another step in missionary discipleship by participating in a trip to the U.S./Mexico border with Maryknoll. "Hearing their cries, I became aware of our sisters and brothers' pain there," he says.

Deacon Campoverde's faith grows from roots of mission planted in his home diocese, the Archdiocese of Cuenca, Ecuador. It all started, he says, when he joined his wife Ines volunteering at their parish there. "I entered a catechists' group and I participated in the charismatic movement," he explains. Their family life was transformed.

He got involved in diocesan social ministry programs preventing alcohol and drug abuse. He and Ines also went on mission trips to rural areas, visiting campesinos, taking their three young sons with them. His missionary call was awakened "right then and there."

"I was a banker," says Campoverde, who earned a degree in education at the Catholic University of Cuenca. "I left the bank. I wanted to work 100% for the Church." He served in church-related work in Ecuador until he and his family emigrated to the United States in 1999.

Living in Queens, the family frequently visited friends and relatives in Peekskill's growing Ecuadoran community. Maryknoll priests, whose headquarters are located nearby, came to say Mass in Spanish

at the Church of the Assumption. Among the Maryknoll priests who have helped at Assumption, Campoverde names Fathers Richard Albertine and Rafael Dávila and the late Father José Arámburu.

Ines and Carlos got to know the parish – and the parish got to know them. One day a religious sister there told him, "We need you here." The family moved to Peekskill and Carlos joined the parish staff.

"I was told to start with a needs assessment because there were a lot of Hispanics in Peekskill, but only 15 or 20 came to Mass," Campoverde recalls. He went door to door, inviting Hispanic families to the parish. As Campoverde himself drew even closer to the Church, he studied for the permanent diaconate and was ordained in 2011.

"Carlos has been the key person in transforming the parish's Hispanic ministry over the past 20 years, from very little participation to now a thriving community," says Deacon Kevin McCarthy, who works in catechist outreach for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers.

Assumption pastor, Father Esteban Sánchez, says 13 Hispanic devotional groups meet there regularly, as do members of five apostolic movements. About 100 people take adult faith formation classes through the parish's chapter of the archdiocesan Father Félix Varela Pastoral Institute, he says.

"Our parish is a busy place," says Father Sánchez, who adds that Hispanic Catholics come from miles around, attracted to the vibrant parish life at Assumption. The congregation includes Ecuadorans,



Deacon Campoverde, ordained in 2011 and pictured in 2014, serves on the parish staff of the Church of the Assumption in Peekskill, New York. (Giovana Soria/U.S.)

Guatemalans, Mexicans, Dominicans and Peruvians. More than 600 children are enrolled in religious education, says Ines, who serves as program secretary.

Last August, Deacon Campoverde joined an immersion trip to El Paso, Texas, sponsored by the Maryknoll Society and led by the Encuentro Project, a faith-based organization that promotes understanding of border issues. The deacon did not anticipate how deeply the trip would affect him. "I was unprepared for what awaited me," he says. "It was so painful, and so real."

He was particularly moved visiting the handicapped children at Santo Niño (Holy Child), a day center in Ciudad Juarez run by the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati.

At Casa del Refugiado (Refugee House) in El Paso, Deacon Campoverde met a young family from his own home city, Cuenca. Traveling to the Mexican side of the border, the parents and their 4-year-old son had been kidnapped and held for ransom by organized crime. Once released, they pleaded for asylum at the border. After processing at a detention center, they were brought



Helena Niño de Guzmán, a participant in the Maryknoll border immersion trip, holds Jesús Manuel Martínez at the Santo Niño Center in Ciudad Juarez. (Tracy McNulty/Mexico)

to Casa del Refugiado.

Thinking of families such as this, Deacon Campoverde says, "At night, I couldn't sleep. I stayed up, thinking, 'How can I free myself up, how can I change, to do more?'"

Returning to Peekskill, he continues with his responsibilities in the active parish. Now, however, he brings the border experience to his ministry. "Being there, I became aware, but returning, my goal is to make other people aware, too," he says. "In our community, we are all immigrants."

Last September, Deacon Campov-

erde and other members of the Hispanic community's Open Hands-Migrant Ministry group held a vigil to recognize immigrant pioneers in their Peekskill community and to express concern for contemporary migrants. The group prayed for five people from the first Latin American families in Peekskill who had died recently and also prayed for newcomers. "We had funeral hymns and joyous songs, too. We sang, we prayed, and above all, we created solidarity," he says.

He adds, "The Church does not abandon migrants." ✠

World Watch

'A Different Kind of Economy'

By Kathleen Kollman Birch

Pope Francis has sought to revitalize conversation about global economic justice in the Church by initiating the Economy of Francesco, a movement of young people committed to “giving a new soul to the global economy.”

The movement began when Pope Francis issued a letter in May 2019 to young economists and entrepreneurs “interested in a different kind of economy: one that brings life not death, one that is inclusive and not exclusive, humane and not dehumanizing, one that cares for the environment and does not despoil it.”

The letter invited them to a gathering in Assisi, Italy, which he said would “allow us to meet one another and eventually enter into a ‘covenant’ to change today’s economy and to give a soul to the economy of tomorrow.”

The three-day meeting in November 2019 included young people from around the world and engaged with prominent economists such as Amartya Sen of Harvard University and Jeffrey Sachs of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University. Delegations from various countries gave presentations on the issues facing their national economies and proposed solutions. Participants

were then grouped into 12 thematic “villages,” focusing on issues such as finance, agriculture, energy, and women in the economy. These groups have continued to meet virtually.

The initiative flows from Francis’ long-standing concern about the structural problems of the global economy. Building on the tradition of Catholic social teaching, he critiques “models of [economic] growth incapable of guaranteeing respect for the environment, openness to life, concern for the family, social equality, the dignity of workers and the rights of future generations.”

In his most recent speech to the World Meeting of Popular Movements, Pope Francis repeated that “land, labor and lodging” are key rights that are cornerstones of social and economic justice. The goal, he says, is to “place the economy at the service of the people in order to build a lasting peace based on social justice and on care for our common home.”

In the U.S. Church, conversation about economic justice has lost momentum in recent years. This past November marked 35 years since the publication in 1986 of the pastoral letter “Economic Justice for All,” the bishops’ last major document on Catholic social teaching and the economy. In a



A laborer in Nepal heaves heavy loads uphill in a brickyard, where workers toil long hours for little pay and with few protections. (Gregg Brekke/Nepal)

panel marking the anniversary, Catholic theologians agreed it was time to reignite Churchwide conversation about economic justice in the United States.

One panelist, Dr. Meghan Clark, a theologian at St. John’s University, said that key to reinvigorating the conversation would be for Church leaders to heed Pope Francis’ call to spend more

time listening directly to people on the margins. “The cry for [dignity of work] we’re hearing louder and louder now,” she said. The conversation “needs to start on the margins,” she concluded. ✚

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

FAITH IN ACTION:

- Explore the website for the Economy of Francesco movement: <https://francesco-economy.org/>
- Watch the panel, “Economic Justice for All at 35:” <https://bit.ly/3rE4pNF>
- Read the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ “A Catholic Framework for Economic Life,” summarizing the 10 main principles in “Economic Justice for All:” <https://bit.ly/31AEqW>
- Watch this video documentary from the World Meeting of Popular Movements and watch Pope Francis’ speech on building a moral economy: <https://bit.ly/3ltz1rg>

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

Missioner to Missioners

By Alfonso Kim, M.M.

Yamao Ritsko, known in her native Japan as Yamao-san, was a catechist at Momoyama parish in the Kyoto Diocese, where I began my Overseas Training Program as a Maryknoll seminarian in 1993. She took care of the parish books, played the piano or organ at Sunday Mass, and was the rectory cook. “Without her, the parish would collapse,” said Maryknoll Father Joe Luckey, the pastor. I soon experienced the fruits of her generosity.

Besides cooking my meals, she mentored me. When I needed to give a reflection at Mass, she corrected my Japanese. On a home visit, I told my mother about this wonderful woman. “She is your Japanese mother,” my mother said. How true!

When I was transferred to Hokkaido, she continued helping me with my weekly reflections. I would fax my jottings to her, which she would edit and send back. On the phone I would practice my homily. Like any mother, Yamao-san wanted me to do well.

After my ordination in 1997, I was assigned to Japan, and went to the Momoyama parish to celebrate my first Mass. What a joy it was to share this sacred moment with people who

were like family to me, especially Yamao-san.

One day she asked to see me. She needed to tell me in person that she had stomach cancer. Yamao-san acknowledged she had always related to me as her son, but today, she said, I was her priest.

She kept visiting her doctor, Dr. Mishima. He saw what a big-hearted woman she was and how she handled her suffering with dignity. He began to fall in love with her.

Dr. Mishima was a widower. He was not a Catholic but knew much about the Bible and considered himself a spiritual man. He wanted to give Yamao-san a new life before she died, and he proposed marriage to her. At first, she refused. But three days later she asked if I would preside at their marriage.

Her new husband took her around Japan to see the many beautiful places that were new to her. Unfortunately, it was not long before he called to tell me Yamao-san had only two months to live. I was heart-sick and visited as often as possible.

Eventually, Yamao-san was hospitalized. One day while visiting her, I asked her, “How is it that you didn’t get married at a young age?”



Dr. Mishima and Yamao Ritsko pose for a picture on their wedding day in Momoyama parish in Japan’s Kyoto Diocese, where Maryknoll Father Alfonso Kim first met the bride and later presided at her wedding and funeral. (Alfonso Kim/Japan)

She shared her story, which, she said, she had never told anyone. She was born in Manchuria, when her father, a Japanese military officer, was stationed there. Baptized as a baby, she was given the name Bernadette. When she was young, she entered a Carmelite Convent, where she contributed her beautiful singing voice and played different musical instruments. But before her final vows, she decided this wasn’t to be her life. Instead, she dedicated her life to helping missionary priests.

As I listened to her, I thought, “What a life of private service!”

I kept visiting her. We never spoke about death, but I knew she was ready. Then early one morning her hus-

band called to tell me Yamao-san had passed away peacefully in her sleep.

Two days later was the funeral, and I was the celebrant. During my homily I said, “Now I am burying my mother. Even at her funeral she is teaching me what it means to be a missionary priest.”

It was providential that God brought me here to meet her. She became a missionary through relationships with other missionaries, including me. I will always be grateful to God for the gift of my Japanese mother. ✠

Father Alfonso Kim is currently associate director of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers’ Church Engagement Division.

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READERS' RESPONSES

FAITHFUL SERVANT

I noted in your Fall issue that Father Edward Hayes died during this year. I was in the sabbatical program at the North American College in Rome with Father Ed in the early months of 1997. He always impressed me with his gentle spirit and his commitment to the missions. He brought a unique perspective to our study and discussions. He always preferred to be back among his people in Africa rather than in the office in Rome. Father Ed was a faithful servant. May he rest in peace.

*Father Phil Thompson
Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

ALWAYS MARYKNOLL

A cradle Catholic, I was seriously considering becoming a Maryknoll sister when I met my late, non-Catholic husband. He often teased that supporting the organization was the least he could do for having taken me away. We were very young and had a large family quickly, so money was always tight, but Maryknoll was important to us, so we always found a way.

As years went on, however, I became very disillusioned with the Church. The sexual scandals and the ongoing use of funds for things and power instead of people and their needs angered and saddened me. We discontinued our donations to every group associated with Catholicism — every group, that is, except Maryknoll. We felt there was something beautiful and unique about the way Maryknoll embraced other cultures, religions and ways of living. One of my favorite photos is that of a

Maryknoll priest seated on a floor in front of a rustic table with a chipped plate and a water glass for his chalice and paten. Maryknoll's union with the poor and openness to God's presence in all peoples continues to sustain and inspire me. Still, when similarly frustrated friends ask why I continue to support this very Catholic organization, I struggle to fully explain my reasons.

Then I read Father Veneroso's article "Missioner vs. Missionary" and that article said it all! How honest, how open and how beautifully Father Veneroso has informed us readers about the true missioner spirit. He has expressed, much better than I ever could, the very reasons that part of my heart will always be with Maryknoll! Thank you for this beautifully written explanation. I will be sharing it!

I am proud to continue my monthly support of the Maryknoll Sisters. I am blessed to have had many of them as friends, and I miss them now that they live in heaven. They enriched our family's life, just as they touched those whom they served in mission. I thank you all for the loving work you do, for sharing this article, and for recognizing God in his universe, in his people and for bringing God's love to all the sad, messy and wonderful moments of life!

*Rita Pisano
Candler, North Carolina*

REALLY PLEASED

I just had to comment on the article "Teaching with Love in the Andes" in the Winter 2022 issue of *Maryknoll* magazine — or, I should say, the won-

derful smiles that stood out and really pleased me. The smile on Minh Nguyen's face on page 36, the boy in front and in the middle of three on page 38, and some of the children on page 40. Perhaps you can let Ms. Nguyen know.

*Thomas Diemer
Kenner, Louisiana*

ADMIRE YOUR WORK

I worked for the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) in Bogota, Colombia, and knew Maryknoll missionary Father John H. Gorham, now deceased. I also visited the Maryknoll house in Guatemala near the U.S. embassy. In short, I have had good interactions with Maryknoll missionaries in Colombia, Chile, Bolivia, Guatemala and various other countries. I admire your work and your dedication to the poor and human development. Do not get discouraged. Continue forward always. May Jesus Christ bless you.

*Father José Dimas Soberal Díaz
Lares, Puerto Rico*

MOST UPLIFTING

I read various Catholic magazines monthly. However, your *Maryknoll* magazine is the most uplifting. It inspires hope for and in me.

God's continued blessings on your ministry.

*Father Ray Lescher
Pembroke Township, Illinois*

FULFILLING VOCATION

On behalf of the Downtown Brooklyn group of Pax Christi Metro New

York, I want to express our joy in learning that Sister Teresa Hougnon has been chosen to lead the Maryknoll Sisters as president for the next six years. We remember Sister Teresa as a young woman searching for a vocation ... of peaceful accompaniment of anyone in need. As a member of the Maryknoll community, she found what she was looking for.

*Edith Newman
Brooklyn, New York*

MERCIFUL ACTS

The Winter 2022 issue of *Maryknoll* shows merciful acts to be emulated. I was especially intrigued by the piece on the internment of Japanese Americans at the outset of World War II. The service that religious and laity offered to those imprisoned in the camps, especially the children, is an example of the persistence of our faith.

This Gospel passage is especially relevant: "Whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me" (Matthew 18:5).

This is clearly seen in the example of the Maryknoll missionaries.

*Mark A. Sleboda
Redford Township, Michigan*

Correction: The article "Setting Japanese American Captives Free" in the Winter 2022 issue contained an error about Japanese American journalist Harry Honda. He was serving in the U.S. Army during World War II while his family was imprisoned in the internment camp in Rohwer, Arkansas.

Forgiveness Brings Joy



In Bolivia, Maryknoll Father Juan Zúñiga runs a program called ESPERE to help participants find forgiveness and reconcile with others.

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Katherine Olguin Rodriguez, a pastoral agent in Oruru, Bolivia, participates in an activity on forgiveness and reconciliation in a program called ESPERE. (See story, page 34.)

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