

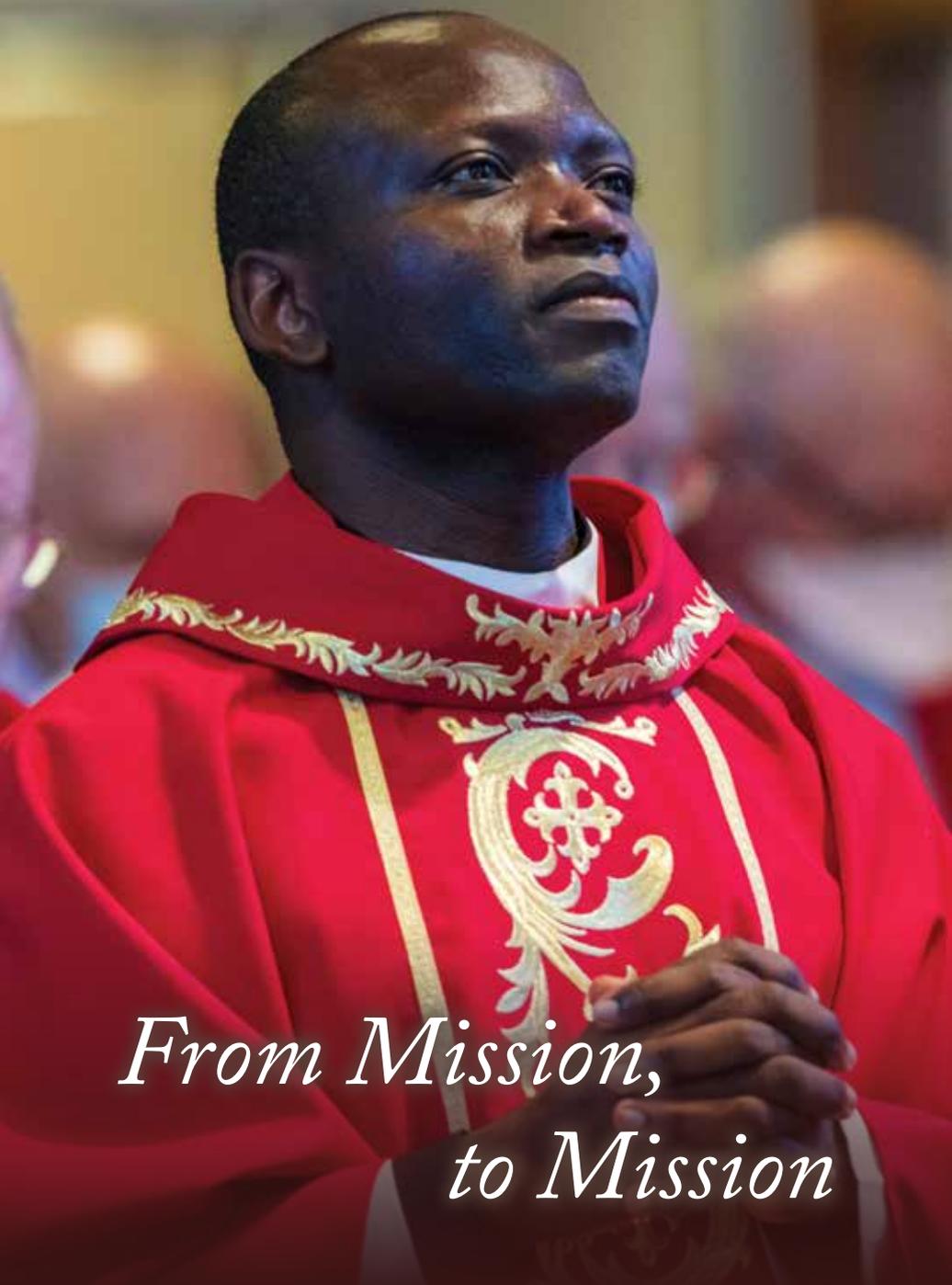


U.S. Catholic Church in mission overseas

# MARYKNOLL<sup>®</sup>

Fall 2022

[maryknollmagazine.org](http://maryknollmagazine.org)



*From Mission,  
to Mission*

## FROM THE EDITOR

**T**he cover line of this issue of *Maryknoll* says it all: From mission, to mission.

On the face of it, we are talking about Maryknoll's newest priest. Father John Siyumbu's call to the priesthood was kindled by stories he heard as a child in Kenya about early missionaries to East Africa. As a university student he was inspired by the work of the Maryknoll missionaries he met. Now, ordained from a mission country where Maryknoll serves, he will go on mission to Peru in South America.

Father Siyumbu's ordination opens a new chapter for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers — the fruition of a decision made eight years ago to accept seminarians from mission sites. Previously Maryknoll held that it should only build up the local Church abroad, not "take" vocations needed there. Times change.

Today, unlike 1918 when the first Maryknoll priests sailed for China, mission is no longer just evangelization from the wealthier European and North American continents to the developing world. It's now global and multi-directional. It's going abroad and it's receiving missionaries from abroad and it's ministering in our hometowns, our own backyards.

In welcoming Father Siyumbu into the Maryknoll family, the Fathers and Brothers join the Maryknoll Sisters in accepting vocations from mission sites. Yet, those familiar with this magazine already know that it has long shown the changing face of mission and the diversity that makes this country a global melting pot — and a reflection of the one body in Christ.

Lynn F. Monahan  
Editor-in-Chief



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FRONT COVER:  
Maryknoll Father John Siyumbu prays at his ordination Mass, held June 3, 2022 at Our Lady Queen of Apostles Chapel in Ossining, New York.

COVER CREDITS:  
Front: Octavio Duran/U.S.  
Back: Gregg Brekke/Kenya

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.

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U.S. Catholic Church in mission overseas

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

*Romans 8:28*

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# *The Mysteries of the Mission Rosary*

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

## *Visit of the Magi*

*Searching the heavens they see  
The great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn  
In Pisces revealing the birth  
Of a newborn king of the Jews  
Prompting them to cross borders  
And search for truth in a foreign land.*

## *Sending out the disciples*

*Two by two, village by village,  
They bear witness to God's kingdom  
Here on Earth, where all God's children  
Are precious, protected and loved  
And all creation reflects the power and glory  
Of the one all-loving Creator.*

## *Jesus cures the centurion's servant*

*Recognizing faith even in a would-be enemy  
Breaking down barriers of "us and them"  
Refusing to accept political or social  
Classes or categories, Jesus grants  
The soldier's request by healing his servant  
In solidarity with human suffering  
Despite differences of race or religion.*

*Conversion of St. Paul  
From persecutor of Christians  
To preacher of Christ crucified  
And risen, he shows true conversion  
As more a change of heart than of religion  
Breaking open the gates  
Of the kingdom of God  
To all nations, peoples, and especially  
Sinners, by being living proof  
Of God's scandalous mercy and  
Unrelenting grace.*



*Jesus meets  
the Samaritan woman  
Refusing to be bound by pride or  
Prejudice, Jesus asks this suspect  
Woman for a drink of water and she  
Sees first a man, a Jew, a prophet.  
What starts as curiosity ends in faith  
When without judgment he quenches  
Her deeper longing for love and dignity.*

# MISSIONER TALES

Sean Sprague/El Salvador



I have somehow become a sponsor for young soccer players. I pass these boys every day on my evening walk in Tanzania. They kick the living daylights out of the balls they play with. I noticed the balls were homemade, improvised from rags wrapped up in a worn-out sock and rounded into a sphere.

I kept looking for a better type of ball for the young athletes and I finally purchased seven store-bought air-filled balls. I knew these would never last because of the area's many thorn

bushes — and the rough use the balls get from these enthusiastic soccer players.

The first ball lasted only about one hour; the rest of the balls fell to that same fate. However, where there's a will, there's a way. I now fill the balls with sponge and have a shoe repair man sew them up.

*John Lange, M.M.*

After working as a lay missionary for most of the last decade in El Salvador, I knew my

mother needed me to accompany her in California as she suffers from Alzheimer's disease. It was a difficult decision. There was so much more work to do with our family literacy outreach program, which was just as much about learning to read lives as it was about reading books. That's what I miss the most — reading life through the daily presence of the people. There's something beautiful and mysterious in accompanying folks who own little in the way of material goods, but who possess treasures in many other ways.

Back in the States, a jar of marbles ties me to some of the best times in El Salvador, where the children would so often stop me, give me a few marbles — called *chibolas* there — and invite me to shoot a game. I consistently lost my marbles in the competition, but the kids returned my losses. "You're just learning; keep practicing," they'd say, holding out a handful of *chibolas* and insisting I take them.

Now my collection of marbles sits in a small jar on my desk. Looking at them brings warmth and solace, yet the memories also leave a hole. It's hard to let go.

*Rick Dixon, MKLM*

How to cure oneself from allergy? Get into a copra boat! That was my experience in the Marshall Islands, where I served in mission as a Maryknoll sister. I used to sneeze whenever I was surrounded by pollens and dusts, and I had to take an allergy pill the first thing every morning. My allergies were unexpectedly cured after a copra boat trip from Tinak Atoll to Majuro Atoll.

Copra is dried coconut meat which emits an unwelcome odor — especially when hundreds of sacks of it are loaded onto a boat. Being a poor sailor, the 17-hour copra boat trip was agonizing for me. I eventually realized, however, what a great blessing those excruciatingly difficult hours were: my allergy symptoms disappeared for three years after that boat trip!

*Aurora de la Cruz, M.M.*

It was early on a Sunday morning, before daylight, and I was on my way to the 6:15 Mass at the mission church, about a 15-minute walk from the House of Prayer where I live and work as a lay missionary in Mwanza, Tanzania. I had hesitated because of the dark, but then decided to brave it.

Halfway up the hill, I was approached by a stranger. No one else was in sight. "Are you going to church?" the man asked. A little shakily, I answered that I was. There was silence as we stood in the dark for a few moments, then in a breaking voice he said, "Pray for me," and moved on.

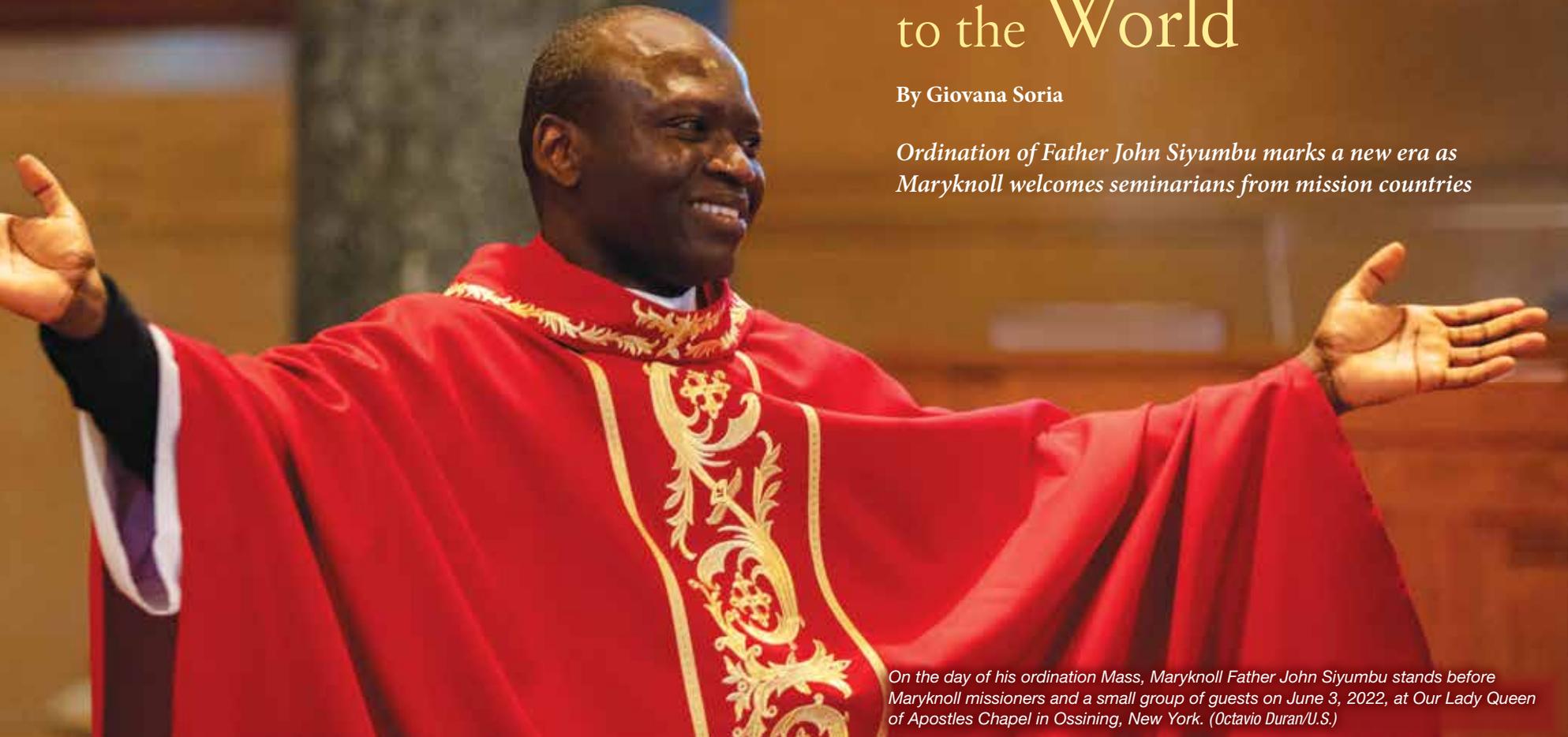
I carried that stranger to church with me. I placed him on the altar with the bread and wine. I consumed him with Communion. All day long, my thoughts returned to that brief encounter and the impact it had made on me. Two vulnerable souls meeting in the dark — one in fear, and the other in desperate need of divine intervention. The stranger had given me a mission. "Pray for me," he said. That was all. It had felt like a divine mission that morning. We had encountered God in our mutual vulnerability.

*Judy Walter, MKLM*

# From Kenya to the World

By Giovana Soria

*Ordination of Father John Siyumbu marks a new era as  
Maryknoll welcomes seminarians from mission countries*



*On the day of his ordination Mass, Maryknoll Father John Siyumbu stands before Maryknoll missionaries and a small group of guests on June 3, 2022, at Our Lady Queen of Apostles Chapel in Ossining, New York. (Octavio Duran/U.S.)*

**J**ohn Siyumbu, born in East Africa, has become the first Maryknoll priest ordained from overseas local churches since the mission society officially opened up to foreign vocations.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (see story, p. 15) was the ordaining prelate at Our Lady Queen of Apostles Chapel in Ossining, New York. The ordination Mass was celebrated on Friday, June 3, the Feast of the Uganda Martyrs.

In his homily, Cardinal Tagle advised Father Siyumbu to always remember how Jesus the Good Shepherd had sent him many people throughout his life, beginning with his family, teachers and Maryknoll missionaries who inspired him in Kenya.

"Remember, even if they call you 'Father,' they call you all of these titles, remain a sheep under the care of Jesus. For only by receiving Jesus' pastoral care of you will you be able to do as he does," Cardinal Tagle said. "So, like him, wherever you are assigned consider the people entrusted to your care as your own. For them you will give everything — your life even — because that is how the true shepherd takes care of the flock."

Closed to the public due to COVID-19 restrictions, the intimate ceremony was celebrated with Maryknoll priests and brothers, a small group of Maryknoll sisters and limited guests present. Father Siyumbu's family — unable to receive visas from the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi to be present at the Mass — joined the ordination via live streaming, as did friends from East Africa, the



United States and Bolivia, where he served during his Overseas Training Program.

"We are grateful to Almighty God for the gift of vocation," said Father Lance Nadeau, Maryknoll superior general and concelebrant of the Mass. "This happy day also has its deep sadness for us, especially for John, because his family is not with us." He addressed Siyumbu's family members in the Swahili and Luhya languages, thanking them for their encouragement of John's vocation.

"You have opened a new page in our Maryknoll mission," Father Nadeau said to Father Siyumbu. "Welcome into Maryknoll, and fly the flag of Good News and the mercy of Christ to all people."

Father Siyumbu, 36, said the highlight during the ordination rite was when he lay prostrate before the altar. "I felt like Jesus Christ on the Cross. Time seemed to stop," he said. "I felt the grace of God, the spirit of God poured out on me through the people around me, all my family, ancestors and friends." He continued, "I felt a deep joy, and a closeness to everyone in the chapel, and also to all of those accompanying from Bolivia, Kenya, Tanzania, and the Americas and all the people who

watched me that moment. I felt a union with them. That will stay with me for the rest of my life."

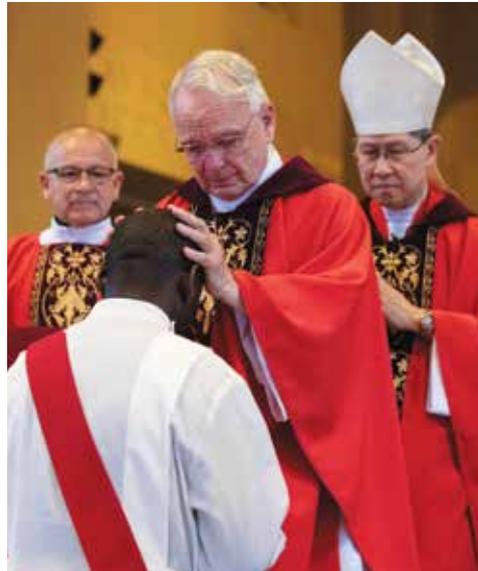
Cardinal Tagle, who is from the Philippines, told Father Siyumbu that the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to build up the human family in our diversity and to let creation sing in a symphony of joy.

"I hope you as a collaborator of Jesus, the head of the Church, will be a sign and an instrument of this welcome of people of different nations, tongues, traditions, cultures, diverse gifts coming together for the common good," Cardinal Tagle said. "Coming together to build up the one community, a Christian family, to strengthen the common home, that is the desire of Jesus. And I hope wherever you are sent, you will be a living sign of the calling of Jesus to everyone; may they hear the voice of Jesus through you."

Present to congratulate the new priest was Siyumbu's close childhood friend Stephen Rotich, who now lives in North Carolina. The two were classmates at Mumias Primary School in Kenya. Rotich remembered how growing up, everyone looked to Siyumbu for guidance because he always did the right thing. "You are a sign of hope for our community," Rotich said to his friend. "Just be strong like you have always been and bless our community."

Father Siyumbu's mother, Eunice, his father, Michael, and sisters Nelly and Jessie said in a WhatsApp interview later that his family members and representatives of small Christian communities in Kenya watched the ordination. His mother thanked all the Maryknollers for having prepared her son to be a priest.

"When Father Nadeau spoke in our languages it was emotional for



*From top left: Deacon John Siyumbu lies prostrate before the altar; Maryknoll Superior General Father Lance Nadeau blesses the candidate; Father Siyumbu poses with presider Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Mass concelebrants and missionaries. (Octavio Duran/U.S.)*





During their sending ceremony, Maryknoll Father John Siyumbu was called to mission in Latin America and Maryknoll Sister Faithmary Munyeki to Brazil. Following custom, the missionaries each received a missionary cross. (Gregory A. Shemitz/U.S.)

us. He represented us as a family," his mother said. "To choose this Feast Day of the Uganda Martyrs for the ordination of my son is very historical. ... It is a very special day for us."

Following the ordination Mass, Father Siyumbu gave first blessings in English, Spanish and Swahili to Cardinal Tagle, Maryknoll missionaries and guests. Among those blessed were Patrick and Karen Holland. The Holland family of Erie, Pennsylvania, met Father Siyumbu when he came to their home for Thanksgiving with their daughter Grace, who met him through a Maryknoll lay missionary who served in Bolivia. Father Siyumbu asked the Hollands to represent his parents at the celebration.

"I felt overwhelmed with love and being part of this," Patrick Holland said. "He is a blessing from God. He will be a great role model for all to follow."

Later that day, Father Siyumbu

and Maryknoll Sister Faithmary Munyeki received their mission crosses in a sending ceremony. Following Maryknoll custom, missionaries already serving in a country or region addressed the new missionaries, inviting them to join them. Sister Munyeki was called to serve in Brazil by Maryknoll Sister Anastasia Lee.

Maryknoll Father Michael Briggs, regional superior elect of Latin America, called forth Father Siyumbu to serve in Latin America. "We are very happy that he is coming to Latin America," Father Briggs said at the sending. Since the time of the ceremony, Father Siyumbu has been assigned to Peru.

"He is going to be an amazing priest no matter where he goes to serve," Karen Holland said. ✠

*Maria-Pia Negro Chin, multimedia associate editor, contributed to this article.*



CNS, Gregory A. Shemitz/U.S.

## THE GIFT OF MISSION

Excerpts from an interview with Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle

**C**ardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, of the Philippines, serves as prefect for the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and president of Caritas Internationalis. He is the author of three Orbis books: *The Risk of Hope, I Have Learned from the Least and Easter People*. A long-time friend of Maryknoll, he recently visited Maryknoll headquarters in Ossining, New York, to preside at the ordination of our newest Maryknoll priest. Our staff writer Giovana Soria had the opportunity to

talk with him about mission, global issues and his hopes for the future. Here we share excerpts of that interview, the long version of which can be found online on our magazine websites.

### **Mission: The love of God**

For the Church in mission, the global reality is not like an extracurricular activity, it is not an appendix. It is part and parcel of our identity as a universal Catholic Church where universal love is operating, where through the presence of people from different countries, then we know that the love of God in Jesus is universal. You find a brother, a sister in everyone, especially in the poor. ... This communion of humanity, the communion of creation in Jesus and the presence of missionaries from different parts of the world in different territories, in different contexts, and living in community is a living Gospel.

### **Divisiveness versus the Gospel of fraternity**

As we talk about globalization, as we talk about communion, as Pope Francis talks about universal friendship, *Fratelli Tutti* and caring for our common home, we see a lot of divisiveness in the world. We see a lot of suspicion of the others. We see a lot of fear towards the others, leading even to violent acts which makes us sad, but at the same time, it is an opportunity to affirm the Gospel of love and universal fraternity, brotherhood and friendship.

For us in the Church to be also vigilant because this divisiveness along ethnic lines, along even tribal linguistic lines, racial lines, what we see in the world has its consequences and has a presence even within the Church. There is a missionary consequence. If the Christian community cannot embrace, the members could not embrace each other as brothers and sisters, the non-Christians looking at them would say, "What Gospel is that?" Communion within the community of Christians is not just for smooth relationships. It has a missionary value.

### **Vocation: Finding our gift**

Whether a priest or a layperson, each one has a unique process in determining what gift has God given to him or her. A vocation is a response to that gift. What I would like to tell young people especially is not to be afraid to engage in the process of finding out that gift. ... There is no recipe that would fit everyone because everyone is called in a unique way. I would tell people not to be afraid to engage in that discernment, to trust the Word of God, listen to the Word of God and see in the Word of God the wisdom that would clarify for each one, "What might be going on in me?"

### **Migrant ministry brings hope**

The ministry to migrants especially by the Church and the social and

charity organizations of the Church is the great bringer of hope to those people who are uprooted and feel lost in a foreign land. When they see that there are individuals and communities who really care for them and who will not leave them alone, then their pain is transformed into strength. ... If they are made to feel that they are human beings respected and given the opportunities to bloom, they become an asset to the receiving country. They provide workforce, they provide quality work because they are accepted and they also are able to help their families back home. The migrant workers could become the human bridge between two countries or more countries and cultures.

"Each one has a unique process in determining what gift has God given to him or her. A vocation is a response to that gift."  
– Cardinal Tagle

### **Poverty and learning from the little ones**

I always try to learn from the little ones. Even if I can't contribute to them, I can teach, but I should be a student of the little ones because they have a wisdom that academics don't have. They know what hope is from their suffering. They know what love is in sharing in their poverty, in their want. They know what faith is even when it's so difficult to say, "Our Father, give us this day our daily bread" because they know there will be no bread. But they know there is faith, they know by faith what that means. We have to learn from them. ...

We should really work so that the basic human necessities that every human being deserves must be given to them not just as promises. I think that's part of our service to them, not just to say in words that they are dignified but to take action and even to propose some changes in mentalities, in policies, in the economy that keep the poor poor. That's part of the affirmation of their dignity.

### **Peace: Solidarity with all people**

We express our solidarity with all the people suffering in conflict situations, and the most traumatic one right (now) is in Ukraine. But there are conflicts raging right now in the world and some of them have been forgotten. ... It seems that the violence has become worse. ...

When will humanity learn? Why do we keep repeating the same fault and mistake?

# Helping Survivors Survive **CLIMATE CHANGE**

Text and Photos by Gregg Brekke

*Long-term projects initiated by Maryknoll priest in Eastern Kenya combat drought, climate change and food insecurity*

**T**he arid landscape near Kibwezi in southeastern Kenya leaves little doubt that climate change has gravely affected the people here.

"The hope was that this would become an agriculturally productive area, but it didn't work out," says Maryknoll Father Lance Nadeau, who served in Kenya for over 20 years and is now superior general of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers.

A generation ago, this swath of land between two sections of Tsavo National Park was envisioned as a region for pastoralist indigenous groups to settle, raise crops and livestock, and provide education for their children.

That dream crumbled before it could even begin as the changing climate made the hoped-for agricultural mecca an unattainable goal, Father Nadeau says.

Increasing temperatures and decreasing annual rainfall mean shorter growing seasons. They also lead to longer walks to graze and water livestock. Hundreds of naturally-fed watering holes that served as reservoirs for most of the year are now dry. In the area, water flows through the Galana River and its tributaries only in the rainiest of times. Since the au-

turn of 2020, with consecutive annual droughts severely impacting an estimated 20 million people across East Africa, the water level has been too low to fill agricultural diversion channels. Farmers whose lands are not adjacent to the river are left without a steady supply of water.

Despite these dire conditions, people in Kibwezi have been bolstered by a series of innovative projects, initiated a decade ago, that help residents of the Kibwezi farmlands survive and thrive. In partnership with the St. John the Baptist mission and its outstation chapels, the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers have been helping residents with food assistance, livestock breeding, well drilling and water retention efforts.

Father Nadeau first traveled to the area in 2009 to meet the family of Dominic Mutunga, one of his students at Kenyatta University. At the time, Father Nadeau was serving as pastor of Christ the Teacher Catholic Chaplaincy Center, and Mutunga was chairman of its parish pastoral council. The Maryknoll priest had arrived in Kenya in 1999 and initially worked among the people living in the slums of Nairobi. In 2001 he began his work at Kenyatta University while also over the years overseeing



*Volunteers at the St. Nicholas outstation near Kibwezi, in southeastern Kenya, help with food distribution as part of a Maryknoll feeding program in the St. John the Baptist mission.*



Local residents hold saplings of drought-resistant mukau trees as part of a project at the St. John the Baptist mission near Kibwezi in southeastern Kenya to plant mukau groves.

These native mukau trees, which thrive in drylands, will provide needed shade, help with water and soil retention, and also eventually provide timber for sale and building projects.

assistance programs, especially in northern Kenya on the border with Ethiopia and South Sudan.

Through his work at Kenyatta, Father Nadeau got to know students such as Mutunga from these remote rural areas. He was “shocked” by the razor’s edge most people walked between survival and death.

The missionary was moved to act and to find ways to meet the people’s needs.

“I got involved in a number of projects — food assistance started in 2010 and water projects, livestock projects, reforestation projects began around 2012 and continue

today,” he says. “There are eight wells and they’re adding another one soon. Hundreds and hundreds of goats are now at the various outstations. Agriculture turned out to be so unpredictable — or should I say so predictably disastrous — that the goats provided a way for people to make some money and buy food, and not rely on food assistance.”

Food assistance is part of the overall project, but is distributed on a food-for-work basis. People receiving allotments of corn or other food items help with one of the many tree planting, gardening or construction projects underway in the mission.

The assistance is open to all, regardless of religious affiliation, and the projects — such as planting groves of drought-resistant mukau trees — provide much needed shade, water and soil retention along with the long-term prospect of timber sales.

“Climate change has become a very discouraging reality,” said Mutunga as he toured the Kibwezi region in late 2021, visiting his family and the Maryknoll project sites (Father Nadeau’s student had gone on to join the Jesuits). “What gives me hope is that the people themselves are aware they also have a responsibility in this,” he continues, “from

the smallest ways in which they can be part of this solution.”

Mutunga, who holds degrees in public health, said this work is not an exclusive effort of the people at the St. John the Baptist mission, but something that has a ripple effect. “One tree makes a difference and that goes on multiplying,” he said. “So there’s still immense hope.”

Providing water via wells — called “boreholes” locally — is an essential part of making the area sustainable for the pastoralist communities, helping to offset the loss of dried-up traditional watering holes. Father Nadeau says the wells themselves are



*A woman at the St. John the Baptist mission stands near a water storage tank that is part of a Maryknoll project to drill wells in the drought-ravaged area of Kibwezi in Kenya.*



*Dominic Mutunga, who connected Father Lance Nadeau to the needs of people in the Kibwezi area, helps distribute food at the Dunguni outstation of the St. John the Baptist mission.*



*A woman tills the soil, preparing to plant corn on the grounds of the St. John the Baptist mission near Kibwezi, Kenya, where the Maryknoll Society funds a food and water project.*

also intended to be self-sustaining.

Each well is staffed by an attendant who collects a small sum for each 20-liter (5-gallon) container filled with water, he says. The income pays the attendant and provides a small reserve for maintaining the pumping equipment and paying for electrical service — or, in many cases, providing solar panels.

Father Nadeau, who returned to the States in 2021 to assume the leadership of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, has relied on the generosity of donors to build and expand these services, noting that the average cost is approximately \$30,000 U.S. per well installation, which includes a solar power system.

The placement of the wells is strategic, he says. “We usually try to get them in an area where there’s a dispensary, a primary school, a secondary school, a church or a technical college so that the community can

benefit from it, too.”

While not all 120,000 residents of the Kibwezi region are pastoralists, the majority of people nonetheless rely on the land for their livelihoods. Survival in such harsh conditions is a daunting prospect, and climate change is only making it harder, Father Nadeau says.

“These are tough people,” he says. “So many people have innate gifts, not only of intelligence but of resilience. Extended families, in small communities, pull together and work for the common good. So that, more than anything else, is what gives me hope: the grit or the survival instincts of the people that I’ve met, who can face unbelievable hardships and survive.” ✨

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

# RESTORING TRAFFICKED

# VICTIMS *to Life*

By Mary Ellen Manz, M.M.

*Maryknoll sister leads religious in Asia in fight against human trafficking*

In the Gospel of St. Mark, Jesus took the hand of a young girl who had died and said to her in Aramaic, "*Talitha kum*," "Little girl, get up." She stood up, walked and ate — restored fully to life (5:41).

These words give meaning to the ministry of Maryknoll Sister Aurea (Abby) Avelino. Based in Japan, Sister Avelino, 56, coordinates Talitha Kum networks throughout Asia to end human trafficking.

Sister Avelino says her own background prepared her to minister to those who leave home in search of a better life. "As I journey and empathize with them, I can resonate with them as migrants in a foreign land," she says. "I was born and grew up in the Philippines; then my family emigrated to the United States."

The missionary's vocation journey began to unfold in California. Avelino earned a degree in mechanical engineering and worked for 15 years as an engineer, while

*Maryknoll Sister Aurea Avelino, coordinator of Talitha Kum Japan, now coordinates Asia's 16 Talitha Kum networks. (Stefano Dal Pozzolo, Courtesy Talitha Kum International)*





*At the Maryknoll Sisters Center, Sister Avelino smiles as the late Maryknoll Father Jack Sullivan signs her final vow documents in 2014. (CNS photo, Gregory A. Shemitz/U.S.)*

being increasingly drawn to religious life. She joined the Los Angeles Maryknoll Affiliates Chapter and got to know the Maryknoll Sisters in Monrovia, California. "I was attracted to their down-to-earth, humble attitude of service in mission," she says. She entered the congregation in 2006.

Sent to Japan, Sister Avelino attended language school before working in pastoral ministry. She often accompanied migrant communities. "I work with people on the move," she says.

In 2011, an earthquake provoked a tsunami that caused a nuclear disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant. Sister Avelino responded to Filipina migrants evacuated to Tokyo. The experience, which she remembers as a "truly missionary response to accompany women and children in times of

disaster," confirmed her vocation. Called to a lifetime of service, she returned to the Sisters Center in the States for a six-month reflection program before taking final vows in 2014.

The congregation's cross-cultural mission work is key, said the late Sister Janice McLaughlin, president of the Maryknoll Sisters at the time. She noted that it draws new women — like Sister Abby — "willing to uproot themselves, to leave their own homes, their own culture, to learn another language, to insert themselves and to live simply with the people."

Returning to Japan, Sister Avelino continued in her position as sister-in-charge at St. Ignatius Church in Tokyo. This large multicultural parish, where she worked for seven years, offers services in six languages besides Japanese.

She also joined Maryknoll Sister Margaret Lacson in Kawasaki at the Kalakasan Migrant Women Empowerment Center. Since 2002, the center has addressed the needs of migrant women who are domestically abused or otherwise exploited.

Through her work, Sister Avelino became aware of a hidden issue within migrant communities: human trafficking. She met numerous women and men from various parts of Asia and as far as Africa who had been deceived by traffickers, "especially the women," she says. "They've been promised, 'You can work in this' but they end up doing different things than they expected to do," she explains.

Globally, women and girls are the most vulnerable; according to the United Nations, 70% of victims are female and over two-thirds are below the age of 30.

"Those encounters triggered something in my heart that moved me to become involved in this ministry," Sister Avelino says.

Called to the forefront to fight human trafficking, she attended a Talitha Kum leadership training course. "It made me reflect on what I had been doing as a pastoral minister here in Japan, particularly with women who are victims of domestic violence, abuse and human trafficking," she says. "I hear their stories, their journey, their struggles in a foreign land. Their stories are sacred."

The Talitha Kum international network, which is formally named the International Network of Consecrated Life Against Trafficking in Persons, was established in 2009 by the International Union of Superiors General in Rome. Since then it has enlisted more than 6,000 religious



*Sister Avelino accompanies women and children at the Kalakasan Migrant Women Empowerment Center in Kawasaki, founded in 2002. (Peter Saunders/Japan)*

sisters in 94 countries to help people at risk of, trapped in or recovering from trafficking.

Sister Avelino serves as coordinator for Talitha Kum Japan. The network advocates for the rights of migrants and refugees, she says, and its members provide counseling, legal consultation and shelter for victims and survivors of trafficking. "We are not working alone," she adds. Their network maintains close ties with the bishops' conference of Japan, the national associations of religious men and religious women, and with non-governmental and non-profit organizations.

In 2021, Sister Avelino was asked

to coordinate Talitha Kum for all of Asia — the continent with the world's highest incidents of modern-day slavery. Of the estimated 40 million people trafficked worldwide, according to the International Monetary Fund, two-thirds of them (25 million people) are in East Asia and the Pacific.

Accepting this daunting task, Sister Avelino said, "It is an honor and opportunity for me to work in a wider collaboration with the 16 Talitha Kum Asia networks."

One common need across the continent is capacity building: learning to identify and accompany victims and those at risk. These

efforts are more important than ever, says Sister Avelino, since the economic instability caused by COVID-19 has made people more vulnerable to trafficking.

Using virtual technology, a monthly webinar was launched, with an average of 250 participants joining. Last year, trainings were also held for new Talitha Kum members, and approximately 200 people were trained in seven countries including Vietnam, Cambodia and Bangladesh.

By educating people in sending countries about the dangers they may face, Talitha Kum members hope to lessen abuse in destination

countries. "We strengthen our collaboration between sending countries and destination countries," Sister Avelino explains. "Japan, Korea and Taiwan are predominantly destination countries."

She is particularly excited about the Talitha Kum Youth Ambassadors program. "We have trained 26 young people — women and men — ages 19 to 30 years old, in 10 countries in Asia to be anti-trafficking youth ambassadors among children, youth and young adults at the grassroots level," she says. "They implement awareness-raising activities, both in-person and online, visiting churches, schools, orphanages and remote villages." Their use of social media platforms gives visibility to Talitha Kum and its mission.

In the Gospel story, Jesus says the young girl is "not dead, but only asleep." Talitha Kum's website states, "The expression 'talitha kum' ... awakens the deep desire for dignity and life which may be asleep and injured by the many forms of exploitation."

Sister Avelino says she will continue the work of "empowering each other, to give hope, strength and dignity to all, especially the most vulnerable women and children."✠

*Sister Avelino (bottom left) joins partners, members and staff of Kalakasan to call attention to human trafficking. (Courtesy Abby Avelino/Japan)*



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# Spirit of Mission

## The Holy Names of Mary

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

“Why do you Catholics worship the Virgin Mary?” is a question asked regularly, both online and in real life, by the curious and the critical. The answer — taught in most catechism classes — is simply, “We don’t.” We offer this explanation: “We *worship* God. We *venerate* the Blessed Virgin Mary and other saints.”

It’s true that the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches are unmatched in our zeal for honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary. Episcopalians and other Anglicans come next, followed by Lutherans. Even Muslims honor Miriam, Mother of Jesus the Messiah. In fact, the Qur’an dedicates an entire chapter to her — the only woman so honored, calling her “the greatest woman who ever lived.”

And to be sure, throughout history some Catholic individuals and groups have gone overboard in venerating the Blessed Mother.

But the two millennia-old veneration that Catholics and Orthodox afford to Mary is deeply rooted in Sacred Scripture.

Returning to biblical sources can correct distorted images of the mother of Jesus. The fiery Mary described in the Gospels, who proclaimed “He has cast down the mighty from their

thrones, and has lifted up the lowly” (Luke 1:52) is a far cry from the passive, demure caricature portrayed in some pious Marian devotions.

Of all of Mary’s titles, none is more dynamic or profound than *kecharitome*, which Catholic bibles translate as “full of grace.” This unique word, coined by St. Luke in his Gospel, is found nowhere else, neither in the Scriptures nor in Greek literature of the time. A unique word for a unique woman! It conveys the meaning that God had already highly favored, or graced, Mary — even before the Angel Gabriel greeted her. It is an adjective that denotes a permanent state of being; a condition in the present that is the result of a past action. We find in this word the biblical underpinning for the dogma of the Immaculate Conception: Mary was free from sin from the first moments of her existence.

This singular state of grace bore fruit in the Incarnation: God became human through Mary. At the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., the Church conferred on Mary the sublime title *Theotokos*, meaning “God-bearer” or in contemporary English, “Mother of God.”

Christians, especially women and mothers, find in Mary the strength to get through hardships. The *Mater Do-*



In the painting “Madonna and Child with Angels” by Italian artist Giovanni Battista da Salvi (1609-1685), the Virgin Mary tenderly embraces Jesus. (Wikimedia Commons)

*lorosa* (Sorrowful Mother) consoles parents who tragically lose their children and who, like her, must stand at the foot of the cross and watch their children suffer.

In recent years, genetic research has confirmed the emblematic ongoing closeness between a mother and child. Medical science has discovered a phenomenon called “micro-chimerism:” as early as the second week of pregnancy, a two-way flow of chromosomes takes place between a mother and her unborn baby. Perhaps it’s not surprising that a mother’s cells cross the placenta to enter the fetus’ bloodstream. It is astonishing, however, that cells from the fetus also cross the placenta to enter into the

mother’s bloodstream. Even after she gives birth, these new cells remain in the mother’s system. They have been found to treat, if not cure, allergies and even rheumatoid arthritis in the mother.

No wonder Christian cultures throughout history and around the world have found in Mary a mother, calling her by many titles and names in our own languages. And isn’t that also true to the Scriptures? “From this day all generations will call me blessed.” (Luke 1:48)

So, far more than being a surrogate mother for the Messiah, we are right to venerate Mary who — even now — continues to be the *Theotokos*, “God-bearer” for us and for the world.✠

# *In Memoriam*

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

---

Brother John J. Beeching

Sister Rita Keegan

Father Thomas J. Burns

Sister Ann Klaus

Father Dennis W. Cleary

Father Robert A. Lilly

Sister Joan Delaney

Sister Dolores Mitch

Sister Jacqueline Dorr

Father Edward F. Moore

Father Arthur J. Dwyer

Sister Cecilia Santos

Father Clarence A. Engler

Father John J. Sullivan

Father Lawrence W. Flynn

Father Elmer P. Wurth

Father Thomas P. Henehan

Father Maurice J. Zerr

Sister Therese Howard

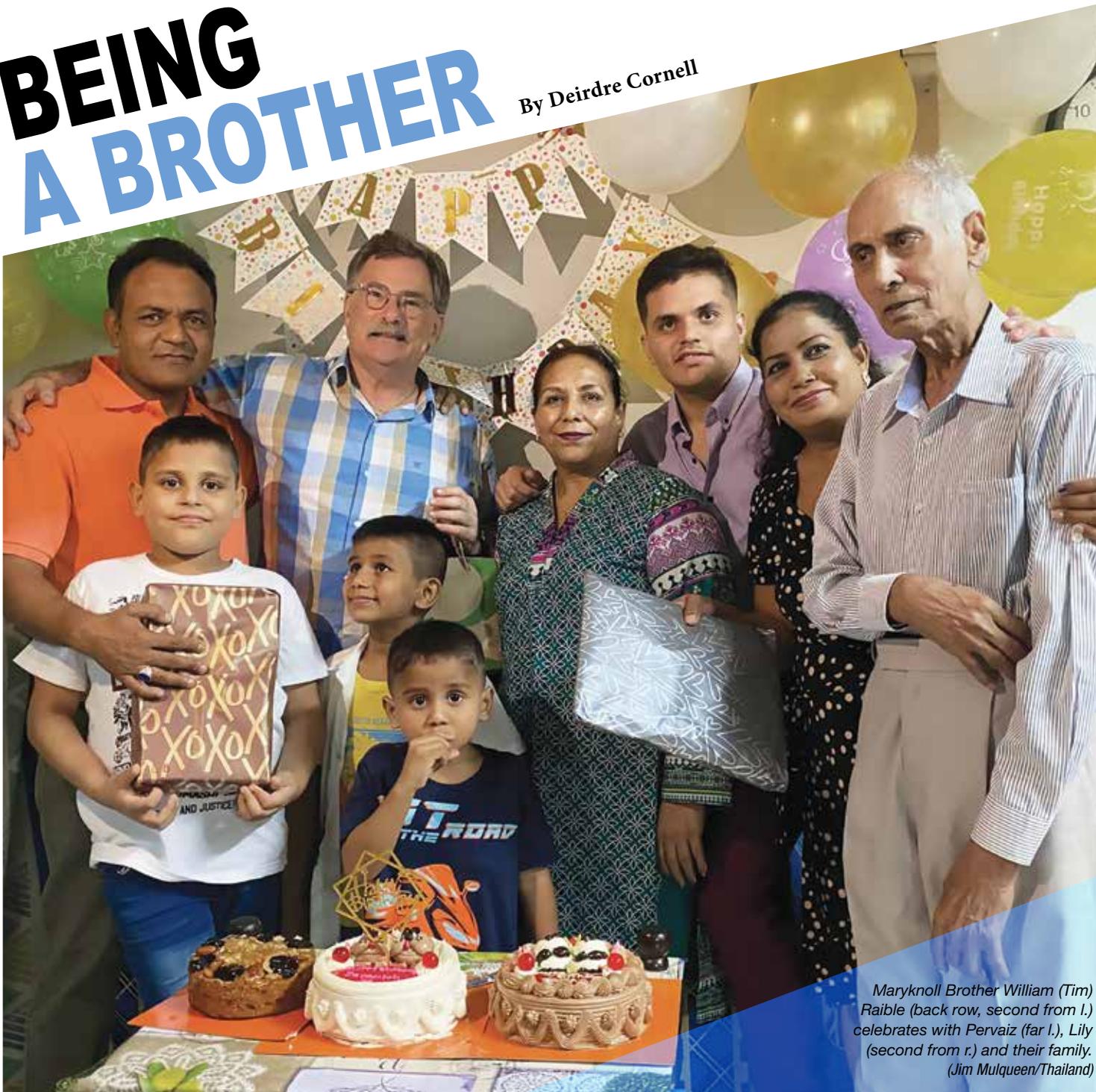
*“Well done, my good  
and faithful servant.”*

*—Matthew 25:21*



# BEING A BROTHER

By Deirdre Cornell



*Maryknoll Brother William (Tim) Raible (back row, second from l.) celebrates with Pervaiz (far l.), Lily (second from r.) and their family. (Jim Mulqueen/Thailand)*

## *Maryknoll brother becomes family to Pakistani refugees in Bangkok*

**W**hen Maryknoll Brother William Raible introduces himself, he often has to explain what a religious brother does. After 45 years of varied ministries, he says he's come up with a simple job description: "to go out and form community with the people we work with."

This is exactly what the missionary did in Thailand, where he most recently served overseas. Working with the Maryknoll staff in Bangkok assisting refugees, Brother Raible, who goes by "Brother Tim," befriended six Catholic Pakistani families.

"I first met Pervaiz and his son, Mandy, at our food distribution program," Brother Raible says. As they bagged groceries together, and little Mandy ate his first strawberries, Pervaiz Ghouri told the missionary how they had fled religious persecution in Pakistan after being targeted in the Muslim-majority country.

"These families lost everything. Their businesses and homes were taken. Their reputations were ruined when they were accused of blasphemy," Brother Raible says. They lived a precarious existence in Thailand, hoping to be settled permanently in a host country.

By the end of the conversation, Pervaiz had worked up the courage to ask, "Would you come to my home and visit my family?"

"Pervaiz met me at the pier when I arrived. It takes an hour and a half by boat to get there," Brother Raible

recalls. "I met his wife, Lily, their other sons, the grandparents and three of Lily's siblings, who brought their own families. They all came."

Brother Raible met two other Catholic Pakistani families at an English Mass and became part of their extended families, as well.

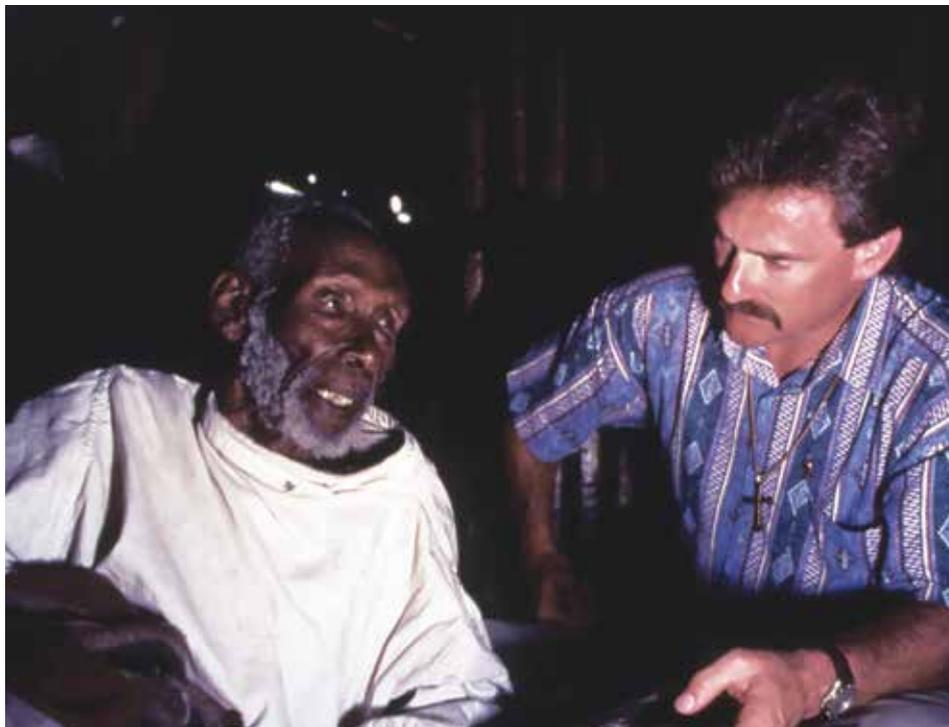
"As a brother I found family in Thailand," he continues. "It was the most normal, natural thing to do."

It's not surprising that the missionary, now 69, became a brother to Pakistani refugees in Bangkok. He has formed such community on three continents.

Born in Oakland, California, and raised in nearby Vallejo, young Tim Raible subscribed to *Maryknoll* magazine. He was especially drawn to stories about religious brothers. While not feeling called to ordained ministry, he knew he was called to mission — and to Maryknoll. He joined the society in 1977.

Brother Raible's first overseas assignment took him to the Mindanao islands in the Philippines. A pattern runs through his ministry, he says. "I motivate people to serve in their communities to make sure needs are met." He recruited and trained 145 catechists from 98 outstations for the regional children's religious education program.

In Kenya, where he was assigned for seven years, Brother Raible joined a woman called Mama Waithera visiting HIV/AIDS patients in the neighborhood of Soweto in Nairobi. "There were just too many sick people to visit," he remembers. "I said to her, 'We've got to get some help.'" Before Brother Raible left, the visitation program



*In a Nairobi slum, Brother Raible receives a blessing from a blind storyteller friend he visited often. (Sean Sprague/Kenya)*

had enlisted 14 volunteers.

Brother Raible returned to the U.S. to work in vocations and mission education and promotion. "I was called to water the seed of mission vocation in others," he says. Based in Seattle, he helped people join Maryknoll as priests, sisters, lay missionaries and affiliates, and assisted with immersion trips and short-term volunteer opportunities in Mexico, Tanzania, Thailand, Myanmar and East Timor.

Regarding vocations to the priesthood and brotherhood, Brother Raible explains, "The primary focus for discernment is the calling to be a Maryknoll missionary. The next step is how to live out that calling."

After 12 fulfilling years in Seattle,

Brother Raible was asked to open a Maryknoll house in Washington, D.C. What was it like to move across the country to start a project from scratch? "It was the same thing, the same calling," Brother Raible responds. "Go out and find community. Be a brother to others!"

In 2016, Brother Raible returned to overseas mission. "When I got to Bangkok," he says, "a firm foundation was there for me to stand on." Maryknoll has a vibrant history of accompanying refugees and displaced people in Southeast Asia. It was especially gratifying, he says, to serve alongside his novice director, the late Brother John Beeching.

From their base in Bangkok, Brothers Beeching and Raible

would periodically travel to reach the isolated hill tribe peoples of Myanmar. They helped distribute food, medicine, blankets and sleeping mats at camps for internally displaced people.

In Bangkok, most mornings Brother Raible taught in the English program started by Brother Beeching at a Buddhist monastery, Wat Vorajanyuwat.

In the afternoons, Brother Raible joined Keadkaw Boonkwan, Arlene Sale and Serge Auguste of the Maryknoll office in Bangkok. This team visits detention centers, serves at the food distribution program and helps with other collaborative efforts between Caritas Thailand, Jesuit Refugee Services, the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees and five Catholic parishes in the Archdiocese of Bangkok.

"Working at the food distribution program allowed me to meet families and make a connection for home visits," the brother says.

A relationship of trust is key to helping refugees in Bangkok emerge from the shadows.

Thousands of Pakistani Christians have fled to Thailand in recent years. Lacking proper visas and not recognized as refugees by the Thai government, they live in constant fear of arrest and detention.

"Often, undocumented migrants are afraid to apply for refugee status. Because if they are not granted asylum, people can be sent back, where their future is very uncertain," Brother Raible says.

When Brother Raible met Perwaiz, the family members' passports had expired. The Maryknoll office



On a periodic relief trip to Myanmar, Brother Raible and volunteer Jim Mulqueen (right) distribute sleeping mats to internally displaced people. (John Beeching/Myanmar)

assisted them in applying for new ones and accompanied them closely to establish their asylum claims through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

In Thailand — where less than 1% of the population is Christian — Brother Raible also offered pastoral care. “I would bring Communion to them,” the missionary says. “We prayed, read Scripture, sang hymns and shared the Eucharist. Afterwards we enjoyed a wonderful Pakistani meal prepared by Lily and her sisters.”

Brother Raible tells of a moment when he knew friendship had

turned into kinship. “They were throwing a combined birthday celebration,” he says. “And my birthday falls in September. ‘You’re our brother,’ they told me. ‘You have to be there.’”

Since then, Lily, Pervaiz and their four sons have been approved to relocate in Australia. Others of the six families the missionary befriended have been accepted for resettlement in Canada and England.

In April, Brother Raible began a new assignment in the States, helping run the society’s New York City house. He plans to keep in touch with the families who consider him their “brother.”

Brother Raible says that wherever he serves, while his mission site may change, his vocation doesn’t. It’s the same calling: “Go out and find community. Be a brother!” ✝

**FOR INFORMATION ON BECOMING A PRIEST OR BROTHER WITH MARYKNOLL FATHERS & BROTHERS,** Contact Fr. Rodrigo Ulloa, M.M., at (914) 504-1196  
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# 2022 MARYKNOLL™ STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

*What is your dream for a better community and world?*

**THREE CASH PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED PER DIVISION**

- 1ST PLACE PRIZE: \$1,000
- 2ND PLACE PRIZE: \$300
- 3RD PLACE PRIZE: \$150

**ASSIGNMENT:** In his book, “Let Us Dream: the Path to a Better Future,” Pope Francis writes, “God asks us to dare to create something new.” How is God inviting you to create something new that would help your community and the world? Write an essay responding to that question.

**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](http://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](http://MaryknollSociety.org/Essay)).

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

**DEADLINE:** Entries must be submitted online or postmarked by MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2022. First-place essays will appear in the Summer 2023 *Maryknoll* magazine. All winning entries will be published online at [MaryknollSociety.org/Winners](http://MaryknollSociety.org/Winners) by April 1, 2023.

MAIL TO: 2022 Student Essay Contest, Division \_\_\_\_\_, P.O. Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0302  
Call 1-914-570-4118 or email Walter Hidalgo at [whidalgo@maryknoll.org](mailto:whidalgo@maryknoll.org) for more information.  
For more educational and catechetical resources, please visit <https://discoveryourneighbor.org/>.



Maryknoll Lay Missioner Margaret Vámosy (center) and agricultural program members Cándido and Margarita harvest organic corn. (Courtesy Margaret Vámosy/El Salvador)

# LISTENING TO THE *Voice of Creation*

By Margaret Vámosy

*Maryknoll lay missioner in El Salvador promotes sustainable agriculture and environmental awareness*

Every year, Pope Francis asks us to observe the Season of Creation from September 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, to October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. This year's theme is "Listen to the Voice of Creation."

In the rural parish of Monte San Juan in the department (state) of Cuscatlán, El Salvador where I serve as a Maryknoll lay missioner, we try to do just that.

Monte San Juan's mountainous terrain is not highly productive, yet farmers here aim to produce enough corn and beans for their families' sustenance. Our



*Agricultural program member Francisca Ventura tends to a litter of piglets. The program helped her to diversify her family farm. (Courtesy Margaret Vámosy/El Salvador)*

parish-based agricultural program improves food security through crop diversification and sustainable organic production.

“My family has seen the benefits of reducing chemicals on our farm,” says Francisca Ventura, who has been involved in the program since it began in 2013. “It is more work to weed by hand rather than spray herbicides,” she explains, “but we are convinced it’s healthier for us and for the environment.” In addition to turning part of her yard into a vegetable garden, Francisca planted fruit trees, improved her poultry practices and started raising pigs and tilapia fish. This provides greater food security for her family and produces extra income.

Francisca and other program members also explore practices to mitigate the effects of climate

change. That means implementing soil and water conservation techniques for greater resilience under changing rainfall patterns; saving seeds from resistant plants to improve future crops’ ability to withstand storms, drought and pests; and avoiding agrochemicals that can be deleterious to pollinators and other beneficial insects (as well as to microorganisms in the soil).

A program member offered a piece of land to try out these practices. This has enabled us to experiment — to succeed and to fail — and, especially, to learn together.

In mission, I accompany our sisters and brothers in discovering how to identify problems and needs; how to test solutions and evaluate results. I don’t have all the answers!

And, neither I nor any other technical advisor will always be around as new problems arise.

Empowerment is part of a faith journey. When we realize our dignity as children of God, we become motivated to live in a more dignified manner, making decisions for ourselves, eating better and providing a sustainable future for our children.

My own journey started on a family farm in New York State. Called to combat world hunger, I pursued an education at Cornell and Texas A&M universities and worked in Ecuador and Honduras and on a Native American reservation in Arizona. Joining the Maryknoll Lay Missioners, I served in East Timor and Cambodia before arriving to El Salvador in 2012. Even at my age, 64, I learn something new every day. I’ve diversified my organic garden by adding things like tree spinach, air potatoes and turmeric!

Along with the agricultural program, I work with our parish environmental committee. One of our first projects was to set up collection bins for recyclable bottles and cans at the two main churches and all chapels in the parish’s 12 communities. We promote the three R’s: “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.”

The committee has made progress toward reducing the use of disposable plates and cups at parish events. In El Salvador, the cheapest disposable material is Styrofoam — which by all accounts will never biodegrade. With the support of our pastor, Father Mauricio Saravia, our committee convinced the parish and most village chapel communities to acquire reusable plastic cups and



*Program members (l. to r.) Dorita, Ruvdia, Antonio and Cándido grind herbs for turmeric seasoning. (Courtesy Margaret Vámosy/El Salvador)*



A technician from the national ministry of the environment, Sol Muñoz, collects river water samples while others take measurements. (Courtesy Margaret Vámosy/El Salvador)

plates for gatherings. Hygiene is not insurmountable, but overcoming the appetite for convenience often seems to be.

We spent a year reading and explaining in short sessions, piece by piece, Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* before Sunday Mass. And we continue to hold training sessions on the importance of caring for our common home.

One day in 2018, while riding the bus to town, committee member Domingo Chávez and I noted a "Land for Sale" sign — precisely at the headwaters of the San Juan River. For years, our committee had been concerned about its diminishing flow and increasing pollution. "Just imagine what will happen to the river if developers are allowed to build houses or businesses here!" Domingo said, knowing its impor-

tance to the local people as a source of irrigation and as a cool and refreshing place to relax.

Due to lack of funds, purchase of the land by the town was out of the question. Enlisting the aid of the national Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, we learned that our best alternative was to create a management plan for the watershed.

We started working with farmers, town leaders and national and local government personnel. Volunteers are learning to measure the quality and quantity of flow in the river so they can monitor those factors regularly. Government officials were impressed the initiative came from within the community and invested in a case study of the work, something we hope will encourage other parish or community groups to take



Maryknoll Lay Missioner Margaret Vámosy and adult community leaders teach children of the village of San Nicolás to recycle in 2018. (Courtesy Margaret Vámosy/El Salvador)

action in their own areas.

As a collaboration between four municipal governments, national institutions and local actors, the watershed management plan will only succeed if people join forces and work together. If people realize they can work together on a river project, they can work together on any number of other issues. Beyond saving a river, ours is also an attempt to empower people and help them take charge, truly planning for a sustainable future.

Cándido Fernández, who participates in the agricultural program and environmental committee, says he hopes the watershed plan will make it possible for young people to stay on the farms. He asks, "If no one wants to work in the fields to grow the food, what will the generations of tomorrow eat?"

By listening to the voices of farm families and community members, we learn from each other. Listening also to the land and the river, we grow in respect for all voices of creation — blended into a chorus that sings of the glory of God. As Pope Francis wrote, "In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God ... Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope." (*Laudato Si'* no. 244) ✠

*Margaret Vámosy, a horticulturist from New York State, joined the Maryknoll Lay Missioners in 2008.*



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# Witnessing the Trauma of War

By Janet Alberti

*Maryknoll affiliates travel to the border of Ukraine to assist with humanitarian efforts*

What would prompt 11 people to fly thousands of miles, drive hundreds more, and learn to say in halting Ukrainian, “Welcome. Coffee or tea?” Turns out, it was to share much more than a cup of coffee.

In May, five Maryknoll affiliates and six other Americans flew into Warsaw to see what we could offer Ukrainian refugees fleeing to Poland. The idea had started during a conversation at a Northeast Ohio affiliates meeting and spread through the affiliates network. Affiliate Pam Cibik (whose family has roots in Poland) gathered donations from people who entrusted us with their generous gifts. We set out in spite of our uncertainty about what we’d do once we got there.

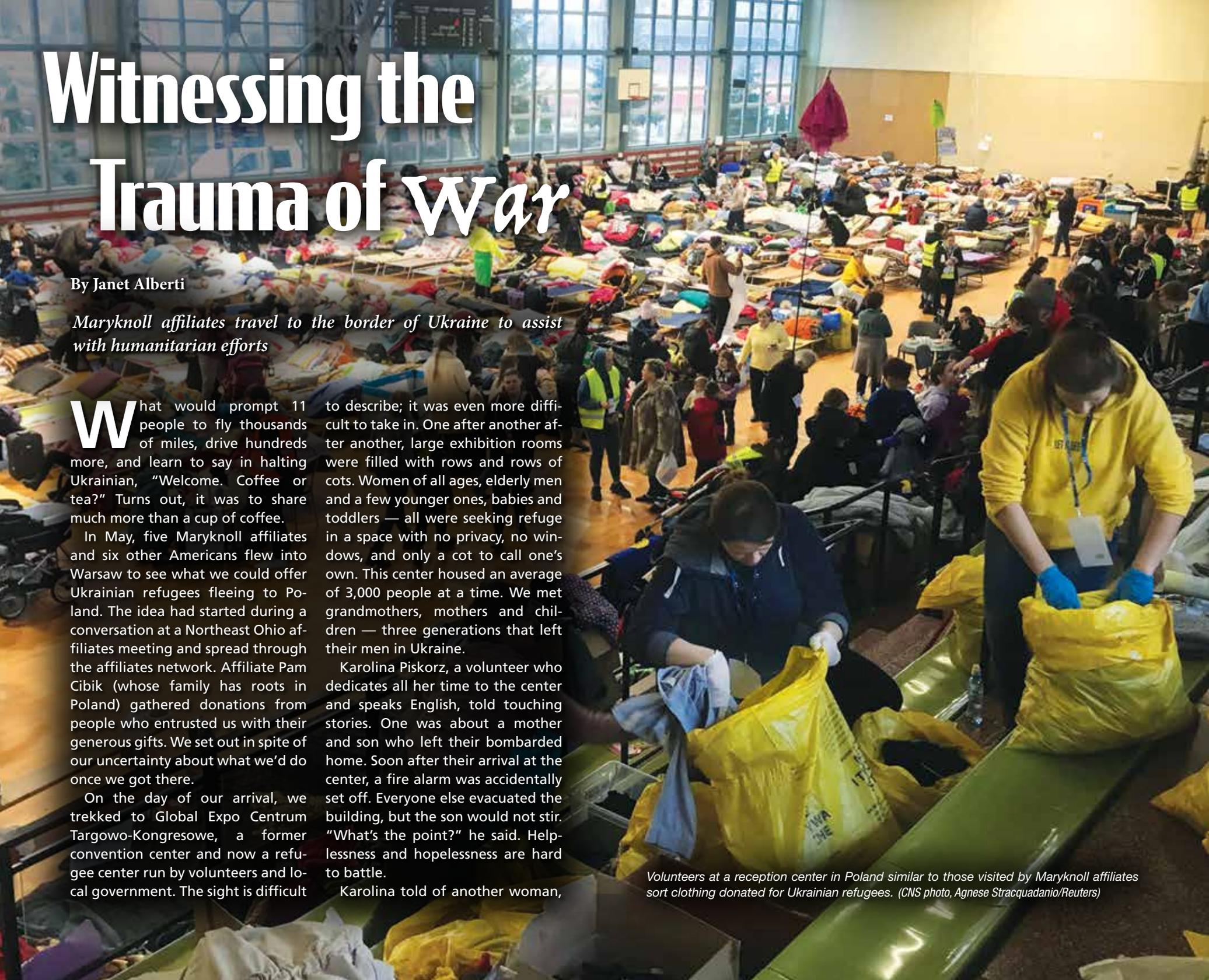
On the day of our arrival, we trekked to Global Expo Centrum Targowo-Kongresowe, a former convention center and now a refugee center run by volunteers and local government. The sight is difficult

to describe; it was even more difficult to take in. One after another after another, large exhibition rooms were filled with rows and rows of cots. Women of all ages, elderly men and a few younger ones, babies and toddlers — all were seeking refuge in a space with no privacy, no windows, and only a cot to call one’s own. This center housed an average of 3,000 people at a time. We met grandmothers, mothers and children — three generations that left their men in Ukraine.

Karolina Piskorz, a volunteer who dedicates all her time to the center and speaks English, told touching stories. One was about a mother and son who left their bombarded home. Soon after their arrival at the center, a fire alarm was accidentally set off. Everyone else evacuated the building, but the son would not stir. “What’s the point?” he said. Helplessness and hopelessness are hard to battle.

Karolina told of another woman,

*Volunteers at a reception center in Poland similar to those visited by Maryknoll affiliates sort clothing donated for Ukrainian refugees. (CNS photo, Agnese Stracquadano/Reuters)*





In Warsaw, Maryknoll Affiliates (clockwise) Pam Cibik, Ken Palisin, Janet Alberti and Lita Sharone shop for supplies. Not pictured: Curtis Alberti (Courtesy Janet Alberti/Poland)

who had been receiving a daily text from her brother at the front. Unexplainedly one day the texts stopped. Three weeks ... and no word from her brother. What does a person do in a situation like that? Grieve? Keep hoping, against all odds?

During the nine days of our trip, we were able to assist in several ways. Pam brought a donation of "fidget blankets" (lap blankets designed to keep hands busy) that we distributed to young children. We also facilitated a play group for boys. Using army figures, they were able to play out their experiences of war and their feelings about what is happening to their country. One boy stated, "Russia will have a Ukraine without mothers and children." A

country without children is no place for anyone.

Organizing donations and supplies at such a place is a challenge all its own, and we were glad to help. Members of our delegation also purchased items at a big-box store nearby: adults' and children's clothing, flip flops, deodorant, backpacks, baby food and sleeping bags. "Because we were there, on the ground, we were able to fill in gaps and provide critical items that were missing," Pam says.

Showers are available in large shipping containers set up in the center, but with so many people, hot water runs out quickly. We were able to buy additional water heaters and get them installed.



Maryknoll Affiliate Janet Alberti, who worked for 30 years in mental health, engages in play therapy with a Ukrainian child (face blurred for privacy). (Courtesy Janet Alberti/Poland)

At Ptak Humanitarian Aid Center, another former expo center on the outskirts of Warsaw, we spent a day sorting useful items and stuffing 1,400 "kindness bags" to be handed out to refugees as they move on to their next destination. It felt great to do something so concrete.

Karolina took us to visit The Mothers' House, a home for refugee mothers with babies and young children on the outskirts of Warsaw. At the time of our visit, the home hosted 15 children. We bought two clothes dryers for The Mothers' House, where they had been washing laundry without one for more than 20 people daily.

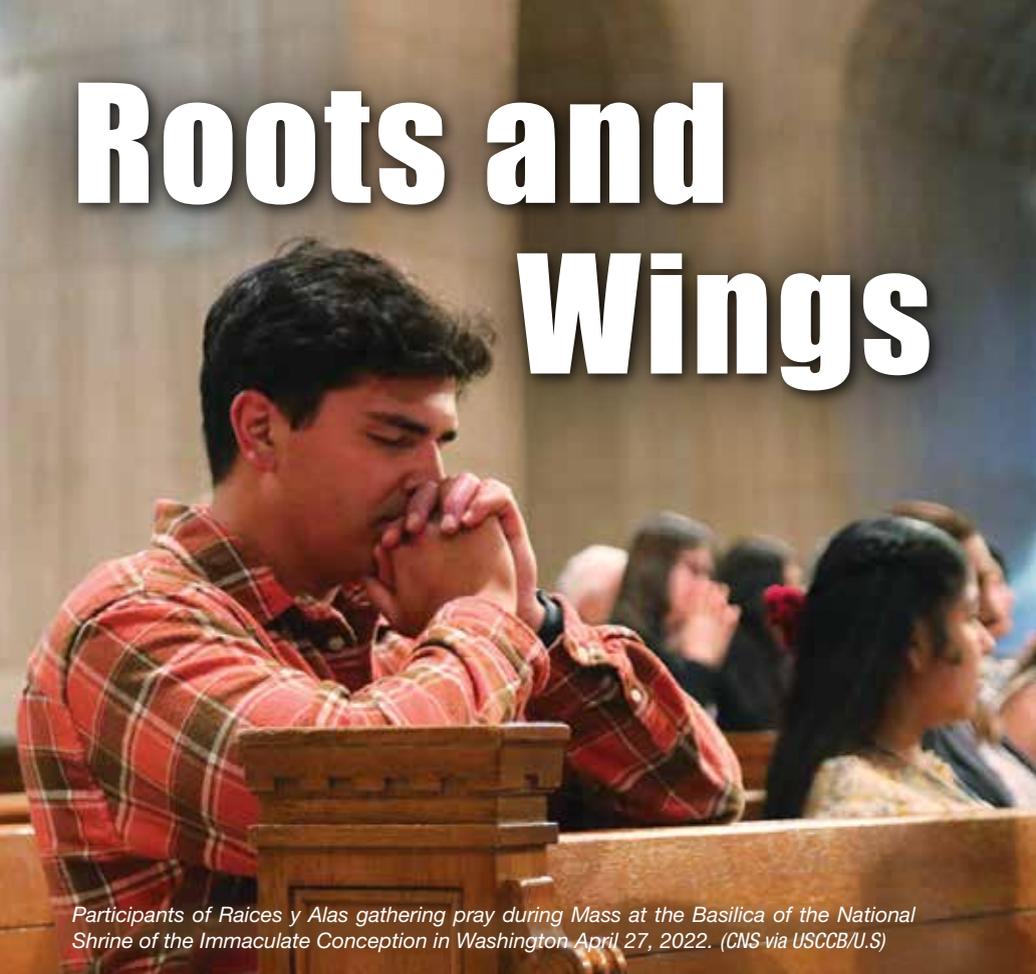
Several children were in quarantine because of spots on their skin.

Our first thought was, chicken pox! Later we learned that a visiting doctor diagnosed the condition as stress-related. He reported seeing many cases of rash and explained that the body tries to expel stress in this way. It's an impact of trauma.

Our group continued on to the Hrebenne Crossing, some 200 miles from Warsaw at the border with Ukraine. There, the non-governmental organization Polish Humanitarian Action is stationed to receive refugees. We stayed for four days to assist in welcoming families as they entered Poland. This was an intensely emotional experience, seeing families fleeing Ukraine among the bus passengers. The reality of the trauma they were living through



# Roots and Wings



Participants of Raíces y Alas gathering pray during Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington April 27, 2022. (CNS via USCCB/U.S)

At a picnic, Maryknoll Affiliate Pam Cibik hugs a refugee child from Ukraine as volunteer coordinator Karolina Piskorz smiles in the background. (Courtesy Janet Alberti/Poland)

could be seen in their eyes, on the verge of tears.

So many stories, glimpsed in passing. I conversed with one woman and learned she had left her parents in hiding in Mariupol.

One evening, a bus, also from Mariupol, came through with 66 orphans. It hurt to know that these children — orphaned before the war — were losing their homeland and would soon lose each other as they are divided among foster placements in Italy.

And then there was the elderly handicapped couple, both leaning on crutches, who had such difficulty getting off the bus. They were given food provided by World Central Kitchen and ... a cup of coffee. Af-

ter the brief stopover, their bus was being reloaded. The elderly man — with crutches under both arms — struggled to cross the patio. He approached one of our members, reached out to shake his hand and just said, "Thank you."

A cup of coffee became a moment of connection. Of being present, of acknowledging that something profoundly wrong is happening — and that words don't suffice to express it. Pam says, "We were there for a greater cause, a greater purpose. For humanity." Coming back, she says, "I watch the news in a different way now."

Witnesses to war, we were honored to be there. ✥

*Janet Alberti, a therapist specializing in trauma, is a member of the Northeast Ohio Affiliates chapter with her husband, Curtis.*

By Leonel Yoque

## Leader of Maryknoll's Hispanic outreach reflects on national event looking at the future of U.S. Hispanic ministry

In April, Elisabeth Román welcomed 400 Hispanic ministry leaders to the "Roots and Wings" conference. The National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry (NCCHM), of which Román is president, set out to reflect on the current reality of Hispanic ministry, identify new paths and motivate us to action.

Hispanic leaders and bishops

from the United States and Latin America came to Washington D.C. in a spirit of synodality. "Raíces y Alas (Roots and Wings) ... marks the climate of renewal that the pope asks of us for the entire Church," said Rodrigo Guerra López, secretary of the pontifical commission for Latin America at the Vatican. Pope Francis defines synodality as "ecclesial communion

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Elisabeth Román, National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry president (right), smiles with speakers Susana Nuin (center) and María José Centurión. (NCCHM, Jesús Picón/U.S.)

... (that) must animate the conversion and reform of the Church at every level.”

I represented the Maryknoll Society, which is trying to identify areas of collaboration with these national institutions and to see how these processes inform Maryknoll’s goal of encouraging the Hispanic community in mission.

Our roots remind us of our long journey as U.S. Catholics who also have deep roots in Latin America. “Hispanic Catholics in the United States respect tradition very much because we have very deep roots in Latin American Catholicism,” said Jesuit Father Allan Figueroa Deck, a pioneer in Hispanic ministry and one of the founders of NCCHM. Since the 1970s, five Hispanic pastoral encounters have

marked the path of the Hispanic Catholics in the U.S.

This Roots and Wings meeting of pastoral leaders focused on the pastoral priorities identified by the Fifth Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry. For four days we delved into family, youth ministry, social justice and formation. The results will be delivered to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to help develop a national Hispanic pastoral plan.

Roots are cultivated in the family, where faith is lived and evangelized and where values are transmitted. The gifts and talents of our children are discovered, and the various vocations are nourished. “No institution or person will have as much influence on a person’s human and spiritual de-

velopment as parents and spouses do,” stressed Dora Tobar, leader of the newly-founded National Federation for Hispanic Family Ministry. “The domestic mission of parents is vital for promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life.”

Hispanic families in the States demonstrate strengths. For example, the “extended family” model of Hispanic families favors the Christian sense of community. Likewise, the faith and culture inherited from Latin America infuse a deep popular religiosity, which, if well oriented, can transmit the faith to future generations. However, many challenges were mentioned: family separation, secularization, machismo, domestic violence, migration, etc. For Hispanic families to be authentic domestic churches, it is necessary to invigorate the formation of couples and parents.

One-third of the participants were young adults, representing the “wings” of Hispanic ministry and echoing Pope Francis’ words: young people are “the now of God.”

“Welcoming young people into our communities is everyone’s job,” said Martin Soros, 17, of the Archdiocese of Washington. “I hope that we can see in each young person someone who is possibly in danger of leaving the Church and that is why each smile, each look, each question, and each acknowledgment that they exist tells them that the Church loves them and wants to see them there.”

Our “wings” are essential to make our dream of a better Church and world come true.

“We need to cultivate vocations to Christian discipleship,” said Hosffman Ospino, associate professor of Hispanic ministry at Boston College. “And from there cultivate vocations to priestly life, religious and lay life so that these young people born in the U.S. can be the new leaders.”

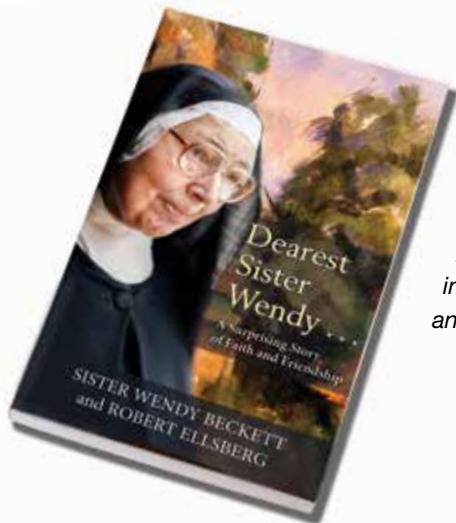
Ospino argues that most priests and religious serving the Hispanic community are immigrants, creating a dissonance in the formation of our U.S.-born young people. He called for more investment into a new structure to “be able to serve this new generation.”

Pope Francis addressed the participants through a video urging us “to reflect on the need to be Christians who transform structures and can create bridges in all sectors of society.”

Representing the Maryknoll Society at the Roots and Wings congress, I found it easy to identify the charism of mission. The Hispanic community in the U.S. is a people on the move, capable of transforming structures and making the social doctrine of the Church come alive in daily practice. It was an encouraging reminder that when we dialogue, discern and act as the People of God, we exercise our prophetic voices. ✠

*Deacon Leonel Yoque leads Maryknoll Society’s Discipulos Misioneros team, which focuses on Hispanic outreach.*

ORBIS  BOOKS  
Spotlight



Preview by Robert Ellsberg

*“To read Dearest Sister Wendy . . . is to be touched by a living flame of grace. I am roundly convinced that it is impossible to overstate the blessedness and wonder of this remarkable book!”*

—Michelle Jones, editor

*Ruth Burrows: Essential Writings*

**M**any people will remember Sister Wendy Beckett, a contemplative nun and art historian, from her surprising run on television. A hermit living on the grounds of a Carmelite monastery in England, she was discovered by the BBC in the 1990s and given her own program, *Sister Wendy’s Odyssey*, to roam around art galleries and comment on what she saw. Sister Wendy considered the chance to talk about art as an opportunity “to talk about God to people who weren’t comfortable with that word.” For Sister Wendy, all beauty pointed to the source of beauty.

But when that period of her public life ended, she happily returned to her hermitage and the life of seclusion to which she was committed

by vocation and suited by temperament. She always resisted invitations to discuss her inner life. That changed in her last years through a correspondence we shared, which both surprised us and changed our lives indelibly.

I had published several of Sister Wendy’s books at Orbis and we had exchanged dozens of notes — in Sr. Wendy’s case, written in her inscrutable handwriting. But thanks to another nun, who took her dictation, Sister Wendy opened herself in her last three years to a deep and intimate series of emails exchanged on almost a daily basis until her death in 2018. *Dearest Sister Wendy: A Surprising Story of Faith and Friendship* is the fruit of that writing.

Our correspondence was at first

sparked by Sister Wendy’s fascination with the Orbis Modern Spiritual Masters Series. She avidly consumed volumes as fast as I could send them: Thomas Merton, Etty Hillesum, Vincent Van Gogh, Karl Rahner, St. Therese of Lisieux. In each case she replied with her usual sharp and incredibly astute assessments, remarking on their strengths, their weaknesses and their overriding message. Sister Wendy’s personal favorite was Julian of Norwich, the 14th century anchoress and mystic who lived in solitude not so different (or so distant) from her own hermitage.

If at first our exchanges focused on saints and the question of holiness, they gradually opened up to encompass all of our lives, considered in light of God’s providence and care. For Sister Wendy this kind of self-revelation was completely unprecedented. At one point she observed that perhaps our correspondence was meant for a wider

audience, as we shared our dreams and considered the meaning of love, joy, suffering, and the presence of grace in everyday life.

Sister Wendy had always kept people at a distance. But in the course of our correspondence, as she was gradually approaching her own death, she was still growing, reassessing old assumptions, learning, as the poet William Blake put it, to “bear the beams of love.” I was eventually invited to lead a retreat at the Quidenham Carmelite monastery where she lived, and so we met at last.

Through this book, I am glad many others will have the opportunity to meet my friend — a true spiritual guide, a modern mystic, a singular lover of God — and learn through her wisdom, as I did, how to read their own lives as a spiritual text in the making. ✞

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



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# World Watch

## *It's Time for Renewable Energy*

By Kathleen Kollman Birch

**R**eleased in April 2022, the latest major United Nations report on climate change put in the starkest terms yet the need for rapid reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions. However, underneath the alarm bells the report had another message: we now have the technological tools to combat this crisis. It is up to us to decide to use them.

This U.N. report is the latest in a series of dire scientific warnings that — despite international agreements — the world is not on track to meet carbon emission reduction goals and the planet is heating up to a dangerous degree. In order to meet the goal of the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015, which is to limit average global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, global emissions need to fall sharply, starting immediately.

At the same time this latest report highlights the hopeful fact that reducing global emissions to the levels necessary is, scientifically speaking, feasible, given the tools we have today.

Renewable energy technology is more available and cheaper than ever. According to the World Resources Institute, the cost of solar energy has fallen by 85% in a decade, and wind power by 50%. These renewable energy sources are now cost-competi-

tive with fossil fuel energy.

In an interview with *Scientific American*, Sarah Burch, one of the lead authors of the U.N. report and a climate researcher at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, said, “We ... have solutions [for reducing emissions] in every sector [such as transportation and power generation] — which is very exciting — many of which are scaling up rapidly and closer to working at scale.”

Now that the technologies exist, she said, “it’s deploying them and scaling them up — that’s the tricky part.”

While personal action is critical for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, individuals are often “locked in,” in Burch’s words, to high-carbon lifestyles. Changes to infrastructure are necessary for the transition to renewable energy.

Politicians will need to champion the kinds of large-scale investments and regulation necessary for this transition, and corporations will need to participate as well.

“Having the right policies, infrastructure and technology in place to enable changes to our lifestyles and behavior can result in a 40% to 70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This offers significant



A solar panel canopy at the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers campus in Ossining, New York, demonstrates the Society’s commitment to renewable energy. (Courtesy Ecogy Energy)

untapped potential,” said Priyadarshi Shukla, one of the co-chairs of the U.N. working group that published the report.

The key is generating enough momentum to garner the political will for change. ✦

*Kathleen Kollman Birch, who is originally from Michigan and earned a master’s degree in global affairs specializing in migration policy, worked on the staff of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns as communications manager from 2019 to 2022.*

### FAITH IN ACTION:

- Join the Catholic Climate Covenant in calling for the U.S. government to invest in ambitious climate solutions: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/>
- Visit the Vatican’s Laudato Si’ Action Platform website to learn about the global Church’s efforts to care for all creation: <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>
- Sign up to receive email action alerts from the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns: <https://bit.ly/MOGCSignup>

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

# Partners in Mission

## *Allowed to Dream*

By Maria-Pia Negro Chin

**M**aryknoll Brother John Nitsch eats a little honey every day.

“I think it’s one of the reasons I have good health,” he says. He gives credit for this healthy habit to his good friend Jorge Hormazabal, a social worker who started beekeeping nine years ago.

“Jorge had this idea of raising bees. I helped him get started,” Brother Nitsch says proudly. The missionary — who has served in Chile for nearly 50 years — explains that Jorge’s drive and entrepreneurial spirit led him to start the business to provide a better life for his wife, Maria Paz, and two sons.

“It is challenging to start a business in Chile, especially for people like me who come from a lower social stratum. You have fewer opportunities,” says Jorge, who grew up as the youngest of six children in a poor, blue-collar family in the peripheries of Curicó, Chile. Jorge and his family lived under the poverty line — even though his parents worked from dawn to dusk and Jorge worked odd jobs. In between, Jorge focused on sports and church. “It kept me off the streets,” he says.

Jorge was 13 when he met Brother “Juan” Nitsch during a youth program at Cristo Resucitado parish. “Everything changed from there,” says

Jorge, recalling how the missionary’s constant mentorship and financial support allowed him to create a brighter future for himself.

Brother Nitsch helped Jorge with his studies, as he did for many other students. More importantly, he motivated young Jorge to pursue his dreams. “He was just a good young man who needed a little help and encouragement to make something of himself,” the missionary recalls.

“Brother was my main motivational support to continue my high school studies and to keep studying,” says Jorge, who also had his parents’ moral support. “I was the only one in my family who finished high school. I think only one or two of us went to university from my part of town.”

After graduating from college, Jorge became a social worker and spent 10 years helping young people deal with addictions. Although his job was rewarding, it was difficult to support his family and pay for his sons’ education on the low salary. When his job with the town’s public ministry ended during the COVID-19 pandemic, Jorge focused full-time on beekeeping.

“I wanted to achieve independence, live a better life, and be able to give job opportunities to others,” he says. With



*Jorge Hormazabal (l.) started his beekeeping business in Chile, which now creates jobs in his community, thanks to the support of Maryknoll. (Courtesy Jorge Hormazabal/Chile)*

Brother Nitsch’s support and through hard work and perseverance, Jorge gradually built his beekeeping project — Apícola Thomas (named after his eldest son).

“I never realized how much work it takes,” Brother Nitsch says.

Jorge says that the first year, half his bee colonies died, due to harsh weather. The following year he was able to multiply them. By the third year, he was ready to bring his bees to help pollinate a field, borrowing Brother Juan’s car to transport them. “He has grown from having 30 beehives to over 300,” says Brother Nitsch.

Jorge now regularly produces honey and provides pollination services to nearby orchards. The successful project gives work to others, and Jorge lends his honey-extracting equipment to smaller beekeepers free of charge. “You simply help because someone

helped you in life,” he says.

Even though Jorge jokes that he is one of Brother Nitsch’s longest projects, he is genuinely grateful for the support from Brother Juan and the mission society. He says he wanted to show Maryknoll that its support has yielded fruit. He also wanted to be an example for other young people from impoverished areas, he adds.

During the nationwide lockdown at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jorge would deliver meals his wife had made for the missionary. “It’s like having another family,” says Brother Nitsch.

Jorge calls Brother Nitsch a second father. “He helped me grow as a person,” Jorge says. “He taught me ... that if you have dreams, if you want to fly, then fly, try it.” He continues, “You must follow your dreams. ... That is what gives you strength every day to overcome hardships.” ✨

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## READERS' RESPONSES

### MISSION OF LOVE

I was recently hospitalized, and while there, I kept asking God what my purpose in life could be since I am getting sickly and weak. Surprisingly, when I arrived home upon discharge, I saw the *Maryknoll* magazine Summer 2022 issue lying on my desk.

Still light-headed, I opened it and went through every page. The layouts were colorful and each article spoke of the beauty of mission. Each missionary — as young as our essay writers and as remarkable as Sister Miriam Francis Perlewitz — exuded the joy of responding heartily to God's call to the Maryknoll mission. As I read further with enthusiasm, my insights grew clearer on the selfless giving of one's self to mission. Much more, the beautiful poem of Father Joseph Veneroso, "Sacred and Wounded," in the photo meditation has provided me a deep impression of the real meaning of my own purpose in life.

May *Maryknoll* magazine continually bless your readers' hearts to love mission.

*Lourdes N. Reynes  
Staten Island, New York*

### SINGING HEARTS

Back in 1960, we were happy young girls at Maryknoll Convent School in Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong. We had a beautiful young nun, Sister Miriam Francis, for our music teacher. (See "Teaching Young Hearts to Sing" in the Summer 2022 issue.)

I remember we often had physical education prior to music class.

We entered the classroom huffing and puffing while Sister soothed and smoothed our breathlessness playing some classical music by Beethoven or Bach.

Sister told us that singing is praying to God twice. So in school or at church we sang our hearts out in English or Latin hymns. Latin was our third language (Chinese is our first and English is our second). One thing we never forget over the years is the lovely wink from Sister when we said goodbye at the end of class.

Sister Miriam, thousands of young singing hearts remember you forever. Take me, for one!

*Mary Tong White  
Honolulu, Hawaii*

### PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Thank you for the inspiring vocation story of this young man, John Siyumbu from Kenya, in "Finding God in Mission" of the Summer 2022 issue. As a widow my vocation now is to fast and pray for holy priests as well as the souls in purgatory. Thank you for changing your policy at Maryknoll and accepting young men aspiring to the priesthood from outside of the United States. Prayers for Deacon John as he becomes Father John.

God bless all newly ordained priests across the globe and those who nurtured their vocations.

*Barbara Faris  
Bradenton, Florida*

### THIRSTY SOUL

Your *Maryknoll* magazine sustains

me in my prayer life. When I'm experiencing a dry and dusty place in my heart, my soul turns to your beautiful magazine. Its photos, its articles, its poetry, its letters from other readers — everything about it — is water for my thirsty soul. I connect with Christ through you.

*Judith Miller  
Leeds, New York*

#### ESPECIALLY POETRY

Thank you very much for *Maryknoll* magazine. I enjoy reading all the articles, but I particularly enjoy the poetry. God bless you for all your hard work in the missions. You are in my daily prayers.

*Rose Oliver  
North York, Ontario*

#### THE LOVE OF GOD

I very much appreciated the comment by eighth-grader Riley Szuba, the Division I second-place winner in the Maryknoll Student Essay Contest, in your Summer 2022 issue of *Maryknoll* magazine, when she wrote, "Through their love, I was able to recognize the love of God." She was referring to the support she received from relatives, teachers, friends and even strangers after her father passed away.

This confirmed my own belief that God mediates his persona in and through the materiality of our own lives. God's divine Spirit becomes visible in and through the human spirit that is receptive to his loving will.

I also very much appreciate that pic-

ture on page 17 of Mary Magdalene's encounter with the Risen Christ. There is a kind of "sudden sacred holiness" conveyed by it.

Thank you for these spiritually nurturing contributions. Our faith is definitely "fed" by them.

*Robert Joocharigian  
Royal Oak, Michigan*

#### REQUEST FOR PRAYERS

Many greetings to the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. Your sister in Christ sends a small contribution for the Maryknoll missionaries serving in distant lands. They are an inspiration to us all to keep up the good fight.

I ask your prayers for my family as we undergo health complications. Please, lift up your prayers on our behalf, to be able to enjoy the wonders of God.

May we find light in our lives and hold tight to the hand of Jesus.

*Teresa Williams  
New York, New York*

#### BEST WISHES

Congratulations to Maryknoll on the ordination of our brother John Siyumbu, a missionary who shared his life and work with our community. Congratulations, Father John. We hope to have you back at our parish community.

*San Pio X parish  
Cochabamba, Bolivia  
Via Facebook*

**Editor's note:** *The last two letters were received in Spanish and translated by Maryknoll staff.*

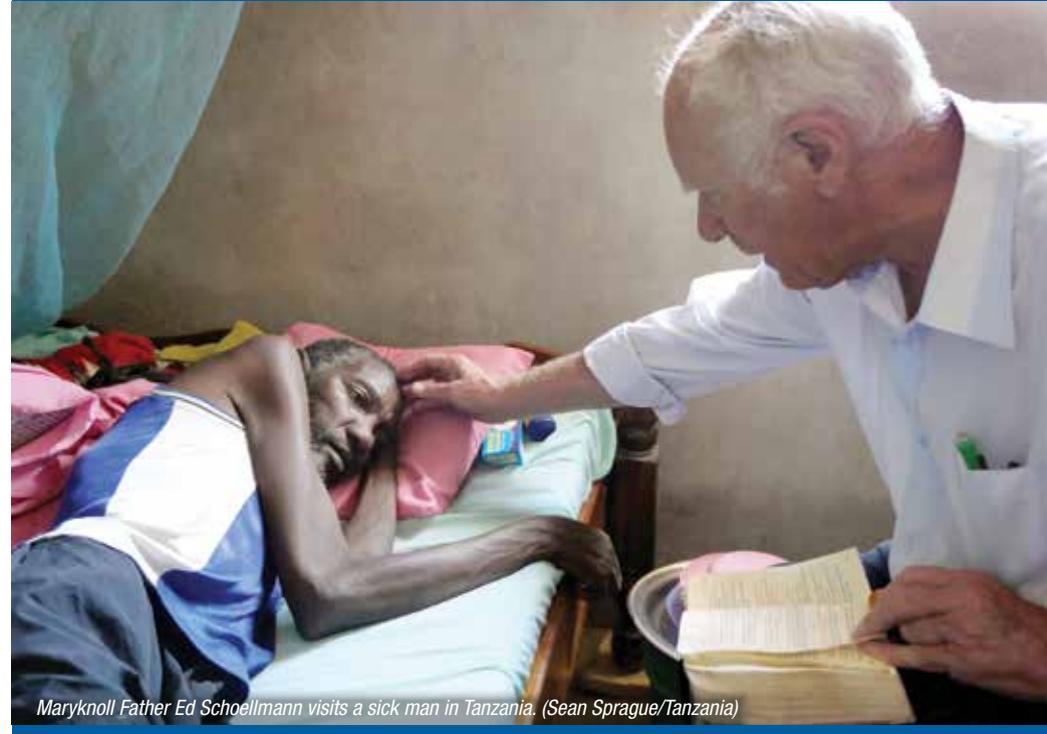
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Readers' Responses

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*"For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you." – Luke 6:38*



*Maryknoll Father Ed Schoellmann visits a sick man in Tanzania. (Sean Sprague/Tanzania)*

Today's economic volatility is having an even bigger effect overseas. Those who are already suffering find their woes increased. You may think you can't make a meaningful difference. Yet together the impact of your prayers and gifts can be tremendous.



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*A man plows a field near Kibwezi in Kenya, where the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers support long-term development efforts to stave off famine and starvation. (See story, page 18.)*

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