

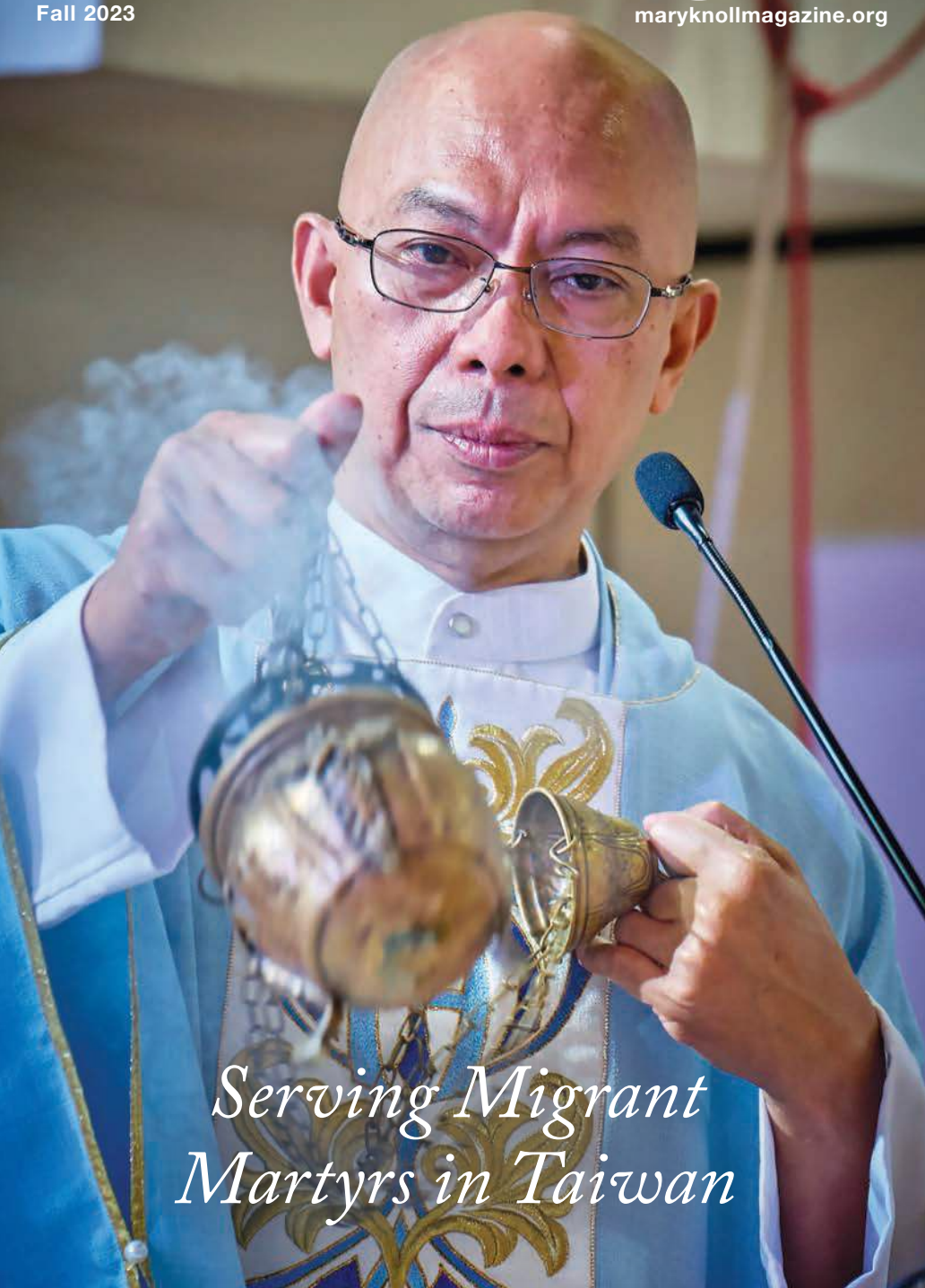


U.S. Catholic Church in mission overseas

MARYKNOLL®

Fall 2023

maryknollmagazine.org



*Serving Migrant
Martyrs in Taiwan*

FROM THE EDITOR

When I think of Maryknoll Father Joyalito Tajonera, whose ministry to migrants in Taiwan is our cover story in this issue of *Maryknoll*, his nickname springs to mind. The missionary is fittingly known as “Father Joy” to the multitude of mostly Filipino migrants he serves. He exudes this emotion — along with his evident love of the people he helps.

As a Filipino and a migrant himself, Father Joy knows the travails of those who leave family and homeland behind. As a seminarian sent by Maryknoll to Taiwan to study Chinese, he was shocked by the plight of the large Filipino diaspora laboring there. I’ve witnessed this diaspora on my reporting trips to Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan. In each place, Maryknollers work with some of the estimated 10 million Filipinos abroad. Many migrants, I learned, spend much of their lives being the breadwinner for families back home — sacrificing their own comfort so their children, parents, siblings, or nieces and nephews have a better life, a more promising future.

Some might call them “heroes.” Father Joy calls them “martyrs.” I think he’s got it right. Sometimes, a name says everything.

Whether they are priests, sisters, brothers or laypeople, Maryknollers around the world share a common call: to serve as missionaries. In this, our vocations issue, we invite you to read some of their stories. We invite you to get to know them, and the people they serve, by name.

*Lynn F. Monahan
Editor-in-Chief*



Courtesy of Jesuit Refugee Service/Ethiopia

FEATURED STORIES

10 Serving Migrant Martyrs in Taiwan

By Paul Jeffrey

18 Bringing Good News

By Rodrigo Ulloa-Chavarry, M.M.

24 Really Living the Gospel

By Meinrad Scherer-Emunds

34 A Crazy Idea

By Mary Ellen Manz, M.M.

40 Two Simple Questions

By John Blazo, M.M.

46 My Blissful Sojourn in the Amazon

By Esperanza V. Principio, M.M.

50 Defending Water in the Amazon

An Interview with Patricia Gualinga

52 A Mission of Peace Continues

By Luna Stephanie

DEPARTMENTS

2 From the Editor

4 Photo Meditation

8 Missioner Tales

16 Spirit of Mission

30 Orbis Books

56 World Watch

58 Partners in Mission

61 Readers' Responses

FRONT COVER:
Maryknoll Father Joyalito Tajonera, who has served migrant workers in Taiwan for over two decades, swings a censer during Mass.

COVER CREDITS:
Front: Paul Jeffrey/Taiwan
Back: Michael Calvente/U.S.

MARYKNOLL®

U.S. Catholic Church in mission overseas

Editorial Staff:

Lance P. Nadeau, M.M., Publisher
Lynn F. Monahan, Editor-in-Chief
Deirdre Cornell, Managing Editor
Giovana Soria, Associate Editor
Andrea Moreno-Díaz, Associate Editor
Mary Ellen Manz, M.M., Maryknoll Sister Liaison
Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M., Contributing Writer
Diane Mastrogliulo, Art Director
Michael Calvente, Graphic Designer
Regina Gelfer, Graphic Designer

Direct all correspondence to:

Lance P. Nadeau, M.M., Publisher
P.O. Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0302
914.941.7590

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

Romans 8:28

Maryknoll, the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, Inc., was established in 1911 by the U.S. bishops to recruit, train, send and support American missionaries in areas overseas. Maryknoll is supported by offerings and bequests.

Maryknoll (ISSN 0025-4142) © 2023,
Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, Inc.
All rights reserved. The title Maryknoll® is
registered with the United States Patent and
Trademark Office.

Visit MARYKNOLL online

MaryknollMagazine.org
RevistaMisioneros.org
Magazine of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers



Photo Meditation on St. Francis of Assisi

In the Spirit of St. Francis

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

*Lord, make me a witness to your truth.
Turn my eyes from evil.
Close my ears to falsehood.
Shield my mind from the temptation
To judge others who sin differently than I.
Seal my lips from adding to the noise
Of a world that worships power,
Rewards greed and sacrifices humanity
On the high altar of fame and success.*

*O Divine Master, grant that my heart
May beat stronger for love of you
In the poor, abandoned and downtrodden
Of the Earth, who cry out to Heaven
For justice tempered with mercy,*



Photo by Unsplash



Photo by Unsplash

*Love rooted in reality, and the light of
Faith that dares shine in the darkness.*

*With your Gospel as my guide, lead me
Along the ways of joy and righteousness.
Give me courage to stand on the side of
All who suffer injustice or violence,
To stand up for those whose dignity is
Damaged by indifference and
Whose worth is denied by forces of power.*

*As I forgive others may I find forgiveness.
As I die to myself may I rise to new life
In that kingdom where you live and reign
With all the saints, known and unknown,
Now and forever. Amen.*

MISSIONER TALES



Paul Jeffrey/South Sudan

There is no dentist for people suffering from dental problems in our United Nations camp of 35,000 people displaced by war. So our Catholic community organized an outreach team. With the approval of the doctors at our hospital for U.N. staff and soldiers, we are bringing four people daily, Monday through Friday, to the dentist's office.

The people here have not seen a dentist since coming to the U.N. camp in 2013, and many have severe dental issues in need of treatment.

After they are treated at the hospital, we accompany the people back to their simple tent or tin sheeted homes. They thank us for giving them the opportunity to find healing from their pain. It is a humbling experience to receive gratitude from people who are suffering here in South Sudan.

Michael Bassano, M.M.

In my ministry as a lay missionary here in El Salvador, accompaniment has taken the form of

sharing everyday moments with the people of the community of Las Delicias. This includes picking coffee in the fields, riding the local bus, visiting families, sharing a meal together and attending kids' birthday parties, graduations and baptisms.

Some of the most impactful moments have come from playing games and sports with young people. Just recently, one of our soccer coaches, Esau, was able to build a relationship with a 12-year boy who has never gone to school. Through this relationship, the boy's mother confided to us that her children do not go to school because they don't have birth certificates. Now we are working with local institutions to help the family get these documents so that the children will be able to go to school.

Meanwhile, our scholarship students have volunteered to teach the kids to read while they wait for the birth certificates to be processed.

Larry Parr, MKLM

Many years ago, I was working in a very poor parish in Kowloon, Hong Kong. One Sunday morning, an embarrassed and clearly distraught man came to our center. The day before, he had sold a pig; the proceeds were to support his family during the months ahead. His wife, who had some mental challenges, had taken the money and put it in the Sunday Mass offering. The poor man was desperate.

We made a quick phone call to our pastor, who had already known that something was "not right" when the

large bundle of bills was dropped into the collection basket. Five minutes later the understanding pastor arrived. The pig farmer — one very relieved and grateful husband — left with the money, along with our advice about opening a bank account.

Anne Reusch, M.M.

A wise Brazilian once told me that our dedication to rituals can be a measure of our emotional balance and mental health. One of our family traditions, which comes from my husband, Flávio, is visiting and decorating his family burial plot on All Souls Day. This is a national holiday in Brazil, where I have been a Maryknoll lay missionary for over 25 years.

The yearly pilgrimage takes us to Flávio's tiny hometown in the rural region of the northeastern state of Paraíba. There, I look around in the cemetery, witnessing a familiar scene — a family remembering and honoring departed loved ones. Leading up to Nov. 2, family and friends decorate gravestones and burial plots with flowers and then keep watch for the entire day, lighting candles and telling stories about their loved ones.

Recently as our family was keeping vigil, Flávio noticed that a nearby grave only had only one simple flower. He lit a candle and placed it next to the flower in silence as all around us the cemetery hummed with activity, love and mourning. My friend's words rushed back to me. Tradition and devotion bring stability and health to our lives.

Kathleen Bond, MKLM

Serving Migrant MARTYRS IN TAIWAN

Text and photos by Paul Jeffrey

A Maryknoll priest from the Philippines ministers to Filipinos working abroad

Maryknoll Father Joyalito Tajonera describes in one word the almost 2 million workers who travel abroad from the Philippines each year and send money home to keep a troubled economy afloat.

"Martyrs," says the missionary, who has served Filipino workers in Taiwan for more than two decades. "I call them martyrs. They support their children, parents, and siblings. They sacrifice everything to make a better life for the people they love."

More than 150,000 Filipinos worked in Taiwan at the beginning of the year, manufacturing camera lenses and computer chips and caring for aging Taiwanese.

"Migration breaks apart families," Father Tajonera says. "Children who only know their parents by video call. Parents trying to raise their children by long distance. Your children know your voice and face, but there's no physical contact. You can't walk them to school or go to the park."

But, he says, "That's the life of poor people. They have to make sacrifices."



Following a Mass at the Taichung Catholic Church in Taichung, Taiwan, Maryknoll Father Joyalito Tajonera blesses parishioners with holy water. Most are Filipino migrant workers.

Father Tajonera, now 63, knows what it's like to be an immigrant. Born in the Philippines, he immigrated to the United States in 1982 to seek work in New York City.

"My impression of America was that it would be a land of milk and honey, everyone driving big cars and living in big homes," he recalls. "I was shocked at the number of homeless people living on the sidewalks in Manhattan."

In response he volunteered with church groups working with the poor. He began to visit Maryhouse, a Catholic Worker community that offers a home to women who would otherwise be on the street.

Those experiences revived the young Tajonera's childhood dream of becoming a missionary priest.

He started by studying theology at the Maryknoll seminary and, by then a U.S. citizen, he soon entered Maryknoll's formation program. Maryknoll sent him to Taiwan for a year of language study, with the idea he would go to China. But just as he had been shocked by the number of homeless people in the United States, in Taiwan he was surprised by the number of migrant workers.

After his ordination in 2002, the priest returned to Taiwan, charged with providing a pastoral presence for Filipino migrant workers. He established a shelter in Taichung and named it Ugnayan, a Filipino word for "connection." The Catholic Worker provided a blueprint.

"I ran the ministry like a Catholic Worker house, a place where migrants could hang out, relax, eat and play games. A house that feels like home. And we've done that for



In Taichung, Taiwan, Maryknoll Father Joyalito Tajonera (center) and volunteers prepare a meal in the Ugnayan shelter he founded, which is run like a Catholic Worker house.

22 years," he says. "We don't make too many rules except meal time and cleaning time. We're open 24 hours a day. People know that if they walk in, they will be welcomed."

Life is often difficult for new workers when they arrive in Taiwan. The community created by Father Tajonera — affectionately called "Father Joy" — provides comfort and safety.

His response to migrants in need is very practical, says Guilveran Omnes, a young volunteer.

"Many times at midnight there will be migrants seeking shelter, and Father Joy never asks them where they're from or what religion they profess," Omnes says. "He just asks, 'Have you eaten?'"

At the center of Tajonera's ministry

is his belief that each migrant is the person best suited to solve their own problems. That often collides with the work of "brokers" — Taiwanese intermediaries whom the workers must pay to act as their agents. In practice, however, the brokers' true allegiance is to employers.

"Ninety-nine percent of migrants can't speak or read Chinese, so they assume you don't know anything. And if you don't know anything, you have no rights," Father Tajonera says.

As a result of pressure from Father Tajonera and others, some things have improved.

"There's now a toll-free number

for migrants to call the government ministry of labor and file a complaint. But the psychology hasn't changed," Father Tajonera says. "That's why we do extensive education that focuses on empowerment."

Melody Caling worked in a factory. When she hurt her back lifting heavy bins of electronic scrap, her employer denied her request for compensation, claiming she suffered from a preexisting condition. Her broker urged her to sign a document in Chinese that she didn't understand forfeiting her rights to compensation. When she found out what she had signed, she turned to Father Joy for help.



Melody Caling, a migrant worker from the Philippines who was injured on the job in a factory in 2021, lives at the Ugnayan shelter as she fights for her right to compensation.

"After they fired me, I really began to think I was stupid. But then Father Joy and the church helped me realize that I am a human being, I have rights," Caling says.

Another young Filipino volunteer, Jeros Amparo, works with Caling on her case. He remembers when she first came to Ugnayan. "She had lost her face, her dignity," he says. "We've journeyed with her. In the end, Melody may get nothing. But at least she will have regained her dignity."

Staying at the Ugnayan shelter means sleeping and eating well. Migrants often show up depressed and malnourished, but after a few weeks, they are better equipped to tackle their problems.

"Father Joy insists that eating well and getting good clothes are essential preparation to facing an

abusive employer. So that they will see a new face," Amparo explains.

"When Melody first appeared before her employer in the appeal process, he was stunned. It was as if Melody had come back from the grave."

Besides empowering individual workers to speak up for themselves, Father Tajonera also encourages workers to band together to force large corporations to act responsibly. With assistance from Charles Niece, a Maryknoll lay volunteer, Maryknoll formed the Supply Chain Due Diligence Program which has pushed more than two dozen companies to improve their employment practices, ranging from enlarging the size of dormitory rooms to assuming the costs of worker recruitment and transportation.

"We also encourage dialogue



Migrant Alina Querubin holds her daughter, Hsin yi zoa, after the girl was baptized in the Tanzi Catholic Church in Taichung, Taiwan. Mother and child live at the Ugnayan shelter.

between employers and workers," Father Tajonera says. "Last year 30 workers came to us about expensive and unhealthy conditions in their dorm. We researched the case and found that the corporation is headquartered in New York. So Charles and I wrote them and asked for a dialogue between them, their workers and the government's ministry of labor. They sent people here and we all gathered in the church for negotiations. As a result, they changed their policies."

It's not surprising that Father Tajonera's Sunday Masses are packed, including in the Tanzi neighborhood of Taichung where worshippers gather in a converted former cinema.

"The Mass of the migrants is so alive, so colorful and rich. The local church is enriched by their well-

lived faith," says Bishop Martin Su Yao-wen of the Diocese of Taichung. The number of migrants is only expected to grow, he explains, partly due to Taiwan's low birth rate. "We're going to need more and more migrants to take care of our elderly," Bishop Su says.

Father Tajonera, who serves as Maryknoll's superior for the Asia region, says, "Everywhere Maryknoll works, the Church is being transformed by migrants, and we've been pioneers in places like Japan and Taiwan in starting ministries." He adds, "The Church of Asia today is a Church of migrants."✠

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.

Spirit of Mission

Universal Richness of Catholicism

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

Visiting a large Hindu temple in Cambodia, I was overwhelmed by floral tributes, clouds of incense, candles galore and the sheer number of colorful statues. Despite their pantheon of gods, many Hindus consider their religion monotheistic. Lesser deities are incarnations of the One Supreme Brahman.

As I walked past the exotic altars, I had one of those “Aha!” moments. This must be how my Protestant friends felt when they visited my home church of St. Michael’s, in Amsterdam, New York, with our “pantheon” of saints — each in its own way an expression of the love and power of the one true God.

In college I took a comparative religions course. The professor encouraged us to visit local Christian denominations and Jewish synagogues, and he lectured about the worship sites of world religions: Muslim mosques, Hindu ashrams and Buddhist temples.

In Maryknoll’s seminary, we learned how historically different religions influenced one another. Having a rabbi teach New Testament opened our eyes to view the teachings of Jesus from a Jewish perspective. Attending a Sabbath synagogue service, we recognized the prayer, “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe,

who created the fruit of the vine...” as the source of our own prayer before consecration.

Also preserved in the liturgy, the *Kyrie eleison* (Lord, have mercy) in Greek acknowledges our kinship with the Eastern Orthodox. The ancient Catholic Church predated the unfortunate split between Rome and Constantinople in 1054. The *Kyrie eleison* is a tenant of our liturgical past and an expression of hope in Christian unity.

Our global Church reflects a rich array of responses to the Gospel personified in Jesus Christ. Catholicism’s wealth of tradition draws on the vitality of local expressions of faith. Indeed, throughout our 2,000-year history, the Church has often adopted cultural customs and made them our own. German Christmas trees, Italian Nativity sets, Irish private confessions and Ukrainian *pysanky* (elaborately colored Easter eggs) have enriched the universal Church.

For centuries, Catholicism confined itself to European expressions of faith. However, contemporary contributions come from other continents. East Africans dance in their liturgies, and the women utter high-pitched ululations of praise. In Korea, Catholics chant the psalms and prayers for the dead



On All Souls Day in Guatemala, the dead are honored with colorful giant paper kites, a custom that predates the arrival of Christianity to the Americas. (Sean Sprague/Guatemala)

(known as “Yeon Do”) in a style that harkens back to the country’s Buddhist past. Latin Americans honor their dearly departed with distinctive cultural customs on El Día de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead), November 2, the universal celebration of All Souls Day. These diverse practices can shed new light on our shared faith.

Regarding world religions, with the declaration of the Second Vatican Council *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time), the Church took a huge step, saying it “rejects nothing that is true and holy” in them, and that they “often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all.”

If we remain firmly rooted in our own rich traditions, we have nothing to fear — and much to gain — by experiencing how others worship or express their faith. This, in turn, should chal-

lenge and inspire us to more faithfully follow ours. I learned this invaluable lesson at the New York Port Authority bus terminal back in the 1970s. As I awaited my bus, a Hare Krishna devotee approached me and offered me a free copy of *The Bhagavad Gita As It Is*. I graciously declined, saying, “Thank you, but I read that in college.”

After all these years, the devotee’s response challenges me still. “Oh, you can’t learn about our faith from a book,” she said. “If you want to know about our faith, you must come and see how we live.”

I never took her up on the invitation, but dedicated my life to encouraging Catholics to put our faith into practice. We, too, can say, “If you want to know the Gospels, come see the way we live.” ✠

Bringing

GOOD NEWS

By Rodrigo Ulloa-Chavarry, M.M.

A Maryknoll priest shares his vocation story

I was on a military plane, flying as an airman to somewhere in the Middle East. The tragic and horrific events of 9/11 had occurred just three weeks before. Everyone on the plane seemed afraid.

I looked all the way down the aisle and saw someone reading. He seemed at peace. "What could he be reading while the rest of us can only wonder where this plane is going?" I asked myself. I noticed that he wasn't a soldier but a chaplain, wearing a cross on his uniform. It wasn't just any book he was reading, but the Bible.

This was the first sign I received from God as I ventured into a four-month deployment that would change my life.

I was born in Guatemala and my family immigrated to the United States. I hadn't yet received Confirmation. That same chaplain, Father David Czartorynski, prepared me for the sacrament; he also invited me to think about being a priest.

At the end of my deployment, Father Dave wrote a letter to the chaplain at Ellsworth Air Force Base, in South Dakota, where I was to be stationed, informing him that I was ready to be confirmed. What I didn't know was that at the bottom of the letter he wrote: "Rodrigo wants to be a priest."

Maryknoll Father Rodrigo Ulloa-Chavarry, who was ordained in 2011, currently serves as vocation director for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. (Nile Sprague/Hong Kong)





Father Ulloa-Chavarry accompanies young people such as these members of the young adults group of Ascension parish in Houston, Texas. (Courtesy of Rodrigo Ulloa-Chavarry/U.S.)

At Ellsworth, I handed the letter to the army base chaplain. He opened the letter, read it and congratulated me with such a big smile that I thought I had been promoted to captain. "You want to be a priest. Congratulations!" he exclaimed. I looked at the letter and there it was. I didn't know what to say. Time stood still. Suddenly I remembered Father Dave's words: "Christ chooses, you simply answer."

"That's right," I replied. "I want to be a priest."

But the truth was, I didn't know what I was getting into. I trusted Father Dave, who saw something in me that I hadn't seen. The only way, then, to find out if I was meant to be a priest was to enter the seminary.

I left the Air Force with a bachelor's degree in computer informa-

tion systems and joined the Diocese of Rapid City in South Dakota. My first year of studies took place at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in Winona, Minnesota. There, I learned of mission when Maryknoll Father Peter Chabot visited and delivered a homily about overseas mission in Bolivia.

Mission? The word intrigued me. What would it be like to be a missionary priest? After sharing the idea with my peers, spiritual director and rector, the rumor arrived to the ear of the bishop, now Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago. Visiting the seminary, then-Bishop Cupich told me, "Finish your year and if mission is what God is calling you to, I will transfer you to Maryknoll." And that was my entry into Maryknoll!

I joined Maryknoll in August of



(Left to right) Maryknoll Fathers Daniel Kim, Shaun Crumb and Rodrigo Ulloa-Chavarry pray the Liturgy of the Hours at the Society house in Hong Kong. (Nile Sprague/Hong Kong)

2004, when I was 23, and I studied for my master of divinity degree at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. An essential part of formation for Maryknoll seminarians is a two-year overseas training program, to discern our calling not only to the priesthood but to mission. In Cambodia, I came to the realization that I could do this for the rest of my life.

We need those moments of assurance about our vocations; we need signs of confirmation along our journeys, and — thank God — they come.

I was ordained a Maryknoll priest on June 4, 2011, almost 10 years after that eventful plane trip.

My first assignment was in Nepal, where I ministered at Assumption Cathedral in Kathmandu. Then I was sent to Taiwan and learned Man-

darin for three years, after which I spent three years in Northeast China — one of my best assignments.

When Maryknoll sent me to Asia, I learned the beauty of the Orient. Culture, traditions, history, archaeology, festivals, holidays, foods and the stories of the local people are some of the layers that a missionary has to understand in serving.

In mission, we don't tell people what to do. We simply provide new ingredients based on how we experience God's love. Most of the time, folks accept us, even if some reject us. Patience is key.

One of the biggest satisfactions in mission is bringing people to Jesus. Think of Andrew, the first disciple to follow the Lord, who brought his brother Peter to Jesus. This same apostle, Andrew, also brought to Jesus the boy carrying five loaves



of barley and two fish. The other disciples protested that it wouldn't be enough — but Jesus used these small gifts to feed 5,000 people.

As vocation director, my job now revolves around sharing my own calling with young people who are discerning a lifetime commitment. Who wants to make a lifetime commitment? Maryknollers do, and I

Left: In China, Father Ulloa-Chavarry receives a blessing from Sister Lee, the most senior member of her community. (Avila Fu/China) Below: In Bandipur, Nepal, Father Ulloa-Chavarry shares a joyous moment of encounter with parishioners. (Sean Sprague/Nepal)

invite you not to be afraid to do so — because Jesus leads and sustains us, every step of the way.

Being where God wants you to be is something we discover gradually, thoughtfully and carefully. Our world needs people who have a sense of who God is and what God is calling them to. Young people are looking for security, for certainty. They want to be grounded and rooted.

Maryknoll is grounded and rooted in apostolic foundations and has been sending missionaries overseas for 112 years. When you join us, we will help you get grounded in Jesus Christ.

We go abroad to help people rise to new hope. And in this process, we ourselves grow. We dance, we cry, we lament, we live, we wonder and imagine, we forgive, we write, we pray and we hope. Yes, we hope that our faith will continue to bring mission to other parts of the world because, as Saint Paul reminds us (Romans 10:15), "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Now that I am 42, I have been with Maryknoll for nearly 20 years. As vocation director, I guide and accompany young men who feel called to be a priest or brother, and I pray that all young people respond generously to God's call. ✠



FOR INFORMATION ON
BECOMING A PRIEST WITH
MARYKNOLL FATHERS & BROTHERS,
Contact Fr. Rodrigo Ulloa, M.M.,
at 914.504.1196
Email: vocation@maryknoll.org
maryknollvocations.org

Really Living the Gospel

By Meinrad Scherer-Emunds

A Maryknoll lay missionary advocates for women refugees in East Africa

Mahlet Tesfom is a 26-year-old Eritrean refugee who had fled to Ethiopia with her two children. Abandoned by her husband, she had to flee again when soldiers invaded their refugee camp. Raped and injured on the journey, she found her way with the children to a Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) community center where they received help.

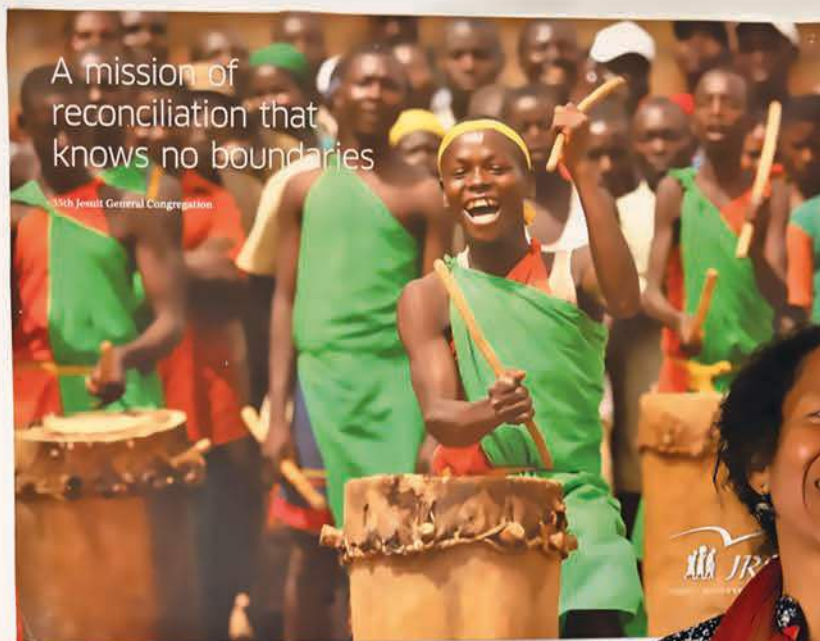
"Whenever I think of the situations that happened to me, I feel great shame," Tesfom says. "But now I can pour out my experience to someone, and I am comforted by the compassion and the support that I receive. I have started to see a glimmer of hope."

Maryknoll Lay Missioner Dee Dungy helps make possible such glimmers of hope.

Dungy has met many other women like Mahlet Tesfom at Kakuma, one of the world's largest refugee camps. Kakuma, which is located in Kenya, hosts almost a quarter million refugees and asylum seekers from all around East Africa.

The road to Kakuma started for Dungy in Sunrise, Florida. Already active in her parish, St. Bernard's, she enrolled in an intensive nine-month program called JustFaith. The program teaches participants "to address the root causes of injustice, while serving with love," she says.

Dungy also belonged to a prayer group held regularly at the Trappist Holy Spirit monastery in Conyers, Georgia. There, sisters, brothers and laypeople came together once a month to pray, reflect on Scripture and share about their faith.



Based in Nairobi, Maryknoll Lay Missioner Dee Dungy is Jesuit Refugee Service Eastern Africa's regional advocacy coordinator. (Jerry Fleury/Kenya)



Above: Young girls in a refugee camp study in a JRS educational program.
(Courtesy of Jesuit Refugee Service/South Sudan)

"A sister gave me a copy of *Maryknoll* magazine, saying, 'Take this home, and bring it back next month,'" she recalls. "At the next meeting, she asked me, 'So what did you think?' I just said, 'Oh, there are a lot of fascinating articles,'" Dungy says.

"The sister replied, 'Is that all?'" continues Dungy. "She pointed to an announcement about a Maryknoll discernment retreat called 'Come and See.' I said, 'Oh my goodness — I do want to come and see!'"

Dungy went to the retreat, where, she says, "I fell in love with Maryknoll." She applied to the Maryknoll Lay Missioners immediately afterward and joined in 2011.

With a bachelor's degree in market research from Indiana University Bloomington, studies in graphic

design at Purdue University and a property and casualty insurance license, Dungy had a successful career. Yet, she says, "I had no hesitation about quitting my job. Maryknoll launched me on really living the Gospel in a much deeper way."

Her first assignment was to Cambodia. There, among other ministries, she worked with abandoned elderly people and internally displaced youth and young adults at the Maryknoll Anlong Kngan Resettlement and Social Development Center. The center served an informal settlement on the outskirts of

Below: A woman in a refugee camp takes part in a JRS literacy program for adults.
(Courtesy of Jesuit Refugee Service/Ethiopia)





Dee Dungy, who joined the Maryknoll Lay Missioners in 2011, talks with Emmanuel Sister Beth Waithera, who works in a JRS livelihood program for refugees. (Jerry Fleury/Kenya)

Phnom Penh where thousands of poor people lived in makeshift housing after a fire burned their homes.

After six years in Cambodia, Dungy moved to Nairobi, Kenya, where she now works as a regional advocacy coordinator with Jesuit Refugee Service Eastern Africa.

"We advocate for refugees and internally displaced persons to ensure that they are treated with dignity," Dungy says. She adds that it is important to put them "at the center of policies, programs and laws" and explains, "We lobby governments and institutions for better and just responses to refugees and situations of forced displacement."

Jesuit Refugee Service works throughout the region, in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, South Sudan, Burundi and Tanzania. In 2021,

JRS Eastern Africa served a total of 118,937 refugees. The agency employs approximately 300 staff and more than 650 additional "incentive staff:" the refugees and internally displaced people who work in different roles for JRS.

A main focus for Dungy's work is capacity building for JRS's country directors, project managers and field workers. She gives training workshops to help them to reach their program goals in addressing the various concerns of refugees at the camps' grassroots level.

Among other topics, Dungy's training workshops cover refugee laws; human rights; education; discrimination; the United Nations sustainable development goals; the link between ecology, migration and displacement; internal displacement; human

trafficking; and gender equality.

Much of her work promotes the rights of women and girls. "We work toward including women and girls in all decision-making and leadership positions," she says. "In the 'normal' course of events and in many of the cultures that the refugees come from, their perspectives and contributions would not be considered or would be ignored or dismissed," she adds.

One of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic was an increase in rapes of girls and resulting pregnancies. In some parts of East Africa, pregnant girls are still not allowed to continue their education in school. JRS advocates for their rights.

"We know that the education of girls and women is crucial," Dungy says. "I urge everyone to make sure that their girls are educated because that is really the key to everything. Too many adolescent and teen girls are still taken out of school as they physically mature and their families look to get them married."

Dungy says she sees hope in the greater involvement of women refugees taking leadership responsibilities. "Women are showing up now, and they are asking the right questions," she says.

Although "there is still a long way to go," she says, she is encouraged by the increasing numbers of men who are receptive to women's empowerment. After workshops, men sometimes come up to her and say, "Wow. We really need this."

These small steps are welcome signs of change. Many of the stories of refugee women are heartbreaking, she says. So many of them — like

Mahlet Tesfom — experience great violence and trauma before, during and after fleeing from home.

Dungy recalls a meeting at the Kakuma Refugee Camp led by women in a community-based safe space. She listened as the women spoke about their journeys to Kakuma. "It deeply unsettled me," Dungy says. "They told harrowing stories about their escapes at night, as they fled tribal or political unrest. I cringed when many said they only had time to grab their children and had to leave their emotions behind."

Some of the women said they found out about impending raids from their sons who were child soldier recruits.

"One by one," Dungy says, "the women shared the awful choices they faced: the choice to stay with their land, their source of food and income; to flee and risk being caught and exploited by captors; or the hope of reaching Kakuma camp unscathed, giving their children a chance to survive."

Even though this work can be deeply disturbing, Dungy says that she has found "true happiness" as a lay missioner. She shares, "The life-changing encounters that God has given me through serving others have been a great grace in my life." ✠

Meinrad Scherer-Emunds is director of communications for the Maryknoll Lay Missioners.



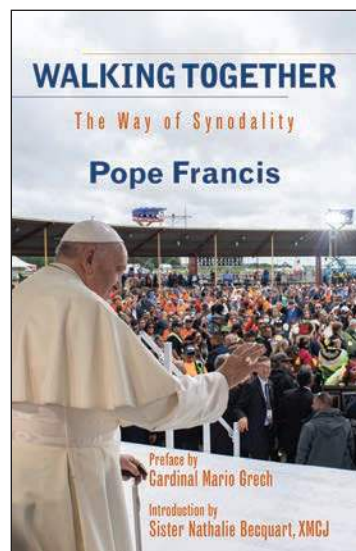
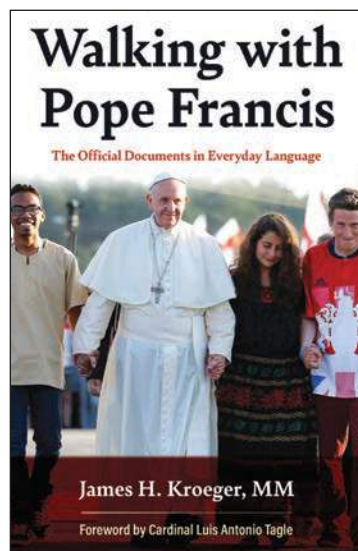
**FOR INFORMATION ON BECOMING
A MARYKNOLL LAY MISSIONER,**

Call, text, or Whatsapp
Lupe Garcia at
(+1) 914.467.8857
Email: join@mklm.org
www.mklm.org

ORBIS BOOKS

Spotlight

Preview by Robert Ellsberg



Ten years ago, in March 2013, Pope Francis first appeared on the balcony of St. Peter's and asked the People of God to pray for him. As became clear in the days and years that followed, the choice of his papal name — inspired by St. Francis of Assisi — was a telling indication of his own agenda. Like his namesake, he set out to renew the Church and its mission with special regard for the poor and those on the margins; to emphasize the theme of mercy; to reach out in friendship to other religions; to promote peace, justice,

and care for the earth. Two new Orbis titles mark this anniversary, offering a guide to his essential teachings and his particular vision for ongoing Church renewal.

In *Walking with Pope Francis*, Maryknoll Father James H. Kroeger has offered condensed presentations of 10 pivotal documents by Pope Francis, aiming faithfully to capture the central insights of the papal documents and to communicate them in “everyday language.”

Among these documents are Pope Francis' first major document, *The*

Joy of the Gospel; his historic encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*; and his most recent encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*. As Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle notes in his foreword, these digests may serve as appetizers for the full writings of Pope Francis: “May you also discover the vibrant ‘missionary spirit’ of Pope Francis: ‘Let us be realists, but without losing our joy, our boldness, and our hope-filled commitment.’”

The second book, *Walking Together*, is a succinct compendium of Pope Francis' homilies and writings on “The Way of Synodality” since the beginning of his pontificate. The word “synodality” means “journeying together.” For Pope Francis this has become not only one of the defining themes of his papacy but an essential dimension of his intended legacy for the Roman Catholic Church. Synodality, he says is not something the Church does — but an expression of its *being*: walking together, listening,

and collaborating under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is an invitation to see and experience the Church as a people of missionary pilgrims.

With a preface by Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary general of the Synod, and an introduction by Sister Nathalie Becquart, member of the Congregation of Xavières and under-secretary of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, this book is an essential guide to understanding the synodal process — which Pope Francis has termed “an expression of the Church's nature, her form, style, and mission.”

For those who have walked together with Pope Francis over the past 10 years, these two books offer both a retrospective view of the distance traveled and, as Dr. Phyllis Zagano puts it, “a roadmap by which the People of God can walk together into a promising future.” ✠

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

Please send:

____ copies of #513-1 *Walking with Pope Francis*..... @ \$20.00 each _____
 ____ copies of #524-7 *Walking Together: the Way of Synodality* @ \$26.00 each _____

Standard Shipping: **FREE**

*CA, CT, DC, FL, IL, KY, LA, MN, NY, OH, TX, WA, WI

Sales tax*: _____

☐ Check enclosed ☐ MC ☐ VISA ☐ AMEX ☐ DISC TOTAL: _____

Name _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Card Number _____ CVV _____

Exp: _____ Signature: _____

Orbis Books • POB 302 • Maryknoll, NY 10545-0302
 1-800-258-5838 • M-F, 8:30-4 ET • Online: www.orbisbooks.com
 Use code M0423 for FREE standard shipping!

In Memoriam

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

Sister Barbara Barr

Sister Joanne Bastien

Father Patrick A. Bergin

Sister Anne Karen Brannick

Sister Alice Cardillo

Sister Marlene Condon

Sister Maureen Corr

Sister Marie F. Crowley

Father Richard S. Czajkowski

Father Marvin F. Deutsch

Father Philip N. Erbland

Sister Lourdes Fernandez

Sister Rose Bernadette Gallagher

Sister Ruth Greble

Father Joseph Heim

Father James W. Lehr

Sister Teresa Ann Lilly

Father William T. Madden

Sister Laura Magallanes

Sister Marie May

Sister Rose Corde McCormick

Father Thomas P. McDonnell

Father William F. Mullan

Father Eugene M. Murray

Sister Patricia Norton

Sister Ruth Marie O'Donnell

Sister Patricia O'Mera

Sister Teresita Perez

Father Philip F. Sheerin

Sister Marilyn Snediker

Sister Thecla Tsuruda

Sister Norma Valdemoro

Bishop J. Quinn Weitzel

Father Edward J. Whelan

Father John F. Wymes

Father Michael O. Zunno



A Crazy Idea

By Mary Ellen Manz, M.M.

A Maryknoll sister, long a 'bridge' between hearing and Deaf people, now focuses on care of creation

Today girls have a wide-open field of possibilities for what they want to do with their lives. To the question, "Have you ever thought of being a religious sister?" most would probably respond: "What a crazy idea!" That's what Arlene Trant thought, too.

Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, Arlene grew up in Chicago until she was 12 years old, when her family moved to San Jose, California. Although she didn't know any religious sisters then, she remembers being attracted to the thought of going to foreign lands as a missionary sister.

"But as a teenager I did all I could to deny this crazy idea of religious life," she recalls.

After graduating from high school, the young Arlene attended San Jose State University, where she studied speech correction and audiology, psychology and education and obtained a bachelor's degree and a teaching credential. The call to religious life kept coming back.

"After college I had a good talk with God," Sister Arlene says. "I said, 'How about if I join the Peace Corps instead?' God seemed to say, 'Go for it!'"

Maryknoll Sister Arlene Trant, shown in 1981 on assignment to Hong Kong, has been a Maryknoll missionary for over 50 years. (Maryknoll Mission Archives)

However, that didn't work, either. While she enjoyed living and working in another culture for two years in the West Indies, something was missing.

The call to religious life led her to the Maryknoll Sisters, and at 25, Arlene entered the orientation program at St. Louis, Missouri. "There I met the One who was calling me — against all my protests," she says. "I guess I just fell in love."

In 1973 Sister Arlene received her first assignment, to Hong Kong.

There she heard that a school for the Deaf was looking for teachers and the young missionary eagerly enlisted. "The philosophy of the school was the oral method, teaching Deaf children to speak and to read lips," she says. "I quickly realized, though, that sign language was their 'mother tongue.'" Her students became her teachers, instructing her in sign language and introducing her to the Deaf culture.

This experience set the trajectory for her life in mission.

The Maryknoll Sisters offer their new missionaries a period of reflection to integrate their learnings in mission and to discern a lifelong commitment before taking final vows. During these months at the Sisters Center in Ossining, New York, Sister Arlene was given the time and space to embrace the calling that had started off as "a crazy idea."

After her reflection year, she was reassigned to Hong Kong. There, in 1980 — in the presence of her parents and sisters, who came for the occasion — she professed her final vows.

Sister Arlene next served in Macau,



where the bishop invited the Maryknoll Sisters to minister to the growing population of newcomers from mainland China.

"When I arrived in Macau, there were very few services for Deaf people," Sister Arlene recalls. Coming from Hong Kong with its highly developed programs, she says, "I saw Macau as a real opportunity for something new to be created with the Deaf at the helm."

Sister Arlene, who sees herself as a "bridge" between hearing and Deaf people, began the Macau Deaf and Hearing Association.

Because of her pioneering work, the Macau Social Welfare Department asked her to start a center for people with disabilities in a joint venture with the diocese. The missionary arranged classes, outings and social services and created workshops to teach job skills. The participants soon formed a caring community. "The Deaf pushed wheelchairs and the physically disabled became their sign language interpreters," she says.

Sister Arlene also formed a pastoral team for Deaf and hearing people at St. Joseph the Worker parish. The team facilitated signing at liturgies, Bible study classes and Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) programs, and taught sign language to clergy and parishioners. "The Deaf became an integral part of the parish and the diocese," she says proudly.

Above: Sister Trant and a Deaf friend sign greetings to one another in Macau in 2012. Below: Sister Trant reads a book to children in Guatemala in 2000. (Maryknoll Mission Archives)



Sister Trant waters cardboard laid over lawn on the sisters' Monrovia, California, property where native plants will soon replace grass. (Rosemary Gavidia, Courtesy of Grow Monrovia/U.S.)

Although Sister Arlene felt very much at home in Macau, Maryknoll missionaries are sometimes called to a new geographical region. In 1998, she was sent to a poor barrio, Mezquital, outside of Guatemala City. The assignment to Central America meant learning a whole new language and culture.

Open to the challenge, Sister Arlene reached out in friendship to people who were suffering not only poverty, but also the loss of loved ones in Guatemala's civil war. "I learned of the suffering of my neighbors, who came to the city from the provinces after deep personal tragedies and genocide," she says.

Working during the week at a

women's cooperative, on Sundays Sister Arlene attended Mass at the cathedral in Guatemala City. Soon she formed a group of Deaf and hearing volunteers who interpreted liturgies and helped with a weekly Bible study in sign language. Together they founded the Guatemala Deaf Catholic Community. This group continued to flourish even after Sister Arlene came back to the United States in 2004.

About her work over the decades with Deaf people, Sister Arlene says, "The joy, love and friendship they extended to me and each other showed clearly that hands using sign language speak louder than spoken words."

During the ensuing years Sister Arlene served in the United States and again in her beloved Macau.

"Hong Kong and Macau are big, bustling, densely populated cities with tall skyscrapers where hardly a blade of grass can be seen," Sister Arlene says. "Each time I returned to the States, I'd stop in at our community in Monrovia, California. I was always overwhelmed by its beautiful grounds filled with sturdy oaks and fruit trees, flowers and luscious green grass."

In 2021, the Monrovia community became Sister Arlene's home when she was assigned to be the coordinator of the sisters' retirement community there. But even

at 77, there is no retirement for the energetic missionary!


"Maryknoll Sisters have long been dedicated to protecting both the human environment and the natural environment," she says. "I'm only now awakening to the call of Mother Earth."

Sister Arlene notes that in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis urges all people to care for our "common home." "The Monrovia property is over six acres of land with trees, flower gardens — and a lot of water-consuming grass!" she says. "Changes needed to be made."

The sisters now partner with a non-profit community organization, Grow Monrovia, she explains. A team of volunteers and neighbors are transforming the property into an ecological restoration site. Native plants and flowers are being introduced where there had once been a thirsty lawn; a tree nursery has been planted; and a community garden open to the sisters' neighbors was started. "Caring for creation is a rewarding mission for all," she says.

"I'm beginning to see with new eyes that the birds, butterflies, and bees are not just lovely in themselves, they are essential workers in re-creating our world," she adds.

"Now our property itself has become part of our missionary vocation of being good stewards," she says. "Not such a crazy idea!" ✚



**FOR INFORMATION ON BECOMING
A MARYKNOLL SISTER,
Contact**

Sister Gloria Ardenio Agnes, M.M.
914.941.7575 ext. 5612
Email: vocation@mksisters.org
maryknollsisters.org



TWO SIMPLE QUESTIONS

By John Blazo, M.M.

A Maryknoll brother finds a life of mission and community in his calling

During a tour of the Maryknoll Society headquarters in Ossining, New York, in 2018, Maryknoll Brother John Blazo points to cofounders Bishop James A. Walsh and Father Thomas F. Price. Brother Blazo joined Maryknoll six decades ago. (Diane Mastrogiulio/U.S.)

One day during my junior year at Archbishop Molloy High School in Jamaica, New York, my French teacher called me into the hallway. “Have you ever thought about becoming a priest or a brother?” he asked me.

My family had already begun asking what I wanted to do after graduation. I had no idea — but it started me thinking about my future. Although I was drawn to religious life, I didn’t feel called to become a priest.

The high school was staffed by Marist brothers, and while I admired them, I did not feel called to be one of them. Their emphasis was on education, but I didn’t want to go to college. Helping my father with handyman tasks for our neighbors on Long Island, I was more interested in practical work, like maintenance.

My family received *Maryknoll* magazine, and I read about Maryknoll brothers doing hands-on work around the world. Most of them didn’t go to college, yet they led remarkable lives of service.



Brother Blazo (wearing glasses) studied adult education and Latin American studies before serving on mission assignments to Nicaragua and Guatemala. (Eric Wheeler/Guatemala)

Starting in 1982, Brother Blazo went on to serve in mission education and promotion, bringing mission stories to schools, parishes and groups throughout the United States.

I was nervous about exploring this idea — and didn't know how to take the first step. That is, until the day my French teacher, Brother Philip Robert Ouellette, called me out of the classroom with his question.

At first, I thought I was in trouble. But as we spoke, I relaxed and told him my thoughts about Maryknoll.

Brother Ouellette said that a Maryknoll priest was coming to the school the following week to interview boys who might be interested in Maryknoll. He asked me a second question: did I want an appointment?

I did.

Once I had the interview, the Mary-

knoll priest then visited my home in Hempstead, New York, where he met my parents and younger sister. I remain grateful that my family and friends supported me — especially the girls and guys on the bus I rode daily to and from school. Even after so many years, I'm still in touch with some of them.

As they say, the rest is history. I joined Maryknoll in 1963, and took my first oath two years later, at 19.

The Second Vatican Council brought many pastoral changes to the Church, among them, encouraging Catholics to pursue higher education. We were prompted not only

to study our faith, but also to take part in secular education that would help us learn more about our world and God's role in it.

I — who hadn't wanted to go to college! — attended Westchester Community College in Valhalla, New York, for an associate's degree and continued on to Mary Rogers College at Maryknoll. Rogers College, which originally educated only Maryknoll sisters, by then had opened up to brothers and lay students.

During college, I was able to spend two summers in predominantly Mexican American communities in New Mexico. One was a small

town and the other, too small to be called a town; at both places, I was warmly received. Enthralled by the enthusiasm of the high school Catholic Youth Organization members and the active participation in parish life, I practiced my college Spanish. These formative experiences showed me what I wanted to do with my education.

I received my bachelor's degree from Rogers College in adult education with a minor in Latin American studies, and in 1975, was assigned to Central America.

My first mission was in Nicaragua, where I traveled from village

to village, training catechists. After only six months, however, health reasons forced me to leave this work and go to Guatemala City to recover.

When Maryknoll opened a new mission in the Petén region of northern Guatemala, I could barely wait to join. It was a team effort. Priests, brothers and lay missionaries supported each other as a community.

My original perception of being a brother came from before the Second Vatican Council. Back then, a brother's vocation was seen only as a supportive role to help priests, in this case, to assist Maryknoll priests in their missionary work. However, together with my brother Maryknoll Society members, I came to see myself as both a brother and a missionary.

Like other religious, whether men as brothers or women as sisters, I choose to live in community, enjoying the closeness of other people while learning from them about Jesus, the Church's mission and myself.

As a brother, and not being ordained, I see myself as a bridge builder between the clergy and laity. Most of my ministry in Central America was going out to others in the community, forming lay leaders and guiding prayer services, visiting the sick, etc. I would tell people that anything I could do, they could do, because for those tasks, ordination

was not necessary.

I was not disappointed when, in 1982, I had to return to the United States due to illness, because that was actually a blessing. I discovered a passion — and a talent — for mission education and promotion, right here at home.

I spoke out about what I had witnessed in Central America, where the U.S. government funded bloody civil wars. More generally, I shared mission stories with groups at schools and parishes. Mission education opens a window to other cultures and how they express their Catholic faith.

At 77, I have spent four wonderful decades in the States accompanying people on the path to become missionary disciples.

Wherever I have served, my favorite thing about being a brother has remained the same. It has been being in relationship with people of different backgrounds to get a fuller understanding of God's presence in the world and Maryknoll's role in teaching that message.

In thinking about brotherhood — or any vocation — one needs to ask God's help in making the decision. Prayer, talking to others already following that vocation and keeping a journal are extremely helpful. In the journal, it's important to keep track of a timeline and practical steps to be taken.

As I look back, I see that each phase of my life led to the next.

When Brother Ouellette called me out of the classroom that day — over 60 years ago — who knew where those two simple questions would lead? ✂



FOR INFORMATION ON BECOMING A BROTHER WITH MARYKNOLL FATHERS & BROTHERS, Contact Fr. Rodrigo Ulloa, M.M., at 914.504.1196
Email: vocation@maryknoll.org
maryknollvocations.org

2023 Fathers and Brothers MARYKNOLL™ STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

THREE CASH PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED PER DIVISION

High School

1ST PLACE: \$1,000

2ND PLACE: \$700

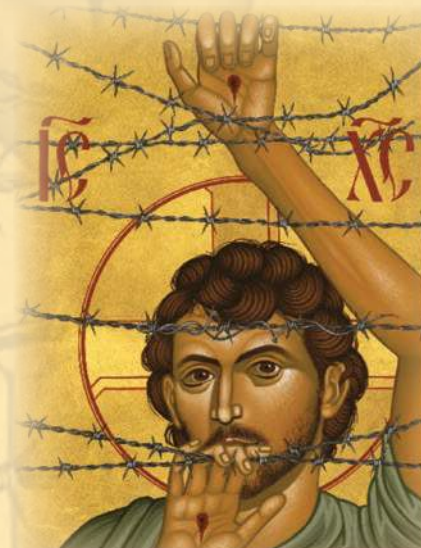
3RD PLACE: \$250

Middle School

1ST PLACE: \$500

2ND PLACE: \$300

3RD PLACE: \$150



ASSIGNMENT: Jesus teaches us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. How can we, as followers of Jesus, stand up for peace and against the growing violence in our country? 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 and the entry form page online at MaryknollSociety.org/Essay (if 13 or older) OR 2) mail essays to the address below. Mailed essays should be typed and stapled, each attached to an **ENTRY FORM PAGE** (available at

MaryknollSociety.org/Essay). Essays will not be accepted without an entry form.

ELIGIBILITY: Students in grades 6–8 (Division I) and grades 9–12 (Division II) who are currently enrolled in a Catholic school or Catholic religious education program are eligible. See MaryknollSociety.org/Essay for official rules.

DEADLINE: Entries must be submitted online or postmarked by MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2023. First-place essays will appear in the Summer 2024 *Maryknoll* magazine. All winning entries will be published online at MaryknollSociety.org/Winners by April 15, 2024.

MAIL TO: 2023 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 for more information.
For more educational and catechetical resources, please visit <https://discoveryourneighbor.org/>.

My Blissful SOJOURN IN THE AMAZON

By Esperanza V. Principio, M.M.

A Maryknoll sister serves Indigenous small farmers in the Amazon Rainforest

During the global Covid-19 pandemic I reflected on the call to expand my ministry in Peru, where I have served since 2013. *Laudato Si'* has been an impetus in my own path and a direction shared with all Maryknollers. In March of 2022, I set out for a 10-month mission in the Amazon.

Volunteering with Caritas of Madre de Dios, based in Puerto Maldonado, Peru, I was sent out to isolated areas to focus on food security and adaptation to climate change and to work with farmers' cooperative projects.

Biodiversity of flora and fauna is the main characteristic of Madre de Dios. The region is also rich with varied cultures lived by Indigenous peoples, both those contacted by non-native outsiders and non-contacted. I was welcomed by, and worked with, seven Indigenous communities on the riverbanks of Las Piedras River. The indigenous groups are Yine, Amahuaca, Matsigenka, Ashaninka and Shibipo. I ministered to families on small farms who grow cacao, from which chocolate is made, and copoazu, a related plant.


During my time in the region, I experienced the richness and immensi-

ty of the Amazon jungle. I traversed the rivers by boat — sometimes for days — to reach Caritas' mission areas. The journeys made me a silent witness to the wonders of the largest and most biodiverse tract of rainforest in the world, drawing me to a deep communion like my experience of receiving Christ in the Eucharist.

However, living in the Amazon also means witnessing an ecosystem that is fractured. Systematic burning, land conversion, land grabbing, deforestation, mining and lack of protection for tropical forests and their Indigenous guardians happen daily. I felt some helplessness as a muted witness amid all this threatened beauty.

During the year, I attended a socioenvironmental justice meeting of the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network, a network of hundreds of organizations in the nine countries of the Amazon Basin. A Jesuit priest also participating said, "God always forgives; with effort, humans can forgive; but nature does not forgive at all!"

What will it take for us to realize we cannot live without nature? How late will we wait until we take care of and repair creation?



Maryknoll Sister Esperanza Principio, who has been assigned to Peru since 2013, served as a volunteer for Caritas in the Amazon Rainforest. (All photos courtesy of Esperanza Principio/Peru)



Clockwise from left: Sister Principio (center) is shown joining Indigenous families for an event; surveying cacao beans set out to dry at a farm collective; and helping to harvest cacao in the rainforest by splitting open the plants' pods and collecting the seeds.

My connection with nature began when I was a child climbing trees on my grandparents' property in the Philippines. My siblings, cousins and I would watch the falling stars in the night sky and run in their direction, as if to catch them. My Amazonian experience has deepened my life-long commitment to care for the earth and God's creation with tenderness and love.

My term of volunteering with Caritas in Madre de Dios having ended,

I returned to my ministry in Lima. I continue to pray for the Amazon Rainforest and its people so that it may continue to give life to our planet and its inhabitants, life in abundance (John 10:10). ✠

Esperanza V. Principio, formerly a sister of the Religious of the Virgin Mary, became an associate of the Maryknoll Sisters in 2005 and joined the congregation in 2009. She served in Panama before being assigned to Peru.





Defending Water IN THE AMAZON

Patricia Gualinga, a Kichwa Indigenous leader of the Sarayaku people in Ecuador, was interviewed during the UN Water Conference in March by Lisa Sullivan of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. A longer version of the interview can be found on our magazine websites.

CHALLENGES AND BLESSINGS

The Amazonian ecosystem is one of the most important freshwater sources of the world. I come from a land of waterfalls, lakes and rivers that flow from the Amazon, and it is water that gives us food sovereignty. There are no markets in my town; we feed ourselves with fish from the river. If [water] dries up we lose our food source, the land dries up, and it generates an imbalance because

the water is a living thing, with energy, with its own light and purpose.

According to our ancestors, we are the people of the Zenith, meaning midday; a fighting people. ... It's a people of 1250 inhabitants who fought fiercely against extractive companies.

Our challenge is a "success story" because we are the only people that removed an oil company [the Argentinian General Fuel Company] in the early 2000s, confronted the nation of Ecuador and denounced human right violations. In 2012, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights agreed with us, ruling in Sarayaku's favor and penalizing the state.

The blessing of Sarayaku is turning into a symbol of resistance, struggle and dignity for Indigenous people.

A GLOBAL PLATFORM

This is not only for the welfare of Indigenous peoples. Think about humankind, about your children and all the people who benefit from the Amazonian biome. No one can say we are isolated; we are close and connected.

We [Indigenous] are people who have cared for those forests and ecosystems for millennia. We come to the United Nations ... to speak up and to make a stand. The human right to water belongs to everyone and, accordingly, defending the Amazon is everyone's responsibility because thanks to it we have water.

If the forest is healthy, water will flow. Complete deforestation, as commercial interests attempt to do, affects water directly; it begins to dry up, to lose its balance. Now it's time to listen to us, to act and to see things in a different light. Not as man dominating nature, but man as part of nature.

FACING THREAT AND DANGER

When the oil company entered Sarayaku territory and people decided to fight ... it was impossible to stand by and watch. We didn't know where this fight would take us, but we knew we couldn't stay quiet.

I knew the plan of action, how the government functions, how to direct, how to document the technical aspects of the process and how to communicate. I had contacts in the media. ... [Initially] I thought the fight would be over if we managed to say no to the company, that it would end there.

In 2018, I decided to retire from leadership and keep a low profile,

but it was impossible. Six months after, I received death threats. It was terrible because they came to my house around one o'clock in the morning. I was with my elderly parents. They threatened me, "If you continue with this, we'll kill you."

When you begin a fight against global economic interests, your life is always at risk. I knew staying quiet was not the better option; I had to keep going. If they wanted to drive me away through fear, they didn't succeed.

POPE FRANCIS AND THE CHURCH

I asked the Church to be our ally. I told them they couldn't watch while Indigenous rights were violated. That they had speak up and accompany us. We have fought side-by-side with many priests, but help from the head of the institution was needed.

Currently, I'm part of the vice presidency of the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon (CEAMA).

[It] can only be the work of the Spirit. That a pope, at the moment the Amazon needed it so much, put the Amazon in his heart.

It's a great strength for a global spokesperson to speak for marginalized people who inhabit and care for such a biodiverse biome and at the same time suffer the ravages of extractivism. This is an ideal moment. Our pleas have been heard. I'm 53 years old and 30 of those years I have spent fighting.

My parents were Catholic — the first catechists. I always dreamt and prayed that the Church would be a part of this journey, of this accompaniment. God lives in the Amazon rainforest, in these peoples.

A Mission of Peace **CONTINUES**

By Luna Stephanie

Maryknoll affiliates in Guatemala continue a missionary's work with youth in a neighborhood rife with gangs and violence

A well-known African proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child." One community in a barrio of Guatemala City truly lives this out. During a recent immersion trip led by Maryknoll's Mission Formation Program, students from Yale University met Maryknoll affiliates who had been inspired by the late Maryknoll Father Thomas Goekler — and in turn, were inspired by their commitment to a program the missionary founded.

Father Goekler arrived in the Guatemala City barrio, known as Zona 18, in 2008. Since the project he had established for marginalized youth in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, could flourish on its own, he wanted to bring its model to other Central American communities. Fifteen years later, Caminando Por La Paz thrives — even amid gangs and violence.

The Yale students and accompanying Maryknoll staff were given a brief orientation by Maryknoll Affiliates Rosa María de León and Rosa Beatriz Castañeda de Larios. Both had attended Monte María School, founded by the Maryknoll Sisters in Guatemala City. They urged us to be open to the many encounters we would experience.

Since the trip took place during Lent, the city was full of people, music and prayer. Our senses were overtaken by the smell of incense and the sound of marching bands carrying out processions. I was moved to witness how poor and working-class people mixed with tourists, coming together to get a glimpse of Jesus.

We were brought to Caminando Por La Paz, which means "Walking for Peace," by Carlos Miranda, a board member and Maryknoll affiliate. Like other Maryknoll Affiliate programs, he explained, Caminando Por La Paz is based on four pillars: community, spirituality, global vision, and action. It offers after school tutoring and a free meal. The project also provides meeting space for small Christian community gatherings and opportunities for service.

The nutrition program provides meals for up to 100 neighborhood children, but during COVID-19, people of all ages came for food. The tutoring sessions serve approximately 20 children. Newcomers are welcome at any time.

Yale University graduate student Claire Latendresse and a young community member enjoy lunch together during a recent Maryknoll immersion trip. (Jenn Schaaf/Guatemala)





Affiliates (blue shirts) host Yale University students and Maryknoll staff including Ray Almanza and Luna Stephanie (bottom row, far left, right). (Courtesy of Luna Stephanie/Guatemala)



Maryknoll Affiliates offer presentations: (left, left to right) Isis Miranda and Karla González; (right) Rosa María de León and Rosa Beatriz Castañeda de Larios. (Jenn Schaaf/Guatemala)



Miranda and the other board members gave us their presentation, all the while setting up the daily lunch. Soon, we heard knock after knock on the door. All three tables quickly filled with children and the Yale students. Caminando Por La Paz felt like a typical Latino home: children playing, adults cooking and the teens in their own bubble talking about their hopes and dreams.

From the affiliates, we learned of young people who have overcome many odds through the program. Anderson de León is an example. Anderson's older brother, Jordi, lived in the Caminando house while Father Goekler was still alive. Later, Jordi was murdered at an early age.

Anderson liked sports since he was little, but was a terrible student. He received tutoring at Caminando, and, with that push, managed to complete his primary school studies. Taking advantage of his talents, Anderson earned a scholarship at a

sports training school. Today he has a place in the reserves of a professional soccer team and is close to playing in the first division. He returns to the community to visit his family and friends — and to play at Caminando's soccer games.

Community members who are impacted by Caminando often stay connected, affiliates say. Miranda explains that he himself was first served by the program before becoming a volunteer and then joining the staff.

After lunch, everyone gathered outside. Due to Zona 18's history of violence, members of Caminando ensure that the children get home safely by walking them home in groups.

The Yale students and the small children walked hand-in-hand through the streets. The teens were too "cool" to hold hands, but joy shone on their faces. All the youth had an innocence to them, nurtured at Caminando Por La Paz: a safe

space where they can eat, learn, pray and play.

Our visit to Caminando ended in the rooftop chapel, a makeshift room filled with photos and memorabilia of Father Goekler and paintings and carvings of the crucified Jesus. More than 20 people fit in this little space where we shared bread and coffee. The coffee had been grown and harvested by small farmers in Honduras and is sold through fair trade by a Caminando Por La Paz project, Family Coffee. I was amazed at how this marginalized community helps other, even more marginalized communities.

Father Goekler was inspired by Servant of God Dorothy Day and founded two Catholic Worker Houses. The deaths of the four churchwomen martyred in El Salvador motivated him to overseas mission. A priest of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, he served as an associate priest with Maryknoll before being

accepted for incardination into the Society in 1999. He told the cardinal of Guatemala, "The work I do, I do on the streets."

Father Goekler, who died in 2010, inspired other adults in the barrio Zona 18 to do the same: to care. To make the problems of its young people their own. And ... to take action.

The Maryknoll Affiliates chapter in Guatemala continues to accomplish something remarkable! Caminando Por La Paz carries on its mission of healing in a country that has endured so much. ✕

Luna Stephanie worked as a mission education promoter for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers from 2019 to 2023.



FOR INFORMATION ON BECOMING A MARYKNOLL AFFILIATE,
Contact Robert Short
affiliatebshort@gmail.com
maryknollaffiliates.org

World Watch

What's Next for Asylum?

By Thomas Gould

The pandemic-era Title 42 public health policy — first enacted under the Trump Administration and continued under President Joseph Biden — allowed border authorities to expel asylum seekers expeditiously, resulting an estimated 2.8 million expulsions. While Title 42 officially ended May 11 after three years in effect, those seeking asylum in the United States now face new barriers.

The day before Title 42 ended, the Biden Administration announced a new rule, known as the “asylum transit ban.” Under this new order migrants are deemed ineligible for asylum if they do not schedule an appointment with U.S. immigration authorities at the border through the CBP One app, or first apply — and are denied — asylum protection in a country they traveled through.

Immigration advocates say these policies are a betrayal of President Biden’s campaign promises to build a more welcoming nation. They note that the right to seek asylum is a moral value that the United States enshrined into law after lessons learned in World War II, when millions of people who were forced to flee persecution desperately needed protection. Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, passed by the United Nations General Assembly in

1948, states that “everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.”

In addition to the Biden asylum transit ban, members of Congress have introduced separate proposals to narrow access to asylum even further. Among the proposals before Congress is the Border Security and Enforcement Act. This bill would make it nearly impossible for migrants to seek asylum in the United States and would also make it significantly easier to carry out deportations of asylum seekers already in the country.

It would restart practices from the failed and dangerous “Remain in Mexico” program and would mandate detention of asylum-seeking families entering the country outside of authorized points of entry. Lastly, the bill would subject unaccompanied children to an expedited removal process. All these protocols would have the effect of putting migrants, particularly including families and children, in grave danger.

“This bill will simply continue to harm immigrants and create divisions in our communities and our country without providing any solutions,” wrote 11 Catholic organizations working with asylum seekers in a letter to the House Judiciary Committee.



A day before Title 42 restrictions were lifted in May, an asylum-seeking mother holds her child at the U.S./Mexico border near El Paso, Texas. (OSV News photo/Reuters/U.S.)

“The solutions are not to be found at the border but rather in Washington, D.C.,” Susan Gunn of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns said, “where Congress has failed to enact meaningful immigration reform for more than 30 years.

“The United States desperately needs comprehensive immigration reform which includes opening up different legal pathways for migrants, rather than restricting asylum access at the

border,” she said. “Our missionaries on the border see it, and the president and members of Congress know it. They may not want to hear it, but as long as the cries of migrants go on, we will continue calling for justice.” ✠

Thomas Gould, who earned a bachelor’s degree in humanities at Yale University, is communications manager for the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

FAITH IN ACTION:

- Volunteer at the U.S./Mexico Border: Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas, welcomes lay and religious short and long-term volunteers to provide hospitality to migrants. Learn more at <https://mogc.info/AH-volunteer>
- Join an immersion trip to El Paso/Juarez organized by the Maryknoll Father and Brothers: <https://mogc.info/border-immersion>
- Find the latest research on the impact of U.S. border policies from a Catholic perspective at the Hope Border Institute: <https://www.hopeborder.org/>

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

Partners in Mission

A Maryknoll Legacy

By Gabe Hurrish

Serving as a Maryknoll lay missionary in South Sudan, I began experiencing a slight problem in one eye and decided to visit a hospital nearby. I did not know I was about to have a surprising encounter with someone who carries on the legacy of a longtime Maryknoll friend.

At Kapoeta Mission Hospital, I was introduced to Grace Baako, who has worked there since 2010, first as a nurse and later also as ophthalmic clinical officer. Grace, it turns out, was set on the path to her profession in eye care by Maryknoll Father John Barth.

"In South Sudan, part of my work was setting up eye clinics where none previously existed — which basically meant anywhere in the country," Father Barth says. "I was pointed in the direction of a small Catholic hospital in the remote town of Kapoeta. It was underfunded by the government and offered no eye care at the time." The priest recalls, "Nurse Grace loaned me a tent to stay in overnight, because there was no guest house in town."

In 2015, Grace was among the local health care workers sponsored by Maryknoll for a diploma course

in ophthalmology at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College in neighboring Tanzania. "Grace was an enthusiastic candidate to be trained to treat minor eye injuries and cataracts which unnecessarily blind many people," Father Barth says.

"There were three of us," Grace says. "One was becoming a surgeon and we two others became ophthalmic clinical officers." Grace passed her final examinations with the highest grades in her class. "This is something I am proud of because I wanted to show Father John and Bishop Paride Taban (bishop of Torit Diocese at the time) that I appreciated their support," she says. "I wanted them to be proud of me."

Having completed the course, Grace returned to the hospital. Then, for about 18 months, she took a position working on a mobile surgical unit with The Carter Center, which collaborates with the Ministry of Health to reach vulnerable communities, including settlements for displaced people. The travel and living conditions were difficult. Nevertheless, Grace found the experience rewarding: "There were a lot of people who needed the surgery and they were grateful for the care."



Nurse Grace Baako, who works at Kapoeta Mission Hospital, credits Maryknoll Father John Barth for sponsoring her training in advanced eye care. (Gabe Hurrish/South Sudan)

Upon finishing her period of service with The Carter Center, Grace returned to her dual position of nurse and ophthalmic clinical officer at the Kapoeta Mission Hospital. "I see an average of 40 patients per month, with a maximum of 80," she says. Cataracts are the major problem, she reports. If a case requires serious medical interventions, she refers the patient to the only eye clinic in South Sudan, the Buluk Eye Clinic in the capital, Juba — founded by none other than Father Barth. She notes that the missionary also provided the Kapoeta Mission Hospital with equipment and supplies which are still being used today.

Grace, whom Father Barth describes as "a dedicated and kind person," says she loves her work. She and her husband have also adopted two children and are raising them as their own. Grace quietly declares,

"With the grace of God, I will work a long time for my people."

Father Barth adds, "I'm pleased to know she has persevered in her work, addressing preventable blindness in that corner of South Sudan."

"I am grateful to Father John for giving me the chance to improve myself. It was through the experience of college that I grew in self-confidence and dignity," Grace says. Her work is important to non-governmental organizations, government ministries, the local diocese — and especially, to the people she helps. "I say a prayer for Father John every time I help people with their sight," she says. "May God bless him and all the Maryknoll priests." ✠

Gabe Hurrish, a Maryknoll lay missionary since 2017 in South Sudan, has worked in relief and development efforts for 30 years in 11 countries.



We invite you to visit us on the web at
maryknollmagazine.org
to read our digital edition as well as our expanded
online coverage of Catholic news worldwide.

We remain committed to bringing you stories of
God's mission through our quarterly print issues
of *Maryknoll* magazine.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY for *Maryknoll* magazine
online and in print at maryknollmagazine.org
or call 1-888-627-9566.



READERS' RESPONSES

HOPE IN YOUTH

I just finished reading your Summer 2023 issue with the article about the Student Essay Contest winners. Wow! The students' submissions were so good — appropriate, aware, touching. Both of the winning essays brought tears to my eyes of joy, appreciation and respect.

I am an octogenarian, having raised with my husband (now deceased) a family of five children, 11 grandchildren and four beautiful healthy great grands. I am blessed and grateful.

Reading about the students and their essays restores my hope. They are way more impressive and intelligent than some current politicians. Tell them to hurry and grow up. We, the world, need help as soon as possible. I probably won't be around by the time these wonderful young people are running our country. But I am relieved and encouraged by their wisdom and passion. Thank you for honoring them. It is the most encouragement I've felt in ages.

Deanna R. Dean

Glen Mills, Pennsylvania

LIFE-ALTERING TRIP

In 2017, I traveled to Tanzania to meet with Ruth and Roy Meyer. (See *Partners in Mission*, Spring 2023). Ruth's cousin and her family joined us in Arusha before we set off for Magalata, where Father Daniel Ohmann had erected a modest church. Our mission was to teach Watatulu children math, science, reading and English, in addition to God's Good News. As a retired

teacher, I was excited to be with the students. They were so eager to learn.

While six of us taught, Ruth and Roy traveled to remote places to visit with the students' parents since it was the Meyers' responsibility to make sure the students were progressing in their schoolwork.

This experience was a humbling time for me. These children had very little, yet they were happy to learn and sing hymns of praise to God. Mass was celebrated most joyfully. The families shared their meager food offerings with us very generously. It was a time of self-renewal for me.

My husband, David, and I will continue to contribute to the Watalulu Education Fund, thankful for this life-altering experience.

*Barbara Foerch
Irving, Texas*

LIVING THE FAITH

I wanted to congratulate you on the recent article "Finding Eucharist among the Displaced" in the Spring issue of *Maryknoll* magazine.

Since I worked with Father John Barth for six years while he served on the General Council of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, I know him well. He certainly lives his faith.

*Maureen T. Foster
Mechanicville, New York*

FINDING EUCHARIST

In your latest issue, Spring 2023, the article "Finding Eucharist among the Displaced" had this quote from Father Barth: "My Eucharist is giving

food to the hungry and starving. To me that's the Eucharist." How refreshing to hear this.

Vincent Hamon
Los Angeles, California

YOGA AND PRAYERS

I would like to respond to the reader who commented about being shocked to see chair yoga in your Spring 2023 publication. Yoga is an excellent form of fitness exercise consisting of strengthening bones and muscles and improving balance. Chair yoga is perfect for older or disabled people. My Catholic church has allowed yoga to be taught and practiced in one of our facilities for the last 10 years. We pray Catholic prayers after each lesson with a core group of people who also know that each and every one of us will pray for the needs of the others.

Thank you all for the holy work you do around the world!

Peggy Wright
Omaha, Nebraska

FULL OF LOVE

Several people have complained recently in Readers' Responses about Maryknoll's emphasis on creating renewable energy. I don't think they grasp the seriousness of the problem. Food and water are threatened. Without food and water, the poor and all the rest of us will perish. While promoting renewable energy does not have a warm fuzzy feeling, it is full of

love. The transition to renewable energy will be costly, inconvenient and full of mistakes, but we should still try.

I love the way the Maryknoll Society covered its parking lots with solar array canopies and preserved all the trees. I relayed the article and photos to the Bar Harbor town council and have repeatedly spoken out that we do the same.

Laureen Donnelly
Bar Harbor, Maine

THANKS FOR POETRY

I received the *Maryknoll* magazine Spring issue and read it, cover to cover, as I have for many years. I especially like the writings of Father Joseph Veneroso. In 2013, you printed "A Prayer for Children" that he wrote. It was so telling of the children of our times. I love it. I pray it every day. Thank you for such a fine magazine. Keep up the good work.

Barbara Gessler
Gibsonia, Pennsylvania

A HIGHLIGHT

I have been a supporter and subscriber to *Maryknoll* for a quarter century, and I read and enjoy every print edition. A special treat is always the poems by Father Joseph R. Veneroso. He has a way of expressing profound truths about our faith in a very accessible, image-filled way. He definitely is a highlight of *Maryknoll* magazine.

Joseph B. Atkins
Oxford, Mississippi

The editors invite Maryknoll readers to send us their views. Write to:

Readers' Responses

P.O. Box 302, Maryknoll, N.Y. 10545-0302

Our e-mail address is: mklmag@maryknoll.org

"For I was ... a stranger and you welcomed me." - Matthew 25: 35



Nile Sprague/Taiwan

For over 20 years, Maryknoll Father Joyalito Tajonera has helped struggling migrant workers in Taiwan find community in a different culture. Maryknoll missionaries like him work with migrants around the world. When you support the work of Maryknoll with your prayers and generous donations, you help demonstrate our Catholic faith in action.

Yes! I want to help Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers in Asia, Africa and Latin America serve our neediest brothers and sisters.

Enclosed please find my gift of: ☐ \$50 ☐ \$35 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$15 ☐ Other \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

☐ Check enclosed ☐ AMEX ☐ MC ☐ Visa ☐ Disc Card #: _____ Exp.: ____ / ____

Name on Card: _____ Signature: _____

Please mark code 2338471003 on your check.
Make your gift payable to: Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers
and mail to: P.O. Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0302



Fathers and Brothers

MARYKNOLL Give online at MaryknollSociety.org or call toll-free 1.888.627.9566 M-F, 8:30-4 ET



Maryknoll Father Juan Zúñiga, secretary general of the Maryknoll Society, is pictured with seminarians (left to right) Matthew Sim, Charles Ogony and Joshua Mutende Maondo at their perpetual oath ceremony on June 3, 2023. (See our vocation director's article, page 18)

MARYKNOLL FATHERS AND BROTHERS
P.O. Box 302
Maryknoll, New York 10545-0302

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Maryknoll
Fathers and Brothers



Facebook.com/MaryknollSociety



Twitter.com/MaryknollFrSBrS



Instagram.com/MaryknollSociety



recycled paper