

MARYKNOLL®

U.S. Catholic Church in mission overseas

Fall 2024

maryknollmagazine.org



Sent to Heal

FROM THE EDITOR

Please join me in congratulating our newest Maryknoll priests, featured in our cover story. Fathers Joshua Maondo and Charles Ogony were ordained on June 8 at Maryknoll's Our Lady Queen of Apostles Chapel in Ossining, New York. While ordinations are already joyous occasions, the presence of the two men's Kenyan compatriots lent an especially festive character to the day. The celebration was enlivened by singing and dancing to irresistible East African rhythms.

Following our ordination story, Father Joseph Veneroso writes in his Spirit of Mission column about Jesus as a wounded healer. He sets the theme for the rest of this issue, in which we focus on mission stories of healing and caregiving.

From Bolivia, Brother Ryan Thibert tells us of his ministry as a brother to neglected, abused and orphaned children and to 50 residents at a home for the abandoned elderly. Filo Siles and Joe Loney, a Maryknoll lay missionary couple also in Bolivia, focus on health, education, social inclusion and economic sustenance for almost 800 children, youths, adults and seniors with disabilities. Maryknoll Affiliates member Erin Rickwa writes about her nonprofit organization, which recently expanded to Tanzania, that provides grants for health care for sick and disabled children. Other articles describe the decades of recovery from the trauma of a coup in Chile and healing through art at a Maryknoll-run AIDS clinic in Nairobi.

As newly ordained Father Maondo says, the world needs healing, and "that's what mission is all about."

*Lynn F. Monahan
Editor-in-Chief*



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 Mastrogiulio, 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) © 2024,
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



Courtesy of Richard Bauer/Kenya

FEATURED STORIES

- | | |
|--|--|
| 10 Carrying the Flag of Mission
<i>By Andrea Moreno-Díaz and Giovana Soria</i> | 40 Being There: A Brother in Mission
<i>By Ryan Thibert, M.M.</i> |
| 20 A Synodal Church is Missionary
<i>By Lynn F. Monahan</i> | 44 Bridges to Healing International
<i>By Erin Rickwa</i> |
| 26 Challenging Assumptions in Bolivia
<i>By Meinrad Scherer-Emunds</i> | 48 'The Sun Is Burning Up the Forest'
<i>By Alejandro Marina, M.M.</i> |
| 34 The Trauma of Memory
<i>By Linda Donovan, M.M.</i> | 50 Celebrating a Life of Faith and Mission
<i>By Giovana Soria</i> |

DEPARTMENTS

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 From the Editor | 25 Prayer for Vocations | 61 Readers' Responses |
| 4 Photo Meditation | 54 Orbis Books | |
| 8 Missioner Tales | 56 World Watch | |
| 18 Spirit of Mission | 58 Partners in Mission | |

FRONT COVER:

Maryknoll Fathers Charles Ogony and Joshua Maondo (left, right), ordained on June 8, 2024, were assigned to mission in Bolivia.

COVER CREDITS:

Front: Octavio Durán
Back: Meinrad Scherer-Emunds

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

Photo meditation on "this, our exile" from the "Hail, Holy Queen"

LONGING TO BELONG

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

*Far, far worse than wandering alone abroad
A stranger in an alien nation
Is returning to a place you once called home
Recognizing words but no longer their meaning
Seeing unfamiliar faces on friends and family
Then realizing, to your shock, it is not they
But you who have changed.*

*Oh you can try your best to put on an act
Pretending to be the person you once were
But in secret desperately seeking
Somewhere, anywhere, someone, anyone
To welcome and accept you as you are now
Experiences, memories, broken dreams
Unrealized expectations and all.*



*Habit beckons you to church, where in years gone by
You sat and knelt and blessed yourself hoping
The words you heard and sang and spoke were true
Standing again in the Communion line as of old
Mysteriously drawn to gaze up at the One lifted high
Suddenly filled at once with shock, surprise and
Amazement to realize the person on the cross is you.*

*At length you reach the source and summit of our faith
And extend your hands, palm-side up
To receive whom you are called to become.
The priest raises the consecrated bread, announcing
“The Body of Christ,” and in that brief moment
Looking at the Host you proclaim “Amen” and realize
The priest is all along looking straight at you.*

*All around you, you see no one but
The blessed fruit of Mary’s womb!
Jesus, your Lord, your God, your all!
Your exile ended, your banishment over,
Your homecoming complete.
Here you are heard. You are seen. You are accepted.
You are loved. You are home.*



MISSIONER TALES



Sean Sprague/Chile

Here in El Salvador, where I serve as a Maryknoll lay missionary, I am starting a children's library at the school where I tutor. I've been using my free time to sort through books including a generous donation of new ones.

The school day had ended, and after three English lessons, I was feeling unmotivated as I faced piles of books. Then a smiling face walked into the room.

Camila is 6 years old and the granddaughter of one of the women who works at the school. Usually, we draw or toss a ball around, but since we were in the library, I asked if she wanted to read a book. I grabbed a

Spanish translation of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Camila is just learning to read, but she stuck with it. About halfway through, her older cousin, a first grader, came in and helped her finish the book. The library isn't open yet but it's already having an impact.

Joshua Wetmore, MKLM

Our mental health program at Sacred Heart Hospital, in Moundou, Chad welcomed a young woman, 17, accompanied by her father. He believed an evil spirit had possessed his daughter because of something she had done wrong, bringing shame on the family. She had not been eating or talking

in weeks. However, in speaking with the young woman, I learned the story was that her husband had left her for another woman soon after their baby was born.

It was a teaching and learning moment for me to be sensitive to cultural beliefs as I informed the father of his daughter's need for psychological help. He did not receive it well, and blamed his daughter for her husband's leaving her because she was not a good wife.

Working with mental health requires changing ways of thinking, which are interconnected with cultural beliefs that run deep. Yet, I feel honored by the responsibility. There is a great need here for public education to dispel the stigma attached to counseling. It seems God has prepared me for this ministry, because I completed a degree in mental health counseling just before setting out for Chad.

NgocHà Pham, M.M.

I was assigned to Chile in 1971, two years before the military coup.

One day, following the government overthrow in 1973, an elderly woman approached me and asked me to accompany her during an interrogation. The military were looking for her son and wanted information on his whereabouts.

As we entered his office, the naval captain in charge looked at me and said, "I know who you are and where you live." This filled me with fear. During the interrogation, he insinuated that my neighbors were gun-carrying terrorists. My fear turned into anger.

I prayed for guidance and strength and immediately felt a deep peace; I was no longer fearful or angry. I was

given the courage to support this woman by offering a listening presence and clarifying the questions being put to her.

As we left the interrogation, I remembered the words of Jesus: "When you go before the court, do not fear. The Spirit will speak through you."

Maureen Hanahoe, M.M.

The goal of the Águilas del Desierto (Eagles of the Desert) in Tucson, Arizona is to offer food and water to migrants in the desert — and to search for the remains of those who have died. While I was in between mission assignments and taking a retreat in Arizona, I joined their efforts. We were asked by the family of a 61-year-old named Thomas to help locate him. They had reason to believe he had perished while attempting to cross the border.

Our group of 20 volunteers began the 15-mile trip into the desert at around 5 a.m. We found clothes and empty water bottles, as well as graves marked with crosses. Francisco, an experienced member of the Águilas team, also pointed out unmarked graves. We stopped to pray in an area where the Águilas had found the remains of a number of people.

Unfortunately, we were not able to find Thomas' remains. We explored some caves on the hills, but found only clothes and blankets, as well as a little shrine people had left behind. We headed back around 4 p.m.

My heart is full of gratitude to God for these compassionate people who show that all people, including migrants fleeing through the desert, are our sisters and brothers.

Michael Bassano, M.M.



CARRYING THE FLAG OF MISSION

by Andrea Moreno-Díaz and Giovana Soria

Photos by Octavo Durán

Maryknoll continues to usher in a 'new era of mission' with the ordination of two Kenyan priests

Maryknoll Fathers Charles Ogony and Joshua Maondo (left, right) dance with Sisters Lydia Yala and Terry Makokha, Father Maondo's aunt (far right), after their ordination Mass held on June 8, 2024 at the Maryknoll Society chapel in Ossining, New York.

A stirring call to worship in Swahili, ululations and Kenyan drums brought the spirit of Africa to the Maryknoll campus in Ossining, New York, for the ordination of the two newest Maryknoll priests, Joshua Maondo and Charles Ogony, from Kenya.

Maryknoll missionaries and attendees of different countries, languages and cultures packed Our Lady Queen of Apostles Chapel, including three Kenyan choirs from Minnesota, New Jersey and Seattle, as well as Hispanic parishioners from Chicago who drove 12 hours for the special occasion.

During the Mass held on June 8, Auxiliary Bishop Peter Byrne of the Archdiocese of New York evoked the innovative missionary spirit of early Maryknoller Bishop Francis Xavier Ford. "His episcopal model was *condolere*; to have compassion," Bishop Byrne said. "First, we have to love people if we want to teach them and have them respond."



As both men lay prostrate on the floor during the Litany of Supplication, Father Ogony says he dedicated the moment to the Blessed Mother, “so that my priesthood may be guided by her and I may remain part of the light that shines to guide God’s people.”

“All these friends of ours from all over the United States, some of them came with their entire families just for this event,” Father Maondo said. “I felt that each of them had a unique sense of the spirit of God.”

Father Maondo’s father, Nicholas, beamed with pride during the ceremony. The older Maondo was able to travel from Kenya. His wife, however, was denied a visa to the United States. “We have been accompanying and supporting Joshua for a long time,” the senior Maondo

said. “It’s been a long journey, but he did it.”

Father Maondo’s aunt, Sister Terry Makokha of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Mombasa, who is studying and serving in Pennsylvania, said she was happy that her young nephew is following “this special calling.” She conveyed her wishes: “I pray that he may continue answering God’s call.”

Sadly, Father Ogony’s parents were denied U.S. visas to attend the ordination. To represent his family, the ordinand chose Alfredo and Verónica Vega, a parishioner couple from the Mother of the Americas Church in Chicago where he volunteered during his formation. The couple, originally from Mexico, was the first to welcome Father Ogony to the parish when they mistakenly thought he did not speak Spanish.

“Carlitos,” as they fondly call Father Ogony, became a source of strength for the Vega family through hard times.

“His words gave us a lot of peace and moral support. He’s almost like family,” Verónica said.

“Charles, besides being humble, has a great calm that’s contagious,” said Alfredo. “He tells us not to hurry in life.”

The newly ordained Fathers Maondo and Ogony received the sign of peace from about 40 fellow priests to the song of *Ndiwe Kuhani Hata Milele* (“You Are a Priest Forever”). Afterward, the young priests distributed Communion, with Nicholas Maondo first in line to receive the host from his son Joshua.

The Mass concluded joyfully, as a procession of the Catholic Women

Association from Kenya came singing and dancing down the aisle. The young priests, along with the rest of the congregation, joined in the celebration.

After the Mass, attendees lined up to receive the traditional first blessings from the newly ordained priests. The emotive custom took place in front of the statue of Our Lady of Maryknoll on the quadrangle of the Maryknoll Society Center.

Left to right: Nicholas Maondo, who flew from Kenya to attend his son’s ordination, looks on proudly as Joshua is ordained. Father Maondo extends his hand for the invocation of the Holy Spirit during the consecration. Auxiliary Bishop of New York Peter Byrne, the ordaining bishop, lays hands upon the two Maryknoll ordinands.



Then, honoring a Maryknoll tradition that began with the first mission departure in 1918, Father Maondo and Father Ogony each took a turn to wield a huge wooden hammer and ring the mission bell that marked their sending to proclaim the Good News.

"This is a new era of mission," declared Maryknoll Father Russell Feldmeier during the post-ordination sending ceremony, "where there is no 'out there,' but it is all in here, in this Church."

The ordination of the new priests represents "a new intercultural reality within Maryknoll itself," continued Father Feldmeier, where "we

are called to expand our circles of care and compassion to go beyond boundaries of trial, language, race, gender and culture."

The young priests, he said, bring their gifts, the blessings of their African heritage and their Maryknoll formation to their first assignment to Bolivia, where the Maryknoll Society began missionary work in 1942, and where Maondo and Ogony completed their overseas training in 2020.

"Charles," said Father Feldmeier as he addressed the new priests, "you have such a deep love for the elderly and the poor and for those on the margins, and you seek to be

Top left: Father Ogony greets Maryknoll Father William LaRousse during the Sign of Peace. Top right: Fathers Maondo and Ogony, wearing their mission crosses, sing with Maryknoll Superior General Lance Nadeau during the sending ceremony held later that day. Below: Maondo and Ogony lie prostrate during the Litany of Supplication.



(From left to right) Father Timothy Kilkelly, Superior General Lance Nadeau, Father Charles Ogony, Bishop Peter Byrne, Father Joshua Maondo, Father James Lynch and Father Juan Zúñiga pose for a photo.

authentic to the needs of others.”

To Joshua, he said, “You bring great enthusiasm and radiate so much energy and seek to use that energy for those that need help, especially families. And you have great talent in music.”

Maryknoll Superior General Lance Nadeau presented the new priests with their mission crucifixes “to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ by your words and example.” Both said that Father Lance, a mentor for them since they were university students, not only influenced their decision to join Maryknoll but also modeled for them the style of priesthood they want to pursue.

“He preached unity,” said Father Ogony. “He brought real life issues and connected them to the Gospel.”

Father Maondo said, “I’ve seen

Father Nadeau do things I’ve never seen any other person do. I have seen him wash student toilets. I have seen him polish the church floor. I have seen him stand up for students who were going to be expelled from the university unjustly.”

As part of the sending ceremony, Father Michael Briggs, superior of Maryknoll’s Latin America region, welcomed both men back to Bolivia. “You have listened to people, let their lives touch your lives, you’ve learned to dance with the people, celebrate with the people,” he said. “You are going to join us and give service to God in Latin America.”

Father Ogony, who served in ministries with the elderly and homeless of Cochabamba, Bolivia, is excited about his return. “I feel like I’m going back home,” he said.

Silvana Martínez, a Bolivian who met Fathers Maondo and Ogony during their Overseas Training Program in her country, said she is confident that both priests will “open new missions and encounter new challenges in order to bring the Maryknoll charism.”

In the same spirit of mission that Maryknoll has brought to the world since its inception, some years ago the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers began accepting overseas vocations from mission regions. The ordination of Father Maondo, 30, and Father Ogony, 31, was the second Mass of Holy Orders under this new protocol.

Father John Siyumbu, the first Maryknoll priest from overseas vocations and who was ordained in 2022, traveled from his mission in

Tanzania for the ordination. Fathers Maondo and Ogony will “have the opportunity to fly the Maryknoll flag of mission, to fly the flag of compassion,” he said.

“Joshua is a priest who can make things happen. We need a priest like that,” Father Siyumbu said. “Charles is going to be a listening priest and offer God’s grace to other people. The three of us, and many other young men who are coming from Africa, would like to participate in the mission that we have seen. We stand on the shoulders of legendary missionaries.”

For Father Rodrigo Ulloa-Chavarry, Maryknoll’s vocations director, this moment brings forth the fruit of a long formation process. “[The ordination] is a triumph,” he said. “It’s a sign that the process worked and that God is in the process.”

Reflecting on their upcoming departure for mission, Father Maondo said that the duty of missionaries is to plant “seedlings of faith, seedlings of hope and virtue everywhere” in those places where “people are wondering whether Christ is with them or not.” The world needs healing, he added. “I think that’s what mission is all about.”

“The world is hungering for love,” Father Ogony said, evoking the words of Mother Teresa. “It just needs that drop of love. God needs those pastors who go out of their way to meet the poor.” ✠

Spirit of Mission

HEALING FROM THE SACRED HEART

By Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

As an Italian-American Catholic, I was raised on stories of Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini. The first U.S. citizen to be canonized, she is the patron saint of immigrants. My mother unknowingly implanted in my heart the desire to become a missionary when she read to me from Mother Cabrini's biography *Too Small a World*.

Pope Leo XIII, reluctant to approve Sister Cabrini's desire to form a new worldwide missionary order, confronted the Italian nun with her physical handicap: three religious orders had rejected her because of "weakness of constitution." She calmly but firmly replied, "We can serve our weakness or our purpose; not both."

Mother Cabrini suffered from chronic endocarditis, inflammation of the inner lining of the heart. Yet she outlived her terminal prognosis by three decades. She also founded the worldwide Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Her order opened hospitals, orphanages and schools from New York to Buenos Aires to Beijing, building "an empire of hope." Their inspiration? The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is shown crowned with thorns and pierced with a lance. Isaiah fore-

told the Messiah would be pierced and crushed, for "by his wounds we were healed" (53:5). After his resurrection, Jesus showed the incredulous apostles his wounds, not just to identify himself as the same one crucified three days earlier, but also to heal them of their doubts and fears.

But why are people attracted to the seemingly absurd notion of a crucified savior?

We are all wounded. One way or the other, by the time we reach adulthood everyone bears emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual — if not physical — scars, remnants of our personal battles. It's the price we pay for being human.

After "Lord" and "Christ" the title most ascribed to Jesus by Christians is "Savior," from the Latin *salus*. The term connotes not only salvation but also health.

While the translation of *salus* into "salvation" conveys an otherworldly sense, its Hebrew counterpart in Judaism, best translated as "deliverance," has a tangible, down-to-earth dimension.

In Jesus' day, multitudes of people sought him out primarily as a healer. We know only some of their names and stories. The Gospels tell of 10 lep-



St. Frances Xavier Cabrini is depicted in a stained-glass window at the saint's shrine in the Washington Heights section of New York City. (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

ers on the road, a woman with a hemorrhage, Peter's mother-in-law and the blind man at Siloam pool. Friends tear a hole in the roof to let down their sick friend so Jesus might heal him.

In the Gospels, deliverance includes — but goes beyond — physical healing. Curing lepers included taking away not just their disfigurement, but their social stigma and isolation. The same happened in the healing of the woman with a hemorrhage. The man possessed by a "Legion" of demons was delivered by Jesus' liberating power.

Yet in his hometown of Nazareth, Jesus was unable to heal more than a few people "because of their lack of faith" (Matthew 13:58). This makes his curing of the Roman centurion's servant all the more scandalous. Imagine his countrymen's shock when Jesus declared of this foreign oppressor: "In no one in Israel have I found such faith" (Matthew 8:10).

The connection between faith, salvation and healing is reinforced in the liturgy. Before receiving the Eucharist, we paraphrase the centurion's response by saying, "but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."

The greatest act of healing occurred at the Crucifixion — not for an individual or nation, but for all humanity in every age. Jesus is savior, healer and liberator of the wounded and broken human race for he, too, was wounded and broken. His pierced, bleeding heart draws to him people who feel wounded and beaten — that is, everyone.

Mother Cabrini's insight still rings true. God heals our injuries and frailties by uniting them to Jesus' Sacred Heart.

As Jesus' wounds heal us, so our wounds can help heal others. Once we give them over to Christ, he can transform them into fonts of healing and grace. ✠



A Synodal Church is Missionary

by Lynn F. Monahan

A Maryknoll priest attending the Synod says synodality is an ongoing process

The idea of synodality at the heart of the Synod of Bishops that meets for a second session in October harkens back to the early days of the Church, and at its core synodality reflects the Church's missionary spirit, says Maryknoll Father William LaRousse.

Father LaRousse, who is based in Thailand and serves as the assistant secretary general of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), was tapped to be a member from Asia of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, generally known as the "Synod on Synodality."

Pope Francis and members of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops pray in the Vatican's Paul VI Audience Hall October 6, 2023. Maryknoll Father William LaRousse is one of the Synod participants. (CNS/Lola Gomez/Vatican City)



Father LaRousse and Bishop Anthony Yao Shun, Diocese of Jining, an alumnus of the Maryknoll China Educators and Formators Project. (Courtesy of William LaRousse/Vatican City)

"It's not just a synodal church, it's a synodal missionary church," says Father LaRousse, who participated in the first session of this multi-phase synod in October 2023 and will return to Rome for the second and final session this October.

The word synodality comes from the word synod, which means "walking together" in Greek, and is expressed in the synod theme of "Journeying Together." Father LaRousse says "the word synod goes way back in the Church," and while the word synodal was not used at Vatican II, its principles were there, according to the International Theological Commission.

In announcing this synod in October 2021, Pope Francis invoked Vatican II, emphasizing that communion and mission were the "main lines" enunciated by the Council. He added a third theme,

participation. Father LaRousse explains that each of the three topics of communion, participation and mission were broken down into 15 questions to be discussed by the 364 voting participants at the synod. Pope Francis brings the total participants to 365.

While Pope Francis has called the Synod on Synodality "something truly important for the Church," others have gone further, saying it is the major event in the Church following the Second Vatican Council.

The motive behind this synod, the fifth of Pope Francis' papacy, is to make the Church more missionary and inclusive, which is reflected in the topic of participation and in the integration of lay men and women who for the first time have a vote during deliberations.

Not only are lay people included with the right to vote, Father



Pope Francis converses with a small group of women members of the Synod of Bishops at the assembly's session Oct. 6, 2023 at the Vatican. (CNS/Vatican Media/Vatican City)

LaRousse says, but the whole structure of the meetings is different. The seating arrangement breaks from the traditional hierarchical pattern where bishops would be seated by rank and seniority. Instead of an auditorium or amphitheater setting, members of this synod sit at round tables for 12 people each.

The seating was mixed, he says. "Unlike before, there's a cardinal sitting next to a laywoman or a sister or a priest."

Each member has a computer tablet with which to sign in, vote and request to speak. A screen, microphone and camera are provided for every three people. All can clearly see who is speaking.

The dress code for bishops was relaxed, Father LaRousse adds. They were not expected to wear *fi-letata* — cassocks, sashes and skull

caps — except on the first and last days of the session. Previously, formal dress was required of the bishops for all sessions every day.

The model for sitting at round tables, Father LaRousse, says, came from Asia, where this seating arrangement was used at the FABC General Conference and the continental assembly of the Synod's preparatory phase. He says the synodal process of involving people at the parish level was well-received in Asia, where he has served since being assigned as a seminarian to the Philippines in 1977 for overseas training.

However, says Father LaRousse, the synod is not a decision-making event, but a forum for discussion. While controversial issues — such as women deacons, welcoming LGBTQ Catholics, and Eucharistic hospitality for non-Catholics —



Father LaRousse is pictured with Pope Francis and others at the first session of the Synod on Synodality in October of 2023. (Courtesy of William LaRousse/Vatican City)

came up, they were not discussed at every table.

"The Synod doesn't make decisions," he says. "Ultimately, the Holy Father makes the decisions."

He noted that earlier this year, Pope Francis announced the creation of 10 study groups to discuss topics raised in the first global session of the synod. These groups will not present their work until June of 2025. The topics of these groups will not be part of the discussion in the second session of the synod, which will focus on the question, "how can we be a synodal Church in mission?"

Father LaRousse says the emphasis from the beginning of the synodal process was listening. "Especially reaching out to groups on the periphery to invite them at the local levels," he says. "Who are those groups and parishes and dioceses that will need to be brought

in? And I think that has had a very positive effect."

In an address he gave at the beginning of the synodal journey in 2021, Pope Francis said: "I am certain the Spirit will guide us and give us the grace to move forward together, to listen to one another and to embark on a discernment of the times in which we are living, in solidarity with the struggles and aspirations of all humanity."

As with the Second Vatican Council, what Pope Francis is doing is opening the Church to some new ways of doing things, and in this case, new ways means listening to everyone, Father LaRousse says.

"Everyone who is baptized is an active member of the Church, so therefore involved in the Church's mission," he says. "They play a role in everything in the Church." Synodality can "reactivate" this sense of identity and belonging.

The Maryknoller dismisses speculation that once Pope Francis' papacy ends, synodality will end, too.

"At least in my experience in Asia it has picked up an energy among the churches, of how to do things and how to see things as Church," Father LaRousse says.

"The important thing, I think, is the process," he says. "Synodality is not a goal to be reached. It's a process to be initiated that will take on a life of its own. ... So, this ongoing process will continue. Now, we have a word for it." ✠

Prayer for Vocations

The Road Unfolding

Traveler, there is no road, the road is made by walking. — Antonio Machado

Oh guiding Spirit of light
Enlighten the path we are to follow as
missionary disciples of Christ

Help us to be unafraid, full of confidence
that we are never alone as we walk with
the humble and poor of this earth

Inflame within our hearts the fire of divine
compassion to embrace all the world
through the vocation you give us

Help us always to discover your presence
in creation, in the unfolding universe
and within our hearts leading us to
fullness of life.

Lead us in the missionary call as Maryknoll
priests, brothers, sisters, lay missionaries
and affiliates wherever you wish us to go

Amen. Alleluia!

— Michael Bassano, M.M.



Octavio Duran/U.S.



Challenging Assumptions in Bolivia

by Meinrad Scherer-Emunds

A Maryknoll lay missionary couple's project in Bolivia works for social inclusion for people with disabilities

At 14, Jhon Alex Muñoz is the size of a 7-year-old. He tires easily, has difficulty walking and cannot fully control his arms and hands. No school exists for his special needs in his home town of Entre Ríos in central Bolivia.

Jhon Alex's mother, Doña Benita, is a single parent who ekes out a living by working in her neighbors' fields. Besides Jhon Alex, she is raising her older son, Jairo, who has an intellectual disability. Since she cannot afford a caregiver and does not own a vehicle, she often carries Jhon Alex on her back.

When Filomena Siles and Joseph Loney, a Maryknoll lay missionary couple based in Cochabamba, first met Doña Benita five years ago, she told them that the local doctor had said Jhon Alex would never walk. She wondered if God was punishing her. Carrying her growing son on her back was not sustainable. Even a wheelchair would not help, as the local dirt roads and trails are not passable for a wheelchair.

"We tend to challenge assumptions," Loney says, "so we had Jhon Alex reexamined by our doctors in Cochabamba and learned that there was no physical reason that he could not walk. With our physical therapist and the rest of our team, we started an intensive therapy schedule, including teaching the exercises to his mother to double up on his therapy. We prayed that it was just the lack of muscle development that prevented him from walking."

On a farm near Entre Ríos, Bolivia, educator Eulalia Balderrama, of the Social Justice Foundation run by two Maryknoll lay missionaries, assists 3-year-old Juan Mamani Rodríguez, who has Down syndrome. (Meinrad Scherer-Emunds/Bolivia)

After six months, Jhon Alex was able to stand and walk 20 feet on his own. Today he is still developing his motor skills, but “now he smiles as he walks, and his mother has regained her faith that a better tomorrow can be achieved,” Loney says.

During a recent visit to the Muñoz home, Doña Benita proudly showed off a newly rebuilt part of the house that Siles and Loney’s nonprofit had helped make possible. While Willy García, a nurse, worked with Jhon Alex, Loney reviewed Jairo’s homeschool notebooks and Siles discussed with Doña Benita a plan to earn more income.

Jhon Alex and Jairo are just two of the 770 people — 90 adults, 180 children and youth and 500 older



Maryknoll Lay Missioners Joe Loney (third from left) and Filo Siles (second from right) pose with Social Justice Foundation staff at the Maryknoll center. (Adam Mitchell/Bolivia)



During a home visit in Entre Ríos, Willy García, a nurse with the Social Justice Foundation, teaches muscle strengthening exercises to Yedy Olivera. (Meinrad Scherer-Emunds/Bolivia)

adults — who are benefitting from the services of the Social Justice Foundation. The Cochabamba-based nonprofit was started in 2016 by Loney and Siles as a ministry of Maryknoll Lay Missioners.

“At the Social Justice Foundation, our vision is that people with disabilities will enjoy a life that is full and complete and that allows them to reach their maximum human potential,” Loney says.

“Our program is based on the community-based rehabilitation strategy,” Siles adds. “We focus on four components: health, education, social inclusion and economic sustenance.”

The Social Justice Foundation has its offices on the campus of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers center in Cochabamba. Besides Loney and Siles, it employs nine people — a physical therapist, educators, community organizers, a nurse, a psychologist and support staff. Some are based in Cochabamba and others in the two rural communities where the organization works: Tacopaya, high up in the Andes, three and a half hours to the west, and Entre Ríos, in the tropics, about six hours to the east.

Tacopaya is a remote, spread-out municipality of almost 100 Quechua indigenous villages on



Siles shares a tender moment with Jhon Alex Muñoz as his mother, Doña Benita, looks on. Thanks to physical therapy, Jhon Alex can now walk. (Meinrad Scherer-Emunds/Bolivia)

the slopes of the Andes — some at altitudes exceeding 13,000 feet. Getting there requires navigating steep dirt and gravel roads that are often washed out and impassable during the rainy season.

While the Tacopaya area has been losing population as younger people move to Cochabamba or other cities, the population of Entre Ríos is growing fast and includes a large influx of poor immigrants. These tropical lowlands are characterized by rain, lush vegetation and agriculture.

In both regions, the team collaborates with people with disabilities and their families and neighbors, as well as with municipal authorities. Team members go to the schools to help teachers make their classrooms more inclusive and in-

tegrate students with disabilities. They supplement classroom learning by visiting students' homes.

The team also consults with hospitals and clinics. As a result of their efforts, for example, the municipal government of Entre Ríos recently added new integral health assessments for children entering kindergarten.

Early detection helps address the needs of children with disabilities at an earlier age, giving them more opportunities for intervention and rehabilitation. In workshops with parents, the nonprofit promotes prenatal and infant care, which can greatly reduce the prevalence of disabilities.

The Social Justice Foundation also organizes support groups for the elderly. Meetings include med-

ical check-ups, physical therapy sessions, eye exams and health information for aging adults. Participants are provided good nutrition as well as eyeglasses, mobility aids and access to vital social services. Gatherings include traditional Andean music and dancing.

This year the program was expanded to offer home repairs and greenhouses to grow fresh vegetables. All activities are oriented to helping older adults remain independent, maintaining their dignity.

Loney, Siles and their staff also support people with disabilities and their families with economic sustenance initiatives. Thanks to their efforts, a visually impaired young father in Tacopaya now keeps beehives and sells honey. In Entre Ríos, a deaf young man has set up a car and motorcycle washing business.

One of the nonprofit's largest livelihood initiatives was spearheading a collaborative project to restore a reliable water supply to a remote Andean community in mountainous Tacopaya.

Every year, for Bolivia's National Day of the Person with Disabilities on Oct. 15, the Social Justice Foundation organizes a celebration in Entre Ríos with games, food, traditional dances and other activities. Loney explains that the event conveys a message: "Despite all the hardships people with disabilities face in their daily lives, life is worth living."

The celebration keeps growing each year to involve not just people with disabilities and their families but also the local school,

government and community leaders. "People with disabilities are worthy of having a public platform," Loney says. "They're worthy of having a place where others can see and celebrate with them, and a public event like this helps to promote their social inclusion and gives them hope."

The event leads to new connections as more people approach the team about a son, daughter, other relative or neighbor who has a disability and would benefit from the organization's services.

"Our first years, the celebrations were pretty small and the families were quite shy. The parents were somewhat embarrassed to bring their children," Siles recalls. "But each year, participation has grown and become more enthusiastic. At our most recent one, I noticed a big change, especially with the boys in the traditional dancing. It was great to see the happiness on their faces."

"I couldn't have imagined the evolution of this ministry when we started eight years ago with pretty much nothing," Loney says. "We now serve many people, and I hope that God allows us to serve many more." ✠

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

In Memoriam

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

Sister Mary Annel

Sister Sophia Aihara

Father Richard A. Aylward

Father Paul D. Belliveau

Father Francis H. Beninati

Sister Ann Carol Brielmaier

Brother Eugene E. Casper

Father John A. Cioppa

Sister Anne Correale

Father Robert F. Crawford

Father Edward O. Custer

Father William J. Donnelly

Sister Georgina Gamarra

Father Herbert T. Gappa

Sister Carol Hassey

Sister Virgeen Healey

Sister Rosemary Healy

Sister Mary Louise Hideko Higa

Sister Kathleen Higgins

Sister Jeanne Houlihan

Sister Ann Teresa Kamachi

Sister Mary Grace Krieger

Brother Anthony Lopez

Sister Marie Lynch

Father William E. McCarthy

Father Bryce T. Nishimura

Father Richard E. Paulissen

Sister Isabel Rabbon

Sister Mary Reese

Sister Patricia Ring

Sister Dolores Ritter

Father Steven S. Scherrer

Sister Margaret Sehlstedt

Brother DePorres Stilp

Father Kenneth J. Sullivan

Brother Frank TenHoopen

Sister Nancy Thomas

Sister Geraldine Wieczerszak

Father Gerald M. Wickenhauser

Sister Marya Zaborowski



The Trauma of Memory

By Linda Donovan, M.M.

A Maryknoll sister honors the pastoral workers who risked their lives during Chile's military dictatorship

As I took my seat on line 1 of the metro in Santiago, Chile, where I serve in mission, my mind wandered through the myriad activities of the past year. Music, poetry and theatre events commemorated the anniversary of a very sad time in Chile's history. Last year marked 50 years since a violent military coup led by Augusto Pinochet installed a dictatorship responsible for the deaths and disappearances of so many people — 1,159 of whom remain missing to this day.

When I arrived as a newly professed Maryknoll sister eight years after the takeover, Chile's reality was one of fear, oppression and growing poverty. Living in the *poblaciones* (shantytowns) among Chileans most affected, I learned who these wonderful people were.

The Maryknoll sisters arrived in Chile in 1950, and in only a couple of decades we spread out across cities and rural areas from north to south. We served in education, research and investigation, health care, pastoral ministry, youth centers, mental health and work with women. We walked with the people every day in difficult situations that put them — and us — at risk.

That was why I was on the metro. I was on my way to a ceremony at the Museum of Memory and Human Rights for an event to honor the religious, clergy and dedicated laypeople who had offered their lives to bring about a new and different Chile — among them, Maryknoll missionaries.

(Left, right) Former Maryknoll Lay Missioner Judy Ress and Maryknoll Sister Linda Donovan visit the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago, Chile. During Augusto Pinochet's 17-year military dictatorship, some 40,000 people suffered human rights violations and more than 3,000 were executed or disappeared. (Deirdre Cornell/Chile)



Left: Maryknoll Father Thomas Henehan founded the Center for Pastoral Reflection for lay leaders. His house was raided four times by police. In 1986, the missionary was arrested and his permanent residency revoked. (Eric Wheeler/Chile)



Middle, right: Maryknoll Sister Linda Donovan, shown with children in 1992 and with youth in 1987, served in Santiago's shantytowns leading programs and counseling at a multiservice drop-in center for young people. (Shirley King/Chile)



Serving in poor places, Maryknollers were connected to leaders who were lifting their communities out of poverty — and who became targets of the regime.

Many of us were called upon at some moment to take a stand. As thousands of people were detained and tortured as political prisoners, it was impossible not to. "What would Jesus do?" was a question we held as a mantra to give ourselves courage.

Maryknoll Sister Margaret Lipsio helped save the lives of a young couple hunted by Chile's infamous secret police. She was forced to leave the country in 1975.

During the dictatorship, Chile's Church became a true refuge for those undergoing persecution. We knew ourselves to be part of an extended family. We took care of each other. So much so, the government began to consider the Church a

threat and those associated with it as dangerous.

The Jewish community, the Lutheran Church and other Christian denominations joined with the Archdiocese of Santiago to form the Committee for Peace. Its mission was to document what was happening and to support individuals in life-threatening situations. The committee evolved into the archdiocesan Vicariate of Solidarity, an organization offering protection to the persecuted. It sent a message: "We are here and you can count on us."

I walked along the street toward the museum. I remembered faces: the faces of those we served; our neighbors and friends; people in the groups we worked with; people with whom we had *onces* — the Chilean tea break around 6 p.m.; the faces of people we loved and to whom we gave ourselves daily.

The gathering at the museum was entitled "A Time to Give Thanks." The invitation read:

"It is time to give thanks to those valiant men and women who contributed in saving the persecuted from prison and certain death. Those who felt the call to denounce the atrocities against human rights, ending up at times victims themselves of the same persecution."

I walked down the long entranceway to the museum, which is dedicated to preserving the memory of the Chilean people who suffered under Pinochet's dictatorship. On the outside walls were pictures of friends who were active during those years and who, as the invitation read, ended up as "victims themselves."

In 1981, the Maryknoll Sisters received the Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Award. The award honors Chilean dissident Orlando Letelier

and his colleague Ronni Moffitt, who were killed in Washington, D.C., in 1976 by a car bomb planted by Pinochet's regime.

Entering the auditorium, I recognized many faces in the large crowd and heard exclamations as people "found" each other after so much time. There was a feeling of coming back, of coming home. We had lived through something that marked us, formed us and shaped our lives.

The highlight of the service, which included prayer, music, reflections and dance, was the reading of a list of names of religious, clergy and laypeople being thanked for their lives and commitment.

As I listened to one name after another, I thought of all the missionaries I have worked alongside. Every one of them came to the poor areas of Chile and stayed because of their love for the people. I could almost hear them say, "I have received so



The Chile regional group of the Maryknoll Sisters is pictured at a gathering in October of 1988. Sister Donovan is shown in the back row at far right. (Maryknoll Mission Archives/Chile)

much more than I ever hoped to give."

Chile is different today from what it was in 1950 when the Maryknoll Sisters arrived, in 1973 at the time of the military coup, or in 1990 when Pinochet's dictatorship came to an end. The return to democracy brought initiatives for housing, education and access to opportunities previously out of reach.

Yet, economically the country is on a constant roller coaster ride, and the chasm between the rich and the majority has deepened. Drug use has grown disturbingly and the number of gangs associated with narcotics has skyrocketed. Like many other countries, Chile also faces challenges in receiving

large numbers of migrants, as well as recognizable changes in climate.

And we can never forget that there are still people who were disappeared and their whereabouts never known. Time has moved on but their loss remains like an open wound. Its pain is echoed in the cry, "Donde están?" ("Where are they?")

Yes, Chile has changed. We have changed as well. The Maryknoll sisters who gave their lives in mission in Chile are no longer physically here. But their gift lives on. And to the best of my ability, I will be here to represent them. Our mission in Chile continues as long as we "make God's love visible" in a context that still — so very much — needs that love. ✕

Maryknoll Sister Linda Donovan, a musician, singer and counselor, served in youth ministry and social work. She later worked for the Chilean Conference of Religious in a program for formation directors.

FOR INFORMATION ON BECOMING A MARYKNOLL SISTER, Contact Sister Sia Nyasari Temu, M.M. U.S.: 914-309-1842 or Kenya: +254 734 749 634 Email: vocation@mksisters.org maryknollsisters.org

2024 STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

Pilgrims of Hope

Fathers and Brothers
MARYKNOLL

**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: For the Jubilee next year Pope Francis has invited us to become "pilgrims of hope." Share a personal story about a time when hope played an important role in your life. Describe the situation, how you felt, and what gave you hope during that time. Explain how this experience impacted you and what you learned about the importance of hope.

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.

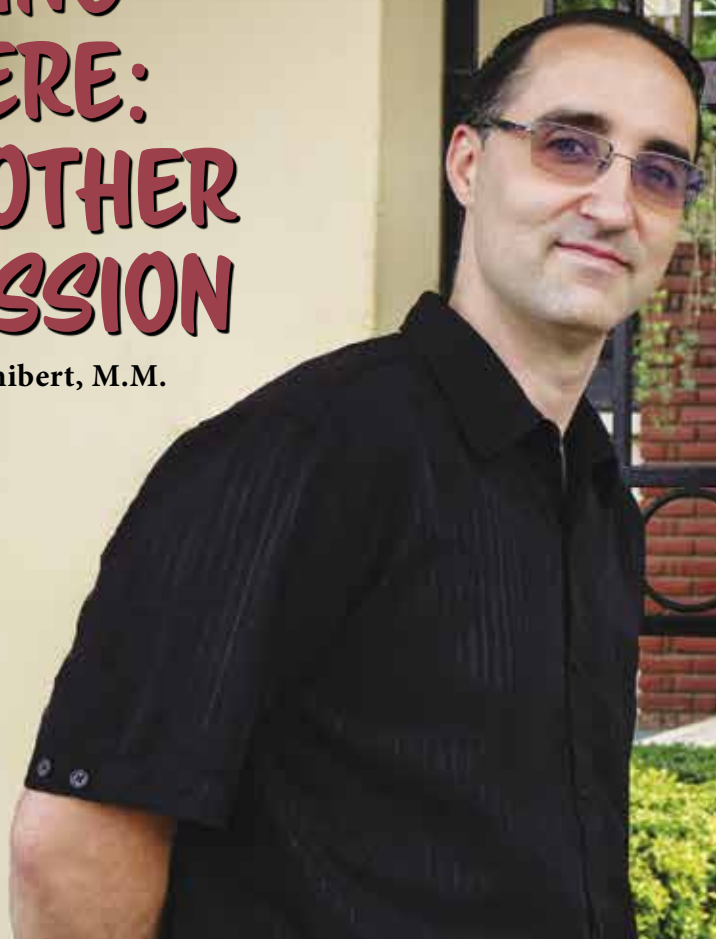
ELIGIBILITY: Students in grades 6–8 (Division I) and grades 9–12 (Division II) who are currently enrolled in a Catholic school, religious education program, or youth ministry program are eligible. See MaryknollSociety.org/Essay for official rules.

DEADLINE: Entries must be submitted online or postmarked by MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024. First-place essays will appear in the Summer 2025 *Maryknoll* magazine. All winning entries will be published online at MaryknollSociety.org/Winners by May 1, 2025.

MAIL TO: 2023 Student Essay Contest, Division _____, P.O. Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0302
FOR MORE INFORMATION: Call 1-914-570-4118 or email Walter Hidalgo at whidalgo@maryknoll.org.
For more educational and catechetical resources, please visit: <https://discoveryourneighbor.org/>

BEING THERE: A BROTHER IN MISSION

By Ryan Thibert, M.M.



Maryknoll Brother Ryan Thibert greets visitors outside the Salomon Klein Orphanage in Cochabamba, Bolivia, where he serves in two local ministries. (Adam Mitchell/Bolivia)

Ryan Thibert entered the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers formation program at age 29. Born in Chatham, Ontario, Canada, he has a twin brother and an older sister. His parents, Rox-Ann and Larry, and his parish, All Saints in Strathroy, Ontario, fostered his vocation. After taking his perpetual oath on May 31, 2019, he was assigned to Bolivia. Now 42, he lives at the Maryknoll center and residence in Cochabamba and serves in two local ministries.

One day, I was serving at the Salomon Klein Orphanage for neglected, abused and orphaned children from newborn to 6 years

old. Child protective services came with the police, bringing a child around 2 or 3 years old. He was malnourished and in raggedy clothes.

The child had not been looked after for some time.

The first thing I did was to feed him, and he couldn't eat fast enough. There was such a need for nourishment, for that soup. It was a tender moment for me, being with this child in his great moment of need. That's part of my vocation, just being there. Being a brother and being present.

As a brother, my job is to accompany the children in their day-to-

day life. I help them along. I ask myself, what are the needs of each individual child?

In my ministry I use art therapy. I allow the children to use crayons and colored pencils, and we look at themes such as family, or how they see themselves. It gives them a voice to express any built-up trauma.

I also serve at Hogar San José, a home for 50 elderly residents run by the Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly.



Brother Thibert and staff care for children from newborn to age 6 at the orphanage. (Courtesy of Ryan Thibert/Bolivia)

This ministry has a sense of abandonment, of loneliness. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the families didn't visit often. During that time, 15 of our residents died.

I assist the men, who have various needs. Some are in wheelchairs, and some are blind. Most have health-related issues. I help them with physiotherapy, helping them get around and get moving.

A lot of it is engagement, sitting down and talking with them one-on-one. "What is your life like at this moment? What are you going through?" Listening to them, hearing their stories.

There's a phrase, "you are walking on holy ground." Some of the men come from very difficult situations. Their lives are to be cherished. People need to feel that someone listens to them, that they're being heard. Ministry is 100 percent relationships, but 90 percent is listening and maybe 10 percent is talking.

Ever since I was very young, I have

liked to be in relationship with people. ... We all need to be listened to.

I was inspired by the example of Brother André Bessette (Saint André of Montreal). He lived a humble life as a Holy Cross brother, but his ability to listen to people made him a saint.

There's a lot of sadness, loneliness and despair in the world. How can we go into those moments and see what people need? Look around – these are all our brothers and sisters!

I first came to Bolivia as a candidate, as part of my formation to become a Maryknoll brother. My Overseas Training Program here in Cochabamba had a huge impact on me, especially living with my host parents Elba and Fice Mustafa. I spent time in different ministries, such as a home for men with medical conditions including HIV/AIDS run by the Missionaries of Charity.

Becoming a missionary means being willing to change and adapt and learn. I am very touched and moved by Bolivian culture. People are family oriented and engaging with one another.

After my three years of overseas training, I was assigned to Chicago for a final year of academics and reintegration before taking my permanent oath. Part of my classes was the task of writing up my own story.

As I was writing and praying and reflecting, I realized I was no longer the same person. Going into overseas mission changes you. It changes your heart. You see new things. Your perspectives change. I had a deeper sense of what my vocation is, what God was calling me to do. I wanted to be a brother for the rest of my life.



Brother Thibert feeds an elderly resident at Hogar San José. (Courtesy of Ryan Thibert/Bolivia)

Here in Cochabamba, we Maryknollers are a community of brothers in mission. We all have a strong vocation, a love of our faith — and we share that with one another. We can rely on one another.

My prayer life keeps me rooted. Without it I would be lost. A deep prayer life gives me focus. I go back to the spring that gives me life-giving water. God calls me day after day to renew that relationship and to be impactful with people I interact with.

The children at the orphanage don't understand what it means to have constant love from a parent or a sister or brother. As a re-

ligious brother I am a brother to all, no matter how old or young they may be.

Caring for the elderly men at the home also helps me to understand the core of my vocation as a brother, to minister to the welfare of the human individual.

Each and every person I minister to, their life matters. ✠



**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

BRIDGES TO HEALING INTERNATIONAL

By Erin Rickwa



Immaculate Heart Sister of Africa Margaret John Masalu, founder of St. Justin's Centre, is shown with one of the children the center serves. (All photos courtesy of Erin Rickwa/Tanzania)

Maryknoll affiliate expands a project helping high-risk children to Tanzania

As a result of cerebral palsy, 8-year-old Gabriela could only get around by dragging herself across the ground. After working with a physical therapist over the last couple of months, Gabriela is up and walking for the first time in her life. Her smile as she moves independently is so beautiful!

Gabriela is cared for at St. Justin's Centre in Musoma, Tanzania, which recently partnered with our non-profit organization, Bridges to Healing International. We provide grants for health care for sick and disabled children who are orphaned or at high risk of abandonment.

Bridges to Healing, which we started in Bolivia, came to Tanzania in 2023. Maryknoll has a long history of working in the East African nation, both with vulnerable children and in health care. Maryknoll Sister Janet Srebalus, who has spent decades in Tanzania, introduced me to partners for our new projects.

We work with the Immaculate Heart Sisters of Africa, an order of Tanzanian religious established by Maryknoll Father Gerald Grondin and solidified through the efforts of Maryknoll sisters including Sister Rose Miriam Dagg. Several Maryknoll lay missionaries have served with these sisters. As a Maryknoll affiliate, I joined this rich legacy.

In Musoma, a city on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria, the Immaculate Heart Sisters run St. Justin's Centre for 115 disabled children. Even with very limited resources,

the sisters have created a warm and caring environment. They also run Jipe Moyo, a shelter for girls fleeing sexual violence and female genital mutilation. At both places, Bridges to Healing provides funds for a nurse. Our local physical therapist also goes out to rural areas to teach training exercises to families with disabled children.

On the southern end of Lake Victoria in Mwanza, Tanzania's second-largest city, we work with a project named Chanua Group. Many of the 60 children it supports were orphaned due to HIV/AIDS. Until recently, the group, whose name means "blossom" in Swahili, was run by Maryknoll Sister Felista Wanzagi. Two local Tanzanian Maryknoll affiliates now lead the project. One of them, Costancia Mbogoma, is a member of the Maryknoll Affiliate Board.

The idea of Bridges to Healing started in 1995 while I was serving as a Salesian lay missionary in a government-run orphanage for 100 children in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The children there received little or no medical care. Some children were so traumatized they didn't speak, and the babies rocked back and forth to comfort themselves.

Upon returning from Bolivia, I studied for a master's degree in social work and designed a program for providing effective health care to children such as these in institutional settings. I wanted to create a "bridge" to local medical resources.



Left: A boy with sickle cell anemia is given physical therapy at St. Justin's Centre. Bridges to Healing International pays for a local physical therapist to work there.



Middle: Erin Rickwa (left) talks with Maryknoll Sister Janet Srebalus and Sister Masalu. Right: Rickwa poses with Immaculate Heart Sister of Africa Regina Linda John.



I met my husband, Spencer, while volunteering in Bolivia, and we married in 1998. As a physician, Spencer brings his medical expertise to our work. Together we joined the Maryknoll Affiliates chapter in San Diego, California, in 2001. Through the chapter, I met Maryknoll Sister Ramona Oppenheim, who became a friend and inspiration. Bridges to Healing International was incorporated in 2010. The members of the current board of directors of Bridges to Healing International are all Maryknoll affiliates.

I was drawn to the Maryknoll idea of going out to listen and observe, spending time to hear people's needs. That's what leads the service. We respect local cultural norms and keep our focus on the universal right

of all children to basic medical care.

There is a deep wound in children when it is not possible for them to be with their biological parents. We partner only with groups that make every effort to reunite the children safely with family members.

Bridges to Healing offers three main types of assistance. First, we enable orphanages, residential schools and shelters to hire local, full-time staff nurses. Secondly, we pay for screening labs for all the children, as well as any medications and treatments needed. Thirdly, we provide funding for individual children who need surgeries, therapies, imaging studies or other treatments.

Building relationships has been critically important in establishing Bridges to Healing. I have been

very fortunate to work with wise Bolivians and Tanzanians who helped me navigate some tough situations. I am in awe of health-care workers in the Global South who do incredibly brave work, often with little or no pay.

In partnering with homes run by religious, I work with the sisters to find local support. I assist them with grant reports and collecting data on the diseases the children suffer. This helps to develop appropriate care models, and demonstrates to the larger community and their governments the needs of these populations.

Bridges to Healing focuses on the children's daily lives. Can they go to school? Do they have trouble sleeping because of nightmares, head-

aches, stomachaches or infected scabies? If they have families, is there a safe path for them to return home?

It's important not to give up hope! I have witnessed many positive, real changes over the 30 years I've been doing this work. Yes, so much more needs to be done and there are more children to reach, but progress is possible. ✠

Erin Rickwa is founder and executive director of Bridges for Healing International.



FOR INFORMATION ON BECOMING A MARYKNOLL AFFILIATE,

Contact Robert Short
affiliatebshort@gmail.com
maryknollaffiliates.org



'The Sun Is Burning Up the Forest'

By Alejandro Marina, M.M.

Father Enrique Bustamante (far right) celebrates faith and culture with religious sisters and Trinitarian children in the Bolivian Amazon. (Courtesy of Enrique Bustamante/Bolivia)

Father Enrique Bustamante, a companion on our missionary journey in the Amazon, called me a year ago with distressing news: "The sun is burning up the forest."

The missionary priest continued, "My avocado plant was healthy and green. A couple of hours of intense sunshine has burned it up. The forests are burning everywhere here. People are very worried."

I struggled to make out my friend's words as he explained through tears, "Trees are being cut down and the jungle is burning. That is why the skies are full of smoke throughout Bolivia, and the sun is more intense."

I met Father Bustamante while participating in a course called "Mission-

ary Transformation of the Church" held at the Maryknoll Mission Center in Latin America. He asked us to give formation to the laity of his parish of St. Pius X in Cochabamba.

Maryknoll Father Paul Masson served for years in that parish, forming Small Christian Communities (also known as base ecclesial communities). Many Maryknoll priest and brother candidates have served there during their Overseas Training Program.

Three years ago, Father Bustamante, who belongs to the Archdiocese of Cochabamba, assumed the leadership of a parish in the Amazon region. The Virgen del Rosario Parish is located in Eterazama, in

the Chapare Vicariate, an area of great pastoral need. He soon invited Maryknoll to join his work.

The invitation was a blessing. It renewed our commitment to the Amazon, coming not long after the Pan-Amazonian Synod convened by Pope Francis.

"I dream of an Amazon that fights for the rights of the poorest, of the native peoples, of the least, where their voice is heard and their dignity is promoted," says the pope in *Querida Amazonia*.

The Amazon occupies 65% of Bolivia's territory and covers nine countries. These People of God, as the pope calls them, are threatened by indiscriminate logging and the burning of the rainforests for the extension of crops and the planting of coca leaf.

We collaborate closely with Father Bustamante in TIPNIS, the Spanish acronym for the Isiboro Sécure Indigenous Territory and National Park. The Pastoral Project of the Chapare Vicariate covers the parishes Villa Tunari, Chipiriri, San Gabriel, Eterazama and Santísima Trinidad. One of the project's priorities is the care of creation, along with the pope's call to build a church with an Indigenous face in the Amazon.

Our involvement includes both pastoral care and reforestation in the Amazon. We have opened tree nurseries for the breeding of native species of timber, ornamental and fruit trees. Maryknoll Seminarian Barrack Odeka has helped with this project in TIPNIS and also at our center in Cochabamba.

Father Bustamante is a tireless missionary. He does not shy away

from promoting the cultivation of trees and raising awareness in the communities about changing habits that destroy the territory's biodiversity. His message that day, relayed though heartbreak and tears that continue to flow, comes from a feeling of helplessness. Seeing that climate change is a reality, he also realizes that, to a large extent, it is due to our irresponsibility.

"I think of the human beings who live in the midst of these forests that continue to ignite," says Father Bustamante. "As a heritage of humanity, we have to look for ways to take care of the Amazon, value it and share it."

What would those trees tell us about "the sun burning up the forest"? What would they demand from us? What would they say about our missionary commitment?

Perhaps, since "the sun is burning up the forest," it is time for the Spirit to ignite us with the fire and passion to care for our common home. The Gospel says, "Go into all the world, preach the Good News to all creation." (Mark 16:15)

Father Bustamante encourages us to be supportive and to reforest the jungle so that the children of the Amazon can be better fed. "Let's plant fruit trees that will feed many generations," he says. "We will help children live in dignity, so that they do not lose the richness that the Spirit of God has sown in their hearts, in their communities and in their heritage." ✠

Father Alejandro Marina is local superior of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Celebrating a Life of Faith and Mission

By Giovana Soria

Missionary disciples find inspiration in the life of a Maryknoll priest in Houston, Texas

More than three decades ago, Arturo and Esperanza Monterrubio left their homeland of Mexico to start a new life in the United States.

Esperanza had a degree in dentistry, and Arturo planned to obtain a master's degree in chemical engineering. They arrived in Kingsville, Texas with their children Daniela, Omar and Fátima.

The family's first refuge was the Church. The community of St. Martin of Tours Church and the Catholic Newman Center of Texas A&M University welcomed them warmly. They still remember receiving a box full of food for their first Thanksgiving Day celebration in their new home.

These welcoming gestures strengthened Arturo and Esperanza's faith. They began to serve as catechists, lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and sponsors for matrimonial preparation.

The couple listened to Maryknoll Father Rafael Dávila for the first time in 1991 when they attended a talk he gave in Houston. "Father inspired us to participate in our community and made us feel like active, living members of the Church," Esperanza says. "He invited me to participate in the vocations committee in the Galveston-Houston Diocese. Holding a foster baby in my arms, I was the only lay woman attending these meetings. I felt welcomed."

A missionary thread has been woven in the Monterrubios' path since childhood. Arturo remembers hearing stories about his uncle, a Marist missionary in Nigeria. Esperanza was inspired by visits with her uncles to the seminary of the Missionaries of Guadalupe in Mexico, founded by the Maryknoll missionary Monsignor Alonso Manuel Escalante.

Getting involved with the Church in the U.S. made the Monterrubios feel that God was calling them to mission and in particular, the permanent diaconate for Arturo. "This call came about after many prayers for vocations that we had committed to daily as a family," he says.

The Monterrubios became foster parents for 10 babies through Catholic Charities. They would adopt three siblings, Theresa, Joseph and Phillip. "Our family not only grew in number, but also in challenges and joys," Esperanza says. "Our domestic church grew stronger after welcoming the little ones who taught us to share, to be compassionate and to love in a different way."

While working at a petrochemical company in Houston, Arturo took classes to become a permanent deacon. During his formation, undertaken with his wife at St. Mary's Seminary, Father Dávila was their professor and spiritual director.



Arturo and Esperanza Monterrubio and Maryknoll Father Rafael Dávila attend the national convention of the Catholic Christian Family Movement in Denver, Colorado, in 2023. (All photos courtesy of Arturo and Esperanza Monterrubio/U.S.)

Ordained in 1958, Father Dávila served in mission in Venezuela and the United States and on the Maryknoll Society's General Council. He regards Arturo and Esperanza as missionary disciples with a distinctive gift for pastoral ministry with families.

"In the class for the diaconate, participants wrote an essay about an aspect of interest, and both of them chose topics related to family and vocations," he recalls.

"We formed an archdiocesan team called Provomiresa (Promotion of Religious Missionary and Priestly Vocations) that created a vocational discernment retreat called 'Come and See,'" says the missionary. "This retreat continues today, thanks to the planting of that first seed."

For the Monterrubios, taking classes with Father Dávila as a couple was a great blessing. "His teachings have helped our journey of faith," Arturo says. After Arturo's ordination in 2003, they continued studying for master's degrees in theological studies.

After 24 years, Arturo quit his chemical engineering career; he felt called to work full-time for the Church. He served as deacon and pastoral associate at their parish, St. Jerome Church in Houston, where Esperanza was director of religious education. Although this decision meant a salary reduction, it allowed the couple to work together in sacramental preparation and family life ministry.

Arturo also served as director for the Office of Family Life for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. In this position he worked closely with his mentor, Father Dávila, to support a Spanish language branch



of the Christian Family Movement, called *Movimiento Familiar Cristiano Católico*, which reached more than 7,000 families registered in the United States, most of them in the Houston area.

Father Dávila and the Monterrubios have worked even more closely during the past six years, since Arturo and Esperanza became mission education promoters for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. "Father Dávila has been our guide, mentor and a model of missionary discipleship," Esperanza says. "We have admired his discipline, his organization, his wisdom and humility."

The Monterrubios meet regularly with Father Dávila, 93, to share pastoral experiences and to plan Lenten mission and formation programs.

This year, Arturo and Esperanza celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary with their six children, sons- and daughter-in-law and 12 grandchildren. Family and mission are fundamental pillars of their lives.

"We are full of gratitude for the opportunity to be part of the community of Maryknoll missionary disciples," Esperanza says. "Our mission is to continue accompanying, forming and sharing God's love with God's people." ✠

Above: The Monterrubios gather for Christmas Mass at Saint Paul the Apostle Church. Below: At a national conference on Hispanic ministry with Deacon Eddy Valbuena and Alejandro Aguilera-Titus.



**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

ORBIS BOOKS

Spotlight

Preview by Robert Ellsberg

In her new work, *Vessels of Love*, Joyce Rupp, one of the most popular spiritual guides of our time, offers a collection of prayers and poems addressed to readers "in the later years of life."

Each of them is an invitation to greater faith, hope, and most of all love.

As she writes in her introduction:

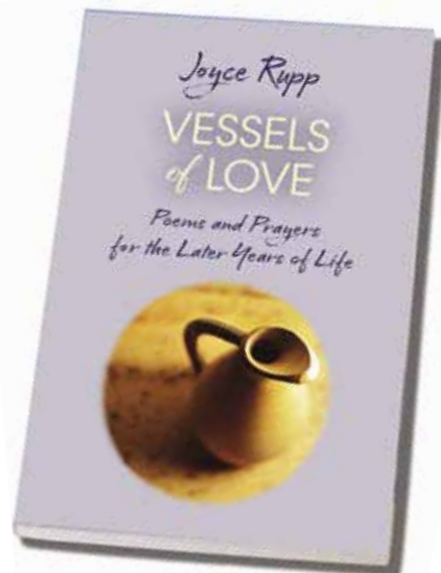
"Have you ever thought of yourself as a 'vessel of love'? This image speaks to what I envision for the elderhood years ... During this lifetime, whether we've been aware or not, a Presence of immeasurable love has been flowing through [our lives], quietly filling the vessel of our inner being. Like vats of matured wine, our ripened goodness has readied itself to move outward. . . Now is the efficacious time to tend 'our tiny vessel' so this graced goodness strengthens in us and benefits the life of those we encounter."

Here, as a sample, is the first prayer in the book:

Accepting the Life I Now Have

We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us.

~ Joseph Campbell



Abiding Companion, what a gift you are as I participate in the continual movement of aging in my final years of life. With your graced assistance I am ready to profess my trust in your loving guidance and to accept being in this stage of elderhood.

I renew my resolve to leave behind aspects of life that no longer fit for me, to divest myself of them in order to gain inner freedom and peace.

I value and am grateful for the experiences that brought insight, meaning and pleasure, for how they led to unimagined, personal growth.

I savor the presence and pleasure of people and events that have been part of my journey and influenced the person I have become.

I release strong clutching to the past of any leftover, negative attitudes that prevent me from entering calmly into my current situation.

I rejoice at the knowledge, insights, and wisdom that have deepened and expanded my internal and external approach to living.

I continue to resolve inner conflicts, to recognize what keeps peace away, and to accept with a firm resolve what is unchangeable.

I forego hanging onto old dreams no longer achievable due to physical limitations, because clinging to them impedes my contentment.

I embrace graced opportunities for continuing to mature in ways that bring out the best in myself and contribute to the benefit of others.

I acquiesce to what is a part of my aging process, joining countless oth-

ers who experience similar effects of constant adjustment in their lives.

I nurture a spirit of wonder at the often overlooked beauty of nature and the enduring kindness residing in the human spirit.

I trust that my remaining years will contain treasures of pleasure and satisfaction if I graciously acknowledge and receive these gifts.

I see myself as a person filled with light and goodness, resplendent with ever fuller transparency and divine splendor.

Today I remind myself that you, Treasure of My Soul, dwell within me, an essence of pure goodness. When moments of hesitancy or a reluctance to change stirs within me, gather me to your heart where I can find strength to restore my confidence and the ability to receive what awaits to revive my joy. ✧

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

Please send:

_____ copies of #592-6 *Vessels of Love*@ \$15.00 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 M0424 for FREE standard shipping!



M0424

World Watch

Water Rights Victory in Peru

By Thomas Gould

A Maryknoll-supported organization in the southern Andes of Peru has won a landmark victory in a case for water rights.

Maryknoll Sister Patricia Ryan founded Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente (Human Rights and Environment) to elevate voices of Indigenous peoples in the area who are easily exploited by extractive industries and often marginalized in the course of development.

In 2017, DHUMA — the group's acronym in Spanish — raised concerns over the contamination of the water supply used by the Aymara and Quechua Indigenous people living on the high plateau near Lake Titicaca in southern Peru. A study by the regional health authority in the city of Puno of the well water used for human consumption found heavy metals such as arsenic and mercury from nearby legal and illegal gold mines, as well as pollution from untreated sewer water from more than 20 cities and towns.

Working with the local community, DHUMA sued the government agencies responsible for allowing the pollution to continue for decades. Nearly seven years of litigation later, the courts handed down a favorable verdict in September 2023. The judge ordered the government agencies to end wastewater discharge, begin construc-

tion of treatment plants for sewage and hospital waste, and install water and sewer service in the cities of Juliaca, Coata and three neighboring districts. That decision was affirmed on appeal in March of 2024, and by May, the National Water Authority made the first round of water monitoring tests pursuant to the court order.

"This is the first judicial case with a sentence that orders a stop to the dumping of solid waste and wastewater into a river and lake," said lawyer Juan Carlos Ruiz of the non-profit Instituto de Defensa Legal (Legal Defense Institute) in Lima, which worked with DHUMA on the case. "That has never been achieved before. It opens a way at the national level to defend water sources."

DHUMA's work highlights the urgency for justice for Indigenous peoples overlooked by their governments. The drawn-out legal battle is evidence of their uphill struggle. At the same time, the court decision is a victory in a legal area where good news is often hard to come by.

For many environmental rights activists the news is usually tragic. In a decade of reporting, the nonprofit Global Witness in the United Kingdom has documented nearly 2,000 assassinations of environmental defenders since



Attorney José Bayardo and Maryknoll Sister Patricia Ryan work for the organization DHUMA, which has won a landmark victory for water rights. (Susan Gunn/Peru)

2012. From their latest report, the year 2022 saw 177 environmental activists murdered, about one every other day. Nearly nine out of 10 of these murders occurred in Latin America, home to the Amazon Rainforest.

The work of DHUMA is far from over. "Implementing the measures mandated by the court ruling will be a monumental challenge," explains environmental lawyer José Bayardo. "Infrastructure projects and specific policies are required to address both human health

and environmental restoration. However, we are confident that the struggle of these communities for human dignity will be tireless and full of hope."

The court decision shows what strategic legal and nonviolent action can achieve when communities and community organizations work together for justice. ✦

Thomas Gould is communications manager for the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

FAITH IN ACTION:

- Read more about DHUMA and follow them on social media: <https://mogc.info/DHUMA>
- Read more Global Witness' reports on lethal attacks on human rights defenders <https://mogc.info/GW-2024>
- Write to your members of Congress in support of the FOREST Act, a bipartisan bill that would prohibit the importation of products sourced through illegal deforestation, including deforestation of the Amazon. <https://mogc.info/FOREST>

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

Healing with Art

By Carolyn Trumble

In these stormy times of climate change and global unrest, Brother Mickey McGrath uses his talent as an artist and storyteller to connect people to each other and the beauty of creation.

The Oblate of St. Francis de Sales says he felt called to his vocation. Being a religious brother, he says, allows him the freedom to share his passion as an artist. “Beauty brings people’s hearts together,” he says. “Beauty is present where you are and in what you are looking at.”

Originally from Philadelphia, Brother McGrath lives in South Camden, New Jersey. He finds inspiration everywhere, and over the years has partnered with Maryknoll missionaries to find new expression for his art. One instance took him to Nairobi, Kenya, and the work of Maryknoll Father Richard Bauer at the Eastern Deanery AIDS Relief Program (EDARP) for people living with HIV.

The plan was for him to create art for the waiting room for women who are HIV positive. The women come for prenatal care, receiving effective interventions to prevent the baby they carry from being infected.

“I asked Mickey to paint a mural of the Visitation, Mary and Elizabeth, both pregnant and comforting each

other,” Father Bauer says. At Brother McGrath’s suggestion, Father Bauer invited youth to help with the murals.

“It was pure grace and transformation,” Father Bauer says. “On Monday, eight to 10 HIV-positive teenagers receiving treatment at the Maryknoll EDARP clinic came to help Mickey. He drew the outline of the Visitation, numbered the outlines, and the youth just jumped in and began painting.”

The Maryknoller says initially the teens were shy and quiet, adding that the stigma for HIV-positive people in so much of the world is still great. For teens, this stigma and discrimination can be paralyzing, he says.

“These youth jumped into the project, and I watched how the energy, confidence, and pure joy increased throughout the week,” Father Bauer says. “By Friday, they were behaving and acting like ‘regular’ teens — laughing, joking, horsing around, filled with life and hope and joy!”

The missionary continues, “Mickey and the kids were so excited they did another mural, in our men’s clinic for guys with HIV.”

Now five years later, every one of those teens is a peer mentor at EDARP. They help newly diagnosed HIV-positive teens adapt to their medicines



(Left to right) A young EDARP leader, Brother Mickey McGrath and Maryknoll Father Richard Bauer pose with the Visitation mural in Nairobi. (Courtesy of Richard Bauer/Kenya)

and model for them self-confidence and pride, he says.

Brother McGrath remembers the experience as a healing one. He says, “Healing power comes from creating beauty together.”

A couple of years ago Brother McGrath participated in a weeklong Maryknoll immersion trip to Native American lands in South Dakota and Wyoming to learn about the past and present struggles of the Lakota people. Seeing the landscape and witnessing the way Native spirituality treats creation as a gift energizes Brother McGrath’s own spirituality. It wasn’t his first trip to the Lakota people. A few years earlier he had painted a mural for the St. Joseph’s Indian School in Chamberlain, South Dakota. The school was included in the more recent Maryknoll immersion trip itinerary.

One morning in Sioux Falls while Brother McGrath was praying the rosa-

ry in a garden, he was joined by local Indigenous leader and teacher Gary Cheeseman. Cheeseman began his own morning prayers, facing the rising sun in the east while drumming and chanting. Each man prayed in his own way that morning, and as Brother McGrath was saying his last “Hail Mary,” Cheeseman was finishing up at the same time.

“We are all one, we are all connected,” Brother McGrath says, reflecting on that moment. “We are related to each other, that fits in with Maryknoll spirit.” ✠

Carolyn Trumble, a returned Maryknoll lay missionary who served in Brazil, is a mission education promoter based in Portland, Oregon.

Brother McGrath will offer a retreat sponsored by Maryknoll’s Mission Formation Program titled “The Earth Is Our Mother” on Sept. 14, 2024.



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

SHARE PRAYER

I wanted to comment on the beautiful "Prayer for Vocations" written by Deacon (soon to be Father) Charles Ogony in the Spring 2024 edition of your magazine. We are blessed with good and holy priests in our parish, and I pray for them, for those in formation and for those who struggle to be the salt of the earth and light to the world that our Lord calls them to be.

I hope that the prayer in your magazine might be published and widely distributed to seminaries and seminarians. With a little change to the wording, it could also be printed and distributed worldwide for parishes to use at the end of Mass, much like the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel.

Thank you, Deacon Ogony, for such a beautiful and heartfelt prayer!

Jill Cic
Denver, Colorado

Editor's Note: Deacon Ogony indeed became Father Ogony. See story, p. 10.

LOVE, NOT LIKE

Bravo to the reader who sent a thoughtful and knowledgeable letter regarding the immigration situation which was printed in the Spring 2024 issue. People who have never experienced oppression, poverty and government abuse have no idea what immigrants from other countries have suffered due to wars, famine and terrible poverty. Jesus taught us to love and respect all our brothers and sisters ... not just those we choose.

Kindness, selflessness and love (not "like") are the commandment of

the Lord: "As I have loved you, so you must do." (John 13:34)

Victoria Schneider
Upland, California

FIRST LETTER

Having received the Spring 2024 issue of *Maryknoll* magazine, I had to write after reading "Laudate Deum" by Maryknoll Father Joseph Veneroso. This is the first letter of this kind I have ever written but, surely, this prayer is the most beautiful I have ever read. So please, pass these remarks along and thank Father Veneroso. I am overwhelmed by his beautiful thoughts.

Mary Wickett
Hamburg, New York

NEIGHORLY LETTER

Editor's Note: The following letter was written to Maryknoll Father Joseph La Mar, who shared it with Maryknoll magazine. It is edited for space.

I just wanted to drop you a note after reading your autobiography, *A Conversation with a Friend: Concerning Justice, Peace and Joy*.

In your book, you mentioned that you must have ridden over 300 hours on horseback! Well, that explains for me why they had horses at Maryknoll back in the day.

I have lived my entire life with Maryknoll as a welcome neighbor. When walking or driving down my street in Ossining, New York, I can see Maryknoll sitting majestically on the next hill almost as if challenging us as to which sits tallest.

As a youngster, I spent much time at my grandparents' house next to Brookside school, just a stone's throw from Maryknoll. Once, I was lucky enough to get a tour of Maryknoll and was even able to look out of the bell tower, which was absolutely magnificent. I looked up at the tower recently and saw satellite dishes. Ah, modernity! Oh, well.

When I was a very little girl in the late 1960s, I would often tag along with my dad as he coached the men's fast-pitch softball games for his team at a park just down the hill from Maryknoll. One evening, two riders appeared at the game. They were both young religious brothers from Maryknoll. A throng of people gathered around one brother and his pretty bay mare named Blue Bell. So, I, as the enterprising horse-crazy kid, made my way over to the grey horse who had no one milling about.

I cannot remember the kind brother's name, but the horse was named Monsignor and he was about 30 years old (or so the brother said). He could see I was enthralled and asked my father if I could sit on Monsignor. Of course, the answer was yes! You never saw a wider smile in your life.

The very next week, I walked on over from my grandparents' house to Maryknoll to try and find Monsignor. I did, and dutifully gave him an apple. A priest appeared and asked "Are you supposed to be here?" I replied that I had previously met Monsignor and the brother and that he

had invited me to stop by. That was the last time that I saw Monsignor.

Reading in the book your account of traveling by horseback in Guatemala, I now understand why Maryknoll had horses: so those going on mission would know how to ride!

*Margaret Fiore
Ossining, New York*

ANNIVERSARY JOY

My husband and I, with a group of about 30 members of our church, were blessed and privileged to travel to Maryknoll recently from Saint Ambrose parish in Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania. The purpose of our journey was to visit Maryknoll Father Robert Reiley, who was celebrating 65 years as a Maryknoll missionary. We were very happy to see how great Father Bob looked! He is clearly well cared for. Father helped out at Saint Ambrose during his years in retirement. We came to know him as a wonderful priest — inspiring, gentle, warm and kind. He has two religious sisters, and I can't imagine how many souls they have led to Christ.

Many of us had not been to Maryknoll before and were impressed with the beauty of the building and grounds.

May God continue to bless the work of Maryknoll and all those who lovingly care for our retired, infirm and elderly priests and religious, and lead more workers into the harvest.

*Deborah Dasch
Friedensburg, Pennsylvania*

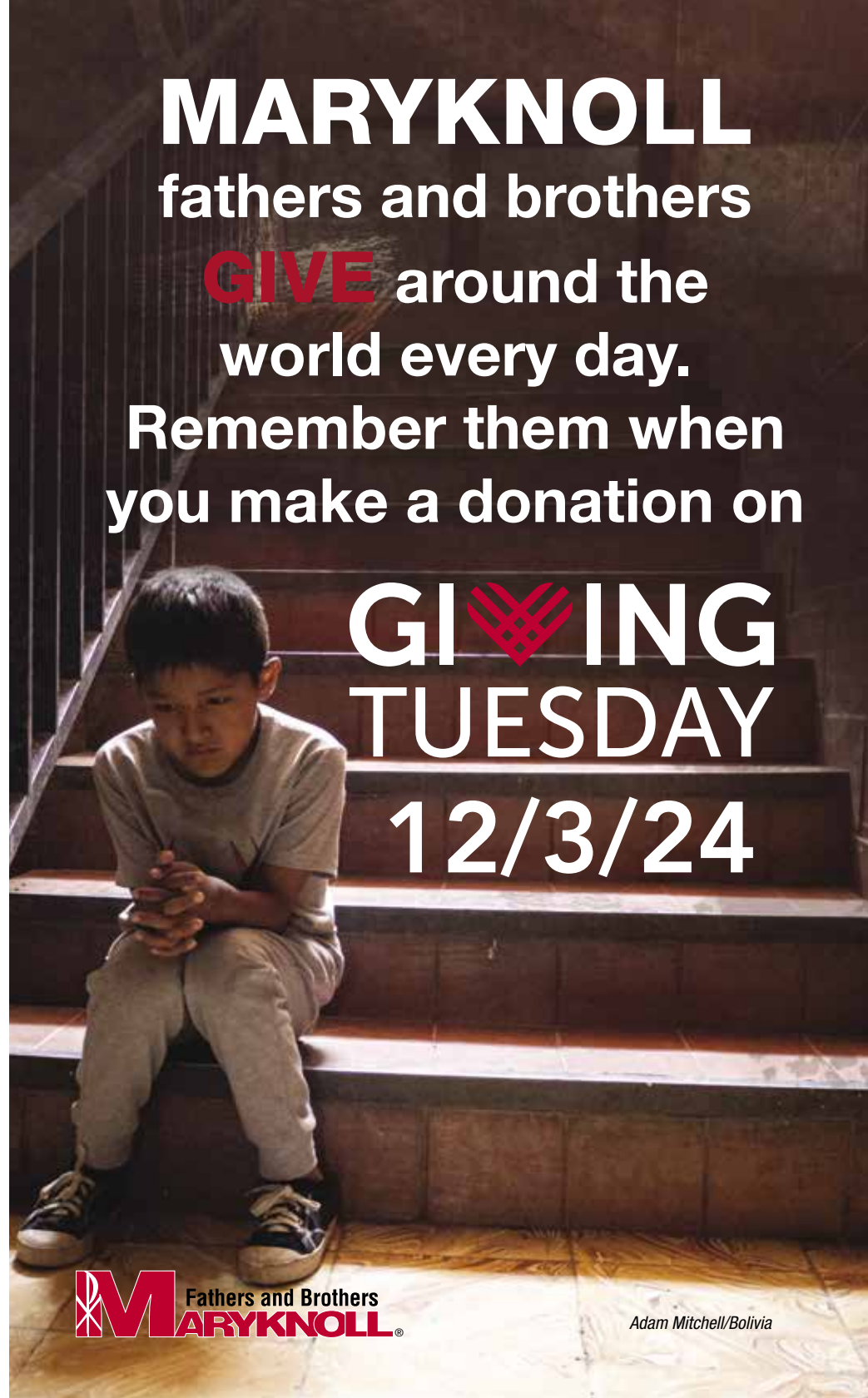
The editors invite Maryknoll readers to send us their views. Write to:

Readers' Responses

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

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

MARYKNOLL
fathers and brothers
GIVE around the
world every day.
Remember them when
you make a donation on
GIVING
TUESDAY
12/3/24



M **Fathers and Brothers**
MARYKNOLL®

Adam Mitchell/Bolivia



Elderly Indigenous villagers of Puytucani in the Andes Mountains of Bolivia enjoy a nutritious meal as part of an outreach program run by the Social Justice Foundation, a ministry led by Maryknoll Lay Missioners couple Filomena Siles and Joseph Loney. (See story, page 26.)

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/MaryknollFrBrs



Instagram.com/MaryknollSociety



recycled paper