



Not So Far Afield

NEWSLETTER OF THE MARYKNOLL AFFILIATES

November/December 2021

Volume 30 Number 6

AT THE KNOLL—MOVING BEYOND AHH!

Tim Moffett & Cordelia Ontiveros – Greater LA Chapter

We thank Richard Lessard for launching **AHH!**—the Affiliates’ Happy Hour where we could gather virtually via Zoom, formerly on second Tuesdays. Rich offered to pass the baton for hosting the Happy Hour, and the Greater Los Angeles Affiliate Chapter has taken up the challenge. Having held two Happy Hours, we thought of re-branding our virtual internet gatherings. From now on, we’ll meet “**At The Knoll,**” at our imagined new space in the iconic *Tavern on the Green**.

Find us **At The Knoll**, in our virtual Tavern on the Green*, and hand the Maitre’d your card, which reads:

Zoom: 894 8684 4827 Passcode: 931535.

Out back on the Terrace, you’ll be escorted to our *virtual* corner table in the dappled shade of the American elms. On the menu will be seasonal offerings of food for thought to nourish your soul. Currently, we will be featuring a side dish of Mini MAC 2—Climate Change. It’s a thymely conversation and seasoned with just the right amount of sage advice, all worthy of further discussion. Yes, you’ll be able to dish with your friends, and some special invited guests will appear now and then, as well. Our objective is to mix social time with relevant topics and even suggest some group action, so that you come away saying, “*Now that was time well spent!*”

Sharing hours “At The Knoll” are: **Fourth Tuesday of the month, 4-5pm PT, 7-8pm ET.** (East Coasters will need to tape JEOPARDY!) All Maryknollers are welcome—current, former, and prospective. The next few virtual meetings will be on Tuesdays:

**October 26th,
November 23rd, and
December 28th**

See you online, “**At The Knoll!**”



***Tavern on the Green**, a fabled restaurant in Central Park, NYC, was built in 1870 as a sheepfold. Since Robert Moses turned it into a restaurant in 1934, its several renovations have enhanced the glory of its many dining spaces: the Pavilion, Chestnut, Park, Rafters, Terrace, and the famous Crystal Rooms. Tavern on the Green, a designated historical landmark, has received several awards.



What’s Inside?

At The Knoll—Moving Beyond AHH!	1
Affiliates Connect	2
Community & John August Swanson	2
Recordando a John August Swanson	3
Affiliates’ 30 th Anniversary in the West	4
Maryknoll Companion & Chapter Meet IRL	4
Ephphatha...Be Opened	5
Tending the Earth: MIni MAC 2 Points the Way	6
A Letter from the President	7
Promoting Active Nonviolence	8
What is Spiritual Direction	9
Another Mini MAC / Farther Out.....	10
Maryknoll in the Change of Eras	10
Board: Topics on the Table	11

AFFILIATES CONNECT

Our cover story shows that as Ginny McEvoy begins her term as Affiliate board chair, she continues former chair Rich Lessard's theme of "connecting" lives on "At The Knoll." Connection is especially important when we are in the midst of "a change of eras," as Executive Coordinator Bob Short discussed with Maryknollers and shares with us. The Regional Coordinators with the Affiliate Board also dream and plan how they can better connect us, engage with Affiliates, and plan for an evolving future.

Celine Woznica and Karla Gonzales emphasize that with Climate Change and COVID, like it or not, we are connected with the broader world. Mini MAC 2 offered us ways to take action on Climate Change. As a fellow Affiliate at Caminando Por la Paz in Guatemala, Karla writes of their struggles with COVID. I encourage Affiliates to connect with Caminando so that they can feel our love and support.

What are your connections? The Action pillar of the Maryknoll Affiliates asks us to reach even farther than our chapters and other Affiliates. Connect with your neighbor, your Chapter Companion, or even a local politician. Reaching out with loving nonviolence will help us extend and reinforce all our connections.

Connect with us at NSFAMaryknoll@gmail.com!



Not So Far Afield (NSFA) is a bimonthly publication of the Maryknoll Affiliates and is also available online at MaryknollAffiliates.org. The name is a play on the title of the original Maryknoll Magazine: *The Field Afar*. Affiliates share in the mission and family spirit of Maryknoll Sisters, Fathers and Brothers, and Lay Missioners.

Mission Statement: Maryknoll Affiliates, while continuing to pursue their own life's journey, commit themselves to the mission goals of Maryknoll in the context of Chapters that gather for prayer, reflection, and action. Maryknoll Affiliates challenge one another to witness to mission as a way of life by going beyond borders, locally and globally, walking with the poor and excluded, and striving for peace and justice for all of God's creation.

For further information, see MaryknollAffiliates.org, contact Executive Coordinator Bob Short, email AffiliateBShort@gmail.com, or write to:

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P.O. Box 311
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COMMUNITY & JOHN AUGUST SWANSON

Hugh Menton – Greater Los Angeles Chapter

"The Storm," above, graced the January/February 2021 NSFA article about racism. I had asked John August Swanson to allow the Affiliates to use his artwork for that article, and Swanson agreed because of our friendship and John's generosity. John August Swanson had many informal connections to the Greater LA Affiliates through common experiences with Pax Christi and events at the Cathedral. His work was featured at some of our gathering locations: St. Camillus Spiritual Care Center in LA and the Maryknoll Sisters Retirement Community.

Now this famous artist and friend has passed. I asked Cecilia González-Andrieu, another friend of his, for her reflections. The article and photo (p. 3) she graciously provided celebrate the life of a fellow traveler, one which many LA Affiliates identify with and recognize as reflecting the Affiliate pillars. We look forward to the Cecilia González-Andrieu's biography of Swanson, which is expected to be published by Orbis.



Not So Far Afield Co-Editors:

Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss & Paula Schaffner

Articles in *Not So Far Afield* do not represent the opinion of any of the Maryknoll entities.

Submissions: We welcome letters to the editor, articles, photos, and suggestions for articles. All submissions are subject to editing. Please contact us at NSFAMaryknoll@gmail.com.

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RECORDANDO A JOHN AUGUST SWANSON

(January 11, 1938-September 23, 2021)

Cecilia González-Andrieu, PhD.

Sometimes when we were together, my friend, neighbor, and activist* John August Swanson would suddenly switch into speaking Spanish. This apparently simple act was very intentional and representative of many of the priorities in John's life.

First, it allowed him to make present his Mexican heritage and the complicated story of a family fleeing the violence of the Mexican revolution at the start of the 20th century in search of peace and stability. His art, his commitments, and many of the marches and events we attended disclosed this deep identification with immigrants and refugees. He knew their struggles intimately from his family's stories and carried them with him. Because of this solidarity with immigrants, the biblical priority to welcome the stranger was central to his life.

Which leads to the second reason he would switch to Spanish – he wanted to accompany the poor and vulnerable. No matter where we were, Swanson would always seek out the persons who might be invisible to everyone else. Even during his last days in the hospice ward of St. John of God Retirement and Care Center in Los Angeles, he tried to learn the names of the custodians and nursing assistants and inquire about their personal stories. This honest love for “the least” made it so the faces in his art were brown, and Mary of Nazareth worked in the fields, or swept the floor and fed the chickens. As an activist John cared deeply about issues of housing and labor rights, going all the way back to his work with Cesar Chavez and on political campaigns to stop housing discrimination.

One final reason for John's switch to Spanish was sometimes to tell me, in a somewhat private way, what was happening in his heart. A heart which was constantly breaking was a burden that Swanson carried with prayer and grace and the companionship of great thinkers and saints. Art like Swanson's that pierces our everyday reality to awaken us to a vision, which I would characterize as the in-breaking kin-dom of God, requires a depth of seeing that is costly. His heart broke at the horrific sin of war, so he spent months holding a weekly vigil on a well-trafficked street corner lifting up his handmade posters to protest the Iraq war. His heart broke at the cry of the earth and in

the last few years he had turned his attention to ecological justice producing works and posters, as well as teaching many of us through the very personal experience of his hands lovingly tending his garden.

The world is extraordinarily richer because John August Swanson lived in it. In his person, in the countless ecumenical and interreligious relationships he lovingly nurtured and in his art,



Photo by Cecilia González-Andrieu

John August Swanson in May, as he worked on his very last canvasses, about preparing the soil, planting, and harvesting.

John imagined a world completely immersed in love. His works, which beyond hanging in major museums around the world grace classrooms, community centers and countless homes, were purposefully made inexpensive or sometimes just given away, so the world that *could be* he could see would call us toward it and we would commit ourselves once more to build it. That is what he would want from us now. Build that abundant world.



Cecilia González-Andrieu, PhD. is a Professor of Theology, Loyola Marymount University. Her other articles about John August Swanson appear in *America* and the *National Catholic Reporter*. Cecilia's book, [Bridge to Wonder: Art as a Gospel of Beauty](#) (Baylor), examines some of Swanson's works and questions about beauty for communities on the margins. She is currently working on a biography of Swanson.

*Artist is a portmanteau word combining "art" and "activist," coined by UCSD Professor Ricardo Dominguez.

AFFILIATES' 30TH ANNIVERSARY IN THE WEST

Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss – Portland Chapter



Inspired by the work of the Maryknoll Affiliates' 30th Anniversary Committee and the September NSFA cover invitation, the Portland Chapter hosted a casual Zoom birthday party for the Affiliates on September 10th.

Nineteen Affiliates from Oaxaca, Mexico, Seattle, Los Angeles, North Bay California, and Portland attended. Mary and Pat Denevan were charter members of the Portland chapter and reminded us of its first meetings in 1993. Janet Quillian told the story of the founding of the Seattle Chapter, which has prospered from its ties to the local Maryknoll House. Many of the Seattle Chapter members have participated in overseas mission. Bob and Nancy McFarland said they started with the San Francisco Chapter in 1999 and subsequently moved to Petaluma, CA, forming the North Bay Chapter, which later joined with the East Bay Chapter.

Affiliates are still active! Seattle was recently looking into serving Seafarers, sailors who are not able to go ashore because of COVID. The McFarlands told of their work with a Haitian refugee family. The Los Angeles Chapter invited everyone to the next Affiliate Happy Hour. The Denevans in Oaxaca, now in their 80s, became permanent Mexican residents after their time in Mexico as Maryknoll Lay Missioners. They continue reaching out to their neighbors with food and medical assistance during the pandemic. They are currently hosting Steve Barrett, a former Lay Missioner and an Affiliate from Guatemala, who says a new second Guatemalan Affiliate Chapter meets in his house.

At our little birthday party, we enjoyed a recorded video and hymn, sang Happy Birthday, and wished we could get together in person. Pat Denevan, who has served in three Maryknoll entities, said he sees the Affiliates as the future of Maryknoll and challenges us to carry on the great work Maryknoll has always done.



MARYKNOLL COMPANION AND CHAPTER MEET IRL

David Schaffner – CA Central Coast Chapter

On October 7th, the Central Coast Affiliate chapter enjoyed a “South of the Border” themed dinner and evening of camaraderie with Russ Brine, a Maryknoll Lay Missioner returning from five years in Cambodia. Russ, who is our Chapter Companion, is heading for East Africa where he will be in the process of discerning his next assignment.

Russ is familiar with Kenya where, having joined MKLM in 2000, he served as the Finance Manager at St. Martin’s School in Nairobi, and then for ten years as Project Manager for the St. John Bosco Rehabilitation Centre in the Diocese of Kitale. The project, which served displaced pastoralist families who had fled from drought and hunger, took children off the streets and placed them in schools.

Hank and Margaret Mott, who hosted the get-together, first met Russ on a Maryknoll Friends Across the Border (FAB) experience in 2003. They have returned to Kenya several times, visiting Russ and bringing one or more of their grown children with them for a FAB type of experience. Hank comes about his affinity for Africa from living in Lusaka, Zambia, in the 1960s where his father, Prof. Robert Mott, Cal Poly, served on a USAID program to develop a new institution of higher education.

The California Central Coast Chapter thanks Russ for being with us on our Affiliate journey and look forward to hearing about his next mission. We wish him the best and Godspeed as he ventures forth.



Feasting on enchiladas are Margaret Mott, Russ Brine, Hank Mott, Joan McKenna, and Paula Schaffner. Behind the camera is David Schaffner.

EPHATHA...BE OPENED

Ann Carr – Contemplative Virtual Chapter,
former Affiliate Board Chair

An abridgment of Ann's sermon for Catholic Women Preach; hear her spoken message at: catholicwomenpreach.org/preacher/ann-carr.

The deaf man's companions, likely Gentile, bring him to Jesus for healing, having heard rumors of his cures. The Jewish Jesus invites the man into a moment of intimacy and dignity, and his ears are suddenly opened and his tongue loosened. Once profoundly marginalized and excluded from the gift of human communication, he can now both hear and speak. And his joy cannot be contained.

Today, we often experience incessant streams of information, yet at the same time, a paradoxical diminishment in our capacity to hear and to speak with one another. How might Jesus be inviting us into *ephphatha*, to *be opened*?

Isaiah, attuned to our frightened hearts, speaks of God's fidelity and love during the Babylonian captivity, as Jesus speaks in the context of the Roman occupation—both periods of profound communal dislocation and alienation from self-identity and culture. In times of oppression, we often only hear the sounds of fear and suffering that surround us and stir within us, but Isaiah promises God's recompense—not only healing, but *transformational healing*, a healing that calls for *ephphatha*. Isaiah takes us through a sacred sensory journey: the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, and the tongues of the mute sing.

A harbinger of the vision put forth in Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*, Isaiah proclaims that the love of God, of neighbor, of self, and of all creation are integrally interwoven. He begins with the incarnational beauty of the human experience and opens us further to the created world. Streams burst forth in deserts, rivers flow in grasslands, burning sands and thirsty grounds are filled with life-giving water. God's love touches us at the intimately personal level and expands beyond to a living cosmos.

We are often painfully aware of our lack of openness, our constricted capacity to hear and to speak. This is especially true for those who live on the margins: the frightened people of a collapsing Afghanistan, the long-suffering Haitians, the elderly dying alone in COVID wards,

children separated from their parents at the border. So many without voice and without ears to hear. And our very planet groans with a deep yearning for her distress to reach our closed ears.


At times, it feels like all too much. How can I respond with love and compassion for my brothers and sisters? How can my ears and my heart be opened to their voices and also to the cry of our beautiful planet so in need of healing? Listen closely to Isaiah, to Jesus, and even to some of the quantum physicists, theologians and spiritual leaders of our day; we are being invited to hear with a new awareness of the sacred interconnectedness of all life, an interconnectedness that is infused with the overflowing and endlessly creative love of God.



God no longer speaks to us from atop a hierarchical order or great chain of being in which the "inanimate" resources of the earth are to be dominated and exploited. We hear the pulsating love of God

moving through the tiniest Boson particle, to the wing of a vulnerable sparrow, to the roar of a cascading waterfall and into the immense silence of a far-off galaxy. Theologian Ilia Delio describes a post-modern world where the new learnings of science are opening us to an expanded consciousness of God and a deepening interconnectedness—the Christification of the universe. The voice of the deaf man whose tongue is suddenly loosened and the cry of creation for healing and restoration are one.

Jesus invites the deaf man, and us, into a transformative opening, not just a conversational exchange. We are being called to truly hear, to listen deeply. Rabbi Arthur Waskow suggests that deep listening begins when we seek to speak God's name. YHWH, in its original form without vowels, is a sound of breathing. It is no accident that the ancient name for God is beyond all utterances, is in concert with our growing understanding of God as sacred breath infusing all of creation. God as breath, or as Waskow offers, God and all of creation dance in a process of interbreathing.

To hear, to speak, to breathe. What does it mean for us to have our own grace-filled, life-transforming encounter with Jesus in this time of epochal change? Do we have the courage of the deaf man and his community of companions to approach the Christ and be opened? May our ears be opened to truly hear the echoes of your love for us and all creation. *Ephphatha!* 

TENDING THE EARTH: MINI MAC 2 POINTS THE WAY

Celine Woznica – Chicago Central Chapter

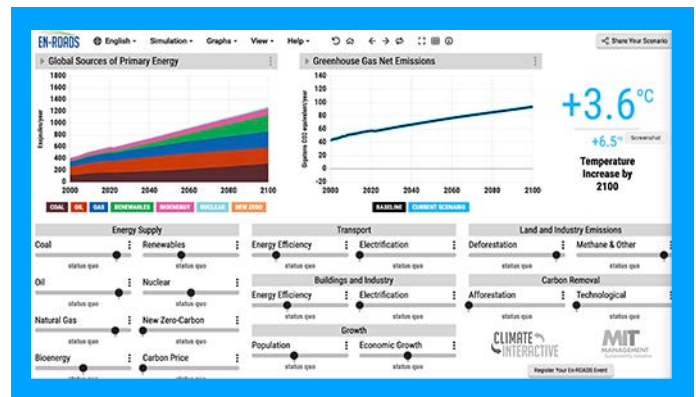
Was it the relentless wildfires this summer that scorched 2.5 million acres in California and sent lung-damaging smoke over the rest of the western United States? How about the extreme drought conditions that continue to affect the American Southwest particularly hard? Or maybe the fiercely intense Hurricane Ida hitting Louisiana and causing fatal flooding as far north as New Jersey and New York? Whatever the motivating factor, Maryknoll Affiliates joined the recent Mini MAC entitled “Tending the Earth” to learn more about what they could do to address the climate crisis in a webinar boosted by science and framed within our faith context.

The second in a series of virtual Mini MACs under the umbrella theme of “tending,” the conference was grounded in the four pillars of the Maryknoll Affiliates: **community, spirituality, global vision, and action**. In anticipation of the conference and in recognition that many Affiliates are already heavily involved in Care of Creation activities, a Google Jamboard was created so that Affiliates could not only learn what other Affiliates were doing, but also build **community** while sharing ideas, experiences, and resources about what is very possibly the moral issue of our time.

Andy Panelli and three colleagues from the national Citizens’ Climate Lobby and the Catholic Action Leadership Team framed the seminar within a faith perspective, grounding the presentation in the **spirituality** of *Laudato Sí*. Pope Francis’ words that we should be “*protectors of creation, (and) protectors of God’s plan inscribed in nature*” were the foundation of Andy’s presentation on the urgency of



undertaking bold and drastic steps NOW on a national and global level to effectively slow down global warming within the next twenty years. He then presented the EN-Roads Climate Change Solutions Simulator (www.climateinteractive.org/tools/en-roads/), an incredibly powerful tool created by a team at MIT Sloan for ordinary citizens to experiment with different climate change solutions and see the impact of their various suggestions.



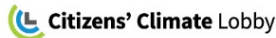
We tried various solutions on the climate simulator. Following Andy’s presentation, participating Affiliates were divided into breakout groups with each one led by a facilitator trained in the climate simulator tool. In small groups, Affiliates were invited to suggest action steps with a goal of bringing down the rate of global warming to 2.0 C by 2100. What if we eliminated the use of coal and natural gas completely? How about increasing energy efficiency in our transportation and buildings? Would it help if we promoted bioenergy and reduced methane emissions? Under the guidance of the group facilitator, the Affiliates learned the (often small) impact of these steps and the huge political and economic obstacles that would have to be overcome.

But there is hope if we take **action** now, and Andy shared with us legislation pending in Congress that would have significant impact on slowing down global warming. Specific action steps can be found on the Catholic Climate Covenant website (<https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/>).

We respond globally, across continents. But action on a local and national level is not enough when this is a global crisis and we, as Affiliates, hold a **global vision**. Affiliates are on it! Portland Chapter Affiliate Marie Venner compiled a list of global resources for the *Global Catholic Climate Movement* website. <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/resources/> Wow! The resources that Marie gathered will be

What else can you do?

- Talk about it
- Advocate for it
- Write your Representative to support EICDA
<https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/program/advocacy>
- Write President Biden to support carbon pricing:
<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/white-house>
- Join CCL's monthly calling campaign
<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/monthly-calling-campaign/>



Andy Panelli Panelli61@comcast.net

incorporated into the global, Vatican-initiated *Laudato Si' Action Platform* (<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>) Yes!

In addition, upon learning that the Climate Change Solutions Simulator is available in a dozen languages, the Affiliate network ignited to arrange for a Spanish-

language, Latin American-focused virtual presentation of the Climate Change Solutions Simulator on Saturday, November 13. Coordinated by Rosa Beatriz Castañeda Ramirez, Affiliate board member and coordinator of the Guatemalan Chapter, the Simulator will be presented by Sebastián del Valle, a Guatemalan scientist and environmental activist who was named on Andy Panelli's list of internationalists trained on presenting the Simulator. By coincidence, one of the Guatemalan Affiliates (Marcela Gereda) knew Sebastian who readily agreed to the presentation. (The Affiliate network is amazing!)

A global crisis requires global action, and the Affiliates are doing their part in connecting across the continents as people of faith, living the Maryknoll charisms of **community, spirituality, global vision** and **action**. Let's continue to promote global Affiliate action and collaboration!



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Karla Gonzales – Guatemala Chapter

My name is Karla Gonzales—I am the current president of Caminando Por la Paz. We are located in Paraiso 2, in Zone 18 of Guatemala. We have projects working with the

children and youth of the community; we are assisting them in their efforts to have a better future and to avoid the negative aspects of street life. (see <https://www.fathertomsmision.org/>) We have programs for good nutrition, sports, education, and most of all, to foster the love of God. Since 2020, it has been more difficult to continue with new ideas on how to continue supporting our kids during the challenge of COVID-19. However, with the help of both God and our sponsors, we have been able to do it.

This year, 2021, has been a challenge, as the year brought the COVID virus to the program among both board members and those living in the program house. Having the infection taught us what it's like to live with the uncertainty of having

one more day with our loved ones. We are always asking God to keep everyone in good health.

While experiencing COVID, we had to separate ourselves from one another in order to assure that not everyone had the virus at the same time. As I mentioned above, when someone at the house has the virus where we all live together, we stay separated in order to minimize infection.

Here in Guatemala, the cases continue to rise and thus we continue to pray for those who have it. In fact, even those few people who have been vaccinated may have the variant. Here it is very sad because many people are dying in their homes because all the hospitals are at maximum capacity, and they are unable to receive new patients. In Guatemala, the poverty rate is exceptionally high, and thus many do not have the necessary medications. This is why the mortality rate is high.

I am now someone living with COVID and who prays for everyone. I realize that God loves me and my family. He is allowing us to continue, yet I feel hopeless because I am not able to help everyone who needs it.

I am someone living in all this, but yet realizes that God loves us. He allows us to continue, yet I feel so helpless not being able to meet the needs of all who call on us.



PROMOTING ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE

Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss – Portland Chapter

Our small community of nonviolent peace-builders, organizing an event to encourage active nonviolence, wanted to show the video, *The Third Harmony*. Many Maryknollers had viewed it at the Gospel Nonviolence Retreat presented by Pax Christi’s Catholic Nonviolence Initiative in December 2020. MaryBeth Buchner wrote about that retreat in the Jan/Feb 2021 NSFA and reiterated the desire that more people, especially Affiliates, see the video and learn to better incorporate active nonviolence in their lives.

The 44-minute video’s key points echo and harmonize with the Affiliate pillars of Spirituality, Community, Global Vision, and Action. Michael Nagler, the film’s director and author of *The Third Harmony*, the book on which the film is based, emphasizes that we are spiritual beings. We are all connected, and nonviolence and cooperation are our natural way of interacting.

Many organizations cooperated in bringing the video to even more people. Last spring, the City of Beaverton called for proposals for peace-building and offered small grants. The City accepted our proposal to host an event showing the video on nonviolence and a training in CLARA for handling difficult conversations. The grant allowed us to plan without raising funds or charging for tickets. The grant was also a stamp of approval and led to a City mailing about the event.

Our group met frequently during the summer, in person and by Zoom, shaping and planning our event. Our first tasks were to set a date and craft an announcement. We wanted each contact with the public to provide some learning about active nonviolence. Through our announcement, we connected with various organizations with harmonious philosophies, in addition to the Affiliates: the local Rotary Club’s peace-builder committee, Pax Christi USA, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Friends of Sabeel, On Earth Peace, and many local churches. These organizations then endorsed and publicized our event to their members. Everyone on our team helped by developing and posting flyers, inviting their friends and organizations, sending press releases, and assisting at the event.

The CLARA training we proposed is most effectively taught and practiced in person. We worked with a local church with excellent

electronic equipment and a knowledgeable technical team to host the hybrid (in-person and virtual) event. Two weeks before the event, the incidence of COVID cases soared, and we felt it wise to cancel the in-person component and encourage folks to register for the virtual event. The CLARA trainer was experienced in online instruction and we received favorable responses from attendees on his virtual presentation.

To facilitate registration, provide us email addresses, and to increase publicity, we used an online resource, Eventbrite, that was free for us. Their analytics showed that the vast majority of our 145 registrants came to their website through our publicity, rather than Eventbrite’s. For the day of the event, we contracted for Zoom’s large meeting capability, although the actual Zoom attendees maxed at 85. After extending the viewing time for the video by two days there were 161 unique views of the video. Success!

We endorse the film’s path to nonviolence by incorporating a spiritual practice in our lives, avoiding violence in news and media, and connecting with others using active nonviolence. How can you promote active nonviolence in your life?



CLARA =
Calm,
Listen,
Affirm,
Respond
Add



Affiliates who missed our free event can still view *The Third Harmony* video with their chapter or on their own for \$5 at vimeo.com.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL DIRECTION?

Cindy Korb – Certified Spiritual Director
Albany Chapter

God wants us to know that he loved us before he even made us, and this love has never diminished and never will. ... through this love he makes everything that happens of value to us ... —Julian of Norwich

Have you ever been suddenly overwhelmed by the wonder and awe of creation? That was God speaking to you. Has a friend called you at exactly the right moment when you needed a shoulder to lean on? Did a sense of peace settle over you after being distraught? Or a sudden insight into a problem you've been facing? Experience a coincidence that meets a need or makes your life easier? These are all examples of God reaching out to you, inviting you into relationship.

God constantly invites us into a closer, deeper relationship, wanting to have a meaningful personal relationship with each and every one of us. As Julian said so well, everything that happens to us has value, is an invitation from God. It is up to us to realize that all of life is spiritual and holy and to accept the invitation, taking a step closer to God who is waiting on us.

Unfortunately, we often don't turn our attention to God beyond attending a church service, a wedding, or a funeral, or praying for help during a crisis. Yet as Christians, we believe that God is with us in every situation and event in our lives. Busy with our daily tasks, schedules, commitments, and work, we seldom keep our eyes open to recognize His presence.

Spirituality comes through our life experiences, no matter what our religion or denomination is; that is how God speaks to us. Richard Rohr address this: "I will admit that the experiences we have of God—and of our own lives and desires—can be confusing and sometimes even contradictory to one another. This is why it is so helpful to have someone to walk with us as we uncover the deeper meaning of our experiences and what they might reveal to us about God and ourselves." (Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations, June 20, 2021)

Spiritual direction is a series of conversations in which a person shares thoughts, feelings, and understandings. It provides an opportunity to slow down, reflect, and ask "big questions" about life. The directees steer the conversations, talking over things of importance to them.

The spiritual director is trained to listen, notice,

and ask questions. This reflective listening helps directees gain insights about themselves and God, see their relationship with God in a new light, or to challenge themselves to look at something they may be avoiding. The director will want to know what has been happening in a person's prayer and daily life, to encourage growing closer to God and to see where and how God is with the directee. (*Learning to Pray*, James Martin, pg. 306-307)

Spiritual direction occurs on a regular basis, typically monthly, and lasts for an hour. Fees can range from nothing to about \$60 a session, depending on the director. Again, depending on the director, sessions can occur in person or virtually. Some directors even offer group spiritual direction. What is important is that a directee feels comfortable and at ease with the director.



Who can benefit from spiritual direction? Anyone! Everyone! People who want to

- Grow into a deeper relationship with God.
- Find deeper meaning in their life.
- Ask: Who am I? Who is God? What do I believe?
- Become sensitive to God's action in their life.
- Grow in interior freedom through self-knowledge and self-acceptance.

Spiritual direction is not counseling or therapy. Rather, it allows you to become more attentive and to look for deeper meaning in all things. This deeper look takes you beyond everyday ordinariness, frustrations, and suffering to empathy and compassion for yourself and others. It allows you to respond in a more loving, caring, and compassionate way as you grow and mature spiritually.

Where can you find a spiritual director? If you are associated with a church or religious organization, you can start by asking there. There are many retreat houses that offer spiritual direction. Spiritual Directors International is the professional organization for spiritual directors. A database of their 6000 members can be accessed here. <https://www.sdicompanions.org>

If you have any questions about spiritual direction, please feel free to contact me at listeningpresence518@gmail.com.





**ANOTHER
CHANCE TO
ENJOY
A MINI MAC**

Join
**Megan
McKenna –**

theologian, storyteller, spiritual writer and lecturer, on Zoom at

**Mini MAC 3 – Tending the Community
November 6th at 4:00pm Eastern Time**

Megan will talk of how we tend to the community—local and global, especially those on the margins—from the perspective of her new book, *The Poor Save Us*. Per composer and author David Haas, “Her stories become theology, and theology becomes proclaimed in real life adventures of humanity.”

To Register: Watch for information in the Monday emails or check the Maryknoll Affiliate News on our website maryknollaffiliates.org

**MARYKNOLL IN THE
CHANGE OF ERAS**

*These are excerpts from a session that **Bob Short, our Executive Coordinator,** led a few months back at a weekly meeting of the *Laudato Si* group, about twenty Maryknollers, mostly priests, who discuss topics of the day that could have relevance to the Society’s future.*

The Cusp of a New Era. Many, including Pope Francis, acknowledge that our world is on the cusp of a new era. It’s equally exhilarating and frightening to be living when fundamental change is on the horizon. Most of us resist paradigmatic change. As Thomas Kuhn has written, “paradigm shifts become necessary when the plausibility structure of the previous paradigm becomes so full of holes and patchwork ‘fixes’ that a complete overhaul, which once looked utterly threatening, now appears as a lifeline.”

Thomas Berry, C.P., gave me a way to frame the of paradigmatic change. discussion: “It’s all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story, the account of how we fit into it, is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story.” So, what is dysfunctional about the old story? How do we begin to identify the new story and, if there’s enough courage, move into it? When fundamental change is just over the hill (or knoll), three responses can follow:

1. Hold tightly to the old model, maybe even return to a more traditional orthodoxy.
2. Make some changes, even fairly significant ones, but not those that would align with the emerging paradigm.
3. Make a bold leap toward the fundamental change that the time appears to call us to.

Most of us opt for 2—a change in degree—a “moving the deck chairs” strategy.

The New Cosmology. Two words characterize the new cosmology, **relational** and **evolving**. Everything in the universe, from subatomic particles to the most complex of human relationships is in relationship. Anything that favors separation (e.g., racism, sexism, patriarchy, nationalism) becomes the sin. Similarly, anything static and fixed (e.g., holding on too tightly to an old model) does not fit into the new cosmology. “Being” no longer serves.

Farther Out...And Further Afield



JESUS WOULD HAVE WORN A MASK

And so would have Moses, and Mohammed, and...



“Becoming” speaks much better to the reality in an evolving universe.

Ilia Delio contrasts the Newtonian cosmology (closed system, control minded, mechanistic, hierarchical, goal-orientated) with that of the Quantum, post-Einsteinian cosmology (open system, participatory, holistic, abundant possibilities).

Other voices more simply frame other characteristics of this new time:

- We are all looking for a larger and more loving story in which to participate. Our ordinary lives are given an extraordinary significance when we accept that our lives are about something more meaningful than winning and succeeding inside of a very small plot line.—Brian McLaren
- The old story was of victimization, marginalization, oppression, oppressors; the new story would see all of us evolving, self-expanding, and finding a new place in this wonderful cosmology...” —Barbara Holmes, on faculty of Richard Rohr’s Center for Action and Contemplation.

Religion no longer belongs to any one institution or to dogmatic belief systems. It is not a particular way to get us into heaven, an evacuation plan for the next world. Rather, it is a deep vital center of spirit that sustains and spurs on the energy of life...a deep existential dimension of being that longs for ultimate wholeness.

We then discussed some of the challenges and possibilities that emerge in the new era:

The Silo Syndrome favors separation and keeps the various expressions of Maryknoll apart from each other. Joe Healey, MM, has often pointed out the negative consequences of

this approach.

Theology/formation: science, especially cosmology, needs to be included in formation. Richard Rohr commented that Jesus didn’t teach his disciples mere conceptual information as (some) seminaries do. Rather, he introduces them to a lifestyle, inviting them to live with him.

For our **Organizational Model**, we could move from a “predict & control” modality to “sense & respond.” Federic Laloux has spoken at great length about “reinventing” organizations.

We ended with words of Ilia Delio:

What would our world look like if we really lived an incarnational faith? What would the church look like if it embraced a God of evolution? One who attains the highest levels of consciousness is one who lives by the life of the whole, one who is ready to surrender her or his life for the whole; one who lives beyond the self for the whole, in awareness of deep relational bonds of love with the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, the disenfranchised. ... I think Jesus lived this type of love because he lived deeply in God... to live in Christ is to live on the cusp of a new future, a future that is God already present in this moment, hidden within us, waiting to be born anew.



News from the Board

TOPICS ON THE TABLE

The Maryknoll Affiliate Board and Regional Coordinators (RCs) met Oct. 28-31, virtually and in person. Their primary agenda was **Transformation**, starting with personal transformation. Then they pondered what in the Affiliate movement needs to be transformed if we are to lean into being an even more vital, faithful voice within Maryknoll for justice and love.

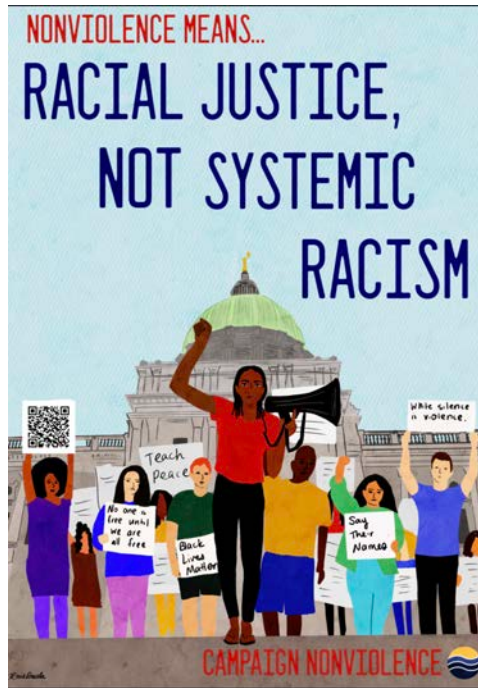
Other key agenda items included:

- Mission Initiative grants
- Board and RC outreach to chapters

They ask for your prayers as they continue to dream and plan for the future.

What dreams do you have for the Affiliate Movement? If you have input or questions, please contact your Regional Coordinator.





WHAT DOES NONVIOLENCE LOOK LIKE?

Pace e Bene/Campaign Nonviolence has launched a series of free downloadable posters at <https://paceebene.org/nonviolence-means/>

The visionary artwork by youth intern, Rosie Davila, illuminates what systemic, structural, and cultural nonviolence looks like in our communities. The Posters and text boldly say what Nonviolence means: restorative justice, renewable energy, racial justice, healing trauma, waging peace, migrant justice, and more.

These posters and accompanying text can spark discussions on nonviolence and social justice in Affiliate gatherings, classes, or the community. How might you use them?

