



Not So Far Afield

A NEWSLETTER OF THE MARYKNOLL AFFILIATES

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PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Paul Masson, MM – Maryknoll Affiliate Board Member representing Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers

In January of this year, I had the opportunity of participating in the Maryknoll Gathering in Asia South. During the gathering, I was able to speak with many missionaries—sisters, priests, and lay men and women—about their mission presence in Nepal, Bangladesh, East Timor, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Myanmar. Also, there were participants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, China and Japan.

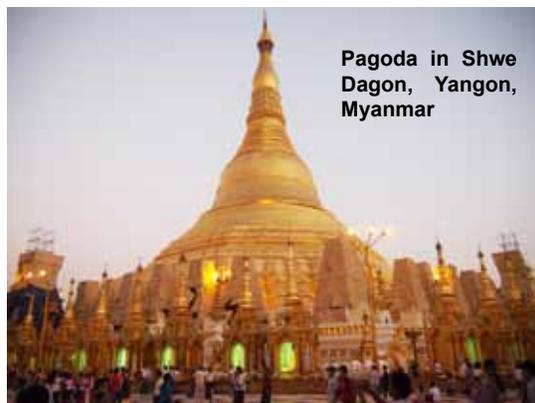


Brother John Beeching and Father Alfonso Kim, in the Grand Palace of Bangkok.

Photos courtesy of Paul Masson, MM.

Brother John Beeching was kind enough to take Fr. Alfonso Kim and me to the Grand Palace, in Bangkok, and share his experience and wisdom of living and working with the Buddhist Monks in the country. After the Gathering, a Maryknoll priest and sister serving in Myanmar invited me to spend time with them in Yangon. I was very impressed with the cultural and religious expressions that I saw in the people and in their Temples.

This visit was a welcome change from the reality of life in Westchester County, New York. Life in Westchester is isolated from the sufferings of so many people around the world. At the same time, there is a hidden turmoil, the frustrations of a consumer society, greed, addiction, and depression. At times, this violence comes to the fore, as in the horrible shootings and deaths of innocent boys and girls, along with their teachers, at Sandy Hook Elementary School, in Newtown, Connecticut.



Pagoda in Shwe Dagon, Yangon, Myanmar

The recognition of evil in our world was not something new. I lived and worked in Chile, in the time of a military dictatorship and social upheaval. The military police apprehended and tortured many of our friends. There was a climate of oppression and fear. In Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, we had to deal with many murders and deaths of innocent men and women. Violence was a part of life and very few of the perpetrators of these crimes were brought to justice.

I had a hard time dealing with the call of Jesus to love our enemies, to work for reconciliation. St. Paul calls us to a ministry of reconciliation:

“So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”—2 Corinthians, 5: 17-19.

True reconciliation demands that there is recognition of an offense and an attempt at reparation. Reconciliation calls for the recognition of the dignity of all human beings and enables people to determine their own destiny. When we do not have respect for basic human rights, we will not have justice or peace.

In Chile and Mexico, and many countries in South and Central America, people carry a heavy burden from the trauma caused by violence, hunger, and injustice. This same reality is also present in many of the people of Asia South, especially in Cambodia, Myanmar and Nepal. One of the tasks of Christians in these countries is to walk with the people and assist them as they search for well being. This search for healing can be done in union with religious leaders of these countries. For example, we have a lot to learn from

Buddhist monks and their search for wisdom and life. Little by little, we can learn that respect for cultural and religious diversity can be an important road to peace and reconciliation in our world.

PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION



The theme for this issue and our Lenten journey, Peace and Reconciliation, is emphasized by Fr. Paul Masson in the cover article. The four pillars of the Affiliate movement: Spirituality, Community, Global Vision, and Action, are also reinforced by other articles in this issue.

We are thrilled that the Spanish version of the *Not So Far Afield*, *No Tan Lejos del Horizonte*, is also beginning under new leadership of Spanish speaking Affiliates. We look forward to sharing articles with them, and they with us, in future issues.

Thank you to all who have been providing articles about your mission activity – and photos (Captions with names and locations are a big help.)! Keep it up. Paula and I have been editing the NSFA since last summer as Fred was preparing to move. In her quest for an inspiring, attractive, and effective newsletter, Paula has quietly made some small changes – can you tell what they are?

We always welcome your suggestions to improve the Affiliate newsletter. Contact us at nsfa@MaryknollAffiliates.org.

Not So Far Afield is a bimonthly publication of the Maryknoll Affiliates. The name is a play on the title of the original Maryknoll Magazine: *The Field Afar*.

Maryknoll Affiliates are a faith-filled people responding in community to God's call to participate in Jesus' mission. We express the Maryknoll Spirit in the context of Chapters which gather for prayer, reflection, and action. We challenge one another to go beyond borders, locally and globally, to walk with the poor and excluded, and to strive for peace and justice for all of God's creation. We recognize that the Spirit who guides us on our journey moves without boundaries and that God's unconditional love is present in all cultures and peoples.

Affiliates share in the mission and family spirit of Maryknoll Sisters, Fathers and Brothers, and Lay Missioners living lives of service in more than 30 countries.

If you would like further information or an opportunity to attend a local chapter meeting in your area, please contact the Executive Coordinator of the Maryknoll Affiliates at P.O. Box 311, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0311 or call toll free 877-897-2386 or e-mail inquiry@maryknollaffiliates.org.

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND MAC 2014

The Albany Chapter Planning Committee is moving forward with preparations for MAC 2014, scheduled for June 19-22, 2014, at Stony Point.

The theme, "**Maryknoll Affiliates—The Third Wave Emerging into the Future**," was inspired by an article in the July/August 2012 issue of *Maryknoll Magazine*: "Riding a Mission Wave," by Gerald Kelly, MM. In his article, Father Kelly explains that the term "third wave of mission" was originally coined by Father Robert Schreiter to refer to the current situation in which lay people have become the principal agents of mission.

According to Fr. Schreiter, the "First Wave" describes missionaries of the 15-17th centuries who accompanied traders out of Europe; the "Second Wave" describes long-term missionaries of the 19-20th centuries who belonged to mission societies or religious orders, like the Maryknoll Society and Congregation. The "Third Wave," in which lay people are becoming the principal agents of mission, clearly encompasses the Maryknoll Lay Missioners and Maryknoll Affiliates. It is reflected in the mission awareness component of Faith Formation programs and in the growth of "sister" parishes participation. As Fr. Kelly said, hopefully all of this "will bring about a tidal wave of mission in the future."

John Sivalon, MM, who served in Tanzania, then as superior general of the Maryknoll Society (2002-08), has agreed to be our **keynote speaker**. He currently teaches theology at the University of Scranton, PA, and wrote *God's Mission and Postmodern Culture—the Gift of Uncertainty*, published by Orbis Books in 2012.

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We welcome submission of articles by Maryknoll Affiliates and Maryknoll Missioners as well as suggestions for articles. Articles are published in as timely a manner as possible and in conjunction with appropriate themes when applicable. All submissions are subject to editing.

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

Please send any letters to the editor, articles, photos or inquiries to the address below. You may also contact us if you no longer wish to receive Affiliate mailings, prefer to receive them by e-mail or read them on the web, or if you have changed your address.

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FINDING CARLA IN LA BANDERA

Jacqueline Maggiore - Greater Milwaukee Chapter

In October 2012, Jackie Maggiore visited the población La Bandera in Chile, where Sr. Carla Piette had lived, to introduce **Aqui Quiero Estar**, the Spanish translation of her book, **Vessel of Clay: The Inspirational Journey of Sister Carla**.*

News of my visit had spread only two days earlier, so I wondered if anyone would really show up, but soon at least 30 men and women had come, one or two at a time and greeting one another with energetic conversation and *abrazos*—hugs. Centro Cultural de Alerce is indeed “the people’s center.” Everything has been donated by the residents themselves, from portable drapes on a clothesline and small computer monitors lined up for training, to food and beverages to share that evening.

People eagerly pointed out to me that the “Carla and Ita Community Chapel” had stood directly across the street from this Center. First we watched (with no sound, as the audio could not be made to work) a special film of a memorial of Carla and Ita held years ago in that chapel. The chapel, and the presence of Carla and Ita, was of great importance to their lives, and bonds created in that community continue to be strong.

Next, I briefly described my lifelong friendship with Carla—her humor and courage; seeing her for the last time in 1976; why I wrote about her life; that I’m so happy to now share Spanish copies of the book with them; and, most of all, my heartfelt appreciation for being invited here. People then introduced themselves and shared memories of Carla. Everyone spoke. No one interrupted. Many vividly recalled Carla’s leadership of St. Joseph the Worker building project team. As construction supervisor, she came with an itemized checklist and assignments; they fondly described her as the Sergeant, the Director, the Boss, the forceful one in charge. Several described Carla’s brave actions during the military regime and her willingness to visit day or night with anyone ill or suffering.

With quiet dignity, one man stated that Carla and Ita “taught us we could do things for ourselves. These women believed in us.” Another stressed that the women were always “working for the people,” and heads nodded in agreement. Pablo Ruiz did not know of Carla and Ita until later, but seeing her and Ita named as human rights heroes, he chose to familiarize himself with them. For these people, Carla and Ita are clearly still alive, held in high esteem, giving inspiration for their own actions today.

Everyone spoke with such honesty and respect that I was overwhelmed by their quiet, deep passion. With

tears rolling down my face and unable to speak, I simply absorbed being present in this place where my friend Carla had lived and worked, sharing memories with people who knew her and whom Carla loved...a profound, holy experience. I felt blessed to be here.

Next a lace cloth was placed on a table and a woman stood to present me with unexpected special gifts from their community... a tiny bowl, a goblet and a candleholder... vessels of clay. With tears again flowing I leapt to embrace her, knocked the small bowl to the floor, and it broke. I felt terrible, but as we bent to



pick up the pieces together she reassured me with her engaging, warm smile, “It’s okay—you can fix it!”

The lights were dimmed, the candle lit and placed in the small candleholder, and an impromptu prayer service

begun. Everyone joined in—the Christians, the Marxist, Communist, atheist, and the American visitors. Special prayers were offered for the people of dictatorships everywhere and for the students now protesting in Chile.



Miguel Cruz, Jackie Maggiore, Camila Leiva (translator), and Sr. Linda Donovan, MM, behind Jackie

The evening was a powerful experience of community. Carla and Ita’s “chapel” lives here, wherever the people gather. How appropriate that the first people to see and hold this Spanish translation are Carla’s old friends and neighbors. In this gathering, I was welcomed so warmly, it was hard to leave. It takes a wonderful long time to say good-bye, even when you don’t speak the same language, when wholehearted, warm *abrazos* are flowing all around.

**Sr. Carla and Sr. Ita Ford (one of the El Salvador martyrs) were working together in Chile when their jeep was caught in a swollen river. Carla saved Ita but then drowned. See www.ifcla.net/site2/?p=13198.*

SANDY: A SPIRIT-FILLED REACTION

Ronni Gilligan – Long Island Chapter

During the early summer, I seemed to have trouble getting to the beach. Little did I expect that it would come to me with a vengeance. Not only the beach, but the entire Long Island Bay came; thanks to a full moon and a full tide, I had a full downstairs. It was powerful, and my neighbors and I felt powerless, standing on the porch watching the water just coming...coming up the street, coming up the stairs...coming up! All kinds of stuff came flowing past the house—tables, a portapotty, railings, and one guy in a kayak.

As fast as it came, it left. By ten o'clock it was finished! About 4.5 feet of water covered everything on ground floors throughout the neighborhood. My couches, TVs, bed, all had to be thrown out...carpets, rugs, wall board, boiler, heater, everything. From the garage, I was able to save a few beach chairs, but bikes were broken, the BBQ grill, skis, skateboards, scuba stuff, workbench gone. A zillion things went to the curb. And I was the lucky one! Many of my neighbors lost everything. Others lost photos, prom dresses, trophies, etc.



Everyone had to muck out, and the streets were filled with personal belongings, memories, and smelly plasterboard. It was awful. One neighbor spent more than four days pumping out his garage. I asked if he had the other end in the ocean. There was no heat, no lights or power except from two generators going 24/7. No utility water for two days and no drinkable water for two weeks. This is the kind of stuff we see on TV, not in our neighborhoods.

But here's the good part. People were wonderful, beginning with neighbors who shared everything and really looked after one other. Many of us opted to stay. Groups from all over came, bringing food. US Army tanks and armored vehicles provided security, helicopters hovered overhead, college kids helped muck out, Knights of Columbus and different restaurants barbecued outside for all...free! Water distribution centers were set up, and Army-ready meals were delivered. Clothing closets and food pantries

were always busy. One day, there was someone at our corner on a loudspeaker offering blankets and UNDERWEAR. If people went somewhere for the night, they would bring back food and news. Of course they couldn't travel much as there was almost no gas available (a friend spent nine hours in line) for those who hadn't lost their cars.

Storm Sandy made me think of all the people with whom I had lived at different times who never have electricity or running water. Many of our Maryknoll friends minister to such people. I remembered the nights I was freezing in Pogredz, Albania. The two days after the New York hurricane were quite sunny and beautiful, but at night, when it got too cold, people would simply go to bed.

Each of us was deeply etched by those weeks. We could see who was having a bad time coping with the reality of it all. One of the most beautiful happenings for me was one really COLD afternoon, when my hands were freezing. I'd just stepped outside when Annette and Timmy came by. She said, "Oh, Ronni, I just got this for you" (which was obviously not exactly true). Looking at her styrofoam cup of steaming chicken soup, I said, "Please let me just hold it for a minute." "No, no, I got it for you!" she insisted. It was a beautiful moment of Communion, of total giving, incomplete had I not accepted. It was a moment of true blessing.

There were so many times that the Spirit of God was really holding us up; for example, almost as soon as we got electricity, the houses were lit up for Christmas, to celebrate the Spirit of the Neighborhood this year, as well as the Spirit of Love. I pray that the brokenness and losses of this storm will be lessened through the coming months. May God and 2013 bring us all that we need, plus a little more laughter. May all of our epiphanies be "chicken soup!"

PRAYER FOR THE JOURNEY

*Lord, I thank you,
you have looked into my heart,
you have laid your hand upon me,
and have set a road before me;
you have called me, "Come apart."
Lord, I pray you, that I see all with your eyes,
that you take me by the hand
on the road to other lands,
one with you for all my days.*

Father John Halbert, M.M.

From The Maryknoll Book of Prayer, p 3.

LA – SIERRA CLUB SKID ROW WALK

Jean Menton – Los Angeles Chapter

As a new member of the LA Chapter, I want to share my reaction to an annual event I recently attended—a midwinter, midnight walk through Skid Row. The enthusiasm of the Maryknoll Affiliates for this annual partnership with the Sierra Club nudged me into the experience. I thank those Affiliates who have made the walk an important part of their story—it has added a new dimension and realization to my life.

We met at midnight at the Metro Gold Line Chinatown Station in downtown Los Angeles. We were about 180 strong, many young folks, carrying backpacks of various sizes, pulling wheeled luggage, rolling carts, at least two wagons, and boxes and bags of all sizes. We carried food, water, blankets, toiletries, socks, sweaters, shirts, pants, coats, scarves, hats, gloves and who knows what else! The social aspect to the walk was evident as we gathered for some group directions.

First we offered this prayer:

Watch now O Christ

*With those who are weary or wandering
or weeping this night.*

Guide them to a house of peace

And lead me to be caring for their tears.

Then our Affiliate group set off walking in a light sprinkle. The rain (only people in southern California would call it rain) lasted only fifteen minutes or so. It was just long enough to dampen the sidewalks and cardboard houses laid out on the sidewalks.

The homeless people we encountered, numbering in the hundreds, were overwhelmingly pleasant, especially given their situation. There were many African Americans, and the number of men far outnumbered the women, perhaps 10 to 1. They thanked us, blessed us, wished us a Merry Christmas, and in some cases looked for and received hugs in return.

It was very humbling to be welcomed for our small gifts and the gift of our presence. They were very appreciative of our offerings. Even the candy canes were received with enthusiasm and smiles.

Reflecting on the walk upon returning home at 4:00 AM, I found myself wondering just how I would prepare myself for the nightly indignity of life on the streets: the cold, the damp, the rain, gathering my belongings or trying to store them somewhere safely to be found the next evening or when I needed them during the day.



Typical
Skid Row
street
scene

I thought about the fear, the intimidation I would feel from the authorities who might want me to be invisible. The lack of grocery stores or laundromats and the trash on the streets were evident. I wondered if I would be as gracious as I found the people to be?

I know this experience will cause me to pray and ponder just how I am called to respond to this injustice on the streets. I do not know yet, but I do know that I have encountered the face of Christ.

WAYS TO MEET POTENTIAL NEW AFFILIATES

Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss – Portland Chapter

Like most chapters, we need to invite new members to replace members who have moved on. And new members bring their own gifts to enkindle our mission spirit. These are two methods to try for your chapter:

Participate in a Mission Education program.

We attended an excellent weekend session of Mission Education in Seattle. It was developed by **Matt Dulka**, a mission educator for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, and led by **Kevin Foy** and **Kris East**. We reviewed the basis of our call to mission, discussed the wide range of mission opportunities, participated in inspiring liturgy, and received videos and other resources. Even better, we met a number of new folks interested in mission and in possibly becoming Maryknoll Affiliates!



Connect with JustFaith, which is an adult education and discussion program focusing on justice and Catholic Social Teaching. During the *JustFaith* program,

participants also learn about Maryknoll and are offered the opportunity to do an immersion program led by Maryknoll Lay Missioners. *JustFaith* graduates are anxious to put their new social justice knowledge to work. One *JustFaith* graduate has joined our Affiliate Chapter, and another applied to be a Lay Missioner.

ENGAGING WITH MAASAI GIRLS AT THE EMUSOI CENTER

Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss – Portland Chapter

In July, 2012, traveling with Portland Oregon parishioners hoping to twin with a parish in Moshi, Tanzania, I took advantage of our proximity to Arusha to connect my friends with a Maryknoll project. Sr. Mary Vertucci, MM, founded Emusoi in 1999 as an educational center for Maasai girls. Sr. Maureen Meyer, MM, sister of Affiliate John Meyer of Phoenix, has been in Tanzania for more than 40 years, and Sr. Jareen Aquino, MM, joined them recently.

“What is your favorite river?” “What is your favorite color?” The girls’ smiling faces and dark eyes showed intense concentration as they listened for our answers. Coached by Sr. Mary and Sr. Maureen, the girls were practicing their English. While they engaged us in conversation, their enthusiasm captured our hearts.



Photo by Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss

The Emusoi Center helps Maasai girls discover their future through secondary education. “Emusoi” means “discovery” or “awareness” in the Maasai language. The Maryknoll Sisters at Emusoi graciously helped us to gain awareness of the traditional Maasai way of life, to see how it is changing, and to understand how we can help their young women. They welcome visitors and also need financial and material donations.

We had seen the proud Maasai goat and cattle herders in their bright red cloaks as soon as we departed the Kilimanjaro airport. Near Ngorongoro National Park we visited a Maasai Cultural Village where men and women in traditional robes danced and sang for us. In the cold, biting wind, they shivered as their robes flapped.

Crouching, we entered the mud and cow dung bomas (huts) and talked with a village elder. He said that although the village was miles from any other settlement, their young people have the opportunity

to attend secondary school. In a classroom, young children were reciting the alphabet. We were encouraged to buy their handmade jewelry, and we also visited a hole-in-the-ground toilet. Watching women bringing in water jugs from afar, we saw that even in this idealized village, it would be a very hard and isolated life.

Maasai tradition encourages young girls to enter arranged marriages soon after puberty, with a dowry of cows paid to the bride’s father. Pursuit of secondary education could delay a young woman’s marriage and might discourage her from choosing to remain within the isolated village structure. In the forward to the book *Emusoi*, Tanzanian educator Tunu Bwegambile explains, “The Emusoi girls are at the very centre of the dilemma. They are torn between their conviction that the survival of their people depends on them going to school and their deep loyalty to a culture that does not traditionally have formal education.”

Rural primary schools, taught in Swahili, don’t adequately prepare students for secondary schools taught in English. To complicate things further, many of the students who come to the Center speak only their own tribal language.



Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss converses with several Emusoi students.

Photo courtesy of Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss

Sr. Mary had some students tell us their stories. Often girls are brought to Emusoi to prepare for a better future, to escape an early marriage, or to avoid female circumcision. Many cannot safely return home for many years. During our visit, a Tanzanian newspaper article discussed violence against women in Tanzania and their need for education and protection. The Emusoi Center protects and supports the young women through secondary school, and for those who can continue, even through college.

Our fellow parishioners were enthusiastic about their visit to the Emusoi Center. They found the Maryknoll Sisters refreshing, knowledgeable, and impressive, and the young Maasai women courageous and sweet. Besides financial help, we talked about returning next year to teach English and to spend more time helping the Maasai women get ready for their future.

Excellent resources describe how the Maasai life is changing with the changing climate and how encroaching farms and settlements are making good grazing land less available. The book, *Emusoi: Maasai Girls Tell Their Stories* at the Center, is available from Amazon and Powells.com. A recent Maryknoll Magazine article about Emusoi is available at <http://www.maryknollmagazine.org/index.php/magazines/317-expanding-the-maasai-horizon>. The Center has created an excellent and informative new web site. Please visit: www.EmusoiCentre.co.tz.

FIELD OF DREAMS CHIPOLE STYLE: A TANZANIAN DIARY

Kitty Schiltz – Seattle Chapter

* Planting Trees. In Chipole, Tanzania, we are building a Field of Dreams. It is 10 acres of clay soil that becomes hard as a brick after five months of exposure to Africa's equatorial sun. We wait for the rain to soften the soil so we can cultivate and plant. This year we hope to succeed.

We have 4,500 trees planted on 10 acres, and as we walk among them, Sister shouts "It's alive, alive!" upon seeing trees that have survived the hot sun and wildfires that have destroyed many of the trees in the last four years. She seems to know each tree as if it were a part of her very essence. Fortunately, many have survived. We have also cultivated the last 2.5 acres for 1000 additional trees, filling the entire field.

* *"Build it and they will come!"* In the middle of the field, there is a grass-roofed shelter called a "kibanda." Sister had intended to give workshops on various topics from starting tree seedlings and nurseries to making charcoal, as well as planting sunflowers and passion fruit. But plans to conduct workshops have been changed by the coincidences and synchronicities that just keep happening.

Two recent Gonzaga University graduates surprised us by their visit. We are not exactly located on

highways most traveled—3 1/2 hours by bus from a "city" and another 4 hours from the main Mbeya to Dar highway. But there they were one night, tall and young and smiling. One was John, a scientist helping people make clay ovens in Zambia, and the other, Emily, self-assured, from Malawi. We invited them to make charcoal with us the next morning.



Photo courtesy of Kitty Schiltz.

Roger and Kitty Schiltz visit with children at the Benedictine Sisters' school in Chipole, where the Tanzanian "Field of Dreams" is being built.

* Making Charcoal. There is something magical and wild about five people making charcoal together—Sister, John and Emily, and Kitty and I. We were all rushing around gathering corn cobs, grass for the wick, and sunflower stalks for fuel to use in making the briquettes, all the while asking John scientific questions. How many to burn? Trying all kinds of experiments and explanations. It was a frenzy with everyone loading the 50 gallon barrel. Sister had even remembered the matches. What excitement! What joy!

We pop popcorn with the corn-cob charcoal and the sunflower-briquettes and celebrate our being together. What we are experiencing isn't about the charcoal, but about us. How did we get here? What is pulling us together? "Build it and they will come." We are eating, singing, building together in one Body of Christ in the Field of Dreams, the Shamba la Ndoto.

* We have built the "Mlango Wa Paradiso"—the Door of Paradise. It's an arched doorway, 8 feet high and 5 feet wide, entering a path that continues to be arched for 120 feet. Growing on the arch there will soon be passion fruit. All are welcome. "Karibuni." I know this is a little corny, but try a little passion as you enter.



THE FOUR PILLARS: A WAY OF LIFE

Bob Short – Executive Coordinator

To strive to live by the values of community, spirituality, and action for good would seem to be foundational life pillars for just about everyone. After all, who would not long for a peaceful life centered on the deeper things of the spirit, supported and challenged by a loving community, and committed to meaningful actions that better our world? Unfortunately, the reality is, very few among us opt in this direction. Ambition, addiction, status, heartbreak, fear and the everyday struggles to pay the bills and keep up, are among the life-depleting culprits here. I don't know all the reasons for this, but the list is surely very long.

When that remaining, and probably most identifiably Maryknoll, Affiliate pillar of global vision is attached

ACTION: *“Maryknoll Affiliates are committed to solidarity with the poor, oppressed, and excluded persons of the world through actions for justice and peace.”*

RETREAT ENCOURAGES ACTION

Vivien Michals & Janet Rousso – New Orleans

When the New Orleans Affiliates met in September, we decided to have a Day of Prayer/Retreat centered around the Fourth Pillar of the Affiliate Movement—Action.

The Affiliates began the Advent Season with a Day of Prayer/Retreat guided and animated by Fr. Robert Jalbert, MM, director of Maryknoll Mission Education and Promotion. We met on Friday evening, December 7th, at our regular meeting place; Saturday, a caravan of ten Affiliates traveled to Caritas, a farmhouse/retreat in Abita Springs, LA. This lovely and holy place gave us respite and a time of quiet.

Father Jalbert guided us in seeing God's presence as we reach out to those we work with daily. Fr. Jalbert's personal experience in Kenya provided many images

to the above-mentioned pillars, even more questions, more protests arise from many in the population. *“Why don't we take care of our own first?” “Charity begins at home!” “There are plenty of poor people here!” “Our country is the best!”* Etc. But Maryknollers, whichever their vocational expression, do not (cannot) split up the world this way. In fact, there appears to be an almost irrepressible inclination to go to other lands and cultures only to learn after being there for a time that we are all one after all.

Two quotes come to mind. The first is Thoreau's when he said that,

“Most people live lives of quiet desperation...”

If we are not spiritually grounded and living in a community that helps us to go out to others, it isn't much of a stretch to think that quiet desperation could easily follow. The second quote from Margaret Mead is well known:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

Affiliates invite all who are inspired by the Maryknoll mission vision to try to live out these four pillars. We believe that in this way, we will have a much better chance to create a truly global community.

of the poor for us to reflect upon as we quietly prayed with our own experiences. Our quiet time centered around three personal questions:

1. How have I been taught to be in right relationship with God and others? How have these people revealed God to me? Who has God used in my life to “stretch” me beyond my boundaries?
2. How have my attitudes toward the poor been challenged and changed over the years?
3. How has my experience with Maryknoll helped me to better understand, recognize, and embrace who God is calling me to become?

Throughout the sessions, Fr. Jalbert invited us to share reflections. **Jimmy Huck, Jr.**, commented:

“For me, the most invigorating parts of Catholic spirituality revolve around the social teachings of the Catholic Church and their emphasis on global mission and solidarity with the poor. The Maryknoll Affiliate movement, by embracing and promoting the centrality of this element of Catholic spirituality, has been the saving grace for me with regard to my own sense of feeling a part of the Catholic community.”

I owe my identity as a Catholic to my friends and fellow members of the New Orleans Maryknoll Affiliates group.”

The Eucharist completed our day on this holy ground of Caritas. We gathered around the altar, conscious of those not able to be present, and prayed and sang, accompanied by **Mary Ann Becnel** on guitar. At the Offertory, six of our newer Affiliates, proud to commit themselves to the values and mission of Maryknoll, signed the Covenant



Ed and Vivien sign the Covenant.

Photo courtesy of Janet Russo

Kim Nunez, our newest Affiliate, filled with the Maryknoll charism during the Mission Education workshop facilitated by Deacon **Matt Dulka** in Lent 2012 and again during her participation in our Chapter community, described her experience:

“This past year has been incredibly special to me as my life and spirituality have deepened and grown through my association with Maryknoll and with all of you! What an incredible time it has been, and signing the covenant as a Maryknoll Affiliate was a very moving moment for me.”

Fr. Jalbert taught us to say, as the people of Kenya say, “*Mungo yupo*—God is here with us.” Together we went forth from this holy moment with the understanding that we find God in the ordinariness of life. Nourished with a new awareness of God in our present moment and a new commitment to be in solidarity with the poor, we left with a renewed sense of mission both in our workplace and in our day-to-day living. The retreat spoke to a spirituality coming from our identity, created deeply in the image and presence of God.

Maryknoll immersion program to Guatemala, June 11–19, 2013, especially for educators and ministers. \$500 cost covers in-country transportation, lodging, meals, and stipends. Airfare to/from Guatemala not included. Passport required. No visa needed. To learn more, contact mission promoter coordinator Kris East at Keast@Maryknoll.org or phone 510.276.5021.

PUTTING OUR EXCESS TO GOOD USE

Gabriella Maertens – Portland Chapter

When I volunteered in the program for the homeless at Portland’s St. Andre Bessette Catholic Church, familiarly known as the Downtown Chapel, I was asked to help at their Women’s Clothes Closet. There were basic rules for what each woman could acquire and how often. I helped the women “shop” for what they needed. The Men’s Clothes Closet had a similar arrangement. I noticed the Closets needed more clothing, especially in larger sizes.

After volunteering at the Downtown Chapel, I asked my St. James Small Faith Community if they would be interested in collecting clothes for the Downtown Chapel as a project. Assured of their backing, I explained the project to my pastor at St. Therese Parish, noting that recently the St. Vincent DePaul Society in Portland had been forced to close their used clothing stores because of financial problems.

Father encouraged us to place a large bin in the vestibule of the church. Our parish bulletin carries a request for clothing donations as space permits. Parishioners are happy to have an excuse to clean out their closets or a worthy place for clothing if a loved one dies. The bin regularly fills up, so now we’ve added a second bin. I check the bins each week and usually fill a van once a month with good usable clothing. When I travel, my prayer group members pick up the donations and store them until I return.

Once a month I deliver the clothes we’ve collected to St. Andre Bessette Catholic Church for the homeless men and women. Sometimes we also deliver clothes to Rose Haven, for abused women and their small children, or to the Francis Center for families. They all appreciate the amount and quality of the clothing we bring.

We fill a need, and our excess is put to good use. This project is not difficult to organize and costs hardly anything to carry out. Having the support of my community is vital because I could not do it by myself. When you see a need in your community, I encourage you to think who might work on it with you.



Gabriella collects clothing for the homeless.

Photo courtesy of Gabriella Maertens

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you and be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” —Matt 28:19-20

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Florence Carey - NE Florida Chapter

My knowledge of Maryknoll began as a child when my mother received the Maryknoll magazines. Finally, this past April, having reared our four children, I took my first mission immersion trip, going to Guatemala City and to Esquipulas, Guatemala, and applied Jesus's Great Commission.

In preparation, I took a year of college Spanish to brush up, not knowing where or when I would be going. When Deacon **Larry Hart** (NE Florida Chapter) called me about a trip, my husband, who knew how much I had wanted to go on a mission trip, urged me to take this opportunity to travel to Guatemala. Matt Rousso, our leader, said all I needed was a tetanus shot and a passport. He arranged for us to stay in a comfortable house and for Martha, a great cook, to prepare safe and healthy foods.

Esquipulas is a popular pilgrimage site for Mexicans and other Latin Americans. Its people are very warm, hospitable, humble and gracious, and at Mass they have a beautiful way of worshiping Our Lord in song and prayer. The basilica enjoys a constant flow of visitors who come requesting miracles. I was also hoping for a miracle when I lit a candle for a specific request, and I have seen some of the effects from that prayer.

I was deeply moved seeing people, many of whom were women dressed in beautifully colored Mayan clothing, walking up a steep hill to visit a pilgrimage site. Some were carrying small children and others were very elderly. We learned that they were praying for their relatives who had left for the U.S. to work in our fields, to pick our crops. We did not know if their relatives suffered illness, hunger, or death.

One of our visits was to the home of a family who have 14 children, eight still at home. The 43-year-old mother shared with us that her husband used to read the Bible all the time, but he began drinking and stopped reading the Bible. Inspired by Jesus's words in the Great Commission, I told her that Jesus is our Savior and loves her very much. I said I would pray that her husband gives up drinking and returns to reading the Word.

IMMERSION, COVEY-STYLE

Ron Covey – Houston Chapter

Ron Covey works extensively at Caminando Por la Paz, and met with Matt Rousso's group.

Mario Torrez, Guatemalan Maryknoll Affiliate, and I both work at Caminando Por La Paz in Guatemala City. We met Matt Rousso's group, including **Florence Carey**, at the Guatemala City airport and traveled with them to Casa Nazaret in Esquipulas. Matt, an Affiliate from New Orleans, is a mission educator for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers and has been taking immersion groups to Guatemala for many years. He has numerous contacts and friends in Esquipulas who often drop by the house. One boy of 14 or so brought a painting as a gift to thank Matt for helping him learn woodworking.



The mission group in Esquipulas, Guatemala: (back row) Florence Carey, NE Florida Affiliate; Mario Torres, Guatemala Affiliate; Matt and Janet Rousso, New Orleans Affiliates; (front row) Ron Covey, Houston Affiliate; Mary Ann; and another participant.

Matt's immersion groups visit families, schools, and *casas de ancianos* (old folks homes) to exercise a ministry of presence. We went to a primary school that gave a little performance for us. In return, much to their delight, we all showed them the Hokey-Pok-ey. Putting these experiences into

a mission perspective, Matt provided background and reflection time. We talked about the impact on the community of Guatemalans migrating north, and the country's many years of civil war and violence.

All of Guatemala still struggles with the violence and poverty that flowed from that conflict. Our main efforts at Caminando Por La Paz, following Fr. Tom Goekler MM, are to help poor children get and stay in school, and to show the community love and cooperation. We also provide space for groups raising awareness of domestic violence and help to improve homes of the poor; and we organized the community to construct a soccer field. We encourage U.S. participation at the Caminando, and in Matt's groups.

ARE YOU BEING CALLED?

The Maryknoll Affiliate Board Nomination Committee is looking for individuals who share our desire to building a strong and sustainable organization that promotes the charism of Maryknoll and are committed to living out the four pillars of the Maryknoll Affiliates—Spirituality, Global Vision, Community, and Action. Do you (or a person you nominate) have the skills, dedication, and desire to serve as a **Board Member**?

Board members are responsible for policy development, major decision-making, and promotion of the over-all wellbeing of the Maryknoll Affiliate movement. The Board writes and/or approves policies that clarify purpose, principles, and goals; develops clear measures of progress on goals; and sets priorities for subsequent action.

Please submit your Board nomination to Lee Fermin (Iferrin70@yahoo.com). Registered users can download the Nominations Form or complete it online. Please include nominee's contact information, a brief summary of qualifications, and letter of recommendation from the nominee's Affiliate chapter. In addition, nomination letters should state that the person agrees to be nominated, acknowledges the responsibilities of serving on the Board, and will actively participate in good faith.

Nominees should have been an affiliate in good standing for one year; be familiar with the Maryknoll entities: The Society of the Fathers & Brothers, Congregation of the Sisters, and the Lay Missioners; and have basic computer/email skills. Board membership information:

- **Term:** Appointment will be for a three-year term with option to renew for another three years.
- **Meetings:** Members are expected to attend two Board meetings annually.
- **Transportation:** Members are responsible for their own transportation to and from Board meetings.
- **Participation:** Members collaborate with other members to provide leadership, wisdom, creativity, and sound policy-making for present and future development of the Affiliate movement.
- **Committees:** Members must be open to participation in active subcommittees of the Board.

Nominations are accepted on an ongoing basis and are considered as vacancies arise. Nominee review and selection of Board members will be carried out by the Nomination and Executive Committees of the Board.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of this area of service for Maryknoll Affiliates.

NEWS FROM THE KNOLL

MARYKNOLL MISSION INSTITUTE EVENTS:

June 2-7 Dying to Live: Migration, Globalization, and the Human Journey – Daniel Groody, CSC

June 9-14 Disciple(ship) Today: The REAL Challenge of the New Evangelization – Anthony J, Gittins, CSSp

June 16-21 The Missionary Spirit and the Spirit in Our Time – Diarmuid O'Murchu, MSC

Application forms and program descriptions may be found at www.maryknollsisters.org

THE GATHERING 2013 – May 22-25

With the motto, "**A Maryknoll Society Gathering at Pentecost – Come Holy Spirit,**" this will be a time for renewal through prayer, creativity, and planning for Mission into the future.

MARATHON!

Mara Rutten has been accepted to Maryknoll Sisters and ran a marathon in February to pay off her student loans. Follow Mara's vocational journey at mara-journey.blogspot.com.

PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR:

Roy L. Bourgeois, who has been dismissed and laicized by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome, effective October 4, 2012. Roy Bourgeois' address is: S.O.A. Watch, P. O. Box 3330, Columbus, GA 31903.

Sr. Margaret Rose Winkelmann, MM, who died on January 8, 2013, at the age of 96, after 70 years of service, largely in Tanganyika.

Sr. Mary Diggins, MM, a longtime missionary to China and Maryknoll Sister for 71 years, who died at the age of 89 on February 2, 2013.

Sr. Helen Wild, MM, who died on February 4, 2013 at the age of 97, having served almost 70 years in various US locations and Bolivia.



The May/June issue of *Not So Far Afield* has the theme of **GOING FORTH**. Please send your articles and news about your chapter by early April to nsfa@maryknollaffiliates.org.

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