



Not So Far Afield

A NEWSLETTER OF THE MARYKNOLL AFFILIATES

May/June 2012

Volume 21 Number 2

GOD'S LOVE MADE VISIBLE IN CREATION

Lilia María de Henríquez and Lucía Ramazzini – Guatemala

The love of God is visible when we contemplate creation. Mother Earth gives us life, embraces us, and receives us in her womb.

In Monte María School, we are convinced of the urgent need for questioning and reconstructing our relationship with nature, with Mother Earth, especially because we are part of a socioeconomic system that violates her dignity and rights, giving privilege to individualism and accumulation.

Our Christian-political commitment invites us to embrace the Earth and all living creatures of Creation as sacred and, as we interact with each other, to build our Common House.

This is why, in Monte María's Project:

We assume ethical principles and a responsible process that shows a reverence to the Earth and an adequate use of resources and our population needs.

- We accept the challenge of assuming a place in creation, being transforming agents that are aware of the need to establish justice, believing in respectful relationships among people and the rest of creation.
- We want to build the present without putting in danger the lives and needs of our future generations.
- We want to be agents of hope, suggest different ideas, and go from the protest to the proposal.

All of these are part of what the Maryknoll legacy has given to us, because sixty Sisters lived their ministry in Monte María. The first Maryknoll century is a great moment to recognize them as pioneers and visionaries of nature's value in the learning process. Monte María School in Guatemala is the product of the seed that Maryknoll planted 60 years ago, and in recognition of their service, in 2011 we named our nature reserve, "Maryknoll Sisters."

Our students enjoy being in "Maryknoll Sisters," a nature reserve that went from being an abandoned area to a pedagogical, enjoyable, and spiritual place to meet with oneself, with God, and



Photo by Fred Goddard

with the rest of the creatures of creation. In it, there is a diversity of trees, flowers, birds, and butterflies species. It is a green area of over 25 acres, one of the few in the city. Its transformation has been a task promoted by the school's authorities and accomplished mainly by the Monte María graduate in charge of our eco-pedagogical program, helped by gardeners, rangers, and maintenance personnel. It is an open space for the process of learning abilities, attitudes, and values that support the protection, maintenance, and development of the ecosystem that it protects. It allows an integral development of people who live in harmony and see themselves as part of nature—not outside, against or over it.

The "Maryknoll Sisters" nature reserve is a place filled with nature's wisdom; from the very depths of Mother Earth, it embraces life and commits us to be Women in Action. It is a place where nature talks and awakens us and our feelings, and we are filled with energy. It is a place where we remember God's love through nature. It is a sacred place.

When Maryknoll Sisters come to a country, they plant a seed. When it grows and is ready to bear its fruit, they pass on to others the responsibility for nurturing that seed. When they retire, the rest of the community members take up their mission. In the "Maryknoll Sisters" nature reserve, a medlar tree was planted by 14 sisters who are still making God's love visible in different communities of our country. A document with their signatures was placed in a chest and buried in the roots of the tree. There is also a sign that says: "As we celebrate 100 years of the Maryknoll Mission Movement, 14 Maryknoll Sisters share their lives with us through nourishing a new life."

After 60 years, the Maryknoll spirit is more alive than ever in Monte María, and it calls us to continue raising "women who transcend."

Lilia María de Henríquez is Coordinator for the Evangelization Department and Lucía Ramazzini is Coordinator for the Social Sciences Department.



Photo by Paul Masson MM

MARYKNOLL AFFILIATES WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE
AUGUST 31, SEPTEMBER 1-2, 2012
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
WATER: SANCTIFIER AND QUENCHER

Join many other Maryknoll Affiliates, who will gather together to listen to inspiring insights, share ideas, unite in prayer, renew friendship, participate in fun activities and see the other side of Las Vegas.

Keynote Speakers: **Sister Rose Marie Cecchini MM** and **Fr. Max Oliva, S.J., M.B.A.**



Sr. Rose Marie is coordinator of the Office of Life, Peace, Justice and Creation Stewardship under the auspices of Catholic Charities of Gallup Diocese, which promotes Gospel-based responses and activities addressing peace, justice and ecological issues of concern.

Fr. Max Oliva, S.J., M.B.A. teaches ethics at Regis University in Henderson, Nevada.



See our [website](#) or call Lee Fermin at 702-513-8444 for the registration form, for more information or if you have any questions.

PERUVIAN REGIONAL MEETING
 Rev. Jim Madden MM

The Maryknoll Affiliates in Peru held a regional meeting in Arequipa on February 19, 2012. This was the first time that Affiliates from Lima attended. They were **Alberto Bailetti** and **Lucy Málaga** from the Sembradores de Amor chapter in formation.

Maria Farfan (Regional Coordinator for Peru) directed the meeting well. Twenty people were present; two from Lima, two from Puno and sixteen from Arequipa.

Maria read a page of the principal commitments of the affiliates. Then she put four questions to the group to report from each area as they broke into Arequipa, Lima and Puno groups.

Most of the meeting involved those reports. Lima was first and all were very interested in their work in the two shelter/homes for the boys and girls. Alberto mentioned that they had recruited four new young members to their chapter, so they had already fulfilled that suggestion of a new person for the next four years!

At the end of mass I was requested to give a general report of the Affiliates. Following that was a fine meal and after that most people stayed around for good socializing, a promising step.

In 2011, Affiliates in Arequipa organized a celebration for Maryknoll's centennial. A DVD of the celebration is available upon request from the Maryknoll Affiliate office.

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.

Jeanette Birondo-Goddard	Nick Petraglia
Lee Fermin	Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss
Fred Goddard	Penny Robinson
Kris Neufeld	Paula Schaffner

We welcome submission of articles by Maryknoll Affiliates and Maryknoll Missioners and suggestions for articles. Articles are published in a timely a manner as possible and in conjunction with appropriate themes as is 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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**MARYKNOLL AFFILIATE BOARD MEETING
APRIL 12-15, 2012
REPORT FROM A FIRST TIME EXPERIENCE**
Kathie Gribble – Maryknoll Affiliate Board

Trying to catch the meaning of what they call the Maryknoll “charism” that seems to bind us Maryknollers into some kind of community kept me keenly attentive to all that was going on during the three days I spent in Ossining, N.Y. Maybe it is a style of doing things that is flexible and compassionate and always for the sake of what is needed for mission.

Learning of the diversity of chapters—in how they form, how they operate, how they communicate, and what they do for actions—gave me a sense of awe in just the goodness of it all, in spite of what the board called “messiness.” It is a different kind of holy ground experience, encountering the dedication, the leadership, careful planning, and fun activities of the April Board Meeting which interfaced at times with the Regional Coordinator’s Meeting.

I guess these gatherings are where that Maryknoll “charism” becomes a known, but elusive identity. The theme of this Board Meeting—*Appreciation, Transition, Transformation*—did capture what we were about concretely those three days, but seems to be part of what Affiliates are about everywhere in the world as they impact communities with God’s love. Hope in a challenging and changing world is our sacred call.

Long discussions from a variety of viewpoints, experience, and perspectives made for an enriching and enlightening meeting that resulted in final consensus. Several decisions were made and leadership roles filled as we made plans for the transition period ahead when we replace our Executive Coordinator, **Fred Goddard**.

Other events of the weekend included a Friday evening concert in the Asia Room at the Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers. This was a musical adventure featuring a large collection of different kinds of Native American and World Mission flutes.

The music was so hauntingly beautiful, it is hard to describe, and the refreshments that followed featured the best fresh lemonade I have ever tasted. The crowd of people that attended hung around long after to visit and learn more from these talented musicians, **Joe Arsenault, MM** and **John Sarantos**.

Another special event on Saturday night was a surprise party for our esteemed and departing Executive Coordinator, Fred. It was a joy to meet so many Affiliates from other chapters who came for this feast to honor Fred—from the Chapters in Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey and beyond. A book of appreciation letters and pictures was presented to him to celebrate the accomplishments of his many years of service and leadership.

On Sunday, the Maryknoll Sisters had a special Benefactor’s Mass and Luncheon to which they invited the Affiliate Board. Fred and I were honored to bring up the gifts for the mass. The Benefactor’s Luncheon was a very fine event with a presentation at the end by **Sister Claudette LaVerdiere, MM**, author of *On the Threshold of the Future*. This is a book on the life and spirituality of Mother Mary Joseph, founder of the Maryknoll Sisters.



Photo courtesy of Mary Moritz

Mary Moritz (Southeast US) presenting memory book to Fred and Jet Birondo-Goddard

MARYKNOLL AFFILIATES CARING FOR CREATION

The May/June edition of *Maryknoll* magazine had articles of how Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Lay Missioners and Sisters care for creation around the world. It even included an article on Maryknoll Affiliate **Beth Belgey** where she and her parish are prophetic advocates for the environment.

In this issue of *Not So Far Afield*, we also highlight just some of the involvements of Maryknoll Affiliates around the globe, from tree planting in North Carolina, to a nature reserve in Guatemala and a radical lifestyle of simple living in one of the places one would least expect, Reno, Nevada.

We hope that these stories serve as both an inspiration and challenge to live more gently on this earth.

SIMPLICITY AS CREATION CARE

Kyle Chandler-Isacksen – Reno

What do the words “radical simplicity” mean to you? Take a minute to let them run around in your head. How do you react to them? What feelings are evoked? Longing? Dismissal? Guilt? Joy? If you were practicing radically simple living, how would your life look? What would change and what would disappear? What would be created?

Jim Merkel, in his book, *Radical Simplicity*, defines global living as “an equitable and harmonious lifestyle among not only the entire human population but also among the 7-25 million other species and the countless unborn generations.” He then uses a metaphor of a potluck buffet where the reader is first in line. He says to imagine that the potluck includes all the materials needed for life, not just food and water. And behind you as far as you can see is the rest of life—human and non-human—waiting its turn. How much do you take? How much can each of us take so there’s enough for all? This question, for us at the *Be the Change Project*, is central to how we serve and how we relate to the breadth of creation.

We run an urban homestead and family learning center in Reno, Nevada. We are dedicated to joyful service and simplicity and use the framework of Gandhian Integral Nonviolence to guide our lives and work. Living simply is an essential foundational practice for all we do, and I hope that in the words ahead I can share some of what that looks like. In practice (and with missteps along the path) we incorporate the following:

- **Greywater:** All water used in sinks and showers goes into our landscaping—a “rain garden,” and nurtures trees, berry bushes, flowers and herbs.
- **Composting:** We compost everything (and then some) and import organic matter from the neighborhood (leaves, manure, etc.) to build soil fertility.
- **Gardening (and animals):** These provide food and beauty for our family and for neighbors.
- **Solar Cooking and Water Heating:** With Reno’s 300+ days of sun a year, this is low-hanging fruit.
- **Wood Stove:** We use local sources (lots of scrap wood) for heat, cooking, and hot water in the colder months.
- **No Fossil Fuels**
- **No Car**
- **No Electricity** (See “Regarding Electricity,” below.)
- **Eating Seasonally, Organically, and Locally**
- **Living below the Poverty Level:** No regular wage-earning job = less money = less consumption = more time at home, on the land, with our kids, and in the neighborhood = more sharing = more community = slowing down. War-tax resistance also happens here.
- **Natural Building:** We use local clay, sand, straw and reclaimed wood for renovations and new building.
- **Going Without:** We assess and reassess needs, cultivating patience on unfinished projects, creatively finding alternatives, ...and so on.

Regarding Electricity



Hermiano Leon

When people ask me why we live without electricity, I have a three-part answer. First, we are moving away from “Big Energy”—withdrawing our support from industries we all know are destructive to ourselves and the environment. Second, we are moving towards deeper connection with the rhythms of nature and the seasons. Lastly, living without electricity serves as a powerful “boink” for people. It challenges their conceptions of reality and of what is possible and spurs curiosity about our lives and this experiment we are living.

For me, what we are moving towards is where the real juice is. We are now in our eighth month of this project, having moved onto this land in August of last year—past the summer solstice as the days were already shortening. As the equinox passed and winter approached, our lives slowed down, way down. We began going to bed earlier each day and rising later. 7:30 PM was not an uncommon time for the whole family to go to bed. We noticed that our own young sons (ages 3 and 6) started asking to go to bed instead of fighting it and us (wow!). As we settled into the earlier evenings, we ate by candlelight, told more stories, played music, and sang in front of the glow of the fire. And never before had the approach of the winter solstice and the return of the light meant so much to me. We watched the sun rise a bit more southerly each morning until December 21, when it reached its southernmost point. We celebrated, had a fire outside, hosted a potluck, and went caroling in our neighborhood in the crisp air.

Now we approach the vernal equinox—the mid-way point. We have started working outside more, are eagerly planning bigger projects, are giddy with gardening prep work. I’ve noticed the buds on the blackberry canes, red-tailed hawks gathering nest materials, and the change of stars in the night sky. It’s worked! We are getting more connected to nature and see ourselves becoming more and more a part of nature rather than apart from nature. So much has been born out of something we turned off. Absence has given us more access to Creation. And we’ve just started down this path, stumbling and tripping along on our way. I look forward to seeing where it leads us.

What about you? What will you do at the buffet? A good place to start is to identify the low-hanging fruits in your life that you can harvest to move toward simpler living, towards Global Living. I always suggest giving up the TV and computer if you haven’t done that already. Maybe starting a garden or doing an electricity-free day each week. Can you bike to work? Can you work less and live on less? Find your edges and lean into them. So much abundance waits on the other side with the rest of those in line at the potluck.

Kyle and Katy Chandler-Isacksen (with their two sons) run the Be the Change project in the heart of Reno, Nevada. Contact them at 2055 McCloud Avenue, Reno, NV 89512 or by phone at 775-348-2505.



Mayor Bill Saffo digging a hole for planting a tree as Wilmington Historical Society Members look on.

FR. PRICE COMMEMORATIVE TREE PLANTING WITH SR. MARY ELLEN, MM

Story and Photos by Gaye Hieb and Jan Howard – Father Price/Wilmington

January in Wilmington, NC, brought beautiful, captivating weather—a perfect setting for the Father Thomas Frederick Price Memorial Tree Planting Ceremony, which took place along Fifth Avenue, a quaint, tree-lined boulevard in the Historic Downtown. It was our good fortune that the blue skies also brought us a visit from **Sr. Mary Ellen Kempken, MM**, representing the Maryknoll presence amongst a large group of onlookers and participants.



Sister Mary Eleen Kempken MM, Mayor Bill Staffo and Maryknoll Affiliate Dallas Midgette plant a tree in Wilmington.

The Wilmington Historic Society (WHS) helped fund the planting of fifty Live Oak trees in the Wilmington area. Of these, ten were planted along the divided avenue (Fifth



Sister Mary Ellen Kempken MM blessing a tree in downtown Wilmington, NC

Avenue) which runs from St. Mary Catholic Church, (built in 1912) northward towards the historic Bellamy Mansion, (built during the Civil War) on Market Street. Fr. Price's tree commemorated his life and mission, his contributions toward the spread of the Gospel (Catholic-style) and his total commitment to God's people.

Gaye Hieb, Fr. Price Affiliate Chapter organizer, opened the outdoor ceremonies, while Sr. Mary Ellen blessed the trees. Guests of all kinds joined in, including Maryknoll Affiliate members, local parishioners, Wilmington **Mayor Bill Saffo**, and even a 100-year-old WHS member, grabbing shovels and filling in each planting. Local media members, too, were on hand to witness the memorialization of a true hero of the Church, Thomas Frederick Price, native-born priest and social justice visionary who co-founded The Maryknoll Foreign Mission Society in 1912.

Mayor Bill Saffo hosted the closing portion of the event with a reception held at the lovely, restored antebellum-era Bellamy Mansion.



Maryknoll Affiliate Gaye Hieb, who opened the ceremonies.

GOOD STEWARDSHIP – LIVING IN SOLIDARITY WITH GOD’S CREATION

Story and Photos by Hans Zuuring – Missoula

All of our recent social justice and caring-for-creation activities have been oriented towards community building and education. As retired educators, my wife and I are involved in a number of ongoing projects: a community garden named “*Garden of Eaton*” and a sacred labyrinth, both located on *Blessed Trinity Catholic Church* property; sales of fair trade coffee and chocolate through *Catholic Relief Services (CRS)*; participation in a *Catholic Worker* farm located near Stevensville, Montana, and lastly, going green at our own home.

Community Gardens

The *Garden of Eaton* is part of a network of six community gardens that are coordinated by *Garden City Harvest (GCH)*, Missoula, Montana. This garden is the only one located on private property, and its irrigation system is subsidized by our church. Our gardeners come from our parish and are joined by members from an adjacent community. In particular, we interact with residents at the nearby *Joseph Residence*, a 16-unit low income housing complex that serves single moms with children.



Garden of Eaton

We currently have thirty 15'x15' garden plots, each tended by one or more persons, as well as several larger community plots tended by groups of gardeners. Through cooperation with GCH, bedding plants, manure, straw bales, and garden tools are provided during the growing season at a fee of \$40 per plot. Although the aim is for each gardener to be self-sufficient in terms of sustainable food production, we also educate each other in terms of choice of and how to grow vegetables organically (no chemicals) and how to make and use compost. Small children are also taught about various types of vegetables, how to plant the seeds and take care of them. We are blessed by an automatic sprinkler system that was installed free of charge by an authorized distributor (a parishioner at our church) of well-known commercial underground sprinkler systems. Having said all of that, the most important outcome of this garden is community building. We now interact with neighbors that were previously ignored by our parishioners.

Labyrinth

During the summer of 2010, with the help of volunteers, we built an eleven-circuit Chartres labyrinth on our church property near the *Garden of Eaton*. It is 58 feet in diameter and consists of two-foot-wide lanes bordered by stones and paved with wood chips over landscape fabric. Planted as

a border around the outer edge of the labyrinth are 48 evergreen shrubs. In the future, there will be an appropriate statue placed in the seven-foot-wide circular center of the labyrinth.



Blessed Trinity labyrinth

Upon completion of the labyrinth in October, 2010, we held a dedication and blessing ceremony of this sacred space. This ceremony was attended by about 30 parishioners under the leadership of **Fr. Ed Hislop**, our church pastor. The labyrinth has been used by a number of individuals who are troubled and suffering physically, psychologically or emotionally. As word has spread about the existence of the labyrinth, more and more people use it for meditation and psychological healing. *Partners in Home Hospice* and our parish, have invited all interested persons in Missoula to take part in a healing labyrinth walk on our church property to mark the beginning of spring and also the “springtime of our grief.”

Fair Trade

Our original desire to sell fair-trade goods was sparked by a meeting with a CRS representative at the summer 2007 Western Maryknoll Affiliate Conference in San Francisco. When we learned that CRS has no presence in the state of Montana, we decided to spread the word about the good works promoted and performed by that Catholic organization. Our fair-trade coffee and chocolate sales continue to take place once a month at several local Catholic churches in Missoula. Last Christmas we also sold some manger scenes crafted by artists from various countries such as Bolivia, Peru, and Indonesia. We purchased a consignment of these goods from *SERV*, a partner with CRS. Again, we are trying to educate parishioners to see that they have choices about what goods they purchase and that their informed choices can have a profound effect on the producers of those goods. Fair trade is free trade with a conscience. For instance, the growers of coffee beans from fair-trade cooperatives receive, on average, \$2 per pound, a livable wage that enables them to send their children to school and to provide medicine for their elders. Fair trade cooperatives also eliminate the illegal abduction of children for child labor. This is a win-win situation for both the producers and their socially-conscious consumers .

Catholic Worker Farm/Retreat

Richard and Becky Bishop operate a Catholic Worker farm located between Florence and Stevensville, about 23 miles south of Missoula. Frequently we have attended a *Clarification of Thought* meeting at the home, usually held once a month. The Bishop of the Diocese of Helena is scheduled

to bless this farm sometime this spring. The purpose of the farm is to serve as a haven of peace and tranquility for people who have worked in soup kitchens or assisted the poor in various ways in metropolitan cities and who are looking to recharge their energy by going to a rural retreat center such as a farm. In exchange for room and board in a country setting, guests work in a very large vegetable garden or perform other chores around the farm.

I have been working with volunteers to build sleeping accommodations for those guests, since the main farm house does not have enough space. Several farm outbuildings are being converted to living spaces, the first of which was started in 2011 when part of a small storage shed housing a boat was converted into a 10' x 10' prayer space. Additionally, part of a two-door garage/storage/shop area with an attached lambing shed is being converted into two sleeping rooms with a shared composting toilet. This conversion has involved some major alterations of the building, as well as removal of lots of junk and old wiring. We started with the floor, installing a vapor barrier and new plywood. Then we built some new stud walls to create two rooms and a shared bathroom. This year we plan to install new exterior windows and doors in existing walls, put new siding on the exterior, wire the two rooms with outlets and light switches, insulate the walls, hang drywall, mud, paint hanging interior doors for the shared bathroom, and install the composting toilet with appropriate venting. Upon the completion of these rooms, this Catholic Worker farm will accommodate many more guests.

Going Green at Home

On a personal note, we have installed a grid-tied 5.16 KW solar panel array on the roof of our home, energy efficient sliding patio doors, and an on-demand tankless hot water heater so as to reduce our ecological footprint. During the mostly cloudy winter months we have been able to generate a total of 1.1 Megawatts of electricity, with an average daily production varying from 1 to 21 KW, depending on snowfall, rain, clouds or sunshine. Solar power generation has saved 1,925 pounds of CO2 production, our attempt toward a cleaner planet. During the sunny days of June, July, and August, we hope to generate 40 to 50 KW of electricity per day.

It is amazing how being good stewards of God's creation can in turn help so many others and enrich our own lives in various and incalculable ways.



Solar Panels

STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION: WHY SHOULD I CARE AND WHAT CAN I DO?

Patrick Denevan—Portland Chapter, Oaxaca, Mexico

In the story of creation in the first chapter of the book of Genesis, as various phases were completed, we read six times, "And God saw that it was good." After creating humans, God blessed them and told them to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." And in verse 31, "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good."

However, as we look at the state of the world today, we see that things haven't worked out so well for God's new creation. John Paul II during an audience on Jan. 17, 2001, said

Unfortunately, if we scan the regions of our planet, we immediately see that humanity has disappointed God's expectations. Man, especially in our time has without hesitation devastated wooded plains and valleys, polluted waters, disfigured the earth's habitat, made the air unbreathable, disturbed the hydro geological and atmospheric systems, turned luxuriant areas into deserts and undertaken forms of unrestrained industrialization, degrading that "flower bed"...which is the earth, our dwelling place.

Today multiple articles, books and websites sadly document that global warming is causing dramatic changes in the world's climate with disastrous consequences for all living beings on earth.



Blessing our Land

Who is to blame for humankind's destructive and hostile behavior toward our world? Historian Lynn White Jr. said it was because God told humankind to "subdue" it, thus leading to extractive capitalism and the belief that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man. However, Columbian priest **Sean McDonagh** points out that the Hebrew word *shamar* means to *take care of*, not *rule over*, *exploit* or *dominate*. Also, in Genesis chapter 2, God took the man and put

him into the Garden of Eden to *till it and keep it*. Throughout both the Hebrew Scriptures (OT) and the Christian Scriptures (NT) we find exhortations to praise and thank God for the beauty and bounty of Creation. Jesus frequently used agricultural metaphors in his parables, e.g. weeds, wheat, vineyard, fig tree, yeast, lost sheep, rain etc.

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church says, “As regards the ecological question, the social doctrine of the church reminds us that the goods of the earth were created by God to be used wisely by all. They must be shared equitably, in accordance with justice and charity.” As John Paul said, “We must therefore encourage and support the ‘ecological conversion’ which in recent decades has made humanity more sensitive to the catastrophe to which it has been heading.”

I believe the degradation of our environment began in earnest with the industrial revolution and the insatiable need for natural resources to satisfy humankind’s desires for material progress based on predatory capitalism. While Christian traditions contain beliefs of praise for creation, modern Christianity has been slow to become “green”, but fortunately both Protestant and Catholic institutions have now become active and strong voices for caring for God’s creation.

As Maryknoll Affiliates and persons committed to building the Kingdom of God on earth with peace, justice and the integrity of creation, how can we respond to the catastrophe to which we are heading? We are surrounded by leaders and politicians who claim that climate change is a “hoax”, that the science on global warming is “uncertain”. It seems that there will precious little leadership in the US to look to solutions to this crisis. The poor of the world are the ones who will suffer first and most from the extremes of climate change. Even here in Oaxaca a former governor once said, when asked about the lack of drinking water in the city, “We have plenty of water to last for at least 15 years. So what is the problem?” What a far cry from the wisdom of a Native tribe in the US which says, “When you plan for the future, think of seven generations.”



Pat Denevan with Joel in milpa-Huatulco

We can learn much about caring for Mother Earth from the world’s indigenous peoples. When we started our Ecology Project in Oaxaca, a group of religious women came to bless the land with an indigenous and Catholic ceremony. Our project is a small demonstration area, and our slogan is “Let’s live in harmony with nature.” Before we plowed the land to plant our milpa (corn field) we asked permission of Mother Earth and asked her for an abundant harvest. We depend on Brother Sun to shine on our solar panels to generate electricity for our personal use and then send the excess to the Mexican Federal Electricity grid. Our agriculture is totally organic—our fruit trees are native to Oaxaca, and we fertilize with natural compost.

I personally had an *ecological conversion* after a course in Permaculture, and our Ecology Project is based on its principles... Take care of the land...Take care of the people. The skills of Carlos, one of our Oaxacan partners, Mary, a therapist, Liz, our other Oaxacan partner and friend, are used with the local women to promote integral health, self esteem and overall family well-being.

Our Maryknoll connections over many years serve as a basis for our current spiritual growth. James Anthony Walsh said we should “seek first the kingdom of God... and its justice.” We discover and meet God in all aspects of nature and among the people of Oaxaca. My spirituality is tending toward eco-theology, similar to the example of Fr. Thomas Berry. We continue our journey in search for the living God and find him/her in our work among the least of our brothers and sisters. In the words of Elizabeth Johnson, in *Quest For The Living God*:

Ecological theology proposes that the Creator Spirit dwells at the heart of the natural world, graciously energizing its evolution from within, compassionately holding all creatures in their finitude and death, and drawing the world forward toward an unimaginable future.”

There is so much to be said and so much yet to be done to save our planet and care for God’s Creation. Some recommended sources are listed below. Anyone interested in further discussion may contact us at: denevanmp@gmail.com.

Our Catholic tradition... calls us to be good stewards of the earth. It also calls us to use the gifts we have been given to protect human life and dignity, and to exercise our care for God’s creation.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Resources

Study Guide for Global Climate Change: A Catholic Response (www.ncric.com), published by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

Eco-Mind, by Frances Moore Lappe

Thank God For Evolution, by Michael Dowd

**INTEGRATED EARTH EDUCATION
AT MARYKNOLL ECOLOGICAL SANCTUARY, BAGUIO
CITY, PHILIPPINES**

Story and Pictures by Mary Jane Foy-os –Baguio

Good stewardship of God’s creation comes in many forms. After the 1990 earthquake, the Maryknoll Sisters in Baguio City, Philippines, led by **Sr. Ann Braudis MM**, discerned a call to act for good stewardship of God’s creation. Their response was to develop a school that offered integrated earth education: *Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary* at Campo Sioco. Developed from scientific data, ancient tradition, indigenous cultures, world religions, and contemporary spirituality, it promotes active learning, articulation of a “new cosmology” or understanding of the earth, and teaching of earth- and faith-based ethics. The goal is to move us to reconnect with nature and the eternal spirit.

Currently under the leadership of **Sr. Cathy Encarnacion MM**, projects at Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary include:

forms like a painted pot, a painting on a paper, a body movement, or a garden.



Mr. Greg Kitma, BD farmer, monitoring an urban garden

Biodynamic (Bd) Gardening Workshop

Biodynamic gardening, an organic process, takes into account cosmic factors such as the influence of the moon and planets on crop growth and quality. Initially funded by Maryknoll, the biodynamic farm project trained five farmer groups in different parts of Cordillera (Baguio’s region), facilitated two urban gardening workshops for Baguio residents, started a market for the biodynamic products, and trained three staff in biodynamic gardening. Helping develop this concrete form of stewardship of the earth, workshops on biodynamic gardening and urban gardening are offered regularly.



Workshop on Indigenous Wisdom as a Way Into The Future

This workshop is inspired by Thomas Berry’s fourfold wisdom: of indigenous peoples, of women, of classical traditions, and of science. Berry says that Indigenous wisdom is distinguished by its intimacy with and participation in the functioning of the natural world. The region is home to the indigenous Ibaloi and Igorots. Maryknoll drew from their wisdom, seen by Lorenzo B. Isla as a way to offer a meaningful future to today’s world. He had explored the atang ritual (food offering to ancestors and spirits) in the development of cosmic consciousness for the integrity of all creation. The Igorot believe that worship and rituals carry powerful potential



Not bothered by rain: Students from Bukidnon in southern Philippines taking the cosmic journey

Cosmic Journey

This experiential walk through fourteen cosmic stations that celebrate and honor the sacred unfolding of the universe leads people to reaffirm their belief that God intends creation to continue its unfolding and not to be destroyed. Reflection on the profound spiritual meaning of the interconnectedness of the cosmos prepares participants to make wise decisions about the use of the earth’s resources so that future generations inherit a beautiful planet capable of sustaining and inspiring life.

Arts for Meditation

Meditating through art helps us listen to our inner feelings, connects us with the rhythm of the earth, inspires creativity, energizes our spirit, and births concrete art



for the development of a planetary ethic.

Exploring the rituals, beliefs, and stories of some Igorot tribal groups, the workshop aims to draw out specific wisdom that guides local people to planetary stewardship and inspires deep reverence for the earth that can be shared with others. Workshop resources include a staff mostly of Indigenous Igorots and materials gathered from research on cosmology conducted in different areas of the Cordillera. The *Maryknoll Sanctuary* also offers an opportunity to perform Indigenous thanksgiving rituals at its Neolithic Village station. In the future, the program aims to offer bioregion visits to some of the Cordillera villages.

Cosmic Blessings for Babies

One of the rituals developed by Sr. Ann is the cosmic blessing of babies. It is patterned after the practice of some tribal groups who introduce babies to the trees, to the animals, to their cultural heritage, to the community, and to the Creative Divine. This invites the baby and everyone present to care for and ensure a beautiful earth.

“Leon Earth, we introduce you to the earth that brought you forth. May you grow in reverence of the earth and all it holds sacred.”



Programs on Creation, Spirituality, and the Arts

Maryknoll regularly offers these programs in the form of workshops, retreats, and recollections. They have inspired other groups to start earth programs in their own places. For example, **Fr. Valentin Dimoc** created an earth sanctuary in Lagawe, Ifugao, one of the provinces of the Cordillera Region.

Networking for Justice and Peace

Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary networks for justice and peace.

Sr. Margarita Jamias MM, who is in charge of the justice and peace works, is involved with social and peace issues at the local and national level. Maryknoll provides integrated earth education through other educational programs: early Earth education for the day care pupils, the Maryknoll sanctuary choir, the Sanctuary Gallery, and a food service program; other programs are gradually being developed.



Stations of the Forest

Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary also facilitates the Stations of the Forest on the Maryknoll grounds every Good Friday. It follows the form of the traditional Stations of the Cross. Just as Jesus was condemned to die on Calvary, so the forest is sentenced and subsequently destroyed until it finally dies. But the last station proclaims that God gave us creativity and ingenuity, which we can harness in the service of life. All are also called to change their lifestyles and take action to safeguard the life of the forest that remains and the poor who depend on it. The reflections of the Stations of the Forest were put together by **Fr. Sean McDonough**, a Columban missionary who worked among the Tiboli people in Mindanao, Southern Philippines.



Stations of the Forest at Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary.

The deep thoughts and creative works; the different programs; the rituals performed; the earth- and faith-based reflections on the care of the earth; the dedicated work of the staff; and the support of donors, friends, and visitors have made every spot at *Maryknoll Ecological Sanctuary* sacred. It is a blessed place that honors the earth and all that it brings forth. A video of Maryknoll landscape and activities accompanied by the song, “Take off Your Shoes,” was prepared by **Pat Labitoria**, a Miriam College volunteer (view it at: http://youtu.be/mhdb_gbqReE). This video awakens the spirit to be one with the holy earth and invites each of us to make a firm commitment to care for and revere the earth.



Betty Tumbaga, Clemente Delim and Angelita Padilla, Maryknoll Baguio Affiliates, leading the Stations of the forest.

NEWS FROM THE KNOLL

Meet Maryknoll Days

This year, the Maryknoll entities are experimenting with a new format for their vocation retreat days. In the past, the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Lay Missioners and Sisters would hold a weekend "Vocation Encounter" retreat.

In 2012, the Maryknoll entities, along with the Maryknoll Affiliates, now hold a one day "Meet Maryknoll" event around the country. The first event was held February 18, 2012, in Houston, Texas. Other scheduled days are:

Chicago, IL	May 26, 2012
Maryknoll, NY	July 28, 2012
Jacksonville, FL	September 15, 2012
Monrovia, CA	October 20, 2012

We are also very excited as Maryknoll Affiliate to be full participants in these events, recognizing the Maryknoll Affiliates as a valid vocation within the Maryknoll Family. If you know someone who is interested in any of the vocations with the Maryknoll family, including the Maryknoll Affiliates, have them apply online at www.maryknollvocations.com/infoencounter.htm.

Maryknoll Sisters Centennial Symposium: Hearts on Fire

The *Maryknoll Sisters Centennial Symposium: Hearts on Fire* took place from April 20-21, 2012. The three plenary sessions were filled with Mother Mary Joseph's spirit and the challenge of what awaits the Maryknoll Sisters as they stand on the threshold of the future. Speakers included **Joanne Jaruko Doi MM, Elizabeth Johnson** and **Melinda Roper MM**. Each talk was followed by a respondent and then all moved into break-out groups to discuss the topic with more depth. (Excerpts from article by Antoinette Gutzler, MM).

The talks are available for viewing and downloading from the Maryknoll Sisters website: www.maryknollsisters.org



DEATHS

Sr. Katherine Taepke, MM	February 28, 2012
Rev. Charles J. Schmidt, MM	March 8, 2012
Rev. Anthony K. Polyak, MM	March 12, 2012
Sr. Yae Ono, MM	March 16, 2012
Sr. Jean Hogle, MM	March 28, 2012
Rev. Joseph L. Hamel, MM	March 28, 2012
Sr. Edith Rietz, MM	April 1, 2012
Rev. Thomas F. Gibbons, MM	April 12, 2012
Rev. Richard E. Zeimet, MM	April 17, 2012
Sr. Jeremie Crowley, MM	April 21, 2012



100th Jubilee Celebrations

We will post the Centennial events for the Society and the Congregation here and on our website. Events and dates are subject to change, so be sure to check [our website](#) for the latest information.

July 2, 2012: Miriam College Glee Club in Concert. Filipina students from Miriam College High School's Glee Club will perform a Centennial concert at the Maryknoll Sisters Center in Ossining, NY. The high school students will travel all the way from Quezon City, Philippines, for the event. Miriam College was originally founded by Maryknoll Sisters in the 1920s.

September 28 – October 1, 2012: Joint Maryknoll Mission Symposium at Society & Congregation Centers. Speakers: Joe Holland, Patricia Licuanan, Bishop Alvaro Ramazini, Ana Tibajuka, and others.

October 27, 2012: Maryknoll Sisters Multicultural Festival and Bazaar at the Maryknoll Sisters.

January 6, 2012: Closing Liturgy for the Public at the Maryknoll Sisters.



Register Now! (Deadline is July 1, 2012)

missionintothefuture.org

Mission into the Future: A Maryknoll Symposium is the final Symposium of the Congregation and Society Centennial celebrations 2011-2012. This collaborative symposium is sponsored by the Maryknoll Affiliates, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Maryknoll Lay Missioners and Maryknoll Sisters for Maryknollers and invited guests.

There will be four exciting and knowledgeable keynote speakers, each representing their part of the world, who will help us move into the future together. The symposium includes resource persons from religious, lay and clerical experience and will include worship/prayer/liturgy and fellowship at meals and socials.

What's Inside?

God's Love Made Visible in Creation 1
Maryknoll Affiliates Western Regional Conference..... 2
Peruvian Regional Meeting 2
Maryknoll Affiliate Board Meeting 3
Maryknoll Affiliates Caring for Creation 3
Simplicity as Creation Care 4
Fr. Price Commemorative Tree Planting with Sr. Mary Ellen, MM..... 5
Good Stewardship – Living in Solidarity with God's Creation..... 6
Stewardship of Creation: Why should I care and what can I do? 7
Integrated Earth Education..... 9
News from the Knoll 11

