



Not So Far Afield

A NEWSLETTER OF THE MARYKNOLL AFFILIATES

September/October 2015

Volume 24 Number 5

RENEWING THE JOY OF MISSION— SHIFTING INTO THE FUTURE

Midwest Regional Retreat Conference
Green Lake Conference Ctr., Green Lake, WI
August 14-16, 2015

Kathleen Gribble – Fox Cities Chapter
& Jackie Maggiore – Milwaukee Chapter

Mission accomplished and then some! Thankful, grateful, joyful, responses praising the Midwest Affiliate Chapters' gathering keep coming in:

- Wonderful meeting of “kindred souls.”
- Sparks conversation for future chapter meetings.
- Looking forward to continued connections!
- Feeling blessed, connected, informed, refreshed, affirmed in individual gifts, renewed in hope on the journey, and loved!
- We really liked that the weekend wasn't rushed, and we had time to walk and reflect.
- When we gather, the spirit is so evident!

Our approach to developing the schedule may be a key to why the weekend was so satisfying. First the organizers elicited input from every chapter on what they needed and what time of year might work for them. From the responses, a five-person planning group gradually determined the content and structure, revising and re-thinking as we worked. Relationships grew among the planning group and with all of the would-be participants. We were thrilled when we actually got to meet each other and share our chapter stories, our joys, and our mission challenges.

Allowing time to focus on relationships, we distributed reflection questions for our walks and gave out folders with important documents related to our missional theme—*Care for God's Creation*. Writings by our Maryknoll leaders and other significant authors on mission and the future were provided but not studied at the event. We distributed cards to record information anyone wanted to make sure is remembered when we all have more time to read.

People from eight Midwestern Maryknoll Chapters attended, and we discovered that the

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WESTERN REGIONAL AFFILIATE CONFERENCE

Seattle University, August 7-9, 2015

Kitty Schiltz – Seattle Chapter

Beginning on Friday evening with a welcome from Northwest Regional Coordinator and Seattle Affiliate Jerrie Drinkwine, on through Sunday morning Mass, the Western Regional Affiliate Conference was a journey into mission, social justice, and community among attendees. We learned of those on the margins: migrant farm workers; trafficked men, women and children; the people of Haiti and El Salvador. Conference goers experienced an atmosphere of community, meeting and making friends.

On Friday evening, Affiliate Executive Coordinator Bob Short inspired us with a presentation on what the Affiliate movement is all about and showed us we are part of the Maryknoll Movement—we have a future based on the four pillars. We are *spiritual, communal, globally aware, and active* in our care for the world, and we have a unique role in Maryknoll. (Watch for his article on this topic in the next NSFA.)



Former co-coordinator Sr. Janet Srebalus, MM, brought us all together in prayer. We remembered past experiences with her and reflected on the other through the song, “The Cry of the Poor.”

Saturday, we learned about Seattle Catholic Community Services' successes in helping house migrant farm workers

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THE SPIRIT IS MOVING [US]

Wherever two or three are gathered...but especially when Affiliates have a conference...the Spirit is moving. This issue gives just an inkling of the Spirit of this summer's conferences. If you weren't able to make it to one of the two Conferences featured in this issue—The Midwest Regional Retreat Conference or the Western Regional Affiliate Conference—see the advance notice on this page from the New Orleans/Gulf South Chapter. As with any regional conference, all are welcome.

You may have received the NSFA attached to a new email. Our updated database means more people than ever are receiving the NSFA. If you haven't already, please send your updated chapter contact list to the NSFA and to our Executive Coordinator, Bob Short (rshort@maryknollaffiliates.org), so that everyone in your chapter will receive the NSFA and other important Affiliate communications.

The NSFA still hasn't received an Affiliate reflection on the Pope's environmental encyclical, *Laudato Si*, but we have heard that one chapter is supporting a Campaign Nonviolence action themed, "Caring for our Common Home." They stand in solidarity with Pope Francis as he addresses the US Congress on September 24th.

Write us with your reflections and news 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 around the world. 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 e-mail rshort@maryknollaffiliates.org.

SURVEY UPDATE

The Affiliate Board sends its thanks to all who completed Survey of Individual Affiliates which was conducted by your Maryknoll Affiliate Board this summer. The survey results will be discussed at the next Board meeting in October, and a report will be published online and in the NSFA before they move into the next stage of this "getting to know you" process with the Chapter Reflection.



R.I.P. RONNI



Veronica (Ronni) Gilligan, longtime chairperson of Long Island Chapter, passed on Saturday, August 22, with her sisters at her side. The Mass celebrating her life was held on August 24th at St. Mary of the Isle Church, Long Beach, NY. She will be missed.

2016 SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL AFFILIATE CONFERENCE

Save this date: **September 30 – October 2, 2016**

Hosts: New Orleans/Gulf South Affiliate Chapter
 Conference theme: Walking Each Other Home—
 Mission as Accompaniment

Location: *Archdiocesan Retreat Center*

Contact: Matt Rousso mattrouk@gmail.com, for more information in 2016

Co-editors: Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss & Paula Schaffner
 Editorial Board: Kris Neufeld Penny Robinson
 David Stocker

We welcome submission of articles by Maryknoll Affiliates and Maryknoll Missioners, as well as suggestions for articles. All submissions are subject to editing. We publish articles as appropriate in conjunction with issue themes.

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

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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MISSING AFFILIATE MARIE PARMLY

By Mary Moritz –
SE Regional Co-Coordinator
NE Florida Chapter

My husband, John, and I met Marie and Lee Parmly when we made our Cursillo weekends some 40 years ago. Marie and Lee were active in Cursillo, Marriage Encounter, and the Charismatic Movement. We knew their five children were grown and they were retired, but we still marveled at all that they did in service to God.

Several years after we met them, Lee and Marie were in a serious car accident. Lee died and Marie was injured. Marie's faith sustained her during this difficult time, and after she recovered, she felt called

to be a Maryknoll Lay Missioner. Eventually, Marie convinced the Lay Missioners that she wasn't too old.

Marie went to Mexico as a Lay Missioner, and we didn't see her for a while. Then we heard that Marie had been shot in Mexico and was returning to the states to recover. Finally, she came back to Florida and we would see her from time to time.

Marie helped out at our local retreat center and became active on the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission. As part of her ministry on the Commission, she would bring birthday cards to each meeting and get all the attendees to sign them so she could send them to prisoners in the area. Marie was also very active with Pax Christi. (See a profile of Marie that appeared on the Pax Christi website in March 2014: <http://paxchristiusa.org/tag/marie-parmly/>)

In 2009, Fr. Bob Carleton, MM, started a Maryknoll Affiliate group in Northeast Florida. He put notices in parish bulletins inviting anyone interested to come to an exploratory meeting. John and I attended and were reunited once again with the indomitable Marie, who welcomed the opportunity for this new Maryknoll connection.

Although 85 years old when our Chapter first formed, Marie came to our meetings faithfully and often got others to come with her. Once Bob Carleton had moved to California shortly after our inception, Marie



At a September 2012 meeting: John and Mary Moritz, back row, pose with special guest Jim Madden, MM, co-founder of Maryknoll Affiliates, and Marie Parmly, both now deceased.

was our only experienced Maryknoller, sharing her hard-won wisdom with us "newbies."

From time to time, Marie would host our meetings at her condominium in Crescent Beach. When other Maryknollers came to town, they often stayed with Marie, who was known for her loving hospitality.

In 2014, Marie had a stroke and took a while to get back on her feet. Our Chapter very much missed the matriarch of our little community. Once she returned home, we decided to have bi-monthly meetings at her



The NE Florida Chapter met with Kitty Madden from Nicaragua in March 2012: front row l-r: Len Carey (now deceased), Deacon Larry Hart, Kitty Madden, Marie Parmly, Florence Carey; back row l-r: John Moritz, Mary Moritz, Mary Williams.

condominium, so she could still participate. Despite her challenges, she was eager to host us.

On June 11 of this year, Marie hosted our Chapter meeting. Little did we know that this would be our last meeting that included her smiling face. Marie had shared with us that she felt ready to leave this earth to be reunited with her dear husband. On June 25, Marie left us to join Lee and the God she had served so well. We are happy for her, but we will miss our Marie.



Midwest Retreat – Continued from page 1.

Midwestern states have much in common—the same issues, collaborations, sense of emerging trends, and resources for adult education. *JustFaith* modules, a Living the Questions video, and many books were promoted as top educational and motivational tools to enable gospel values and mission to thrive today. Approaches to social justice vary: Cincinnati and Milwaukee Catholic parishes are actively involved in social justice. In Fox Cities, WI, the ESTHER interfaith organization promotes social justice, and while no particular parish is deeply involved, many participate.

Highlights of our time together:

Friday: After introducing the participant chapters and special guests from NY, then enjoying a fun-and-laughter icebreaker, the NE Ohio Chapter moved us easily into shared discernment. We reflected on Fr. John Sivalon's hopeful vision, especially for our loosely structured Affiliate organization. We dialoged about our own transformative missional experiences. The level of personal sharing seemed quite amazing for a group of relative strangers. Must be the power of "high-fiving"! We were deeply, easily, trusting and thoroughly enjoying each other.



Photos by Jim Coady

Key reflection themes: listening, openness, relationship focus, values of gifting and receiving, seeing a new level of listening and vulnerability as a strength, not a weakness, and the wonder and necessity of personal contemplation on the journey.

Saturday: In the morning, each chapter shared their story—their history, current membership make-up, meeting ideas, issues, missional activities, and challenges. To break up the morning, we took an "Emmaus walk," on which partners shared personal growth experiences while enjoying a lakeside stroll.

After lunch, Executive Coordinator Bob Short took us on a quick journey through the history of mission, giving us a realistic sense of the challenges of our time, the heroes of our culture, inner and outer struggles in

mission, and finally the joy and hope of knowing clearly that the world needs Maryknoll Affiliates. Dialogue and small-group sharing dominated our time together. We came to realize that Maryknoll Affiliates are a unique and very needed gift to history, and we can go forward in joy just BEING, not doing, our gift of presence to every situation in which we find ourselves. Our Feast of the Assumption liturgy followed another "Emmaus walk" amid the diversity and beauty of God's creation.

Saturday evening was unstructured, with many resources to browse—books, videos and missional material, a computer to do the Affiliate Survey online, and time to spend with each other.

Sunday: We learned about the African kitenge cloth as Albert Waszok spoke about Tanzania; Bob Short discussed posting information on the website and how to get coverage in the Monday morning MailChimp. Patty Hinton (Midwest Regional Coordinator) led a Prayer of Blessing that expressed all our needs, and we sang together "A New Church," with Mary Sluka at the piano. Fr. Russ Feldmeier, our new Maryknoll Society representative on the Affiliate Board, said Affiliates are about possibility because after we retire from work, that's when we really go! He then gave us a final blessing, sending us forth with renewed joy to *shift into the unknown* and mysterious future of Maryknoll and the Affiliates.



One couple's insight sums up our plan and its fruition in our Midwest Region Retreat Conference:

Ultimately all retreats (and conferences) are about personal sharing and connecting; and yet we always seem to feel a need to have speakers and presentations to "facilitate the discussion." Sometimes they over-speak, if there is such a word, and over-present...and we all wind up under-sharing.

That didn't happen this time. You all did a really wonderful job of keeping things simple so that people could really share stories among themselves. There were a lot of amazing people at the retreat. I only got to talk with some of them, but still, Ann and I both feel greatly enriched by that experience.



Western Region Conference – Continued from page 1.

from our morning keynote speaker, Gloria Burton. The afternoon keynote



Gloria Burton and Renate Schneider

speaker, Renate Schneider, a Chicago Affiliate who has worked in Haiti for the past 15 years and has formed an NGO—Haitian Connection (www.haitianconnection.org), described the spirit of Haitians and the challenges they face.

From an offering of six breakout sessions, we chose to explore Fair Trade with Barb Luxenberg, to reflect on Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato Si* in Jessie Dye’s Earth Ministry session, or learn more about: human trafficking from Sr. Linda Haydock, SNJM; migrant workers in Skagit Valley, WA, from Jose Ortiz; micro-financing from Tom Mailhot; or mission in El Salvador from Seattle’s Maryknoll Lay Missioner Joe Hastings. Kitty Madden, former Maryknoll Lay Missioner and friend of Casa Materna, a Nicaraguan center for rural mothers with high-risk pregnancies (see p. 9), made us aware of these women by teaching the prayer they offer before meals and sharing cards with a prayer for pregnant mothers.

We had many chances to form community and get to know each other through meals in the cafeteria, prayer, and exhibits. A dance group from a Seattle parish, young women from the Karenni tribe of Myanmar, entertained us on Saturday evening. They performed international



Joe Hastings

traditional dances in colorful costumes, including the Philippine stick-dance, “Tinikling,” using bamboo sticks. Members of the audience were invited to try the dance. Mystery guest “Elvis” showed up and entertained us with songs that resonated with the “Love in Action” theme, like “Don’t be Cruel.” His greatest hit was, “Don’t Step on My Mission Shoes!”



At the final meeting, Jerrie Drinkwine announced that a new Northwest Regional Coordinator will be elected in September and welcomed additional candidates. Looking forward to the next Western Regional Conference, she asked all chapters in the region to consider hosting it, possibly in 2018. It was announced that the Hawaiian chapter may be joining the Western Regional Group. Maybe they would like to host the next Western Regional Conference.



Displays from around the world sharpen global vision.



Kate Maugham takes the Tinikling challenge.

The conference was easy to navigate, since we were located on the beautiful campus of Seattle University, and all activities were in the same locale. The Seattle Affiliates worked as a team, making the weekend flow smoothly for all of us. They looked like they enjoyed being together, and they worked as a single unit, like honeybees. Their efforts and attitude made the conference a very enjoyable environment in which community flourished.





FRIENDS ACROSS BORDERS IN BRAZIL

Mary Morris Williams – Northeast Florida Chapter

Imagine this: You are in a foreign country, waiting for a van in front of your hotel. You notice a woman who was on the bus from the airport the night before and at breakfast. She smiles and you start talking, haltingly in a combination of gestures, some English and assorted, memorized foreign phrases. You learn that she is on her way to Rome to study Italian for 15 days, leaving her husband behind for this short trip. You try to explain that you are there on a mission trip and are waiting for a van to pick you up. When the bus for the airport arrives, she smiles and gives you a hug “goodbye.”

This was one of my first experiences in Sao Paulo, Brazil, waiting for Catherine Heinhold, the Maryknoll Lay Missioner who would be our guide for 11 days. A hug at the end of a brief conversation! What kind of people are these Brazilians? I told this story to Catherine shortly after she picked up my husband Bryan and me. She commented that the lady I spoke to probably continued to think of me on her way to the airport and wonder about my life.



One of many happy lunches. L to R: Patty and Joe Symkowick, Kathy Bond, MKLM, Bryan Williams, Sister Isabel Araujo, MM, Catherine Heinhold, MKLM.

Our introduction to Brazil was warm and welcoming. After picking up Patty and Joe Symkowick, Maryknoll Affiliate Board members from Sacramento, at the airport, we headed to the home of Greg and Kim Fisher, two more Lay Missioners in this small Maryknoll community, comprised of two priests, two sisters and

six Lay Missioners. A welcoming lunch greeted our arrival, followed by prayers of blessing for our time in Brazil.

Our eight days in Sao Paulo were filled with exploring and learning, visiting historical sites, museums and the ministries in which the Maryknoll Lay Missioners serve. At the ministry sites, we sometimes met with directors of programs, were introduced to colleagues of the missioners and had opportunities to talk with the people served.

Patty and I accompanied Maryknoll Lay Missioner Kathy Bond to her program at one of the women’s prisons. She works with a group of pregnant women and a group of new mothers and their babies who are allowed to remain with their mothers for six months. She teaches health workshops that include yoga to help develop centeredness and identity in the mothers and basic baby massage to help the mothers bond with their children and give them a good foundation before the expected separation. Her love, dedication to and caring for these women were evident in her greetings to them and in her teaching. Even though what we saw was spoken in a foreign language, the smiles and gestures communicated the underlying message of hope and love.

Our next visit was to a shelter for women and children which served refugees from many African countries (Angola, Congo, and Democratic Republic of the Congo) and released female prisoners. With expert translation help from the missioners, including Maryknoll Lay Missioner Sirikit Noronha, who applies her profession as a lawyer to provide legal aid, we learned the plight of many African women who were fleeing violence in their native countries and of women who were duped into transporting drugs into Brazil and were caught and imprisoned far from their native countries.

Although I thought I was well educated, this trip made me realize how little I knew about the history and geography of South America. I set out imagining a country with some native Indian tribes, having been colonized by the Portuguese. I ended up visiting a multi-ethnic, diverse country with a large Japanese population (invited to come as farmers), Italians, Germans, Syrians, people from different countries in Africa, and an indigenous Indian tribe (the Guarani Mbya).

Maryknoll is known for reaching out to marginalized people: the poor, the homeless, refugees, and those



Mary Williams and her husband Bryan enjoy the view from the Sao Jose Operario Parish rectory.

in prison. Accompanied by Maryknoll Lay Missioner Greg Fischer, we also visited a center for immigrants, refugees, and migrant workers (Missao Paz), where Greg helps to provide translation services, social services and job resources for those using the center. At the time of our visit, the center was responding to a large influx of Haitians. Housed in a large parish center where they slept on the floor, they were given legal and social work services to help get proper documentation, jobs, and homes. Many of the Haitians had left Haiti through the Dominican Republic and had flown to Panama City. Then they took buses and trains for about 25 days of travel to get to Brazil.

Other stops on our journey included an alternative health center on the southern periphery of the city; a visit to a health center that served the indigenous Indians; a Women's Center helping women in situations of vulnerability and domestic violence; and a project for homeless people, Cor da Rua, which had a handicraft shop to support the ministry. Our days were punctuated with lunches at restaurants serving many different ethnic foods. Meal times gave us opportunities to talk more to the missionaries who were working in the different programs.

We were greeted and welcomed and hugged by so many people along our journey. Even in the midst of difficulty, people greeted us and were willing to share their stories and their food.

The name of the program for this trip was "Friends across Borders." We did not go there to build or paint or

provide medical services. We went there to be with the people, share in the lives of the Maryknoll community, learn about Sao Paulo, and submerge ourselves in a different culture. This trip accomplished its purposes. I feel I now have friends across the Brazilian border. I have made friends with the missionaries and connected to the people they serve. I will not forget the faces of the women prisoners as they massaged their babies or the faces of the refugee women in the shelter. These faces remind me of the needs not only in Brazil, but in Jacksonville and in many cities of the world.

One of the reasons I chose to go on this trip was to see Maryknoll in action. I have been involved in a Maryknoll Affiliate Chapter for four years and have read *Maryknoll Magazine* for many years. This was an opportunity to see a place where Maryknoll has an established community and to see that community in action, serving a city with multiple problems and needs.

A special treat at the end of our mission days was a visit to Iguacu Falls, located in the southwestern part of Brazil, at the border with Argentina and Paraguay. This is one of the wonders of the world, a splendid marvel of God's creation. We had a friendly taxi driver on our second day at the falls who also drove us to the airport on our last day. I wasn't surprised when my goodbye with her included a hug, a special end to a FABulous trip.

For more information about Lay Missioners' mission



immersion trips, explore their website: www.friendsacrossborders.org. Maybe God is calling you to step out of your comfort zone and explore a different part of His world.



PLANTING SEEDS OF NONVIOLENCE

Manny Hotchkiss – Portland Chapter

Only a few miles from Seattle, Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action shares fence line with the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world, Naval Submarine Base Kitsap-Bangor. This base contains more nuclear weapons than the countries of Israel, North Korea, China, India, Pakistan, England, and France combined. Ground Zero, founded in 1977 by Jim and Shelley Douglass, offers ongoing training in nonviolence and resistance to nuclear weapons. Ground Zero distributes leaflets to folks entering the base almost every week and has influenced some of them to support Ground Zero.



Rodney Brunelle, Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss and Mary Hanson at the gates of Naval Base Kitsap Bangor.

that Rodney is active in Pax Christi and campaigns against nuclear weapons.

During our brief vigil, we held up signs for passing cars urging, “Abolish Nuclear Weapons.” Mary cautioned us to not cross the blue line on the pavement marking the edge of federal property. Crossing would be considered criminal trespass. We had stood in the



Three police cars join the vigil.

glaring sun for only a few minutes when three police cars stopped in the road in front of us. Were we going to be confronted? No such luck! Mary wished them a good afternoon and we went home hoping that our nonviolent vigil had also planted a seed.

To learn more, read about Archbishop Hunthausen and Ground Zero at: <http://www.thestreetspirit.org/street-spirit-interview-with-jim-douglass-part-2/> and in the Orbis biography of Archbishop Hunthausen, A Still and Quiet Conscience. Read about FOR at: FORUSA.org.



Mary and Manny Hotchkiss at the entry of the Ground Zero Center For Nonviolent Action.

We heard stories of Ground Zero’s activism at the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) Conference held in Seabeck, WA. Glen Anderson of Lacey, WA, said that after the 1976 FOR Seabeck Conference, an action occurred in conjunction with nonviolence training by Jim Douglass. The Conference had dealt with food issues, and some participants decided people needed food not bombs. In a carefully planned action, a group of 20 or so people visited Bangor Base at night to plant a garden. The trespassers scaled the fences with ladders, spaded up the soil and even scattered some seed as security guards were arresting them. Nina Murano from Vashon, WA, proudly related that after a different action, Seattle Archbishop Hunthausen had come to greet nuclear weapon resisters as they were released from jail.

On a hot Sunday afternoon, we gathered with Mary Hanson, co-chair of the stewardship committee for Ground Zero. After walking a weedy path along the fence, we met her at the gates of the Bangor base. We stood at the roadside with Mary, Rodney Brunelle, and some folks from Port Townsend, WA. We had met Rodney at the recent 50th anniversary celebration of the ordination of Fr. Tom Marti, MM, and had learned

Photos courtesy of Mary Ryan-Hotchkiss

**MY VISIT TO THE CASA
MATERNA
IN MATAGALPA**

Gabriella Maertens – Portland
Chapter



Photos courtesy of Gabriela Maertens

The next day we walked with the women up some very steep hills to the hotel gardens for calming exercises led by Kitty Madden. Then we were treated to some fruit punch and flan at the hotel. I learned the women’s ages, how many children they already have, their due dates, and the reason for their stay at the the Casa. They ranged in age from 17 to 42; this would be first child to eighth; and they were expecting that very day or week, or were overdue.

I had a chance to ask them questions and they asked me about my children. Our second walk a few days later was also very enjoyable and just as calming. The sense of calm, the companionship of the women, and the dedication of the staff are what impressed me the most. I met the whole Casa Materna staff when I joined them at the end of their monthly meeting, just in time for their fun fundraising raffle (to raise money for their 13th month salary – their bonus), and I was certainly impressed by their desire to serve the women in Matagalpa with high-risk pregnancies.

While I was in Matagalpa, several women went to the regional hospital to deliver their babies or for appointments in the new ambulance that was purchased a few years ago. Marvin, one of two Casa drivers, was taking a women for an appointment in the ambulance and gave me a ride as well, dropping me off at the bus station when I had to leave Matagalpa.

After my volunteer assignment in San José, Costa Rica, I traveled by bus to visit Kitty Madden, a Maryknoll Affiliate in Matagalpa, Nicaragua. She has lived there for 29 years, putting her heart and soul into serving the needs of high-risk pregnant women. Casa Materna, established in 1991 as the very first maternal care center in Nicaragua, offers food, shelter, education, medical care, transportation and support for high-risk pregnant women from rural areas for one to two weeks before and after childbirth.

I had met Kitty Madden at a Maryknoll Conference and become a Friend of the Casa Materna. Later she traveled to Portland and visited my Solo group and Portland Affiliates. During her last visit, over lunch I learned of the new developments at the Casa. I thought it would be wonderful to actually see for myself the operation of this wonderful Maternity Home.

Kitty greeted me warmly at the local bus station and installed me in the Casita, a very comfortable hotel across the street from Casa Materna. The \$15 per day cost goes directly to support the Casa. Soon we were welcomed by the staff and pregnant women at the Casa. Charming murals, brightly painted interior spaces, and wonderful rocking chairs made for a very friendly atmosphere. After a lunch of rice and beans, I joined Kitty at a meeting with the staff, who were planning an outreach program—additional education and training that women have requested. The follow-up and outreach programs are becoming a more important part of the mission of the Casa Materna as the number of Casa Maternas has increased; now over 100 are located in every department in the country.



A DAY IN A LAY MISSIONER'S LIFE

Karen Bortvedt –

Maryknoll Lay Missioner, Cambodia

My brain often feels like a station wagon from a 70s movie, loaded down with people, noise, and commotion, cruising along an empty highway until, suddenly, someone notices smoke seeping from under the hood. It pulls over, and someone opens the hood, no doubt burning his or her fingers, and releases a great cloud of steam. At this point, the whole gang realizes they are going nowhere soon or fast.

On a good day, I can make it until lunch without my brain fizzling out—from overheating either literally or metaphorically. Often, I have to push it from behind just to keep it moving forward. Either way, I am going nowhere fast in Cambodia – it is just not the culture.



Photos courtesy of Karen Bortvedt

Leading a meeting in Cambodian Sign Language to plan for the International Week of the Deaf

I serve as the Communications Coordinator at the Deaf Development Programme (DDP – <http://www.ddp-cambodia.org/>), a project of Maryknoll Cambodia. My job title is hilarious to me, as I feel that at any given moment I am lucky if 80 percent of the conversation is understood by both parties. Outside the language differences, there are huge cultural differences which can interfere with mutual understanding. I switch from Khmer to Cambodian Sign Language to English, depending on the conversation, sometimes using a combination of the three or interpreting from one to the other. Combining this with observing different cultural norms and approaches to life, while attempting to actually ‘accomplish’ something measurable and check it off the to-do list, often leaves the brain in need of a cool-down. Add on the extreme heat and all bets are off.

So, what is the average day like for this Maryknoll Lay Missioner in Cambodia?

Work begins at 7:30 AM. Many seem to think working in mission is some really profound experience, but I believe all our lives are filled with experiences that can be profound if we open ourselves up to them, and mission is no different. Often, my day starts by killing all the mosquitoes that have taken up residence around my desk. My foreign blood is a rare treat, so the little buggers tend to congregate for a welcome-to-work picnic buffet centered on my ankles. Before



I even had a desk or computer at the office, I had a mosquito electrocution racket. To date, my high score for the day is 28 little guys massacred. With the risk of dengue fever, my views on nonviolence must be pushed aside when it comes to mosquitoes.

At work, every day is different. My colleagues generally have a more relaxed attitude than existed at my previous work in Washington, DC. If I want a response, email is not an effective form of communication; walking up to someone’s desk with a planner is often the only way to get something scheduled, and it will likely be rescheduled multiple times.

When co-workers need a break from their work, for some reason my desk has become the figurative water cooler. Sometimes folks want to see what I am working on, or they practice their English by reading my emails over my shoulder. Other times, they stop



Karen, left, with Co-workers at a colleague’s son’s first birthday party

by to tell me about a great deal at the market or to update me on their stomachs and how many times they have gone to the bathroom that day. Can't say that was ever a topic of conversation around the water cooler in the US...

I love the openness and feeling within the staff that we are friends first. I also appreciate that work is not the end-all, be-all that it seems to have become for many in the US. Yes, at times it is frustrating because follow-through and dedication to work are not what I am accustomed to, but there seems to be more of an understanding that work is a part of life, not that life must be squeezed in around work. So, though the to-do list doesn't necessarily shrink at the normal pace for this type-A personality, I can safely say not a day goes by that a real, genuine connection does not occur.




Note: Want to hear more about Karen's mission experiences? Karen invites you to follow her at: thelifeandloveofkaren.blogspot.com. To learn about opportunities to serve as a Maryknoll Lay Missioner, see: <http://www.mklm.org/become-a-missioner/>.



Is your chapter participating in the 2015 Campaign Nonviolence? September 21 to 27, hundreds of groups across the country will be taking action to end war, poverty, and climate change. Some groups are connecting the environmental message of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* with their Campaign Nonviolence event. See paceebene.org for a listing of events in your area. The next NSFA will report on actions by Affiliates - send your news to NSFA@MaryknollAffiliates.org.

**AFFILIATES FROM LIMA
IN MARYKNOLL MAGAZINE**

See the August 2015 *Maryknoll Magazine* for a story about and quotes from several Maryknoll Affiliates in Lima, Peru. US Affiliates met some of these Affiliates from Peru at the 2014 Maryknoll Affiliates Conference in New York.



Pope Francis, asking us to pray with him, has suggested these special intentions:

September: That opportunities for education and employment may increase for all young people.

October: That human trafficking, the modern form of slavery, may be eradicated.

**REGIONAL COORDINATORS—
CHANGE IS COMING**

At the Western Region Affiliates Conference in Seattle, [Jerrie Drinkwine](#) announced that nominations have been received for a new Northwest RC and that ballots will be distributed September 12. We will announce the new Northwest RC in the next NSFA. RCs serve the Affiliate movement by connecting and communicating with the Board, Executive Coordinator, and chapters. They're the glue that holds us together.

NEW FORMATION PROGRAM POSTED

The new Initial Formation program (and process) has been posted on the Maryknoll Affiliates website. The links to materials associated with each module are posted, and some materials can be downloaded for printing.

To open the Formation program, go to the website, maryknollaffiliates.org, and click on the Who We Are tab. On the Who We Are page, go to the Quick Links blue box on the right, click on Chapters and Formation, and look for "Initial Formation 2015."

We especially thank [John Moritz](#), Southeast Region co-coordinator with his wife [Mary](#), for heading up this initiative.

MISSION INSTITUTE 2015 – CALIFORNIA

A forum of adult learning and reflection on world church and mission

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Sept. 16-19 **Edwina Gateley, MA** – *Our Call to Personal and Global Transformation* ([Los Altos, CA](#))

Sept. 20-25 **Edwina Gateley, MA** – *Soul Sisters: Women Called to Connect, Bond and Heal in a Broken World* ([Monrovia, CA](#))

For details, see: <http://maryknollsisters.org/maryknoll-mission-institute>.

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