



## Vocation Ministry Newsletter

### Christmas 2021 Issue

*"We Maryknoll Sisters, envision One Earth Community where the Co-Creative Energy of Divine Love flows freely, nurturing wholeness of being in an expanding and evolving Universe."*

I think that living close to Christ is the whole secret of our Maryknoll vocation- the secret of our joy, of our happiness, the ability to smile when things are going against us, the ability to work until we are worn out, the secret of the spirit of prayer which everyone seems to think marks our Sisters, the secret of Christ blessings to us.



*Mother Mary Joseph: 1944*

*Thanks to our contributors:*

*Le kheng Chen*

*Millie Hernandez-Pulsone*

*Dulce Aleixo*

*Rianne Hailey Torres*

*Sandra Brandt*

*Gloria Ardenio Agnes*



## Making God's Love Visible

by: Le Kheng Chen, MM

While I was studying to become a Catholic, two Maryknoll Sisters, Agnes Virginia Higgins and Etsuko Ogo, were my instructors. They often visited patients in a Christian Hospital and many times invited me to come along as well. I was amazed that they visited people around the ward whether they knew them or not. They did not go there to push their belief but rather purely to visit, comfort, and encourage the patients especially those who came from far away. No patient was too poor for them. Seeing their unusual act, a desire within me of wanting to follow that example started like a seed to break the soil.

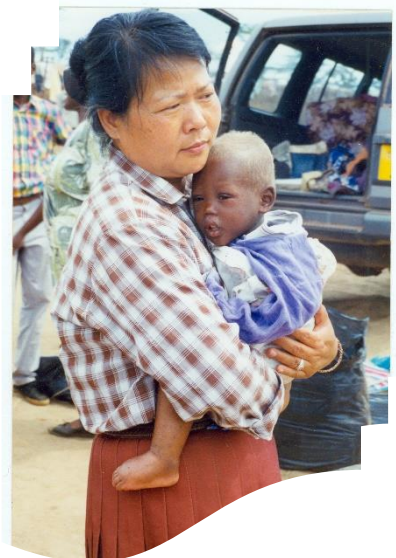
I related to Etsuko and Agnes more closely. Later, I became their catechist. Furthermore, when they moved to a village parish where there was no priest they invited me to come live with them in the same house. Together with two other catechists, we prayed and planned the work together as a team. The parishioners liked and loved the Sisters because of their simplicity and easiness. Bicycle was the only transportation for us. The distance to village homes would often take us 40 minutes or more than an hour. It was a mango area. The sweet smell of the mango accompanied us for each journey.

Agnes and Etsuko kept every church's activity in their heart. They ate what was offered to them and they worked with women preparing the sweet rice ball for the feast day and knelt down in the church to wash the floor etc. The biggest thing in a day was to start with prayer and a time for their stillness/silence in front of the Eucharist. God was the center in their life. My spirituality was rooted by their example.

Sr. Katrina Eggert also came to live with us. She commuted by train and bus to her work in the city. On my day off, we traveled together. It was a graced time because I was able to ask her many questions. One day, I asked what her family thought about her becoming a Nun and leaving for other countries. When talking about her father, she was tearful. It was a shock because I did not know that nuns were allowed to cry. A feeling of tenderness, simpleness, and truthfulness profoundly touched my heart because it expressed the depth of the human being.

I witnessed that the Maryknoll Sisters in Taiwan were deeply involved in people's lives. They accompanied the struggling people of the country, holding hands, making the unbreakable human chain, chanting songs, peacefully supporting and encouraging us for making and believing that "tomorrow will be better."

Making God's love visible appears as a logo for us. We keep that in our missionary's spirit as a banner waving in the air. As I remember my vocation call, these words come to me. They make the love of God visible. Therefore, we share that call together in Maryknoll.



**Make the Path as We Walk**  
*by: Millie Hernandez-Pulsone*  
*Information Technology Director*

**Before I came to Maryknoll**, I worked at Phelps Memorial Hospital in the Information Systems Department. My commute was about 15 – 20 minutes and although I was working in my passionate field of technology, I was in a closed Server Room working behind the scenes with minimal people interaction. I love people so I had this job but it was not quite fulfilling to me. When I saw an ad for a Maryknoll Information Systems Director, the first thing I thought was, “I will be only 5 – 10 minutes from home and if needed, I can get to my family at the drop of a hat.”



So, to be honest the proximity to home and quick access to my family (especially in case of an emergency) was the initial force that led me to Maryknoll. However, I quickly began to realize how Maryknoll actually felt like my second home and family. I thought, “Wow, I am doing what I love to do and loving the people and mission I am doing it for. How fortunate and blessed am I?”

Through our ups and downs, our joys and sorrows, our accomplishments and challenges – here at Maryknoll we are always there for one another. This brings mindfulness to some of the most important things in life – how we support and advocate for one another, how we help each other thrive and how much joy we feel when we can contribute in unified and meaningful ways. We share the common notion that it’s about “making the path as we walk” and walking that path together for the good of the whole.

When I first started at Maryknoll (25 years ago) my girls were 2 and 5 years old – for many years they came to Maryknoll at least twice a year – for “**take your daughter to work day**” and for our “**Christmas Eve mass.**” Throughout the years, my girls saw how passionate I was about what I do at Maryknoll, not just because of my passion for technology but because I feel a sense of purpose and know I’m making a difference in the world by serving and contributing to the Maryknoll Sisters mission. They also saw how my spirituality deepened and strengthened because of the Maryknoll Sisters.

Working with such brilliant and brave Sisters who many times are giving up their life of comfort or ease to go to foreign lands – far away from what they know geographically and culturally to share the heavy weight and burdens of those who are marginalized and suffering – is indeed an inspiring realization of commitment and conviction. Knowing that the Maryknoll Sisters are striving to transform and improve lives, and that I play a role in the justice, peace and human rights efforts is truly a life force for me.

While there are endless testimonies of the Maryknoll Sisters “Making God’s Love Visible” the one that stands out the most for me is Sr. Pat’s work in Human Rights with the movement to bring the basic fundamental need of clean water to the indigenous people of Puno, Peru. In an area where the locals are becoming ill with contaminated toxic water and cannot advocate for themselves, Sr. Pat Ryan takes on the tremendous undertaking of bringing justice in a peaceful

way to this group of voiceless people. The Maryknoll Sisters are the voice of the impoverished and oppressed people in their mission areas. The Maryknoll Sisters are compelling and relentless and will never give up or surrender until they make some kind of headway. The Maryknoll Sisters are a group of courageous and zealous women who are selfless and strive to make this world a better place even if it is one life at a time. The Maryknoll Sisters are Trailblazers not afraid to confront new challenges and not afraid to “make the path as we walk.”

### **From the Observer’s Eye**

*by: Dulce Aleixo*

My name is Dulce da Conceicao Aleixo. I am 28 years old, and a native of East Timor. I am now taking up a college degree in the Jesuit University. When I was in high school, I met some of the Maryknoll Sisters. One of them was my English teacher when I was in senior high school. Most of the times, the Sisters would come and visit my aunt. While visiting my aunt, Sr. Mary Mullady would teach me English in my aunt’s house. Sr. Christelle, on the other hand would teach me catechism.



The Sisters’ simplicity of life, loving care and generosity to the people they serve attracted me to Maryknoll. Their joy of witnessing God’s Love to the poor and untiring giving of oneself for others were remarkable.

I observed your Congregation is different from other congregations. The Sisters way of life brings closer to the people they serve. The Sisters’ simplicity is remarkable. They would visit the sick with love and care. Whatever the local people would offer them to drink and eat during visit, they accept it with gratitude. The Sisters witnessing of God’s borderless Love indeed is admirable and made it easier for the local people to welcome and trust their presence in our place. For this reason, I feel attracted to Maryknoll and would like to discern my vocation.

### **Interviewing Young Vocation**

*Rianne Hailey is eleven years old. She is the daughter of our Information Technology personnel Rosa Torres. This interview was made possible through Rosa’s help.*

**Interviewer:** What is your name? And how old are you?

**Rianne Hailey:** My name is Rianne Hailey Torres. I am eleven years old.

**Interviewer:** What do you want when you grow up?

**Rianne Hailey:** I want to become a Maryknoll Sister and a Doctor.

**Interviewer:** What inspires you to think and consider of becoming a Maryknoll Sister?

**Rianne Hailey:** I love to help people in need. I remember when I was sick in the hospital my mom would read me all the cards, prayers and emails she received from the sisters. And I remember smiling, they made me feel so good. I use to lie there and think, “Wow the Sisters are all praying so hard for me, and they have never met me, they are showing me so much love. I want to be able make someone feel like this one day too” This inspired me to want to help others and be there for them, even if I do not know them.



**Interviewer:** What do you think the Maryknoll Sisters are doing that encourages you to dream of serving God through religious life?

**Rianne Hailey:** I think the Maryknoll Sisters are creating new life and hope for people who did not think they could have it. And the reason the sisters can do it is because they walk and talk with God every day. And I want to be able to help people too. I talk to God all the time. But I want to learn to hear him when he talks back to me. And I think being a Maryknoll Sister will help me learn that.

**Interviewer:** What do you want to tell to the children like yourself, about God?

**Rianne Hailey:** I want children to know that God is Real, and that He Loves us all so much and that they should walk with him in their hearts always. He is Miraculous. I know because he made a miracle in me.

**Interviewer:** Is there anything that you want to tell to Jesus or what is in your prayer?

**Rianne Hailey:** I tell Jesus every night that I love him and that I thank him for guiding me and protecting me. I ask him to protect my family especially my brother who is in the Navy.

**Interviewer:** Thanks Rianne Hailey, and know I hold you always in my prayer.

### **Our Mission: Learn, Grow and Give**

*by: Sandra Brandt*

*Human Resources Manager*

On August 1<sup>st</sup> I had my 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Maryknoll Sisters. Sister Joan Berninger hired me in 2007. I am so grateful for all she taught me about Maryknoll culture during the time I worked with her. She was a blessing in my life and I will never forget her. The years have definitely flown by and I look back on them with many happy, but also some difficult, moments. The nature of Human Resources and all the duties involved can be very rewarding as I bring new employees to Maryknoll Sisters but also challenging when people need to leave us for various reasons.



I came from a background of performing mostly recruitment and hiring of employees for another non-profit company. A year or so into my job here at Maryknoll, I realized I needed more knowledge in Human Resources overall to do a great job. I decided to pursue my Human Resources certification from the national Society for Human Resource Management which would give me more well-rounded knowledge of all areas of Human Resources. I studied diligently for four months after work and on weekends. The test for the certification was a three hour timed test at a testing center. When I got down to the last second a message came up on the computer screen that said my test results would be available in 5 minutes. Those 5 minutes seemed like an eternity! I was so grateful and pleased when the message, "Congratulations, you have passed!" came up on the screen. Every three years I recertify to keep up with my certification. Many hours of training take place between certifications to be sure I remain current on Human Resources issues. There is always so much to learn as laws and regulations constantly change, especially during this past year with the COVID-19 pandemic.

I enjoy working at Maryknoll Sisters very much. I love hearing stories of the work Sisters do in Mission. It keeps me motivated and grateful that I am a partner in mission doing what I can at the Center so Sisters can be in the world helping so many people. It says a lot about Maryknoll Sisters to have employees with us for 45+ years! That does not happen very much anymore in the world of work.

Finding good employees for our departments is very important to me. I enjoy working with managers and supervisors to bring in new people. If a person has the skills to do the work and seem like they will be a good fit for our culture here, we like to give them a chance to succeed. I wish everyone the best here, but ultimately how well a person does in their position is mostly up to them. Sometimes people do not work out, which is never easy. I have been working in Human Resources for many years and letting people go from a job never gets easier. I pray for everyone who leaves us that they find a path that is for their highest good. I like to watch people learn and grow in their job. That is why we are all on this earth - to learn, grow and give our specific talents to the world. I believe all employees have gifts to give no matter what position they are in. Everyone is valuable and needed.

I like to believe the work I do makes a difference in people's lives. My personal mission is to do what I can when I can to make the world a better place. I do my best to treat everyone with kindness, compassion and respect. Even a small act of kindness can make a world of difference to another. I am grateful to work for an organization that honors these values.

### **Knowing our Purpose**

*By: Gloria Ardenio Agnes, MM*

When I was asked to do Vocation Ministry almost three years ago, I didn't know what to say. In my heart, I wanted to go back to the mission outside the Center. There was even a time I found myself asking God, "Why? My father just passed away recently. I was enjoying my mission life in El Salvador. My community was supportive and loving. I loved my ministry. But my time there was too brief - not long enough to savor. Why are you taking away everything you gave me to enjoy?" Jesus indeed whispered to my broken heart to remind me the essence of religious vows. My purpose in this missionary field is not to enjoy everything. My calling is to find joy even in my nothingness and make Jesus Christ as my everything. Working in Vocation Ministry blesses me with an experience of a wider community spirit. It helps me to deepen and widen my horizon. It shapes my perspective to become more mindful it is not the individual's will that create one's happiness. It is our Rootedness in Jesus Christ that give us courage to say YES, and to let the unknown unfold. The heart of Vocation Ministry is to accompany the discerners until she finds what is most life giving for her and can be accountable for her own decision-making. Journeying with the women as vocation director in discernment of their own calling gives me the opportunity to journey inward and affirm a million times my vocation to Maryknoll. Knowing my purpose and having Jesus as the center of



my calling helps me to see the gem in everything I do. The focus is not on life's difficulties, which may bring us tears of sorrow. More important is what we learn from these experiences that help us to see the deeper beauty of life.

I am so grateful to live in a Community that encourages me every day to be clear about my purpose. I feel so blessed by the privilege of accompanying those searching for their life's purpose. Merry Christmas every one and have a Grace-filled New Year 2022.

### Vocation Team

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Roni Schweyen  
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CLT Liaisons: Norie Mojado & Teruko Ito  
Vocation Director: Gloria Ardenio Agnes

#### Corner Note:

Want to share your  
World-Wide-Mission-Experience  
with us? Contact Gloria Ardenio Agnes @  
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Watch for another Vocation Presentation  
on February 2021



**Happy New Year**  
**2022**

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