



Vocation Ministry Newsletter

Spring 2022 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."



You must always remember that in community life we no longer act as an individual. We must never, never forget that our actions are the actions of the community, and are measured as such by the world outside.

Mother Mary Joseph: 1930

Thanks to our contributors:

Esther Warioba, Grace Dorado, Michelle Bueta,
Rose Marie Cecchini, Melissa Strelec and Martha Quesada

Esther is my Name
by Sr. Esther Warioba, MM



I am Esther, a Maryknoll Missioner in Hong Kong.

Following the footsteps of Jesus through missionary work is really life giving in a way that no material thing can give. Living this life, I can attest that Community is essential because we share a common vision and we enjoy life as a family. In our community, we are trying to make things easier for each one to find joy within. We usually have community gatherings, scheduled at a time that does not interfere with our ministries in mission.

I do witness God's love by witnessing to the Good News in my daily living. I also share material goods, pray for those in need, and spend time with the people that I work with.

Experiencing the complexities of our everyday life helps me to be aware of our diversities. Learning to respect others is the key to living with these diversities. I am discovering that some complexities and diversities can be a bridge for creating relationships with others. Learning to trust God and to give oneself fully in mission despite the unknown helps me to deepen my vocation to Maryknoll.

Creating Relationship: A Lesson Learned

By: Grace Dorado
(Hospitality Coordinator)

I started working in the Maryknoll Sisters in 1987. I was working in the Laundry and Housekeeping Departments. Later on, Sr. Claire Murphy arrived at the Center. She took over the Hospitality Department. Sr. Claire saw my potential and my desire to learn new things. She asked me to work with her, and gave me the position as Hospitality Assistant. At that time, everything was done through hand written notes and telephone. There was no computer yet. Sr. Claire and I worked together and made a good connection from the beginning. She was an amazing teacher and friend. In less than two years, I was promoted to Hospitality Coordinator.



It was exciting to learn and develop a new career. I love what I do and the great responsibility I have. Being promoted to this new position, it was important to do the job with all my heart, love, and patience in order to create a good relationship with the Sisters and co-workers. The interaction with the Sisters and their mission stories has always lifted up my spirit. Listening to the Sisters' stories makes me feel like Maryknoll is my second home.

My family, and the Maryknoll Sisters, have inspired and helped me learn about my new journey day by day. Our journey is a personal one- full of lessons, and reasons to be happy. When we stop comparing our self to others, and realize how blessed we are, then we learn to appreciate our individual value.

After 35 years of working at Maryknoll, I've learned that our mission in life is creating relationship. If you give love and compassion, you will receive it back and will have more. I feel blessed and very grateful to be able to work alongside many wonderful people during all these years and to be able to share many experiences with the Sisters and see the legacy of Mother Mary Joseph's love, compassion and kindness in her home.

In a few words, my mission in Maryknoll has taught me that God is always with us. God is guiding us and letting us know that we all can learn from one another to make the world a better place. God's love is visible worldwide.

What the Future Will Hold

by: Michelle Bueta

I am Michelle Bueta, 28 years old, from the Philippines and currently living in Vietnam.

I am the second born of five children. I left my country in 2013 after I graduated university. I

decided to work abroad. I flew to Vietnam to continue my teaching career. I'm teaching English in different levels, kinder, primary and high school. I also had some experiences with college students but I chose these younger ones. I really love kids! I believe that the foundation must be strong for a brighter future. So I started focusing with the children for I know that they'll be the next generation when I no longer exist.



In October 2016, I started serving as a Lector here in Ho Chi Minh City. I became a member of LOF (Light of Jesus Family) or the FEAST. I am happy to serve God through this ministry. I believe this is a way to pay back God's abundant blessings to me.

I started to take responsibilities with my family since I was young. I worked harder. I sent my younger siblings to school. They have their own lives now. It is about time to think of myself, and what the future will hold for me. I have experienced the outside world. I traveled a lot. I have many friends. I experienced hanging out with them and with different people. I have done exploring things. I have settled things in so that I can begin discerning my vocation. I am willing to take a new journey, for God alone. I am willing to give up everything just to follow and walk with God. He always been good to me. I never felt alone where ever I am and whatever I do. I

always say in my prayers, "Lord, use me as a channel of your blessings, healing and miracles. I hope Maryknoll will lead me to the path that I think I am destined to be.

When I was younger, I only dreamed to become a teacher and to help my family. And it happened. I was happy in my chosen career and to serve the church as my volunteer ministry. But happiness doesn't define life. I was looking for a JOY, and I found it with the Lord. Nehemiah 8:10 says, "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." That is why I decided to discern my vocation in life. Truly, it is the JOY that I have been searching for, for years. Our past won't define who we are now. People change. We are not perfect. But God loves us perfectly.

Missioner's Journey to Mission
by Sr. Rose Marie Cecchini, MM

In 1953, after prayer, discernment and guidance, I came to a clear realization that I was being called to religious life, but had no attraction to a particular community. It suddenly all came together when I



learned that the Sisters who had been my religion teachers in grade school were members of an overseas missionary community. Instinctively, I knew, without fully understanding the "why" or "how" of it, that I was being called to respond to something beyond my "known horizons," and that it would be my unique response and expression of love for God, people, and God's creation, as I follow Jesus Christ in gratitude for the gift of life.

Entering Maryknoll, I learned about Mother Mary Joseph's inspiring life and charisma for mission. In my own life, responding to calls beyond "known horizons" has been a steady compass direction, inspired by Mother Mary Joseph's life, her magnanimous heart and all-inclusive love.

What nurtures my life in mission is being receptive and responsive to God's Love present and revealed in diverse peoples, races, cultures and creation. In 1959 I transitioned from the United States to Japan, a nation with predominantly Buddhist and Shinto religious traditions and culture, which still bore open wounds of World War II destruction and two atomic bombings, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There, I witnessed and experienced in new ways the freedom of God's Spirit to reach human hearts, to reveal God's unconditional Love for all. This love I saw mirrored in the reverence, gentleness, sincere goodness and generosity of countless Japanese people. With Japanese Catholics in local communities, I learned something of what it means to be a small minority living the Gospel, in a nation where Christians of all denominations numbered less than 1% of the total population.

In the Philippines, during the 1960's and again the 80's, my eyes and heart were opened to the daily realities of poor, exploited people and communities, struggling to remain human under an oppressive, militaristic Marcos regime. Sharing in prayer and Gospel reflection with basic Christian communities in urban slums, fishing villages, rural barrios in Mindanao, and with political detainees, I began to grasp more fully the meaning of God's option for the poor. The people taught me what it means to be joined in active solidarity with our sisters and brothers in developing nations, in their community-based, nonviolent struggles to secure justice, freedom from oppression, the basic essentials of life, water, food, lands, just wages, and human working conditions.

Life in the remote mountaintop village of Bandipur in central Nepal continued to expand my horizons and awareness of God's presence. The villagers were steeped in timeless spirituality, reflected in their cosmic rituals and earth-centered awareness of the sacred depths of all things. Though I daily witnessed the stark poverty, malnutrition and hardships that oppressed and deprived people, especially children, of a full life of human dignity, they at the same time witnessed to me incredible strength and resilience, a profound awareness and intentional communion with their experience of the Divine Source, present in all created beings.

I returned to the United States in 1995, with an unsettling realization. After living in Asia 33 years, learning about the cultures, religions, languages and histories of Asian countries, I knew nothing about the First Peoples of my Country. This led me to join other Maryknoll Sisters serving in Gallup, NM, diocese, which was established to minister to seven Native American tribes and pueblos in the 55,000 sq. mile diocese. I was a beginner, ready to learn from tribal and pueblo people about their spiritual and cultural traditions expressed in seasonal rituals and ceremonies reverencing Mother Earth. In the process, many shared the history of their people's struggles and their survival in the face of colonization, government policies aimed at genocide, forced removal from sacred lands, and the boarding schools. This soon led to my active engagement and solidarity with Navajo and Pueblo communities and organizations in the movement to hold government and mining corporations responsible for the cleanup of over 500 abandoned uranium mine and mill sites which continue causing radioactive contamination of sacred water, land and air. Native people and communities in these areas still suffer from high rates of cancer, other illnesses, and long term health and environmental impacts from decades of uranium mining. Native peoples have revealed to me their deep love for Mother Earth, as they courageously act for healing of their people, the sacred land, water and air. They have taught me that the wounded places in Earth's body are our bodily wounds, and that we are all responsible for the healing. They have shown me how to participate in Earth's healing to help change our human life patterns that threaten the living systems of Earth; sacred water, soil, air, plants, trees, creatures, and all beings.

Looking back at each mission area, I see how vital it was to have been welcomed and supported by Maryknoll Sisters in community. Introductions to people and places were possible because of the Sisters' own presence, personal commitment, collaboration, friendships and ministries that had created relationships of trust, credibility and genuine appreciation of our Sisters in those I met. These were the sources of invitation and encouragement opening up new ministry possibilities in each country. And in the Sisters' company, risk-taking – responding to calls beyond "known horizons" – was part of the adventure of life in Mission.



In God's Grace and Mercy
by: Melissa Strelec

My name is Melissa, I am 34 years old. I have a degree in Organizational Change from Northwestern University and a Master's degree in City Planning from Clemson University.

I was born in Pittsburgh and was baptized at St. Scholastica Parish in Aspinwall, PA. I am the youngest of three girls, we are three years apart. It seems like my younger years flew by, with many happy birthday parties, family Thanksgivings, and church every Sunday.

I am excited about the call to religious life, especially because it's something that I have prayed about, and feel that my prayers have been answered recently. I prayed and asked our Lord, is the

call for me? Am I really called? I felt a unique answer from the Lord. He showed me that in all the wonders and adventures of the secular world, I somehow keep being called back to the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ. I know I have a call to our Lord, and am still figuring out how I am going to live that call.

With Maryknoll, I would be able to live the Gospel life. This means incorporating prayer into daily life, as Jesus taught us 'Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.'

(1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18).



(I am in the top row, second from left)

When I think of religious sisters, I usually think of teaching orders. One of the sisters in my parish when I was growing up led Sunday choir, and I admired how dedicated she was to Jesus. Despite how much I felt at home in St. Scholastica Parish, I never considered myself or my future as a teacher. I think I am gifted in other ways, in both contemplative prayer and the activity ministry of Christian evangelization.

I have always loved fellowship, conversation, and cultural exchange, but I have struggled in keeping these things focused on our Lord. I have been tempted by worldly things and have been bitten by the travel bug. I am a sinner, like all of us, but I know Jesus calls to the imperfect. It is He who shapes us. By God's grace and mercy, we become like Christ, and even our imperfections can be purified.

Currently, I work part time as an activities assistant at a nursing care home. As I pursue religious life, I would like to turn to Christ more than I have in the past. I would also like to be an example for my friends and family. In some sense, the religious life is about leaving the secular world behind. Christ suffered, and we too are called to suffer, so that we can learn to be better Christians, neighbors, and children of God. Why do we do what we do? So that we can be an example for others, and let Jesus be the source of our salvation.

Finding No Barrier

*by: Martha Quesada
(Nursing Aide)*

I am Martha Quesada. I am originally from Ecuador. I have two daughters and three granddaughters. Thirty-six years ago, I left my native land and entered the USA without any documents. From Ecuador, I went through Mexico. I know how it was for people crossing the borders. I was one of them once.

In 2003, a friend of mine working in the kitchen area of the Sisters encouraged me to apply and work in Maryknoll. I was accepted and started to work as a Nursing Aide.

From the very start, I like the place and the ambiance. I feel confident here, and this is like a family for me. The Sisters are very loving. I remember when I was new here. The Maryknoll Sisters managed and ran the whole Eden [Nursing Home] Area. I observed that all workers shared the same works equally and we helped each other. It was easier to create and to establish relationship among us employees. Working here at Maryknoll is a privilege to learn, share and observe the Sisters' way of life. I was the aide of Sr. Helen Wild for a long time. She was like an angel for me. I really appreciated her humble spirit, simplicity of heart and good manner. She was very good. She bore all her pain and suffering in silence.



Another Sister that made a great impact to me was Sr. Aiko Oyabu. She was a lovely Sister. I cried a bucket of tears when she died. I was her caregiver.

The Sisters' way of life and chosen vocation is truly a gift that is not given to all. I admire the way they dedicate their life to mission. The Sisters' total submission to God's Will, sacrifices and dedication to help the people of other nations are very inspiring. The way they witness the compassionate heart of God and the readiness to embrace strangers teaches us the great lesson of life. Love indeed finds no barrier, nor excuses. Love finds its own language to be expressed and to be understood, and to understand. The Maryknoll Sisters indeed do a great sacrifice for a greater love.

Working here, I learned the richness of life. It is not the material things that would matter most. It is the humility to serve and to help those in need, with great love, that counts.

Vocation Team

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Corner's Note:

Want to share your
World-Wide-Mission-Experience with us?
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