

## Vocation Ministry Newsletter Spring 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."



burneying Into Canonical Yea by: Faithmary Munyeki

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." (St. Augustine) I embrace and appreciate this year as an opportunity to develop a deeper connection to God through prayer, my community, the universe, and discovery of myself as I continue to discern my call with Maryknoll Sisters. I allow my heart to rest in God alone who satisfies my longings and fills me with life and gladness.



My transition to canonical year has been a time of grace, stretching, and God's abundant blessings. I finished my apostolic year in August and entered into my canonical year. That meant a change of house from Maryknoll Integration House Chicago to CDN (Collaborative Dominican Novitiate) in Chicago. I moved from a house of three where I was the only novice, to a house of five where I am with two other novices and two directors. What a great shift! We started our life here at the CDN by getting to know each other and I came to realize how diverse we were.

As I live in this intercultural community, I embrace the richness of diversity and also recognize the differences as a gift and source of wealth that calls forth listening and dialoguing with others in the community. I continue to take CTU classes, ICN and in-house classes too. This semester I am taking the Gospel of Luke with Sr. Barbra Reid, O.P (The President Elect for CTU) and Religious life with Sr. Maria Cimperman, RSCJ. Both CTU and ICN classes are through zoom due to the current pandemic situation. For in-

houses classes, we take preaching and life of St. Dominic. We also have panels on the four Dominican pillars (Prayer, Studies, Community and Ministry). We take Fridays as days of reflection and solitude. That gives moments of tranquility which leads to introspection, deeper self-understanding, and a closer relationship with God and others. I continue to learn how to balance studies, prayers, community time for self, and leisure. The community creates an atmosphere for us to undertake a personal project and work on areas of our gifts which are anything from cooking, decorations, gardening, and discovering new places for adventures to sports like basketball and pickle ball (courtesy of Carolyn White, MM). We often create time for fun, to play our favorite Canadian game crokinole and watch movies as a community. I continue enjoying bike rides and walks along the lake. Moments of being creative are always encouraged and supported here. We all share our various talents and gifts in the house generously.

I continue to learn to cook different types of food from my community members as share my Kenyan cultural food with the community. The current pandemic situation has made going for ministry an even greater challenge. As old ways of serving in ministry are being eliminated or restricted, there has been a need to be open to creating and embracing new ways of ministering. As much as I was willing to continue ministering in the food pantry where I used to serve, the community has asked me to put it on



hold – hence I had to look for new ways of doing ministry. I volunteered at Bethany House of Hospitality to do Kiswahili-English translation for residents who are from Kiswahili-speaking countries, but currently, they don't have any resident from the Swahili-speaking countries. So instead, I bake and deliver cookies for the other immigrants every other week. Bethany House of Hospitality offers housing and support services to young immigrant women and children as they journey to independence. The residents in Bethany House come from different parts of the world like El Salvador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Guatemala, Somalia, Congo, Venezuela, and Sudan, among others. This situation has stretched me to learn how to bake. I am exploring and discovering new recipes in order to give better service, which is working alright so far. As I read these words from Mother Mary Joseph, "We come to religious life, each with our own little gift. God has called you and me, because in each one of us there is some gift which could be used and which was given to us to carry out God's plans" MMJ,1930.I cannot but wonder whether this is my little gift being called forth at this place in time.



I have been working at Maryknoll for 14 years come August. I started working here in August of 2007. I stumbled upon the job by accident. I was supposed to be at the MKLM for an interview and I got lost because I could not find their place, and I saw the sign for Maryknoll and followed



it. I ended up here at the Sisters and was given an interview with Sr. Connie Krautkremer and Sr. Geraldine Wieczerzak, and a week or two later, I was hired. You could say that my getting lost was a blessing in disguise!

I really enjoy working here. You learn something new every day. There is no stress like other jobs. Your day is full and goes by quickly. I do enjoy talking and learning about the Sisters, their stories, the people they have met and what they have done in mission. Everyone is so nice and easy to talk to, if you have a problem or question they are willing to help.

Being at Maryknoll has made me a better person. I am more at ease with other people. Making new friends and being able to be myself. I enjoy helping the Sisters and my colleagues. I find that I have a lot more patience. I am calmer with everyday occurrences and I seem to take things in stride without getting so worried or flustered.



In Seventh Grade, Sister read to us the story of Fr. Gerard Donovan, a Maryknoll Missioner. His family lived in our parish. Then, once a week, a priest talked to us about Jesus.

He told us Jesus loved us and we could tell Jesus anything. He invited us to join the "Fifteen Minute Club." Members visited Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament every day for 15 minutes. I joined the Club. We did not have to tell anyone if we made our visit.

We had a little folder with a simple meditation method and a calendar. I hurried to the church every day after school. I talked to Jesus about everything. I learned to read the New Testament, to enjoy being with Jesus, to tell Him when I was sad, or wondering about something, to tell Him what I was excited or happy about.



Then, one day, during Geography Class, the Sister put her hand on the map of Tibet. She told us it was a land locked country with high

mountains. Some had never heard of Jesus. I remember thinking, "I have to go and tell them about Jesus." I have never forgotten that moment.

A Maryknoll priest came soon after that to our school. He spoke and invited the boys to become Maryknoll Priests and Brothers. He asked if anyone had a question. I asked, "Are there Maryknoll Sisters?" He said, "Yes!" I knew that was what I was going to be.

This year I will celebrate 75 years in Maryknoll. I stayed because Jesus is faithful. Every life has its ups and downs. I had many incidents and difficult situations as well as delightful and grace filled experiences. I always knew that Jesus was present. I could always rely on Him. Nothing I suffered ever compared with what He suffered. He called to me in the children who were so lovable. Even in the darkest times when I felt my heart was broken, I knew He and His

Mother understood my tears and helped me over the hard spots. In addition, much of the time, holy Maryknoll men and women whose example inspired me to follow Jesus surrounded me.

I hope Maryknoll Sisters will cherish the values our founding members held.

Love of the Church and its Universal Mission = Our Founders faced many difficulties but there is no record that they ever considered founding anything independent of the Church.

- 1. Eucharistic and Liturgical Practice in its fullness
- 2. Chaste Love and Care for one another among Sisters, Priests, Brothers from many nations.
- 3. Willingness to risk commitment to mission in the peripheries. While Maryknoll has always risked mission in geographic peripheries, now we must commit to the new peripheries, geographic or otherwise.



"The first law of our being is that we are set in a delicate network of interdependence with our fellow human beings and with the rest of God's creation....It is the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours. I am human because I belong....[It speaks] about compassion...." (Bishop Desmond Tutu - God has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time.)

How does one invite and nurture vocation to Maryknoll and for mission? The story of the two



disciples walking to Emmaus and the

Stranger journeying with them brought a life changing experience...their hearts were burning in the sharing and listening to each other's life story. Is every Maryknoll Sister's heart burning with joy and mission as she shares her

life and mission stories with the young adults we each accompany? As missionaries, do young adults see and experience our capacity to listen to their faith-life stories? Do they hear and experience from Maryknoll Sisters the joy and invitation for growth in Community, healing, forgiveness, and prayer life in our



midst? Do Maryknoll Sisters witness God's Dream coming to realization for each person in Community and Mission? The challenge for every Maryknoll Sister is to listen compassionately—to listen with the heart—and to expand our hearts wide enough to hold space for every discerner and every life experience of others, whether in our own culture or in another.

Encounters with Maryknoll Sisters give opportunities for young people to discern how to follow God's invitation for them "Walk with Me!" (cf. The Road to Emmaus). The enthusiasm and commitment of these young adults give us hope and joy for the church and mission. Maryknoll

Sisters, wherever we are in Mission and Ministry, create opportunities to welcome and nurture Vocation to Mission and to Maryknoll. The enthusiasm and commitment of these young adults give us hope and joy for the Church, Mission and Maryknoll.

We believe that God continues to call – to invite every person "Come Walk with Me." Scriptures and our lives witness to this reality. Yes, we want to facilitate and accompany others to live and preach the Gospel. We, as Maryknoll Sisters believe in the importance of inviting and accompanying, and in being a supportive presence for each other on the journey. We believe that our new members and our multi-culturality call us to openness and trusting our future as a community.



It has been my privilege to work alongside many wonderful people for over 25 years. The interaction has always lifted my spirit, and working here has given me a purpose. The Sisters have always given me the opportunity for growth, whether within my department or as a young woman surrounded by so many beautiful knowledgeable



women of God.

I have had the opportunity to work with the Sisters communities and numerous departments, which has allowed me to work well within the culture here at the Center.

Here at Maryknoll Center the Sisters have made it known to all staff that we play a large part in making it possible for the Sisters to accomplish their vision in the mission field. Knowing that we are making a difference and contributing to their mission allows you to have a purpose that touches your heart and soul.

I have always had the opportunity to sit and learn from the Sisters as they share about their missions/mission fields abroad. Each one has taken the torch, so to speak, of Mother Mary Joseph and her Vision that she received personally. In my job I have learned to see Mother Mary Joseph's love, compassion, kindness, gentleness and servanthood in her work as well as in the Sisters who carried it on.

The Maryknoll Center has a heartbeat like no other. Their vision to be missionaries not only reflects their willingness to give up their lives to serve in so many different countries but also to continue that vision here at the Center. Their love, compassion and overwhelming kindness fills the hallways, rooms, offices and even Zoom meetings. The Sisters are true servants and are always willing show the love of God by serving in any way they can.

Working here at the Center has taught me about community, oneness, servanthood which has been a reflection of God's love for us. The Sisters have put their knowledge and their culture in such a way that I have not only been influenced but touched deeply.

The values that I have grown up with in my family as well as what I have learned while working for the Maryknoll Sisters:

To serve before being served

To honor before being honored

To love before being loved

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To bless before being blessed

To be willing to sacrifice for others

To continue to learn and walk a life showing God's Love to all people

## **Dates to Remember**

April 1-3, 2021 – Maryknoll Collaboration Holy Week Virtual Retreat
April 22, 2021 and April 23, 2021 - Regional Vocation Circle Zoom Meeting
July 2021 – NRVC Summer Courses (*National Religious Vocation Conference*)



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