



Vocation Ministry Newsletter

Spring 2023 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."



Imbued with spirit we inherit from our foundress, we strive to be faithful to her description of a Maryknoll Sister.
"I would have her distinguished by Christ-like charity, a limpid simplicity of soul, heroic generosity, selflessness, unswerving loyalty, prudent zeal, gracious courtesy, an adaptable disposition, solid piety and the saving grace of kindly humor."

Mother Mary Joseph: 1935

Thanks to our Contributors:

Sr. Theresa Baldini

Lucy Massafra

Hanna Niña Bentain

Gene Calderon

Gloria Ardenio Agnes



Reflection on My Call to Maryknoll

By Sr. Theresa Baldini, MM

It is a joy to share these reflections on my Call to Maryknoll. I was blessed in being part of a wonderful family in Brooklyn, NY, and our home was always open to others. On Sundays, we had



our dinner at 1 p.m., and most often we had relatives, neighbors, friends join us. Our meal often ended around 5 pm, as our relationships and good conversations were blessed in sharing a meal together. It was in my early years that I learned the importance of staying in the conversation long enough to reverence our differences, and how much our diversity enriches our humanity and gifts us with compassion!

Before I came to Maryknoll, I was a secretary at a stock brokerage in New York City, and was dating a nice young man for 2-years. Although I was enjoying being with great friends from school and from my Parish, I felt God was calling me to something MORE! We received the *Maryknoll Magazine* in my home and the call to mission touched my heart deeply. My entering Maryknoll in 1955 was one of the great gifts that God gave me. After Profession of Vows, assisting as a secretary at the Sisters Center, and then as a secretary to the Maryknoll Society's General Council were grateful experiences.

While working with the Maryknoll Society, I began to experience contemplative prayer and mission as needing to be more integrated in my life. Being an extravert, this did not come easily! I was delighted to read the words from our Foundress, Mother Mary Joseph (MMJ): "*May no one take us for anything but missionaries*" ~ those who willingly go forth into the unknown, outreaching to others in mutually blessing ways, and conscious that God is always with us!

And also where MMJ said: *Every Maryknoll Sister is called to be a contemplative in mission* ~ recognizing the sacred among us and beyond us. The contemplative posture, coupled with the call to mission, opens us to the paradigm of complete self-gift. MMJ called this complete self-gift, the ***spirit of martyrdom*** ~ going the whole way for Christ. Few of us are asked to shed our blood but all of us are invited to love forever unconditionally. It is following Jesus the Christ, who gave himself into the hands of his disciples saying: *This is my body and I am giving it to you!* And we as Maryknoll Sisters are saying the same words: *I am giving my body into your hands, O loving Creator, for the well-being of humanity and all of creation! Use me as YOU will!* And the gift of being part of our Maryknoll Community energizes us beyond ourselves and is at the heart of our Maryknoll Charism!

In 1963, I was assigned to the Contemplative Community, and new blessings entered my life. From 1971 to 1985, I was in the group assigned to open a Prayer Presence among the Navajos in NM, at the request of the Bishop of the Gallup Diocese, and was exposed to the wisdom of indigenous people. In 1986, I was assigned with another Sister to have a Prayer Presence in a war-zone in the Diocese of Torit in South Sudan, at the request of the Sudanese Bishop Paride Taban. In 1992, because of the escalation of the war, the Bishop advised all expatriates to leave temporarily. We returned to South Sudan in 2000, when we continued our prayer presence in the Torit Diocese to 2010. We were blessed by the Sudanese people who taught us to 'live with

enough' -- that there are two things that can displace the human spirit: wanting more of everything and not knowing the meaning of 'enough.' Also, we learned through the suffering of the people that an important part of being human is to try to see that no one suffers alone, that no pain goes unnoticed, and that all pain has meaning.

My humanity is blessed and stretched in living out my missionary/contemplative call, discovering that the real journey of the missionary is inward and the conversion is not someone else's but one's own. It is an ongoing surrender to God's overwhelming love, experiencing the Heart-beat of God within oneself and others. The missionary journey is to our true self and our true home, where we are connected to all peoples and all of Creation! *Thank YOU!*

My Years at Maryknoll

*By: Lucy Massafra
(Direct Mail Manager)*



Greeting to all at Maryknoll Sisters Center.

I joined Maryknoll Sisters on April 20, 2020, during the Covid-19 Pandemic. I previously worked in publishing for over 20 years as a Marketing Manager and most recently prior to coming to Maryknoll Sisters I worked in Heath Care as Administrative Manager.

As my learning continues of the Maryknoll Sisters mission, I find working at Maryknoll Sisters to be spiritually rewarding. Assisting the Sisters in telling their mission stories to our Donors is an important and eye opening experience. We have compassionate and magnificent Donors who want to be there for the Sisters to help with financial support and eager to learn more about how the Sisters are making God's Love Visible in a One Earth Community. It makes you feel good at the end of the day when you go home, that you're not just doing a job, but you're working on a project that truly changes someone's life for the better!

As my years at the Maryknoll Sisters continue, I've realized the importance of building relationships with people from all over the globe. In the spirit of Mother Mary Joseph, we all are truly entwined together as a One Earth Community.

Discerning: Give Yourself A Time

*By: Hanna Niña Bertain
(Discerner)*

My name is Hanna Niña G. Bertain, 32 years old. I graduated from Don Bosco Technical College in Cebu, Philippines with the degree of Bachelor of Arts Major in Religious Education and Pastoral Communication. I live in Lipata, Minglanilla, Cebu. I am the youngest of four children. I have 2 brothers but unfortunately, my older brother passed away. My sister who is the eldest

of the family is married. I am currently working as a librarian and part time teacher at Don Bosco Formation Center in Lawaan, Talisay City, Cebu, Philippines.

Almost my entire formal education was in Catholic schools. I grew up seeing and associating with religious sisters, but it was only in my adult years that I gained some understanding of what religious or consecrated life is.

Probably my attraction to religious life was already present within me, but I just didn't pay attention to it before. At present, when I ponder about consecrated life, what attracts me is the total belongingness to our Creator and the great sense of serving other people, which gives the person something fulfilling. I am also drawn to the simplicity and tranquility of religious life.



The decision to discern religious life is a highly personal and individual one. Personally, I felt the desire to live a life of service to others, to deepen my relationship with God. I somehow feel a deep longing and restlessness that I cannot really explain. I also see or consider religious life an opportunity to find meaning and purpose in my life. Hence, until now I take time to discern more as I am still confused about what is really my vocation in life. I am very grateful for the guidance through the accompaniment of one of the Maryknoll Sisters who is journeying with me in my discernment process.

Discerning my vocation to Maryknoll, I hope to deepen my relationship with God. I hope to grow as an individual, since discerning a vocation to religious life is a transformative process. I hope to grow in self-awareness, emotional maturity, and personal development through discernment.

As I discern my own calling, I would like to encourage the young professionals who are searching for their life's purpose and would like to tell them, "Give yourself time to explore different interests, opportunities and learn more about what you resonate with. Seek guidance and support, talk to mentors, and friends, or a religious sister or priest who can be your spiritual director and can offer advice and support as you discern your life's purpose. Be patient and kind to yourself. Finding your life's purpose is a journey, and it can take time. Remember to be patient with yourself and treat yourself with kindness and compassion along the way. Eventually, finding our life's purpose is about discovering what brings us joy, fulfillment, and a sense of meaning. Keep an open mind, stay curious, and trust that we will find the place that we are destined for.

Witnessing God's Love

By: Gene Calderon

(Maryknoll Nurse)

Working at Maryknoll has been a life-changing experience for me. After spending 13 years in a high-intensity job in the city, I made a decision to look for a more rewarding and less stressful opportunity. In 2019, my Aunt, who is an employee at Maryknoll, introduced me to this institution- and I have never looked back.



Being able to support the Sisters in their last journey in life is what makes my work at Maryknoll more life-giving for me. Seeing the satisfaction on our Sisters' faces and knowing their final moments are comfortable and peaceful is priceless.

One thing that stands out about Maryknoll is how complex and diverse its personalities are. Working in such an environment has helped me develop and enhance my ability to adapt and react to differences. Moreover, it feels like I'm in different countries every day because of the culture the Sisters adapted to and brought from their missions – which adds to the overall experience.

Mother Mary Joseph encouraged us to witness God's Love in our daily life, and this is something that I strive to do every day. By supporting the sisters, I am able to see God's Love in each one of us - from the nurses to the aides down to the kitchen and maintenance people, working hand in hand to be the best support system to the Maryknoll Sisters and community. Outside of work, I try to extend the same love and support to the less fortunate people in my neighborhood.

In today's world, healthcare workers are the Maryknoll Sisters of our time because of their dedication to their jobs - helping the community go through life challenges and development. Whether combating a pandemic, taking care of the sick or elderly, or simply spreading hope and love, the work of healthcare workers embodies the spirit of Maryknoll.

Overall, my time at Maryknoll has been a fulfilling and rewarding experience. I take pride in the work that I do, and I am grateful for the opportunity to help make a difference in the lives of others.

Creating a Welcoming Space of Becoming

By: Gloria Ardenio Agnes

How many women or men are you recruiting to join us? This is the common question



frequently asked of the vocation ministers. Recruitment might have been the word used when there was no other available terminology. Now, Vocation Ministers are encouraged not to RECRUIT, but rather to ASSESS the individual's vocation.

Various options are given to the discerners. In John 21: 15-17, Jesus asked Peter to feed his sheep. Jesus didn't ask Peter to

count his sheep. As I accompany and assess women on their vocation discernment, I hope they can find what will be most life giving for them. Wherever their vocation leads them, I hope they will be more responsible for the decision they are making. I hope they will be more accountable for the option they are choosing. Assessment is journeying with the discerner to search and to discover her vocation. Accompanying the discerner on her discernment takes time. We know that there are four vocations in life: married life, religious life, priesthood, and the single life. In order to discover and affirm which one of these is meant for the discerner, the woman must be aware of her strengths and her growing edges. Which one of these vocations will be most life giving for her? Which of these four will make her more responsible and accountable? If her discernment leads her to religious life, is it in Maryknoll? As vocation minister, I offer these options to the discerners. I want them to know that Maryknoll Sisters is one of their options... but not the only option. When the woman decides to join the Congregation, I want to foresee

her as a responsible individual and mindful of her strengths and growing edges. Most of all, I hope she is capable of learning from others, both in community and ministry. As Maryknoll Sisters community, I hope we too, are open to learn from young women who are responding with courage to their call to Maryknoll. As the receiving community, how do we create a welcoming space and build bridges between differences and similarities? How do we welcome young women into our Community? As a Congregation, how do we support young women who are not just seeking a place to belong, but rather are searching for their Call of Becoming?

Vocation Team

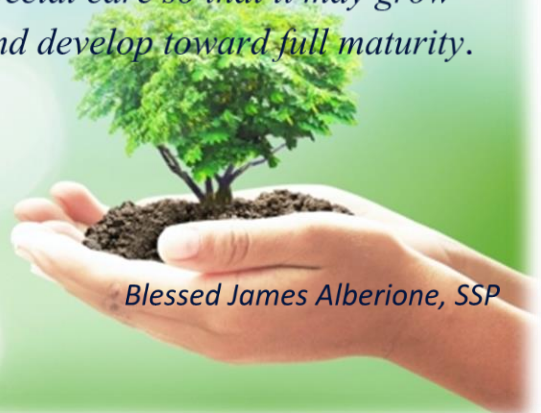
Abby Avelino	Sue Rech	Julia Shideler	Marvie Misolas
Aurora de la Cruz	Paulette Yeung	Dolores Geier	Michelle Reynolds
Sia Temu	MaryLou Rajdl	Teresa Dagdag	Miyoung Sung
Mary Vertucci	Chiyong Pak	Armeline Sidoine	Carolyn Moritz
Janet Srebalus	Yoo Soo Kim	Roni Schweyen	Rolande Kahindo
Felista Wanzagi	Susan Wanzagi	Gladys Gonzalez	Dora Nuetzi
Gloria Tamayo	Daisy Vargas	Sue Glass	Maria Zeballos
Isabel da Costa Araujo	Rosalinda Barrozo	Teruko Ito	Ro Milazzo

Vocation Director: Gloria Ardenio Agnes

Corner's Note:

Want to share your
World-Wide-Mission-Experience
with us?
Contact Gloria Ardenio Agnes
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*A Vocation to religious life needs
special care so that it may grow
and develop toward full maturity.*



Blessed James Alberione, SSP