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Lay missionary Mike Garr with Angel in her grandmother's home in Kenya.



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MKLM Mission Statement

Maryknoll Lay Missioners is a Catholic organization inspired by the mission of Jesus to live and work in poor communities in Africa, Asia and the Americas, responding to basic needs and helping to create a more just and compassionate world.

PLEASE REMEMBER

Maryknoll Lay Missioners (MKLM) is a separate and distinct organization from the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers and Maryknoll Sisters. Although we often join together to serve in mission, **MKLM raises all of its own resources to recruit, train, send and sustain our Lay Missioners.**

We need your support!

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MKLM IS FAMILY

Author: Bill Bachmann

It takes a very strong-willed and faith-filled individual to serve in mission for 18 years, leave to earn a law degree, and then return to mission filled with renewed energy, knowledge, and determination.

Heidi Cerneka, fresh out of college, spent two years overseas with the Jesuit Volunteers in the late 1980s, and when she returned to the U.S., she still felt a burning desire to head back overseas at some point in her life. Heidi admired the Maryknoll Lay Missioners organization – in part because of the four-month training program, which made her feel that they took training seriously, and in part because of the longer commitment of 3½ years that MKLM required. She felt very strongly that mission must be prophetic, that is, it must work for change and a more just world, as well as be inspired and motivated by a deep faith. Maryknoll really impressed her with its rich history and deep, committed, prophetic mission. *“I wanted to live my faith and my call to mission along with other people searching*

for the same depth, the same commitment and the same belief in a better world.” Heidi joined Maryknoll Lay Missioners in December 1996 and for the next 18 years worked tirelessly in prison ministry and as a human rights advocate in Brazil.

In August of 2014, Heidi detoured as she continued on her spiritual journey. Many of the people she had worked with in the human rights field were lawyers. *“I felt that I could be an even better advocate if I had legal tools to accompany all of my accumulated experience and knowledge.”* So she left MKLM and entered law school at Loyola University in Chicago. Although Heidi was twice the age of most of her classmates, and she laughs about that, this learning experience was unparalleled.

In 2017, with law degree in hand, Heidi felt drawn back to overseas mission and decided to return to Maryknoll Lay Missioners. She thought of MKLM as “family,” and this time around wanted to serve in Kenya. She loves working with the law and confronting justice issues,



Photo credit: Peter Onyango Olwal - Onkol Media.

but is adamant about doing it from a faith perspective. One can practice law in Chicago, Texas, or in an overseas job, but the amalgamation of working for justice from a faith perspective is a practice that MKLM has fine-tuned over the last forty years.

What peaked Heidi’s mission interest in Kenya, in addition to MKLM’s presence there, was a desire to deepen her knowledge of incarcerated women and to learn from the experience of training prisoners to be paralegals. The paralegal



fairly universal. They do not change from country to country, and Heidi wanted to learn how that is true in the context of Kenya. In her opinion, incarceration of women is not the problem, but instead is a symptom of global systemic problems, such as economic injustice, which needs to be identified and addressed.

Heidi first joined MKLM because she felt particularly called to serve outside the U.S., with other cultures and people in communities different from hers. She is well aware that there is a



Photo credits:
Top: Courtesy of Heidi Cerneka
Middle: Peter Onyango Olwal - Onkol Media
Bottom: Marj Humphrey

program and training prisoners to be their own advocates in court is a unique program that Heidi has not seen in her exposure to prison advocacy in many countries. She hopes to learn the model and be able to offer the training in other locations. Additionally, she has worked for many years learning about women and incarceration – in Brazil, at an international level, and in Chicago and the U.S. – and found that while some country and cultural contexts change, the causes and devastating consequences of locking up women, often single-parent heads of households, are



lot of work to be done in the U.S., and people sometimes ask about her desire to serve in another country when there is so much need here in the states. *“That’s a fair question,”* she says, glad that so many people do work for justice in the United States. But Heidi has chosen to follow her own true north – call it vocation, call it her motivating force that is faith-based. *“I trust my intuition, and I feel drawn to continue learning more, and giving more, so that I can better understand what and how we need to change to have a more just world.”*

Seven Maryknoll Lay Missioners

Author: Ayde Lyons

"They heard the call and responded to it."

These were the words of Maryknoll Father Larry Lewis as he presided over the covenant-signing ceremony of the new Maryknoll Lay Missioners on December, 7, 2017.

The new missioners — **Gabrielle Cuda, Margarita Duran, Kathleen Flatoff, Kylene Fremling, Michael Garr, Gabe Hurrish and Angelica Ruppe** — were each making a 3 1/2 year renewable commitment to live and work as messengers of God's love among the world's most vulnerable people in mission overseas. The hymns they sang during the ceremony reflected the commitment these laypeople had just declared and the readings chosen by them reflected their commitment to the beatitudes in following the non-violent Jesus.

blessings of the community. In early January, they departed for their respective mission sites in Africa, Asia and Latin America, where they began the next stage of their orientation to mission, including in-country language training, acculturation and mission service.

But their journey to overseas mission began long before they arrived at Maryknoll, N.Y., in October 2017 for their 10-week orientation. Their journeys are as distinct and unique as the travelers and speak of the different paths they followed that led them to choose life as Maryknoll Lay Missioners.

Angelica Ruppe's call came after she spent a month serving as a missionary in Cameroon, Africa, where she says she fell

Answer The Call To Walk In Jesus' Footsteps



just got bigger," said Angelica about her decision to join MKLM. She looks forward to following whatever God wants her to do when she begins her work in Tanzania.

Another Mexico native, **Margarita Duran**, who most recently lived in Rio Rancho, N.M., credits her work as a teacher and catechist, as well as the loving influence of her dad, with leading her to mission. Margarita feels that her degree in criminology and psychology will serve her well in Brazil, ideally working in education or prison ministry. But her heart and mind remain open to possibilities. *"I really just want to be humbled and grow in my relationship with Jesus Christ,"* she said.

Kathleen Flatoff, who will be serving in Kenya, recounted how it took her nearly

community. Kathleen went on short-term mission trips after retirement and decided that now was finally the time to devote her life to mission work. *"I was in my 50s and MKLM was one of the few organizations that took older people, so this was a perfect match for me,"* she said.

"I had an uncle who was a Franciscan TOR (Third Order Regular) priest in mission for 33 years. I remember his stories when I was young," recalled **Gabe Hurrish** of what drew him to mission. Gabe, from Stevens Point, Wis., worked with several relief, development and mission organizations for more than 25 years in 10 countries, many in Africa. He will return to continue his previous work as a professor at Solidarity Teacher Training College at Yambio, the only functioning teacher



Photo credits: Ayde Lyons, Bill Bachmann, Debbie Northern

Two days later, on a snowy Saturday, inside the Christmas-adorned Queen of Apostles Chapel on the Maryknoll campus in New York, these men and women became the 50th class of the Maryknoll Lay Missioners sent forth with mission crosses and the

in love with the people and culture and felt Africa was where she was needed. A certified public accountant who grew up in Mexico and most recently lived in Medford, Ore., Angelica was referred to MKLM by a missionary friend. *"My dream*

30 years to answer the call to mission. This native of Tomah, Wis., served four years with the U.S. Navy in Guam and for 28 years as a registered nurse in the Department of Veterans Affairs. She volunteered on an indigenous reservation and has been active in her church and

training college in war-ravaged South Sudan.

The road to mission was not an easy one for **Michael Garr**, a chef from Lansing, Mich. His discernment began as Mike participated in a *JustFaith* group and was looking to put his faith into action in a

Front row
(left to right): Gabe
Hurrish, Angelica
Ruppe, Kathleen
Flatoff

Back row (left to
right): Margarita
Duran, Kylene
Fremling, Mike Garr,
Gabrielle Cuda

Photo credit:
Debbie Northern



more concrete way. Three years ago, Mike did a fair share of praying and journal writing, unsure of what to do with his future. He heard his call through a talk at his church by Maryknoll Father Brian Barrons. A sense of peace came over him, he says, and he finally decided that God was calling him to global mission. In January, he set off for Kenya. *"I hope to deepen my relationship with God by working in prison ministry as well as with street kids and orphans."* Mike said.

For **Gabrielle Cuda**, it was not only the work but the people who helped finalize her decision to become a missionary. *"I traveled to Uganda last year and fell in love with the people. They are materially poor but so rich in their faith and it actually transformed my faith,"* said Gabrielle, from Los Angeles, Calif., who has a degree in communication studies. In Tanzania, she will be working with the LULU Project, which serves at-risk teenage mothers, teaching them life skills and ways to earn an income.

Kylene Fremling, who will be working in Cambodia, jokes that she has always wanted to become, in her words, *"a professional volunteer."* For the Brookston, Minn., native, who has a degree in exercise physiology, the call to mission was a

combination of factors. Kylene has worked with people experiencing homelessness and in community health as a Vista and Americorps Volunteer. *"I really wanted to serve people in a way that I could serve God and include my faith but also really love God's people as well,"* she said. Her friend told her she had a vision of Kylene working as a missionary. *"Once I heard that,"* Kylene said, *"I knew it was a clear sign of what I was supposed to do."*

The new missionaries praised very highly the 10-week Orientation Program and especially highlighted the community aspect of the program that was developed with such a diverse group of all ages and cultures from all over the country. Special notice was given to the importance of the following workshops: Following the Non-Violent Jesus, Catholic Social Teaching, Faith in Action, Anti-Racism, Forgiveness and Restorative Justice, Enneagram (a comprehensive personality and spirituality assessment tool), as well as Conflict and Communication. *"They highly valued the communal prayer and personal retreat time, as well as the focus on Maryknoll Lay Missioners' eight core values and cross-cultural aspects of mission,"* said Joanne Blaney, former Director of Mission Services.

On a New Mission in South Sudan

Author: Gabe Hurrish

Maryknoll Lay Missioners introduces our work in South Sudan.

*Foreword from Marj Humphrey,
Director of Missions*

South Sudan is not new to Maryknoll Lay Missioners. We have had lay missionaries work in South Sudan in the past. But, in recent years, due to various circumstances, we have simply not had people who were able to serve there. However, in the past, Dr. Susan Nagele, Marty Roers, Liz Mach, and Marj Humphrey served in South Sudan during the country's civil war, before it was independent. - M.H.

So we were delighted when, last year, an experienced lay missionary, Gabe Hurrish, who had worked with various organizations over a span of 25 years, asked if Maryknoll Lay Missioners could consider placing someone in South Sudan, even though we did not currently have anyone there. In addition to many years of experience in other geographical settings, he had worked in South Sudan many years ago, and then again in the summer of 2016 when he volunteered with *Solidarity with South Sudan* for 3 months.

Gabe felt a strong call to return full-time, with a longer commitment, so he contacted Maryknoll Lay Missioners to see if we would consider such a placement if he were to be accepted by us as a lay missionary. His inquiry was referred to me, as I was the only person in our office with prior experience there.

South Sudan is one of the neediest, least developed places in the world, and has always been close to my heart. To hear that someone was interested in serving there spoke directly to my firsthand experience of the tremendous needs of one of the world's greatest humanitarian

Gabe teaching at Teacher
Training College – Yambio –
South Sudan



Photo credit: Courtesy of Gabe Hurrish

tragedies. Hundreds of thousands of people have died or been displaced in recent years, as the world's newest country has dissolved once again into mass violence. I, and many others, believe that ethnic cleansing is going on there, though no one will officially say that. I strongly believe that if there is any way we can have a presence in South Sudan, we should. And now we have a person who is willing and able to serve there. Gabe, and all the people of South Sudan, need our prayers and support. - M.H.

Welcome to South Sudan, the newest country in the world!

There are between 65 - 70 ethnic languages spoken in South Sudan. The largest ethnic tribe is Dinka, with Nuer second. Since independence on June 9, 2011, South Sudan has declined into civil war with up to seven groups recognized as antagonists. The entire country is affected as roads are unsafe, the economy is extremely weak, infrastructure is almost non-existent, many institutions are operating at below average or have closed altogether, and most civil service employees are unpaid.

English is the national language in South Sudan, but local tongues are commonly used. A sort of pidgin Arabic language is also used in many workplaces and professional settings. High school graduates and professionals are fluent in English; however, many of those we serve and walk alongside speak limited English.

The situation has led to one of the largest refugee populations in the world. As of January 2018, about 30% of the 11 million population are living in Internally Displaced Camps

run by the United Nations (more than 2 million), or have crossed the borders of neighboring countries, with the DIDI refugee camp in Northern Uganda being one of the largest camps in the world (more than 1 million). There are over 6,000 internally displaced persons now living in Riimenze, and Solidarity With South Sudan (SSS) has been assisting them since January 1, 2017.

In the country, basic supplies are in short supply and very expensive. However, most things can be purchased for a price. Transportation is very difficult. Roads are in complete disrepair. The Central Government does not provide water, electricity, postal or any other civil services. The climate is tropical most of the year. Dry season is from December to March with short rains beginning in April and the heavy rains coming in June to September.

South Sudan is severely lacking in trained and certified teachers. SSS is a group of international Catholic religious who operate a Teacher Training College in Yambio, of Gbudue province in the southwestern

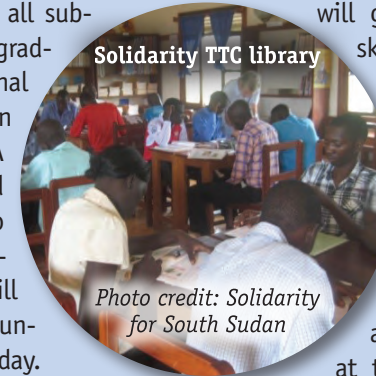


Graduation from Teacher Training College

Photo credit: Solidarity for South Sudan

part of the country. Students come from all over the country and represent a microcosm of tribes and ethnicities. As of January 2018, every student is sponsored by a donor so their education is free. This also includes transportation to and from the college. They study all subjects in 4 trimesters to graduate with a professional teaching certificate in about 15 months. A lucky few are selected each year to go on to advanced study in Nairobi. The idea is they will return to take over the running of the college one day.

I am a Maryknoll lay missionary serving in Yambio City of Gbudue Province and I work with SSS. SSS also operates a Health Training Institute in Wau, a Retreat Center in Juba, and does many of the official processes and air ticket reservations for many religious in the country. My role is to assist the Principal in the administration of the college. I teach Level 3 and Level 4 Social Studies. I document all the buildings and history of the college. I am also tasked with interviewing the students to create a written account of their lives before coming to college and after they graduate. As the only lay missionary amongst 10 international religions, I represent Maryknoll Lay Missioners. There are two Maryknoll priests serving with SSS in other project sites. I am fully integrated in the life of the community. We pray together twice every day, attend mass together,



Solidarity TTC library

Photo credit: Solidarity for South Sudan

prepare and eat meals together. Every member is given a specific responsibility to serve the community. I am the gardener and my task is to raise some herbs and vegetables which we cannot find in the market. It is a small plot but we hope it will grow as my experience and skills grow.

If ever there was a more justifiable situation for MKLM to be involved in, I think South Sudan would merit the presence of our lay missionaries in any capacity. This multifarious and complex situation pulls at the very heartstrings of my emotions and passions. Although so many South Sudanese live among the darkness of fear and uncertainty created by greedy and selfish leaders, one can truly feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.



Photo credit: Courtesy of Gabe Hurrish

Living alongside these suffering people is truly the Good News Jesus was instructing us about. Jesus humbled himself for our sakes and we, as lay missionaries, do the same for our brothers and sisters in Christ who experience the Passion of Jesus in their very lives here in South Sudan. The Beatitudes come to life for us as we accompany these lovely South Sudanese, who simply want to live a good quality life and raise a healthy family.

We find our own faith tested and forged in this fire of struggle and pain which only the Divine can defeat. We lay missionaries pray with increased intensity for the presence of Our Lord as we continue to serve as best we can.

We See From Where We Stand

Author: Joanne Blaney

This Haitian proverb has been a constant in my life. It has inspired me to be in faith-based service work from an early age and challenged me to immerse myself in other cultures and situations to learn to see from other perspectives. For many years, I was a teacher and principal in urban schools in Philadelphia and Washington, DC. From my family, especially my parents, I learned early on the importance of service grounded in Gospel values, especially by their lives that mirrored, *"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."*

I have been a Maryknoll lay missionary for 21 years and served in Sao Paulo, Brazil, for 18 years, and for the last three years, as Director of Mission Services in New York. I have learned to see from multiple perspectives and hope to continue to do so as I now return to mission in Brazil. I am inspired by the MKLM call to be a compassionate presence in service and to join with others in working to change unjust structures. My deep sadness in seeing the disparities in our world, where more than 1.3 billion people live in extreme poverty (less than \$1.25 a day) and over 65 million people are displaced from their homes because of war, famine and violence, motivates me to continue in mission.

Given that 86% of the world's population is now urban, I am excited to return to the mega-city of São Paulo and work for non-violence, forgiveness and restorative justice processes in schools, neighborhoods and prisons. With the growth of violence in the United States and so many

other parts of our world, we see the importance of working to prevent violence as well as helping to heal and transform the pain of those who suffer from violence. In a special way, I remember Seu Joao, 72 years old, who had been in and out of prison most of his life. After taking the restorative justice course, he stated, *"I would not be here today if I had taken this course earlier in my life."* He and other inmates spoke of the importance of forgiveness, learning about

non-violent ways to resolve conflicts, and how revenge only leads to more violence. They learned to see from another perspective and are working in some way to repair the harm that they have caused. Seu Joao is helping to mediate conflicts in his cellblock.

Recently, I was in a maximum security prison in New York with a group of men who were evaluating the Restorative Justice workshops. One man said, *"Nothing is the same now."*



Photo credits:
Courtesy of Joanne Blaney



Joanne Blaney and her team of Restorative Justice facilitators:
From left to right: Annie, José, Joanne, Talita, Andrea

Photo credit: Courtesy of Joanne Blaney

Another talked about how he can now look at things from the victim's perspective: *"I know what I did that day, but before this workshop, I didn't really think about the victim."* Helping people to see from another's perspective leads to empathy and compassion, as well as a desire to repair the harm.

Doña Cida is an example of truly living out Gospel values. She lost her only son in an act of senseless urban violence. After a period of grief, anger and pain, she forgave the young man who killed her son and even helped his mother. In Dona Cida's words, *"In that moment of encounter with them, I saw another young man like my son, and, in his mother, a poor woman just like me. I was able to forgive and later even worked to help his mother deal with the reality of her son being in prison."* Doña Cida stopped her son's friends from taking revenge on the young man's family, stating that, *"This will not bring back the life of my son."* Today, she is a community leader in a neighborhood youth project.

God's grace is certainly a part of these transformations. Where once there was

only pain and anger, there now is *"a peace beyond all understanding,"* as one victim said.

I am grateful for my years with the dedicated staff of MKLM in New York, and look forward to rejoining the Brazil Maryknoll community as we work together to bring more peace and justice to our world. I am so blessed by the incredible witness of so many men and women in our world who, in spite of so many difficulties and sufferings, continue to hope and work toward a better world for all.

Pope Francis states, *"Each of us is an artisan of peace by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding onto it."* May each of us open our eyes and hearts and take steps to see from others' perspectives so that we may truly build a compassionate world. *"God's mercy and compassion can make even the driest land become a garden, can restore life to dry bones"* (cf. Ez 37:1-14). Let us be renewed by God's mercy; let us become agents of this mercy, channels of hope and global solidarity.

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MKLM in Haiti

Author: Debbie Northern

Maryknoll Lay Missioners is excited to announce its new mission commitment in Haiti. This is the culmination of talks that began five years ago. In January 2013, then Executive Director of MKLM Sam Stanton accompanied Sr. Bernice Rigney, MM on a trip to Haiti to vet out the country as a future mission placement for MKLM. From this visit to Cap-Haïtien in the northeast, it was determined the idea merited further exploration and MKLM was commissioned to go to Haiti to gather more information and do an assessment of the viability of sending MKLM missionaries.

In 2017, the leadership of the Religious Sisters of Jesus and Mary contacted Maryknoll Lay Missioners to discuss a future working relationship with their congregation and their lay volunteer program, which has been successfully working in Haiti for over 20 years. Further talks ensued with the leadership of both organizations about a possible partnership in their program. The Religious Sisters of Jesus and Mary (RJM) were looking to the future, keenly aware that the Sisters were aging, but their lay volunteer program is thriving. The Sisters invited MKLM to Haiti to see their ministries.

MKLM is happy to be able to respond in mission to the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Working in Haiti opens an exciting chapter in our history, under the guidance of seasoned lay missionary Sami Scott. Sami has previously served in mission in Venezuela and has most recently served as a lay missionary and the Regional Director of Cambodia. We hope to start placing new missionaries there in January 2019.

*Photo credit:
Sam Stanton,
Sr Bernice Rigney, MM*



Collaborating in Service in Cambodia

Author: Ayde Lyons

Foreword from Sam Stanton:

Maryknoll Lay Missioners, along with Maryknoll Sisters and Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, have been together in mission in Cambodia since the early 1990s. Although we are three separate entities, we are a "Mission Family" and share the same foundation and mission values. In a newly formed collaborative effort, Maryknoll Lay Missioners, Maryknoll Sisters and Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers have joined forces to continue bringing the liberating message of the Gospel in deed and word to the marginalized in Cambodia. Maryknoll Lay Missioners will highlight the work and ministry of missionary Dee Dungy (see below), who initiated her ministry in 2011, after joining MKLM and being sent to Cambodia. The Cambodia Collaborative Project, which officially launches in July 2018, is expected to reach and serve even more people in Cambodia.



Photo credit: Sam Stanton

Pillar of Help: Protecting Young Boys from Abuse and Exploitation

Dee Dungy - Cambodia Maryknoll lay missionary Dee Dungy has been serving in mission for more than 7 years at the Maryknoll Community Center in Anlong Kangan, a forced eviction resettlement area about 45 minutes outside of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Approximately 4,700 families live in this shantytown. Here, Dee is involved with several ministries, including two women's groups and an eldercare program. Through these ministries, Dee serves those living in deplorable



conditions, including the elderly and other alienated groups living on the fringes of this community. In her work with women's groups, Dee serves the poorest of the marginalized women, nursing mothers and children. Dee teaches and trains mothers about the importance of good hygiene, how to make nutritional boba (rice porridge) for their families and provides basic first-aid care for the children.

Dee also works with Pillar of Help, a ministry which was founded in December of 2013 to teach migrant workers the best practices for travel and work safety across borders. Now the program has begun to include outreach and holistic care for the left-behind children, mostly boys living on the streets. In Cambodia, one out of every six boys is a victim of sexual abuse. Weak law enforcement, corruption, extreme poverty and fractured social institutions left by the country's turbulent recent history have left Cambodia with an unwelcome reputation for child trafficking and exploitation.

The Pillar of Help project encompasses a preventative aspect and offers services for those who experience abuse.

There are 60 individuals currently enrolled in the program:

- *Workshops and training throughout the rural areas of Cambodia target youth who may be at risk regarding issues of personal security. Educational workshops are held wherever the boys are – in the villages and at a central community center.*
- *Counselors actively assist boys, young men, their families and supporters, whatever their background, to ensure protection from sexual abuse and exploitation of any kind.*
- *Dee and another staff member monitor the enrolled children in the community center, and their activities and grades in the public schools. If the children have not been attending school, program facilitators coordinate with parents or caretakers to resolve any issues.*
- *Dee and her colleague offer Child Protection Awareness training in the surrounding schools, orphanages and churches.*
- *A workshop called "Know Your Rights" focuses on rebuilding trust and rehabilitative caring sessions for abuse victims. The program also provides a range of confidential, free, easily accessible and sensitive services for these individuals.*



Photo credit: Sam Stanton



Making A Difference

These photographs were taken by our lay missionaries serving in Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, El Salvador, Kenya and Tanzania. Many people in these countries **live on less than 2 dollars a day.**

Photo credit: MKLM



A Memorable Journey – Our Experience with Friends Across Borders

Author: Gerry Mullaney

This is a story of three friends and a journey. The friends are Kathy Ress, Pam Cibik and me, Gerry Mullaney. The journey begins in 2003 and continues—it spans four continents and nine countries. The backdrop is Maryknoll. Who were these friends when we embarked? Who are we now? What happened in between? Where are we now?

Kathy, Pam, and I knew each other for some years before the journey. We shared traditional Catholic, Christian roots. We

shared professional identities as mental health clinicians. We were good people who cared for our families and provided service to our clients in U.S. society.

Then we encountered Maryknoll Lay Missioners. Kathy had a head start as the sister of Judy, a Maryknoll lay missionary, who served in Chile. Kathy and Judy hosted us on a visit to Chile over New Year's in 2004. There, we learned some important history—including the darkness in our Church's past of complicity in

the abuses of colonialism and in our country's foreign policy, which provided comfort to Augusto Pinochet with his abuses of human rights in the 1970s and 1980s. We saw light, as well, in the challenging and healing posture of Maryknoll.

Following this adventure in Chile, we became intrigued with Maryknoll. We began a series of Friends Across Borders visits—to Tanzania in 2007, to Cambodia in 2010, and to Bolivia in 2012. These were not the mission trips of “*doing for others*” that family and friends expected. We enjoyed a richer experience of walking with sisters and brothers of different cultures, sharing, and learning.

There were the street boys of Mwanza, Tanzania, with whom we colored books

and played games. There was the exuberant music and the African blessing extended through the outstretched hands of the entire Sunday Mass congregation. There was Maryknoll lay missionary Liz Mach's loving and healing touch for girls in her fistula group at Bugando Hospital.

In Cambodia, we experienced a contrast in the quiet serenity of Hindu and Buddhist history and culture. We learned of darkness again—the cruelties of Tuol Sleng prison and the killing fields during the Khmer Rouge terror. Again, Maryknoll Lay Missioners showed us light in the work of Father Charlie Dittmeier, who is bringing the previously unserved and rejected deaf population into connection with Cambodian society. Father Kevin



Kathy, Gerry and
Pam in Guatemala

Photo credit: Pam Cibik



Gerry in Bolivia



Gerry, Pam and Kathy with women in Bolivia



Kathy in Cambodia



Pam in Tanzania

Conroy is working hard to establish psychological healing in a country in so much need of these services.

Bolivia provided an opportunity for contact with indigenous peoples—the Aymara and Quechua—and their gifts of welcome with blankets full of food, woven goods, and dance. The personal encounters provided deeper meaning—the old man on the shore of Lake Titicaca expressing his happiness that we visited his village to be with him. And there was the prisoner in Cochabamba showing his appreciation for our attendance at Easter Mass with the community of prisoners.

Beginning in 2014, our journey continued with travels to Latin America with the assistance of two other organizations – GATE (Global Awareness Through Experience), and the School Sisters of Notre Dame. These stops included Guatemala,

El Salvador, Cuba, and the United States border with Mexico. Again, we were witnesses to darkness — the decades long genocide in Guatemala with U. S. government complicity, the cruelty of the Cuban embargo, and the ongoing suffering of Mexican migrants who seek a share of God's gifts across their border with the United States despite U.S. "keep out" efforts. Again, there was light—the Saints—Stanley Rother of Guatemala and Oscar Romero of El Salvador—the migrant outreach of the interfaith border ministry in Douglas, AZ, and Agua Prieta, Mexico, the universal education and health care in Cuba. Most of all, again, the brightest light was that provided by the people who welcomed us and appreciated our witness to them and their experience.

So here we are now—what are we to make of all of this? Our world is bigger and more complicated than our experience before the journey. It is filled with past and present, pain and darkness. It is also filled with light. We agree that the most memorable and meaningful light has been encounters and connections with our fellow human beings, our sisters and brothers who share our humanity across different cultures and life experiences, who live and love and suffer as we do, and who can appreciate, and share with us as I hope we do with them. In this journey, the spiritual connection among the three of us has deepened as well.

We found God present in these cultures and people, in their struggles, in their gifts to us, and in the loving and healing works of saints. We can conclude that God is bigger and better than we imagined, bigger and better than the darkness and pain of life. We are challenged to live believing this. We are challenged to see past the walls and to continue living lives of encounter, connection with all of our sisters and brothers.



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- **CHILE – Notre Dame – Marquette**
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- **CAMBODIA – August 10 – 20, 2019**
Deadline for signups: May 10, 2019



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Photo credit: MKLM

Millennials in Mission

Author: Karen Bortvedt



Millennials often make the news these days for being spiritual but not religious, for allegedly being more self-focused than previous generations, or having an inability to commit. Rarely do we hear about their adaptability - coming of age in a struggling economy. Nor do we hear of their ingenuity to create their own opportunities or conscientious approach to the world. Regardless of which stereotypes you choose to believe about millennials, we thought it would be good to sit down with some of our young lay missioners and learn why they are doing something as countercultural as mission.

What motivated you to go to mission?

I came to mission because I relish being uncomfortable and seeing what that discomfort can blossom in me (and perhaps what it allows to die in me). I came for the challenge. It broke me open, stripped me of all of my masks and ways I defined myself. It forced me to rely on others. What a painful gift it has been.

– Teresa (Bolivia)

As I approached the end of my 20s, I found myself a little restless... Still searching for something deeper, I chose to open my mind to a change of direction - professionally, geographically, and otherwise. I was

reminded of Maryknoll Lay Missioners through an immersion trip to El Salvador sponsored by the Archdiocese of Chicago. After this, I felt open to take the risk; the time felt right to pursue the opportunity to live abroad, learn a different language, and use my pastoral and theological training in new, exciting ways - things I'd always imagined myself doing at some point.

– Becca (Brazil)

It was a combination of recognizing the intersection of faith and justice and wanting to experience that outside my own culture. From high school through college, I saw that the world is so much bigger than Ohio (where I grew up) or Chicago (where I went to college). I wanted to see God at work in new places and how others practiced their faith and pursuit of justice. I came with a sense of duty to participate in creating a more just and less violent world.

– Annie (Bolivia)

What motivated me to go into mission was serving as a catechist at my local parish in Bernalillo, NM. I felt such joy and fulfillment sharing the word of God with the children. Since traveling is another one of my passions, I thought continuing to share my faith in other parts of the world would be perfect.

– Margarita (Brazil)



Teresa Villaruz



Becca Muder



Annie Burns



Margarita Duran



Kim Fischer



Larry Parr



Gabrielle Cuda



Claire Stewart



James Havey



Photo credit: MKLM

Being a part of a generation where many choose to have no religious affiliation, why do you choose to remain Catholic and practice your faith in such a bold way?

Being Catholic is who I am because I was born into it. The incredible force of faith, for me, lies in faith in action. I have been able to find a church, and an organization, that allows me to practice my faith by working with others, and supports me in developing and maturing in my faith.

– Kim (Returned Missioner, Brazil)

I choose to remain Catholic and practice my faith as a missioner because I feel that God is calling us to love all of our neighbors throughout the world. I believe that this work helps create a global community that is working for justice and building a better future. Most millennials want to belong to something important that can make a difference in the world, and I have found that with MKLM.

– Larry (El Salvador)

In the world today, there is much violence and defilement of human dignity. I do not have the strength to make sense of it all without my faith. Living among corrupt systems, my faith gives me hope for a better future for those suffering from broken social structures. I choose to practice my faith in such a bold way because our global society is at a point

where action is needed, and if no steps are taken, change will not happen.

– Claire (Brazil)

What are the advantages you see to being a millennial in mission?

Something millennials are chided for is talking in a way that is politically correct or being concerned about creating safe spaces. We tend to be conscious of what we say and how we say it, communicating in a way where people feel welcome, safe, and heard - which is important in mission. We work with people who are not always heard, so the way we talk about them, or more importantly the way we support them to speak, is important. By being more attentive to power dynamics, millennials can nurture just communities in a unique way.

– Annie (Bolivia)

In El Salvador, there are very few opportunities for young people. Youth gangs and violence are some of biggest problems facing the country. Being a millennial has helped me to relate to and accompany the youth on their journey, to look for opportunities, and create a better future. I arrived here as 23-year-old missioner and it helped me connect with youth as their peer to work together for the kingdom.

– Larry (El Salvador)

Because millennials came into the job market when the crash happened, we do not tie our identity to our job or work for companies for 20+ years. Rather, our values and beliefs determine where we go and what we do. We have loyalty to a vision rather than a company, unlike the generations before us. We also allow ourselves more flexibility in how we define family, spirituality and home, and this is a huge advantage in mission.

– Teresa (Bolivia)

We can build an amazing foundation for the rest of our lives – based on mission experiences, bringing those to our parishes and work in the future. My dad once told me, “St. Augustine said the youngest person in the room is just as valuable as the oldest because they offer a completely different world view in the conversation.” I held that. The Catholic Church is aging and I am a young person working from inside, being a young voice.

– James (Cambodia)

What is your hope for the future of mission?

As Christians, we are called to mission by baptism. My wish is that whether it is domestic or international, Christians get out and go on a mission trip! Being able to experience a new culture is an amazing feeling, and experiencing while evangelizing through our actions – what could be better? One two-week mission trip had the

ability to change my life. If it wasn't for that trip, I wouldn't be where I am today.

– Gabrielle (Tanzania)

My hope is that the laity in mission will grow and find an active place in Catholic mission and sustainable development around the world. I hope we can shift away from the “charity” mentality.

– James (Cambodia)

I hope mission becomes a true exchange of knowledge, experience, and service. Maryknoll is special because it really instills that you are not there to “bring something to someone in need.” You are there to serve, and in serving you receive. I hope that this view becomes stronger around the world: we all have something to give and something to learn, and this is true whether it occurs in international service or in everyday interactions.

– Kim (Returned Missioner, Brazil)



Photo credit: Mike Garr

What were your greatest fears when discerning a call to mission?

And, how did you overcome those to find yourself in Brazil/El Salvador?

Personally, I had college loans that I did not want to leave to anyone else. Fortunately, Maryknoll Lay Missioners established a student loan repayment program the year I decided to join, which made my decision easier.

– Claire (Brazil)

My greatest fear when discerning my call to mission was leaving my family and losing friendships. Ultimately, my heart continued to push me toward mission and all else simply had to be left in the hands of God. In the end, the people that are meant to be in my life will be and my family will always be in my prayers. Thanks to that, I have been able to accept my calling to mission in Brazil in peace.

– Margarita (Brazil)

My greatest fear was leaving for many years. It seemed like such a long time to be away from my family. I have now been here 10 years and am still learning so much every day. I feel blessed to have spent this time of my life with the Salvadoran people.

– Larry (El Salvador)

I was afraid of living in a huge city, and I was concerned with how this decision might affect my family's future. As a young family, we did as much research and counseling as possible to prepare. Now that I am a returned missionary, I can say that this was the best thing we could have done for our family.

– Kim (Returned Missioner, Brazil)

What advice would you have for other millennials considering mission?

***DO IT!** Growing up, I heard all the time about older people who said, "When I was younger, I wish I had..." I'm not doing that. I'm writing my own story. I am working with people to create a brighter future. It is not putting life on hold but walking through a less commonly used door to a vast world of opportunity.*

– James (Cambodia)

My advice is that mission work is 3 1/2 years of experience you will not get anywhere else. Mission is the opportunity of a lifetime to be with people who are just as happy to learn from you as you are from them. It will challenge you, but the challenge is what makes it worthwhile.

– Claire (Brazil)

If you want to dive deeply into who you truly are, to shed all of your false selves, to feel the extremes of the human experience, to feel closer to God and at the same time more alone than you have ever felt in your entire life, mission is for you.

– Teresa (Bolivia)

***TRY IT!** You never know what opportunities arise when you listen to God's call and get out in the world. Why not try one of MKLM's Friends Across Borders mission trips? They are short mission trips to visit missionaries' ministries to see how Maryknoll Lay Missioners operates and changes lives around the world. It might change yours, too!*

– Gabrielle (Tanzania)

To learn more about joining Maryknoll Lay Missioners, visit mklm.org or contact Karen Bortvedt at join@mklm.org or 914-467-8857. View our full page ad on page 16.



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Welcoming Our New Board Chairman

Author: Terry Miller

When Father Bill Vos called to offer me the position of Chair of the Maryknoll Lay Missioners' Board of Directors, I responded in the way the Jesuits I have been working with for over a decade have taught me when given any invitation of great responsibility: I "will reflect and discern," and let you know. How would I respond to this call?

When discussing the pros and cons with my wife and former lay missionary, Joan Kelly, the challenges of saying "yes" to this invitation dominated our

conversation. Upon reflection, I recalled the other times in my life I have been called – to mission in Chile, to be a husband, to be a father, to work in what is now the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns, to work in a university – and I realize that the risks and challenges before each of those decisions appeared insurmountable.

Maryknoll has been part of my life since I was seven years old and my family would attend the June missionary sending ceremonies at Maryknoll. Like many of us, I would discover in the monthly Maryknoll magazine real-life images of mission to fuel the childhood dream of a vocation. Nonetheless, the call to mission was put on hold as I pursued a degree in Government and Peace Studies at Manhattan College and Law School at



Photo credit: Chris Winters



Photo credit: MKLM



St. John's University. Still, as I served as a criminal defense attorney for the Legal Aid Society in Brooklyn, NY, the dream never went away.

In 1987, I fulfilled that childhood dream as I took a leap of faith and joined Maryknoll Lay Missioners in Chile. It was a country ruled by a military dictatorship—the risks involved in the decision did not seem abstract. Yet in living out that choice, I was embraced by the Maryknoll team in Linares that walked with me as the Chilean people voted the dictatorship out. I worked documenting the executed and disappeared. I also fell in love with my soulmate and married her on a beach in Constitución, Chile.

As Joan and I continued our journey with Maryknoll, we were offered positions in Washington, D.C. Joan worked in mission education and I became Associate Director for Africa and the Middle East in the Maryknoll Justice and Peace office. Joan was elected regional representative for the lay missionaries here in the U.S., and was involved with the founding of the Maryknoll Mission Association of the Faithful in 1994. Our family was also established around that time with the births of Gabriela Jude and Quinn Damian in DC. In 1997, I was offered a position in international education at Ramapo College of New Jersey. Two more children joined the Kelly-Miller clan during that

time: Aidan Romero and Magdalena Rose. We moved to Milwaukee, WI, in 2000, where I took a position at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee for several years. For the last 11 years, I have been the senior international officer at Marquette University. We also had our fifth child, Fiona Clare, our Wisconsin baby.

When I arrived at the October Board meeting still sorting out my decision, I took a walk around Maryknoll. My first stop as always at Maryknoll was the grave of Maryknoll Father Stephen DeMott. Steve was part of the Linares team and always modeled living the Gospel in authentic solidarity with the economically poor. He also was a good friend. In that moment, I knew in my heart that my answer would be "yes" to become Chair, the same "yes" so many other Maryknollers have given to the call of the heart to mission. When I gave my response to Fr. Bill before the full Board, I realized that like previous invitations to commitment, I do not walk alone, but travel the path with committed Board colleagues and with experienced staff led by a dynamic new Executive Director. But most importantly, I accompany missionaries in the field afar living the Gospel message. This is the road I want to tread, and by doing so humbly contribute to the mission of the Maryknoll Lay Missioners.

Where are they **NOW?**

Returned Maryknoll Lay Missioners John and Karen McCoy

Author: John McCoy

After Karen and I, and our three children, Luke, Zena and Aaron, returned in 1989 from three years of mission in Peru, our lives were never the same. We divide our lives into two periods: before and after Peru.

In Lima, Karen, a registered nurse, worked in a shantytown where the quinoa breakfast that she and local women prepared was the only hot meal of the day for many of the children. I wrote and edited for Latin America Press (Noticias Aliadas), a weekly bulletin covering human rights, social movements, the environment, the indigenous and the church from the point of view of the poor.

Our mission experience happened to coincide with a time of extreme violence and suffering in that beleaguered Andean nation. A civil war with Communist guerrillas took thousands of lives, wreaked havoc on the Peruvian economy, and plunged the country into fear, depression and darkness. The currency was so devalued we needed a shoebox of bank notes to buy bread. The newspapers were full of accounts of bombings, kidnappings, disappearances and assassinations. At the Maryknoll Center House in Lima, we gathered weekly with other missionaries to share our stories and pray.

Karen and John McCoy with Fr. Phil Erbland, M.M. (center) and their children (left to right) Luke, Zena and Aaron outside the Maryknoll Society House in Arequipa, Peru. July 1988



Photo credit: Courtesy of John McCoy

Peru enabled us to see the world through new eyes. Much of what had occupied our attention before Peru seemed secondary, even irrelevant. The Gospel message became much more central to our lives: *"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."* (Matthew 25:40)

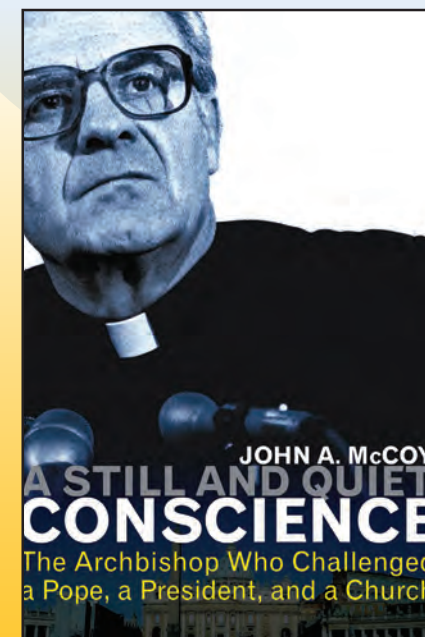
Now we're both retired, living on Vashon Island, a ferry ride from downtown Seattle. Karen, who has kept her nursing license, does counseling and spiritual direction with women facing personal and family challenges. Both of us are active in our small parish, which has welcomed a growing number of Hispanic immigrants. Our parish society of St. Vincent de Paul in Seattle reaches out to the low-income and the homeless, and is part of a wider church effort to provide a free community meal daily. In the winter months, we cut and deliver firewood to families who depend on wood as their primary heating source.



Karen (center) cooking a hot meal for children with Peruvian women in a Lima shantytown. Nov. 1989

Karen has become very involved in the 12-Step Movement, meeting regularly with those who seek recovery through the intervention of their Higher Power. I wrote a book about Seattle Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen, a quiet, reflective man known internationally for his opposition to nuclear weapons and the madness of the arms race. At heart, his opposition came from his refusal to see other human beings as foes. Whatever they did or believed, they were children of God, made in God's image.

In 2015, Maryknoll's Orbis Books published John McCoy's biography of Hunthausen *A Still and Quiet Conscience: The Archbishop Who Challenged a Pope, a President, and a Church*. The last surviving bishop to participate in all sessions of the Second Vatican Council, Hunthausen, at 96, is ready for his final mission – eternal life.



Cover of John's biography of Archbishop Hunthausen

Photo credit: Courtesy of John McCoy

The Legacy of Jean Donovan's Guitar

**Author: Rick Dixon,
lay missionary in El Salvador**

I first learned of Jean Donovan in 1984, almost four years after she and three other North American church women were murdered in El Salvador. Jean was a lay member of the Diocese of Cleveland mission team. Along with Cleveland missionary Sister Dorothy Kazel and two Maryknoll Sisters, Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Jean worked among the poor in El Salvador at a time when siding with the poor was considered subversive. She had prepared for her diocesan assignment by participating in the mission formation program for Maryknoll Lay Missioners.

I was working on the California-Mexico border with Salvadoran refugees in 1984. I lived with five other volunteers in a rental house from Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in Calexico. The house library owned the movie *Roses in December*, the 1982 documentary on Jean Donovan. One evening I watched it and was spellbound. The music from the song "Be Not Afraid," images of Jean with her guitar and her incredible story, hooked me. My spirit bowed down



Rick Dixon and Alex's little brother, Rodanny



Photo credit: Sam Stanton

to that powerful simplicity. I wanted to be a part of it. And I wanted to learn to play the guitar.

But it wasn't until after long mission stints in Mexico and Venezuela that the dream of learning to play reached fulfillment, when I arrived in El Salvador in 2012. I bought three guitars, one for nearly each decade I had procrastinated. I had no excuse now. The idea was to learn to play one and lend out the other two.

El Salvador today faces different challenges than in Jean's time here (1979-1980). Yet her spirit of sharing and music is just as relevant now as it was then. One day, a gang member suddenly appeared in the community center where I work in La Esperanza. I was alone.

"Hey, give me a guitar," he demanded.

Hair greased back, Marvin was tall, muscular and wearing a tank top t-shirt. His stature filled the only entrance to the community

center and his craggy face took on the air of a petrified gargoyle that wasn't going to budge until he got what he wanted. I handed him a guitar and told him I'd need it back tomorrow at 2 pm for a catechism class. My pulse raced as he took the guitar and walked out. I thought I'd never see it again.

The following day I arrived early to get materials ready for my class. Marvin was already at the front gate, cradling the guitar in his arms.

"Gracias por tu confianza," he said and looked at me with a solid, ruddy stare.

He thanked me again for trusting him and put the guitar in my arms. His eyes turned big, like a frog, skulking in deep water, as if he were tangled in something he couldn't escape.

"Take it again tonight if you want," I told him.

He shook his head, no, and explained he only wanted to play "Las Mañanitas" for his mother that morning. It was her birthday. I knew his mother. She lived in dire poverty and had been bedridden for quite some time.

"Take it," I said. "Keep singing."

He refused and a few weeks later he was arrested by the soldier-cops (National Police, which were the National Guard in Jean's time). He ran when he first saw them and was shot and wounded in the leg. He remains in prison to this day.



Jean Donovan, MKLM
sending ceremony, 1979.

"If only we could have reached him a few years earlier with that guitar," I've often wondered.

Alex was 11 when I met him. He also lived with his mother in desperate pov-

erty. Like so many kids in La Esperanza, he was bored out of his mind. But on the day I showed up at his house with a wheelbarrow full of books (from our mobile library) and a guitar on top, he perked up. We practiced a few chords and he asked if he could keep the guitar.

"It's like a book," I told him. "The only difference is you can keep it for up to six months as long as you're practicing."

For a year, we practiced (he checked it out twice), and now he's playing a few songs. His favorite is "Madre de los Pobres" (Mother of the Poor). He has since become a member of the church choir and often travels to different events in San Salvador like the feast of Nuestra Señora de la Paz. When he returns from these events, you can see a light in his eyes. He is now 14 and a catechist.

Most kids have no idea what they can get from the guitar, but I've found if someone is there to encourage them and tell them to keep working at it, they get better. They get excited about playing, and that opens so many other doors. Jean's spirit did that for me and, in turn, that spirit inspired Alex, who is now singing and calling others.

Jean's guitar now sits just outside the Maryknoll Lay Missioners' chapel, in Ossining, NY. It was a gift from one of Jean's friends, inspiring a new generation of missionaries and those they serve.

Gracias, Jean.

Letter from Mission Advancement Director



It has been a privilege to welcome Theodore "Ted" Miles as the new Executive Director of Maryknoll Lay Missioners. Upon graduating from college, Ted went to Belize on a two-year commitment as a Jesuit volunteer and from there his life has been one strong journey of faith to spread the Gospel, to build "a more just and compassionate world." For the last twelve years, Ted has worked in youth and education empowerment programs for Catholic Relief Services (CRS). We are truly blessed that he accepted this leadership position at MKLM at a crucial time in our history. I am confident that Ted will lead MKLM into a new era, as the times require. Bienvenidos Teodoro!

Ted has asked me to continue my mission ministry in promotions, and work with you, our Partners in Mission. I will be heading up our Mission Advancement Department, while Ted carries out a search for a Director of Mission Advancement. In my nine years as Executive Director of MKLM, I have shared the call of the laity, and the story of MKLM and its ministries, in over 100 parishes in 23 states. I have graciously been invited into many of your homes. During this upcoming interim responsibility, I look forward to visiting many of you again and sharing the exciting ministries that our lay missionaries are carrying out around the world. As Cardinal Dolan of New York says, *"Maryknoll Lay Missioners is positioned to play an important role in the current and future mission efforts of the Church in the United States, and I am pleased to have them headquartered in my ecclesiastical jurisdiction."* At MKLM, we take that observation seriously and are here to serve throughout the coming years and decades!

Why mission across our borders today? Because we passionately believe it is important to serve, to bring our skills and faith where they are needed, to enter into the encounter that Pope Francis speaks of. We learn and receive so much from those with whom we are privileged to work. We share our life and our faith with them and we become neighbors. Upon returning home, we share their story here, and become bridges of understanding in a world that yearns for connectivity.

In the last year, I have visited our missionaries, and most important, the people they live with at two of our mission



sites in Cambodia and El Salvador. I was so impressed and privileged to witness our ministries once again in both countries. We have nine missionaries in each. I felt a tremendous sense of renewal, as I was reminded by so many people of the impact of our Maryknoll Lay Missioners, and what the presence of our laity means to them. I share three compelling examples and invite you to go to our website, www.mkmlm.org, to view more.

Dee Dungy has served in Cambodia for seven years. She ministers along the Mekong River, an hour outside the capital city of Phnom Penh, in a social service project that helps provide basic services and friendship to seniors who don't have an income or family support structure, and also young people dealing with issues such as self-esteem. It was so inspiring to hear, through an interpreter, what Dee's presence has meant, witnessing it through the warm and tight hug of an often neglected senior.



In El Salvador, I watched lay missionary Peg Vamosy share her horticultural skills with subsistence farmers in a rural area near the city of Cojutepeque. Peg is celebrating 10 years as a Maryknoll lay missionary... Congratulations! During my visit, I spoke to farmers who said how her valuable knowledge has increased their production, which provides more for their families. They also are grateful for her participation in the local parish and the pastoral leadership she offers.

I also visited Larry Parr, whose work with young people helps keep them out of the ferocious gangs that now infest the country and are a threat to the well-being and future of so many youth. His programs of study activities, sports, bible study and faith formation provide young people with positive options and help keep them on a straight path. Talking to the youth participating in these activities about their new perspective on life, I found sparkles of encouragement and hope, in what is often a dire situation.

Please take a look at these stories and other items on our website, as I look forward to personally speaking and visiting with many of you in the coming year. And feel free to write me at ssanton@mkmlm.org or call me at 914-819-8401, if you have any questions or would like to know when I might be in your area. Until then, blessings to you and your family!

Sam Stanton, MKLM
Director of Mission Advancement
Maryknoll Lay Missioners

For more information about Sam and his 33 years as a Maryknoll lay missionary, visit his profile at www.mkmlm.org.

Photo credits: Courtesy of Sam Stanton



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