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Voices Of Compassion



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JOYFULLY CALLED TO MISSION

Cover photo: Maryknoll Lay Missioner Teresa Villaruz celebrates with her students at St. Francis Primary School in Mombasa, Kenya
Photo credit, Judy Walter



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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.

DID YOU KNOW?

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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CONTACT US

To visit us, learn more about becoming a Lay Missioner or to support us, please visit our website
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Photo credit
Doug Fogg



Sam Stanton
greet elderly
women while
visiting an MKLM
ministry in Bolivia

Dear Friends,

We rejoice at the past six months, which have been both exciting and motivating times for the U.S. Catholic Church and all people of good will. Of course Pope Francis' visit to the U.S. in September was the highlight! He captivated the hundreds of thousands who viewed his appearances, and energized our efforts with his reminder to heed the call to mission. The rare chance to see the Holy Father address our nation's leaders, interact with people living on the margins in our country and travel to some of our main cities was inspiring. Pope Francis' visit came shortly after the release of his encyclical *Laudato Si'*.



*"Many things have to change
course, but it is we human beings
above all who need to change."*
— Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*

Pope Francis photo: Getty Image

In a joint statement issued on the encyclical by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns on behalf of Maryknoll organizations, we noted that Pope Francis shows the fundamental link between social exclusion and environmental devastation, two major concerns of Maryknoll Lay Missioners today. We are stirred by the breadth of vision in *Laudato Si'*; it is not only a doctrinal teaching that offers moral guidance to Catholics, but also a prophetic call to all people of good will to act decisively to save humanity and earth—particularly marginalized communities—who carry the greatest burden from climate change.

At Maryknoll Lay Missioners, we celebrated our 40th Anniversary with a kickoff event in New York this August that joined nearly 200 friends of MKLM in a special way. Together, we honored the incredible work our Lay Missioners are acting out in faith all around the world. Representatives such as Liz Mach, celebrating her 40th year in mission, provide a beautiful window to the heart of mission in this article.

We are also reminded of the marginalized communities that Pope Francis refers to in the stories of accompaniment from Maryknoll Lay Missioners around the world. As outlined in our article "Welcoming the Stranger," Lay Missioners Kim and Greg Fischer and Sirikit Noronha help minister to the thousands of migrants who arrive in Brazil, lacking basic services, housing and employment. Lay Missioners Ashley and Michael Leen and Kristle Bulleman in Tanzania, and Teresa Villaruz and Judy Walter in Kenya, underscore the importance of small steps towards empowerment for the women and communities they serve in several other articles.

We celebrate and acknowledge the generosity of friends of MKLM like Tim Wills, who is supporting the future of young adults in El Salvador by offering them financial assistance to be transported to school through Lay Missioner Larry Parr's scholarship program. We also echo the sense of wonder expressed by the participants on a *Bolivia Friends Across Borders* trip, as they observed our Lay Missioners' ministries that demonstrated love and compassion there.



Photo credit Doug Fogg

Sharing examples of mission through the pages of this magazine is an important part of how we grow awareness for the strangers who are suffering in our midst in the world today. When we encourage dialogue, and together call attention to the plight of those who are without, we help expand the reach of every Maryknoll Lay Missioner. I invite you to tell our stories, support our cause and remember to always welcome the strangers in your life.

Blessings in mission,

Sam Stanton

Lay Missioner Minh Nguyen and
Sam Stanton offer compassion to
women in a Bolivian shelter

Life in Mission: Welcoming the Stranger

Faces of Migration

A newly arrived family has just migrated from their native country. They do not speak the local language and do not have a contact in-country to arrange housing, work or provide for their basic needs. They are strangers to this country who made a difficult decision to leave behind everything they knew. Immigrants may be escaping political unrest, threats to safety, lack of economic opportunities and many more scenarios that cause people to flee their homelands, often with nothing more than the possessions that they can carry with them.

When we extend a “welcome” to these strangers, as Maryknoll Lay Missioners Greg and Kim Fischer are doing through their civil and human rights efforts while working and living in Brazil, we are following the path Jesus asks of us. The mega-city of São Paulo is a major hub for people fleeing oppression, and despite currently being in economic crisis, it continues to receive high numbers of immigrants and refugees from Haiti, Nigeria, the Congo, Syria and elsewhere. People arrive searching for new hope, but are faced with the difficult tasks of finding work and housing.

Lay Missioner Kim Fischer came to know Sylvie and her children through one of her ministries teaching an aerobics class at Casa de Acolhida (House of Welcome) for refugee and foreign women. Sylvie left Nigeria in 2014 with her two children and immigrated to Brazil, but in the process of migration, lost all contact with her husband

Lay Missioner Kim Fischer and her son share a friendship with migrant Sylvie, whose family is now reunited after immigrating to Brazil separately



who had to travel separately, and ended up living at a women’s and children’s shelter in São Paulo.

Kim remembers, “Every week, Sylvie always approached me with a hug and a smile, and always inquired about my health, as I was pregnant at the time. Then, Sylvie came to me with incredible news. Her husband had miraculously found her through a refugee network, and because he had a stable job through the Work Mediation program at Missão Paz

(where Greg works), they were able to move into their own apartment. More than a year passed since they had last seen each other, and they were about to live as a family again. I recently met up with Sylvie, and she and her family are doing well. She said, “Life has been dif-

ficult and we struggle to get by at times, but it’s worth it. To know my children are safe and we’re all together makes it entirely worth it.” They persevere in their lives as refugees, yet still struggle to afford most of the things we take for granted. But they are safe, and they are together.”

Missão Paz is a Migrant and Immigrant Pastoral that addresses social issues and provides assistance, both to immigrants and businesses seeking employees, to ensure that the basic human rights of immigrants are respected and protected under Brazilian law. Through the program’s Work Mediation Center, Greg Fischer helps the migrant population by assisting in the hiring process and providing language translation, advice, resume services and mediation support in disputes. He also aids individuals and families in their attempt to secure housing and basic services. The Work Mediation Center receives more than 3,500 migrants, immigrants and refugees over the course of a year, and helps secure approximately 400 positions for those individuals over the same period.

Greg’s most recent project through Missão Paz addresses the lack of education on



Lay Missioner Greg Fischer interviews migrants to share their stories through the Rostos da Migração photoblog

migrant issues for the Brazilian public. Helping to bridge this gap, Greg created a photoblog called “Rostos da Migração” (Faces of Migration) that is bringing attention to the prejudices and obstacles that immigrants face. He has gained local Brazilian media coverage for the project including *BuzzFeed Brazil*, and an online publication, *Clichetes.com*.



“I was 12 when we left Syria. I have no friends there; they left the country, too. Like my sister, I did not speak Portuguese, only Arabic and English, when we arrived in Brazil. Like her, I learned the languages through the classes offered at the mosque as well as in school. While the culture of Brazil is very different from Syria, I got used to it a little bit; I met people. But still, it’s very different and difficult to adapt. But it was not difficult for my teachers to adapt to me.”

– Rostos photo blog interviewee



"My driving force is knowing that wherever there is a prisoner, a refugee, a homeless person or a human being in need, there is Christ himself awaiting our visit and help."

– Sirikit Noronha

Lay Missioner Sirikit celebrates life and diversity with Brazilian elderly at Casa de Clara

The project illustrates the human aspect behind immigration by sharing a collection of photos and stories of individual migrants and immigrants. Rostos da Migração catalogs the unique stories of individuals from Armenia, Syria, China, Bangladesh, Cameroon and other countries. Testimonials are translated into Portuguese, English, Spanish and French so that they can be read by more people and to make the content more accessible for distant friends and families of those profiled.

Greg's work enables people to connect on a human level with foreigners who share some of the same aspirations, childhood memories, struggles and accomplishments. Through the blog, he stresses the interconnectedness of all humans as a way to combat societal stereotypes and advocate for immigrants on a personal level.

Small Things with Great Love

Maryknoll Lay Missioner Sirikit Noronha sees firsthand the challenges that so many new refugee arrivals experience. As a lawyer, she provides legal and social service aid for refugees from more than 80 countries and foreign women in prison from more than 50 countries. Sirikit also offers compassion and care for the Brazilian elderly through programs of empowerment, dignity and social interactions.

Sirikit was born and raised in Bombay, India, and finds that her status as a foreigner allows her to understand and relate to her client's issues in a unique way. She says, "I am constantly guided by Mother Theresa's example of doing small things with great love. My focus is on each person as a human being, and his/her needs."

Sirikit's ministry work primarily addresses and corrects situations where refugees are most vulnerable, empowering them with measures of independence. She reestablishes medical attention for pre-existing conditions, restores missing identification documentation that would prevent gainful employment and reconnects family members in other countries with loved ones who are in Brazil prisons. The majority of refugees whom Sirikit meets have fled their countries due to oppression. Many of these individuals have lost their families, homes and belongings.

When they arrive in São Paulo, they lack shelter, food and the basic necessities for survival. Other critical issues for these refugees that Sirikit also strives to resolve are employment, long-term housing, healthcare and the language barrier.

Sirikit encounters individuals like L. (name withheld), an unaccompanied 17 year-old from an African country, where his father and uncle were brutally killed by the military. L. and his mother and brother were imprisoned.

Tragically, his mother died in prison. L.

escaped prison with help from a

family friend and arrived in

Brazil in the hold of a ship.

When he arrived he was

weak and in poor health,

and traumatized by the

experiences he had

gone through in his

home country. At

Caritas, Sirikit's

team was able to

arrange for a safe

shelter and basic

necessities, and

accompanied him

through his journey

of recovery, transition

and hope. This young

man has a burning desire

to bring about change in the

world, in honor of his parents

who died for a worthy cause.

Thanks to a Brazilian family's support,

L. is now in pre-medical school and continues

to work with Caritas to build an awareness of refugees

and their situation.



Lay Missioner Sirikit Noronha with colleagues from her ministry, Maryknoll Sr. Isabel Araujo and Caritas staff member Larissa Leite, building relationships on World Refugee Day



To view a music video that was produced by the Refugees at Caritas, visit the "Relações Externas" channel on YouTube for Brazil and select the video "Refugees in Brazil - Refugiados no Brasil."

"Many people think that a refugee is a fugitive, who did a bad thing. A refugee is someone who has been persecuted, or is a victim of war, conflict or other endangerment... There's a lot that can force a person to leave their country." - L., an African refugee

Sirikit sees what she calls "the language of the heart," as the common thread that connects all of her interactions serving these "strangers" in Brazil. "My work has given me the gift of witnessing that relationships based on God's love transcend all human limitations and are life-giving and sustaining," she says.



Lay Missioner Sirikit Noronha celebrating diversity with Indonesian friends in São Paulo at Eid-al-Fitr, the feast that marks the end of Ramadan

FROM THE FIELD

MISSION AT ANY AGE

Contributed by Judy Walter and Teresa Villaruz

Lay Missioner Teresa Villaruz is only seven months into her mission placement serving in Kenya. She previously taught at an economically disadvantaged school in Oklahoma with Teach for America, following her undergraduate schooling. When Teresa embarked into mission with Maryknoll Lay Missioners (MKLM) last year, she met Lay Missioner Judy Walter, and they became housemates. Judy spent more than 20 years in Bangladesh and India with the Medical Mission Sisters, Holy Cross Community and the Church of Bangladesh before joining MKLM and travelling to live in Kenya in 2010. These dynamic women are forging a new path by collaborating to bring about solutions that empower the impoverished communities whom they serve.

Lay Missioner Teresa Villaruz is teaching at St. Francis, a Kenyan primary school, in the informal settlement of Kibarini. Teresa relates that most of the children are so poor they cannot afford basic school supplies or treatments for their ailments. During her initial months at the school, these examples of discomfort, tragedy and pain have touched her soul time and time again.

"'Ni maisha,' Kenyans say. It is life. I have heard people say this phrase in the States, of course, but it takes more faith to say it

here because life is so hard. I found out recently that one of my boys in 5th grade must collect scrap metal from the garbage dump across the street in order to buy pens for school. Another one of my girls who is in 4th grade was accused by the women of the village of sleeping around with their husbands and was subsequently harassed heavily. Another student, who literally lived in the garbage dump with her drug and alcohol addicted father, has been limping all around the village because she has a huge festering sore on her foot from jiggers that were popped out of her skin and left untreated for a month. This is life. It is jiggers and trash, harassment and shame."

Rather than allow the helplessness she feels in the face of this suffering to



Photo credit Judy Walter

overwhelm her, Teresa is channeling her emotions to leverage a source of energy and compassion. Fellow Lay Missioner Judy Walter is collaborating with Teresa on a project that will enable vulnerable girls to gain dignity in their femininity, reduce healthcare risk and spend more time focused on gaining an education. Judy runs St. Patrick's Dispensary in the informal settlement of Banglades, on the outskirts of Mombasa. Judy and Teresa observe that the subject of sexual development has been neglected in Kenyan schools. It is commonly believed that if a girl has her period, she is unclean. Sanitary napkins are incredibly expensive and sold in small packages of 5-10. The girls living in the community where Judy and Teresa work cannot afford sanitary napkins at all, so they skip school when they are menstruating or use leaves, rags, scraps of paper or whatever they can find to keep the stains from showing on their uniforms.

Seeking to offer education and tools for empowerment to the women and girls in



"I am so grateful that we can offer a service that restores a sense of dignity and self-worth to these young girls, and provide a means of income for the women who will no longer depend on the dump for survival." – Judy Walter

this community where poverty is most severe, Judy is leading a pilot project for students at St. Francis School, where Teresa teaches. The school includes 226 little ones from age 3–15, enrolled in kindergarten to 6th grade.

The project is for girls who are of menstruation age, and provides them with unique reusable feminine hygiene kits.

The project kicked off with "Distribution Day," where the feminine hygiene kits were supplied. Teresa and Judy were moved by the joy on the young girls' faces, as they received these colorful bags that have the potential to make a significant difference in their lives. These sanitary napkins offer a socially acceptable alternative to the isolation that most girls are forced to choose while menstruating. A social worker and a nurse from the local parish will be coming to the school on a monthly basis to talk to the girls about feminine hygiene and their changing bodies.

The second aspect of the pilot project is providing training sessions for the women

All photos on page, credit Judy Walter

of Kiberani to learn how to make reusable sanitary napkin kits that are effective for two-three years. By building this capability, the goal is for the kit creation to eventually become an income generating project for these women. Without alternative sources of income such as these kits, many single mothers of Kibarani pick scrap metal from the garbage, make local alcoholic brews or sell their bodies in order to provide for their families.

The cost of each kit is \$7 to cover supplies and the work done by the women of the

village. Judy and Teresa have recently begun a campaign to raise funds for the project and are already receiving an enthusiastic response.

Teresa is finding other ways to help empower her young pupils at St. Francis as well, including building up the school's library and starting Taekwondo classes for girls to teach them basic defense. The children at St. Francis Primary School clearly have found themselves a staunch new advocate!

Lay Missioners Teresa and Judy comfort a young boy who received a vaccination at St. Patrick's Dispensary in Mombasa, Kenya



Photo courtesy Anita Klueg

Photo credit Judy Walter



Schoolchildren at St. Francis show off their new feminine hygiene kits on "Distribution Day"

"They say that in mission, you just go and you will find out what the needs are. Your ministry is where your skills and the needs of the people meet; it is the cause that makes your heart ache and keeps you up at night. To be so close to all of this violence and this pain makes my heart ache, but it also wakes me up out of my sleepwalking indifference, shocks me out of my numbness and forces me to FEEL the world around me."

– Teresa Villaruz

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MKLM IN TANZANIA EMPOWERING FROM WITHIN

The Making of a Pearl

The nearly 50 women who graduated this past June from the Lulu Project in Tanzania closed the ceremony by dancing their way out of the hall, and back to their homes and families. This expression of joy and celebration formalizes the end of a year's worth of education, but also signifies the self-worth that learning can bring about.

In Tanzania, young women frequently have little value outside of being married or having children. Their voices are seldom heard. They are trained not to speak up. Young Tanzanian women are routinely pulled out of school in order to care for their younger siblings. This leaves them isolated and without a community to support them, as they spend most of their time in the home.

Lay Missioner Ashley Leen believes that supporting young women is key to strengthening a society. Young working women, whether they are mothers or daughters, return nearly all money earned from their work back into their families. Ashley is co-coordinator of the Lulu Project, which provides vulnerable women with skills that will help them achieve their goals; in turn, these women help to build a stronger Tanzanian society. The Lulu Project goes well beyond skill-building and income generation however; the primary goal is for the participating women to see themselves as being



Lay Missioner Ashley Leen observes cake making techniques of a Lulu member in Tanzania

Photo credit Niles Sprague

precious as a pearl. (Lulu means "pearl" in Swahili.)

Through the Lulu approach to education, young women between the ages of 14 and 20 meet for lessons twice per week. Lessons cover health, relationships, life skills, financial literacy and entrepreneurship, and are taught by fellow Lulu members who have previously completed the course. Peer education is critical, as the women are able to see others like themselves demonstrate how they might achieve their goals. The most difficult part of the process is building self-esteem in the young women who have been



Lulu members learn how to make cakes that are baked over traditional Tanzanian open fires; learning this skill can lead to cake production and more earned income for these women

Elizabeth Malegesi, pictured with Lay Missioner Ashley Leen, credits Lulu

with helping pave the way for her dream of entrepreneurship in Tanzania

Lay Missioner Michael Leen with the young mothers who have completed their business training, and therefore increased their earning potential

devalued by their communities. Also critical to Lulu values is building support for each other, despite differences of community, tribe or religious background. *"One Lulu Project pillar is cooperation, and we talk a lot about building a network of young women across the city of Mwanza who can depend on one another and call on one another for advice and assistance in times of need,"* states Ashley.

A handcrafts element of the Lulu Project demonstrates to the women that they can contribute and begin earning based on a skill. During week-long workshops, students choose a skill to learn including embroidery, sewing, knitting or crocheting, and support each other through the process. All crafts are made by hand (no machines) to enable the women to recreate these products at home, regardless of their ability to purchase expensive equipment. Through the handcraft workshops, members master their elected skill, and go on to generate an increased income for their families by making and selling those goods.

Ashley is proud of one peer educator who, having done handcrafts for a couple of

years, asked if she could apply to the Lulu Scholarship Fund in order to attend tailoring school to develop her skills as a seamstress. The cost for three months of courses is nearly \$100, which would be nearly impossible for her to afford on her own, as she lives alone and has no financial help from her family. With the Lulu Scholarship Fund covering the remainder, she has agreed to contribute almost a quarter of the total costs, in small increments.

Another example of success is Elizabeth Malegesi, a senior peer educator with the project. Over the course of her two years with the Lulu Project, Elizabeth has flourished, both personally and professionally. She learned the importance of savings and entrepreneurship and put those skills to use by selling batiks, locally-dyed fabrics, and embroidered cards. She also opened her own bank account, which she uses to save for her education and future business goals. Elizabeth dreams of eventually owning her own hair salon. She is currently studying to become a hair stylist, through courses funded jointly by Elizabeth and

the Lulu Project. After three months of study, she hopes to secure employment with one of the larger salons in town to gain experience.

Elizabeth credits the Lulu Project with instilling positive values in all of its members. "When girls come to Lulu, they quickly learn to leave their old ways at home and to take on the characteristics of Lulu," she explains. She lists Lulu's core values as respect, patience and listening well to one another in order to foster healthy relationships among the over 200 young women enrolled in the program.

"Just as these young mothers are given renewed hope and sense of purpose through computer literacy and business skills training, I too am rejuvenated and encouraged by the loving grace they always show me, and by the unfading smile of hope on their faces."

– Michael Leen

"It is encouraging to see those women who graduate with a sense of purpose and accomplishment," says Ashley. "For those who become peer facilitators, they lead the next generation of Lulu members to recognize their value as pearls."

Business Skills for Young Mothers

Similar to his wife Ashley, the core focus of Lay Missioner Michael Leen's ministry is helping young Tanzanian mothers attain economic empowerment by starting and running their own businesses. Poverty is endemic in Tanzania, with 68 percent of Tanzanians living on less than \$1.25 USD per day (Source: Trading Economics).

Michael works with Education for Better Living (EBLI), an organization helping to reduce poverty in the community one young mother at a time, by teaching business skills to these mothers who dropped out of secondary school due to pregnancy. They learn how to choose, start and run their own business. Michael also helps those not suitable for entrepreneurship to gain employment.

The young mothers who enroll and complete the training with Michael are able to significantly impact their earning potential. Prior to any studying with Michael's program, only 28 percent of the participating young mothers are employed or self-employed. However, after they complete the training, 77 percent of the young mothers are able to be hired or are self-employed. Each young mother gains, on average, an additional \$52 of monthly income following completion of the training, with many earning two to four times more than the average Tanzanian monthly wage.

The most recent graduating class of young mothers read a statement during their ceremony that reinforces how valuable they consider the program to be, "We have obtained great respect in the surrounding community, for when we were cut off from continuing our school lessons due to pregnancy, the community dismissed us, despised us and saw us as never having value again, but now we are happy and so thankful because we will not be scorned again as a result of what we have obtained here."

"Garden Variety" Cures

Lay Missioner Kristle Bulleman, serving in Mwanza, Tanzania, since 2013, oversees the Mabatini Parish Public Health Office as program director. Working in social services in Southern California prior to joining MKLM, Kristle remembers feeling that Africa was where she was called to serve.



Photo credit Cecilia Espinoza

Lay Missioner Michael Leen facilitates a session for graduates of his ministry's business training to share their experience and successes with young mothers who are interested in the program

"For about nine years, I knew I wanted to go to Africa and be a part of an organization that helps people. Maryknoll Lay Missioners has this charism of building relationships and doing things from the ground up for a sustainable impact."

Kristle works alongside local Tanzanian women at the Health Office to educate the community as a whole on preventative health techniques. Much of their outreach is to community youth through health education classes they bring to local schools. The Health Office also serves mentally and physically disabled children and adults in need of healthcare.

A key focus of Kristle's ministry is teaching about natural medicines, cultivating and harvesting those medicinal plants from the Health Office gardens and helping to manage packaging and selling the medicines to the Mabatini community, which is the most poor and densely populated area in Mwanza. The Health Office sells these natural medicines at a very low price to enable the community to afford them, thus helping to prevent diseases and conditions like malaria,



A community member receives treatment and education on natural medicines from staff of the Health Office where Lay Missioner Kristle Bulleman is program director



Lay Missioner Kristle Bulleman and her colleague tend to the medicinal plants that grow in gardens at the Health Office

typhoid, high blood pressure, malnutrition and more. The plants (Artemisia, Moringa, Rosella, Papaya and others) grow easily in the Tanzanian climate; many people have the trees and plants right in their own backyard.

Kristle is proud of the work she and her colleagues are accomplishing to help promote health education, by taking what's already part of the community and empowering the people to understand and apply that knowledge. "These plants already grow in people's backyards; we are showing them how to use them for their own good."

All page photos credit Niles Sprague

WELCOME ABOUNDS ACROSS BORDERS

Contributed by Doug and Danielle Fogg and Santa Orlanda

All page photos, credit Doug Fogg



"Perhaps our charity, and our love, should begin at home, but it should never end there. God knows no borders."

– Danielle and Doug Fogg

Travelers who participated in the Maryknoll Lay Missioners' *Friends Across Borders* (FAB) mission immersion trip to Bolivia this past summer experienced a level of hospitality and welcome beyond their highest expectations. Below, participants from the trip share their reflections on the experience and relate the impact of seeing the Lay Missioners' ministries firsthand.

Doug and Danielle Fogg traveled with a group of 12 from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, Maine, for which the trip was designed. They were delighted to make many new acquaintances and even recognize old friends during their trip to Cochabamba, Bolivia.

"Upon arrival, our first impressions were the smiles, hospitality and warm welcomes we received from the Bolivians, yet we were clearly surrounded by such



widespread poverty. While the per capita income in Maine is \$27,000 annually, the Bolivian per capita income is just over \$1,600. This discrepancy was obvious in many houses around Cochabamba that had been left unfinished, or were constructed haphazardly of scavenged materials.

We were very surprised to recognize Bill and Eileen Velicky, who attended St. Mary's Church in Bangor with us back in the 1990s. They have worked as Maryknoll Lay Missioners ever since, in East Timor, Cambodia, and for the last four years, in Bolivia. Bill recently started, along with local artisans, a workshop making specialized wheelchairs for children with physical disabilities, a service which is totally lacking in Bolivia. Eileen, a physical therapist, consults with Bill, but also works with children with learning disabilities to strengthen their reading skills so they can succeed in school. In Bolivia, there are no publicly funded special education services.

We will be reflecting on this trip for many years to come, and we could never have foreseen how hard the people we visited have to fight

for any right, privilege or comfort. Their faith is an integral part of their daily life, because they rely on God for everything. The Maryknoll Lay Missioners based in Bolivia are reaching out to partner with the Bolivians to improve their situation with love and dignity. There was little we could do in a two-week period that would change any lives, and, yet, these beautiful people changed ours."

"Mission occurs any place where one walks with empathy and compassion for those in need, at home or overseas."

– Santa Orlanda

Santa Orlanda was another participant on the Bolivia FAB trip who joined the Maine contingent from her hometown in Albany. Santa is a Maryknoll Affiliate, who found the FAB trip to be profoundly moving. She shares her new appreciation for the warmth that she observed each Lay Missioner offer to the individuals and communities they serve in mission. "Lay Missioner Minh Nguyen shared unconditional love and respect for the abuelas (grandmas) of Cochabamba, those that have struggled and given throughout their lives.



Photo credit Sam Stanton

*Lay Missioner
Minh Nguyen*

These elderly ladies now find themselves old, tired, vulnerable and lonely with no place to turn. The Lay Missioners help to provide the women with basic necessities and help them obtain documentation to

receive the government stipend. They also provide companionship and the knowledge that someone does in fact care.

Lay Missioner Joe Loney revealed to us his unconditional love and respect for the imprisoned men he serves by providing legal aid. In prison, their reality is one of survival in an environment where typical societal norms are meaningless. Each

person must find their own means of existence and hope; "cells" are bought or



Photo credit Doug Fogg

*Lay Missioner
Joe Loney*

rented, meals must be purchased on your own and even transportation to court must be individually financed. No guards are found inside the prison walls; order is maintained by inmates in a loose form of democratic government.

I now know the heart of a Lay Missioner operates first out of love. What they do, and with whom they walk, may differ in each country where they serve and in each ministry they choose. This diversity extends to the entire community; everyone offers their individual gifts, their time and talents as part of the global community."

If you would like to consider joining a Friends Across Borders (FAB) mission immersion trip, please visit <http://www.mkim.org/take-a-trip/> or contact friendsacrossborders@mkim.org.



Come take a trip with us that could change your life

FRIENDS ACROSS BORDERS

is Maryknoll Lay Missioners' mission awareness program.

Join us to experience what you could never discover in travel brochures, films or books. You will see what life is really like in communities where Maryknoll Lay Missioners are living out their faith and helping to create a more just and compassionate world.

UPCOMING MISSION AWARENESS TRIPS

- **CAMBODIA** – JustFaith Ministries
February 12 – 21, 2016
Deadline for signups: November, 2015
- **EL SALVADOR** – JustFaith Ministries
June 10 – 19, 2016
Deadline for signups: February 10, 2016
- **CHILE** – Notre Dame – Marquette
July 9 – 25, 2016
Deadline for signups: March 9, 2016
- **TANZANIA**
August 5 – 15, 2016
Deadline for signups: April 5, 2016
- **BOLIVIA**
August 6 – 18, 2016
Deadline for signups: April 6, 2016
- **CAMBODIA** – Mission Discernment Trip
August 12 – 21, 2016
Deadline for signups: April 12, 2016
- **BRAZIL**
November 5 – 15, 2016
Deadline for signups: July 5, 2016
- **CHILE** – Notre Dame – Marquette
February 9 – 25, 2017 (to be confirmed)
Deadline for signups: October 9, 2016



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JOYFULLY Called to Mission

A 40th Anniversary makes for a joyous celebration! This past August we welcomed nearly 200 guests to our U.S. headquarters in Maryknoll, New York, to help kick off our 40th Anniversary. The event was held the evening of August 8th, 2015 and provided many special moments worth recalling. The occasion highlighted examples of Maryknoll Lay Missioners' (MKLM) outreach and aid across our global mission sites and emphasized that all the faithful are united to God's mission in the universal Church.

The celebration featured a presentation called Leading by Example: Shaping the Future of Mission, for which Maryknoll Lay Missioner Dr. Susan Nagele, MD was our keynote speaker. Susan inspired the crowd with her remarks that included memories from 31 years in mission across Tanzania, South Sudan and Kenya, the many challenges she has faced, limitations to healthcare and services, examples of fellow missioners who are making a difference and her faith as motivation and sustaining force throughout it all.

Susan also stated her belief that MKLM is distinct and that keeping our Lay Missioners' perspective in mission is critical. Establishing that MKLM members are often uniquely qualified to be role models for the Catholic Church worldwide, Susan said, "I hear God calling our church to put more emphasis on participation of laity. We need missioners who are married, as well as single, to communicate our strong Catholic family values."

Executive Director Sam Stanton acted as master of ceremonies and reminded attendees that mission is for all, as a calling from our Baptism. He recounted MKLM's ministries throughout the world and affirmed the Association's role as a leader that continually builds bridges of understanding and awareness for worldwide mission with the U.S. church. Sam honored many long-term Maryknoll Lay Missioners, noting their combined experience and involvement in helping MKLM to shape and sustain lay mission outreach today.

Maryknoll Lay Missioner Russ Brine, who has served in mission for 15 years in Kenya, articulated his experiences as well. Russ offered a moving description of the extreme



Photo credit Meredith Heuer

Keynote
speaker
and Lay
Missioner
Dr. Susan
Nagele



Photo credit Sean Sprague

deprivation that is a reality for many East Africans. He provided context for how programs like the St. John Bosco School and Rehabilitation Center that he helps to oversee, impart hope and enable a better future for the youth and families that they serve.

It was a delight to unite so many friends of MKLM in New York for the celebration, including our valued supporters, returned Maryknoll Lay Missioners from all over the country, Ossining town officials and other Maryknoll organizations: the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Sisters and Affiliates.

There are many ongoing special moments to celebrate throughout the year as well. Our longest-term active Lay Missioner, Liz Mach, will be celebrating her own anniversary marking 40 years in mission in February 2016.

Photo credit Meredith Heuer



Dr. Susan Nagele at left at MKLM's Anniversary event and Lay Missioner Liz Mach at right in Tanzania



Photo courtesy Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

Liz recalls a few enhancements while serving in mission as a nurse over the years: "In this age of technology—the iPhones, iPads, and chats—we are so much more connected than 39 years ago when I arrived as a new Maryknoll Lay Missioner in Tanzania. At that time, out in a rural village, it took three weeks for a letter to arrive home and three more weeks before I had an answer to my questions. The one or two times-a-year phone call home was a blessed event. Now, I speak with my 93-year-old mother daily through Facetime and the cell phone. I too, am caught up in the new technology (and so is she!)."

Liz's faith is her foundation. She says, "It is good not to lose sight of what has brought me here, kept me here and sustains me here. And, God is right there at the top. I am called to be here and I have to answer my own calling. It is not dependent on others, but it is my contract with God and an ever-present force in my life."

Celebrating the joy of our purpose as Maryknoll Lay Missioners with so many supporters, both in person and in spirit, is extremely invigorating. As we grow throughout our 40th year and far beyond, we continue to keep our energy level high, always striving to serve more people in need around the world. Echoing Dr. Susan Nagele, who stated this sentiment during her August 8th keynote, we know the Holy Spirit will continue to inspire and guide us along the path, and the journey ahead will take us to even better places than we can even imagine at this moment!

A COMPANION IN MISSION

NURTURING DREAMS, ONE BUS FARE AT A TIME

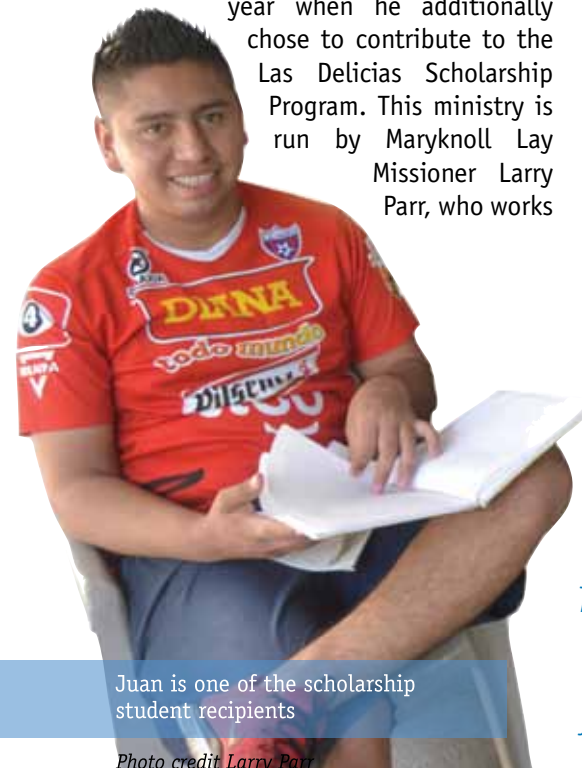
Contributed by Tim Wills and Larry Parr

Ten years ago, Tim Wills became a Companion in Mission by joining Maryknoll Lay Missioners' program for regular, sustained contributors. The regular support that MKLM receives from our Companions in Mission is critical to sustaining our Lay Missioners month to month and year to year in their ministries overseas. Tim deepened his partnership with MKLM earlier this year when he additionally chose to contribute to the Las Delicias Scholarship Program. This ministry is run by Maryknoll Lay Missioner Larry Parr, who works

and lives with the poor community of Las Delicias in El Salvador.

Tim remembers, "When I first learned of Larry's project, I was moved to help, hearing that kids in Las Delicias often cannot attend school for lack of the few dollars needed for bus fare."

Life in Las Delicias is challenging. It is a very poor, rural community of 600 families, located 45 minutes from the capitol of El Salvador. The community originally relied on the coffee picking industry. However, in recent years, coffee picking has diminished and residents have been left without means to support themselves. Many families depend on factory jobs, while others look for agriculture or domestic work, which on average earns them less than four dollars a day.



Juan is one of the scholarship student recipients

Photo credit Larry Parr

"My Catholic faith has instilled in me a deep desire to discover the path that God wants me to follow in this life. All of us are here for a purpose, to grow in holiness and to serve God and our neighbors, but the exact way in which each of us is called to fulfill that mission varies greatly." – Tim Wills



Photo credit Erik Cambier

"The funding is critical. The scholarship program helps provide bus fare, so that these young people can go to school, realize their dreams and have opportunities to succeed."
 – Larry Parr



Often, children drop out of school in 5th or 6th grade, and only half of those who finish basic (middle) school actually complete high school. There is no high school in the town and the youth must travel by pickup truck or bus to reach the high school in the city. Many families cannot afford this daily bus fare. The youth who drop out of school have limited opportunities for advancement and become more vulnerable to gang recruitment that is rife throughout the greater San Salvador region.

Larry co-directs FUDESCA (Foundation for Development and Solidarity Castulo Antonio), which was started by members of the Catholic Church to help strengthen the community through leadership development and education. Through the foundation, families and youth gain services that promote literacy, leadership and empowerment. Observing the financial burden that prevents many families from sending their children to high school, Larry developed a scholarship program. This scholarship initially provided basic school materials for students, and now with Tim's help, offers transportation scholarships to cover the costs of bus fare for six community youth in need.

When asked what inspired him to become a Companion in Mission sponsor and provide the FUDESCA scholarship, Tim responded, "For some time now I have had a deep admiration and attraction to the type of work in which Maryknoll Lay Missioners are involved. I think there is a possibility that at some point in my life I too will serve in this way, but in the meantime, I can at least help to financially support those who are in the field."

"The scholarship program has helped me a lot, because without it I would not be able to study and expand my knowledge. This has helped me to be able to help other children and youth that are in need in my community."
 Cesar Flores,
 second year in high school

"Thanks to the help from the scholarship program, I am able to study at the University and have more opportunities in my life."
 Juan Moreno, completing his first year in college, studying to be a Physical Education teacher

"It is very difficult to better a country that has so many problems, but with help from God and from generous donors, anything is possible and we can say together 'si se puede,' yes we can."
 Jessica Hernandez,
 graduating high school in November

Tim Wills works in the field of computer science as a software engineer. He has attended several mission trips both in the U.S. and Central America and looks forward to the opportunity of someday participating in an MKLM Friends Across Borders mission immersion trip to El Salvador to meet Larry and some of his students in person.

Where are they NOW?

KATIE REID

Returned Maryknoll Lay Missioner Katie Reid spent her ministry expanding young Tanzanian women and girls' civil and human rights, and increasing services in economic development, education and public health. Katie co-coordinated a project called Lulu Mabatini, where she worked with at-risk girls in the Mabatini area of Mwanza to build cooperation, self-esteem and creativity.

Katie reflects, "I got a first-hand education in violence prevention in the developing world. We helped a girl who could not read or write start a small business of her own, earning the funds she needed to get out of an abusive relationship; we helped a woman who dropped out of 8th grade save money to build her family a safe, secure home; we helped shy young women who at first couldn't look you in the eye transform into proud leaders standing in front of local representatives demanding to be treated with respect."

Recently returned to the states, Katie is taking up a new role as Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator at The South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA), where she is applying her cross-cultural lessons in violence prevention.



Katie is proud to have helped individuals like Teddy through her Lulu Project coordination. When Teddy joined Lulu in 2013, she had passed her examinations for post-high school level studies with plans to focus on science, but did not have the money. Upon entering Lulu, she was quickly identified as a strong candidate, and a year later became one of the four senior facilitators of the program. Katie says, "Because of the skills Teddy's learned about budgeting, planning for life's goals and entrepreneurship, she has all the building blocks she needs to pull herself up and I truly believe she will achieve what she sets her mind to."

As Katie's story illustrates, the ministries our Lay Missioners began overseas don't end when they return home. Rather, our returned missioners continue to serve people in need and "live out the Gospel" across our nation and beyond. Please visit our "Returned Missioners" page on www.mkmlm.org and our "Always A Missioner" Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AlwaysAMissioner to stay connected and learn more.



Charitable Gift Annuities That Support MKLM's Mission

Supporting those in need around the world, while
guaranteeing steady retirement income for yourself
and an immediate charitable tax deduction

Lay Missioner Peg Vamosy



When you plan ahead to consider ways to support the causes in which you believe, we hope you include Maryknoll Lay Missioners (MKLM). Making a Charitable Gift Annuity is a great option to consider when gift planning. Gift Annuities provide an opportunity for you to support our Lay Missioners' ministries and those people around the world we are blessed to serve.

**Charitable Gift Annuities
are a great way to:**

- *Support the work of MKLM for many years to come*
- *Receive timely fixed payments during your retirement years (the older you are, the higher your payment rate)*
- *Receive an immediate charitable tax deduction*

This approach of planning ahead to manage your future needs in retirement and provide ongoing support of MKLM provides critical help to our Lay Missioners in the field doing God's work, and sustains MKLM as we recruit, train, send and maintain Lay Missioners throughout the year, helping enable our path of growth. If you would like to find out about Charitable Gift Annuities or other planned giving options, please **contact Laurie Rumpf at 914-236-3479 or lrumpf@mklm.org**.

May God bless you as you bless others with your gifts!