

VOICES *of* COMPASSION



Spring 2010



MKLM and Salvadorans:

Stopping AIDS

Advancing Nutrition

Promoting Self-Sustenance

MONSEÑOR ROMERO
PROFETA NUNCA MUERE

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

Just months before Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador was killed by an assassin's bullet while celebrating Mass, he wrote these words about the church as Christ's Body here on earth:

A church that can feel as its own all that is human,
and wants to incarnate the pain, the hope, the affliction of all who suffer and feel joy, such a church will be Christ loved and awaited, Christ present.
And that depends on us.



MKLM's Executive
Director Sam Stanton

Archbishop Romero could have chosen to be an aloof prelate, leading a life of privilege along with the other members of El Salvador's cultural elite. Instead, he chose compassion – literally, to “suffer with” the poorest of the poor who, at the time, were the primary targets of brutal government repression. Like Jesus, Archbishop Romero was moved by his bold compassion to confront the corrupt, comfortable, and predatory powers of his day; like Jesus, Archbishop Romero was ultimately murdered because of his compassionate confrontation.

A similar faith-inspired compassion led Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, and Cleveland lay missionary Jean Donovan to serve in El Salvador during those years of escalating danger. The four women provided food, transport to medical care, and other assistance

On the Cover: Maryknoll Lay Missioner Tim Morris with a young member of the Christian Base Community — Rutilio Grande.

Cover Photo Credit: Sean Sprague

to thousands of rural people living in camps for the displaced after their villages were destroyed. With increasing frequency, the women were faced with the grim task of burying the ravaged bodies left behind by death squads. Less than nine months after the murder of Archbishop Romero, their own bodies were discovered in a shallow grave; they had been tortured, sexually abused, and shot to death by members of the Salvadoran National Guard.

MKLM Mission Statement

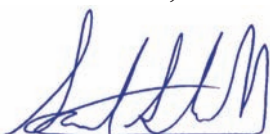
Maryknoll Lay Missioners is a Catholic organization inspired by the mission of Jesus to live and work in poor communities in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, responding to basic needs and helping to create a more just and compassionate world.

It has been 18 years since Maryknoll Lay Missioners joined Maryknoll Sisters and Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers in El Salvador. The three entities continue to serve among a people still desperately poor and still attempting to heal from the wounds of war. The pages that follow describe the country's current realities, and the ministries of MKLM missioners in response to urgent, contemporary needs.

Compassion is still what draws us to, and keeps us in, the land of the Savior. MKLM missioners seek to nurture a church that is "Christ loved and awaited, Christ present" among the poor. Being such a church, wrote Archbishop Romero, "depends on us." *All of us.*

As a friend of Maryknoll Lay Missioners, you have embraced Christ's poor in their suffering and affliction as well as in their joys and their hopes. Thank you for your compassion, which is incarnate in your support for our ministries among the poor of El Salvador and throughout the world.

In mission,



Sam Stanton
Executive Director

To learn more about becoming a Maryknoll Lay Missioner, visit:

www.mklm.org/forchange

To support our work, visit:

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MKLM ANSWERS THE



A tectonic plate splits the foundation below, the rumblings echo above. Mother Nature, with her constant threats of volcanic eruption, hurricane, and landslide, is but one volatile force creating chasms and blockages on the roads and hillsides of the land of the Savior. Residual tensions from the 12-year civil war and the great chasm between rich and poor, as well as the transition from an agricultural to a service-based economy, are among the other challenges that face Salvadorans today.

CALL IN EL SALVADOR



Maryknoll Lay Missioners
are there to work with
the people of El Salvador
to bridge chasms and
overcome obstacles.

This issue of Voices of Compassion features the ministries of 3 of the 8 Maryknoll Lay Missioners currently assigned to El Salvador. Though roughly the size of Massachusetts, this small Central American country faces considerable challenges. Since the end of the war in 1992, the capital of San Salvador has experienced spurts of economic growth. Now a sprawling, bustling commercial center, its paved city streets have replaced green fields and vegetation; business complexes and shopping malls stand where balsam and savanna oak once grew in abundance.

The still-rural outskirts of San Salvador are home to people crushed by the reality of the country's new economic growth strategies. As coffee crops disappear, farm laborers struggle to survive. Knowledge of the English language, computer skills, and a post-high school education are needed to survive and thrive in this changing environment.

Children, who receive inadequate daily nourishment and lack the means to obtain mandated school supplies and uniforms, do not attend school, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

Many in the countryside have had little or no schooling and are illiterate. Men, in search of manual labor, are often forced to leave their families. Boys, lacking adult male role models, form gangs. Women often find themselves alone, uneducated, and raising children in hostile, gang-ridden neighborhoods. Children, who receive inadequate daily nourishment and lack the means to obtain mandated school supplies and uniforms, do not attend school, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

MKLM's Longtime Service to El Salvador

Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers began their Salvadoran ministry in the 1950s; Maryknoll Sisters followed in the 1970s. The first Maryknoll Lay Missioners arrived in 1993, after the end of a civil war that claimed more than 75,000 lives.

Today, MKLM missioners in El Salvador work in both San Salvador and in rural areas, responding to urgent and basic

needs while partnering with local communities to find ways to end the cycle of poverty. Missioners' projects provide educational opportunities for children, assist women with learning income-generating skills, promote self-sustaining community advancement, improve nutrition, and offer pastoral support.

To learn more about MKLM and how your generosity helps sustain our missioners around the world, visit mklm.org. You'll be amazed by the work you make possible!

Forever Changed



If you or someone you know would like to learn more about becoming an MKLM missioner, please visit www.mklm.org/forchange, or call or write to:

Recruitment Manager
Maryknoll Lay Missioners
P.O. Box 307
Maryknoll, NY 10545 – 0307
1.800.818.5276 Ext. 114
Recruitment@mklm.org

Missioner Brings Life to El Salvador

Child mortality rate plummets from 60% to 24%

Thousands of moms aided by nutritional supplement; trained to make it themselves



MKLM missionary Ann Greig serves Alexander nutrient-rich soymilk. With additional support from MKLM donors, Ann's project will continue to stem El Salvador's child mortality rate.

Life has improved in El Salvador since MKLM missionary Ann Greig began her ministry there in 1993. In the period since the country's civil war ended, the economy has grown and the national debt has somewhat

-Saving Supplement

The mortality rate for children under age 5 has plummeted from 60 to 24 percent – a statistic for which Ann deserves a hefty share of credit.

diminished. The mortality rate for children under age 5 has plummeted from 60 to 24 percent – a statistic for which Ann deserves a hefty share of credit. Working on a shoestring budget, she has spent her years in El Salvador overseeing the development of an innovative nutrition project based upon the affordability, versatility, and nutritional value of the soybean.

But a child mortality rate of 24 percent is still too high for Ann.

Working in coordination with various parishes, communities and the National University of



San Salvador, Ann – a dietician trained at the University of California, Davis – founded the Soy and Health Program in 2002 to help improve the health of poor Salvadorans, especially pregnant women and malnourished children. Initially, the program was implemented in only one community. Because of its success, and to broaden its impact, the archdiocese requested that Ann extend the program to 10 additional communities.

According to the World Health Organization, 19 percent of Salvadoran children suffer from such severe malnutrition that their growth is stunted. Two-thirds of Salvadorans live in poverty, and food prices remain high. Yet, the Soy and Health Program has significantly improved hunger statistics in the areas where it has been implemented (in San Salvador and in rural areas). The program provides an inexpensive source of protein and carbohydrates for families that would otherwise suffer malnourishment. It

also offers a health education component.

One-year-old Alexander from San Ramón, a poor neighborhood in San Salvador, has benefited from the program since before birth. The San Ramón branch of the program prepares and serves soymilk to 150 people — children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers — per day. Families pay a token \$5 per month for this service. Additionally, the network of volunteer health care promoters that Ann has trained (the “soy women,” as Ann affectionately

Companions in Mission



Meet Jurencio, a ten-year-old boy living in East Timor. Gifts from



Companions in Mission sponsors enabled MKLM to send a missionary to build a specialized wheelchair for Jurencio and countless others like him. Now, Jurencio can finally travel to school.

This little boy is just one of the thousands of reasons that you should join MKLM's Companions in Mission sponsorship program.

To learn more, go to www.mkmlm.org, or call 1-800-867-2980.

According to the World Health Organization, 19 percent of Salvadoran children suffer from such severe malnutrition that their growth is stunted.

of toasted sorghum flour, toasted soy flour, cinnamon and sugar, can be made into a cold or hot beverage, or used for baking. This product

calls them) continues to offer similar programs in both urban and rural communities.

Alexander's mother, Clara, and his grandmother both credit the Soy and Health Program for his healthy birth weight and steady developmental progress. Clara consumed soymilk provided by the program during her pregnancy, and continued while breastfeeding Alexander. Since birth, Alexander has been monitored and weighed monthly by the community's clinic and always receives a clean bill of health.

The "Nurture Life" Association

In 2007, Ann registered the Soy and Health Program as the legally-recognized Asociación de Nutravida (Nurture Life Association), allowing her to import her own soybeans and to develop a variety of soy products. One product in particular, consisting



Clara consumed soymilk during and after her pregnancy with Alexander. She credits Ann's Soy and Health Program with Alexander's healthy birth weight and steady developmental progress. Ann credits MKLM donors.

became available for consumer purchase in February; profits from product sales are reinvested in the program to ensure its long-term sustainability.

See the recipe for Sorghum Cookies on page 13!

continued on page 12



Each week, Ann travels to remote locations to serve her soy products to communities in need. Here, Ann, second from right, teaches the community to make the soy products themselves, lessening their dependence on her.

“Soy Cow” Will Increase Milk Availability and Counter Malnutrition

Monday through Friday, the “soy women” of San Ramón produce more than 150 glasses of soymilk. Sometimes it is enough to meet the needs of families in the neighborhood. Other times, it is not. Soon, however, the San Ramón branch of the Soy and Health Program will obtain a “Soy Cow” — a machine that makes soymilk — which will significantly increase production.

Ann and her team have applied for a permit from the government’s Ministry of Health to bottle the milk and make it available inexpensively in poor communities not yet served by the Soy and Health Program.

Ann Grieg joined MKLM in 1982 from Chula Vista, California, part of the Diocese of San Diego. Before arriving in El Salvador, she served in Peru for nine years. If you’d like to ensure that Ann can continue to help the littlest Salvadorans (like Alexander) stay healthy, visit mklm.org.

Sorghum Cookies

Ingredients:

1 cup of vegetable shortening
4 eggs
¾ cup of sugar
4 cinnamon sticks crushed or
1 tsp. cinnamon powder
1 tsp. vanilla
1½ cups of sorghum flour
½ cup of soy flour
2 cups of cornstarch
½ Tbsp. of baking powder
Dab of salt



Instructions:

1. In one bowl, mix the eggs, sugar and vanilla. Then, mix in the shortening.
2. In another bowl, combine the dry ingredients: flours, cornstarch, baking powder, salt and cinnamon, and mix well.
3. Combine the contents of both bowls and mix until you have smooth dough that will form into balls.
4. Lightly grease a 9 x 13 cookie sheet.
5. Roll the mixture into little balls about an inch in diameter. Evenly place in rows on cookie sheet. With a fork, press each down.
6. Bake in a preheated oven at 375 degrees for approximately 12 minutes or until brown.

Makes 2 dozen big cookies

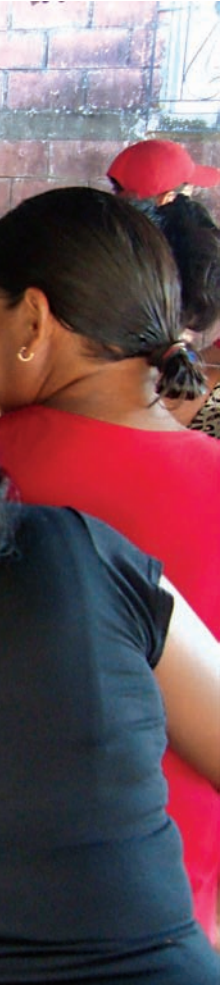
Stopping HIV/AIDS

Missioner educates hundreds of youth in HIV awareness



MKLM missionary Debbie Northern, pictured center, plays a game with CONTRASIDA students. Through her workshops, she reaches Salvadoran youth – the highest at-risk population for HIV infection.

Before It Starts



Debbie Northern's first assignment as a Maryknoll Lay Missioner was in Tanzania, a country debilitated by an AIDS pandemic. When assigned to El Salvador in 2003, Debbie saw an opportunity to try to stop AIDS in its tracks. Preventative education would be her strategy.

There are five new cases of HIV every day in El Salvador; most of the people infected are between the ages of 15 and 45. As Salvadoran men are forced to look for work away from their homes and families, boys are often left without male role models. They take to gang life, in which they are persuaded to believe that a "real man" exhibits machismo. Gangs pressure their newest members to prove their "manliness" by having many sexual partners.

There are five new cases of HIV every day in El Salvador; most of the people infected are between the ages of 15 and 45.

Debbie works with CONTRASIDA, an organization that began as a preventative education program to halt the spread of HIV. Started by Maryknoll Sisters Mary Annel and Lorena Beinkafner, the program had originally been conducted, for the most part, in parishes. It has grown to include three youth theater groups; a pre-teen group; a one-day-a-week clinic; a visitation, accompaniment, and



Debbie presents the dangers of having many sexual partners to a group of young men. In El Salvador, one's "manliness" is measured by how many sexual partners one has had.

self-help program for people living with HIV/AIDS; and workshops for ministry to the sick in parishes.

Debbie works specifically in preventative education. Through her workshops, she has educated hundreds of participants – mostly youth – about HIV, gender, and self-esteem. Though most workshops are hosted in parishes or in conjunction with other organizations, Debbie has been known to take her lessons to wherever groups of students will gather. On more than one occasion, she has taught in a kitchen-turned-

classroom through which chickens, turkeys, and dogs wander freely. All are welcome in Debbie's classes!

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Once Students, Now Teachers

Recently, youth from Las Delicias Community Development, a project run by fellow MKLM missionary Larry Parr, attended Debbie's workshop. Afterwards, Larry helped

the teens and young adults to form a community theater group that teaches other youths about HIV prevention.

“It is important to let people know how they can avoid becoming one of the statistics,” Debbie says of her ministry. And Debbie does “let people know.” Last year she taught more than 100 people, mostly between the ages of 13-25, a key age group for preventative education. “I hope that we can help them think about the consequences of their actions and keep them healthy. We encourage everyone who attends the workshops to pass the word to friends and family.”



Maryknoll Lay Missioners
is now on

Facebook. Visit us to see videos of Larry's ministry!

Debbie Northern joined MKLM in 1999 from Radford, Virginia where she was active in St. Jude Parish and was a Catholic Campus Minister at Radford University. She has two undergraduate and three post-graduate degrees. Your donations help keep Debbie in mission. To equip youth with information that could save their lives, visit mklm.org.

YOUR WILL, YOUR LEGACY

“He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor.”

– Proverbs 22:8, 9

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Missioner and Commu Tanks, Develop Self-S

Two tanks provide potable water for nearly 100 residents

New community-run farm will feed dozens of families



The tiny settlement of San Antonio sits high in the coastal mountains of El Salvador. Most of its residents — who rely on coffee farming for their main source of income — work on large plantations, picking coffee beans and tending fields. Families also farm corn and

nity Build Water ustaining Food Source

beans on rented patches of land. They build their own homes, using corrugated metal, adobe brick, and plastic; “floors” are made of packed earth.

MKLM missionary Tim Morris was invited to live with and serve the people of San Antonio through their Christian Base Community — Rutilio Grande, a grassroots outreach program of the nearby Sacacoyo parish. The program provides the people of San Antonio with an opportunity to come together for prayer, spiritual reflection, and grassroots community organizing.

Tim and other members of the 20-family community meet three times a week to read and reflect on the Gospel, share stories of daily hardship, provide support for one another, and discuss ways to improve life in the community. Tim, along with teammate Raul Pinto Martinez, facilitates this community group, providing materials for Bible

study and organizing community gatherings. He works closely with the Sacacoyo pastor, Fr. Florintino, to arrange for weekly Mass at the

“My role here is not to create something new,” says Tim.

“My role is to use the tools and the gifts that are already present to help change the lives and reality of the people. I don’t work for the community, but rather, with the community.”

community chapel. “But,” says Tim, “my involvement goes beyond facilitation. It requires listening to and learning from the people about how they see the world.”

A Model for the Children

A graduate of Chaminade College Preparatory School, located outside of St. Louis, Tim earned a BA in Religious Studies from Santa Clara

University in 2006. While a Claretian Volunteer in Missouri from 2006 to 2007, Tim worked as a campus minister. After arriving in San Antonio in 2008, Tim set out to help the youth of the community.

Twice a week, Tim teaches English to as many as 40 youths. One class is provided for older children and another for younger children. For the children he tutors, Tim provides academic oversight and acts as a liaison with their schools.

Recently, Tim and Raul formed the San Antonio Young Persons Reflection Group. The group offers participants guidance in their daily struggles, which include pressure to join gangs, engage in sex, or take drugs, and helps them to cope with the pervasive threat of violent crime that is part of El Salvador's civil war legacy.

"The people of San Antonio have included me in their circle, inviting me to birthday parties and family celebrations," says Tim. "They also invite me into their homes to share some coffee and talk about the struggles of life."





MKLM missionary Tim, left, and Raul Antonio Pinto inspect one of the two water tanks they and community members built. The tanks, which provide potable water to nearly 100 people, collect water and protect it from contaminants such as leaves, animal waste, and human contact. With continued financial support of MKLM donors, Tim will address additional basic needs of San Antonio.

Home Again

Raul and his siblings were born and raised by their single mom in San Antonio. Raul's mother believes that education is the key to overcoming poverty and encouraged Raul to push himself through two high school degrees. Consequently, Raul was able to secure employment in San Salvador's clothing manufacturing plants. But when his mother became ill, Raul returned to San Antonio. While caring for his mother, he

became involved with the Christian Base Community.

The needs of the people of San Antonio were great, and Raul welcomed Tim's partnership. In March, the two led the community in the construction of two new water tanks that protect and conserve residents' limited supply of potable water. In April, Tim and Raul began a community farming plot to grow



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A San Antonio resident washes clothes and retrieves safe drinking water at the newly constructed water tank.

Two new water tanks protect and conserve residents' limited supply of potable water.

grains. While many families cultivate corn and beans on their own small plots, the new plot marks the first time the community has worked together to create a shared food source – one that will provide sustenance for all community members.

“My role here is not to create something new,” says Tim. “My role is to use the tools and the gifts that

are already present to help change the lives and reality of the people. I don’t work for the community, but rather, with the community.”

Tim Morris hails from Creve Coeur, Missouri, part of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. He and his family are longtime members of Incarnate Word Parish in Chesterfield. Without the support of our donors, Tim’s ministry in the poor, mountain community of San Antonio would not be possible. To help keep Tim in mission, visit mklm.org.



Join Us at Your Local Parish!

Maryknoll Lay Missioners will be speaking in nearly 65 parishes throughout the U.S. in 2010!

Go to www.mklm.org/churchtalks to find out when a Maryknoll Lay Missioner will be speaking at a church in your area, or to learn how to schedule a talk for your parish!

Did You Know?



The three branches of Maryknoll – Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers, Maryknoll Sisters, and us, Maryknoll Lay Missioners – are **each separately funded and operated**. Although we often join together to serve in mission, each entity depends on its unique donors for support.

Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers

Through contributions to Maryknoll Lay Missioners, you can make a difference in the lives of the poor in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. To make your gift, please complete the form below and return it today.

Maryknoll Sisters

On behalf of all those that we are privileged to serve, we thank you very much.

Maryknoll Lay Missioners

To learn more, visit mklm.org.



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IN THIS ISSUE OF VOICES OF COMPASSION:

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