

VOICES *of* COMPASSION



Winter 2011



Building Bridges with the US Church
Friends Across Borders

Dear Friends and Partners in Mission,

Greetings from Maryknoll Lay Missioners as we close out another liturgical year and enter the season of Advent, a time of great reflection and contemplation.

Contemplating the mystery of this moment and of the gift of Christmas leads me to a gift that our missioners have been able to witness time and time again: the gratitude, even for the simplest of things, of those we serve – regardless of the challenges they face.

Gratitude is what I want to offer at this season of the year. The true meaning of gratitude is not quite captured in the English language. In the Greek used by St. Paul, the word gratitude, *charis*, was intertwined with the concept of glorifying and praising God. Our faith fills us with a sense of gratitude and a positive energy, and



Sam Stanton,
Executive Director.

we give glory and praise to God through our actions.

The end of another year is a good time to take stock of all that we are grateful for – and here at MKLM we have been very blessed this year. We've been blessed with new spirit through the

arrival of Margaret Cuccinello, our new Director of Advancement and Debbie Northern, our new Training & Educational Programs Manager. Margaret brings years of experience in Catholic fundraising and Debbie has just returned as a missioner from El Salvador.

I am grateful to our dedicated staff who serve at the center with so much dedication, and to our board members who give so generously of their valuable time and resources. I am grateful to be a part of the Maryknoll community — to work

Cover Photo: Ted & Diane Von der Ahe plant a tree at St. Anthony's School in Kitale, Kenya



amongst the Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Affiliates — each of us in his or her own way serving the Gospel.

I am especially grateful to you, our donors and benefactors without whose support nothing would happen. Not all can go to the mission

fields and it is our privilege to be the link, the bridge between you and the people around the world.

For the 12 candidates who have come to Maryknoll this year, and who have just departed for their missions on December 10, I am filled with deep gratitude and admiration. Their commitment exemplifies the positive energy that comes with a faithful spirit.

And mostly, and most deeply, I am grateful to our loving God. Through the Creator all good things come. With God all things are possible. In Him lies the one true joy — that of faith. My prayer this Christmas is that we can all live that faith according to our loving Creator's will.

Merry Christmas.

Sam Stanton
Executive Director



Maryknoll Lay Missioners meets all 20 charity standards of the Better Business Bureau.



Maryknoll Lay Missioners is a proud member of the National Catholic Development Conference.

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.



Contact Us

- To learn more about becoming a Maryknoll Lay Missioner, visit: **www.mklm.org/4change**
- To support our work, visit: **www.mklm.org/donate**
- To receive our e-newsletter, email "Subscribe" to **info@mklm.org**



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Facebook.*



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on Twitter.*

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 donors for support.

Maryknoll Lay Missioners serves the poor in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

To learn more about us, and how your support creates lasting improvements worldwide, visit **mklm.org**.



MKLM Benefactor Spotlight



Mike Wrob at
Huruma School
in Tanzania

Mike Wrob is a good friend to the Maryknoll Lay Missioners. A board member for the past four years, a visitor to our sites in the field, and a financial supporter of MKLM, Mike has become an important thread in the fabric of our organization.



Mike Wrob (right) with Friends
Across Borders participants at
the Serengeti National Park

His path to us was by no means a straight line, but that path had its origins when Mike was just a baby. His uncle, John “Jack” Ganley, was a Maryknoll priest himself, and was the one to baptize Mike. After a Catholic education and upbringing, Mike went on to the working world where he found success, and is currently the President of Marathon Heater in Del Rio, Texas.

For a while, admittedly, the Maryknoll mission did not play a big

part in Mike’s life. Always a faithful Catholic he attended Mass regularly and he lived his faith. There are, as they say, no accidents, though. So it should not be considered an accident that one Sunday morning while sitting in Mass, Mike listened as a Maryknoll Lay Missioner spoke about his work in the developing world. Remembering his uncle Jack,

Mike became a donor. This was no accident – rather, it was a moment of grace that began a long and wonderful relationship.

As a board member for the past four years, Mike has lent his expertise in business, as well as his generous spirit, to the Maryknoll Lay Missioners. He has been on two trips with us, one to El Salvador, and one to Africa, and is planning another trip to Cambodia in 2012.

“Our biggest obstacle isn’t finding willing Missioners. Our biggest obstacle is finances. We could put two or three times as many people in the field, but the fact is we just don’t have the money to do it.”

“What has impressed me the most about MKLM is the overall impact they have in the various regions where they work,” he says. “They help, and have helped, so many people in so many ways. The people they serve, whether in Africa, Central America, or anywhere else, know that the Missioners are there to help. That means a lot to them.”

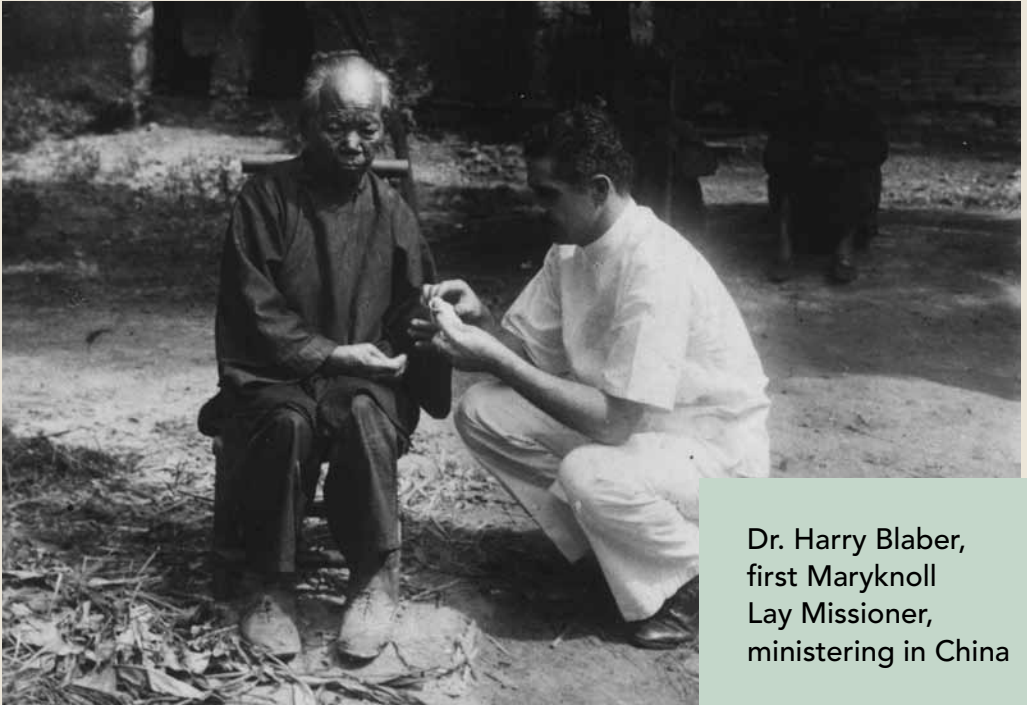
Mike knows that at the heart of each Missioners’ journey is a generosity that stems from their faith.

“The men and women who become lay missioners are among the highest quality of people I know. They are impressive, and intelligent, and they really live the Gospel values. They are helping people with real needs, and fully immersing themselves in the communities to which they minister. And the example they set draws people, not only to them, but to the Gospel.”

Mike has been a very generous partner with MKLM for many years, and we look forward to continuing that partnership for years to come. And, as he says, the more people that get involved in supporting MKLM, the more good work we will be able to accomplish in the places where it is needed most.

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Building Bridges Across Cultures



Dr. Harry Blaber,
first Maryknoll
Lay Missioner,
ministering in China

In 1930, Maryknoll's first lay missioner, Dr. Harry Blaber, embarked on his journey to China. While he was there he would open a hospital and his commitment was the beginning of the Maryknoll Lay Missioners. More than 60 years later, in 1994, we began a new phase of outreach. Recognizing that some people cannot make the long-term commitment that comes with being a Lay Missioner, we began a program called Friends Across Borders (FAB). Now entering its nineteenth year, FAB has become an arena where people from the United States can find life-changing experiences while immersing themselves in service in another culture.

The purpose of a mission trip is twofold – not only to serve others but to allow ourselves to be transformed by the Spirit

When individuals or groups begin seeking out immersion opportunities, it is important that they not only consider the needs of those they will be serving, but their own needs as well. After all, the purpose of a mission trip is twofold – not only to serve others but to allow ourselves to be transformed by the Spirit. Often when our FAB participants return from their trips, they speak as much about what they gained as they do about what they gave.

As an important component of the Maryknoll Lay Missioners, our FAB participants follow the same principles as our long-term missionaries. We are privileged to enter the sacred ground, history and culture of another world community. We believe that life is a mystery and God is very much present in the countries where we work and the people we encounter.

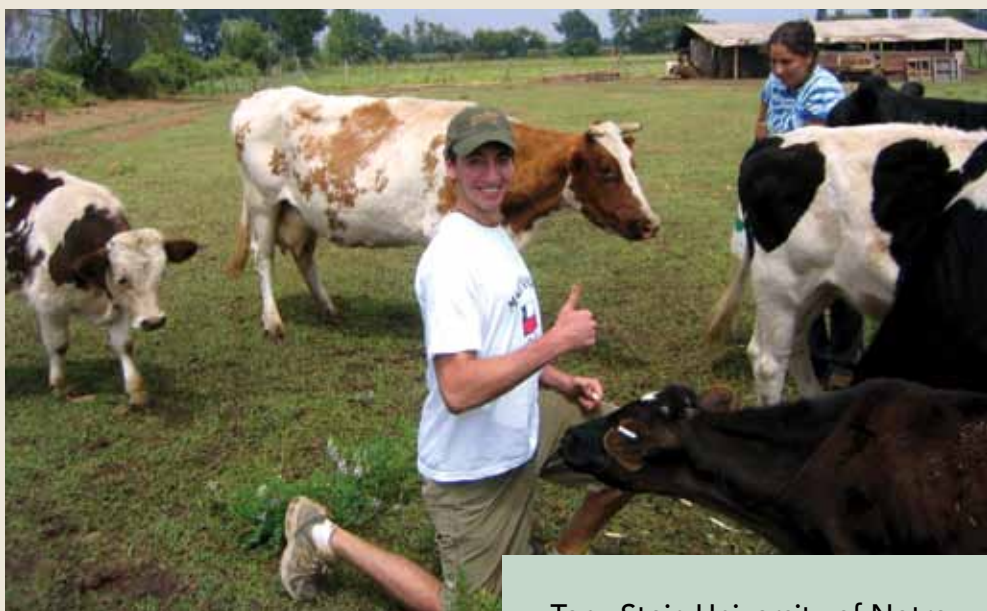
In recent years we have been privileged to share our mission with individuals and groups from a number of colleges and universities around the country.



Ohio Dominican University student helping to create a garden at El Cedro in El Salvador

Witnessing college students immersing themselves in a new culture is a beautiful experience – it allows us to see the best that these young people have to offer, as they channel their energy into serving populations far less fortunate than those they experience on campus.

Regardless of the group or individual who chooses to participate in FAB, there are preparations that need to be made. Reading about the culture, about the reality faced by the people there, can be a big help. We also recommend a certain amount of self reflection. What has led you to



Tony Steir, University of Notre Dame student, working at San Dionisio in Chile

consider such an experience? What do you hope to discover or learn? How open are you to the unknown and different realities you are sure to experience? Each and every time a FAB participant gets ready for their experiences, it is expected that they would have considered those questions.

Are you interested in making a difference? Do you feel the call to experience and serve a different culture? If so, please get in touch with our Friends Across Borders manager, Cecelia Espinoza at (914) 762-6364 x207, or friendsacrossborders@mkmlm.org.

Trips for 2012 are already planned to Cambodia, Tanzania and Bolivia

and El Salvador, Kenya and Brazil are being planned

As we look to the future of Friends Across Borders we hope to help more people than ever before. Not just the populations to whom we minister, but we also hope to help others as they seek to better understand their own faith and respond to God's call. Thank you to all who have supported FAB, through your participation, through your prayers and through your donations. Together, we are building bridges across cultures and making Friends Across Borders.

The To-Do Checklist

By Margaret A. Cuccinello

Are you a checklist person? I am. I make checklists to help me organize my day. Last year for Christmas, my sister gave me the book, *A Thousand Places to See Before You Die* – what an awesome checklist that book is! In fact, my sister often jokes that I have a checklist to check off tasks on my checklist! Okay, so maybe I am a bit of a Type-A personality.

Well, I have a checklist for you. Very often, I hear from donors that they don't have a Will and then they give me a list of reasons why not. I don't have the time. I don't like lawyers. It's a waste of money. I don't like thinking about death. I don't have anything to give. My family will know what to do when the time comes. I'm spending it all now (my mom's favorite!)

If you do not have a Will, please consider making one. Whether your estate is large or modest, a well-written Will prepared by a qualified professional is worth the cost. If you don't know where to start, give me a call. I would be happy to send you



a **Personal Financial Affairs Booklet** that will help you organize and ease the steps necessary to put your estate plan in order.

If you do have a Will – Congratulations! Periodically, it's a good idea to run through a little checklist to make sure your Will keeps up with your life's circumstances.



✓ **Is my Will up-to-date?**

This is an important question because many people have a will tucked away someplace, a will that is so outdated as to be practically useless. In fact, an out-of-date will can actually cause more problems for your loved ones than not having a will at all. Tax laws change and the size and extend of your assets may have changed as well. Updating your will allows you to take advantage of recent tax developments and new techniques in estate planning.

✓ **Does my will represent my wishes?**

Your family situation may have changed over the years so that you no longer have dependents at home. Perhaps your estate has grown beyond your earlier estimates. Maybe you've changed your mind about some of your bequests. The more time that passes and the more changes that occur in your life, the more you should consider bringing your will "up to speed."

✓ Is my will valid?

Have you moved to a different state since creating your will? The laws may differ and your will may be invalid. Or maybe you prepared your own will and missed something of vital importance, like proper signatures. Considering the importance of your will, it makes good sense to have a reputable estate-planning attorney review your current will or even draft you a new one.

Updating your will allows you to take advantage of recent tax developments and new techniques in estate planning.

in a fireproof home safe? Or is it in a file folder someplace or even in an old shoebox under the bed? This is a precious document and should be either in a bank safety deposit box or some other place where it is protected from fire and thievery.

✓ Is my will safely stored?

Where do you keep the original copy of your will? Is it safely tucked away

✓ Does my representative know?

After selecting a safe place to store your will, be sure to tell your

Charitable IRA Rollover Set to Expire!



Unless Congress takes action soon, on December 31, 2011, a unique tax break for senior citizens will be wiped off the books. This tax law provision allows qualified taxpayers to “roll over” funds tax-free from an IRA to a charity.

The IRA Rollover was first enacted in 2006 as part of the Pension Protection Act. The provision allows individuals aged 70½ and older to donate up to \$100,000 from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to public charities without having to count the distributions as taxable income.

Since the provision was first enacted, Americans have made millions of dollars of new contributions to nonprofits — including social service programs, religious organizations, arts and cultural institutions, schools, and health care providers — that benefit people every day.

If you would like to learn more about IRA Charitable Rollovers, please call our Advancement Director, Margaret Cuccinello at 914-762-6364 ext. 215.

personal representative where to find it. Imagine the frustration and added grief by being unable to fulfill your wishes in settling your estate. Besides informing your representative about your will (and maybe even giving him or her an access key or combination), you might also, along with the will, provide a list of accounts, assets and funeral instructions.

If and when you do update your will—or maybe prepare one for the first time—I hope you will consider adding a bequest to Maryknoll Lay Missioners. We have excellent brochures that provide information on wills and basic estate planning. They are yours free for the asking.

And, yes. I have a will. I am leaving all my checklists to my sister!

Welcome MKLM Class of 2011!

Your gifts provide the funding to recruit and train our new missionaries and sustain them while they learn the language of their placement country — a necessity to make a real impact upon the communities where they serve.

Please be sure to visit **mklm.org** often so that you can read about the accomplishments of our newest class and please keep them in your prayers as they begin their mission journey.



DO YOU FEEL CALLED TO SERVE?



Service in mission requires stepping out in faith. It is a bold response to the call of the Spirit to serve the poor. We transcend barriers and are transformed for life.

- Are you a Catholic interested in living your faith by serving the poor?
- Are you at least 23 years old?
- Can you make a 3 ½ year commitment to overseas service?

If you have answered yes to these questions, then Maryknoll Lay Missioners could be for you. Through MKLM you can give back from the skills and gifts you have been blessed with, and work for sustainable change in an overseas community, in yourself, and in our global church. If you would like to learn more, or speak with a Lay Missioner, contact Debbie Northern at (800) 818-5276, ext. 123 (dnorthern@mklm.org) or Joe Regotti at ext. 122 (jregotti@mklm.org).



35 Years in Mission Reflection

by Liz Mach

As a Baby Boomer, I really do not feel any older than those first exciting months I entered into mission with the Maryknoll Lay Missioners 35 years ago. As I look around and see others I went out to Africa with and they are now grandmothers, I wonder how all this time as passed. How did the choices I made after college to use my nursing skills in Tanzania bring me this far and why me? The ideals and dreams of those early years are what I continue to live out today.

I was a fortunate one. The dreams I had of making a difference, living



in Africa (just like some of those National Geographic pictures we all remember) has been my life. And the ups and downs and the bumps in the road have been there too. The choices I made so long ago brought me to war in Southern Sudan and the AIDS Pandemic in Tanzania. It has introduced me to Mary Rashidi-mother, grandmother and incredible nurse. It has let me into the life of Stella, her biological children Sofia and Cecilia, her brother's children Paulo and John and the HIV virus that affects so many in her family. Winifrida lives across a dusty road from me with her six children in a mud hut and struggles for food each day. But she is the first one at my gate when the rain is torrentially falling and washing through my yard and house and she helps me sandbag and



clean out the mud with her boys. I am blessed to share life with these folks.

Have I really been in Africa this long? If you had asked me those many moons ago what my plan was I would have told you one contract and then I head home to Minnesota for marriage, children and just get on with my life. My plan versus God's plan. What a joke-we think we have it all together and set out for our selves and then God comes along with a gentle laugh and a new paintbrush stroke that changes our direction and focus. And the result of that stroke of paint left me still in Africa and celebrating 35 years in mission. I am blessed that God's plan was the better canvas for me.

It has not all been easy. We all have bumps in the road, the black paint on our canvas of life. Sudan was a difficult time-war, bombings, ambush and so many people who needed medical care. The strength comes in moving through these darkened times. For me, that movement has come through prayer and discernment. God, where do you want me? What do you want from me? Those questions are not the first ones I ask (I am usually too caught up in the pain) but they eventually work their way to the forefront and the sunshine comes.

God, where do you want me?
What do you want from me?

Prayer is the bottom line. I turn myself over and let go. How many times does one say in ones life "Let go and let God"it is one of my mantra's that I live by daily. It is



when I can let go and let God into my decisions that I move forward. That canvas also has a tremendous amount of sunshine and bright colors. Our HIV positive children who have a ready smile which paints

the day a bright yellow as they show up at our gate to play. John thinks I should have a giraffe in our yard so he can visit it when he comes (this was after a trip into the Serengeti with them). Wouldn't I just love that too? Michael shows up just to water my plants in the yard or to spend some time planting sunflowers. Sr. Lucy comes by to invite me to come down to her hostel and play netball with the girls. It's a neighborhood and we are blessed with so many folks who come by.

Maryknoll Lay Missioners have offered me the opportunity to be on this canvas of mission. When we started 36 years ago no one thought

of this as a calling for laity to be in long term mission. Expectations were for 3 -6 years and then we come home and get back into the "normal" life here in the USA. For some of us, there was another call. I am grateful that Maryknoll Lay Missioners kept letting us push that edge out farther and farther until we have shown that the laity is called to long term mission. We do have a call to answer. God's paintbrush has shown us this pathway.

Life in Africa and mission for 35 years. Not my plan, God's plan and paintbrush. And I am the one who has been painted and blessed.

YOUR WILL, YOUR LEGACY

"The one who is generous will be blessed."

– Proverbs 22:9

YOU can be generous today and for generations to come.

Help SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS and work for peace and justice by including MKLM in your WILL.

To receive a FREE INFORMATION package that answers questions regarding the preparation of a WILL, call 1.800.867.2980.



Friends Across Borders



Friends Across Borders is Maryknoll Lay Missioners's mission awareness program. We invite you to deepen and enrich your understanding of mission by joining us on an exciting mission trip.

You will have the opportunity to experience what you could never discover in travel brochures, films, or books. You will experience what life is really like in communities where MKLM missionaries are living out their faith, and working for, and with, the local people.

We look forward to hearing from you and accompanying you on an experience that will change and enrich your life.

Upcoming Mission Awareness Trips

- **CAMBODIA**
February 24 – March 9, 2012
- **TANZANIA**
March 16 – 31, 2012
- **BOLIVIA**
Bolivia – March 30 – April 13, 2012
- **EL SALVADOR**
El Salvador, June 15-30, 2012
- **KENYA**
Kenya – June 22 – July 6, 2012
- **BRAZIL**
Brazil – October 19 – November 2, 2012

Contact Us Today:

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Matching Gift Opportunity

We have very exciting news to share. A very generous donor has offered to match every gift made before the end of 2011, up to \$100,000!

With your support, Maryknoll Lay Missioners continues to place missionaries in some of the world's poorest communities, applying their skills and knowledge to respond to the basic needs of our brothers and sisters in often very difficult situations. This month, we celebrate the sending of 12 new missionaries into mission, making a total of 63 missionaries in 7 countries sustained by your financial contributions to MKLM.



Please make a gift before midnight on December 31st and your gift will go twice as far. Please be generous, and please share this opportunity with your friends and family.

To speak with someone in our Advancement Department, or to make a gift by phone, call 1-800-867-2980. To make a gift on-line visit our website at **www.mkmlm.org**.

Thank you for helping the world's poor through Maryknoll Lay Missioners. Your encouragement, prayers and financial support have enabled our organization to gain strength as we, the laity of the US Catholic Church, carry a greater role in overseas mission outreach.

May God bless you and those you love this Christmas.