

# VOC

Voices Of Compassion



maryknoll lay  
missioners

**A TIME TO PLANT...**



**A TIME TO HEAL...**





## PLANTING



## A LAY MISSIONER'S JOURNEY



## INTRODUCING MARJ HUMPHREY



## A FAMILY IN MISSION



## HEALING



## MKLM CLASS OF 2016



## TRANSFORMATION IN CAMBODIA

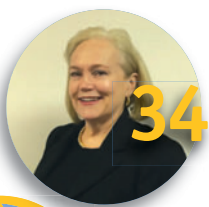


## REFLECTIONS



## BRIDGING CULTURES

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



## PARTNERS IN MISSION

Cover photo: Top, Lay Missioner Peg Vamosy (2nd from left) picking coffee beans with her neighbors in El Salvador

Photo credit: Courtesy of Peg Vamosy

Bottom, Lay Missioner Juan Gomez with Alejandra (left) and her friend in El Salvador

Photo credit: Jacqueline Flores



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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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## MKLM Mission Statement

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

## PLEASE REMEMBER

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

We need your support!

**Donor Care Manager  
Richard Gatjens**

P: 914-236-3449

Email: [rgatjens@mkmlm.org](mailto:rgatjens@mkmlm.org)

**Director of Mission Advancement  
D. Susan Wallace**

P: 914-236-3488

Email: [swallace@mkmlm.org](mailto:swallace@mkmlm.org)





# A TIME OF HOPE

## Dear Friends,

It is my privilege to greet you again as Executive Director of Maryknoll Lay Missioners (MKLM). The MKLM Board of Directors asked me to serve in this capacity while they conduct a national search for a new Executive Director. I am committed to our mission and strongly believe Maryknoll Lay Missioners plays an important role in cross-cultural service to our brothers and sisters throughout the world and in fulfilling the church's mission.

In December of 2016, MKLM was blessed to send forth eight new Lay Missioners who completed their orientation on our campus in Ossining, New York. Our faith-filled mis-

sioners bring a renewed spirit to our mission and to those they serve in Bolivia, Brazil, El Salvador and Tanzania. Through the missionaries' faith and desire to build a better world, they represent Jesus' gospel message of hope and love and are an inspiration to all of us.

Many people in our world face seemingly insurmountable challenges and live with little to no hope. One of the greatest mission gifts is creating a "culture of hope" by planting and cultivating the

seeds of faith and love. It is amazing what one person can accomplish in a few years or, in some cases, a lifetime. By touching a life and bringing hope to a doorstep, one's world can truly be changed whether the person is the giver or the gifted.

Last year I had the honor of visiting our Lay Missioners and the people they serve in Bolivia. I witnessed many examples of our missionaries enhancing the lives of children, adults and seniors. One example was in Cochabamba, where Minh Nguyen brought the gospel message of hope by teaching new skills to imprisoned women. I saw the joy of children when Caitlin Reichelderfer attended to their health needs, and taught and played with them. In the men's prison, Joe Loney offered legal services and spiritual advice and opened doors literally and spiritually to help men see a bright side in their



**The MKLM Leadership Team**  
**Joanne Blaney, Sam Stanton, Marj Humphrey**

*Photo credit: Bill Bachmann*



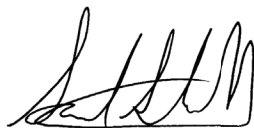
## *"We plant the seeds that one day will grow"*

future. Hope is a cornerstone of our faith and allows each of us to see ourselves as members of God's family and builders of God's kingdom here on earth.

With the constant struggles our world faces, I often turn to a healing reflection some call the "Romero Prayer." It was written by Bishop Ken Untener in honor of martyred Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador. These precious words inspire me when I am challenged because they put things in perspective and allow me to focus on the most important tasks at hand. I hope his message gives you hope in your moments of need.

Many blessings and much gratitude to each of you for making our lay ministries possible. You truly are our Partners in Mission. You are the Healers. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

In the mission of Jesus,



Sam Stanton  
Executive Director

**Sam gets creative  
with lay missionary  
Hang Tran and her  
students in Cambodia,  
March 2017**

*Photo credit:  
Cecilia Espinoza*



### **Archbishop Oscar Romero Prayer: A Step Along the Way**

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.  
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.  
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.  
No statement says all that could be said.  
No prayer fully expresses our faith.  
No confession brings perfection.  
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.  
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.  
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.  
This is what we are about.  
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.  
We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.  
We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.

# A TIME TO PLANT...

by Peg Vamosy  
Maryknoll Lay Missioner,  
El Salvador

After eight years as a Maryknoll Lay Missioner, with the last four of them in El Salvador, I still love my work! I am in a rural Catholic parish and support the social ministries, which include health, human rights, skills and leadership training, agriculture and the environment. My focus is mainly on the last two. Life here is rather precarious with threats of violence, militarization, injustice, corruption, poverty and environmental

At the close of last year, a troupe of “shepherds” sometimes accompanied the after Christmas *pasadas*. They went to homes dancing and performing a colorful show where gifts were offered to the Christ Child with rhymed couplets that they recited. The celebrations went on nearly every night until mid-January. At the end of January we had another festival in honor of the Niño de Atocha (Holy Child)...and so on throughout the year! Most of these celebrations involve processions (the Salvadoran version of a parade) and are very much community affairs. I think they go a long way to help keep the community united and sane in the face of many difficulties.

Of course, **in addition to celebrating, there is plenty of work to do.**

I continue to accompany a group of families that promotes food security and self-sufficiency by using sustainable (i.e. organic) agricultural practices. We grow home gardens and raise small animals such as chickens, turkeys, pigs, rabbits and tilapia fish. We all work together on projects while practicing cooperation and developing leadership skills. Julia, a woman in the group who has Parkinson’s disease, gave us a field to use. To the surprise of many, we raised an entirely organic corn crop. The harvested grain will be used to make a homemade feed ration for the small animals.

I also work with our parish environmental ministry to increase awareness of global



**Peg (left) and her agricultural group at a parish social ministry fair**

*Photo credit: Marj Humphrey*

degradation. Anything we can do to strengthen families, educate youth, create opportunities and develop the local economy, while protecting the fragile environment, helps promote peace and justice. It means we celebrate life to the fullest!



**Felícita and Adrián with their sow and 14 new piglets less than a day old**

*Photo credit: Peg Vámosy*

climate change, promote reforestation by raising tree seedlings in recycled sugar and rice bags, and conduct a town-wide clean-up of pesticide containers on Earth Day (Apr. 22). We are repeating that again this year since we haven't convinced everyone to cease their use of pesticides. Too often those containers are left on the ground in the fields or near the streams where the contents are mixed into backpack sprayers and this often causes pesticides to get IN the streams. We promote reducing waste, reusing containers (other than those of pesticides!) and recycling. The pope's encyclical on the *Care for our Common Home* has been a great support, and we explain parts of it before Masses. People are becoming more aware and interested in the environment. Although it is discouraging to see some people burning crop residues, throwing trash out windows, and still using plastic bags for their already wrapped purchases, I've seen some important steps moving forward. At the *pasadas* celebration at Francisca's home, rather than using the usual Styrofoam disposable items, the tamales were served on plates and coffee in cups that were to be washed. Francisca, a member of the agricultural ministry

group, explained to everyone that she did not want to pollute the environment anymore with all that trash!

The work to create a more just and compassionate world continues every day in small actions, not unlike planting seeds and watering them. Accompanying the Salvadoran people on their journey toward a better future is why I'm here. I trust that my sharing in the joys, sorrows and challenges of ordinary daily life helps to give people dignity and hope in a place where many suffer from economic problems and gang violence. I'm sure that you find many opportunities to bring hope and joy to those in your own corner of the world! May all our efforts be fruitful, healing and blessed throughout the coming years!

**Peg (center), with a parishioner and a sanitation worker, loading pesticide containers on Earth Day for town-wide cleanup**

*Photo credit: Courtesy of Peg Vámosy*





# A Lay Missioner's Journey

## From Asia to Africa to South America

by John O'Donoghue  
Maryknoll Lay Missioner, Bolivia

I first heard stories of mission and faraway places from Irish missionaries when I was about ten years old and a primary school student in Ireland. These stories shared by Irish priests spoke about places unknown to me and cultures that sounded fascinating. I think my mission journey began back then, when this seed of mission was planted. I didn't know it at the time.

I imagined what it would be like to work overseas in some of the poorest countries of the world. When I was 29, I summoned up the courage to join the Peace Corps and was sent to Lesotho, in southern Africa. In Lesotho, I began to learn about the poor and marginalized peoples of the world and their daily struggle to exist.

When I was 40, I wrote to Mother Teresa of Calcutta expressing my interest in visiting ministries of the Missionaries of Charity in India. I did know that Pope



**Mother Teresa and John in Calcutta in 1993**

*Photo credit: Christina Hansen*

+LDM MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY  
20/A, A. J. C. Bose Road,  
Calcutta - 700016, India

Dear John O'Donoghue,

Thank you for your letter and the gift of the books

I thank God for all the joy you shared and the love you gave to Jesus in the poor in our homes in Calcutta. It is not how much we do that is pleasing to God, but how much we love we put into the doing. May Jesus bless you, and keep you, be always in you so that you may continue to be His love and light in the world. Be assured of my prayers for you.

God bless you.

*Mu Teresa ne*

**John's thank you note from Mother Teresa**

*Photo credit: John O'Donoghue*

John Paul II and Mother Teresa were great friends. With my letter, I sent a copy of a recently published *Time* magazine, which had a cover story on Pope John Paul II. On the inside corner of the front cover, Mother Teresa had written a short, beautiful prayer-poem in reference to her friend Pope John Paul, ***"Ever sustained by a profound faith/nourished by unceasing prayer/fearless in unshakeable hope/deeply in love with God."***

I learned long ago that if you sit waiting for a letter or a phone call to change your life, it isn't going to happen, and that the best helping hand is at the end of your arm! Having an adventurous spirit, I decided to go to India. In Calcutta, I learned a great deal more about destitute people. Mother Teresa gave me what she jokingly called her business card. On it was written this prayer, ***"The fruit of silence is prayer/the fruit of prayer is faith/***

***the fruit of faith is love/the fruit of love is service/and the fruit of service is peace.*** I remember that prayer to this very day. She was also fond of saying, ***"It is not what you do, or how much of what you do that is pleasing to God, but the love you put into the doing."*** I have a note from her, which I received much later, with those words written in it. She thanked me for the gifts of the *Time* magazine, the book by Pope John Paul II, and for my work in Khaligat, one of her homes for dying people in Calcutta.

I joined Maryknoll Lay Missioners years later. I was 53 at the time. My first assignment with them was in East Timor, a very beautiful, but violent country. During my time there, the United Nations and the Australian military were working with the people to establish peace. Before they left East Timor, the

Indonesian occupiers virtually burned the country to the ground. It would take years to re-build.

In East Timor, I worked in the St. Francis of Assisi workshop, where we made hand-powered tricycles, wheelchairs and specialized shoes for disabled people. I will never forget the time when Maryknoll Lay Missioner Peg Vamosy and I delivered two of these tricycles to Suai, on the coastal region of East Timor. It was a day-long journey through difficult terrain, but when we arrived we were greeted by two hundred or so villagers. They were so excited to see these new tricycles and to welcome home their two returning disabled villagers who had just received training at our tricycle workshop. Not long after that, the East Timor government gave us a significant grant to renovate the



A tricycle, made by disabled staff at the St. Francis of Assisi workshop in East Timor, gets a workout from Paulo, who suffered a serious spinal injury after falling from a coconut tree

Photo credit: Peg Vamosy

St. Francis of Assisi workshop. I thought that would never happen, but perseverance, prayer and efforts of the people paid off.

After East Timor, I worked in Kenya for five years with income generation groups. These groups did their own savings and lending, and functioned like mini-banks, a microfinance variation. The profits from the projects provide the workers with enough money to pay annual school fees and give their children a better education. With the money they borrowed, several women started small businesses of their own.

Presently, I am working in Bolivia, in an HIV/AIDS shelter that is run by Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. I thought it ironic, that after 23 years, I would end up working through MKLM with the Missionaries of Charity again. Those who are able help with daily tasks such as preparation and cooking of food, as well as



**At St. Joseph Parish in Kenya, John receives a chicken from the chairman of one of the men's groups**

*Photo credit: Pauline Ngina*



**In Bolivia, John assists an AIDS patient with his walking exercises**

*Photo credit: Ryan Thibert*

maintenance of the gardens and the house. I listen, visit and accompany the patients in their daily lives. I work to keep them physically, mentally and spiritually active. As part of our daily routine, we also play cards, chess, checkers and other games. The patients are for the most part abandoned and have very few visitors because HIV/AIDS still has a terrible stigma attached to it in Bolivia. In a very small, but important way, I am a part of the healing process.

I have been with Maryknoll Lay Missioners for over ten years, a journey that has taken me from Asia, to Africa and to South America. I have had the privilege of working with wonderful Maryknoll Priests, Brothers, Sisters and Lay Missioners who have helped me on my mission journey. The needs of the poor and marginalized are even greater today, and there is still so much more work to be done...



# Introducing Marj Humphrey, Director of Missions

In 2016, Marj Humphrey was appointed Maryknoll Lay Missioners' (MKLM) Director of Missions to oversee our Lay Missioners and their ministries around the world. She works closely with the overseas Regional Directors, the Mission Services Director and the U.S. Operations team to achieve organizational goals and ensure that our missioners have the support and resources they need to be in mission and minister to those they serve.

Marj, a member of the MKLM Leadership Team, says, *"After 29 years of being part of the Maryknoll mission community, particularly as a Maryknoll Lay Missioner, I am honored and humbled to serve as Director of Missions. I pray that I can help promote laity in mission, while fostering peace, justice, compassion, dignity and love among people of other cultures in our broken world."*

Marj is originally from Nampa, ID, and graduated from Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA, with a Bachelor's Degree in Religious Studies and Communications. She completed a Master's Degree in



Education and taught Religion and Journalism at Gonzaga Preparatory School and coordinated the student community service program. In 1978, she headed to New York City to join the Catholic Worker Movement, where she had the privilege to know and be in commu-

nity with Dorothy Day, its foundress. In 1986, Marj attained a Physician Assistant degree and worked at a homeless people's clinic in Bellevue Hospital in New York City.



**Attending to a Kenyan child  
with shingles in 2003**

*Photo credit: Courtesy of Marj Humphrey  
Top Photo credit: Bill Bachmann*



**Marj (middle row, 2nd from left) with Maryknoll Lay Missioners in El Salvador in 2016**

*Photo credit: Courtesy of Peg Vamosy*

Marj recalls, *"I'd heard about Maryknoll's opportunity for lay people to serve in overseas mission in 1979 through three remarkable Maryknoll Sisters, who served near The Catholic Worker in the impoverished, often-violent "Avenue C" neighborhood on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Sister Mercy, Maryknoll Sisters' first doctor, had served, among other places, in Korea during the war. Years later, I attended her funeral, and reflected on her total commitment to the world's neediest people and the way she had responded to war with love and compassion for its most vulnerable victims. I had thought about joining MKLM for a couple of years, but on that day I knew it was time to stop procrastinating and do something about it! Afterwards, I walked over to the lay mission office and asked for an application."* Marj joined Maryknoll Lay Missioners in 1987 and initially served in Kenya. In 1991, she became the Africa Area Coordinator, and in 1994 joined other Maryknoll Lay Missioners on a medical team in Camps for Displaced Persons in South Sudan.

In 2000, Marj served as a medical consultant and practitioner in the Kitale, Kenya AIDS Program and subsequently became the Kenya/Zimbabwe Regional Coordinator. She transitioned out of MKLM contracted membership in 2007 to care for her elderly parents in Nampa, ID, and then Spokane, WA, where she worked as a clinical Physician Assistant. From 2007 to 2016, Marj served on the MKLM Board of Directors. In 2012, she was honored by her alma mater, Gonzaga University, with the DeSmet Medal for Christian Service (Gonzaga's highest honor) and gave the Commencement Address to the graduate students.



**Giving the Commencement Address at Gonzaga University in 2012**

*Photo credit: Courtesy of Gonzaga University*

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Maryknoll, NY 10545-0307



# “Mission is about working with God”

## A Family in Mission



**Kathy, Maya and Flávio**  
Photo credit: Lindsay Doucette

### **Kathy Bond, Flávio José Rocha and their daughter Maya Rocha Bond**

are a Maryknoll Lay Missioner family living in São Paulo, Brazil, where they have served the poor and underprivileged for the last seven years.

*“Searching to combine social work and activism in a faith community led me to Maryknoll Lay Missioners,” shares Kathy, who has been a lay missioner since 1993. “I am very grateful for the opportunity to be in mission. My spirituality is nourished by ever-widening circles of people and cultures, which are interwoven with stories of pain, transformation and God’s abundant love.”*

In partnership with the Archdiocesan prison ministry and the Institute for Land, Work and Citizenship (ITTC), Kathy facilitates support circles for incarcerated women focusing on mental and physical

health. There are about 15,000 women in São Paulo’s state prison system, representing almost 40% of the country’s female prison population! Kathy works at three women’s prisons in São Paulo, which like most prisons in Brazil suffer from overcrowding, human rights abuses and over-extended judicial processes. Kathy teaches relaxation techniques – including yoga, meditation and body work – to help prisoners relieve stress, build self-esteem and regain positive attitudes. She works on communication skills and addresses re-entry issues, mental readiness, and government and private program support networks.

Kathy recently shared, *“As I was passing through a small park, I ran into Grace, a young woman from the Philippines. I*



**2003 article about Flávio and Kathy in the Battle Creek Enquirer**

Photo credit: Courtesy of Willard Library in Battle Creek, MI



**Kathy facilitating  
a health course at a  
women's center**

*Photo credit: Viviane Balbuglio*

*accompanied her last year when she was in prison. Grace faithfully attended the health issues workshops I taught. Upon recognizing me, she gave me a big hug and thanked me for visiting her during very difficult moments of being in prison in a foreign country. For me, one of the hardest things is that I often don't know what happens to the women after they get out of prison. Sometimes we don't have the chance to say good-bye, so "bumping into" Grace made my afternoon. I was happy to hear that she was working two jobs and had a safe place to live. Prison ministry is often like planting seeds without ever seeing the fruits. This made my encounter with Grace extra special."*

Kathy's prison ministry also helps women who have babies in prison. She co-facilitates moms and newborns' health courses that promote breast-feeding, care of newborns and the prevention and treatment of

post-partum depression. She teaches the Shantala Baby Massage method to promote maternal bonding and motor skill development in the baby. This simple technique can easily be practiced by the women in their cells. "I am grateful for the MKLM donors' generosity, which allowed me to take a professional qualification course on the Shantala method," comments Kathy. "It has been such a big hit with the women that when our team enters the maternity ward the first mom who sees us usually shouts, 'Shantala,' which is the announcement that our course is about to begin."

Kathy assists the mothers in creating a Memories and Milestones Book and encourages them to write letters to their babies and future caretakers. The prison system's policy allows babies to only remain with their mothers for a 6-8 month period. Then they are separated if the



Baby's footprints for a  
mother's Memories and  
Milestones Book

Photo credit: Kathleen Bond



mother has not finished her sentence. Completing this book is important for the mothers in facing the difficult moment when their babies leave them. At the end of each course, an evaluation is completed by all the participants. One woman, who was released with her son a month after the course finished, shared, *"I am feeling happy to have my son with me, but also sad that he is in a prison. I do hope to leave here with him and put into practice and share with other women everything that I learned in the course."*

Kathy and her team partner with Church groups, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and public defenders to advocate for prison reform, especially to allow women with young children to serve alternative sentences to jail time (part of the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders).

## **Before Flávio became a Maryknoll Lay Missioner in 2003,**

he was active in campus ministry and ecological issues. Flávio's background in education and creation spirituality contributes to his MKLM ministries. *"After many years of studying and working on environmental issues, I welcomed Pope Francis' compelling encyclical Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home,"* shares Flávio. *"One of my most satisfying early ministries was facilitating youth environmental education workshops in rural areas."* Flávio still keeps a keen eye on ecological issues, including research and writing on the privatization of water in Brazil.

A native of Brazil, Flávio works at CAMI, which is an NGO serving immigrants. He leads a *Theater of the Oppressed* group for youth and assists in its newspaper production. This "theater education" is an advocacy-training program that offers training for NGO educators and Church pastoral groups. He discovered that



theater is a good way to initiate discussions about social issues and conflicts. The participants role-play topics of injustice and poverty relevant to their own lives. Non-violent solutions are suggested to solve social problems in creative ways.

Flávio uses this theater method with women in prison. He hopes the workshops create space to help the women prepare for leaving prison. Flávio relates, *"We have women who have been in prison for years. There are women from other countries. One example is Z., an African woman, who participates because she wants to learn more about theater techniques for community organizing in her country. When we finish the workshops, I ask the participants to do a short reflection. The women often say the best thing about our time together is they forget that they are in prison because they have fun being together and sharing. At that moment, we are a group learning together in spite of the difficulties that exist."*

Maya, Kathy and Flávio's adolescent daughter, understands that, *"Mission is about working with God"* and enjoys learning firsthand about a variety of cultures and spiritual expressions. Maya likes growing up bi-lingual and knowing that other Maryknoll Missioners, of all ages, come from many places around the world and are united as a mission community.

Daily living in São Paulo has its perils and difficulties. Although a mission family faces challenges like managing ministry schedules and being far from extended families, Kathy and Flávio definitely encourage any family, who feels a calling, to accept this call and head out to serve with open hearts and few expectations. After many years in mission, their mantra remains, *"Be open to what life brings!"* and, *"Live your faith to help create a more just and compassionate world."*



Flávio leading a Christmas play at a Franciscan community center

Photo credit: Kathleen Bond



# We Are All God's Children

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









# A Time to Heal...

by Juan Gomez

Maryknoll Lay Missioner, El Salvador

Alejandra (top row, far right) with friends displaying their creativity

Photo credit: Juan Gomez



Exactly one year ago, I found my little friend Alejandra rather sad and discouraged in the back of the church. In the meantime, all the other children of the catechesis program ran and played joyfully around the building. Trying not to be too obvious with my interest regarding her mood, I approached her and we began to talk. Conversation eventually led us to the

reason for her sadness ... *"I have wanted to make my First Communion for two years, and today I failed the exam for the second time."* I tried my best to cheer her up a bit. We came to the mutual agreement that next year, the third one, she would finally be able to receive her First Communion.

At the beginning of the year, she began attending the catechism classes again, and I started actively accompanying her. As time passed, I continued to periodically review the material with Alejandra, and was assured that her progress in catechesis was going well.

A while ago, to show my support, I appeared unannounced at her catechetical class. To my amazement, I learned Alejandra had stopped attending the classes a month earlier. How could it be

home visits, this one seemed to be an exception and I left discouraged.

The next week she again did not attend her classes. I talked with other people close to her, including her catechist, to find out more. Over and over I heard of her parents' lack of interest and support, which stemmed from other concerns. Delving deeper into the conversations led to what seemed the key point: There was no First Communion dress and shoes -- and no money to buy them. To Alejandra,



Juan and his students visit the Tin Marin interactive museum

*Photo credit: Maria Gomez*

that our reviews continued as usual, yet she had not mentioned anything to me?

I decided to go to her home for a visit. I greeted her father and let him know the situation. I hoped that he was not aware of it and that's why he had not done anything about it. His response to me placed all guilt on Alejandra, who was present. This discouraged her even further. I tried to comfort her and offered encouragement that she continue with her preparation. Although time in mission and my community have taught me that beautiful things happen with personal

it made no sense to continue with the preparation classes.

Who among us has had to deal with such a problem at this young age? Do we stop to think how grateful we should be to simply have our required clothing? Alejandra is a brave girl. She has learned to cook for her entire family at age eight and, in order to do this, goes to the forest by herself to get the firewood. At her young age, she washes her own clothes and irons her school uniform. She has many other family obligations. In short, she is perhaps the most courageous,

determined and joyful child I know. But there are simply things in life that break our spirit, no matter how strong and determined that spirit is.

Talking with my family and reviewing my Maryknoll Lay Missioner "Ministry Account," where funds go to support my projects and Maryknoll Lay Missioners, we decided to financially support this cause! When I confirmed with Alejandra that lack of funds was actually the main obstacle, her face lit up completely in an unimaginable and beautiful way!

She resumed her catechism attendance, and our reviews were intensified to make up for the lost time. The night before the exam, we stayed up late studying. Two weeks later, she came running to me with the great news that she had passed and even received a perfect 10 on the exam!

**On December 10<sup>th</sup>,  
Alejandra, along with  
our company,  
celebrated her  
First Communion!**

I leave space and an invitation for all to reflect and draw personal lessons from this true mission story. At the same time, I share two that are important to me. First, it is a strengthening of my knowledge that

**Alejandra Makes Her  
First Communion**

*Photo credit: Juan Gomez*

**I am not alone in mission. Instead, we are an entire mission network of family and friends who help to make possible this beautiful dream of accompaniment and service to those who need it most.**

Secondly, the importance of accompaniment and friendship has been reaffirmed for me. This experience taught me that even the smallest amount of financial support, given at the right moment, can have a profound impact on the people I serve and *Love*.





# The MKLM Class of 2016

## OBSERVATIONS



(Top row) George, Anne, Becca, Tim, Filo, Maelle, Marcelo, Kathleen, Cecilia  
(Bottom row) Louisa, Susanna, Annie

### The Class began its mission service in January 2017

#### Kathleen Maynard, Marcelo Maiorano and daughters Cecilia and Maelle (Brazil)

"A little four-year-old girl from Angola told me she had four siblings - some here, some in Africa. Most children at the table reported similar situations, three or four siblings spread across continents. I thought in that moment of my daughters - together. Gratitude welled up inside me. I thought of my younger daughter, probably sitting with a Brazilian woman, and I felt grateful for this exchange, for bridges forming between cultures, for the humanity of the moment."

#### Tim Ross (El Salvador)

"Sure, memorize words in language school all day if you want, study the 'expert difficulty' jigsaw puzzle that is grammar, and yet listen in dismay as someone takes that precise conception of language and turns it into subtle syllable soup seasoned with slang, spoken at medium volume in a bus without a muffler!"

#### Becca Muder (Brazil)

"I have been astonished by the ease with which I have entered into this liminal space - a sacred time between the familiar and completely unknown...My time in mission is already bringing me closer to the person God created me to be and aches for me to become - a woman joyfully attentive to all that the present moment holds, confident that she is being led exactly where she is meant to be."

#### Filo Siles (Bolivia)

"I am using my talents to serve the poor and following the path that God shines for me. I am serving the children with reading difficulties and my special blessing is that my children, Pauline and Ben, help me."

#### Anne Berry, George Stablein and daughters Susanna and Louisa (Tanzania)

"George agreed to be the first of the two of us to learn to drive here, with, of course, the steering wheel on the other side of the vehicle, dodging the people, motorcycles (piki pikis), goats, van/buses (dala dalas), etc., while avoiding the rocks and ruts in the dirt roads. The other day he thought he was driving fast, and then realized he was only going 20 mph!"

#### Annie Burns (Bolivia)

"Each day I am taken aback by the patience of my Spanish teachers, the generosity of my Bolivian host family, the guidance of passersby who help me get to my destination, the creativity and depth of the missionary community and so many others.... I will be glad for the day when my Spanish is sufficient to express, at least in part, my gratitude for all of the graces of these early days in Bolivia."

# Transformation in Cambodia

by Jaynie Prior

## ***MKLM Friends Across Borders*** **Participant**

Arriving in Phnom Penh at night was an overwhelming sensory experience of intense humidity, streets still crowded with tuk-tuks (three-wheeled motorized taxis), bicycles, cars, trucks and pedestrians, sounds of an unfamiliar language and signs in an alphabet that looked like decorative scrollwork. At that moment I couldn't have imagined how attached I would feel to the place, the people and the culture after a visit of ten short days.

Throughout our stay, the *Friends Across Borders* (FAB) group visited a number of programs where Maryknoll Lay Missioners work. Each is an amazing response to the needs of the particular population they serve. The Mental Health Project provides a number of services. Those include sending outreach teams into surrounding communities to identify and treat the most severe cases. The staff has incredibly big hearts and loves those they serve, many of whom have been ostracized by their communities. The Deaf Development Program has had a foundational role in serving the deaf community. Staff and volunteers facilitated the development of Cambodian sign language, provide education and job training, build "community" and do extensive outreach into the provinces. When we visited, some

participants told their stories in Cambodian sign language, which was interpreted by multi-lingual staff for us.

The presenters described heart-wrenching stories of abuse and neglect because of their inability to communicate.

They shared transformative moments such as when they realized the other students in the classroom were deaf, as well. They had never before encountered others who had this same disability.

Additional Maryknoll Lay Missioner programs address

issues resulting from a society that has been gutted of its most educated people. Also, the country is heavily burdened by the poverty of political corruption. Some Maryknoll Lay Missioner programs work to alleviate sex trafficking. Others address the lack of professors in higher education. We visited a resettlement community, where a Maryknoll program provides many services to entire communities who were forcibly evicted from their land. A Maryknoll community Health and Education project helps an extremely vulnerable population, many of whom are Vietnamese Cambodians. In Cambodia, they are an ethnic minority who have experienced centuries of discrimination



Jaynie on her last day  
in Cambodia

Photo credit:  
Kieran O'Dowd



**Boat Homes of the Vietnamese Cambodians**

*Photo credit: Jaynie Prior*

and violence. They often live in camps on the banks of the Tonlé Sap Lake and Mekong River or in their long, low boats on the water. The disparity between their living conditions and the backdrop of modern high-rise hotels is striking. Along with the rest of the population, they did not escape the genocide of the Khmer Rouge.

Our visit to the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Cheung Ek Killing Fields mass grave sites is difficult to describe. Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge killed nearly a quarter of the population of their country. Much of the killing was done by individuals, including child soldiers, who were coerced into participation when their own lives were threatened. After touring the most notorious Khmer Rouge prison, we saw two men, of the handful who survived their incarceration, signing books. Chum Mey, one of the survivors, wrote in his book, *"How can I say I would have behaved differently? Would I have had the strength to refuse to kill, if the penalty was my own death?"* We didn't

speaking each other's language, which was irrelevant. I had no words.

We visited the interfaith Metta Karuna Reflection and Peace Center. This is a beautiful place with inviting meditation opportunities. One statue that impacted me related to the Biblical story of the washing of the feet, except the statue of the Cambodian has only one foot. Cambodia is one of the most landmine affected countries in the world with landmines laid by the Khmer Rouge as well as the Vietnamese. Today there are over 25,000 amputees. There is a chapel at Metta Karuna that has a beautiful hand carved wooden altar. It was made and donated by a former Khmer Rouge soldier, who hoped for some reparation for his role in the genocide.

During our daily shared prayer and meditation times, our group tried to connect the disparate parts, the narratives of individual and cultural trauma, with the hope and inspirational drive for healing and restoration that we saw. At this intersection is where we found the transformational work of the Maryknoll Lay Missioners in Cambodia.



**The Friends Across Borders group with the Deaf Development Program participants**

*Photo credit: Fr. Charlie Dittmeier*





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- **CHILE - Notre Dame - Marquette**  
**July 9 – 25, 2017**

Deadline for signups: May 9, 2017

- **TANZANIA - JustFaith Ministries**  
**August 4 – 13, 2017**

Deadline for signups: June 4, 2017

- **BOLIVIA**  
**August 11 – 20, 2017**

Deadline for signups: June 11, 2017

- **CAMBODIA**  
**August 11 – 20, 2017**

Deadline for signups: June 11, 2017

- **CHILE - Notre Dame - Marquette**  
**February 9 – 25, 2018**

Deadline for signups: October 9, 2017

- **CAMBODIA**  
**February 23 – March 4, 2018**

Deadline for signups: October 23, 2017

- **TANZANIA**  
**August 17 – 26, 2018**

Deadline for signups: April 17, 2018



## CONTACT US TODAY:

**CECILIA ESPINOZA**

Maryknoll Lay Missioners  
Friends Across Borders Manager  
P.O. Box 307  
Maryknoll, NY 10545-0307

Phone: 914-236-3474

FAX: 914-762-7362

[friendsacrossborders@mklm.org](mailto:friendsacrossborders@mklm.org)

[www.friendsacrossborders.org](http://www.friendsacrossborders.org)

# Reflections

## Excerpts from Susan Nagele's Blog Maryknoll Lay Missioner, Kenya

The BBC announced four major good things that happened in 2016. Upon reflection, I decided from my perspective, as a Maryknoll Lay Missioner/doctor in Kenya, there were many more positive events that occurred during the past year. So here are eleven hopeful signs from my point of view!

**1.** They finally finished paving Taveta Road, which we navigate to get to two of our clinics. It used to take us five to six hours to drive sixty miles. Now it takes two!



(Left) Old Road to Taveta in 2013  
(Right) New Road to Taveta in 2017

*Photo credit: Susan Nagele*

**2.** A new Ebola vaccine will be ready for production in 2018. It was given to 6,000 people and no one developed Ebola!

**3.** For the first time in my 13 years in Kenya, I saw local priests wash the feet of women and children on Holy Thursday.

**4.** Guinea Worm is almost eradicated from the world!

**5.** Mr. Salah Sabdow Farah, the deputy headmaster at the primary school in Mandera, was on a bus attacked by Al-Shabaab terrorists in northern

Kenya. They wanted to kill the Christians and he died protecting them.

**6.** The presidential election in the U.S. was basically free, fair and peaceful. Currently, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Gambia have people dying every day for the sake of the democratic process.

I save my most precious memories for the work that was done with pastoral workers in St. Patrick Parish in Bangladesh, an informal settlement (slum) in Mombasa, Kenya. These include Health Workers, Justice and Peace Workers, and the Parish Priests.

**7.** A child was protected from incestuous uncles and is back in school and home with her 80-year-old grandmother.



Susan examining a patient at a Bamba clinic.

*Photo credit: Judy Walter*

**8.** Salome had ulcers on her legs for 20 years. They are now almost completely healed!

**9.** Asha, a 17-year-old emaciated girl with childhood diabetes, who comes from a completely destitute family, has gained 12 pounds and is well-controlled on insulin.

**10.** Bob, age 9, was rescued from despicable abuse and had four surgical procedures to correct the damage done to his body. He is now in an orphanage, happy and healthy.

**11.** The Kenyan government doctors have been on strike since the 5th of December. On December 8th, I found a young man I know, “Julius” (his name has been changed to protect his identity), in a small private clinic lying on the floor in a deep coma and unresponsive. I told his family he needed to be moved to a hospital. We had examined him in October and he was well, but this clinic found that one test was positive for HIV, although they couldn’t confirm it. Because the family could not afford a private hospital, he ended up in the government hospital where I saw him four days later. The nurse told me I couldn’t act as a doctor there, but in a ‘social’ visit I could see that because of the antibiotics he was taking, he was beginning to open his eyes and could move his arms and legs. The nurse told me to take him away, as there were no doctors on duty.

I thanked her for being on the job and told her that he needed to have a test to confirm HIV. She said they would do it. Shortly thereafter, when I got to St. Patrick’s Dispensary, the clinical officer, Dalmas, suggested that we send our lab technician to do the test. So I did. But

when the lab tech arrived, they refused to allow her to do the test. We also found out that “Julius” hadn’t had his dose of antibiotic for the day, even though the family had purchased it, brought it to the hospital, and given it to the nurses.

I asked Dalmas if we could bring him to the vacant room downstairs for nursing and treatment. He was agreeable. The parish priest, Fr. Gabriel, also agreed. So we had the family bring him to this small room in a slum where a nurse and



**St. Patrick's Dispensary over Bangla Drive**  
*Photo credit: Susan Nagele*

clinical officer looked after him very professionally for the next six days with my help. We found he was fluid overloaded and needed an injection to get rid of the fluid. He woke up and started to eat pilau, a rice dish, within a couple of hours! We then found that he had a bedsore.

We also discovered that he had HIV, and the team from Mombasa Community Based Health Care (CBHC), another diocesan health center, came to bring medicines that he would need to treat several possible infections, including TB meningitis, encephalitis, and cryptococcal meningitis. I saw him on Christmas day and he was still struggling for his life. He needed a brain scan. The President of



Kenya had announced that not only the 26th but also the 27th would be public holidays, so the earliest this could be done was on the 28th. The family wanted to take him back to their rural home. Fr. Gabriel anointed him and he left on the 27th.

It took two days to get him home because the car broke down on the way. When they arrived, the big referral hospital was closed due to the continuing doctors' strike. So, as of this moment, "Julius" is still alive, being cared for by his family at home with the training they received from our staff and the medicines that we sent with them. He is a very strong man, and I pray every day that he will recover.



**Some current & former staff members at St. Patrick's Dispensary**

*Photo credit: Susan Nagele*

I am so proud of the staff at this facility, St. Patrick's Dispensary, and how professionally they work together. Despite bad management early in the illness, our continued hard work and resources (albeit limited), allowed us to make accurate diagnoses and give proper treatment. "Julius" is still alive and that is no small feat. This dispensary, in an informal settlement, did better than the district and referral hospitals. Whether "Julius" lives or dies, he has finally had loving, professional health care, which is what every human being deserves.

**Update:** I am sorry to report that on Jan 24th "Julius" passed away. He was taken to his home area in central Kenya. The family had taken him to a level 5 hospital (the highest level) but it was closed and he was turned away. They then took him to another mission hospital but it was so full they couldn't admit him. He was told to go home and keep taking his medicines. So the family cared for him the best they could at home. Actually, I suspect that there was so much permanent brain damage from the meningitis that he was unable to recover. It's possible that even if he had received the care he needed when he first got sick, he wouldn't have made it. But there was too much unnecessary suffering until we got him moved to St. Patrick's Dispensary with a good caring staff. I still feel proud that he finally received the kind, loving, professional care he deserved before he passed. The family was very grateful. We all did the best we could and that's all any of us can do.

*Dr. Susan Nagele is originally from Urbana, IL. After participating in mission trips to Appalachia, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, she decided to become a Maryknoll Lay Missioner in 1984 and has served in Tanzania and Sudan for 19 years and now Kenya for the last 13 years. In 2012, Susan was awarded the Medal of Valor by the American Medical Association in recognition of her life-long work and "courage under extraordinary circumstances."*

**To view Dr. Susan Nagele's appearance on ABC's Nightline in 1999, visit:**  
<http://www.mkmlm.org/newsroom-2/videos/>  
**and her blog can be viewed at:** <http://HealthMinistryInKenya.blogspot.com>

# Bridging Cultures

## Connecting with Students

by Steve Pope  
Maryknoll Lay Missioner, Tanzania

I first heard a call to mission when I was very young. My aunt, Barbara Pope, was a Maryknoll Lay Missioner before I was born, and she told stories of her time in Latin America with such passion and joy that I could feel how transformative the experience was for her. In 2014, I graduated from Boston College, a Jesuit School, with a major in History and minor in Theology. My short-term service trips and community projects in Boston were major parts of my formation. I served five months in South Africa at an AIDS orphanage and volunteered in the U.S. as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher and mentor.

I am grateful for Maryknoll Lay Missioners' thorough training program at its center in Ossining, NY. In November of 2015 I stated, *"My time during Orientation with MKLM validated my decision to serve in mission as a Maryknoll Lay Missioner. I saw such wisdom, insight and authenticity from many long-term missionaries who were part of our training curriculum."*

Since July of 2016, I have been teaching at a Catholic high school in Mwanza, Tanzania, for poor boys who have few opportunities. I instruct teenagers, 13-15 years of age, a mix of English, History and Bible Knowledge, and coach soccer, volleyball and basketball. During my first week in the classroom, I told the students I wanted them to connect a given biblical

story to their lives. When reading Genesis 1:26, I asked the boys, *"What does it mean to be made in God's image?"* If the class were held at night, I would have heard crickets. For months, I continued to struggle to get the boys to engage in the material. *"What does the story of Joseph and his brothers teach us?"* Yet when I finished "explaining" a point and asked if they had any questions, a boy would invariably ask me to clarify who was so-and-so's uncle or *"What was the name of that mountain?"* I oftentimes left the classroom feeling dejected. I asked myself, *"Why don't these kids care about the meaning of the story?"*

Like many young inexperienced teachers, I have slowly learned with time. For my History class, I wanted the boys to understand about assembly line efficiency. So, I decided to show them a video of a South Korean "poultry processing plant." The boys were attentive and seemed to enjoy the various assembly line stages. I asked the students to explain how this assembly line was a good example of "efficiency." More crickets. Eventually, some of the boys raised their hands, but the majority of students looked confused. Internal sigh from a new teacher.

*"Okay boys,"* I said, *"this video shows one way to process chickens on an assembly line. But I know that many Tanzanians slaughter their own chickens. I have never*

*done that, so tell me how it's done."* An audible gasp filled the room and wide eyes looked at me in disbelief. I picked Faustine, one of the quieter boys, to describe the process. As he detailed the process step-by-step, other boys jumped in eagerly to point out the flaw in his method. *"No, no. Sir, removing the feathers only takes three minutes, not five."* Nearly every boy wanted to share the process that he and his father used. After ten minutes, the boys concluded that it takes between 30-45 minutes to properly slaughter and cook a chicken. When I told them that this South Korean chicken factory processes and cooks 10,000 chickens a day, their wide eyes, gasps and shouts of "Jamani!" or "My goodness!" expressed their amazement.

As I was wondering what to do with the last ten minutes of class, I heard the school bell ring and realized we were out of time. While I gathered my belongings, boys came up with dozens of questions. I eventually made my way into the hallway and was thinking, *"That was fun."* I was sure they understood the lesson and I felt that we had a "successful class." But the most important aspect was that I really felt a strong connection with the boys. It was one I craved back in July, but failed to establish when I asked them to ponder Genesis 1:26. So moving forward, as I strive to strengthen relationships with my students and further develop their intellectual curiosity, I keep this fond transformative memory and its lesson for me in mind.



**Steve (right) shares writing tips with David**

*Photo credit: Courtesy of Steve Pope*



# Where are they NOW?

## LIVE THE MISSION SPIRIT

by Pauline Hovey, Freelance Writer

When Linda and Joe Michon embarked on a six-week Guatemala mission trip with Maryknoll in 1979, their four young children in tow, they could not have anticipated the profound impact it would have on their lives.

Inspired by the young men they befriended from the Maryknoll Society novitiate located near their home in Hingham, MA, who would return from overseas mission with their faces lit up, Joe related, *"We wanted to expose our children to this alternative way to live because we both take the gospel seriously and joyfully."*

During that first mission trip, which they took at the invitation of Maryknoll Sr. Dorothy Erickson, *"We discovered how dynamic the message of Jesus was and how much it called us,"* Linda said.

Ten years later, Joe took a leave from his Boston ophthalmology practice and the couple left to follow their calling. After an intense year of freelancing overseas with nonprofit organizations, Linda recounted,

*"We realized we needed the community, spiritual depth and cross-cultural experience that Maryknoll offered."*



Linda (far left) and Joe (far right), as lay missionaries in 2008, in Chiapas, Mexico  
Photo credit: Chris Divin

In 1990, the Michons joined Maryknoll Lay Missioners (MKLM). For the next eight years, they served in Oaxaca, Mexico and Cochabamba, Bolivia. The high Bolivian altitude compromised Joe's health so they needed to move to another mission site.

While visiting El Paso, TX, they encountered an active community of Maryknoll Lay Missioners, Priests and Sisters, who were involved in various border ministries. Linda and Joe were attracted to this life-giving way to live the gospel and to the people of Juarez, Mexico. *"They lived in the worst poverty we've ever seen,"* Joe said. The influx of Mexicans seeking work at the maquiladoras (U.S.-established factories) created austere conditions. People lacked water, sewers and other basic necessities. *"It was globalization without a conscience,"* Joe lamented.

Yet, the Mexicans' joyful and celebratory spirit deeply affected the Michons. They set up two eye clinics in Juarez, became part of the MKLM community and stayed 11 years until Mexico's drug war violence intensified.

The Michons, now settled in Claremont, CA, continue to live MKLM's commitment and passion. Their "major mission" is to promote Fair Trade in their community and nationally. Linda and Joe made Claremont an "official" Fair Trade Town and created an Interfaith Fair Trade network. They collaborate with Catholic Relief Services to bring fair wages and safe working conditions to all. *"It's one way we, and anyone in the U.S., can live in solidarity with the poor,"* explained Joe.

Following their desire to remain connected and serve those on the margins, Linda and Joe, at their own expense, return to El Paso every few months to accompany refugees seeking asylum. As Linda noted, *"Maryknoll Lay Missioners continues to connect us with like-minded people who share our passion. In Spirit, we are still with them."*

**Linda explains the Fair Trade practices at a fair in their community**

*Photo credit: Joe Michon*



# Partners in Mission – Transforming Lives

It is with joy that I begin the next step of my life's journey with Maryknoll Lay Missioners (MKLM), serving as Director of Mission Advancement.

My faith is a gift from God that has been nurtured by my parents, siblings, Sisters, Priests, and friends of many denominations, who have all played a role in my continuing formation. This has helped me cultivate a faith-based understanding of the development ministry and appreciate that God gives us a variety of gifts to share with others.



*Photo credit:  
Bill Bachmann*

During travels to Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, I witnessed first-hand the women and men who toiled long hours to keep a roof over their families' heads and food on their tables. As we join together to do God's will, this awareness, along with my education, fundraising and development experience, will be put to good use at MKLM. While individually we can help others, we can accomplish much more by combining our talents, time and treasure to serve God as a body to support those less fortunate. Maryknoll Lay Missioners is where the *Compassion of the Faithful Transforms Lives*.

I have a deep appreciation for those who support and/or devote their lives to people truly in need.

It is a blessing that individuals, couples and families have accepted the call to serve as Lay Missioners in countries where citizens lack necessities we take for granted in the United States. It is an equal blessing that friends like you help sustain MKLM's efforts through your financial gifts and prayers. *"For where your treasure is, there also will be your heart."* (Luke 12:34)

If you have any questions or would like additional information about Maryknoll Lay Missioners, please call or email me at 914.236.3488 or [swallace@mklm.org](mailto:swallace@mklm.org). I look forward to sharing this sacred journey and getting to know you better in the upcoming months.

Together in Christ's mission,

D. Susan Wallace  
Director of Mission Advancement





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Maryknoll Lay Missioner Teresa Villaruz



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