

SCARBORO MISSIONS

May-June 2011 \$1.00



Our
Life
is
Mission



Our Lady's Missionaries

SPECIAL EDITION

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convenience.

We welcome enquiries about Scarboro’s
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Please contact:
Fr. Mike Traher (priesthood):
mtraher@scarboromissions.ca
Mary Olenick (laity):
lmo@scarboromissions.ca
www.scarboromissions.ca



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Please address all inquiries to: Scarboro Missions,
2685 Kingston Road, Scarborough, ON, M1M 1M4.
Tel: 416-261-7135; Toll-free: 1-800-260-4815;
Fax: 416-261-0820
Email: info@scarboromissions.ca (General)
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GUEST EDITORIAL



By Sr. Frances Brady, O.L.M.

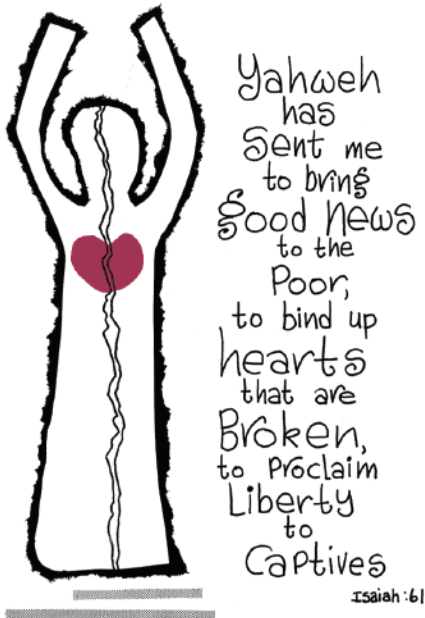
Mission

According to the Oxford dictionary, “Mission” is, among other definitions, “a task to be performed” and “a person’s vocation or divinely appointed work in life.” It has a variety of meanings and may refer to a specific task or a way of life.

The motivation and goal of mission always involves others. One’s mission is never for oneself alone. We are part of a community of persons of this planet, created by God to be dependent on one another for our survival and fulfillment. It is likely then that we will be drawn into some aspect of mission and be happy only when we live according to the nature that God has given and sustains in us.

For Christians, mission is to follow the teaching and example of Jesus: “...to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free...” (*Luke 4: 18-19*). Reflection on the mission of Jesus in light of our world today gives us insight and guides the activities of our daily lives: Refugees who come to our country to escape violence and oppression are welcomed by individuals, parish communities, and non-governmental organizations who offer help, guidance, and friendship. Amnesty International coordinates volunteer letter writers globally on behalf of persons unjustly imprisoned and/or mistreated. Through the Out of the Cold program, members of faith communities provide food and shelter for persons who are homeless. Organizations such as Development and Peace, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, and Citizens for Public Justice make us aware of how we can help in situations where persons, communities, and the environment are unjustly treated.

Wherever there is need, where someone or some group, or some part of the Earth is forgotten or neglected and needs to be recognized and respected, there is an invitation to mission. Around the world people respond generously and faithfully. One’s role may involve an important work that affects the whole world or something more modest that affects our neighbourhood. We are beginning to realize how much we are all connected, that by affecting our neighbourhood for good we are having a positive influence on the world. Together, we are drawn into the mission of building the *kingdom* of God.∞



Our thanks for your gifts

We, the members of Our Lady’s Missionaries, are dependent on the support of family, friends, and other benefactors. We are always grateful for your thoughts and prayers and for the monetary donations we receive from estates, donations in lieu of flowers at the time of a death, parish collections, the Catholic Women’s League and Ladies’ Guild annual donation, and from you who send personal contributions. All donations are tax deductible. Please note that government regulations do not permit us to receive donations for ministries in places where we no longer have Sisters present. This includes Guyana, Nigeria, and the Philippines.∞

THANK YOU!

Our Lady’s Missionaries are grateful to Kathy Gillis, editor of *Scarboro Missions* magazine, to Sisters Christine Gebel and Noreen Kearns who worked with Kathy to prepare this issue, and to all at Scarboro Missions for this and the countless other ways they offer us friendship and support.∞

COVER PHOTOS:
Top right, L-R: OLM Srs. Margaret Walsh, Rosemary Williamson, Gwen Legault, Rosemary Hughes and Norma Samar, with Claudy Toussaint (sitting). Canada.
Left, L-R: OLM Srs. Lorie Nuñez and Mary Gauthier with Irene Yusingco. Philippines.
Right, L-R: Sr. Betsy Flynn, NDN, with OLM Srs. Clarice Garvey, Lucy Lee, and Anie Montejo. Brazil.

In God's presence

By Sr. Lucy Lee, O.L.M.

Over the years I have had the opportunity to work alongside people with AIDS and cancer, as well as the elderly and the young, in Nigeria, the Philippines, Canada, and Brazil.

No matter where or with whom I worked, I was always aware of being in God's presence when we gathered. We shared stories while I was teaching new craft skills. Faces lit up with the completion of a woven basket, a scarf knitted from recycled material, or a necklace strung by the knotty fingers of a senior. Oftentimes children nearby would be watching in awe.

When I first met Lenha in Brazil, she was a volunteer at St. Joseph's Hospital for AIDS Patients and Infectious Diseases as well as at the Mary Mona Kelly Little Library. She had lost her teaching job, yet it impressed me that despite her own hardships she still wanted to help others. Since then, I have passed on to her some of my craft skills and she is able to support herself by selling flip-flops that she decorates.

It is so satisfying for me to see the smiles of women who have come to recognize their ability to make something that can be sold to friends and neighbours for an income, however small it may be. Most of all, they recognize the goodness of God in themselves.∞



Sr. Lucy Lee with her friend Lenha who learned craft skills from Sr. Lucy and now supports herself by making hand decorated flip-flops (shown at left). Sr. Lucy also teaches crafts to young people at the library (below). Bela Vista, Brazil.



Our life in mission

By Sr. Mona Kelly, O.L.M.

Every day our mission changes depending on what is currently happening.

Years ago, shortly after we moved onto the land of Planalto do Pici and needed to strategize how to gain legal ownership of it, the people of the neighbourhood began the custom of gathering in a group in front of our houses between four and five o'clock in the afternoon. We would discuss the events of the day and how to move forward together. By that hour everyone had taken a bath, changed their clothes, and was ready for supper.

One day as I was about to sit down on a neighbour's front step, 12-year-old Henrique shouted, "Wait, wait!" He rushed into his house and came back out with a chair. He was all smiles as he proudly proclaimed, "We have a chair."

The chair looked like it had come from a dump. And yet, no one else had a chair or table in their house. Henrique insisted that I sit on it and kept his hand on it, smiling at everyone while we continued our discussion.

Some days, mission in my life is appreciating the gift of a chair.∞



"Mission in my life is ... interreligious and interfaith dialogue—communal contemplation with people of no faith or of all faiths.
Sr. Elaine MacInnes, OLM, Toronto



Henrique offers his family's chair to Sr. Mona as she and other neighbours gather to chat outside their homes. Planalto do Pici, Brazil.

Photo left: Srs. Elaine MacInnes (left) and Mona Kelly. Canada. Sr. Elaine, a Zen master, spent 32 years in the Orient learning the healing power and spiritual experiences that meditation and yoga can bring to prisoners. She founded the organization Freeing the Human Spirit (www.freeingspirit.com) to promote this ministry in correctional institutions throughout Canada.

A new birth

By Sr. Anie Montejo, O.L.M.

Like a mother preparing for the birth of her child, I have now journeyed with the Brazilian people for nine months. My journey began with nothing, but in that nothing I have found hope and light, which inspire and lead me onwards.

First came the hard, challenging, and fun task of learning Portuguese. Language is such an important part of our identity. Learning a language is full of ups and downs, and some shocks as one is also exposed to a new culture and lifestyle. Still, the Brazilians are so welcoming and encouraging. Once while at the Mary Mona Kelly Little Library, I read aloud a simple sentence and was able to pronounce it correctly. A little boy sitting next to me clapped his hands and gave me a wonderful smile.

Food can be another aspect of settling in. The Brazilian *cuscuz* made of ground corn reminds me of the Philippines, my home country. While eating *cuscuz*, I realize that missionary life is about openness and adaptation. Wherever I am is mission.

Music has helped me to enter the world of the Brazilian people despite the language barrier. Learning to play the flute, I was deeply touched by the words of a Brazilian song that spoke of life for the farmers as they struggled to survive through the long drought.

Now that my Portuguese is improving, I have been teaching a group of children to make macramé bracelets. A new friend takes the time to explain to me the culturally correct way to use words. I am also learning about the cultural festivals and they all sound so



L-R: Sr. Anie, Sr. Lucia, Sr. Gessica, and Sr. Catarina (front).
Photo at right: Sr. Anie with Lourdes.

interesting.

The flooding that Brazil recently experienced has challenged me to find a way to respond as I listen to Mother Earth crying out in pain. Walking with the Brazilian people has helped me to grow in trust—in myself, in God, and in those around me. Imagining how a mother prepares for the birth of her child, I wonder what will be birthed in my own life after these nine months of growth.∞



By Sr. Clarice Garvey, O.L.M.

Our living and life-giving planet

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now...” Romans 8:22

The bishops of Brazil have chosen “Care for our Planet: our Earth, our Rivers and our Forests” as the theme for our national Lenten reflections this year. It is a hopeful sign that our church leaders have taken a stand to remind us of our responsibility to care for the garden God has given us for our home.

As I write, millions of people are watching the disaster in Japan. Never before in the history of the world has such incredible suffering been brought so close and so quickly. We saw and heard the Earth groaning. We saw and heard the fear of people running to flee crumbling concrete and raging waters. We watched cars being carried by strong currents, boats crashing against concrete bridges. And the world sits on edge as the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor threatens a meltdown. We who have seen and heard these groans are called to accept our responsibility to the Earth, our home.

Some years ago we were reminded in the Earth Charter, a declaration by Leonardo Boff and many other theologians and scientists, that we are at a critical time in the history of the Universe. They brought to our attention that nature as well as humanity has rights. Care for the Earth means to hear St. Paul’s words in his letter to the Romans that the Earth is groaning.

When huge factories spit out their poisonous waste, creation is being desecrated. When large acreages of land are owned by a handful of people who have no need of it and millions of



“The Divine Dynamic”, Artist: Mary Southard, CSJ; www.MarySouthardArt.Org
Courtesy of www.Ministryofhearts.org, Congregation of St. Joseph

landless farmers go hungry, the Earth is denied her full dignity. When land is used continually without time to rest, the land suffers.

We are called to see our planet, and every living species, as sacred creation. This is a call to care for the Earth and all life. It is a challenge and an opportunity for all of us to leave behind our wants and to open ourselves as wide as the sky and feel the breath of our Creator bringing us to

new life as it was brought to Eve and Adam. Do we dare to long for that Spirit of life? Do we dare to waste the chance?

If we look back at the beauty of our autumn leaves, hear the sound of a family of robins singing, listen to the laughter of little children at play, can we risk denying ourselves that beauty? Blest are those who see our planet as living and life-giving.∞



By Dr. Roberta L. Bondar

If my first visual encounter with Earth from space made a lasting impression on me, the final view filled me with the anticipation and excitement of exploring the planet around which I had orbited for more than eight days. While floating within view of the Earth, I embraced the new vision of my world, but back on the ground I searched for a way to express what I had seen from space and how I felt about the planet.

It is very real and clear from the space perspective that the forces of nature will keep reshaping the planet. Plants, animals, and humans will constantly remodel and renew to meet the challenges or we will all vanish. But our environment cannot adapt quickly enough to compensate for our alien intrusion. Because humans have developed frightening technologies and have evolved rapidly into a resource-depleting species, we, and we alone, have the ultimate responsibility to protect the Earth, and each other, from ourselves. We must show our respect and admiration for our natural world and work for peace, not for destruction and extinction.

There are at least three reasons to



An astronaut's view of our planet

set aside and protect the land and the sea. First, protecting biodiversity—a mix of plants, animals, and micro-organisms, ensures that they can continue to evolve and maintain a healthy gene pool. Second, watching for shifts in the growth of other creatures can warn humans of existing and impending change. Third, learning how other life forms use sunlight, soil, and water to respond to long-term weather changes can help humans to adapt, too. Unlike these life forms, which must seek a better place or die, we humans can cross over many habitats because

of our technical ability.

Canada is unique in having large undeveloped and relatively untouched tracts of land and water. That is reason enough to be actively caring for our natural environment and our heritage. The message is clear: If we do not protect the environment of our planet, we eventually will fail to keep our bodies, and our souls, nourished.∞

“

After observing the planet for eight days from space, I have a deeper interest and respect for the forces that shape our world. Each particle of soil, each plant and animal is special. I also marvel at the creativity and ingenuity of our own species, but at the same time, I wonder why we all cannot see that we create our future each day, and that our local actions affect the global community, today as well as for generations to come.”

Dr. Roberta Bondar, the first Canadian woman to go into space.

Facing page: The Great Lakes, photographed from the space shuttle Discovery by Dr. Bondar, physician, scientist, astronaut, author, photographer.

Photo of Sr. Marie Clarkson (this page). Credit Patricia Green.
Background photo: Sunset in the Arctic. Credit: Roy Sakaguchi.

The rhythm of the Universe

By Sr. Marie Clarkson, O.L.M.



**slow now
my hurried
heart
and feel
the rhythm
of the universe**

**the ebb
and flow
of oceans
the changing
seasons
of the year
the cycles
of night
and day
with dawn
and dusk**

**such mysteries
are mine
known through
the ages
a part
of me
and me
a part
of all**

**slow now
my hurried
heart
and feel
the rhythm
of
the universe**



By Frances Sanderson

Our way

The strong spiritual values of Native people are steeped in hundreds of years of living a life dedicated to harmony with nature. Our culture is rooted in fundamental values concerning our relationship to the Creator, to the environment, and to each other.

My ancestors lived on this continent enjoying their own government and way of life long before explorers from other countries first came to North America. Newcomers were welcomed unconditionally and offered a place by the fire to keep warm, food to allay their hunger, and the knowledge that was required to build a life in this new land.

In the First Nations way, people do not just grow old, they become Elders. The teachings of our Elders and their role in society is extremely important. They are our history keepers. They guard the past and guide us in our responsibility to Mother Earth—to the waters, land, and air; to the plants and animals, and to other human beings. They also lead us into the future by helping us set our course, giving us spiritual direction in the ways of our people as the wisdom of thousands of years flows from their lips. We follow the teachings of the Elders and our ancestors.

As a Native person I can say that I am spiritual. I believe in the Creator—the

Great Spirit who created our world and every living creature. The Creator is the ultimate caretaker and spiritual guide—the Great Mystery who cannot be defined, who is neither He nor She.

We believe that everything, beginning with the Earth, has a spirit. Everything that exists is an expression of the Creator. The Sun protects, warms, and shines down on Mother Earth who nurtures and supports all life on the planet. We do not worship the Sun or the Earth; we worship the Creator. And when we give thanks for Mother Earth, Grandfather Sun, Grandmother Moon, the Little Sisters (the Stars), and for all other life, we give thanks for these beautiful expressions of the Creator.∞

Whatever happened to the Maryglen?

In 2007 Frances Sanderson, Executive Director of Nishnwabe Homes Inc., purchased Maryglen Residence—Our Lady's Missionaries' housing ministry to women in downtown Toronto. Nishnwabe South House, as the residence is now called, offers accommodation to Native women and men.

Photo above: Sr. Noreen Kearns and Connie Nudo outside the former Maryglen residence.

“Mission in my life is

...living in openness to receiving and sharing with others the many gifts that God blesses me with, not for myself alone but for the building up of the Reign of God.

Sr. Rosemary Hughes, OLM Toronto

...believing in Christ and trying to follow him more closely and carry on his work in our world today as God's Spirit leads me.

Sr. Margaret Walsh, OLM, Toronto

...looking for the beauty in each person and in all of creation.

Sr. Joan Missiaen OLM, Toronto

...advocating and working for the cause of affordable housing in my community and in the larger global community.

Pamela Roth, Markham, Ontario Canada

...to take my family and as many people as I know, and even those that I don't know, to heaven.

Juanita Gutierrez, Hillsborough, California, U.S.A.

Out of the Cold



Milton Cilcus and Amanda Inglis visit with Sr. Susan Moran at St. Patrick's Out of the Cold.

St. Patrick's Church

By Sr. Susan Moran, O.L.M.

Last December St. Patrick's Church, always a loving home to its Out of the Cold guests, hosted a Christmas party. The pastor, Redemptorist Father Gerald Fleming, and Mr. John Hamilton, Director of St. Patrick's Out of the Cold, welcomed volunteers from St. Peter's parish in Woodbridge who cooked the Christmas dinner and prepared more than 200 Christmas gifts.

It was a festive evening of love as Our Lady's Missionaries Sister Christine Gebel and I celebrated with all who were present. Looking around at our sisters and brothers, I was very much aware of their hunger, loneliness, and lack of shelter, and knew with greater certainty that our country, Canada, has to be called to conversion in order to end hunger and homelessness. God desires this of us.

Naguib Mahfouz, the Nobel Prize-winning author from Cairo, perceptively expressed the psychology of the young who are working for change in the Arab world: "Whenever someone is depressed, suffering or humiliated, he points to the mansion at the top of the alley at the end opening out to the desert, and says sadly, 'That is our ancestor's house, we are all his children, and we have a right to his property. Why are we starving? What have we done?'"

Our First Nations sisters and brothers could ask the same questions as they watch us prosper on their ancestral lands. As in Egypt, may there also be Canadians who will take a stand for the rights of all the people of our nation. We are not free until all have shelter and enough to eat.∞

St. Brigid's Church

By Srs. Mary Hughes and Cecile Turner, O.L.M.

Having spent most of our lives outside of Canada, it was a shock to realize the plight of a great many of our sisters and brothers here in Canada. Going downtown, we see women and men during the cold winter months sitting on grates for warmth and reaching out for help.

And so, we accepted an invitation to volunteer at Out of the Cold and for the last three years, along with Sister Joan Missiaen, we have looked forward to going to St. Brigid's Church on Monday afternoons.

Other volunteers from St. Brigid's and other parishes help to prepare and serve the supper each week when usually more than 100 people come to eat. Blankets are provided for the 70 or so who stay overnight and a good breakfast awaits them in the morning.

We are blest to be with the volunteers and the many guests who come to St. Brigid's.∞

Below L-R: Srs. Joan Missiaen, Susan Moran, Mary Hughes, and Cecile Turner (2nd from right) join other volunteers at St. Brigid's Out of the Cold.





Commitment to nonviolence



By Sr. Rosemary Williamson, O.L.M.

“Nonviolence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart and it must be an inseparable part of our very being.” Gandhi

My interest in nonviolent peacemaking had been stirred by the film “Gandhi”. I have watched it several times with the Justice, Development, and Peace group in Nigeria. Each viewing was more compelling and deepened my conviction in Gandhi’s path of non-violent direct action. After turning over our works to Nigerian lay leaders, I returned to Canada and applied for membership in the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT).

CPT engages in biblically-based, spiritually-centred peacemaking, emphasizing creative public witness, nonviolent direct action, and protection of human rights.

In 2010 I participated in a CPT delegation to Grassy Narrows in northwestern Ontario. From a base in Kenora we visited First Nations traditional lands, meeting with Indigenous and non-Indigenous community leaders and residents. I was deeply

touched by the warmth and welcome of the people in Grassy Narrows who have suffered so much from corporate clear-cut logging and mercury contamination in their lake. Two brief trainings in colonization and racism were personally revealing and highlighted my need for further education and awareness.

In January of 2011 I went to Chicago to participate in a month’s intensive training with CPT. Our group was a good mix of ages, experience, and ethnic origins. We were privileged to make our sleeping quarters at the First Church of the Brethren where Martin Luther King stayed for some months while doing community organization. His profile is featured in one of the stained glass windows. This was a further source of inspiration during a very demanding training.

We planned and carried out two public witnesses. One addressed the illegal and continued detention and torture of those being held in Guantanamo Bay in violation of the Geneva Convention. Ten of us, dressed in orange prison jumpsuits symbolic of the detainees, and black hoods, tried to enter the Federal Courts in downtown Chicago in a sym-

bolic search for justice. Vigilers called out the names of each remaining Guantanamo detainee, followed by “... is looking for justice!”, as we “prisoners” walked in silent procession from door to door seeking access to the courts. Security officers blocked each doorway and we knelt down to wait. Vigilers gathered around us singing, “Courage Muslim brothers, you do not walk alone; we will walk with you and sing your spirits home.”

The second public witness was in support of the farmers of Las Pavas, Colombia, who were forcibly removed

from their land to make way for corporate palm oil plantations.

Our training also included briefings from CPTers currently working in Iraq, Palestine, and Colombia, and with the Aboriginal Justice team. The entire experience was inspiring and challenging. I am delighted that I have been accepted as a member of CPT and I commit myself to the ongoing inner conversion to nonviolence lived so wholeheartedly by Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and modelled first by Christ.☺

Facing page, L-R: Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) members Carol Rose, Doug Pritchard, and Sr. Rosemary Williamson, OLM, along with other peace activists at a public witness in Chicago in support of the farmers of Las Pavas, Colombia.

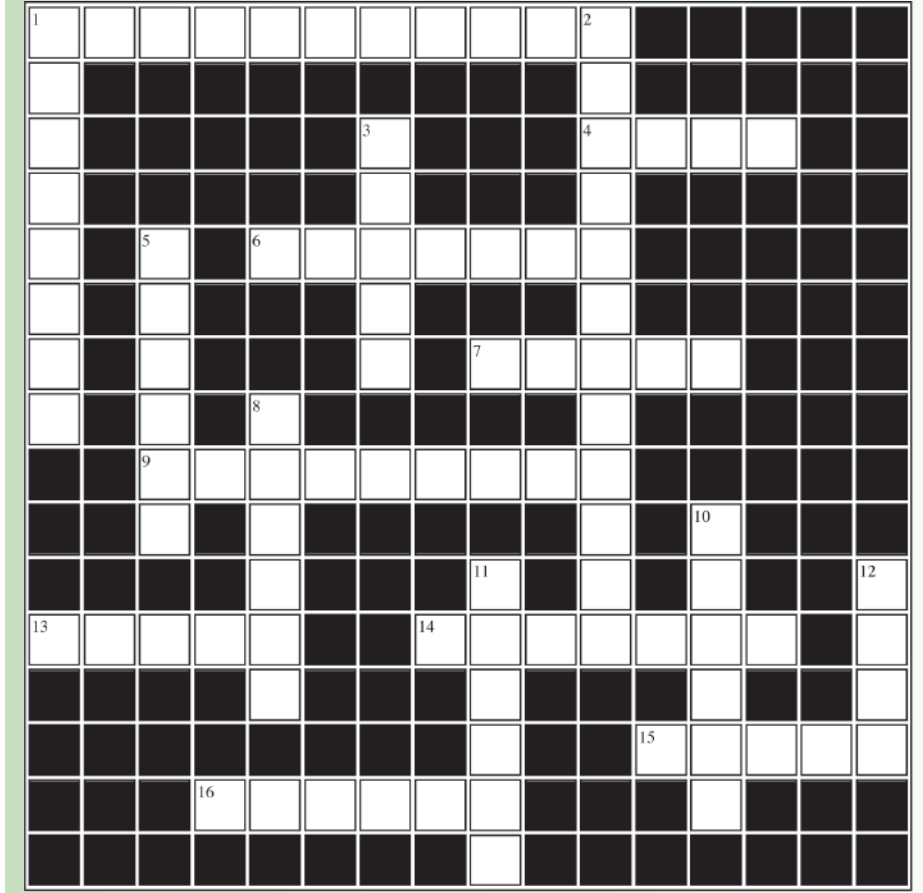
Below: CPT members in Chicago addressing the detention and torture of detainees at Guantanamo Bay.

Photos by Tim Nafziger.

To learn more about Christian Peacemaker Teams go to www.cpt.org



CROSSWORD



Across

Down

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Mission closed by OLMs in December 2010 | 1. Where to find a date |
| 4. The hope of the harvest is in the _____ | 2. Province with no daylight saving time |
| 6. Epidemic in Haiti, 2010 | 3. Make amends |
| 7. Knife used in making crafts | 5. Exile |
| 9. Card game played by one person | 8. Disaster in Australia, December 2010 |
| 13. Early Celtic priest | 10. Sister of Moses |
| 14. 1st Cdn-born male saint | 11. South American country that recently elected its first woman president |
| 15. Country that suffered three major disasters in March 2011 | 12. Mouse target |
| 16. One who exemplified nonviolence | |

Crossword by Sr. Doris MacDonell, O.L.M. Answers on page 23.



Cherished memories

By Sr. Mary Gauthier, O.L.M.

It was difficult to believe that it was my last evening in Cagayan de Oro, Philippines. The next day my journey to Canada would begin. Many smiling faces flash through my mind as I recall that evening sitting out under the stars. We were grateful that the rains held off. It was the culmination of our celebration of Mindanao Week of Peace and also the culmination of a significant part of my life.

Sister Lorie and I, along with other members of the Interfaith Forum for Peace, Harmony, and Solidarity had helped to organize this event. Each year different activities are planned with the hope that we are deepening our relationships, appreciating our differences, and living out our different faith beliefs.

These words help me to deepen my appreciation of the experience:

**To honour all relationships as sacred,
to live in peace and in balance with
all living things.
And acknowledge the sacredness of
every path,
albeit different from your own;
That you may reverence
the Great Mystery
and the wonder of life!
Remember always to offer
grateful hearts
in thanksgiving to the One
who lives among us.**

*Excerpt from Psalm 107, Psalms
For Praying: An Invitation to
Wholeness by Nan C. Merrill*

I felt the preciousness, the sacredness, as I listened to the stories of a young Muslim teacher gently, bravely sharing his experience of prejudice and biases from Christians and from his own people. He was grateful for this opportunity to help us become more aware of his situation. A beautiful Indigenous woman, Joan Gairan (inset), proudly reminded us of the sacredness of her culture and their love and care for the Earth. I was impressed by a Christian youth who expressed his desire that justice, truth, and caring for the poor be lived out by newly elected and re-elected politicians in his country.

The fruitful evening of stories left me with a grateful heart. It did not end there; our Bishop Tony Ledesma invited members of our group to join in sharing a delicious meal with him at his residence. It was a joyous *despidita* (farewell party). I will always cherish these memories in my heart.∞



Friends gather with Archbishop Tony Ledesma, S.J., Sr. Mary Gauthier (2nd from right), and Srs. Lorie Nuñez and Christine Gebel (5th and 6th from right).

Her becoming

By Sr. Lorie Nuñez, O.L.M.

As my days in the Philippines come to a close and many changes are taking place, spending time with Irene Yusingco, a friend of our community in the city of Cebu, has brought me to a new understanding of the process of transformation.

Ever since I entered Our Lady's Missionaries, stories of Irene have abounded. Her care for family and others who need a helping hand has continued over time despite her advancing years. Irene welcomes many people into her home because she cares.

It was not until these past few days that I began to realize the full depth of this caring for others. Irene possesses a special kindness that springs from her past. At 17 years of age she lost her mother. It was in the Philippines during World War II when intense bombings forced her as the eldest to leave her parents and take her siblings to the island of Bohol in search of safety. When their mother died of shrapnel wounds, Irene was left with the responsibility of helping her father raise her brothers and sisters.

Her awareness of God's presence and loving care in her life, especially during the difficult times, redeems and transforms her past into a source of life and love.

In every event there is significant learning that can show us how to become ever more the perfect image of God. Irene embodies this awareness that gives us the eyes to see others and ourselves as a revelation of God incarnate, the Emmanuel whom we long to have in our midst.∞

“Mission in my life is

...to look after my siblings and extended family. God provided me with a big house, so I welcome people who need room. I also undertake other tasks such as feeding programs for malnourished children and editing a newsletter.
Irene Yusingco, Cebu City, Cebu, Philippines

...thanking God daily for the gift of family.
John Peco, Port Perry, Ontario, Canada



Irene Yusingco (left) and other volunteers at a centre that helps to feed malnourished children.
Top (L-R): Sr. Lorie, Sr. Mary Gauthier, and Irene say their farewells as the OLM Sisters depart for Canada.





By Sr. Myra Trainor, O.L.M.

The hope of the harvest is in the seed. We plant and water and God does the flowering and the growing.

As part of my ministry at the provincial jail in Cagayan de Oro in the Philippines, I helped to initiate a livelihood skills education program for parolees who wanted to change their lifestyle from that of living off the street to honest work. My friend Monette Magracia accepted to join our ministry and what a blessing she has been. This was soon followed by another blessing when neighbour Milagros Noble readily agreed to be part of our project. We all saw that this ministry could be fruitful and lead to less crime.

At first we started skills training in a parish setting. As the program expanded, we moved to a college where teacher Dr. Roy Santiago was a special blessing. He was very helpful in negotiations with the Mindanao Polytechnic State College administration. Dr. Santiago remains a loyal supporter and friend.

Once the parolees realized the benefits of skills training in auto mechanics, appliance repair, and other livelihood skills, some of them asked if their sons could join the class.



Dr. Roy Santiago, Monette Magracia, and Milagros Noble.

Blessings of a seed



Sr. Christine Gebel, OLM

Students enrolled in an auto mechanics class as part of a program to teach livelihood skills to parolees and their children. Below and facing page (top): A graduating class and the college where the program is taught.

This was quickly approved and promoted. Now the program is open to any of the parolees' children. Most have only completed elementary schooling, so the opportunity to study and acquire a skill is a big enhancement to their lives. I recall the great joy at graduations when each of these students received appropriate tools and a dip-



Sr. Lorie Nuñez, OLM



Sr. Christine Gebel, OLM

loma from a college.

We received yet another blessing. Monette's mother, Terrasita, is a member of the Rotary club and this charitable group of women brings a delicious celebratory meal for all the graduates and their families. To be treated so graciously adds greatly to the self esteem and dignity of the parolees and their families.

The parolees have shown their gratitude in so many ways. During one skills training course, a student had surgery for a tumour and even with his head bandaged he never missed a class. I also have happy memories of parolees rushing up to me on the street and excitedly telling me that they now have work.

Through the generosity and support of our Canadian and Filipino friends, and Our Lady's Missionaries, we have been able to sustain this project for many years. For a time, Sisters Mary Gauthier and Lorie Nuñez also acted as contacts. Now the OLM mission in the Philippines is closed but through the capabilities and generosity of Monette and Milagros, the program remains very active and indeed is expanding. This year there are 36 graduating students.

So much is possible with so little—the marvels of a growing seed.∞

Coming home

By Sr. Mary Deighan, O.L.M.

Two years ago I returned to Canada after living in Nigeria for 30 years. Life there was full, exciting, dangerous, and challenging. I felt fully alive and grateful to be on the front line, training Nigerians to be village health workers, teaching trained medical staff how to do primary health care and, when time permitted, doing direct nursing among the poor in the villages of Benue State.

By 2009 I knew it was time to come home. The Nigerians were ready to carry on the work. My staying on in the country I loved would have undermined their independence and ability, so the decision was made to join our Rosalind community in Toronto.

Once back in Canada, life immediately seemed to shrink. Perhaps this is the experience of all people who have had the privilege of working in developing countries where the need is endless and no talent is wasted. Adjusting to life in Canada has taken longer than I expected, but my energy has returned and I see that there is so much one can do here to make life better for others. Travelling on the subway and buses, feeling the fleeting glances of friendliness in the eyes of newcomers from different countries, I long to welcome them to our country. I know how it feels to leave my home country and arrive as a stranger in a strange land and I want to ease their adjustment as they struggle to settle in a country so foreign to what they have known. I have returned to Canada where I started my missionary journey and I have discovered again that my sisters and brothers are everywhere. In fact, mission can be found in all places.∞



Sr. Mary Deighan (right) with family friend Ruth Halladay. Photo by Carol Gauthier.

“Mission in my life is ... loving God and loving people.
Sr. Mary Deighan, OLM, Toronto



By Sr. Rosemarie Donovan, O.L.M.

To be born is to be chosen

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” we ask four- and five-year-olds. Their answers are imaginative and hilarious. However, things take on a different note when we question 18-year-olds about their future because they know that eventually choices must be made and time is passing.

When I entered religious life 62 years ago, I was under the illusion that this was the best choice to make to serve God and my brothers and sisters around the world. It wasn't that I felt exceptional in any way, but all who knew me—priests, teachers and family—inferred in some way that this was a special calling, one set apart, especially so because I was entering a new missionary community. It took a long while for me to become aware of the innumerable vocations open to people searching for ways to love and serve God.

John Henry Newman spoke about “God's individual call to each of us to fulfill a certain purpose in life before we die.” To be born is to be chosen.

We look for signs and wait for answers until we realize we have been struggling to fulfill God's wishes all along. And then we are at peace.

There is no need to look far afield. I see the courageous choices made by my parents, siblings, nieces, nephews, and so many others—choices filled with hopes and dreams, happiness and tears. And then a spouse, child, or friend is afflicted with deep pain and suffering while living with a debilitating health condition. Family and friends rally round and I am humbled by their witness.

I was missioned to Nigeria where I lived for 32 wonderful years. There I saw men and women faithful to their calls in heroic ways. Most of their marriages were extremely tough and their efforts to feed, clothe, and educate their children in a land of poverty and violence seemed almost impossible. I looked to them then, as I do now, for inspiration, and marvel at their positive and cheerful lives.

And now I am in Canada, grateful for the choice I made many years ago and hoping to become more aware of the need for prayer and to be given the chance to grow in forgiveness, generosity, and love within my OLM community. When times are difficult and health is failing, I know I can put my arms around Jesus and lean on him.∞

“Since Jesus was born, and grew to his full stature, and died, everything has continued to move forward *because Christ is not yet fully formed*: he has not yet gathered about him the last folds of his robe of flesh and of love which is made up of his faithful followers.”

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., The Divine Milieu



“Mission in my life is

...to deepen my friendship with God; to become the most loving person I can be and to communicate that love through acts of meaningful kindness, by both word and action.
Victoria Clarke, Toronto

...to never stop learning and loving and, while appreciating all that has gone before in my life, to always look forward to the next part of the journey.
Cathy Gross, Aurora, Ontario, Canada

...building community.
Marilee Sherry, Brantford, Ontario

...to give something good to others each day and to not waste time hating anyone.
Eppie Eden, Toronto

...to strive to grow into a greater awareness of God's mission, and through retreats, workshops, and seminars at Eramosa Eden Centre, to be instrumental in raising that awareness in others.
Valerie Bannert, Eramosa Eden Centre [www.eramosaeden.org/] Rockwood, Ontario

Who me? A missionary?

By Martha O'Connor

When asked by my Aunt Noreen, a member of Our Lady's Missionaries, to write something about mission, I agreed right away, but now, with a blank page in front of me, I wonder, What was I thinking? Where do I begin? Is this supposed to be about the meaning of my life? My Aunt made the article sound like it would be simple to write. Maybe it would be easy for her because of her many years as a missionary overseas.

Mission for me is not so clear-cut. Yes, I made a commitment in marriage even though I was young and naive at the time. Making this relationship work is part of my mission.

Next came the children. They too are my mission. When they were young, they were a huge mind-boggling responsibility and I loved them with every ounce of my being. I think I would have killed to protect them. Later, as they matured, mission became appreciating, encouraging, and valuing them as adults.



Martha and her Aunt, Sr. Noreen Kearns.

When I retired from work and my children were well launched into adulthood, I told people my new mission was to be a contemplative-in-action, sending out positive vibes into the universe. I figured that eventually I would be off to a third world country doing volunteer work. That hasn't happened and I now realize that my mission is to be a positive influence wherever I am. I want to make the people I touch feel a little bit better about themselves and their lives.

Having three sisters and seven brothers gives me plenty of opportunities to do this: housing a nephew who needs accommodation while he is working at a summer job; driving a sick brother to the doctor; taking my mother grocery shopping; babysitting my grandson; hosting family holiday celebrations. The opportunities are endless. Yes, like my Aunt Noreen, I too am a missionary—by being a wife, mother, daughter, sister, grandmother, sister-in-law, cousin, aunt, and even a niece.∞

“Mission in my life is

...my everyday living. It's the sum total of prayer, work, and play done lovingly with and for others.
Sr. Suzanne Marshall, OLM, Toronto

...presence and relationships nourished by community life and personal prayer.
Sr. Rosemary Williamson, OLM Toronto

...trying to love with compassion and to respect individuals who are suffering physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
Sr. Norma Samar, OLM, Toronto

...to be kind to those I meet and always find something to be grateful for.
Mina Velasco, OLM Associate Toronto

...to be open to God's plan and try to listen, live, love, and share this plan among God's people.
Gemma Labitan, OLM Associate Toronto

...to preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, to use words.
Mary Sanderson, Toronto





By Sr. Gwen Legault, O.L.M.

Dancing to the rhythm of a new drum

Coming back to live in Canada again after my long years in Nigeria calls for a tremendous adjustment. The rhythm of life for me in Toronto is vastly different from that of my home in the village of Vandeikya and I will always cherish that African beat in my heart. But I meet so many people in my work as a volunteer at Providence Health Care and in my multi-cultural neighbourhood, I am led to appreciate a different rhythm.

Yet, it was an immense pleasure for me to recently receive a letter from Sister Eucharía Ugwu, the principal of St. Francis School for the Deaf, a school that I founded in Vandeikya in 1975. They had just celebrated the school's 36th anniversary. The students provided the entertainment, performing a famous traditional Tiv dance called Tembe Duen to the beat of a deaf drummer, amazing the entire audience.

How could the deaf dance so faithfully to the beat and how could the drummer follow the rhythm without mistake? It remained a mystery to nearly everybody, although from my experience with the deaf I know they can feel the beat on the ground beneath their feet as the dancers swing their horse tails acrobatically to the rhythm of the drum.

Sister Eucharía, in an article about the occasion wrote, "St. Francis School for the Deaf has brought a drastic change to the way society looks at this category of people. What's more, the school has given new life and sense of purpose to a great many physically challenged children in Nigeria."

The beat of that drum and the dancing of those feet will always fill me with pride and joy.∞



Photos this page: Students at the St. Francis School for the Deaf entertain with a traditional Tiv dance at the school's 36th anniversary celebrations this year. Vandeikya, Nigeria.



By Sr. Patricia Kay, O.L.M.

Mary of Magdala's mission



he raising of Lazarus convinced Caiaphas, the high priest, that it was better for one man to die for the people than for the whole nation to perish.

And so the Son of Man set his face resolutely toward Jerusalem. There he was handed over to the chief priests and the scribes who condemned Him to death. They in turn gave him to the pagans to be mocked and scourged and crucified.

But that was not the end. On the third day he rose gloriously from the dead, as he said he would.

Then early in the week, as darkness still covered the land, Mary of Magdala, whose great love proved that her many sins had been forgiven, came to the garden. Brokenhearted, all she knew was his dying. She viewed the empty tomb in dismay and ran quickly to Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved.

"He's been taken away and I don't know where," she cried.

Immediately they returned. They saw that his head cloth was rolled up in a place set apart. The one Jesus loved saw and at last believed that Jesus must rise from the dead.

Mary of Magdala herself was inconsolable and through her tears looked inside again. Two angels in white sat where his body had lain.

"Why are you weeping?" they asked her.

Unafraid she answered directly, "They have taken away my Lord and I don't know where they put him."

Still weeping, she scarcely recognized a gardener who repeated the angels' question.

"Sir," she said to the gardener, "if you have taken him away, tell me and I will go and remove him."

Then that Divine Gardener said simply, "Mary."

"Rabbuni!" she called him in utter joy.

But she was not to cling to him because he had not yet ascended to the Father. Rather, she was to go and find the brethren and tell them what he said: "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Full of belief and happiness and entrusted with her sacred mission, Mary of Magdala ran to those who had been his companions, now mourning and in tears. She breathlessly told them, "I have seen the Lord," then

recounted his very words to her.

But they were unconvinced and stayed fearfully behind locked doors.

He himself would have to pass through those barriers and speak, "Peace," before they could believe. But Mary of Magdala and the other disciple knew a fully developed love that expelled every particle of fear and torture of guilt.

Easter was already theirs.∞



Beatitudes in mission

By Sr. Therese MacDonald, O.L.M.

My first mission inspirations were given to me by my mother as she kneaded bread so many years ago and had me memorize the Butler's catechism. The Beatitudes were included and I drilled them into my head over and over again. Now, 75 years later, I still recall the words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit... the merciful... the pure of heart..." and so on. (*Matthew 5:3-12*)

Later I joined Our Lady's Missionaries and was missioned to Brazil. There, in the 70s, we were introduced to Liberation Theology. The Sermon on the Mount was one of the most used scripture passages in this theology. Living with people materially and spiritually poor, I chose as my personal theme, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Through the years, as my life situation changed, I kept readapting my spiritual themes, always choosing one of the Beatitudes. Some years later there were several deaths in my family and "Blessed are they that mourn, they shall be comforted" became my theme. And the story goes on...

Now I find myself an octogenarian living with several chronic diseases, somewhat handicapped, wondering just what "Blessed are" I am living. One day as I lay on an MRI table reciting old poems to myself to pass the time, the Beatitudes came to mind. With each recitation, a memory surfaced. When I came to the last, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," there was my answer. And the reward, "the kingdom of heaven," is the same as for the first Beatitude.

Although I am not persecuted for my faith, I often read and hear in the media of those who are. As a missionary today, what can I do about it? More words from the Sermon on the Mount ring in my ears. Jesus said, "Pray for those who persecute you..." (*Matthew 5:44*)

The message is quite simple: those who suffer for their faith, Christians as well as others, are my sisters and brothers. My mission today is to pray for them. I can sit in my room and pray, "You, O God, know the anguish and fears of the persecuted. You make yourself known to them. When they commit themselves into your hands, be their strength and comfort." (*Adapted from Psalm 10:17-18*)

Thus have the Beatitudes guided me throughout my life, providing spiritual themes from which to live my mission.∞

“Mission in my life is

...caring for myself and contributing to community life whenever possible, usually doing little jobs that are within my capability.
Sr. Therese MacDonald, OLM, Toronto



Sr. Therese MacDonald and her sister-in-law Rita Lamontagne-MacDonald.

“Mission in my life is

...to give the best that I can give.
Goya Caronan, OLM Associate
Cagayan, Philippines

...to live, appreciate, and share the simple things in life.
Nimfa Codilan Tinoy
OLM Associate, Laguidingan
Misamis Oriental, Philippines

...to do good for our less fortunate brothers and sisters.
Joy Tumamac, OLM Associate
Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Oriental
Philippines

...connecting with the world and enjoying it!
Tensie Villa, Cebu City, Cebu
Philippines



By Sr. Suzanne Marshall, O.L.M.

New beginnings

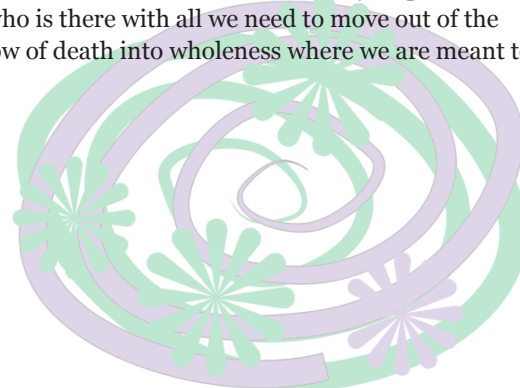
Her pain was palpable as she continued to cry her anguish and confusion at the turn her life had taken. The group of women and men who had come to the meeting waited in silent accompaniment for her to find words to share her distress. Each of us in our own way had been where she was now.

I am part of the group attending the monthly meeting of New Beginnings at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Scarborough, Ontario. Although this group is relatively new to me, it was started in 1976 by Sister Jean DeLuca of the Sisters of St. Joseph. In the summer of 2010 Catholic Family Services took the responsibility of administering the program.

Since the first meeting I attended at St. Bonaventure's parish in the fall of 2010, I have been overwhelmed by the degree of grief and hurt that fills the lives of people who come to New Beginnings in search of healing. Like many self-help groups, the members share as much as they choose. As they talk and listen, they often see a pattern and path forward where before there was only hopeless panic and overlapping circles of pain.

It takes courage to come to the meeting and trust in the members enough to share such a sacred part of one's life. What we gain is the understanding that we are not alone, that others have been there and can affirm that life can and does get better. We find wisdom in the practical suggestions that are offered, we find comfort in hands reaching out in solidarity, and we find hope as we recognize that people are meant to heal.

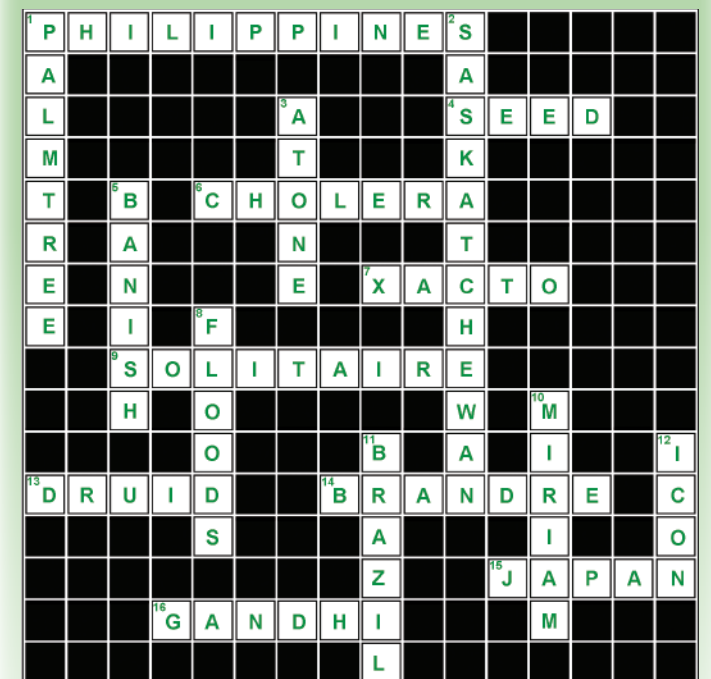
I feel honoured and humbled to be part of this small group. I come away revitalized by the people I meet there, their goodness, their fidelity to family, their willingness to bear so much hurt and not opt out, which must be such a great temptation at times. I witness their power to often forgive the unforgiveable. In the courage of the human heart I see God who has loved us into existence, who has walked with us every step of our lives, and who is there with all we need to move out of the shadow of death into wholeness where we are meant to live.∞



New Beginnings is a ministry of Catholic Family Services of Toronto "to meet the needs of those who are separated, divorced, and widowed. Through various programs: retreats, mini renewals, bereavement groups, divorce groups, and parish based support groups, participants are given the opportunity to move through grief, hurt, anger, and depression to healing, forgiveness, closure, and the beginning of a new fulfilling life."

Visit: www.cfstoronto.com

Answers to crossword on page 13.

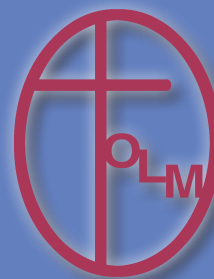




Srs. Frances Brady and Doris MacDonell (standing L-R) and Sr. Christine Gebel (stooping), enjoy a visit with Emily MacDonald, a long-time friend and supporter from Glengarry, Ontario, Canada.

Our Lady's Missionaries

2 Leander Court
 Toronto, Ontario M4B 2W1
 Tel: (416) 752-0263
 Email: olm@bellnet.ca
www.ourladysmissionaries.com



Through Your Generosity

For more than 60 years Our Lady's Missionaries have been missioned around the world on behalf of the Canadian people. Through your generosity we have served in Japan, the Philippines, Nigeria, Brazil, Mexico, Guyana, the Canadian North, and here in Toronto. Along with these more permanent mission commitments, Our Lady's Missionaries served temporarily in Vietnam, Thailand, Biafra, Mozambique, England, and East Timor.

We have been blessed by this great privilege. And you, our benefactors and friends who have been our great support, are constantly remembered in our prayers and with our gratitude knowing that you are close to the heart of God.

As we gradually return to Canada due to ill health and age, we are becoming engaged in ministries serving the people of God here in the Toronto area.

May our loving God continue to bless each of you as you need most. We ask you to continue supporting us in the many ways you have in the past, especially by your prayers and moral support.



Sr. Rosemary Hughes, O.L.M.
Congregational Treasurer