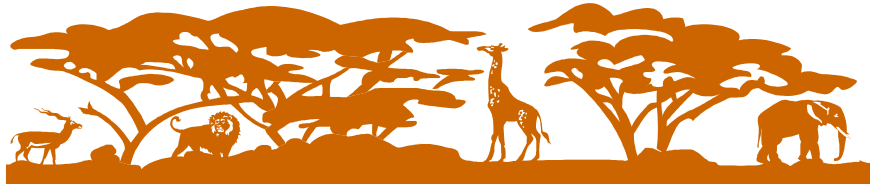


MARYKNOLL FATHERS & BROTHERS

AFRICA REGION



December 2008

Maryknoll Twelfth General Chapter

In the following three theme articles of this newsletter, the Maryknoll Africa Region's delegates to the Twelfth General Chapter share their reflections and insights into the experience of attending this major Society meeting. The Chapter was held at Maryknoll, NY, from October 3 to 24, 2008.



Maryknoll Society 12th General Chapter Process

By Michael Kirwen

Theme
Article

The idea of a new type of process for our Maryknoll Society 12th General Chapter that took place at Maryknoll, New York in October, 2008 goes back two years when it was suggested that the coming Chapter be more pastoral and spiritual. The Chapter Preparation Committee suggested that a new process of group dynamics be employed based on a concept called "presensing" (presence + sensing) which signifies a heightened state of attention that allows individuals and groups, in our case the Chapter delegates, to shift from our ordinary limited view of Maryknoll Society in which we function on a Regional or special-group level, and begin to operate from a future space of possibility for the Society that we felt wants to emerge. Hence the six directions (visions for leadership) that flowed from our interactions. This kind of a shift is seen as the essence of leadership today.

From my perspective, one of the major reasons that we were able to make this shift was the communal prayer services (including prayer booklets, artwork and chapel decorations) that were prepared in a most beautiful and powerful manner by Brother John Beeching around the writings and saying of our founders. They included special times for celebration of our unique charism as Maryknollers, remembrance of all our Maryknoll martyrs, Maryknoll Brothers, Maryknollers who had special influences in our lives, and daily Mass prepared by various groupings of Maryknollers. We were immersed and renewed in our Christian faith and commitment to Maryknoll. This heightened state of attention spilled over into the formal and informal meetings for the three-week period. Furthermore the process was skillfully facilitated by Brother Paul Michalenko. We owe him a debt of gratitude.

Advantages:

- ◆ The 30 Maryknoll delegates were able to unite in the framework of our Maryknoll charism, missionary vocations, and Christian faith and start the conversations, as one entity, on some of the major issues relevant to the present and future directions of our Society.
- ◆ The Chapter delegates hope to use a similar process through the post-Chapter meetings in order to facilitate a similar shift to a heightened stage of attention towards the Maryknoll Society in the lives and apostolates of the entire Maryknoll community worldwide.
- ◆ If this shift in awareness for future possibilities is even partially achieved throughout the Maryknoll world, then the Chapter will have been a success for the "conversations" begun at the Chapter will be continued, modified and developed for the enrichment of all. However, this response is dependent on the openness and cooperation of all members
- ◆ The spirit of discernment and unity seemed to spill over into the residential community at Maryknoll creating an atmosphere of calm and peace at the shared meals.



Limitations:

- ◆ The seven major topic papers (upon which the six directions are based) were developed through committees that one was free to join and to move in and out of. However, due to time constraints, it was not possible to give input into more than two or three.
- ◆ I spent most of my time in the committee on Society Identity and Membership - an issue that had surfaced in Africa's pre-Chapter discussions. Consequently I was only able to sit with the committee on Recruitment/Formation a few times. My concern there was to ensure that part of the theological formation of candidates be done in an overseas context - an idea that was included in the final draft.

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◆ Since the directional statements emerged from the floor out of the concerns of the delegates, there were some important societal issues, listed below, that to my mind were not adequately addressed:

1. Outside of the Superior General's report on finance, nothing was discussed about Maryknoll's current spending priorities whether in the US or in its overseas apostolates -- a major indicator of the Society's missionary commitments and vision.
2. The uniqueness and special position of the Maryknoll Society in the Church in the US, which was cited as the reason for its extensive missionary awareness programs, was not discussed in light of the limited number of US dioceses that are open to Maryknoll's programs and promotions.
3. The uncertainty concerning the distinction between apostolates of Maryknollers in overseas Regions versus apostolates based in the US was raised several times but never properly discussed.
4. The issue of the dwindling number of Maryknollers and the long-term viability of the Society was left somewhat in abeyance, as there did not seem to be any common position or wisdom on this reality. I intervened at one point saying that the situation of the Society is similar to that of an African thinking about marrying a second wife when the first wife is no longer fertile. This analogy did not get a response.

Final Remark:

LET'S KEEP THE CHAPTER'S CONVERSATIONS GOING!

LET'S KEEP THE FLAME OF MISSION ALIVE!



Reflections on a Prayerful General Chapter

By Mark Gruenke

Theme
Article

I have received comments from more than one person remarking that we seemed to have been on retreat rather than at a Chapter. There is some truth to this observation. We did start with a two day retreat on our founder's lives and on their writings. During the Chapter itself we spent time daily in private and community prayer. Each day started with a half hour of optional private meditation followed by about 20 minutes of common prayer. At noon we celebrated Mass together. And at the end of the day we spent another 20 minutes together in quiet meditation. Brother John Beeching prepared all of the prayer materials while Father Jim Kroeger accompanied our hymns at the piano. It was a very rich prayer experience. Everyone who participated agreed that this had much to do with the outcome of our Chapter.

The observation that I have heard that we didn't seem to accomplish much at this Chapter, however, is not correct. It is a misconception based upon presuppositions that this Chapter would be like past Chapters. This Chapter was very different. The main difference at this Chapter was the approach that was used. Instead of emphasizing our differences on the various issues we decided to seek out what unites us. We listened to one another in a non-judgmental way. We reflected and prayed over our traditions and over our experiences. In this way we grounded ourselves in what is at the heart of our vocation to God, mission and Maryknoll. It is true that we didn't create and vote on a series of concrete amendments and proposals. We chose instead to elaborate common directions that would unite us. Together we elaborated six common directions that will give ourselves and our newly elected General Council orientation during the next six years.

Another comment that I have heard about the Chapter is that since we didn't come up with some spectacular new proposals to stem the tide of the Society's diminishment we must have resigned ourselves to the death of the Society. Far from it! As the Chapter progressed, it became more and more apparent to us what great gifts Maryknoll and our missionary vocation are to us. The greatest strength that we Maryknollers have is our oath to one another to serve God and mission as a Society of men united in common purpose. Commitment of this nature is rare indeed. It is a great grace that we have received and that we share with one another.

Could a greater outcome have been hoped for from Chapter? So often Chapters simply write beautiful vision papers, elect new leadership and crank out proposal after proposal for leadership to implement. Then, when it is all over, each member goes off to his own particular ministry leaving it up to the General Council to carry the Society forward. This Chapter ended differently. There were no illusions that the General Council had been given a set of blueprints for the next six years. No blueprint was written.



The future of the Society depends rather upon a process that demands the involvement of all of the members. This was a very big commitment indeed that we Chapter delegates made to one another and in the name of all of the members of our Society. It was not done lightly. We all experienced doubts and fears about what we were doing. We were only able to come to such a far reaching commitment because of the high level of trust that prevailed at Chapter. That trust was achieved through prayer and respectful listening. We have now committed the whole Society to the same process over the next six years.

No one can accuse us of being a do nothing Chapter. We gave ourselves over fully to a process that lead to a profound renewal of the meaning of our oath to one another. We celebrated the renewal of that commitment in a formal ceremony of renewal of oath. Each member knelt at the head of the founders' tombs and renewed his oath with his hand on the Bible.

We delegates came forth from the Chapter committed to engage all Society members who are willing in the same process. Every Society member is called to renewed commitment to one another and to mission. Chapter is no longer seen as a one month event every six years. Chapter continues throughout the next six years as the membership meets in small and in large gatherings to decide how we can walk together down a shared path of mission in Maryknoll. The future of the Society rests in the hands of us all.

2008 - 2014: A Time for Renewal

By David A. Smith

Theme
Article

If I were to choose a single word to represent the theme of the 12th Maryknoll Society General Chapter, that word would undoubtedly be "Renewal." Throughout our three and a half weeks together, the delegates discussions ranged far and wide and then always came back to the idea of renewal - spiritual renewal, a renewal of members, a renewal of the Society, a renewal of commitment to mission, a renewal of our appreciation of Maryknoll's charisms, a renewal of our oath (and all that that implies), a renewal of faith, a renewal of understanding of our founders, a renewal of trust in the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, a renewal of our devotion to the Queen of Maryknoll, Mary, and to her Son, our Lord and Savior. Each day someone would mention the significance of the 2011 Centenary anniversary of the Society that will be a Jubilee moment in our history and a time for renewal. Comments about becoming re-vitalized and re-enthused were frequently heard - again, aspects of being renewed.

The delegates to the Chapter shared a common spirit and sought to discern a common vision for the road ahead. All were amazed at how little politicking, arguing, or personal agenda were seen. As we



had collectively agreed from the outset that this Chapter would be different - more prayerful, reflective, and pastorally-focused - the old patterns dissolved away without much resistance. The result was a shared purpose in finding future vision and directions for the entire Society. The few votes that were taken dealt with Constitutional changes and the election of leadership. There were no commissions or mandates. Rather, directional statements were developed that are intended to guide the leadership for the next six years. These directional statements are at the heart of the Pastoral Letter from the Chapter to Society members and will be the focus of our discussions and further discernment in the months and years ahead. That was another key concept. The

Chapter did not see itself as the "end" or the "answer." Rather, the Chapter is the beginning of a six year process in which all Society members are expected to participate. The six Chapter directional statements serve as a springboard for further visioning and discernment of how we want to be Maryknoll into the future.

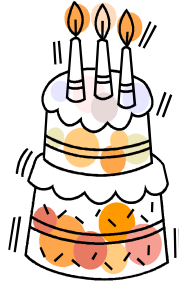
The Chapter also touched upon the realities of Maryknoll's getting smaller and older, the limited number of new vocations, and the increasing diversities within our membership. These realities elicit some fear and uncertainty among many members. They also can be a source of tensions, misunderstandings, and prejudices that result in members feeling hurt, isolated, marginalized, or unaccepted. It was further recognized that young people interested in religious life nowadays all want community and that a lack of community within Maryknoll was part of the reason for the woundedness being felt by some members. When Maryknollers were many - at the seminary or in the overseas Regions - support for one another was more readily available because other Maryknollers were always close at hand. As we become fewer we will need to make more concerted efforts to support each other. This leads to seeing "Maryknoll as community." It will require a commitment from members and perhaps even a willingness to relocate and/or change ministries in order to fulfill this renewed way of being Maryknoll.

As Chapter was winding down much was said about the extremely positive experience of the Chapter process. It was hoped that something of this experience could be shared with all members of the Society. That is the goal of the post-Chapter: to begin the renewal by continuing the Chapter process from now until the 13th General Chapter in 2014.



Happy Birthday to You!

Ed Schoellmann Jan. 4
 John Lange Jan. 18
 David Smith Jan. 19
 Frank TenHoopen Jan. 25
 Ed Shellito Jan. 25
 Dick Baker Jan. 31
 Tom Tiscornia Feb. 5



Lance Nadeau Feb. 10
 Joe Healey Apr. 29
 Ken Thesing May 9
 Wayne Weinlader May 12
 John Conway May 13
 Douglas May Jun. 9
 John Waldrep Jun. 12

Participating in the 2008 World Youth Day in Australia

By Sheila Mulinya

The 2008 World Youth Day experience in Sidney, Australia will forever remain embedded in my memory as a great achievement. The main reason is that as a filmmaker working for Ukweli Video in Nairobi, Kenya when I leave to go on a shoot, I don't quite come back with what I expected to get. But with the 2008 World Youth Day I came back with what I expected and much more.



I left Kenya in July, 2008 very enthusiastic about my first ever World Youth Day Pilgrimage. Even though the trip was long with stopovers in Doha and Singapore before arriving in Sydney, I was too excited to realize what the fatigue was doing to me. My experience was enriching, interactive and educative. I arrived safely back in Kenya from Australia a better Catholic and a more informed believer. It was truly a life changing experience.

I met and made many friends in Sidney and they were all very happy to hear my stories about the Catholic Faith in Africa. Many got to learn that Africa is not a big bushland where people walk around naked and perch on trees when night falls. I remember a family that I stayed with in Pennant Hills, Australia who were surprised to see me with a sleeping bag. They thought that even though it was a prerequisite for the trip since July is winter in Australia, I wouldn't know what it was.

The whole event will remain embedded in my memory banks for a very long time. I am very grateful to all those who supported me in my venture as a pilgrim. The prayer and sharing sessions taught me a lot about what my fellow youth in the diaspora understand about their Catholic Faith. The spiritual preparation before the trip ensured that I enjoyed the



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Catechesis Sessions, Prayer Meetings and Bible Study that we had at St. Agatha Catholic Church in Pennant Hills.

The first Sunday after my arrival back in Kenya, my fellow youth from Kileleshwa Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Nairobi were elated to see me. They were very happy with the good news I brought along. I talked to them about the events of World Youth Day and how economically developed Australia is as a country. It is a blessing that I used my journalistic eye on the pilgrimage.



We all received Pope Benedict XVI's message with excitement. Despite the numerous demonstrations by pro-abortionists, gay communities and supporters of contraceptives and other groups, we were steadfast in our pilgrimage. I am happy that as a pilgrim I brought home the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ and the strong will to serve God through prayer and action as a youth in the Catholic Church in Kenya. I am glad that this whole experience has changed my life in a big way and now I can confidently say that "I AM PROUDLY CATHOLIC."



*NOTE: Sheila is a 27 year old Kenyan Catholic woman whose photograph and reflections were published on page 13 of the July/August, 2008 of the **Maryknoll Magazine**. In his article about World Youth Day in the July, 2008 issue of the Spanish magazine **Revista Maryknoll** Father John Sivalon wrote: "This young movie maker shares her skills in the arts with other youth with the aim to move them to reflect on their faith and its relationship to the dramatic challenges facing young people in Kenya today. As Sheila says she seeks 'to share her own deep faith in the love of God and invite others to recognize that love and respond to it.'"*

PROFILE OF THE AFRICA REGION

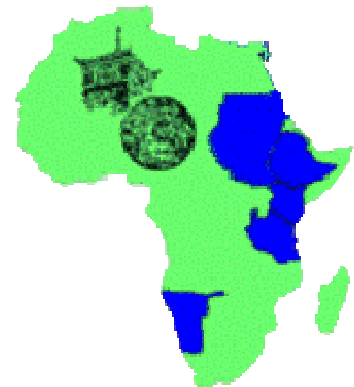
30 Priests (with 3 in Retirement Community)

5 Brothers

35 TOTAL

We work in the following African countries:

**Ethiopia
Kenya
Namibia
Sudan
Tanzania**



Remembering our Maryknoll Ancestors

January

Fr. Albert Good	January 2, 1984
Br. Ronald Rak	January 12, 1994
Fr. John J. Ridyard	January 14, 2003
Fr. William Collins	January 20, 1974

February

Fr. William Murphy	February 7, 1985
Fr. William Daley	February 18, 2008
Fr. Charles Kenny	February 19, 1973
Fr. Joseph Brannigan	February 26, 1999

March

Br. John Walsh	March 2, 2000
Fr. Delbert Robinson	March 15, 1991
Fr. Louis Bayless	March 16, 2001
Fr. Joseph Trainor	March 28, 1997
Fr. George Pfister	March 30, 1994

April

Fr. Donald Donovan	April 8, 2007
Fr. Brendan Smith	April 10, 1989
Fr. Thomas Shea	April 14, 2002
Fr. Thomas Mantica	April 28, 1978
Br. Justin Joyce	April 29, 2002

May

Fr. George Buckley	May 22, 1998
Fr. Thomas Burke	May 28, 1999

June

Fr. Daniel Lenahan	June 1, 1977
Fr. Steven Schroepfel	June 6, 2008
Fr. Charles Callahan	June 10, 1996
Fr. Joseph Reinhart	June 12, 1999
Bp. John Rudin	June 14, 1995
Fr. Walter Gleason	June 20, 1983
Fr. Charles Liberatore	June 22, 1981
Fr. Alden Pierce	June 27, 1989
Fr. Edward Bratton	June 27, 1990

July

Fr. James Morrissey	July 4, 1982
Fr. John Quinn	July 8, 1995
Fr. Joseph Corso	July 9, 1989
Fr. George Egan	July 9, 2001
Fr. George Putnam	July 16, 1991

August

Fr. George Haggerty	August 10, 1974
Fr. Paul Bordenet	August 16, 1963
Br. Brian Fraher	August 21, 1996
Bp. Edward McGurkin	August 28, 1983
Fr. Denis O'Brien	August 29, 2002
Fr. James Kuhn	August 30, 2007

September

Fr. Joseph Glynn	September 13, 1990
Br. Fidelis Deichelbohrer	September 23, 1975
Fr. George Mikolajczyk	September 29, 2008

October

Fr. Alan Smidlein	October 2, 1988
Fr. James Lenihan	October 2, 1998
Fr. Phillip McCue	October 20, 1998

November

Fr. Daniel O'Brien	November 11, 1991
Fr. Edward Baskerville	November 13, 1975
Fr. John Bergwall	November 14, 1996
Fr. John Graser	November 15, 1992
Fr. Michael Duffy	November 16, 1999
Fr. Richard Hochwalt	November 16, 2003
Fr. Edward James	November 18, 1987
Fr. Thomas Quirk	November 23, 1979

December

Fr. Gerard J. Grondin	December 3, 1966
Fr. Donald Steed	December 3, 2007
Fr. Francis Flynn	December 13, 2003

Call for Articles for Our Next Issue

Date: June 2009

Theme: Inculturation in Africa

Material to Editor by: 1 May 2009

Please send material to the Editor, Joe Healey, by Email to:

JGHealey@aol.com or by paper mail to: Maryknoll Society House,
P.O. Box 43058, Nairobi, Kenya (for scanning into a computer).