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# MARYKNOLL

VOCATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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**Br. Tim Raible Trying Out Elephant Travel In Thailand.**

*"Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others". Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel*

Pope Francis is a missionary pope! You can tell he is writing from personal experience. Most Maryknoll missionaries could have written the same message. With a faith inherited from our parents and nourished in our parish communities we left "security on the shore" and became excited by the mission of communicating life and God's love to others. We don't regret that decision because our lives have grown through the experiences of learning new languages, adjusting to new cultures, meeting new people and making new friends.

As missionaries we want to give of ourselves for the sake of others, especially the poor and those living on the margins of societies. But, in the process, God graces us with so many experiences that witness to God's presence in the world. Sure there are difficult times and unexpected events that can even be tragic, but, in the midst of it all God is with us. And when we are down we often see the face of Jesus in the people we went to serve and are lifted up. This is the gift of the missionary vocation!

Never be stymied by the challenges presented in life. Rather, be close to God in prayer, follow the teachings of Jesus and take the steps necessary to find the place where God calls you!

As always we look forward to hearing from you. Fr. Mike ([msnyder@maryknoll.org](mailto:msnyder@maryknoll.org)), Fr. Joe Donovan ([jdonovan@maryknoll.org](mailto:jdonovan@maryknoll.org)) and Mr. Greg Darr ([gdarr@maryknoll.org](mailto:gdarr@maryknoll.org))



**Sunrise at Ndoleje Mission Church, Shinyanga, Tanzania**

# FIVE NEW CANDIDATES FOR MARYKNOLL

Maryknoll recently accepted five new seminarians to our Initial Formation Program and it is with pleasure that we welcome them to Maryknoll!



**Andrew Feister**

Andrew is 24 years old and hails from Cadillac, Michigan. He is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of 5 children. Presently studying at Northwestern Michigan College, Andrew will enter our initial formation program in August and complete his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy at St. Xavier University.



**Patrick Okok**

Patrick is a 25 year old man from Segga village in Western Kenya. He is the 7<sup>th</sup> of 10 children. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education at Kenyatta University with a specialty in Physics and Mathematics. Presently studying philosophy at Tangaza University in Nairobi, Patrick will begin the Spiritual Year in Chicago this January.



**Charles Ogony**

Charles is a 23 year old man from Migori, Kenya. He is the 5<sup>th</sup> of 12 children. He earned a Bachelor's of Arts Degree in Education at Kenyatta University with specialties in Geography and History. Presently studying philosophy at Tangaza University in Nairobi, Charles will begin the Spiritual Year in Chicago this January.



**Joshua Mutende**

Joshua is a 23 year old man from Kakamega, Kenya. He is the 5<sup>th</sup> of 8 children. He earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education at Kenyatta University with specialties in English and Literature. Presently studying philosophy at Tangaza University in Nairobi, Joshua will begin the Spiritual Year in Chicago this January.



Sean Cintron is 30 years old and comes to us from Brooklyn, NY. A former Army Paratrooper, he is the first of two children and has been studying at Fordham University while participating in the Cathedral College Seminary Program. Sean will enter our initial formation program in August and complete his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy at St. Xavier University in Chicago.

## VOCATION PRAYER

*Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures – I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my soul; I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands, without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father.*

**Blessed father Charles de foucauld**



# Maryknoll Chicago Vocation Retreat

## October 13 – 15, 2017



Join us for a weekend retreat at the Maryknoll Residence in Chicago. Located in the Hyde Park area just opposite Lake Michigan it's a great location with parks everywhere that allow you to get out and enjoy the Windy City! This fall retreat will begin on Friday evening October 13<sup>th</sup> and end on Sunday at noon October 15<sup>th</sup>. Joining us will give you a good opportunity to get to know Maryknoll while meeting our candidates and formation team, seeing where they live and visiting the Catholic Theological Union where they study.

Consider becoming a missionary priest or Brother and come join us for this weekend event! Contact Fr. Mike Snyder at [msnyder@maryknoll.org](mailto:msnyder@maryknoll.org) for further information!



## MISSIONERS' CONTRIBUTIONS



*As mentioned in past newsletters, we asked Maryknoll Missioners some questions. Here is another one: Who were some of the people that you spoke with about becoming a priest? Did you have a mentor or role model that inspired you? What kind of advice did you seek from them? What was the best piece of advice you received? Here are some of the answers:*

I talked with my parish priest. I went to a Catholic University run by Benedictine Monks who were very influential in teaching me about vocations, prayer, service, and community. Their Masses and liturgy of the hours are gearing to going out and being a witness to Christ's love in the world. My campus minister and the monks who lived in the dorms with us students were inspiring as well. The Benedictine sisters at the College of St. Benedict just down the road encouraged me to look at priesthood as well. One of the monks said, "Go for it," which was helpful advice. Various professors practiced what they taught and told me they thought Maryknoll would be a good fit for me with wanting to be in solidarity with the poor. After I was strongly considering religious life, a vocation director told me to visit different communities to get a sense of what they are like, which helped me to compare and contrast and see where I felt most at home. (Fr. Shaun Crumb – serving in China)

Yes...during grade school my 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher – Sister Antonio spoke a great deal about this holy man in Montreal. She knew Brother Andre (now St. Andre Bessette) and talked about him from time to time. She was sharing more about who he was and not always about what he was doing. The Brothers of Christian Instruction had a high school not far from home and their life style and presence always inspired me. The Graymoor Friars had a novitiate not far from my home in Saranac Lake, NY and would visit from time to time. I would consider many of these men and the Ursuline Sisters as well as priests in my home parish to be key mentors in my early years. (Br. Wayne Fitzpatrick – serving in the U.S.)



**Newly Ordained Frs. Daniel Kim & Peter Latouf with Bp. Joseph Caggiano of Bridgeport and Fr. Raymond Finch, Superior General of Maryknoll**

I was blessed enough to have a team of people (priests, religious, friends and family) whom I engaged about discussing the possibility of my becoming a priest. What was most helpful, now that I think about it, were the mixed responses and support (sometimes the lack thereof), that really helped me to get a deeper insight into the different angles that were associated with this life-changing commitment. The type of advice that I sought from them, in a nutshell, was that of which came from their hearts; meaning, to have the courtesy and courage to tell me flat-out what they really thought. In retrospect, it would have been a huge disservice to receive “advice” that was mired in pleasantries and platitudes—just tell me what you really think! And believe me I received just that! Not to say that it did not come with its challenges and frustrations but in retrospect I am truly thankful that those whom I elicited for advice had the courage to tell me what they really thought and felt—which definitely helped make the process clearer and more concrete. So, out of the various advices that I received, it can be aggregated into this one pithy saying: “God created YOU to be YOU, so do not waste your life in the fruitless endeavor of trying to please others rather live your life in a way that gives glory to God in the way that only YOU uniquely can.” (Fr. Daniel Kim – serving in Hong Kong)

Most of my discernment came through personal reflection and prayer. For me, being committed to the Catholic Church and to my faith are of utmost importance. I did a lot of traveling around while I was in college, but throughout all of these travels I felt

something was lacking — a greater connection to the Church. Talking with some of my friends, and even some of my high school classmates who had become seminarians, I came to find that the priesthood was the right track. (Fr. Peter Latouf – serving in Hong Kong)

## MISSION REFLECTION

A few months ago, I stopped by the office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations here in the Twin Cities. They stand as champions of justice, peace and dialogue, particularly in issues that touch upon the lives of the tens of thousands of Minnesotans who are Muslim. In my conversation with Mr. Jaylani Hussein, the center's Executive Director, I recalled the extraordinary hospitality I enjoyed as a Maryknoll missionary among the Somali people of Kenya and those Somalis forced from their homes by conflict and famine in neighboring Somalia. No matter the hardships endured by these families, they welcomed me with smiles, laughter, unrestrained hospitality and the most delicious cups of hot spiced tea and milk I've ever enjoyed.

After I unspooled accounts of Somali hospitality, Mr. Hussein responded, "There is a saying in my country [Somalia]; even in this city [Minneapolis] -- it is impossible for a person to ever be truly alone and unwanted. That's because somewhere, there's always a Somali man or woman who sits at a table with a pot of tea ready to welcome you to sit and enjoy it with them."

Mr. Hussein's axiom has become for me, a wonderful image of vocation ministry and even mission itself. Our vocational stories are meant to be shared like a warm pot of tea. We sit ready to invite people to our lives, and to God's love, in the ways we open our hearts and convey meaningful encounters with love, life, even pain and death – all experienced by Christ. In this, I've been truly blessed, first as a missionary and then as a vocation minister, to enjoy the hospitality of so many who poured out, so generously from their lives, the love of Christ.

-- Mr. Greg Darr, Vocation Minister



## *Getting Beyond Your Fears*

### **Fr. Charlie, OP**

Candidates have often told me they find the period after they've read the material, met with the vocation director, chosen the community, and prayed, and prayed, and prayed, the most difficult. They know that in order to finally address this calling that they've felt for so many years, they must move forward and begin the application process. This next step is where the rubber hits the road. Inertia sets in, and like an airplane circling an airport, their vocation remains in a comfortable and unobtrusive holding pattern.

This phenomenon affects most of us whenever we face a major life-decision. We face a choice. Either we choose to let the uncertainty and fear of the unknown hold us hostage, or we claim the freedom from fear that comes with being a child of God.

In his book *Soul Brothers*, Richard Rohr writes about Peter the apostle. He is the "everyman" - the regular guy - because like us he is blessed with an array of gifts that occasionally get overshadowed by fear and bad decisions. It's not until he realizes God's unfailing love that Peter moves beyond his fears and begin his part in building God's kingdom.

*"On the personal level, which is where it all starts, Peter is a grand and honest statement about how we all come to God. This pattern is a great surprise, and for many a great shock and even a disappointment. We clearly come to God not by doing it right but ironically by doing it wrong.*

*...Biblical holiness has to do with God's call, grace and faithfulness to us and not the faithfulness of our response, which is why the text goes out of its way to show Peter's first response as almost always incorrect, and his second response almost always forced upon him by the goodness and patience of Jesus. Check it out for yourself in all of the Peter stories. He is the first in foolishness, and the first in surrender. That is the normal path. Until the cock crows, we do not get it. Until the cock crows, we do not know ourselves. We are all saved in spite of ourselves, and never is that more clearly*

*illustrated that in the life of Peter. God loves Peter because God is good, and that is what Peter finally sees and what makes him fall in love with Jesus in return. Finally, Peter the everyman runs with John the beloved to the resurrection, always trying to catch up. ... Once I knew that fallible, failing men like Peter were the norm, then I was able to hope for love - and find hope for myself."*

"What if I really don't have a vocation? What if I have to quit?" I'm convinced these questions have plagued candidates (including myself!) for the last hundreds of years. The problem lies in allowing fear (of change, failure, etc.) and uncertainty to hold us hostage in a state of complacency. Like most major decisions, choosing to discern your vocation involves action, risk and ultimately trusting in God.

We know that not all who enter will remain with us to the end. Part of every formation director's ministry is to assist the student in discerning whether or not they are called to such a life. Those who leave have not failed. They have, in fact, succeeded in what they originally set out to accomplish - discerning God's call. They can now go on and continue their journey in another community, marriage or as a single person. There is no failure in trying and finding it is not for you. We fail when we allow our fears to paralyze us from exploring our vocation.



Chicago Vocation Weekend Retreat 2016

[MaryknollSociety.org/Vocations](http://MaryknollSociety.org/Vocations)