

Marist Mission Today

Number 81

Marist Missionary Sisters

Winter 2018

Dear Partners in Mission,

As a Region we were very excited when we heard there would be six Sisters in Temporary Vows from different parts of the congregation coming for a nine-month ongoing formation program. They would live with our senior Sisters at 62 Newton Street in Waltham, Massachusetts. The two coordinators who would be accompanying them would be Sr. Virginia Fornasa and Sr. Telesia Mulipola.



This has been a good arrangement for both groups. The Sisters who are still new in religious life are living with senior Sisters who have lived in other countries and cultures for most of their lives. There is a mutual sharing between the younger and older generation. Laughter and joy can often be heard as you enter the dining room. As one older Sister said to me, "living with these younger professed Sisters has given me hope for the future of the congregation." The response of the Sisters in the Formation group has been that they have learned so much from the older Sisters who have lived as Missionaries, Marist, and Religious for so many years.

These Sisters have not taken final vows yet in the congregation. It has been between 2 to 6 years since their first vows, and they have all served in mission in a country not their own. Having a peer group to be with at this time of their formation has been helpful so they can share with each other what it has been like to be on mission and living in another culture. Being a missionary has many challenges but also many blessings.

To me, it is important that we, as a congregation, give our Sisters the best formation and preparation that we can to live in today's context. My wish is that more women would feel called to live this way of life. Today's world needs women who are dedicated and can share Mary's spirit especially with those on the margins. Pope Francis often challenges young adults to think of being missionaries. Did you ever think God could be calling you?

Sister Mary Jane Kenney, smsm

*Regional Leader
Region of the Americas*



Sisters Mira, Maya, Senitila, Virginia, Catherine, Mary, Sunitha, and Marie Chantal at the close of a course on "Mission Today".

Ongoing Formation Program for Sisters in Temporary Vows

In mid-October 2017 six Marist Missionary Sisters arrived for the first time in the USA from their missions in Madagascar, Senegal, Rome, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Colombia. They also came from different countries of origin: Rwanda, Togo, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Kiribati, and the Solomon Islands.

This international group was called together by our congregational leader, Sr. Georgeanne Marie Donovan, to participate in a time of ongoing formation in our way of life, and also for online studies in theology and Scripture from the Dominican International University, in either English or French. All the Sisters in this group are reasonably bilingual in both of these languages, in addition to their own various mother tongues.

Our "in house" courses and workshops aim to deepen understanding and practice of our particular way of life: Prayer, Mission, Living the Vowed Life in an apostolic community, Marist history and spirit, including an in-depth

study of our Constitutions, and the integration of the Sisters' early years of experience as Marist Missionary Religious women.

In addition to studies, there is limited volunteer ministry in the Pastoral Care department of Maristhill Nursing Home or in the After-School Program for children at St Mary's Parish in Waltham.

There has been time for other new experiences: visits to Boston and to the "Plimouth Plantation" – and of course a first experience of snow and winter cold! We are now enjoying the first signs of Spring!



Farewell, Colombia!

It was in 1983 that the Bishop of Monteria, Colombia, first invited the Marist Missionary Sisters to work in his diocese. Bishop Carlos José Ruiseco Vierira came to visit us in Lexington, Massachusetts to meet the first four Sisters who would be part of this new mission: Sisters Mary Rufina Medina (USA), Noela Garcia,(USA) Viviana Kidimasi (Fiji) and Malia Nive Kepu (Tonga). Our sisters served in pastoral ministry in Monteria for many years and also had a community in the capital, Bogota.

Bishop Ruiseco later became the Archbishop of Cartagena. He became aware of the great needs of people who had been displaced from other areas of the country because of violence, and were settling in the outskirts of the city. He asked our Sisters to establish a mission in what was then a shack settlement, called El Pozon. Sisters Akeneta Folituu and Ana Briones were the pioneers of this new mission in 1998.

Over the years, Marist Missionary Sisters from many countries have served in Colombia. But because of our diminishing numbers, our congregation had to make the decision last year to withdraw the few remaining Sisters from Colombia. Though there was sadness in leaving, the Sisters can be happy that they have done so much to prepare others to take leadership in the church community



Sister Joyce Ann Edelmann (2nd from right) presented an interactive workshop on "Alternatives to Violence." One of the activities was to create a "tree" that shows all the manifestations of violence in today's world that we could think of – and then search for the "roots" of violence beneath these actions. We then did the same for "Non-violence". Contemplating both trees was an exercise in finding hope despite the chaos in today's world. The Sisters are holding some of the "keys" to Non-Violence that they discovered.



Photos from old albums: Above: Bishop Ruiseco meeting in Lexington MA in 1983 with Sisters Viviana, Rufina, Noela and Malia Nive. Below: Sisters Ana Briones and Akeneta Folituu, the "pioneers" of El Pozon, talking with Sr. Angela Loda at a meeting in Bogota c.2000.



TRIBUTE OF ARCHBISHOP CARLOS JOSE RUISECO VIERIRA TO THE MISSIONARY SISTERS AND THEIR WORK IN COLOMBIA

Archbishop Carlos José Ruiseco Vierira is now retired and lives in Barranquilla in the house for retired priests.

On the 29 of December 2017, he invited the two remaining Sisters to Barranquilla for a farewell Eucharist and lunch. Afterwards he sent the following letter:

Barranquilla,
January 7, 2018

To Sisters Helen Muller smsm, and Palepa Aukusitino smsm:

In these days when we begin a new year, you begin a new stage in life and in your religious apostolate. I have received from Father Rafael Castillo a very nice report or commentary on the pastoral, spiritual and material work that you are giving to the Church of Cartagena today: a work of many Sisters who have sacrificed themselves in this Mission of El Pozón. I greatly admire the personality of each Sister, the apostolic work, the promotion of the people, (especially the leaders), the link to the diocese and the assimilation of the culture of Cartagena (as in the past the culture of Monteria).

I wish you two (the last ones I met and greeted) and all those who have gone through the Mission, may God bless your steps from now on, in Boston, in Rome, in the places where Providence assigns you, in the spirit of Francoise Perrotton and the Pioneers.

We thank you and congratulate you for the work accomplished. We are sad because of your departure, but we are not worried. Your work in Santa Eduviges (and in Montería, and Bogotá) continues, by the grace of God, in the people, institutions and places that you fostered, created and formed. The Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary will continue to live among us...

Bon voyage and let us keep the communion of prayer with you and us.

Your grateful friend,
+ Carlos José Ruiseco Vierira
Archbishop Emeritus of Cartagena



Fr. Rafael Castillo (left) the pastoral vicar of the archdiocese of Cartagena and retired Archbishop Carlos José Ruiseco Vierira with Sisters Palepa Aukusitino and Helen Muller – the last two SMSM to depart from Colombia.



Sister Ana Berru (3rd from left) with some of the young people of El Pozon. (2014)



Sisters who were missioned in Cartagena in 2014, at the time of a visit by the Regional Leader, Sr. Claire Rheaume, and where they are now: Front: Sisters Marisa Besacchi (Italy), Margaret Walsh (Peru), (Back) Palepa Aukusitino (Rome), Ana Berru (Peru), Michelle De Silva (Philippines) and Claire (USA)

We Keep in Memory...



Thinking of becoming a Marist Missionary Sister?

Learn more: Visit our website maristsmsm.org

Email: vocations@maristsmsm.org

(Photo: Sisters in Jamaica, January 2015)

*Sister Martha Fluet, smsm
August 8th, 1919 – January 15th 2018
May she rest in peace.*

**READ MORE ABOUT THE MARIST MISSIONARY SISTERS at our website
www.maristsmsm.org or on [www.Facebook.com/MaristMissionarySisters](https://www.facebook.com/MaristMissionarySisters)**

OR: CURRENT RESIDENT

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Walpole, MA
Permit No. 59435

349 Grove Street
Waltham, MA 02453-6018

Marist Today
MISSION