



Maryknoll Convent School Alumni (B.C.) Association

Spring
Newsletter

March, 2013



Maryknoll Sisters Founder Named National Women's Hall of Fame Inductee

Maryknoll, NY – Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, MM, founder of Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, has been named one of nine American women to be inducted in 2013 into the National Women's Hall of Fame (NWHF), it was announced on March 8, 2013 by the NWHF.



The National Women's Hall of Fame, which is the oldest national membership organization dedicated to recognizing outstanding individual American women and their achievements, selects up to 12 women every other year "to honor in perpetuity whose contributions have been of the greatest value for the development of the country." They are selected by a distinguished board of judges from leading national organizations, education institutions and diverse fields of human endeavor.

Mother Mary Joseph, whose "extraordinary achievements were recognized and applauded" by all the judges, according to NWHF deputy director Amanda Bishop, will join the 247 eminent women who have been inducted into the Hall since its founding in 1969 at a special induction ceremony to be held at the NWHF headquarters in Seneca Falls, NY, on Saturday, October 12, 2013. Among others included in this year's list besides Mother Mary Joseph were Betty Ford and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi.

"We are thrilled and honored by Mother Mary Joseph's selection," said Sister Janice McLaughlin, MM, president of Maryknoll Sisters, upon receiving the news from NWHF president Beverly P. Ryder, "and happy for the recognition it gives to our founder who achieved so much, not only for women religious, but for all American women, at a time when possibilities for them were far more limited than they are today.

"Mary Josephine Rogers, as she was called prior to joining religious life, broke through the negative stereotypes about the role of American Catholic women in church and society at the beginning of the twentieth century," Sister Janice commented. "As founder of the first American mission congregation of Catholic women, she proved that women were equal to the demands of life and ministry abroad, particularly in places where poverty, physical hardship and sometimes, even safety during wartime, were commonplace."

A graduate of Smith College, Mother Mary Joseph was a woman gifted with natural leadership ability and a charismatic bearing that quickly showed others, among them Father James A. Walsh, founder of Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers, with whom she worked, that she was the perfect person to lead the first US-based congregation of women religious dedicated to foreign mission in 1912.

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Born on October 27, 1882, in Roxbury, MA, Mary Josephine “Mollie” Rogers, the fourth of eight children, was inspired by her Irish Catholic parents with a passion for the church and its works worldwide that they sought to sow in all their children.

While in a season of wondering how she might personally contribute to the work of the Church, Mollie overheard the joyful praises of Protestant students exiting a service at Smith in 1904, where they had pledged their lives to missionary service. “If Protestant women can do this,” she wondered to herself, “why not Catholic women, as well?” One year later, following her own graduation from Smith, Mollie returned to her alma mater where, in addition to assisting the instructor in zoology with lab experiments, she began a missions club for Catholic women. It was while seeking materials to use for the club that she met Father Walsh and soon began assisting him with a magazine he had begun publishing, “The Field Afar”, now known simply as *Maryknoll*.

Following the congregation’s foundation on January 6, 1912, Mollie took the religious name Mother Mary Joseph. As she oversaw the growth of the congregation and its expansion into mission, she also placed great value on diversity, welcoming women from all nations. She also integrated prayer with apostolic ministry “so that no one would take us for anything but contemplatives in mission.”

Mother Mary Joseph drew from a lifetime of spiritual depth when she stressed the need for the sisters to be compassionate women, adaptable and willing to try new ways without fear of failure or censure. Above all, she emphasized the primacy of a holy life.

Today, Maryknoll Sisters serve in 26 nations around the world, ministering to all people, regardless of race, creed or nationality, with a special emphasis on working with the poor, with women and with all those who struggle on the fringes of society. Their numbers include doctors and nurses; authors, artists and dancers; social workers, ecologists and peace activists; theologians and spokespersons to the United Nations.

Her innovative professional and mission preparation of the sisters was recognized through honorary doctorates given her by Smith, Trinity University and Regis College, Boston. By the time of her death on October 9, 1955, there were 1,065 sisters working in twenty countries and serving minorities in several cities in the United States.

For more information on Maryknoll Sisters, please visit our website:

www.maryknollsisters.org



CONGRATULATIONS!

Our Alumni member, Ellie Chan received Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in February 2013

Ellie Chan, founding co-chair and current co-chair of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Women's World, long-term volunteer for Meals On Wheels, active supporter of the Walk with the Dragon since its inception in 1986. She is also a charter member of Vancouver Shaughnessy Lions Club and has just celebrated their 25th charter anniversary at the New Convention Centre, Vancouver.



Our Spring dinner at Victoria Seafood Restaurant on March 10 was a success in that we achieved our dual purposes of bringing people together and reconnect, and at the same time raise funds for a worthy cause. Among the 41 guests in attendance, there were 6 alumnae from Maryknoll Sisters School. The dinner was held in a warm and cordial atmosphere, and everybody had good fun. (More photos can be viewed on our website.)

We were so blessed to have the Sisters as our teachers and educators, who inspired and educated us in our formative years, and helped us open doors in our lives. We now want to give back to them by being a part of the project, which is to convert the four existing bathrooms (built in 1932) to handicap accessible ones, so that the Sisters who are wheel-chair ridden will have more room and independence with the new facility. The total cost is US\$200,000.00. Edwina Shuster, who was there last October for the premiere of the film "Trailblazers in Habits", had spent a few days at the Motherhouse together with some of her 1967 classmates. She gave us a PowerPoint presentation of the Motherhouse and the Sisters who live there. The slide show included pictures of Sr. Miriam Xavier Mug, Sr. Marie Corinne Rost, Sr. Rose Duchesne Debrecht, Sr. Jeanne Houlihan, Sr. Teresa Leung, Sr. Rose Bernadette Gallagher, Sr. Ann Carol Brielmaier, Sr. Marie Ann Lipetzki, Sr. Mary Diggins and others. But the joy of seeing their happy faces was tinged with sadness because Sr. Mary Diggins, a long-time missionary in China, passed away peacefully in her sleep on February 2, 2013; she was 89.

A 7-minute trailer featuring the Sisters' missionary work in China from the early 1920's through recent years was also shown, witnessing their profound contributions to the Chinese community.

We also announced the cheering news of Mother Mary Joseph's induction into National Women's Hall of Fame... an honour so well-deserved!

We are working on a series of fundraisers to achieve our contribution goal of US\$10,000.00 in the next few months, for example, a premiere of the "Trailblazers" film in Vancouver, a bazaar in the summer, so please stay tuned for these upcoming events. If any member who would like to contribute their fundraising ideas, please talk to any one of us in the Committee; the names are listed in the newsletter.

Proceeds from the dinner, raffles and sale of souvenirs were \$1,645.00, together with personal donations of \$1,525.00, making a total income of \$3,170.00. A very encouraging sum of money, and we very much hope that with your help, so much more is possible. For donations, you may either want to mail your cheque to MCS Alumni (BC) Association, PO Box 61078, Langara Postal Outlet, 571 West 57th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6P 6S5, or directly deposit funds into our account at HSBC, account number 570-000262-240, held in the name of Maryknoll Convent School (*designated account for Motherhouse*). Thank you for your support!

~Anita Poon~

“Trailblazers in Habits” NEWS update

Watch this 7-minute trailer for "Trailblazers in Habits," which is being launched in its entirety at a premiere screening to benefit the Maryknoll Sisters in New York, October 2012.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3icyEE7pVWs>

Coming Soon to the Vancouver Chapter, stay tuned!

We are fundraising to help improve the living condition of our retired and elderly Maryknoll Sisters living in the Maryknoll Sisters Center in Ossining, New York. After a lifetime dedicated to educating Maryknollers like ourselves, our Sisters are now advanced in age and many are wheelchair-bound and in need of special care. This fundraising campaign is specifically for the renovation of four common bathrooms on the assisted care floor of the residential care building at Maryknoll Sisters Center to make them handicap accessible.

This floor houses 38 Sisters who require various levels of assistance and, in some cases, skilled care. Because the bathrooms are constantly used on a daily basis, the fact that they are not wheelchair accessible nor user friendly to these Sisters is a matter of grave concern from the standpoint of safety as well as convenience. These bathrooms are the same ones designed and installed in 1932 for normal use when the building was constructed. Now, work is urgently needed to make a first bathroom handicap accessible as soon as possible in early 2013. After the first bathroom is done, the remaining three will follow as funds are raised.

In the Maryknoll spirit of giving, please take part in this campaign and put in your utmost effort by contacting all your classmates and friends. To succeed, we need to have the concerted effort of all Maryknollers from all classes all over the world.



Methods of Donation:

- 1) Please issue cheque to “MCS Alumni (BC) Association” and indicate that it is for “Handicap Compliant Bathrooms Project” and mail to our address at P.O. Box 61078, Langara Postal Outlet, 571 West 57th Avenue, Vancouver, BC.
- 2) Direct deposit to our Alumni Account: HSBC Account Number: 570-000262-240, account name: Maryknoll Convent School (*designated account for Motherhouse*).



Sr. Mary Diggins, MM, passed away on Feb. 2, 2013, at Maryknoll Sisters Residential Care III in Ossining. Also, a Vesper service was held for her on Monday, February 11, 2013 in Ossining.

Rose Lam's husband David passed away on February 21st. His funeral was held on March 8th. We send our heartfelt condolences to Rose and her family on their loss. The service was inspirational and very well attended, may he rest in peace.