



Maryknoll Sisters

Making God's love visible

Congregational Leadership Team

P.O. Box 311, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0311

Tel: 914-941-7575, E-Mail: CLT@mksisters.org

April 24, 2008

Dear Sisters, Relatives and Friends,

We gather this morning to celebrate with our Sister Margaret Monroe her entrance into the fullness of life and to remember her 78 years of life among us. Margaret died at Phelps Memorial Hospital in Sleepy Hollow, NY around 10:30 a.m. on April 21, 2008.

It was a picture of a Maryknoll priest on a horse, that sparked Margaret's interest in mission. While in high school she was given a copy of the Maryknoll Magazine in which that picture appeared and Margaret decided she could live that kind of life. Years later she pondered wittingly, "*I entered Maryknoll....and have not met up with a horse in 50 years. It just goes to show that God will use anything to catch our attention to Mission.*" Margaret may not have met up with a horse, but during her 55 years as a Maryknoll Sister she did meet up with many other animals.

Margaret Helen Monroe was born in Dayton, Ohio on August 8, 1929, the youngest of three daughters of Maxwell M. and Rose Helen Southard Monroe. She is predeceased by her parents, and her sisters, Marjorie Ann Monroe and Carol Hack, and her beloved niece Pegi Hack. A graduate of Immaculata High School in Detroit, MI, Margaret earned a BA in English from the University of Dayton in 1951. She worked for two years before entering the Maryknoll Sisters, in Valley Park, Missouri, on February 1, 1953. At reception she received the name Sister Martin Marie. Margaret made her First Profession of Vows on September 8, 1955 at Valley Park and her Final Profession of Vows on the same date six years later at Maryknoll, NY.

Her first mission assignment, in 1956, was to Walterboro, SC, where Margaret was involved in catechetical work. After teaching for three years at St. Anthony's Grade School in the Bronx, NY she was assigned to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) in 1963. Margaret taught at Isango Middle School, in Musoma Diocese before moving in 1969 to the ministry for which she is most renowned and remembered, the Family Center in Makoko.

The Makoko Family Center, a Maryknoll Society sponsored program, was an educational live-in center for Christian families, located on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria just outside the town of Musoma. Based on the belief that there is no development without total human development, the Center was committed to develop the Christian as a whole person and as a family. The courses for married couples and their children included seminars on scripture, child care, farming methods and animal husbandry, as well as leadership training. The Center raised rabbits, chickens and ducks, bred sows, and ran a pork processing plant. Margaret's many interests and talents had found a home. She was equally enthusiastic about raising chickens as teaching liturgy.

Just down the road Margaret had her own income generating projects. She planted fruit trees in her yard, grew vegetables, raised hens,



Sister Margaret Monroe
1929 - 2008

recorded egg production, and cleaned rabbit cages. She also loved dogs.

Except for one year when she served in Bariadi, in Shinyanga Diocese, Margaret lived at Makoko. She traveled to the secondary schools in the area to teach religion classes, and from 1994-97 taught biology at the Diocesan Junior Seminary.

Margaret loved life. Her eyes twinkled and her laugh was deep. She was seen as rough and tough, down to earth, with the inside of a marshmallow! Being ill was not easy for her. When the kidney disease Margaret had lived with for many years became increasingly life threatening, the Maryknoll Sisters in Tanzania encouraged Margaret to think about returning to Maryknoll, where her condition could be assessed and possibly treated. Margaret resisted the idea of leaving Tanzania, but realized eventually that a return to New York was imperative.

"Having a kidney transplant in 1998 changed my whole outlook on life," Margaret wrote, "Life is a gift, and a second chance to live, through the generosity of Sister Theresa Baldini, [donor of the kidney] has centered my mind on thanksgiving."

In 1999 Margaret was assigned to the Center-Rogers Community. During this time she volunteered her services in the Promotion/Mission Education Office until 2006. Her Prayer Ministry was for the Congregation's Mission Education/Promotion efforts.

Margaret wrote that her assignment to Tanzania was the fulfillment of a life-long dream. The 35 years she spent in mission there were the happiest of her life. The following poem by Margaret expresses well how Tanzania captured her heart.

Joy in Mission

One morning, as I prepared for the day's activities,
I heard her knock.

Annoyed, I opened the door quickly.
She stood there in her rags,
a small basket in her hands,
trying to tell me something.

I asked a neighbor to translate into Swahili. [from the local language]

"She has brought you a gift.

You helped her very much when she didn't have food
and now her hen is beginning to lay.
She wants you to have these eggs."

We extend our condolences to Margaret's nephews, Thomas and John Hack, and their families and also to her long time friend, Joanne Zamorski, who wanted very much to be with us today. We welcome our guests, Maryknoll Society members, former Maryknoll Lay Missioner Jack Connell, Christian Brother James Perry, who taught with Margaret at the seminary, and Maryknoll Father David Jones, Margaret's partner at the Family Center, who will preside at our Liturgy of Christian Burial this morning.

Peace and blessings,

Connie

Connie Krautkremer, MM
Congregational Leadership Team

Messages of condolence may be sent to Margaret's nephew:

Thomas Hack
1916 Secluded Woods Lane
Neptune Beach, FL 32266-1500