



MARYKNOLL SISTERS: FAST FACTS

OUR PURPOSE: The Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic exist “to participate in the mission presence and activity of the universal Church so that God’s reign of peace, justice and love may be proclaimed and witnessed to throughout the world.” (Maryknoll Sisters Constitution, p. 3-4)

OUR MINISTRY: Maryknoll Sisters give witness to God’s love as nurses, doctors, teachers, theologians, social workers, agronomists, writers, veterinarians, community development specialists, artists, environmentalists and pastoral workers. Many are engaged in AIDS prevention education and ministry to AIDS patients and their families. The Sisters also work particularly with youth, women and migrant workers. After Vatican II, Sisters moved into these ministries in greater numbers, turning over their institutional works to their capable and dedicated lay colleagues with whom they had worked for so many years. Sensitive to local needs, the Sisters search out and train for whatever form of ministry serves the community that invites them to share in its life and practice.

OUR NUMBERS — As of January 2012, there were 492 Maryknoll Sisters living and working worldwide on behalf of the congregation.

OUR LOCATIONS — Headquartered at the Maryknoll Sisters Center, 10 Pinesbridge Road, Ossining, NY, Maryknoll Sisters serve in 25 nations around the world, including:

- Albania
- American Samoa
- Bangladesh
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Cambodia
- Chile
- China
- East Timor
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Japan
- Kenya
- Myanmar
- Namibia
- Panama
- Peru
- Philippines
- South Korea
- Taiwan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- United States
- Zimbabwe

OUR ORIGINS — The Maryknoll Sisters, founded on January 6, 1912, initially consisted of a small group of young women who provided support services to Father James Anthony Walsh and Father Thomas Frederick Price, founders of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, now commonly known as the Maryknoll Priests and Brothers. Initially the Sisters’ work involved secretarial, editorial, production and mailing work on the Society’s magazine, *The Field Afar*, now known simply as *Maryknoll*, but soon expanded to include their own work among Japanese immigrants in Los Angeles, CA, then Seattle, WA, followed by Hong Kong and China. Originally operating out of rented housing in Hawthorne, NY, Maryknoll purchased a farm in Ossining, NY, and moved there by the end of 1912. The Sisters moved into the first of their current buildings and chapel in 1932.



OUR FOUNDER — Mary Josephine Rogers was born in Roxbury, Massachusetts, on October 27, 1882, to Abraham T. Rogers and Mary Josephine Plummer, both of Boston. Mollie was the fourth child and first daughter in a family of eight: five boys and three girls.

A 1905 graduate of Smith College, where she specialized in zoology, Mollie taught in Boston public schools, at both the elementary and high school levels, until 1912. At that time, after several years of devoting her spare time to assisting Fathers James Anthony Walsh and Thomas Frederick Price with their work at the Society, she joined the work on a full-time basis, moving to Hawthorne in September 1912.

Mollie was chosen immediately by Father Walsh and the “secretaries” (as the group of laywomen that would one day become the first Maryknoll Sisters were called) to direct the women under Father Walsh’s guidance and continued in that capacity until 1920, when the group, then numbering 35, was recognized as a diocesan religious congregation—the Foreign Mission Sisters of St. Dominic, generally called the Maryknoll Sisters.

At their first General Chapter in 1925, Mollie, now known as Mother Mary Joseph (her religious name), was elected Mother General. Mother Mary Joseph was re-elected to that office at subsequent General Chapters until her retirement in 1946 at the age of 64. At that time the Congregation numbered 733, and the Sisters were working in Asia (China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines) and in Latin America (Panama, Bolivia, Nicaragua), as well as with diverse ethnic and racial groups in the United States.

The reverence and esteem for Mother Mary Joseph extended far beyond the religious community she founded, as is shown by the honorary degrees which were bestowed on her: Doctor of Laws by Regis College in Boston in 1945 and Trinity College in Washington, D.C., in 1949, and Doctor of Letters from her alma mater, Smith College, in 1950.

Mother Mary Joseph died on October 9, 1955, at the age of 73.

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