



Maryknoll Sisters

Making God's love visible

*P.O. Box 311, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0311
Tel: 914-941-7575
www.maryknollsisters.org*

April 2, 2015

Dear Sisters, Relatives and Friends,

We gather at this Mass of Resurrection to remember and to celebrate the life of our beloved Sister Miriam Xavier Mug. Born in Lafayette, Indiana, on September 22, 1913, Sister Miriam Xavier, who died on March 31, 2015, in Maryknoll Home Care III, at the age of 101 and six months, was the oldest living Maryknoll Sister. She had been a Maryknoll Sister for 71 years.

She was the youngest and the fifth child of George Francis and Grace Wheeler Mug, and christened Mary Louise at her baptism. Her three brothers, John, Hugh and Edward and her sister Margaret have all predeceased her. When she was 15 months old, the family moved to St. Louis, her mother's hometown.

The family lived in Cathedral Parish and all the children attended the parish school. For her secondary education, Mary Louise attended the Visitation Academy and graduated in 1931. Following her graduation, Mary Louise took secretarial courses at the Hadley Vocational School for one year before entering St. Louis University where she received her A.B. degree in Education in 1936. From 1936 to mid-1941, she did secretarial work in the office of St. Louis University Graduate School. From 1941 to early 1943, she did secretarial work at the Multiplex Faucet Company. When she entered Maryknoll on September 7, 1943, she was employed by the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad. At the time of her Reception into the Community, she chose the name of Miriam Xavier, which she continued to use throughout her religious life. She made her First Profession of Vows on March 7, 1946 at Maryknoll, New York, and her Final Vows on March 7, 1949 in Hong Kong.

Sister Miriam Xavier was assigned to the South China Region in 1946 and to Maryknoll Convent School, Kowloon Tong, where she taught Mathematics, History and Religious Studies in the Secondary Section. From 1954-1957 Sister Miriam was Principal of Maryknoll School, Hong Kong, later renamed Maryknoll Sisters School at Blue Pool Road. There she was also the superior of the convent. After her decennial in the United States in 1957, she returned to Hong Kong where she was reassigned to Maryknoll Convent School in Kowloon Tong. In 1961, she became Principal and Supervisor of Maryknoll Convent School, Primary Section. After her renewal in the United States in 1967, she remained to do development work until early 1969 when she returned to Hong Kong and teaching in the Secondary Section of Maryknoll Convent School. From 1977 to 1982, Sister was a member of the Regional Governing Board. She retired from teaching in 1979. From then until 1988, she engaged in various types of regional work.

In March of 1988, the Holy Spirit Study Centre, the Diocesan China Centre, was asking volunteers to assist in its office. For the next ten years, Sister worked two days a week at the Centre doing various and sundry types of work for the Director, typing, working on copy for Tripod, its research journal, proof reading, etc. So competent was she, even at the age of 85, that although she was a volunteer, she received the regular diocesan stipend for her work. In 1998, she discontinued working at the Centre, and did various things in the region including writing a short history of the China Region from 1921-1998. In 2000, Sister asked to be assigned to Monrovia, the Maryknoll Sisters retirement facility, where she took up residence in October 2000 until 2004 when she returned to the Center in New York and joined the Chi Rho Community. For her prayer ministry she had taken China and Maryknoll Planned Giving. She transferred to the Eden Community in 2006.



**Sister Miriam Xavier Mug
1913 – 2015**

In the section of the letter I have just read to you, I have tried to be faithful to Sister Miriam's request that her "funeral be simple and without a long, extended letter". She provided the facts she wanted shared and these I have included above. I think, however, that I, who knew her well and lived with her for many years in Hong Kong, would be remiss if I did not add a few words on the person she was for us all.

There was something very special about Sister Miriam. She was, above all, a woman religious of unflinching integrity, whose spirituality was deep, faithful and consistent. She was an exceedingly intelligent woman with no ostentation whatsoever. Her phenomenal memory at the age of over 100 could run circles around most of us as she easily recalled the names and the graduation dates of hundreds of the students she had taught. She was an avid and discriminating reader revealing a wide range of interests, and a wonderful companion within Community.

One of her former students, who visited her recently, remarked upon hearing of her death, "Sr. Miriam was her witty and caring self when I stopped by to see her a couple of weeks ago, and I'm happy that those are my last memories of her. She was always so interested in the world around her, both in the out of the Center. She lived life to the fullest and is a wonderful role model...That she died peacefully among her Maryknoll family is a true blessing." Another former student upon learning of her death e-mailed immediately saying, "She taught us how to live and how to die with dignity."

Sister Miriam summed up the joy of her missionary life saying, "I treasure the satisfaction that comes when I see women I taught as teenagers, now grown into responsible women, with lives based on the ideals expressed in their Maryknoll education."

She held a high ideal of the Maryknoll vocation and the one she herself endeavored to live. In being asked to reflect on that commitment and whether it was changing with changes in the Church, she wrote, "... as the founders envisioned a Maryknoll where women and men would freely give themselves to the person of Jesus by giving themselves to his people, so it is today. This is still the vision—a community of women and men committed to Jesus and freely allowing themselves to be spent that persons may know and experience Jesus." With her love for a no-nonsense simplicity of life, she concluded her thoughts saying, "Love is really visible in fidelity to the ordinary that enfleshes the words sometimes so nimbly uttered, 'Mission is a total way of life' and total life mostly is in the everyday."

Today, dear Miriam, as we say farewell, we send you with joy where Christ will find in your heart "a dwelling place of faith and a heart rooted in love". For our part, we thank you for your life among us.

We welcome Sister Miriam Xavier's nephew Thomas Mug and niece Dr. Margaret Peak.

We also welcome our Maryknoll brother Father Jack Sullivan, MM who will preside at our liturgy of Christian Burial.

In Our Lady of Maryknoll,

Betty Ann Maheu, MM

Sr. Betty Ann Maheu, MM
Community Member

Messages of condolence may be sent to:

Dr. Margaret Peak
2579 Rue Palafox
Biloxi, MS 39531-3734