



Ontario Maryknollers

Official Newsletter of Maryknoll Convent Former Students (Ont.)

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☆ **2012 ~ 2014** ☆
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Christmas is a time of joy and reflections, celebrating the birth of Christ and reflecting on the true significance of His coming to earth. For the past 30 years, we have been carrying on this tradition, spreading and sharing the joy of Christmas with our Maryknollers around the world. Regardless of the prevalent practice substituting Merry Christmas with Happy Holidays, we still believe in our own conviction and wish everyone a

**Peaceful and joyful Christmas
and a New Year filled with
love and contentment.**

Hope to see you all at our 8th Worldwide Reunion in Toronto in August 2014.

AAA & Networking Dinner

We had a great networking dinner on Sunday 17th November, 2013 which was also our pre-Christmas celebration. The venue was at Vince Chinese Seafood Restaurant at Kennedy and Denison, Markham, which was conveniently located and with ample parking space for our 40 participants.

Our Vice-President recapitulated on the details of our Worldwide Reunion as well as the celebration of our 30th Anniversary scheduled to take place on 1st-3rd August, 2014 and requested that members get as many old schoolmates to join as possible. Meanwhile, our hand-knitted colourful scarves, baggage tags and vests were sold on the side.

During the course of the evening, an AA Award Certificate was presented to Christine Lee Chau for her son Steven Bo Jim Chau for his outstanding academic achievements.

To conclude the evening, MarianneTavares gave a very interesting and informative talk on 'Caring for our Elderly Parents', a summary of which is included herein.

Marianne Tavares rscj gave us some insight into the key elements involved in caring for our aging parents, based on her experience and those of others. She grouped them into four categories: (1) Gathering information (2) Advocacy (3) Future care planning and (4) Caring for oneself. The following is a brief summary of her talk:

(1) Gathering information

It is important to remember that health professionals may not have all the information that you may need. No matter how widely programs and resources are advertised and information disseminated, this does not reach everyone at the same time. Therefore in addition to consulting health professionals, families should do their own research (online, asking friends, contacts, etc) and find out how the system works, what's available 'out there', options and the different ways to access resources. Do we know how health care is funded and delivered in our region? Regions tend to set their own priorities for care, therefore what is available differs from region to region.

(2) Advocacy

From the experience of several caregivers of elderly parents, advocacy stands out as the most important thing we can do for our parents when the time comes. No matter how assertive our parents were in their prime, once they become patients or are on the receiving end of care they become vulnerable adults. It is up to families to ask questions, make requests and constantly follow up, whether it is a matter of pain and other symptom management, appointments, investigations, how care is delivered, the attitude of professional caregivers or options for ongoing and/or future care. Moreover, it is up to families to find a way to ask questions without offending or overly antagonising the professionals. In other words, ask questions 'nicely' but be persistent.

(3) Future care planning

In Ontario your local Community Care Access Center (CCAC) is the 'control hub' that determines what funded care your parents are eligible for in the community. Their brochures are fancy with words that seem to promise solutions to all your care problems. In fact, funding is very limited and what is available is only a tiny fraction of what your parents will need. Though a generalisation but from the experience of a multitude of people, I would say "be prepared for your patience to be significantly challenged when relating to CCAC". Creative thinking is essential and, again, be your parents' advocate.

Other than CCAC funded caregivers, be prepared to pay out-of-pocket for caregiving hours. Caregiving agencies are likely to charge double what you may need to pay if you ask around. Future care choices are limited to: (a) Care at home - your parents will want to stay in their own home for as long as possible – look for private caregivers, find out about the Live-In Caregiver Program where caregivers are recruited from abroad. Consider employing a live-in caregiver locally. (b) Retirement homes (you pay 100%) and Assisted Living (often in a retirement home that will then charge more for the extra) and (c) Long Term Care Homes (ie nursing homes) which are subsidised by the government therefore charge less than retirement homes – but CCAC has to assess for eligibility.

Research the following issues before talking to your parents about some of them: Power of Attorney (for care and/or finance), Substitute Decision Maker, Living Will, 'Do Not Resuscitate' order (DNR)

(4) Caring for Oneself

Involve all siblings though the contribution of each person may be in different ways

Know your limits

Plan to have regular 'time off' in order to stay grounded and nourish yourself (recharge your batteries) in different ways – much as you care out of love, you will need time off!

Be prepared to pay for extra help so that you have energy just to be your parents' daughter/son sometimes – and not just their practical caregiver.

Keep your prayer life strong - remember that God is faithful. When you have done your best, remember that like the story of Abraham and Isaac, 'The Lord will provide'.