

## FOUNDER`S DAY 2016

**By: Ma. Angela Torres S., rectora**

Celebrating Founder`s day in each Marymount School in the world, is to remember and recognize that what we are today, belongs to a history that gets us all together and it is our responsibility to get this history passed to other generations, to be known by the community strengthening our identity and sense of belonging.

This history is made up by different chapters and many people that share a mission and special charisma have participated actively in it. To all of them, we pay tribute, showing gratitude and admiration. Even though we never had the chance to meet them, we are certain that thanks to their faith and conviction, made our school possible. I am referring specifically to the religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, who represent our origins, and to the parents who gave continuity to our school at a very difficult time in our history. We gather in this special place where silently every single day and with open arms, our dear Virgin Mary welcomes us because we know that from her guidance and by her hand we have celebrated year after year, 68 years of history; those which I will try to gather in the following words:

### **OUR ORIGIN (1849)**

It is difficult to become acquainted with someone who lived long time ago. Through the memories of different people, we can construct what people built with their actions and know about the values that they materialized, so let`s start with some important people from our Marymount family.

First, the Institute of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary that was founded on February 24, 1849 when a group of women gathered to form a community dedicated to the work of [Father Jean Gailhac](#), a priest in Béziers, France.

Led by [Mother St. Jean](#), first superior, the sisters sought to be followers of Jesus, to grow in knowledge and the love of God. Each member of this group brought her own talents and capabilities; each one assumed responsibility for some aspects of their common mission.

### **MARYMOUNT ARRIVES IN AMERICA (1907)**

Mother Joseph Butler, was the religious who led the founding of the Marymount schools in America. She was born in Ireland in 1860 and began her religious life in 1877 in Beziers when she was 17 years old. She was known for her kindness, gentleness, charisma and charm. On December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1907, she and six Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, came to a hill close to New York and after a long walk, founded the first Marymount of America; They carried a statue of a small Virgin Mary and when they reached the top of the hill, entered the house that belonged to her cousin and his wife Mary Ann O'Rourke Butler, put the statue on a table that was in the room and he said, "in honor of Mary Immaculate and memory of Mary Ann O'Rourke Butler, she called this new home MARYMOUNT."

A few months after the school opened with only six students in less than a year there were 20. At that time Mother Butler began the construction of classrooms, a chapel, bedrooms and a dining room. Her idea was to have the facilities to serve school and also to be a place where laywomen could make spiritual retreats. . **"The goals of a Marymount education are**

**manifold: to educate the heart and the mind, to provide for each student's total growth spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically".**

Mother Marie Joseph Butler, RSHM – Foundress of the first Marymount in NY.

This school worked during its first ten years only to high school students and subjects such as philosophy, history and languages were offered, which was advanced enough for the education of women at that time. In 1917 when the first war ended, the school opened the possibility for students to continue their studies after graduation, because at that time the girls could not attend college. This type of program was known as Finishing School and it also offered the subjects mentioned above and courses in law and economic policy. A profound vision of the role of women Mother Butler certainly had.

Those who knew Mother Butler say she was one of the few people who at that time had the great ability to have a bifocal vision, which means she could see things from different points of view. As bifocal glasses that some people wear to see far and near, the intelligence of Mother Butler allowed her to know the close reality of each student she was in charge and to identify the reach and the real possibility of many future opportunities of their students' education.

It was Mother Butler who first thought of an international school network like the one we have today. When the First World War ended, she traveled to France to find a house in Paris in which Marymount students could go to school. However, only until 1923 the school of Paris was founded, and the one in Los Angeles just a year before. At that time, traveling was not so easy; the thousands of miles took several weeks or months by train or boat. Stated by Sister Kathleen (2010)

## **MARYMOUNT ARRIVES IN BOGOTÁ**

Mother Annunciata, was the founder of our school, her real name was Maria del Pilar Uribe Holguín, she was born in 1918, in Bogotá. In her early life, she decided to go to New York because she wanted to be part of the Order of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary. She is described as a strict and extremely kind person. Demanding is another quality that comes from memories of the people close to her. Sense of duty and an exquisite sense of humor were both evident characteristics of her personality.

Even though she lived many years abroad, her presence in Colombia paved the way for the creation of three significant schools: the Marymount in Bogotá, Barranquilla and Medellín. Those actions express the adventurous spirit of Mother Annunciata, who, after many years of living in New York, made the decision to come to Colombia under the auspices of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, the order to which Mother had dedicated her religious vocation. Her determination let her follow her convictions and good evidence of this is the fact that Mother Annunciata decided to be a nun against her own father's will.

Her visionary capacity let her conceive one of the first bilingual schools in our country. Against the traditions, she imagined a colorful uniform in order to create a school full of significance. She and the sisters of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary conceived an education in which it was important to be close to their pupils. She thought that education consisted of dialogue with the students, so that questioning was part of her convictions and teachings.

Mother Annunciata left Bogota in 1952 to establish a new Marymount in Barranquilla where she remained until 1957, the year in which she went to Medellín to establish the Marymount in that

city. She is described as a very bright, a quality that was reflected in her desire to know and comprehend the issues of her time. One of her wishes was to create a school through which she could help poor people. That was a great accomplishment in Barranquilla.

Sadly, she became ill in the last years of her life and cancer was part of this. She was brave and, as a particular message from god, she died on December 24<sup>th</sup> of 1997. Her life is a testimony of conviction, dedication, and vision.

### **THE NEW MARYMOUNT FOUNDATION**

For over 20 years the school was run by religious nuns and it was always recognized for excellence and innovative proposal. In 1969, after an internal crisis due to political, religious and social situations of our country, the sisters left our city and a group of 12 parents accompanied by Monsignor Mario Revollo Bravo, representing the Church, took the initiative to open a school following the philosophy and Catholic principles that had oriented Marymount. Hence the New Marymount Foundation was born, our current school.

To conclude

I would like to invite you to be part of this celebration with a time of thanksgiving and a prayer for each and every one of our Founders, religious and laity who have made it possible from the place God and life gave them in this story of Marymount. Our school, the one we enjoy and we all love today.

Let us give thanks for the joy and the hope represented in our life to be part of Marymount; because together we learn to believe, to trust and have faith.

Let's be thankful for the responsibility we all share to make this a better school every day, a place that offers other choices and not always the same. This has been our nature, to be visionaries as each one of our Founders were. Working together, overcoming resistance and difficulties involved. That is the true commitment and genuine service.

Let us give thanks for the privilege of being together today, learning and remembering those who came before, leaving a great mark and forming those who will come in the future to take our places.

Let us thank that we are not alone; by the hand of the Virgin and the presence of our Board of directors, the schools of the World Network and religious nuns move forward in our mission and transform ourselves while sharing our lives. Let's make it worthy being here!.