



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Global Mission

April 11, 2008

Dear family and friends of Marjorie Bly,

On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I express my heartfelt condolences on the death of a remarkable woman of faith and service, Marjorie Bly, even as I give thanks to God for Marjorie's life and witness in her service to the gospel.

The whole church is profoundly grateful to Marjorie, who served officially for 43 years in public health ministry, first in China, and then in Taiwan. Commissioned as a missionary by the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America in 1946, Marjorie served for three years in China, during what she called her "wandering" and learning period.

In 1952 Marjorie was called to Taiwan to provide care for leprosy patients and families through an outreach clinic. In 1954, she moved to Penghu Island, where she was completely at home among the people. She immersed herself not only in the care of people suffering from leprosy but also advocated for their inclusion in society, demonstrated by the leprosy clinic that was included in the general hospital program at Municipal Penghu Hospital. This was considered a radical idea at the time, and many doubters said it couldn't be done. But it was. Marjorie established a dermatology clinic through the outpatient department of the hospital and provided follow-up care and treatment for patients and families.

Marjorie continued her ministry well beyond her official retirement from service with the American Lutheran Church in 1989, remaining in Penghu among the people whom she deeply loved. This love and deep affection was mutual, and the people of Taiwan honored Marjorie by giving her the Chinese name "white pearl", paying tribute to her with awards and a visit from the President of Taiwan, and then by caring for Marjorie in her last years. In 2007, she received the highest civilian award from President Chen Shui-Bian, President of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

We know Marjorie's work made a significant contribution in the lives of the people whom they touched, and her life and ministry bear witness to God's amazing grace in Jesus Christ. At this time of Marjorie's passing, we join with her many friends and colleagues here and in Taiwan and throughout the global community, in thanking God for her years of faithful witness and dedicated service.

May our Lord who is the Resurrection and the Life be with you.

Soli Deo Gloria,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rafael Malpica Padilla". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".

The Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla
Executive Director
ELCA Global Mission