



Rhonda Mary Maingot

Degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD)

Chancellor, a “leap of faith” brings to mind jumping off a cliff and hoping the bungee cord wasn’t too long, or jumping out of a plane and trusting that your parachute deploys as it should. That imagery is entirely inappropriate to describe the modus operandi of Rhonda Mary Maingot because while leaping often requires a commitment, it is typically does not demand sustained effort. A long time ago Ms. Maingot embarked on a “journey of faith” and that continues to make all the difference.

Perhaps the journey began by growing up in a Catholic family of seven sisters and brothers and not having much money. The onus was always on the siblings to help in sickness, in time of need, or just to help around the house. The household culture made helping and being available for each other the natural order of things.

However, the path ahead would start to come sharply into focus with a calling from God. So powerful was the message that it prompted her to sell everything she owned and set off in search of the God who had captured her heart. She started a prayer meeting and working with the poor. By her own account, “no one came for a couple of years”! Nevertheless, the movement caught the attention of Archbishop Pantin who invited her to hold meetings at the Archbishop’s Residence. His endorsement promoted a considerable increase in attendance.

From the outset, the focus was on the poor, the suffering, the afflicted and in effect, people on the brink of something dark. In addition to being a co-foundress, Rhonda Maingot would serve as the Director of the Living Water Community from 1975 to the present. In all that time she has served a Living Mission which has evolved to address human need however and whenever it presented itself. From this platform, she would go on to found:

- The Living Water Hospice to care for the terminally ill and socially deprived*
- The Ave Maria Caring Centre for Homeless Persons*
- The New Life Ministries Drug Rehabilitation Centre*
- The Marian House for Homeless Boys*

- Our Lady of the Wayside Halfway House for Abandoned Children
- The Fountain of Hope Developmental Programme for Young Women
- The Caribbean School for Catholic Communications
- The Mercy Home for those afflicted with HIV/AIDS; and
- The Home for the Aged in rural south Trinidad

During that time, her vision has also extended beyond local shores in the establishment of permanent missions to the Netherland Antilles, Barbados and St Lucia as well as a three-year mission to Russia after the fall of communism.

Strategically positioned, the Living Water Community attracted many benefactors and volunteers all fired with a desire to live their faith through self-empowerment and service to others. Added to this is the observation that after making a contribution, or even while in the act of contributing, people are invariably moved to remark that they receive so much more than they could ever give.

Always striving to reach out to as many as possible, Ms Maingot is the station director for the recently launched Trinity TV 24/7. She described the venture as, “an extremely bold step of faith” and as, “an amazing opportunity to bring the word of God not only to the wider Trinidad and Tobago Community but (also to) the Caribbean.”

She has been described as the “administrative hub” of all activities. However, like all the best leaders, she has guided the Living Water Community to the point where it will survive and thrive without her. Today, Rhonda Mary Maingot is a Consecrated Sister in Household Community. Her journey of faith continues to gain momentum in the exploration of new territory.

Chancellor, I present Rhonda Maingot, and ask that by the authority vested in you by the Senate and Council of The University of the West Indies, you confer on her the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.

*St. Augustine Campus
October 22, 2014*