

Dear Friends

We have so many things to celebrate! Let me tell of a few...

On the cover you see the wonderful photo of **Sisters Angela Lyapa MMM and Angela Anigbogu MMM** drumming with joy after we elected a new leadership team for the Congregation in 2015! You can feel their excitement. Both of these Sisters were in Congregational Leadership themselves and now have taken up new assignments as nurse/midwives in Kenya and Angola. They are examples of the flexibility needed in our lives and the call of our missionary vocation to let go, move on, and begin again.

Each year we celebrate the lives of MMM's who celebrating Jubilee! This year, among the group, are two American MMM's who are familiar to many of you. They are women who have lived their lives in response to changing needs with great flexibility, always ready to go where God leads. We celebrate the lives of **Sisters Marian Scena MMM and Mary Ann MacRae MMM**.

Earlier this year in Ireland, two other MMM's were honored and we celebrate that as well. Some of the contributions of the Medical Missionaries of Mary to maternal and child health were highlighted at a recent 'Historic North-South Spring Conference' of the Irish Perinatal Society (IPNS). The meeting was held at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda from 25-26 February 2016.

Consultant Ob/Gyn Doctor Maire Milner spoke on the legacy of the Medical Missionaries of Mary and announced the Inaugural Ann Ward Medal Winning Presentation, acknowledging her lifetime's work.

Sister Ann Ward, MMM, now retired, was consultant Ob/Gyn at Saint Luke's Hospital, Anua, Nigeria for many years. She has received an Award of Merit by the International Federation of Obstetricians

and Gynecologists and the Distinguished Graduate Award from University College, Dublin for her 'outstanding contribution in the field of medicine' in relation to obstetric fistula.

Sister Ekaete Ekop, MMM, our present Assistant Congregational Leader and a consultant OB/Gyn with over twenty years' experience in Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, gave a presentation entitled 'Perinatal and Maternal Health in Sub-Saharan Africa'. "Our tradition of training others has ensured that the work continues far beyond our scope. The first VVF hospital in Nigeria was pioneered by Sister Ann Ward in the 1980s and was the third of its kind worldwide. Doctor Upuji (RIP) was one of her trainees and continued her work after she retired."

Ekaete pointed out, that about seventy years before it became a global issue, Mother Mary Martin identified the problem. In 1937, she founded the Medical Missionaries of Mary, setting up a powerful response that spread to many sub-Saharan countries, including Angola, Benin Republic, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. This was fifty years before Safe Motherhood was launched by the World Health Organization (WHO). **Generations of women trained in this medical field, faithful to God's call. That is something to celebrate!**

With deep appreciation to you who make it all possible,



Sister Joanne

Sister Joanne Bierl, MMM
Development Director

Front Panel Photo: Sisters Angela Lyapa MMM and Angela Anigbogu MMM drumming.

MEDICAL MISSIONARIES OF MARY

Mission Development Office
4425 West 63rd St., Ste. 100
Chicago, IL 60629-5565
www.mmmusa.org
www.facebook.com/medicalmissionariesofmary.usa



Interacting with old and new friends brought many happy moments to Sr Mary Ann.

Pursued by God

By Sr. Mary Ann MacRae, MMM

Born within a year of the end of WWII, I was the eldest of two in our family. My mother was a devote Catholic who instilled a deep sense of God in us.

My father had been brought up Episcopalian, although he did not have any religious affiliation by the time he met my mother. However, when he could, he would accompany us to Sunday Mass and agreed to educating us in Catholic schools.

My maternal grandmother had died of cancer before I was born and my mother's telling of it deeply affected me. I decided at a young age that I would become a doctor and find a cure for cancer. That changed when as a freshman in high school I became acquainted with books written by Dr. Tom Dooley about his experiences as a doctor in Vietnam and later Laos. Something in me shifted and I felt a strong call to become a missionary doctor. I had been given so much in life and I wanted to share it.

As a junior in high school Sister Vida Maria, SNJM my homeroom teacher, took me aside and asked if I might have a vocation to religious life. No, I told her, I want to be a missionary doctor then get married and have children. That same year, two Medical Missionaries of Mary came to speak in our school and showed a film called Africa Pictorial. I thought if I ever entered a convent this congregation would be the one, but I was very resistant to that idea. God has a funny way of pursuing you and in my senior year a leaflet left behind by those MMM Sisters caught my attention. It was then I knew strongly that God was calling me to religious life as an MMM and if they would accept me I would go. I had not counted on the fierce opposition from my father over my decision.

Leaving home, mother, father and sister was perhaps the hardest thing I ever did in my life. My father could not come to see me off at the train station; it was too hard for him. I shed many tears on that 3,000 mile trip from Seattle to Boston to join the MMMs.

In those early years of formation Vatican II would unfold and change the face of religious life as I had known it. After

taking my first vows in Winchester, MA, I went to Ireland where I learned much more than just medicine. Becoming involved in the Charismatic Renewal was a deeply transformative experience for me leading up to my taking final vows. In my mind I was now ready to be launched into the next phase of the adventure to which God had called me.

During my years in Nigeria, the emphasis on Primary Health Care would become a priority. This growing emphasis on making health care more widely available, accessible, affordable and appropriate for the people among whom I lived and worked would fire my imagination and zeal for a more grassroots type of health care. It would also be a time for exploring how to make healing more holistic. Throughout these years, 1976-1994, I learned so much from the people of Nigeria that I will be forever indebted to them. I received much more than I ever gave.

Tijuana, Mexico along the border was to be my next home. Ministering in a clinic near the municipal garbage dump, I was able to be more one with the people among whom I lived and worked. However, I was to remain a bare 5 years when MMM asked me to return to the USA to take up a new role as Development Director for the Medical Missionaries of Mary. That was a privileged time, getting to know you who have been faithful supporters of MMM. We became friends and I learned something of your hopes and aspirations and struggles. You never failed to inspire me.

Last year I said good-bye to you and moved to Ireland for a new phase of this ongoing adventure in faith as part of our MMM Congregational Leadership Team. It is never easy to say good-bye but it is true that when God closes one door another opens. I continue to learn much and delight in this journey called life. To quote Dag Hammarskjöld, "For all that has been, Thank you. For all that is to come, Yes!" ■

A Dream Come True

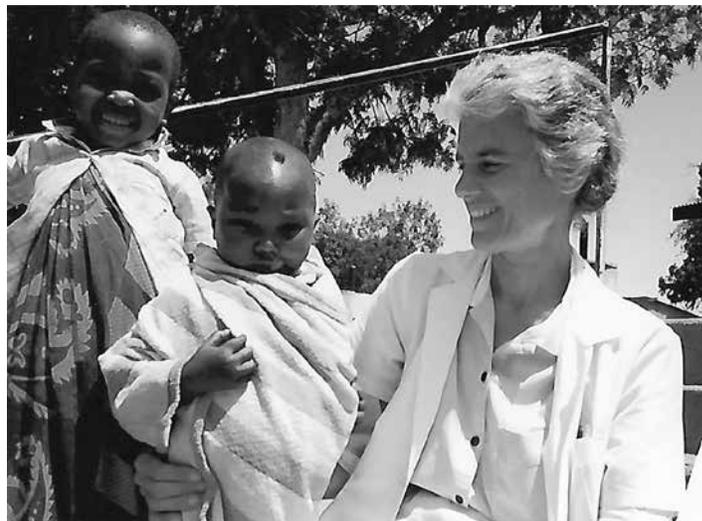
By Sr. Marian Scena, MMM

I dreamed of being a missionary and sharing my faith with those who hadn't had the same opportunities I had as an American teenager in the late 1950s and early 1960s. I had assumed that God wanted what I WANTED!

Little by little, I began to ask God what plans God had for me and it gradually became clearer: a missionary, a profession in health services (maybe a doctor) and, MAYBE, a Sister. I wondered if it were possible to combine these three things in one vocation? Then I read about the Medical Missionaries of Mary and realized that it just might be possible!

I felt ready to begin The Extraordinary Adventure of joining MMM after graduation from high school! As I lived two thousand miles from Boston in Denver, Colorado, there was no question of visiting them to "Come and See"! When I entered MMM in September 1963 I remember saying to myself, "You are going to spend your life here and you have never even met these women. Anyone would think you are crazy!" But I laughed because I knew I was making the right decision for me.

As time passed I grew to love silence and the "hidden life" of the Postulancy and Novitiate. After First Profession on 2 July 1966, I was asked to stay in the U.S. to help out for two years. Then in September 1968, I was sent to our MMM Motherhouse in Ireland and soon started Medical School at University College, Dublin. After graduation in June 1975, the next step was Internship in the MMM's International Missionary Training Hospital (IMTH) in Drogheda, Ireland followed by another year there doing Obstetrics and Pediatrics. In those days MMM Doctors were considered ready for the missions after these two years! I had worked for 3 months in Dareda Hospital, Tanzania before my final year in medical school. I was delighted to be reassigned to Tanzania after finishing my studies in IMTH. But it was not to be. I developed an illness that took nearly a year and a half to diagnose and this was a time of great soul searching and not a little suffering. However, eventually the cause was found and I was on route to Dareda Hospital again – this time as a qualified doctor! Dareda was a very busy hospital and we eight MMMs worked hard, prayed hard and entered into life fully.



Sr Marian with her beloved "watoto"(children) in Tanzania.

Now, as I celebrate my Golden Jubilee of Religious Profession, I find that I have spent 33 years in Tanzania: 5 in Dareda Hospital, 3 shorter times in Kabanga Hospital, Kigoma Region, 14 years at Makiungu Hospital, Singida and the past 10 years at Faraja Centre CBHC, Singida. As MMMs, we are meant to be contemplatives in a very active life and that has been my life. Without a deep foundation and practice in prayer, I do not think I would have survived and grown in my vocation. I am very happy to be ministering in Home Based Hospice and Palliative Care for the past three years at Faraja Centre. We have been able to help many patients to know they are loved by us and by God and to die pain-free with their family at home. I am now 71 years old but have no desire to retire from this needed and fulfilling ministry!

I am very grateful to my parents who, although they didn't want me to join MMM, but gave me their blessing and supported me in my decision.

As I look back on these 50 years, I am very grateful to God for my vocation and to all my MMM Sisters and to friends and family who have encouraged and supported me. Our MMM vocation is An Extraordinary Adventure. As our MMM Constitutions tell us: Your life is a "Yes" uttered in faith in response to God's call. Our Foundress Mother Mary Martin used to say when all seemed impossible: "If God wants the work, God will show the way". God has shown me the way! ■



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Addresses of Houses in the U.S. • www.mmmusa.org

Medical Missionaries of Mary
Mission Development Office
4425 West 63rd Street, Suite 100
Chicago, IL 60629-5565
773-735-3712
Fax: 773-735-4661
e-mail: mdommm2014@gmail.com

179 Highland Ave.
Somerville, MA 02143-1515
617-666-3223
e-mail: mmmsomerville@comcast.net

16 Downey St.
Malden, MA 02148-2056
781-912-2173
mmminmalden@gmail.com

563 Minneford Ave.
City Island Bronx, NY 10464-1118
718-885-0945
Fax: 718-885-0010
e-mail: minniefordmmm@gmail.com

3410 West 60th Place
Chicago, IL 60629-3602
773-737-3458
e-mail: mmmchi2015@gmail.com

Route 1 PO Box 329
Clinchco, VA 24226-9702
Tel/fax: 276-835-9312
email: srberniekenny@yahoo.com

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For more information please contact:
Sister Joanne Bierl, MMM
Mission Development Office
4425 W 63rd St., Ste 100
Chicago, IL 60629-5565
Tel: 1-773-735-3712



Bring to your healing service...

and into your relationships with your co-workers, integrity, dedication, and care.

Seek God as you work for human wholeness.

Your prayer, your service, your study, in fact your whole life,

all are dedicated towards the fulfillment of Christ's healing mission:

that the world "may have life and have it in all its fullness."

(MMM Constitutions 9.11)

Together their 100 years of MMM life and service has been an extraordinary adventure over 3 continents.