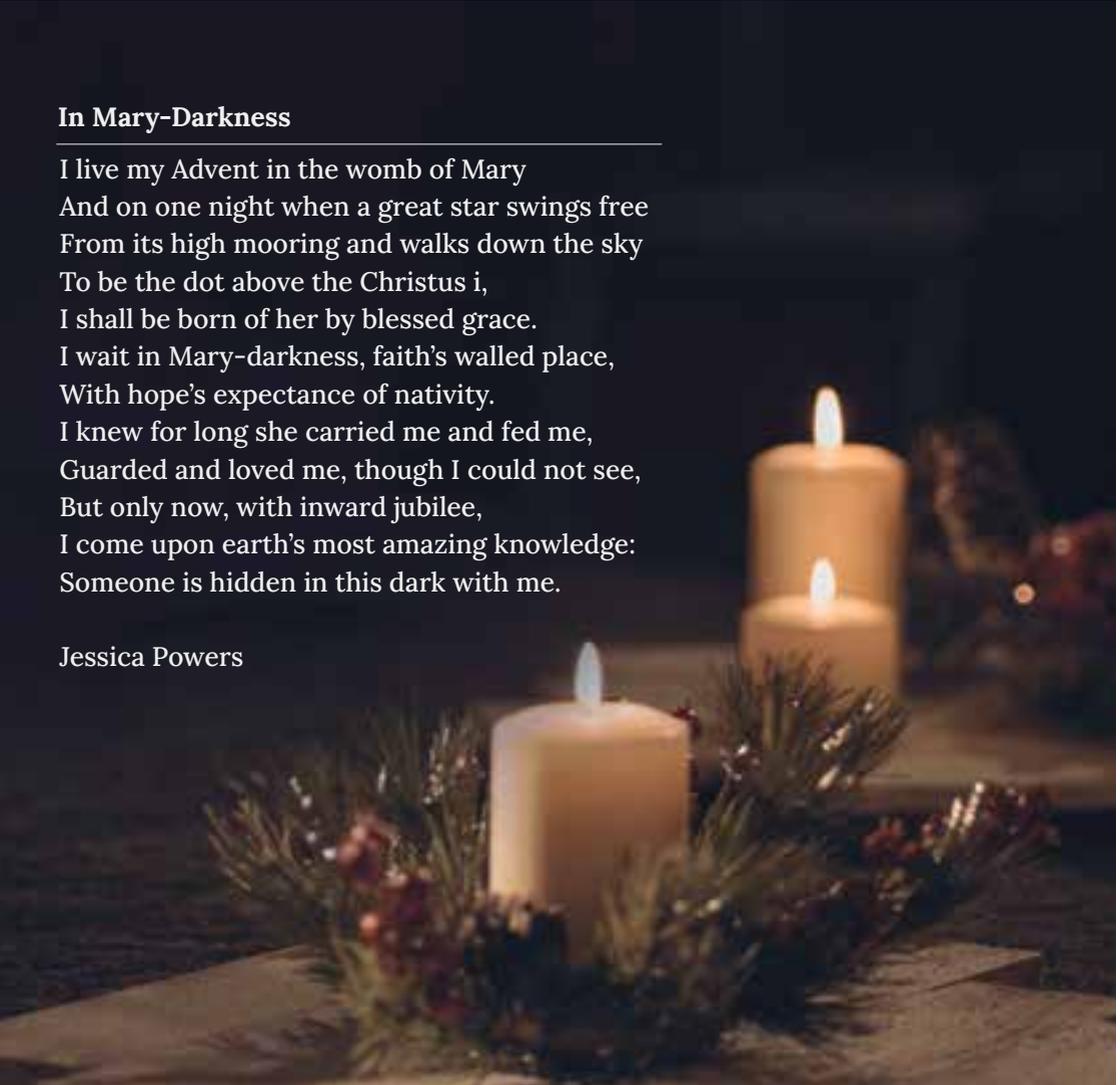




In Mary-Darkness

I live my Advent in the womb of Mary
And on one night when a great star swings free
From its high mooring and walks down the sky
To be the dot above the Christus i,
I shall be born of her by blessed grace.
I wait in Mary-darkness, faith's walled place,
With hope's expectance of nativity.
I knew for long she carried me and fed me,
Guarded and loved me, though I could not see,
But only now, with inward jubilee,
I come upon earth's most amazing knowledge:
Someone is hidden in this dark with me.

Jessica Powers



Wishing You Peace and Joy at Christmas

Bringing Tidings of Joy

On behalf of the Medical Missionaries of Mary - Sisters and Associates - we wish you, your families and friends a very blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership in our common mission of healing and for your continued interest and generosity to so many in great need. It is humbling in these especially challenging times.

Below and on page three are some illustrations of what you have helped to make possible in 2021. They are people with whom we work, along with our Sisters, Associates and staff.

May you experience the joy and peace of Christmas, the hope of the Resurrection, and good health and happiness in the year to come. Be assured of our prayers for you each day.

Sister Carol Breslin, MMM



Protecting children against illness



Providing food for the vulnerable

Editor: Sister Carol Breslin, MMM Design: Dayna Brislane
Photo credits: Cover: Laura Nyhuis, Unsplash; MMM Sisters

For All the People



Providing basic health care



Engaging youth with health education



Providing hand sanitizing materials



Collaborating in training of pharmacists



Upgrading for Sisters



Learning to grow food



Giving much-needed dental care

In a World of Constant Change

'As Medical Missionaries of Mary we go ... where human need is greatest.' We plan our activities with this in mind. So what happens when the context changes? Recently we have experienced the disruptions brought about by climate change and increasing violence and political unrest. These have been intensified by the ongoing effects of COVID-19, whether from the disease itself or restrictions imposed by governments. They are hard enough to cope with in countries where there are social safety nets and funds available for responding to emergencies, but in many of the countries where we work, these supports do not exist. MMMs and Associates quickly learn flexibility and we appreciate the understanding of our donors who make it possible to adapt at short notice. At times we have found it necessary to curtail some activities and develop others to reach out to people in distress.

Many of us have seen the increasing devastation caused by **climate change**. We work in areas affected by deforestation, drought and flooding. Homes and land are destroyed and it is difficult for families to plant and harvest crops. Many experience hunger. They are often forced to flee, hoping to find safety. In their desperation they are vulnerable to the promises of traffickers. Our MMMs and staff, especially in South Sudan, Honduras and in Torugbene, Nigeria, have taken steps to combat climate change and mitigate its effects. They have planted trees, used solar power to decrease their reliance on diesel, started kitchen gardens and seed banks, and protested against deforestation.

On the move

Some projects are coping with greatly increased numbers of **internally displaced people**, resulting from violence, political unrest, the effects of climate change - and in Nigeria the activities of Boko Haram. People are afraid to go out and travel or have been forced from their homes. It is more difficult for them to access health care and other services.



People displaced by conflict

Our Sisters in Abuja, Abakaliki and Fuka, Nigeria have responded by providing food, shelter, medicines and nutritional supplements, as well as household, sanitation and cleaning materials and mosquito nets in the camps. They help with school fees and materials and seed grants for income generation. With our particular concern for mother and child, we prioritize women-headed households and female victims of violence.

The Christmas story is also one of a young family experiencing displacement and uncertainty, away from the support of family and friends, sometimes in fear of their lives, in a world that had no room for them. Thank you for reaching out with us to those in similar situations.



Using solar power to provide water

All Things New

Our new look!

We launched our new MMM website in October 2021. You can learn more about who we are, where we are and what we do by visiting us at www.mmmworldwide.org. There is information about our history and spirituality. You will find stories about our work, videos, interactive maps and other resources. You can also access our publications archive.



Our new website



Sister Sheila Campbell

Introducing our new editor

Over the past eleven years I have had the opportunity to tell our MMM story through our MMM publications, describing the work of our Sisters, Associates and staff to our generous and loyal supporters. From 1 January 2022 I will be handing on this ministry to Sister Sheila Campbell. I know you will show her the same interest, encouragement and generosity that you have shown me. Thank you and may you and your loved ones be richly blest.

Sister Carol Breslin, MMM

'As I Have Loved You' (Jn 15:12)

Sister Fergal Kenna was born Mary Kenna in Portarlinton in 1928. She worked in the civil service in Dublin in the Department of Posts and Telegraphs before joining MMM in 1960. After profession she trained in hospital administration and worked in the hospital in Drogheda for several years. In 1975 Sister Fergal was assigned to Kenya, where she served in MMM leadership and as a secretary and bursar. She then worked in Uganda until 1993, when she returned to Ireland.



Sister Fergal Kenna

Sister Fergal lived for many years in our MMM house in Artane, Dublin, where she was the bursar and also did tutoring in adult literacy. She moved to Raheny, Dublin, in 2006, again serving as the community bursar, and was a member of the local church choir. Sister Fergal transferred to the Motherhouse in August 2019. After an episode of ill health in September 2021 she was admitted to Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda and was later transferred to the Cottage Hospital. Shortly after, she returned to the Lourdes Hospital, where she died peacefully on 1 October 2021.

Meet Our New Team!

Our eleventh MMM Congregational Chapter took place in Accra, Ghana, from 1 to 17 October 2021, marking a new stage in the life of the congregation. As well as reviewing our life and mission 'in the context of changing world realities and in the light of our charism of healing' the chapter delegates elect the members of our MMM Congregational Leadership Team (CLT). We eagerly awaited the news and on 14 October we learned that a new team had been chosen. The four women bring a wide variety of experiences, skills and knowledge to this special ministry of leadership.



A centerpiece for the MMM Chapter



Sister Ursula Sharpe

Sister Ursula Sharpe is our new MMM Congregational Leader. Born in Glenties, Co. Donegal, she attended her early education in Leitrim and in Ardee, Co. Louth. She qualified as a nurse-midwife and worked for several years as a volunteer for Concern in Bangladesh, training in development. After a time as the head of fundraising for Concern in Dublin, Ursula joined MMM in 1983. Her first assignment was to Kitovu, Uganda, in 1986. At that time HIV/AIDS was devastating the lives of the people and the government encouraged concerted efforts to deal with the pandemic. MMM

was in the forefront of the response and Ursula was in charge of innovative projects in primary health care, in home care for people with AIDS, and in care for orphans. She was to spend 17 years in Kitovu, also serving in Area MMM leadership and earning master's degrees in pastoral leadership and counselling psychology.

Sister Ursula returned to Ireland after election to the CLT in 2003. Her leadership skills were again asked for in 2009, when she was elected leader of our MMM Motherhouse, and was also a member of the European Area Team. Ursula spent some time in Malawi and also used her facilitation skills to help other congregations. She also has talents in music!

Sister Maria Gonzaga Namuyomba, from Masaka, Uganda, is our Assistant Congregational Leader. She completed her schooling in Kampala and was a junior nurses' aid before joining MMM in 1989. After profession she obtained a bachelor's degree in accounting, later completing a bachelor's in accounting and finance from Dundalk Institute of Technology. Her first assignment was to Mzuzu, Malawi, in 1998, after which she spent eight years in Nigeria as administrator of our busy hospital in Abakaliki.



Sister Maria Gonzaga Namuyomba



Maria then used her skills at our mission in Choloma, Honduras, for four years, working in youth development and pastoral work. She helped many young people acquire basic education. In 2014 she was in Nairobi, Kenya, preparing for her next challenging appointment as Area business administrator for our MMM East/Central Africa (ECA) Area. She had hardly started into that role when she was appointed Area leader for the ECA, a post that she was holding when she headed to the MMM Chapter in October. When not involved in administration Maria enjoys sewing and weaving.

Sister Clara Chikwana is a Councillor on the team. Born in Lilongwe, Malawi, she was a trained enrolled nurse-midwife when she joined MMM in 1991. After profession she worked first at our health centre in Chipini and then completed registered training in nursing and midwifery in Uganda and Kenya respectively. In 2000 she was assigned to Nigeria and worked in the hospital we ran at Urua Akpan at that time.



Sister Clara Chikwana

When she returned to Malawi, Clara was involved in opening a new house in Kasina and taking over the health centre. The centre developed a wide variety of preventive services, home and palliative care, a HIV programme, and maternal and child care. After several years in vocation promotion, she began studies in formation work in Ireland in 2013. Clara moved to our international novitiate in Ibadan, Nigeria, with a view to taking over as directress of novices. Sister Clara took up this appointment in 2016 and in 2019 was also appointed head of our formation team for the MMM West Africa Area.



Sister Rose Mogun

Sister Rose Mogun was also elected as a Councillor. From Ogiedi-Elume, Nigeria, Rose joined MMM in 1977 and trained as a nurse-midwife after profession. After experience as a staff nurse in Nigeria, she obtained a master's in pastoral studies in the USA. She then served in formation and vocation ministry for several years in Nigeria and was part of the MMM Regional leadership team. She continued to use her leadership skills when she was elected to the CLT in 1997.

Sister Rose then obtained a master's in development studies in Ireland. Assigned to our house of studies in Nairobi, Kenya in 2011, she developed another set of skills as a Resource Person for Management of MMM Ministries. With MMM Associate Dr. Eamonn Brehony she visited our projects and helped our Sisters and staff to develop good standards in delivery of services and accountability. Rose continued in this ministry when she was assigned to our new house in Kampala, Uganda in 2019.



Attendees at the 11th MMM Chapter

We congratulate these Sisters and are grateful for their willingness to serve in MMM Congregational leadership for the next four years.



Work with us!

- Pray with us.
We remember you each day.
- Make a donation by mail or online at www.mmmworldwide.org
- Join us as members of MMM.
- Share our charism as an MMM Associate.
- Leave an enduring gift of health and healing in your will.
- Remembering us in your will or giving a donation in memory of a loved one will help us to plan our work.
- You can specify how and where your gift will be used.
- Please include: "the Congregational Leader, for the time being, of the Medical Missionaries of Mary."

Donations specified for a country or special need (e.g. palliative care), are sent to the country or need. We allocate other donations to the most urgent needs overseas or to our General Mission Fund, to pay for e.g. training and airfares.

Privacy

We respect your privacy. Any information that you provide to us will only be used for the purpose for which it is given, and will be processed in compliance with the Irish Data Protection Legislation. It will not be shared with any other organisation, unless required by law, or requested by you, such as for the processing of a tax claim.

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