



Dear Friend,

Gratitude! This is what fills our hearts as we draw close to that great feast of Thanksgiving. Asking ourselves, what exactly are we grateful for in this time and place? YOU are a big source of our gratitude. Sometimes we ask the question, “Why me, Lord?” Often it is asked when something very challenging has happened, i.e., the untimely death of a loved one, a terrible disaster, etc. But do we ever ask, “Why me?” when there is a great deal of goodness, blessing and happiness in our lives?

When I read Kirambi, Rwanda’s Annual Report and some of the good things they have experienced this year, I am grateful to Misesan Cara. This group works to bring about transformation through supporting missionary organizations and their partners in promoting poverty eradication, education, health care, social justice, peace, the integrity of creation, and inter-religious collaboration. It is supported by the Irish Government and many of the programs and projects that MMM manages receive aid from them.

In a world ravaged by wars, good relationships with others is of paramount importance. These good relationships are another reason to give thanks. For example one of our Associate MMMs, Moira Brehony is the liaison officer for MMM with Misesan Cara. When you read about Rwanda you will see how much they have accomplished this year with such help.

Oftentimes we do not consider transitions as times for which to be grateful. In reading Sister Therese’s reflection on gratefulness we can see that indeed these in between times in our lives are moments filled with many lessons.

Do you have younger family members that want you to try out new ways of doing things? I am grateful for these young people who have alerted me to what Amazon is offering to its customers. A new way of supporting our missionary works is www.smile.amazon.com, something about which I am smiling. You will find more information on the back flap of this newsletter.

In our Summer Newsletter, I told you about the documentary film being made by Gerard Thomas Straub about the poor and suffering in Honduras and how MMM responds to those caught in these conditions. It has been an exciting journey with this film maker and hopefully, soon, we will be sharing the fruits of his efforts with you.

To put the making of this documentary, called “Rooted in Love” in some perspective: less than 10 years after Mother Mary founded the Medical Missionaries of Mary, she was inspired

to make a movie as a way to get the work of MMM known more widely. Through friends she was able to contact Andrew Buchanan, a very well-known film maker in England. She convinced him to go to Nigeria to do a documentary style film on the sisters’ work, so that people could see the need and the MMM response. Because of WWII there were many mines in the seas between England and West Africa, and chartering a plane would have been prohibitively expensive, they decided the only way they could travel was by land over the Sahara Desert. This was no small feat in 1946. So media has been an important part of telling the MMM story in which YOU have been a part.

Recently I was waiting for someone who was in a very long line of customers waiting for service. I sat down beside an older lady who had some trouble walking and had a cane. She explained to me that she too was in that line, but a woman in the line said she would hold her place and when it came near her turn she could rejoin the line. My new friend marveled at the goodness of people. Perhaps we could all take a little time to sit quietly and count our many blessings.

Each day as we gather to pray, we remember YOU and all your needs before our loving God. And each day as I experience your goodness through your prayers, words of encouragement and faithful support, I give thanks for YOU. God bless YOU always.

Gratefully,

S. Mary Ann MacRae, MMM

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Development Director

Out of Darkness... Health and Healing

Remember François? The little boy who smiled through his life's most difficult challenges. He was cared for by our Kirambi Heath Center in Rwanda

This newsletter will bring you up to date on the many wonderful things happening at the Kirambi Health Center as detailed in their Annual Report.

Rwanda is a small land locked country located in East Africa, more commonly known as the Great Lakes region. It shares a border with Uganda in the North, Burundi in the South, Tanzania in the East and Democratic Republic of Congo in the West. It is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa.

We first went into Rwanda in June 1994 in response to the genocide that had occurred and were involved in relief work until June 1995. We returned in October 1996 and in May 1997 we took over the running of the Kirambi Health Center at the request of the Bishop of Gikongoro Diocese. The Center serves two outreaches namely Kirambi and Kabilizi in the Southern Province of Rwanda with a combined population of approximately 25,000 people.



Patients waiting for tests.

There has been a 40% increase in out-patient contacts over the last year. One of the reasons for this change is that we are now able to test and treat both HIV/AIDS and Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

Good laboratory services are essential for diagnosing and monitoring response to treatment for many diseases and Misan Cara has helped make this possible. The local people are also very grateful, and are delighted to have such a beautiful laboratory in their rural area.

Some of the improvements made over the year have been:

- building renovation of our Laboratory and Pharmacy
- a new ambulance
- visiting doctors and dentists who provide consistent care
- improvement of nutritional status of many children



François presenting Sister Kathie Shea, MMM from Boston, MA with flowers. He is grateful to be so well even though left with permanent physical challenges.

Plans for next year

- to control malarial outbreaks by distributing government supplied insecticide mosquito nets
- to order malaria treatment supplies as early as possible before the mosquito season that transmits the malarial parasite
- to educate people on the importance of paying for medical insurance on time, thus allowing them to access health services anywhere they wish
- to renovate the staff quarters

And now for a story: Sister wrote to us of how a mother and her newborn baby in a difficult obstetrical challenge both survived and thrived.

The young mother, living in very poor conditions with no family nearby, gave birth at home, on her own, to a baby boy. A neighbor found her with the undelivered placenta still attached to the baby and notified one of our health workers.

The health worker phoned us and we went immediately with an ambulance to collect the young mother and child. When we arrived we found that she had eaten nothing and the baby was not yet breastfed. The mother had no clothes for the baby. In fact, she had nothing. Her neighbors brought milk and some of them accompanied this small family to our Health Center.

Our staff delivered the placenta successfully, thank God, and weighed the baby at about 4 lb. Because the mother was so very malnourished, we decided to keep her and her son for several weeks to build them up nutritionally.

We often ask ourselves, what would have happened to this mother and child if we were not there to help? You, by your faithful partnership in our 'circle of gift' make it possible for our sisters to be in just the right place at the right time. Remember, you are indispensable in making this miracle and so many others like it possible. 🌸



Transitioning with Gratefulness

Let us be grateful for the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom. - Marcel Proust

After coming across the above, I was asked to consider contributing a reflection on gratefulness to this newsletter edition. As I sat down to write, this quote returned to me as gift, offering the inspiration that could help hold my thoughts together, as I, with gratitude, gathered some memories and experiences of my life.

Gratitude came gently. It seeped into my soul from the bountifulness of my parent's gratitude to God for life, family, friends and faith. They were the first charming gardeners who helped my soul to blossom to the mystery of God, the treasure of family and friends, the joy of service, the sense of adventure of following one's heart that led me to MMM. I so am grateful.

After novitiate and professional training, I joined an MMM team in Brazil who were living in the periphery of Sao Paulo among migrants who arrived from the drought inflicted and socially/economically deprived area of the northeast. On arrival, they joined hundreds of thousands in makeshift living arrangements, constructing small huts often built from cardboard or plywood. The periphery was continually spreading and expanding with the daily arrival of others who came in search of making a living. There was no sewage system, electricity, running water, nor medical facilities readily available to them. The sisters, with basic medical supplies, opened small health clinics in these shanty towns and engaged with pastoral ministry. My heart swelled with gratitude to be among these courageous, faith-filled and resilient people. My missionary vocation was taking flesh, becoming more of a reality to me. During the many years I was in Brazil, I joined other MMMs in working in a small, rural hospital down south and eventually was part of a team that opened a new mission in rural Bahia, northeast Brazil. Primary health care and pastoral ministry continued to be our priorities.

Responding to the needs of today, our sisters continue in Bahia and one sister is in a pilot project in Sao Paulo. I left Brazil at the end of 1998. When I close my eyes I see the many faces, feel the hugs and handshakes, hear the words of encouragement and challenge and smell the many coffees

the gracious Brazilians generously offered us. I am ever so grateful.

After twenty years, I returned to the USA. The initial trans-cultural adjustment to Brazil was mild compared to re-entry to the USA! It was like walking through a dense fog, carrying a heavy heart and not too sure where I was going. All part of the grieving process with which we have all become so familiar. Family, friends and MMM sisters were a tremendous support and eventually, over the next fourteen years, I became involved in a wide range of various and life giving ministries filled with new experiences and people, all for which I am so grateful. Little did I know I was being prepared for my unexpected and challenging assignment to Angola, W. Africa.

Our sisters run two health care centers offering services in curative and preventive medicine, one, in the township of Viana, in the outskirts of Luanda and the other in the periphery of Huambo, located in west/central Angola. Both centers have outreach programs bringing services to those areas that are isolated and deprived of health care. Both are engaged in HIV testing, counseling, referrals and prevention.

In addition to ministering in the area of HIV, I was privileged to follow other MMMs in prison ministry in Huambo. I visited the prison weekly, facilitating sessions in spiritual leadership. On leaving Angola, I had no doubt the participants would continue to be faithful to their ministry while serving their sentences. Upon discharge I know that they will carry their ministry home to their families and communities.

Having left Angola less than a year ago, my mind often returns to the memory of these people, places and experiences now woven into the fabric of my life. The grief of goodbye lingers and yes, ***I am most grateful for all.***

A Blessed Thanksgiving to you.

Thank you for your partnership in this extraordinary MMM adventure. ***I am so grateful for YOU.***

Therese McDonough, MMM

Action ALERT!



Do you shop online? If you do and you shop at Amazon then you might like to know about Amazon's initiative to help your favorite charity.

Instead of going to the normal Amazon web site, just go to www.smile.amazon.com. It will look exactly like their usual website same goods, prices, etc. What you will be able to do is to select the charity of your choice and for every eligible purchase Amazon will donate 0.5% of that price to your charity. The Medical Missionaries of Mary have registered with Amazon and although it may not seem a whole lot, still if enough people participate then it will add up and every penny counts.

Bequests — Gifts that keep on Giving

Your will ensures that those you love and the institutions you care about receive a portion of your estate when you are gone. Please consider the MMM as you prepare your will. If you already have a will, contact your attorney about adding a codicil (amendment). The Medical Missionaries of Mary, Inc. (legal name) is a tax exempt entity in accordance with section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. For more information please contact:

Sister Mary Ann MacRae, MMM
 Mission Development Office
 4425 W 63rd St., Ste 100
 Chicago, IL 60629-5565
 Tel: 1-773-735-3712

MEDICAL MISSIONARIES OF MARY Addresses of Houses in the U.S. www.mmmusa.org

Medical Missionaries of Mary
 179 Highland Ave.
 Somerville, MA 02143-1515
 Chicago, IL 60629-3602
 773-737-3458
 e-mail: mmmchicago@sbglobal.net

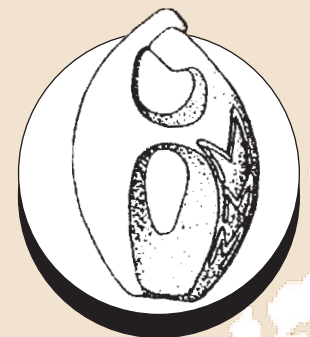
563 Minneford Ave.
 City Island Bronx, NY 10464-1118
 718-885-0945
 Fax: 718-885-0010
 e-mail: minniefordmimm@gmail.com

16 Downey Street
 Malden, MA 02148-2056
 781-912-2173
 e-mail: mmminimalden@gmail.com

773-735-3712
 Fax: 773-735-4661
 e-mail: development@mmusa.org

4425 West 63rd Street, Suite 100
 Chicago, IL 60629-5565
 773-735-3712

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Rooted and Founded in Love...