



Dear Friends,
For last year's words belong to last year's language,
And next year's words await another voice -
To make an end is to make a beginning. ~ *T.S. Elliot*

Beginnings are important and can be quite daunting at times. At the start of 2015 we are faced with many challenges. You will read about a new beginning for MMM in Honduras and some of what the sisters are facing there. We have planted many seeds along our journey with the Honduran people.

Here in the northern hemisphere we are in the middle of winter where the ground can be hard and frozen yet we know that come spring the daffodils and tulips will bloom again, the grass will come back to life and the winter wheat planted in faith in the fall will be harvested come next summer. In the time that the sisters were in Marcala many seeds were planted and as they prepare to leave, like winter wheat, the harvest of their efforts will be seen sometime in the future.

For the past months I have been writing about Gerard Straub's documentary of the MMM work in Honduras. In early October we received the first 100 DVD copies of "**Rooted in Love.**" The two feature-length DVDs depict the work of MMM in Marcala and in Choloma. Gerry has donated his time and resources in the making of this documentary and is using the power of film in the service of the poor. If you are interested in obtaining a copy, please contact us at the Mission Development Office, address and phone number on this newsletter. The cost is \$10 which includes handling and shipping. We are also looking for creative ideas and suggestions as to how we might share this gift with others interested in helping us bring health care to the poor.

Every six years MMM has a General Chapter. This is a time where representatives from all over our MMM world come together to reflect on the past six years, pray and discern together and then set our course for the next six years. At this time we also elect our Congregational Leadership Team. Prior to this meeting we evaluate how we

have answered the various calls of the last Chapter, discern what new needs we may be able to address and what it is that God would like from us in these next six years. This year we will open our meeting on April 12th in Nairobi, Kenya. Your prayerful support during this time will be gratefully appreciated.

There are some advantages to wearing many hats as I do. It enables me to travel, bringing the mission of MMM to various churches around the USA and to visit some of our missions. In 2014 this mission trip took me to Brazil after the World Cup and the visit of Pope Francis. It was interesting to see how the Brazilian people responded to two such different events! While disappointed at their team's performance during the World Cup, they were enthralled with Pope Francis and his message. You will find out a bit more about my experience inside this newsletter.

You, our friends and partners in mission are always with us and sometimes we get to meet you and celebrate your milestones. I had such an opportunity when two of our long time Chicago friends, Joan Edelman and Jean Quinn, celebrated their 90th birthday. They told their family and friends that they did not need anything but if anyone wanted to make a donation to MMM that would make them very happy...and it made us happy, too.

As we embark on this new year of 2015, let us be the peacemakers that we are called to be. You are always in our prayers. Your support and prayer is always needed.

Gratefully,

S. Mary Ann MacRae, mmm

Sister Mary Ann MacRae, MMM

Development Director



In the Face of Violence, Hope Abounds

Following a discussion on active non-violence, I was reflecting on a recent trip I took to visit our Sisters in Salvador, Brazil. While there I witnessed the violence they experience on a daily basis. The MMMs in Salvador started Project Consolation to better enable their neighbors to cope with the escalating violence in their society.

In the State of Bahia where Salvador is located 34,000 people were assassinated between 2000 and 2010.

In Salvador (pop. 3,000,000) in 2010 the number of assassinations was 2,129, mostly young, black males.

Project Consolation recognizes the stigmatization and isolation that happens to a family following the assassination of one of its sons/daughters. The natural process of bereavement is disrupted and distorted and family disintegration often occurs. The Project aims to help families through the intense grieving stage and reintegrate them back into the wider community.

Working with the bereaved families, we seek to accomplish this through the formation of voluntary workers, training sessions, human rights input, home visiting, trauma counselling, ritualization of loss, networking, human resources, administration, monitoring and evaluation.

Having visited the Project on a previous trip to Brazil, I was anxious to see how things were developing and we agreed to go in the afternoon. However, before this could happen, we learned that there had been a demonstration in the neighborhood against police brutality that morning and there were repercussions. After a phone call to the Project, it appeared “safe enough” to proceed with our plan.

As we traveled through the neighborhood, schools had been dismissed early, community centers were empty and in general there was an air of “being careful”.

Shortly after arriving at Project Consolation, a woman, whom I will call Maria, came in. She had been a client of the Project after her son was assassinated by the police and had been greatly helped. Maria returned to the Project that afternoon because the current trouble with the police evoked a flashback to her own experience. On her way to the Project she went to where



Maria (far L) shares her story and her fears with (from L to R) Sister Sheila Campbell, Sister Catherine Carey visiting from USA and staff, Rita, AMMM.

her other son worked to warn him of the troubles and to caution him to be very careful.

When Maria arrived she was able to pour out her heart and concerns in what she knew to be a safe, nurturing environment and we were privileged to be with her. Maria had not been a client of the Project for some time, but former clients are always welcome to return when they feel the need for support.

A few days later we were preparing to leave our house for a meeting when gunshots were heard and a woman walking down the street reported to Sister Sheila, “I was standing right next to the young man and they just shot him dead.” She was stunned as were we.

Sister Sheila, who works in this Project, sent me an update on the occurrence: “The young boy who was shot on our street that day was called Cleiton, aged 20. We have been in touch with both the mother and the father (separated) and they are being accompanied by the Project. It seems that Cleiton had no drug involvement so it may have been an extra-judicial police killing as the men who shot him arrived hooded and masked on two motorbikes - not the style of the local gangsters who go right into the house unafraid of recognition and shoot!”

So how do we live in a world where there is more and more violence, often by guns? How do we become actively non-violent to bring about peace? These are the questions that I sit with and yet I also see that a few very committed women have made a safe place where those who have very little can come, grieve, share with others, find support and learn to live again with hope. As the New Year begins let us commit ourselves to being non-violent.

You have made Project Consolation possible. Maria and all those who share her journey thank you. ■

Sowing Seeds of Hope

2015! A new year and a new adventure for the MMMs of Marcala, Honduras. Ongoing evaluation of programs and projects is an important aspect of discerning where we should be at a given time. In dialogue with the Bishop of the Diocese, we are moving from Marcala to another area where there is a greater need for our presence and services.

But first a little history:

The Medical Missionaries of Mary arrived in Marcala in May of 1999, following the devastation of Hurricane Mitch. Our mission is located in the Southwest part of Honduras. During these past 15 years we have established an Integrated Health and Development Project whose objectives are:

1. To raise awareness through capacity building, providing relevant information on health education and human rights, building healthy self-esteem and encouraging women and children to recognize and break negative cycles of behavior.
2. To increase the ability of women and children in the rural areas to access information and services on health, education, social and legal issues.
3. To support and care for the sick and elderly in their homes and with their families.
4. To collaborate and network with other groups in the area involved in women and children's issues and the promotion of further education.

After 15 years of working with the indigenous peoples of Marcala and surrounding areas, we now have people who have become our partners in mission. With the seeds sown by our missionaries, they are able to continue much of the work that we have begun.

Presently, our sisters are looking for a place in the northern part of the diocese which will be closer to the MMM sisters in Choloma. This new location will enable the two groups of sisters to meet together and better support each other. This is very important given the extreme violence under which the sisters in Choloma live and work on a daily basis.

Missionaries by their very nature do not stay forever in one place. Once we have trained the local people to take our place, we move on to where we can bring God's love and healing to another location.

There are some essential elements in starting a new mission. The first priority after identifying the location is to do a needs



In Marcala, Sister Cleide da Silva visits the ill bringing a compassionate presence to the homebound.

assessment. In so doing we wish to respect the people to whom we go by finding out from them, what knowledge and skills we can share with them. The sisters will also look for a place to live and some kind of "office space" from where they can work. Unlike densely populated urban settings such as Choloma, the work in a rural area requires the sisters to move out into the countryside to make their services more accessible.

For most, change is a challenge so moving on to a new place will bring some sense of loss as the sisters say good-bye to the people among whom they have lived and worked. They are heartened by what one of the women's groups said, "We will never go back to the way we were."

So begins our 2015! New horizons, new adventures, new paths to walk in the service of the People of God. Our missionaries, the people they serve and you are all living out the call by Pope Francis: be missionary disciples. The Sisters are ever grateful for what you have made possible through your support in Marcala. They look forward to your continued partnership in this new year and new mission. ■



Sister Bernie Heneghan instructs children in one of the schools not only the basics of healthcare but also self-care through the use of Tai Chi.

Fifty Years Later

Almost 50 years ago two MMMs, Sisters Teresa Connolly and Nina Underwood, were in the parking lot of St. Francis Hospital in Evanston, Illinois. They needed directions to the place where they were to address the student nurses and show a film about MMM. Twins sisters, Jean and Joan Conlon, who were nurses at the hospital, were going home after a day's work and stopped to help the sisters find their way. That was the beginning of a lifelong friendship between "the twins" and MMM.

Jean Quinn and Joan Edelman-long-time friends of MMM.



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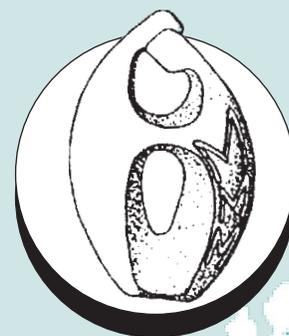
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Rooted and Founded in Love...