



Dear Friend,

Easter Resurrection! Digging out from the piles of snow and the sub-zero temperatures. After this winter, the resurrection of spring holds a whole new meaning.

With the coming of spring, signs of hope abound and being an avid gardener I find the little sprouts of green grass encouraging. Recently I read, Pope Francis' letter called "The Joy of the Gospel," and as a missionary, I find great joy and motivation in his writing.

There are more signs of hope when I hear from our sisters in other countries about what they are able to do because of how YOU have been supporting their efforts. Sister Ursula, a young sister from Nigeria, writes of some people she has met in the clinic in Mukuru. Young sisters offer us hope, while we older ones have the experience of living through many different times and seasons.

When I think of all the people I have met in various places over the years I wonder how they are today. Once when talking at a mission appeal in one of the parishes, it was brought home to me how YOU too like to know the ending of the story. Sometimes we never know the ending. In the story of Sonia, Sister Maria Namuyomba from Uganda, gives an update of what has happened to her. In today's world there are often so many stories that are heartbreaking; it is encouraging to hear how a person such as Sonia has coped and how she has spread both joy and hope to others. This despite some pretty serious challenges.

Back in the winter when many of us watched the Super Bowl (being from Seattle I was kind of rooting for the Seahawks), a group of supporters in Medford, MA held a fund raiser and called it Super Bowl Squares. The proceeds from this went to help the people in Nangwa, Tanzania. Besides a clinic and the care of the mothers and children, the sisters have been working on various ways to make a water supply safe, accessible and affordable through the use of appropriate technology. The Medford Circle of Friends are an example of a group of people, getting together, having some fun, and yet offering hope to a people half way around the world.

We have had many calls and inquiries as to how the sisters are in South Sudan. It has been a time of uncertainty with the various attempts at peace talks, and by the time you receive this, things probably will

have changed again. However, at this writing, the sisters are together in Wau. Sister Irene writes that they continue working with the local people and are planning a project which will be a healing center that will include a health care facility. In the midst of so much uncertainty the sisters live in hope and give hope to their beleaguered people that life will be better.

In the final chapter of his letter, Pope Francis encourages us to be "spirit-filled evangelizers who are fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit". He says that only the person who feels happiness in seeking the good of others, in desiring their happiness, can be a missionary. "If I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life."

Our lives are justified by our helping others to live better lives, whether it be in our homes, the supermarket, the mall, or half a world away. That's our mission, that's our life's work. We are all engaged in a great missionary effort.

The Pope cautions us not to be discouraged if results are scarce. He reminds us that "fruitfulness is often invisible, elusive and unquantifiable." He assures us that it is only our commitment that is necessary. Well, YOU have certainly proven your commitment to helping your less fortunate brothers and sisters in our missionary world.

During this Eastertide as we prepare for Pentecost we pray that YOU will continue to be blessed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Please continue to remember us in your prayers.

Gratefully,  
*A. Mary Ann MacRae, M.M.M.*

Sister Mary Ann MacRae, M.M.M.  
Development Director



Elizabeth and her child beaming with health and happiness.

# Oasis of Hope

The MMMs have been in Mukuru since 1995. We have witnessed resurrection in the lives of our clients at the Health Center. Sister Ursula Agge sent us this report on the area itself and the impact we are having on the local population. She tells of two families affected by HIV/AIDS and how we have helped them see a way forward to living full and productive lives. She also relates how MMM is working to educate the young on how to avoid contracting the HIV/AIDS virus.

## But first, a little background on Mukuru itself:

The Mukuru slum is a winding maze of narrow alley ways and aluminium shacks. Located just 5 miles from the center of Nairobi, Kenya, Mukuru is a world away from the traffic jams of the Kenyan capital. Here, many of the mud tracks that run through the slum are too narrow for cars.

It is, however, a hive of activity. Market stalls fill every available space. The 600,000 people who live on this small piece of land bump shoulders and elbows as they go about their day. Amid the visible signs of poverty that strike you everywhere you look, the thing that really hits you is the complete lack of personal space or privacy.

Poverty has invisible signs, too. Over 1.6 million Kenyans are living with HIV. Many of them live here and in the other slum areas of the city.

This is the reason why the Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) decided to set up a clinic to assist the HIV positive community. We are working as a professional team, with staff and community workers providing services where clients are treated with dignity. We meet, greet and screen all clinic visitors ensuring they are welcomed and supported through-out their visit, whether it is for HIV counselling and testing, TB testing, prenatal services, or growth monitoring for children under the age of five.

Our community health workers are the backbone of the clinic and its outreach services. These health workers run support groups for men and women living with HIV, and also go into the community to raise awareness of issues related to being HIV positive, especially for pregnant women.

Two stories illustrate how the donations/support we get from different people have brought smiles to our TB/HIV Clients.

Like many women in Kenya, Felistus tested positive for HIV when she was pregnant. The counselling Felistus received at the MMM clinic helped her accept her HIV status. When her daughter, Grace, was 18 months old she tested negative, she was free from HIV.

Elizabeth found out she was living with HIV when she was pregnant with her son Wyclef. She was tested at the Trócaire (an Irish Aid Agency) supported MMM clinic and received treatment to prevent transmission of HIV to her child.

The community workers also conduct regular talks in schools. This outreach work is of crucial importance in a country where stigma and discrimination continue to impede effective HIV responses. Between 2008 and 2011, 56 % of people living with HIV reported being verbally abused as a result of their HIV status.



Felistus and her daughter Grace.

However, great strides are being made in Kenya. The country has doubled its domestic HIV spending. Between 2008 and 2010, 23% of adult men in Kenya were tested for HIV, compared to only 8% in 2003. Approximately 61% of eligible children younger than 15 years old are receiving antiretroviral therapy, while 67% of women are benefitting from antiretroviral therapy to reduce HIV transmission during pregnancy.

In the middle of the extremely poor slum of Mukuru, where the communities have little food, no toilets or running water, no jobs, and where in the rainy season sewage flows freely, the MMMs provide an oasis of hope and health.

We are grateful to all those who have contributed in different ways to make our work in Mukuru a success and we look forward to your continued support. Our bright buildings and the hospitality of management and staff makes this a very special place for the people of Mukuru. You make it possible for the sisters and staff to be a beacon of hope, a light in a world of uncertainty. An Easter people! 🌸

# An Indomitable Human Spirit



**Sonia and Sister Renee Duignan at Casa Vistación**

off both Sonia's arms and cut a deep gash on her head causing severe brain trauma. One of her legs was also badly wounded. As a result of her injuries her left side and left leg were paralysed due to nerve damage. Because the farm was so remote, she was not found for two days. Luckily her daughter was not in the house at the time of the robbery. Sonia was hospitalized for a long time and gradually she recovered to the extent that she could be discharged. Her mother and step father took her home when the hospital could do no more for her.

The health committee in Ocotillo (Volunteers of Casa Vistación) went to visit her some time later. They were shocked to see her condition. She had never moved from her bed, which was just a mat on a wooden frame. The health committee asked Casa Vistación to come and visit. They got her a wheel chair and gradually got her out of the bed. Bit by bit her strength built up.

Sister Maria Namuyomba, MMM writes to us that to date, Sonia has availed herself of many of the services that you have helped to offer through Casa Vistación. They arranged for her to go for physical therapy and so she has a lot more movement in the two stumps of arms and can now stand on one leg

Sonia usually sits at the entrance to her mother's home. In front of the house is a drain of approximately 1 foot deep full of flowing raw sewage. The smell is constantly there but Sonia does not care as she is just happy to be able to sit out and watch people passing by. She is always surprisingly cheerful given all that had happened to her. In fact she has also been the victim of sexual abuse by her step-father. Given her condition, she has to be lifted in and out of bed every morning and night which makes her very vulnerable and dependent on other people. But Sonia is a gutsy woman and she has had the courage to talk about it. She went to the psychologist at Casa Vistación and received counselling. The abuse has stopped and she is able to

We first told you Sonia's story in our Fall Appeal of 2007. Since spring is an awaking of new life, we want to bring you up-to-date on Sonia's life today. Here's her story and how it has turned out because you were there, helping to support our missionary work at Casa Vistación in Honduras.

Sonia was married with a one year old child. Her husband was looking after a farm in the country side. One night, two robbers came and murdered the husband. They cut

stand up for her rights despite her vulnerability.

Over the past few years Sonia has taught herself to write with a fixture attached to her arm stump and sends messages of hope to members of her church group. Although she still needs a lot of help on a daily basis, she can feed herself



**Sonia sends messages of HOPE.**

and has a wonderful sense of self-worth. She comes to events at Casa Vistación and other places to share her story and help others who are struggling with difficulties. Sonia also spends some time every few months at a local Hospice (which is in collaboration with Casa Vistación); to give her mother some respite. It is like a holiday for both of them. The Hospice patients love her and the staff is delighted when she comes because as she lifts everyone's spirit with her laughter and good humour.

Sonia is indeed an example of resurrection! To paraphrase 1Sam 2:8: I will raise you up from the ash heap and seat you in a place of honor. 🌸



**MMM in Honduras: Left to right front row: Sisters Cleide from Brazil, Renee from Ireland, Maria from Uganda. Back row: Bernie from Ireland, Rosalinda from Philippines and Rita has returned to Ireland.**

## A Thought to Ponder

“Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are, quite naturally, impatient in everything to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new. And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability and that it may take a very long time...Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.” *-Tielhard de Chardin, SJ*



Sisters Maria and Ursula trust in the slow work of God.

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

## MEDICAL MISSIONARIES OF MARY Addresses of Houses in the U.S. [www.mmmusa.org](http://www.mmmusa.org)

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

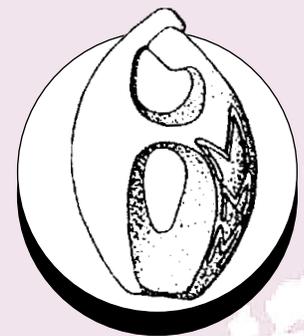
179 Highland Ave.  
 Somerville, MA 02143-1515  
 617-666-3223  
 e-mail: mmmosomerville@comcast.net

Route 1 PO Box 329  
 Clinchco, Va. 24226-9702  
 Tel/fax: 276-835-9312

563 Minnford 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: mmmchi@sbcglobal.net

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