

MEDICAL MISSIONARIES OF MARY

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Easter
Newsletter
2022

“Listen with the ear of your heart”

—From the prologue of *The Rule of St. Benedict*

Dear Friends,

Before anything else, thank you for your fidelity and patience as we adjusted to a new office, a new address, and a postal system that did its best, but was quite slow initially. We continue to be so grateful to each of you for your gifts, yes, but as well for your encouragement and the hope you give us.

Listening has always been an important practice in the life of an MMM sister and associate and a practice we try to share with those who form part of our lives. St. Benedict begins the prologue of *The Rule* in a similar way encouraging us all to *listen* using the ear of the heart. Pope Francis shared, “From the pages of Scripture we learn that listening means not only the perception of sound but is essentially linked to the relationship between God and humanity.”

Of course, there is **listening** and then there is **listening with the ear of the heart** . . . deeper, broader, going beneath what is said, connecting with your own reactions . . . **listening** in this way is a gift we give one another, our world, and is the building block of our relationship with God.

Know that we try **to listen** to each of you when you write, phone, email and ask us to pray for your friends and families and often, you wisely ask us to pray for our troubled world. This is a ministry we share . . . a consciousness of the healing power of God.

And so, **we listen**. In this year of 2022, MMM is engaged in 26 ministry projects in the countries where we live and work. Each one of those projects arose from the practice of **listening**. **Listening** to one another, to the needs of the people, to the pain of our world . . . and we do our best to continue **listening** as each ministry adapts and changes from year to year.

In this newsletter, I thought it would be good to choose one of our ministries and share with you our MMM experience there. So, let us travel together to Viana, Angola, just outside of Luanda in West Africa. To learn more about MMM, do look at our website mmmworldwide.org, which is full of information and stories of healing in our world.

MMM has been in Angola since our early days and remained there all during the civil war. We are still there, engaged in integrated health programs, in spite of the difficult environment. I asked Sr. Angela Anigbogu, MMM, if she would spend some time telling me about life in Viana and share some photos so I could pass them along to you. Because I have been in Viana myself, Sister Angela’s account of her life and work there is very real for me.

Angela and I lived and worked together in Dublin on our Leadership Team from 2009–2015 where we shared the joys and challenges of visioning and administering a Congregation with such diverse cultures and realities. She is a wonderful woman and is now sharing her skills and experience among the poor in Viana . . . a forgotten area in many ways. Welcome to Viana!

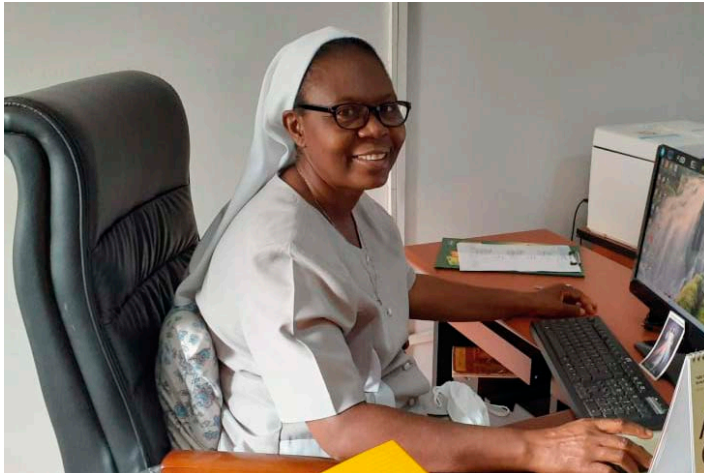
Gratefully,



Sister Joanne

Sister Joanne Bierl, MMM
Mission Development Director

Sister Angela Writes to Us from Viana



Sr. Angela Anigbogu, MMM

Viana is a municipality in the province of Luanda, which is also the name of the capital of the country. The Medical Missionaries of Mary have a Health Centre here that serves not only the people in this area, but people from far and wide. The attraction is that the clinic is managed by the MMMs, and we give holistic care, using our Core Values that we share with our staff. They in turn implant these values in their care of the patients both in our clinic and in the wider community in their homes. Somehow, though people coming to the clinic would not understand the term “core values,” they seem to find that they are treated with respect and welcomed and those are two of our core values! (The MMM Core values that we have agreed to practice as best as we can are Commitment, Compassion, Creative Fidelity, Hospitality, Interconnectedness, and Integrity.)



Angola, West Africa

The Health Centre opened on the first of December 2010 and access to it is through sandy, muddy, potholed unplanned roads that are many times flooded with stagnant water because we do not have a good water drainage system. When it rains, it is almost impossible to get out and or come in. It was decided to begin a health Centre here as the needs were so great and the service limited! I understand that when we came here, there were few houses, but since our arrival, the area has grown and every bit of land here is now occupied.

We continue to give preventive, curative, and diagnostic health services. If a patient cannot offer anything for his/her treatment, we provide our service without payment. We are also very much aware of COVID-19 and do our best to take precautionary measures both for ourselves and for our patients. All our staff have been vaccinated.

Our area may be best described as “an abandoned area” in the sense that little or nothing is done by the government to improve the lives of the people. There is a lot of unemployment, teenage pregnancies, which the people now see as normal. Therefore, there is little effort made to understand why this is happening and seek alternatives for these young men and women.

Crime and violence are the order of the day here. There are many dangerous gangs that, apart from terrorizing the communities, fight among themselves sometimes causing harm to anyone near at the time. We, the MMMs, have fallen victim to this violence and terror as we experienced in the early hours of the September 27, 2021. Our house was robbed by a large group. It was a terrible and traumatic experience as we were tied up, gagged, and locked in a closet. We are gradually recovering from the trauma and are aware that our healing will take some time.



SR. JOYCE ZARNIK, OSF

Medical Center Mother Mary Martin, Viana



Sr. Stella Adaobi Nwoye MMM with a member of staff



The waiting room at the Medical Center

Again, on December 21, 2021, we had another attempted robbery, but this time the leader of the group was caught by our able security man. We had contracted a new and better security company after the robbery in September. The company is expensive but good. The reality is we have to pay for 24-hour security to remain in this area.

Robberies of different degrees happen in our area on a daily basis and our area is known to be a dangerous area to live in. People have asked us why we are here in this dangerous place, and have even advised us to leave, but our response has always been that we are missionaries, and we work in places where there are needs that we believe we can address. Thus, we remain with the people who are unable to escape this reality either. We keep trusting God for protection, for we believe, just like our Foundress Mother Mary Martin, "If God wants the work, God will show the way."

Though we give a great deal of education on hygiene and care of the earth both in the Clinic and when home visiting, as well as in the market, and in the school, people

are still dumping refuse in the streets including our street and at our gate. It is demoralizing to live in a neighborhood with garbage in the streets, which often leads to indifference, lethargy, and a sense that nothing will or could change.

In the midst of all the challenges here, people try to live their lives as best as they can and try to put on a smiling face. The trust that people have on God helps them to have courage and to keep moving forward despite all odds. We, as MMMs, do our best by encouraging the people and giving them hope. It is our desire to be compassionate and stay in solidarity with them. After all, we share life in the same part of the planet.

The work in Viana is challenging but it is valuable and seeing how we are able to support and help the people here keeps us going. We are also aware that so many people in both the USA and Ireland are praying for us, supporting us financially, and this is a good opportunity to let you know how grateful we are. Thank you.



An ante-natal clinic outside the medical center



Sr. Angela with students in the parish

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BEQUESTS: Gifts That Keep on Giving

Your bequest will ensure that those you love and the institutions you care about receive a portion of your estate when you are gone. Please consider the MMMs 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:

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If you want more news about MMM in Viana and the work of MMM around the world, visit our website at mmmworldwide.org, which has been newly updated and is full of information on MMM and the wonderful people who keep the healing charism alive with us.

