



MEDICAL MISSIONARIES OF MARY

Mission Development Office
4425 West 63rd St., Ste. 100
Chicago, IL 60629-5565
www.mmmworldwide.org
www.facebook.com/medicalmissionariesofmary.usa

•
Lent/Easter
Newsletter
2019

Dear Friends

*“You lay your head on your pillow and you pray
for a better dream.”*

Sharlet Wagner CSC, President of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) wrote in her letter to LCWR members of her recent visit to her congregational sisters working in health care in Uganda. She was meeting with a Ugandan Doctor who, using the words above, gave voice to his frustration and struggle with the health needs and the generalized corruption in his country. Sr. Sharlet commented: “Those words seem to me to express the sentiment of so many as we enter into a new year. As we begin 2019, people around the world pray for a better dream.”

In this newsletter, we wish to share with you news from MMM life and work in Angola...specifically from Viana. Certainly a place that longs for a better dream!

My own experience of Angola a few years ago is one I will never forget. The initial arrival was on a plane full of men and women from China and we joined three other international arrivals in an airport without electricity and utterly chaotic. A very kind Angolan security guard grabbed me and with my Spanish and his Portuguese, we managed to get through immigration and customs. Leaving with **Sister Alice Achitebe MMM**, I saw many Chinese men in handcuffs being loaded into buses and then I understood. Chinese companies' operating practice for overseas projects, including in Africa, is to keep the number of local workers to a bare minimum and to bring in

much of the workforce from China, some of which comprises convicts “freed” on parole for project-related overseas work and to whom they are not required to pay a salary.

This introduction paved the way for me to enter into the complexity of a country coming out of years of colonization, a war for independence, a civil war, competing world views, and hope for a new dream. In the midst of this, MMM is there...a simple presence, offering health care and a healing presence with a willingness to understand the lived reality of so many Angolan men and women who just want to live peacefully and bring up their families in a good environment.

So, we share with you something of our MMM presence in Angola and ask you, as always, to keep the Sisters, their staff, our associates, and those for whom we care in your heart and prayer. On behalf of MMM worldwide and from us here in Chicago, we wish each of you and your families a meaningful Lenten experience and the joy that comes from knowing the Risen Lord walks among us each day encouraging us to be His presence in our world,



With gratitude and best wishes,

Sister Joanne

Sister Joanne Bierl MMM
Development Director

MMM Mission in Angola

Medical Missionaries of Mary first went to Angola in 1953 and remained with the people through twenty-seven years of civil war which, thankfully, ended with Peace Accords in 2002. Today, as the people of Angola continue to rebuild their country, MMMs can be found in Angola's second largest city, **Huambo**, which suffered great devastation during the war. Our other mission is in **Viana**, a satellite town outside the capital, Luanda, in an area where there is no other health service. We have two professed Angolan Sisters, **Laurinda Bundo** and **Perpetua Ndahetekela**.



Historically, from 1953 to 2002, MMMs were in Chiulo in Cunene Province, in the south of the country near Namibia, and ran a well-known hospital and nurse training school. The staff members and graduate nurses who came to know MMM in those years remain loyal friends, and this has led to a growing number of MMM Associates, who carry on our charism today.

In 1962 we opened a clinic in Cuamato, which we handed over to the Dorothean Sisters in 1975 because of the war situation. In 1989 we went to Mitcha, Lubango. We handed over there when we were able to go to Huambo. Those events are still remembered by the people of southern Angola today, as was recalled during the jubilee celebrations: *"The Sisters were always with us, whether*

in times of joy or in times of sorrow during the war situation in our country. Our words cannot describe this satisfactorily, but the birds and the trees could tell you."

Centro Médico Madre Mary Martin is the name of our health ministry in Viana where MMM continues the tradition of being present with the people in all that happens in their lives. Viana is home to 68,000 inhabitants including about 6,000 long-term refugees, primarily from Katanga Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Viana is about a 90-minute drive from downtown Luanda.

It is a very busy health center and saw 8,491 new patients in 2018 with 11,469 repeat visits. 2,604 women



A busy day in Viana.



Health Education in the clinic in Viana.



Alice at an outreach station.

registered for pre-natal care and there were 7,178 repeat pre-natal visits. Many are young girls barely into their teen-age years. There is a busy laboratory, pharmacy, and a staff committed to MMM core values. It is demanding for the Sisters and for the lay staff who are aware that many of the health problems like malaria could be prevented.

Collaboration is the key...with the neighborhood, the ministry of health, local schools and government.... good people working together towards this dream for Angola. But it is not easy. Great effort is made to know the community and understand their needs.

Sisters Alice Achitebe MMM, Angela Anigbogu MMM, and Mary Dakom MMM share in the administration, clinical work, home visiting, health education, and parish ministry in the neighborhood of Viana. Angela is doing Health Education for girls in the local schools and in an orphanage that has 80 children.

The sisters sent us the statistics, the photos, and hope you will remember them. They want to express their gratitude for the support they have received over the years.

Sister Alice told us of her visits with Teresa, who was blinded by the explosion of a land mine planted during the war. Alice explains, "She is a widow with

three very intelligent children. Before I met Teresa, she used to go with them to beg for food. Funds from MMM partners have helped to take her off the streets and be independent. She has an underground tank that she fills with water. By selling the water she is able to provide meals for the family." Teresa is only one of many women the Sisters are visiting in their homes.

Alice continues "Sleeping under treated nets prevents people from being bitten by the mosquitoes which carry malaria. We started education two years ago at a Salesian Secondary School with fifty-six boarders. This education resulted in the provision of mosquito bed nets for all the students. Up to March 2018, we had six to ten students every week at the clinic with malaria. Since May, we have only seen three students with malaria. Malaria has also decreased in small children.

Two years ago, we saw two to three children with convulsions every clinic day. Last year there were about two a week. Since January we have had only six cases." We are so grateful to those who have provided the treated nets for sleeping...it is making a huge difference.

Slowly the Sisters and their team effect change in this community. They could not do it without your interest, concern and support. ■



Alice and Angela with Teresa.

“You lay your head
on your pillow
and you pray for
a better dream.”



MEDICAL MISSIONARIES OF MARY

Addresses of Houses in the U.S. • www.mmmworldwide.org

Medical Missionaries of Mary
Mission Development Office
4425 West 63rd Street, Suite 100
Chicago, IL 60629-5565
773-735-3712

Fax: 773-735-4661
e-mail: mdommm2014@gmail.com

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

16 Downey St.
Malden, MA 02148-2056
781-912-2173
mmminmalden@gmail.com

3410 West 60th Place
Chicago, IL 60629-3602
773-737-3458
e-mail: mmmchi2015@gmail.com

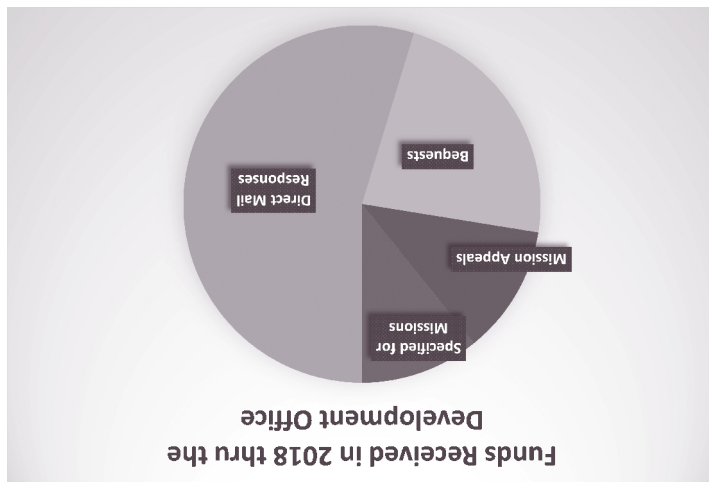
Route 1 PO Box 329
Clinchco, VA 24226-9702
Tel/fax: 276-835-9312
email: srberniekenny@yahoo.com

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's 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 Joanne Bierl, MMM
Mission Development Office
4425 W 63rd St., Ste 100
Chicago, IL 60629-5565
Tel: 1-773-735-3712*



We share with you the break-down of the funds we received in 2018. As you can see, the support we receive from your donations is enormous. Each year we do an Audit and our financial information is available. Like the story in the Gospel when Jesus remarks on the widow who gave from the little she had; we are blessed with those who share very generously from what they have. It goes a long way to making a difference...honoring the dignity and value of each human being who crosses our paths. That is our mission.

Because of you many lives have been healed and made whole.