



"The Task for which God made me is done."

Dear Friends

It was a young German Christian lawyer, Helmuth Graf, who fought against the Nazis from the 1930's who was arrested and executed on 23 January 1945 at the young age of 45. The above is what he said as he died. The above is similar to what Jesus said as his own life came to an end. **"It is finished."** Christ died and rose so we could understand that **the gift of life has meaning and purpose. And so we celebrate Easter!** Easter is about hope and promise in life's purpose and meaning. In these days, hope is a precious gift we give one another. The task for which God has made us is not finished and so we journey on together in hope!

All our connections with you have the purpose of keeping alive your partnership with us, encouraging you to continue to support us, of course, but also keeping you informed on the changing ministries of MMM, the blessings and challenges we face as Medical Missionaries in the world of today. In the last Pledge and Appeal letters, I spoke of our emerging commitment to bring awareness of and advocate for the women and children who are being trafficked in our world today. We cannot do that work without your presence in our lives.

In the newsletters this 2017, as we celebrate 80 years of MMM life and Ministry, I would like to celebrate both the past and the present in each of the countries where we are living and working. We will begin in this newsletter with **Malawi**, called "the warm

heart of Africa". A country of 16.3 million people, it is land-locked, very beautiful but very poor and has been the most deeply affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in all of Africa. Even in 2015, 9.1% of the population was infected and 70% of the hospital beds are taken by persons being affected by HIV/AIDS.

The first MMM Sisters arrived in Malawi in 1962 just before the country became an independent nation. For several decades they developed St. John's Hospital in the town of Mzuzu, with its well-known nursing school. Services extended later to the Health Centre at Nkhata Bay, on the shore of the beautiful fresh water Lake Malawi which stretches more than 560 kilometers. Having passed over to the local community these two earlier projects, today our work in Malawi is mainly focused on community-based health care.

And so we continue our presence in Malawi. Clearly, the task for which God sent us to Malawi is not finished yet! Thank you for being there with us,

Sister Joanne Bierl MMM

Development Director



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

Our Journey in Malawi

Our journey in Malawi included the terrible famine that threatened the lives of millions of people in 2002 inevitably drawing us more deeply into the area of nutrition.

Happily, we were able to play our part in preventing many deaths during that time and during later periods of drought. With the help of hundreds of donors and by working closely with other NGOs in Malawi, we were involved in distributing seeds, fertilizer, and tools, which resulted in good harvests. The feeding centers that we ran throughout 2002 were all finally closed in May 2003, allowing us to concentrate once again on our core work. This was done at Chipini, a rural health center in the south of Malawi, near the city of Zomba. From there we had an outreach program to the surrounding seventy-six villages which we successfully handed over to the local people in 2014.

At present in Malawi we are in **Kasina**, about one hour's drive south of Lilongwe, where we run a health center and an outreach program and in **Mziritsa** on the periphery of Lilongwe where a long awaited new project, an integrated health center initiated in 2014 has been accredited and became operational in November of 2016.

The center in Mziritsa is located in a hard to reach area of Lilongwe city. It is a densely populated area with over one million households with an average number of five people per house. Since we started, we have been seeing a lot of conditions, many people with hunger, poor hygiene condition; both personal and environmental, Malaria cases, diarrhea, hypertension and diabetes just to mention but a few. There is scarcity of quality drugs in the country and qualified staff which is a constant struggle. But the Sisters and the staff are there for the people in this under-served area.

In Kasina, one of the many programs is **The Teens Club** which we have told you about in a previous newsletters. Initially it was all about HIV AIDS but later they were told about various aspects of life, the importance of their schooling etc. to prepare them for adult life and life with HIV infection. In the meantime each child is seen, examined and counseled. They get refreshments during the morning and at midday they and their guardians enjoy a good meal – which is a big attraction needless to say! After the meal they all go to the Health Centre to receive their ARVs after which they are free to start their journey home – all on foot and it could be a distance of up to 10 Kilometers.



Sisters Cecily, Ngozi, Cecilia, Chinyere, and Mary

After many difficult years, Malawi is doing really well with the management of HIV/AIDS. WHO has set the target of – 90-90-90. 90% of all the population to be tested- 90% of all those testing positive for HIV to be on treatment – 90% of those on treatment to be with Low Viral Loads – (viral suppression) Malawi has achieved 78%, 89 % and 91% respectively which is most encouraging. There are estimated to be around 900,000 people with HIV infection living in Malawi.

Another program is our **Home Based Palliative Care**. Two nurses have done the Initiator's Training in Palliative Care at Ndi Moyo Palliative Care Centre in Salima – Malawi. We have 34 Home Based Palliative Care Volunteers chosen by their chiefs with the community. Each one cares for a few villages in their home area. We have divided the 74 villages into clusters called Sections. Twice a week we do rounds – one section each day. We are grateful that we have a vehicle and driver and are able to visit the patients in their homes. Each day we manage to visit 5 – 10 patients who have been identified as the ones needing our attention by the volunteers of that Section. Sometimes they have new patients for us to see. Our patients include those needing intensive Palliative Care such as those with cancer, HIV/AIDS with complications, those who are bedridden due to a stroke or some other debilitating disease. We have about 50 patients receiving g palliative care, pain control being one of the most important aspects of care. The frail, the elderly and others needing attention number around 100. This is a most rewarding but difficult ministry.

The Journey Continues...

MMM Future in Malawi

Sister Clara Chikwana is the first Malawian woman to become a professed Sister with MMM. Clara is now our Formation Director in our Novitiate in Ibadan in Nigeria in West Africa. There are three young Malawian women in formation in our novitiate and they are doing well which is a further sign of hope.

A further sign of hope: Sister Chinyere Anyaorah, from Nigeria, on mission in Malawi, told us about three new MMM Associates who recently made their covenants in Lilongwe. Pictured here, from left to right, they illustrate the great diversity of gifts that our Associates bring to the expression of healing. Their beautiful dresses express their joy on the special occasion as they join 140 other Associates in the Congregation. We thank our Sisters Catherine Dwyer, Mary Doonan, Anne Carr and Patricia Amadi who, over the years, nurtured these friendships.

Lilian Ngambi is a teacher by training and is now involved in business. A home-based care volunteer, she also serves as Archdiocesan Mistress of Ceremonies and is in charge of a choir and liturgical dance. A widow, Lilian has three daughters. The youngest is in university.



MMM Malawian Associates Lillian, Sophie and Benedetta

Benedetta Kulemeka is also a teacher and has worked in nursery and secondary schools. She is a member of the Legion of Mary and the Divine Mercy. Bernadette is married with a grown daughter and son.

Sophie Kalinde is a retired diplomat and human rights commissioner and is currently engaged in agriculture. She is a member and former chairperson of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. She is a member of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society and serves on the commission for the welfare of priests in the diocese. She is an Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister. Sophie is a widow with four adult children.

News and Up-dates

An MMM Partner who is truly missed.

We remember **Richie Moriarty** who died on December 9 2016. Richie was part of the life of MMM since he was a young single man, a firefighter, who gave his free time to care for our MMM home in Winchester MA and took on a role of member in our Men's committee. As young American women who came from around the country to join MMM, we were uncertain and struggling to find our way in this new Congregation. Richie was a presence among us for all those years and we rejoiced when he found Mary, the love of his life. Their marriage and their family of four children were always a part of our lives. They supported us personally and our work around the world for more than 50 years. In January 2015, he sent a nice letter to the office here in Chicago. He was not well, but was so happy that we were with him and his family all these years. It is these relationships that nurture the Hope we live by and give us the energy to do the work that God places in our path. We remember Richie with love and gratitude. May he rest in peace.

MMM Events in 2017 for which we ask for your prayers

The MMM **Extended Leadership Meeting (ELM)** happens every year and will take place in June in Ireland. It sets our agenda for a year. We are planning an **International Formation Meeting** to follow the ELM. This is a very important meeting that will look at all the ways we invite and train women to become MMM's. Please, keep that in your prayer. It is our future.

The School of the Lord's Service (SOLS)

is bringing together 13 young MMM's in Tanzania who have finished their professional training and are assigned to mission but are at the point of making a decision to take their final vows and commit themselves for this life. It is a very special time for them and it will mean a lot to know you are praying for them.

VVF Camps

- in both Itam in Nigeria and Kitovu in Uganda camps have recently been held and many women's lives have been changed for the better because of VVF repair surgery. We thank all of you who help support these programs.



“The Task for which God made me is done.”

MMM of MARY MEDICAL MISSIONARIES

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

563 Minneford 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: 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

Wherever you are,
whatever you do,
let there be in your heart
a space for others to be.
- MMM Constitutions

