



Dear Friend,

What a Year! And it's only half over! First there was the historic resignation of Pope Benedict. Then there was the election of a Latin American cardinal. And of all the saints on the Catholic calendar, he chooses the name of Francis after the poor man of Assisi whom God called "to build my church." Amazing and hopeful is all I can say.

As a Medical Missionary of Mary, Pope Francis' concern for the poor and those on the margins of society really touched a deep chord of empathy and hope in my being. To quote John Allen writing about Pope Francis when he was Cardinal, "...[his] commitment [to the poor] was anything but abstract. He spent a considerable share of his own time in the villas (slums), trying to make the faith relevant to people whom he believed had been cast aside by politics, by the economy, and in some cases, even by the church."

For those of you who read our every Newsletter you have come to appreciate that the Summer Newsletter shares some of the vocation stories of MMMs and AMMMs. **This time we have three sisters who are celebrating 50 years of being a vowed Medical Missionary of Mary. In this newsletter they share their "vocation story."** As you will see from their stories, it is this very thing that Pope Francis speaks of that attracted these women to MMM. Being on mission with those who have been pushed aside and ignored by society, bringing Christ to them by revealing the great love that God has for each one of us, not just for those who "have it all".

Hailing from New York, **Sister Ann Flynn** spent many years in East Africa as a nurse- midwife and tutor (teacher) of nursing. Always ready with a good story, she was beloved by her students. She has spent time back in the States caring for her sister and advocating for the less able in a health care system that often does not make it easy for those who need such services.

Among many descriptions of **Sister Nina Underwood**, the "the flying nun" is the one that captures the imagination. As portrayed in an exhibit that traveled throughout the States, called **Women & Spirit**, women religious have done and gone places where no one else would go. Sister Nina did likewise not only in the skies but to various countries in Africa where war and famine were at times a heartbreaking challenge.

As you will read, **Sister Jo Ann Mullen** spent 40 years in Ethiopia. She did what we are called to do on mission: handing on skills, empowering the local people, preaching the gospel by her life and then leaving others to continue this work of God. Today she ministers in our community in Somerville, MA.

There is one more person that I wish to mention here as celebrating that special 50th Jubilee. **Sister Joyce Zarnik, OSF**. A native of Chicago, she joined the Franciscan Sisters of Clinton Iowa. She works with MMM in the Mission Development Office. Many of you who call are greeted by her or you may have met her as she too travels the country telling the MMM story in various churches. Joyce always had a great desire to be a "missionary" and so after 42 years of teaching she joined our staff to tell our story and invite you, our partners, to this great adventure in faith.

Having read the "vocation" stories of our Jubilarians, maybe you know someone who is sensing a call from God to live our way of life. Please give them our information.

Join with us as we celebrate these 200 years of service to the people of God, especially those who live on the margins. We promise you a remembrance at prayer for all your needs. Please do pray for us and together let us proclaim the Good News to the world, that God does indeed love us.

Gratefully,

S. Mary Ann MacRae, MMM

Sister Mary Ann MacRae, MMM
Development Director

The Fabric of Our Lives –

Sister Ann Flynn, MMM

Recently I was asked for the story of my vocation which I guess you could say started when I arrived into a family in the heart of the Finger Lakes Region of NY State. My 4 year old sister, Marge and 2 year old brother Bob had already arrived ...and I was the last of the clan. When I was 3, someone asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up and I announced: "I'm going to be a nurse." This surprised everyone because I didn't know any nurses and had never been in a hospital.

Soon I was 5 and we had to leave the beautiful lake and all that goes with 'small town America'. This move brought us first to Baltimore and then on to Buffalo which would be my Home for the next 20 years.

Life was good! Lots of empty lots to play in and school was full of fun and friends. Then in August 1945 all that changed. The doctor came to the house (imagine that!) and confirmed my parents' worst fears: Polio. I was only 9 years old but I knew this was not good. My Grandfather and Dad built a 'Kenny Packer' with a big pot in which to boil water so my mother could soak the pieces of wool to make hot packs which she wrapped around me from early morning until late at night. It was a very lonely time for my Mother. Everyone was afraid to visit because at that time, no one knew what polio was or how it was contracted.

Only our neighbor, Mrs. Bury would come down every evening and visit.

On one such occasion she asked, "Why don't you ask God to make you better?" I knew He made the world and all the lovely creatures, flowers and the stars. Why would He want to do that was my question and her reply, "Because He loves you".



Ann listens and explains as any good teacher does.

That precious piece of knowledge gave me a new lease on life and I uttered my first 'formal' prayer. I remember it still: "If you'd like to make me better, I wouldn't mind".

The years rolled on and I followed the dream of my 3 year old self. Just as I was finishing my nurse's training, someone casually (God is very clever!) said to me, "I have



From L to R Sisters Ann Flynn, Nina Underwood and Jo Ann Mullen.

found a place for you, they do medical mission work. NOT ME! I thought to myself.

Mrs. Bury was a missionary to me and my family and the thought of doing the same wove in and out of my thoughts. No internet, no smart phone and no Google—I had to find people who did this work by looking in a huge tome of a book. And there I found the Medical Missionaries of Mary.

These are simply the bones of my story...so many people and places and events have brought it to life.

Sister Nina Underwood, MMM

As far back as I can remember I dreamed of being a nurse and a missionary - but certainly never a nun. My family was very influential in my life. I was blessed with faith filled, hard working parents. They often sponsored or supported causes that directly assisted the poor and shared with their children the need to serve those less fortunate. So at a young age, through the sisters in school, film and stories of the needs of the poor and sick in faraway places, I felt drawn to service.

When I was in high school, my older sister entered religious life, but at that time I had no desire to do the same. Though I felt that the seed of the call had been planted in my heart, I resisted because I did not want to be a 'nun'.

Time passed and I found myself living next door to the MMMs. I was drawn to them by their openness and hospitality, and besides, they had a pet dog.

Still in denial, I decided to try other orders of missionaries and was delighted when I was not accepted, thinking, well this must be God's will. But God doesn't give up that easy. The continual urging of the Spirit led me to ask for

Woven Together

admittance to MMM and to my surprise I was warmly welcomed and accepted by our Foundress, Mother Mary. This is when I began a sincere discerning process and with the help of wise women was assured I had a vocation to missionary life.



Nina with one of the children from a famine relief camp.

Because MMMs are sent where the needs are greatest and human development is paramount, I was sent to train as a nurse in Ireland at the MMM International Missionary Training Hospital. My studies were interrupted by a request to take pilot's training.

Because I could fly a plane, I was sent to the Turkana Desert in Northern Kenya in response to a severe drought in the 60's which continued on and off into the 80's. This was a challenging, fulfilling, and exciting time in my life. Working closely with the Flying Doctor Service of East Africa, who provided support and financial assistance, an MMM team along with NGO's, and the local church were able to bring much needed relief to thousands of nomadic people scattered over an area of 32,000 sq. miles.

Some of the other places in which I have been privileged to serve are: Sudan, the Kibera slum of Kenya, as chaplain in a hospital in the USA and then to Niger, West Africa. All of these experiences have had a transformative effect on me.

Gratitude fills my heart as I reflect on this 50 year journey with MMM. I believe that I could not have found a more adventurous or extraordinary life. Or should I say, the life that found me. Looking back at the marvels and miracles God has worked, I say, "Thanks" and renew my "Yes". ALLELUIA!!

By Sister Jo Ann Mullen, MMM

God so often seems to speak to us in the most mysterious of ways! In high school on the west side of Chicago two MMM Sisters showed us the film "Visitation." I remember being deeply touched by the needs of the people and the heroic efforts of the sisters to bring them health care. Without further thought I went home, put the vocation leaflet in my dresser and continued living through the joys and trials of being a typical teen-ager. Three years later I found the MMM

leaflet and decided to write for information as I was interested in medical work and very much attracted to the adventures and challenges of mission life.

Needless to say, my parents were not exactly overjoyed with the idea of losing their only child to the foreign missions, but they put my happiness first and gave their permission, though, they hoped and frequently said: "Go, you'll be back home after 2 weeks." When I was being reprimanded my mom would say, "You ... a nun!" A little over a decade later my mom and dad were called home to God and became two of my angels.

Completing my formation period in MMM and three years of nursing studies at St. Elizabeth's School of Nursing in Brighton, MA, my feet were itching to go to Africa. Instead,



Jo Ann rode a donkey to get around to people needing her services. She upgraded to a motorcycle: much easier to manage and faster.

I landed on the Emerald Isle at our Motherhouse for another two years because acquiring my resident's visa to Ethiopia turned into quite a process.

At last, the day had arrived. I woke up in the plane to see the sun rising over the Sahara Desert. I knew I was flying into the unknown and never guessed that Ethiopia would be my home for the next 40 years. The only thought that came into my head that morning was: "Jo Ann, what have you gotten yourself into now?"

Ethiopia is a beautiful country. The people are extremely gracious, hospitable, and hard-working. Enjoying close family bonds, they are known for their great sense of humor.

In my 40 years I enjoyed the experiences of varied health ministries: Leprosy control, clinical nursing, Primary Health Care, community-based health and development, mother and child care, women's training programs, project administration, just to name a few!

There were also times of great sorrow, as the people suffered through the "green revolution" and then the "red terror" stages of the communist regime. Life has never been easy for the people of this beautiful land.

2009 was a very sad year for me as I said my good-byes to the people and land that I so dearly love. I have been especially blessed by all the people that have been a part of my life and they are forever woven into the fabric of my being.

A Blessed Life – Sister Joyce Zarnik, OSF



Joyce doing what she loves: singing.

Have you ever heard someone say that “so and so” leads a charmed life? Well that expression fits me to a tee!

After teaching school for 42 years and loving it, I decided that I didn’t have the energy that my students deserved. That’s when the position with MMM just dropped into my lap.

They say that if you like your job you will never work a day in your life. That’s so true. I find my MMM position so rewarding and fulfilling that MMM is doing me a favor and not the other way around.

Remember the “charmed life” description? Well my religious life started when my mom found an advertisement for Mount Saint Clare College in a church newspaper. That’s how this whole thing began and it has been a very rewarding and fulfilling way of life.

Requests — 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:

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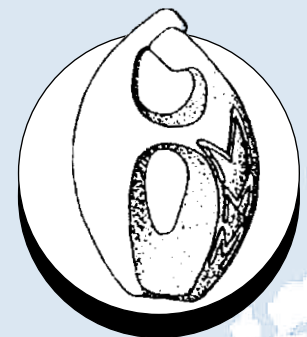
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